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TALES OF THE MOOR.

THE SECOND VOLUME OF THE SERIES IS PREPARING
FOR PUBLICATION.

TALES OF THE MOOR.

BY JOSIAS HOMELY.

CONTAINING

REGINALD ARNOLF,

TOM STIRLINGTON,

ETC.

LONDON: SIMPKIN, MARSHALL, & CO.
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TO

MRS. TEMPLER, OF SANDFORD ORLEIGH,

THIS VOLUME IS
MOST RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED, WITH A FEELING OF THE
DEEPEST GRATITUDE.

It is indeed a very slight token of such a feeling, but it is the only one which circumstances enable the Author to offer. The chief object of these TALES is to inculcate principles of Christian charity and general benevolence. However feeble the effort, he therefore hopes that they will not inappropriately appear under the protection of the name of one so well known to practice the virtues which he has humbly endeavoured, by fictitious illustration, to render amiable in the estimation of that numerous body of the community who prefer receiving moral truth in an amusing form.

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PREFACE.

In submitting this volume to the attention of the public, I beg most respectfully to offer my grateful acknowledgments to that numerous body of Patrons and Subscribers whose valued support has encouraged me to publication. I feel that to them an apology is due, because the contents of this volume will be found to differ considerably from what was at first proposed. The fact is, that in re-writing them for the press, tempting opportunities occurred of making the two stories of Reginald Arnolf and Tom Stirlington much longer than they were first intended to be: I yielded to the temptation, under the impresssion that the additions were improvements, and that the stories would be rendered thereby more acceptable to my readers. This compels me to exclude from the present volume numerous Detached Pieces named in my first prospectus: these, however, it is my intention (with some other Tales) to prepare for publication in a Second Volume, which will appear as soon as circumstances will admit.

JOHN BRADFORD.

Pavilion Place, Newton-Abbot,
August 21st, 1841.

"I would not have the reader, upon the perusal of a single paper, pronounce me incorrigible; he may try a second, which, as there is a studied difference in subject and style, may be more suited to his taste: if this also fails, I must refer him to a third, or even a fourth in case of extremity. If he should still continue refractory, and find me dull to the last, I must inform him, with Bayes in the 'Rehearsal,' that I think him a very odd kind of fellow, and desire no more of his acquaintance."

OLIVER GOLDSMITH.

TALES OF THE MOOR.

INTRODUCTION.

THE CEMETERY.

> "Lead me to yonder craggy steep. The murmur of "the falling streams; the whistling winds rushing through "the woods of my hills; the welcome rays of the bounteous sun—will soon awake the voice of song in my "breast. The thoughts of former years glide over my "soul like swift-shooting meteors o'er Ardven's gloomy "vales."
>
> EVIR-ALLAN.

Among the hills of central Devonshire,
There is a lonely forest burial-ground,
Where, resting in their solitude, the dead
Of many ages have returned to dust.
In days long number'd with the past, 'tis thought
There, in the centre of their hunting-grounds,
The chasers of the red Deer fell asleep,
And moulder'd into nothing, side by side;
And the Moor-Shepherds gather'd to the fold
Prepar'd for all our kindred of the earth,
Ceas'd from their labours, and forgot their cares.
This solitary city of the dead

Is plac'd upon the summit of a hill.
There, when bland spring is master of the vale,
Fierce winter holds his icy citadel,
And when the flow'rs are on the southern plains,
Seeking the uplands with the earliest dawn,
The plough-boy checks his song, surpris'd to find
The snow-flake lingering yet among the graves;
And on the rude old Church, a place of prayer
For men of ancient days and ruder times,
How ancient or how rude is now unknown.
In sullen loneliness the fabric stands,
The storm sighs round it with a dirge like wail
When the fierce north-wind wanders in his might,
Forth from the caverns of his frozen home.
But e'en the sun-light of a summer dawn,
Shedding on all around a new-born joy,
Seems to invest it with a deeper gloom.
Its dark sepulchral sadness nought can cheer.
The men who rear'd the pile have long been dust.
No other work of human hands around;
It stands their lonely monument, and seems
The solitary remnant of their works;
The mouldering weir'd memorial of their faith.
The patient hands of those who work in stone
With persevering toil, from solid rocks
Have chisel'd all the frame-work into shapes
Of rustic symmetry and mouldings rude,
But so unlike whate'er for pomp or use,
Or purposes devout, men *now* construct,

It scarcely seems the work of human hands.
Her airy legend superstition builds
On this foundation. Aged men still tell
An awful tale, (devoutly still believed,)
That when on pious purposes intent
Men first resolv'd to build a house to God
Far in the wilderness, a distant tor,
Which from that summit seems an azure cloud,
Was deem'd the spot most holy: and they there
Laid down the strong foundations, and had rear'd
Breast high the growing pile, but while they slept,
And darkness hung its sable curtain round,
The whole had disappeared! The flowery turf,
Which they had left at night-fall soil'd and trench'd,
Now lay as smooth beneath the dapple dawn
As if no hand had e'er disturb'd its rest,
No foot of man e'er press'd its virgin green!

Confounded, to the hamlet they return'd,
" High heaven our proffer'd services rejects!"
They said, " His wonder working hand thus marks
" His high displeasure of our daring deed."
Till from the hill an aged Shepherd came
With trembling footsteps, though in eager haste—
" Be comforted my children," he exclaim'd,
" For he who guards the creeping thing which dwells
" Among the grass, has not forsaken us.
" Far in the moor the fabric I have found;
" Its firm foundation there no mortal hand

" Has fix'd, nor thence can e'er remove. It is
" Gods chosen spot—to us the gate of heaven.
" Each stone is there replaced as left by you,
" But nought is added; hasten to complete
" The work, which viewless messengers of heaven,
" Or spirits blest, once men, have thus begun."
He spoke—the trembling swains obeyed.
With faltering hands they rais'd the battlement;
Around the turret, and the sacred roof
Within, they built an altar to their God.
There, still, the living of that hamlet meet
For weekly prayer—around, their dead find rest.

To muse o'er death in this lone solitude,
To steal, as 'twere, upon its dreamless sleep,
I oft have wandered from the haunts of men.
For death here wears no silly masquerade;
Here pomp does not insult it, and here wealth
Has not its treasures lavish'd to procure
The grave derision of an epitaph;
It wears the semblance of a calm repose,
A balmy slumber following days of toil,
This life's concluding blessing and its end.
The rustic mother leads her rosy boy,
On sabbath mornings, up the hill to prayer;
Forth to the merry fields his father guides
His faltering steps to teach him life's great aim—
Want, to o'erpower with unceasing toil.
On his yet careless brow the snows of age

Gently descend, and then he falls asleep.
One long submission to necessity—
His earthly lot. His Death is but the same.
Its quiet, calm, inevitable close.
And then he claims (fit resting place for him)
His lonely green, unhonour'd mound of earth,
'Tis all his country think they owe to him,
'Tis all at least his kindred can bestow.

A breathing worm among the breathless; here
The stories of their sufferings and joys
Fall with a solemn interest on my heart.
I oft have witness'd, in this lonely spot,
The parting of the living and the dead;
For here affection renders to the grave
The clay it could not rescue from its claim.
The widow'd, childless, fatherless, depart,
And leave the jewels of their hearts behind.
And I have followed to their lonely homes,
And mark'd their alter'd fate, when death has claim'd
Their kindred. Thus, familiar to my mind
Are simple tales of separated love.
They are not for the heartless, thoughtless, proud,
Whose human sympathies, the pride of cast
Has blighted like the breath of pestilence,
But for the soul where meek affection dwells
Which sees itself reflected in the stream
Of human life, where'er it flows around.

THE MEETING.

As I journeyed one evening towards the Moorland Cemetery, that I might be alone among the dead, an incident occured, which, although apparently trivial, was destined to give, for a time, an entirely new direction to my thoughts. At the foot of the hill on which stands the old Church, there runs a rapid mountain brook, through which a number of large stones or blocks of granite rock, are so placed as to afford to the traveller the means of crossing it. At this place I found a youth of most prepossessing appearance, cautiously reconnoitring the ford, apparently doubtful as to whether it could be crossed in safety, or not. Having assured him that it could be, and having set him the example, he sprung over with the agililty of a young antelope.

How trivial a thing in the journey of life will knit together or divide the hearts of men. Having offered to the young traveller this trifling kindness, I felt as if I had a right to be interested in him.

"Go you" said he, "towards the Church upon the hill? if so, I should be glad to accompany you; I am a stranger to the path."

"It is a sad and lonely place." said I, "for young hearts to visit, whose hopes are fresh, and feelings unhackneyed in the ways of men;—it is, perhaps, the resting-place of some one you have loved and valued?"

An expression of deep sadness, like the shadow of a vagrant cloud, passed for a moment over his finely-expressive features, as he said, "I have, indeed, lov'd and valued some who are resting there;" and immediately recovering his former expression of gaiety, he continued, "My business there to-day is not with the dead but with the living. I go there to meet my brother, a sailor, who is just returned to England after a long absence."

This explanation not only satisfied, but highly interested me; which feeling of interest was greatly increased by the conduct of my young companion. He seemed desirous of hiding from a stranger the deep emotions which evidently occupied his heart, occasioned by the anticipated meeting with his brother. He sometimes addressed me, with the greatest apparent gaiety, but would stop short in the middle of a sentence, as if he had forgotten what it was his intention to have said, and then laughing at his own confusion, would turn aside to hide a tear, which I saw trembling on his dark blue eye. As we ascended the hill, he stooped down several times to pluck a beautiful wild flower, which he looked at with the fondest admiration for a moment, and then would let it drop from his hand, as if he had forgotten its existence. But this emotion grew too strong for concealment when we reached the top of the hill, from whence we could look down upon a valley covered with brushwood and low stunted trees. Along the side of the hill which arose beyond the wood on the opposite side, ran a narrow stripe of rough and unprotected road, on which we could discern a single dark spot. As it moved towards us it became evident that it was a solitary traveller. My young companion, clasping his trembling hands together, stood motionless and speechless, watching it with the most intense interest, and the strongest emotion; the traveller was, however, soon concealed from our view by the wood of the valley. The short time which elapsed before he again appeared emerging from the wood, was a time of agonizing suspense to my young friend. But the moment the traveller appeared, he sprung forward, exclaiming, "Ernest, my brother!" which was replied to by an exclamation expressive of the same fine feeling, "Oh, Julian, my own dear boy."

I withdrew to some distance, for I felt that the presence of a stranger could not but be an improper intrusion at such a moment. Still I was near enough to observe them. After a short time, I was surprised to see them turn aside and go into the burial-ground, the younger brother resting heavily upon the arm of the elder, as if he could scarcely have moved forward without its support. The elder, at first, erect and firm walked on, but soon I saw his head drop heavily upon his hand, overcome with powerful emotions. Suddenly they clasped each other's hands and dropped upon their knees by the side of a flower-covered grave—

IT WAS THE GRAVE OF THEIR MOTHER.

It was at this holy spot, these young hearts had agreed that the tie of brotherhood should re-unite, after their long separation.

As I stood observing them, near the gate of the Cemetery, I was surprised to hear a soft, plaintive, dove-like murmur, which seemed to be uttered by some one hastily approaching through the wood, and in a short time, a youth, of most singular appearance, sprung lightly over the fence, and stood beside me. He looked earnestly towards the brothers; but, perceiving how they were engaged, stood still, watching them apparently with the most intense delight. This gave me an opportunity of observing him more particularly.

His age, if I judged correctly, might have been about eighteen; his figure slight for that age, but possessed of that symmetrical proportion of parts, which gives to the painter the most perfect notion of harmony, and helps to impress the beholder with the idea of great activity or power of action; his countenance was pale—possessed even of feminine regularity of features, and so delicate, that it was rescued from the charge of effeminacy only by its expression, which was at once so touching, and so noble, that it commanded immediate interest, admiration, and respect. This was greatly aided by the tender enthusiasm, but intense emotion, expressed by his full black eyes, which caused a feeling I could scarcely account for to thrill through my heart; for, as he stood with clasped hands, looking now at the brothers, and now into the interminable blue of the heavens, I could not but feel that there stood beside me a creature of the "Earth, earthy," but born to the contemplation of the Eternal—the Infinite. In the haste of his flight, his hat had been removed from his head, and his long black hair floated upon the gentle breeze in unrestrained and beautiful ringlets. His dress might not have been chosen to aid the effect of his appearance, for it was the ordinary dress of a respectable youth of the middle class, yet it *did* greatly aid that effect. The short round jacket, by leaving the figure unencumbered with drapery, displayed its fine proportions to the best advantage, and a small black silk kerchief, brought once round his neck, confined by a single knot, and then left to float, with his hair, upon the breeze, completed the picture. It was, altogether, such a face and such a figure as the painter and the poet strive to imagine when they would depict man in the full vigour of his intellectual power, but with his primeval innocence yet untarnished. As the brothers arose, and turned towards us, he sprung forward to grasp their extended hands, uttering again his soft plaintive cry, (which, though evidently expressive of joy, sounded to me most sad and touching,) while they both exclaimed—"Reginald! poor Reginald!"

The three young men, (for such I ought to call them, as Reginald, the last comer, was evidently the junior of the party,) now came towards me. I thought they all appeared a little ashamed of the strong feelings which they had so lately exhibited. *But* I *did not feel ashamed of* THEM. I did not feel ashamed of the country which had produced them. For the moment, I even thought the better of poor human nature—that frail and erring thing, which, in this vale of tears, wanders so far from perfection and happiness, yet, even in its wildest wanderings, gives proofs that it contains within itself the seeds of better things—and these, to me, are proofs that he who has sown the seed will not abandon it—that the buddings of the heart will flower another day—that the blossoms of time will bring forth the fruits of Eternity.*

Julian Mortimer now proceeded to introduce me more formally to his companions, and first to his brother. I never saw so great a likeness, accompanied by so strong a contrast, as there existed between them. Their features seemed almost counterparts of each other; but the mild expression upon the countenance of Julian, with its gentle and tender blue eye—which looked as if it was always in search of something to admire and to love—was strongly contrasted by the lofty and intrepid expression which marked the countenance of his brother, who looked as if he had grown familiar with danger, and could meet it fearlessly.

I was surprised that their companion had not yet spoken, and I looked at him, I fear, too inquiringly; for he turned away with an expression of great embarrassment. Julian Mortimer observing this, with ready kindness, explained.

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* The three youths here introduced, are the Poets who will relate the "TALES OF THE MOOR." Ernest is the Poet of Romance and of daring Adventure; Julian the Poet of Domestic Life; Reginald the Poet of Nature and the Metaphysics; while Tom Stirlington will try to aid the cause of Virtue, by pointing the finger of Ridicule at Vice and Folly. They will speak to the feelings of the unenlightened—to the hearts of the untaught—and endeavour to prove that the perfection of human morals is contained in the precept, "Do unto another as thou would'st he should do unto thee."

"Our friend, Reginald Arnolf," said he, "is deaf and dumb. We are all going to the house of our relative, Mr. Aubrey, of the Barton House, where Reginald resides."

"Aubrey?" said I; "my kind old friend. It was my intention to visit him myself to-night, and to remain at his house several days. Let us all go together."

I was flattered to observe that this proposal was received with apparent satisfaction by the brothers; and Julian having communicated my intention to his dumb friend, by signs rapidly made on his fingers, he smiled delightedly, and gaily led the way.

We all met with a kind and cordial reception from Mr. and Mrs. Aubrey, of the Barton House; and an equally friendly, though much more boisterous, greeting, from Mr. Tom Stirlington, a wine merchant, residing in a neighbouring town, who had married Mr. Aubrey's daughter, and, with his wife, happened to be on a visit to Barton House.

Having received a summons to the tea-table, which, on account of the heat of the weather, was prepared in the large ancient hall, we were delighted to find that our company was augmented by the presence of several ladies; but as they will be introduced in one of the following tales, I forbear to name them here.

Tea being removed, it was proposed by Mrs. Aubrey, and agreed to by the company, with much pleasure, that we should hear the tale of REGINALD ARNOLF, or the story of a Dumb Boy, as recorded by himself, shortly after having finished his education at an institution for the instruction of those thus bereft. It was read to the party, with much feeling, by his attached young friend, Julian Mortimer. Reginald himself sat close beside him, and, by a glance of his quick eye, could ascertain what particular passage was being read, and by a keen and eager examination of the countenances of all present, seemed anxiously endeavouring to read its effects on us.

REGINALD ARNOLF,

OR THE

STORY OF A DUMB BOY.

" Never did I feel assured of the strength of my own heart, and trustful to subdue its human errors and its hourly sorrows, until I saw bright before me the Birthright and Eden of IMMORTALITY."
BULWER.

" If this is the beautiful creation that springs from ashes, let its peace prosper with me."—CHARLES DICKENS.

Lady, all hail! The dumb boy knows your sign,*
'Tis loveliness, with kindness sweetly blended.

Say—Will the noble hear my simple tale,
And will my gratitude be sweet to you?
The wealthy may not like to hear of want;
And, writing to the generous and kind,
Why should I tell a tale to make you weep?
Why should the precious pearl-drop of a tear,

---

* YOUR SIGN.—The distinguishing mark by which the dumb are instructed to recognise a person they have once seen.

Born from the sweetness of your noble heart,
Be wasted on the desolate of soul?

It is not for myself I ask a tear,
But for the many *untaught* orphan boys
Who wander through the world, to them a waste,
In all the loneliness of speechless grief.
Their desolation science has not reached—
Their bleeding hearts compassion has not soothed;
Bewildered and confounded is the soul,*
Imprisoned in its tenement of clay,
Yet always agonised with active thought,
A keen, unsatisfied desire to know.
Their hearts' affections source of purest joys,
To those who hold life's intercourse of love,
Blighted, or turn'd to bitterness and pain.
They love—they have no voice to ask return;
And love avoids th' infection of their woe.
Their speechless friendship meets with cold disdain,

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* The Author has endeavoured, in this tale, to trace the development of understanding and feeling in a child bred up in solitude, and who, from his being deaf and dumb, must be supposed, up to the age of maturity, to have received his impressions entirely from the sight. In this introduction, therefore, he (Reginald Arnolf,) describes the *untaught dumb* as being precisely in the same situation as he himself was previous to his having received that education which brought him into communion with his fellow creatures. To them much of the most familiar phenomena of nature, and the most ordinary transactions of life are as unexplained mysteries. *They have no knowledge of Death, nor can they conceive what it is.* But this relation will show how, with the knowledge of death, comes the natural, the rational consolation—THE REMEDY—THE HOPE OF IMMORTALITY.

As if they were not kindred to their kind.
Th' accumulated hatred of the world
Has not one-half the power to crush the heart
When its first loves are bursting into bloom,
As has cold Apathy—the smooth disdain
And stern injustice of a silent scorn.
—I mark'd a rose-tree, in my native vale;
The ruthless storms of Autumn pelted it,
And tore away its sear and yellow leaves:
And yet it seem'd to smile whene'er the sun
Look'd kindly down thro' fragments of the storm;
The Winter hung with icicles its stems,
And buried it at length in drifted snows.
It lived. The green vitality revived—
But when the Spring breath'd coldly on its flowers
It died. The heart is like that bonny rose—
A chill'd affection is its deadliest bane.

An understanding blank—a blighted heart—
The untaught dumb boy's certain lot must be.
Where ignorance and poverty have met,
They are, alas! the certain lot of man;
But the gay peasant, in his useful cares,
Feels not the vacancy, but laughs and sings,
Though no one hears him save the patient beast,
The sharer of his gladness and his toil.
Not so the youth in lonely silence doom'd
To bear the ills of hopeless poverty.
His journey is upon a barren heath,

Where murky clouds obscure the cheerless day.
The past hangs o'er him like a painful dream,
Where visions unexplained swift flitted by,
Yet left no record on the heart but fear;
The Future, wrapt in darkness, is a blank;
Time—to his eager heart—a tale half-told;
Eternity, perhaps, a restless sleep.
For Hope—who points the way to better worlds,
Or better days in this—her magic lamp
For him has never trimm'd. His soul is dark.

Hope, like the sunbeam on a sepulchre,
Clothes even sadness with a gleam of joy;
But Earth's *realities* soon satiate.
There is no dreary waste, no wilderness,
So darkly desolate as that to which
A fullness of its joys leads on, if Hope
Ends with to-day, and with the breath expires.
Such is the paltry history of pomp,
The nothingness of grandeur, when the heart
Rests on the flitting shadows of to-day,
And, as it darkens, sees no star of Hope
Gleam in the distance, through the coming night.
Oh, grandeur pines for Hope, and so does grief—
It is misfortune's *sole* inheritance!
Cut off from life's absorbing cares—debarr'd
Its dissipating joys—that lonely Hope
Which speaks of lands where spirits meet in bliss,
And sweetly interchanging thought for thought,

Unite in love unfettered by the tongue,
Is, to the dumb and desolate of heart,
Like the soft ripple of the holy fount
To him who all day long has toil'd among
The burning sands which clothe the wilderness,
And, as the evening zephyrs wake from sleep,
Reaches the city of the sacred palms—
Fair Tadmor of the desert.*

—Giant boughs,
Of deep, enduring, never-changing green,
Hung o'er the waters, seem to whisper words
Of holy quietude, as sighs the breeze
Encumbered with the breath of many flowers.
The rippling fountain dashes forth a stream
Of orient pearls upon the chrystal pool,
Which, like a sheet of molten silver, lies
Reflecting back the twilight hues of heaven.
And th' sooth'd spirit of the care-worn man,

FAIR TADMOR OF THE DESERT.—This lovely city of antiquity was built upon an oasis or fertile spot in the midst of an arid, sandy desert. It was 117 miles east from the shores of the Mediterranean on the one side, and 85 from the level banks of the Euphrates, on the other. It could only, therefore, be approached by passing long tracts of desert sands. But here the gushing forth of a noble stream fertilized a little island, as it has been called, of very fruitful land, covered by a grove of very luxuriant palms—hence it was called by the Greeks "Palmyra," and by the Assyrians "Tadmor," both names signifying, in their respective tongues, "The City of Palms." This explains the comparison; for the delight of reaching such a spot after having endured all day the toil, the torturing heat, the insufferable thirst, occasioned by travelling on the desert, may be *safely* left to the imagination of the reader.

That eager, wayward, restless, anxious thing,
Is, for a moment, hush'd in that still calm;
The toil and peril of the day are past—
Forgotten are to-morrow's crushing cares—
His heart resigns itself to present joy;
The placid happiness of silent prayer,
The sacred rapture of unspoken praise.
—So is it with the traveller, who toils
Along the weary wilderness of life,
Which here and there presents a tarnish'd flower,
Mocking earth's barrenness with its faint smile,
Who hails the hope which settles on the tomb,
And points him onward to his place of rest.

Were this calm sunshine of the heart alone
The light which springs from an immortal hope,
And the *sole benefit* that hope confers,
It were not wise to cast the boon aside;
But its *least value* is that joy serene—
It is its sanctifying power to check
The heart, when wandering after joys unreal,
The gross yet unsubstantial source of pain,
With mundane or eternal bliss at war,
Which stamps it with inestimable worth.
—The wise Egyptians, men whose giant minds
First pierced the clouds of dark uncertainty,*

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* "FIRST PIERCED THE CLOUDS, &c."—Herodotus asserts that the Egyptian philosophers were the first who taught the doctrine of the immortality of the soul. The celebrated inscription at Sais,

And taught the eager sons of ancient Greece,*
Who, in the chambers of the pyramid,
Bow'd down to learn their hieroglyphic lore:
"That, as the Nile, the father of all streams
" Receives th' erratic waters of the fount,
" So spirits, emanating first from God,
" Embosomed in his being, rest in death."
—These placed a skeleton, with garlands crown'd,
And veil'd from sight by rich embroider'd robes,
Beside them at the banquet board. 'Twas well
That it was veil'd from vulgar view; the face
Once hidden in the catacomb should not
To mortal sight be thoughtlessly exposed.
Those sacred remnants of a fallen shrine
Should speak their dreadful lessons to the few
Who can endure them well—with dauntless hearts,
Yet not with brute indifference and scorn.
'Twas well they crown'd with flow'rs th' painless brow
And hail'd Death's victim as his victor! But
'Twas wiser still the monitor was there,
In all its native horrors, though disguised.
It did not pain the sense, but check'd the soul.

Lower Egypt, coupled with others, would lead us to suppose the following as a summary of the ancient *esoteric* philosophy of the Egyptian priests. I give it in the language of the inscriptions, without comment. " I am whatever is, or has been, or will be; and no mortal has hitherto drawn aside my veil. From me all things came, to me all will return."

[*] " SONS OF INFANT GREECE."—Orpheus, Thales, Pythagoras, Democritus, Plato, &c., visited Egypt in search of knowledge.—See *Brucker's Historiæ Critica Philosophiæ.*

Well knew each reveller what awful form
The broider'd robe and flowery wreath conceal'd ;
So still and passionless while roared the feast—
So calm and tranquil at the council board—
Yet speaking stern, unutterable truths!
Could wanton folly's vain impertinence,
Or pride's still vainer insolence, intrude
Where sat the delegate of other times—
The stern ambassador from Death to Life?
No! Wisdom mark'd that strange companionship.
Happy the man who, with untrembling hand,
Can pluck th' blossoms strew'd around his path,
And meet life's duties with unshrinking soul,
Yet dares do either hand in hand with Death.
This calm reflection on mortality,
Is, to the pilgrim spirit, as a guide
To show the value and the real worth,
Or worthlessness, of all that tempts or tries
The traveller upon th' chequer'd path
Which Destiny has mark'd for man on earth.
The poor dejected Dumb Boy knows it not.
He lives, not knowing he shall shortly die—
He dies, unknowing 'tis his lot to live
For ever, in that bright untroubled world,
Where, to the pure in heart, there is no grief;
Where man shall learn why here he suffered pain ;
And the crush'd roses of this stormy clime
Put forth their sweetness to a genial air,
And bloom in freshness, knowing no decay.

Ye privileg'd wealthy—God demands of you
To break the seal which binds the book of fate;
To cause to be revealed the mystery,
To cause the Dumb Boy not to live in vain,
But to accomplish here his being's end.
Slowly unravell'd by Time's silent hand,
Th' unhoped-for secret how to reach the souls
Before deemed desolate, and, by a gulf
Impassable, cut off from intercourse,
Is your's, is mine, and may be all mankind's.
Will those who hold it have to give account
Why they send back those spirits to God's throne,
His name unknown to them, His will untaught?
I may not ask. Mercy herself will close
The grand account—*I* have no right to judge.
But this I know, and need not fear to speak:
You leave your offering at the altar's side—
'Tis yellow dust! You have enough to spare;
But 'tis a knowledge of ETERNAL LIFE,
OF HOPE IMMORTAL YOU CONFER ON US.

But read my story, and in mine read their's
Who tread the wilderness with bleeding hearts,
Melting away in silent loneliness.

II.

My earliest home was in a Moorland glen,
In central Devonshire. A sheltered vale
In whose green bosom thousands of wild flow'rs

Were scattered by the fingers of young Spring,
While yet his victory remained in doubt.
And, on the pinions of the midnight gale,
Th' snow-flake, child of Winter, would come back
And play in circles round the massy rocks
Which crown'd the summit of the bare bleak hills.
And oft these loveliest children of the Moors
Had from our valley scarcely passed away,
When Autumn blasts, with loud and fitful wail,
Pealed the last requiem of the fading year.
For in our vale the Summer linger'd long,
And, on the pinion of the first south wind,
After brief absence, joyously came back.
An amphitheatre of lofty tors,*
Rising abruptly, circled it around,
Save one green vista, hung with pendant woods,
Which wooed the sea-breeze of th' melting south,
And form'd the only pass into the dell.
There Nature's frolic hand had carelessly
Piled up a mighty precipice of rocks,
(Like rude materials of a new-made world
Thrown bye superfluous,) and had formed a cave,
Which hands of men inured to rudest toil
Had shap'd into a hut, in years gone by,

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* TOR, anciently spelt Torre, and often vulgarly pronounced Tar, means a rocky eminence. The following example will be sufficient to explain. Belson-tor is an eminence of that description, on which the Sun was worshipped by the Druids, under the name of Bel or Belus. Belson-tor, therefore, literally means "The hill of the Sun."

Where Celtic hunters dwelt, whose simple art
Copied the instinct of their hunted prey,
Which sought at night the shelter of the earth.
One rugged window fac'd the rising sun—
Its simple entrance led towards the south.
So void of form, seen from the neighbouring hills,
It might have seemed a portion of the rock.
The savage architect, with untaught skill,
Exhausted all his cunning on the cheat,
And found security beneath his guile.*

Nor let the pamper'd sons of milder times
Disdain this remnant of a noble race,
Beat by the treacherous Roman from the plain.
Their feet were on th' mountains—they were free!
Their altars were the lonely desert stones,
Their god the peerless, life-bestowing Sun,

---

* The huts or dwellings of the ancient inhabitants are to be found in every part of Dartmoor, in a state generally very imperfect, the foundation stones and those forming the door-jams being all that remain of these dwellings, with few exceptions. The huts are circular on the plan, the stones are set on their edge, and placed closely together, so as to form a secure foundation for the superstructure, whether that it were wattle, turf, stone, or other material. These vestiges strikingly illustrate the descriptions which Diodorus Siculus, and Strabo give of the *habitations of the* BRITONS *in their times.* In a very considerable proportion of examples, the door faces the south. These habitations were, for the most part, placed in the middle of a wood or valley, a confused parcel of huts, defended by ramparts of earth.—See "*Antiquities, &c., of Okehampton.*" Rude as the above description is, it evidently alludes to an ancient British *town.* The habitations of hunters and isolated families were, on the contrary, such as described in the text—caverns rendered habitable by a little rude architecture, in which the two great objects were shelter at night, and *concealment.*

(Ever in victory, though all things else
The spoiler, Death, conducteth to decay.)*
Despising compromise, disdaining life
If fettered by the Roman's chain—they swore,
With dreadful energy, and kept their oath,
That He, the conqueror of night and storms,
Should ne'er look down and see his children slaves.
But while the chieftain battled on the hills,
To keep that oath, the birthright of our isle,
Th' Cimbrian mother watch'd the wild dove's flight,
And mark'd where she had hid her unfledg'd young,
For there she knew fierce winter was a guest,
And not a conqueror—and there she nurs'd,
Cradled in moss and wrapt in softest furs,
Th' embryo hero, soldier of the Sun,
And freedom's warrior of a future day.

Land of green valleys and of fertile plains,
Of forest-covered hills, fair Devon, hail!
This THY first annals tell, and this thy sons,
Lock'd in their inmost hearts will ever feel.
Whate'er of crime or folly thou hast known—
Whate'er of dire calamity hast shared
In common with our country's common lot,

---

* "O thou who travellest above, round as the full-orbed hard shield of the mighty! O Sun—thou art in thy journey alone. The oak falleth from the high mountain; the rock and the precipice fall under old age; the ocean ebbeth and floweth; and the moon is lost above in the sky; *but thou* ALONE *art for ever in victory*, in the rejoicing of thy own light."—*Ossian's Carrickthura.*

Thou NE'ER hast nurs'd a RACE of WILLING SLAVES.*
We pass the treacherous Saxon's strife with scorn,
For here his treason never made him lord.
The red-hair'd Dane appeared and disappeared,
The robber of the land and of the sea,
Yet left unspoil'd the freedom of the moor.
The rugged outline of the Celtic hut
Appeared externally, but not within,
For here an anchorite of Norman race
Had scooped a spacious cell, with vaulted roof,
And, fashioned forth to face the rising sun,
A lofty window, arch'd and oriel form'd,†
That, ere the sunbeams touch'd th' green festoons
Of eglantine and ivy, clustering round,
With eyes directed to the dawning east,
Towards the city of the sepulchre,
Where fought the chosen warriors of the land—

---

* Beyond the reach of records is a settled gloom which no ingenuity can penetrate. Britain's FIRST *annals* were recorded by her enemies. And yet it is impossible to look back even on those, brief and scanty as they are, without feelings of exultation. The warfare of the Britons was simple—for they fought naked, defended only by a wicker shield. They used chariots with scythes projecting from the wheels; but these were more calculated to astonish the rude than to secure a victory over disciplined troops; yet, such was the determined spirit of the race, that they nobly dared the first Cæsar and his legionaries; and, under all their disadvantages, to a certain extent succeeded in maintaining their independence. The Romans made settlements on the sea coasts, *but never conquered Dartmoor*, nor the mountainous districts of Wales, nor any part of Scotland north of the Solway.

† Forming a recess or rude oratoria.

He might petition for the victory
For those who battled with the Saracen,*
And rest to them who fell. And oft, 'twas said
By pilgrim palmers from the holy land,
That victories were won while thus he prayed.

The distant infidel his only foe,
The sweetness of his spirit was distilled
In boundless charity to all at home.
Meek, self-denying charity for all!
Man, in the madness of his furious pride,
Regards this quality in man with scorn;
But angels deem it brotherhood to them,
Regarding it the surest proof that we,
The progeny of Earth, shall yet shake off
The fetters of our mother, and shall dwell
In the bright light, too brilliant for the sense,
And therefore darkness deem'd by some on earth—
The mole-eyed claimants of eternal death.†

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* "Prayers for victory, and services for the dead."—See *Histories of the Crusades.*

† Of all the doctrines which have been broached concerning the immortality of the soul, none appear to me to be more striking and beautiful than that of Lord Herbert, of Cherbury, which is quoted by Sir E. L. Bulwer, in his "New Phœdo." I do not quote Lord Herbert's exact words, but the substance of the passage alluded to is as follows:—"As, previous to my birth into this world, Nature had formed my eyes, and ears, and the organs of my other senses, not intending them for use where I then lay, but fitting them to apprehend the things which would occur in this world,—so, I believe, since my coming into this world, my soul hath formed or produced certain faculties, which are almost as useless in this life, as the above-

His faith the Hermit taught to wandering swains
And solitary pilgrims of the wilds—
Though not unmix'd with error; yet his words
Brought consolation to the sorrowful,
And a dim glimmering of undying hopes
To men whose sole instruction came from him.
And thither came th' afflicted sons of toil
To seek for ease, and renovated health
When grim disease bow'd down their hardy strength.
For he had learnt the virtues of all herbs
Which fringe th' stream, grow in th' shelter'd brake,
Or creep along the upland's sunny side.
These, with meek blessings sanctified, he gave;
And simple swains, with humble hearts, received;
And even thought the fountain of the vale,
Which slak'd th' good man's thirst, had pow'rs to heal,
Unknown to Leech-craft, blest with sacred charms;
And that his voice, so bland and musical
Chaunting his vesper hymn, had power to lull
The north wind in the madness of his might;
For when the storm-beat shepherd left the hill,
Dismayed and wondering, and reach'd the vale,
Soon as the Solitary's voice he heard,

---

named senses were to me previous to my birth. These never rest or fix on any transitory or perishing object in this world, as extending themselves to something further than can here be granted—and, indeed, acquiescing only in the perfect—the Eternal—the Infinite." —Of this beautiful theory, the story of the Dumb Boy, with its episodes, is an attempted illustration. But we wish to avoid swelling this note to an inconvenient length; we shall return to it again.

He found a still and holy quietude
Hung like a curtain round the sacred cell.*
Thus superstition weaves its mingled thread
Of piety and folly; yet is it
Th' involuntary tribute of the heart
Which untaught nature offers to the good.
The shepherds have preserv'd the hermit's song;
And still his meek and pious name revere,
Although their fathers have forsook his faith.

THE ANCHORITE'S EVENING HYMN TO THE VIRGIN.

Virgin most beautiful! in holy place,
    Look from thy sapphire throne
Down on the sorrowful of erring race,—
    Thou meek and blessed one.
Thou by the cross hast stood, and by the grave,
And wept as we do weep, powerless to save.

Handmaid most beautiful! lady of love,
    Whom every tongue shall bless;
Whom once the Mighty One, the rich above,
    Chose for thy lowliness.

---

* The valley open only to the south and the wind blowing from the north, easily explains the supposed miracle and the foundation of the legend.

Hence thou didst magnify His wondrous name
Who fill'd the hungry, cloth'd the proud with shame.

Virgin most merciful! though brightly pure,
To frailty allied;
Who, in our wilderness, didst once endure
The scorn of earth-born pride,
O teach us charity, that we may live—
Forgiving us, O teach us to forgive.

III.

The Hermit slept—and e'en his bones were dust,
When men of other faiths, alike sincere,
Arose. With stern fidelity of heart
They dared the dominating sect, and died
Claiming Man's noblest privilege—the right
Of private judgment on the will of God.
For this they gave their bodies to be burnt—
Yet burnt the men who differed from themselves.
Thus man has ever been a wolf to man,
E'en with the purest words upon his lips,
When power has pander'd to his lust and pride.

In those dread times, when persecution raged
Throughout the land, the good of ev'ry faith
Were smitten at the altar or the hearth,
Where'er or howsoe'er they worship'd God.
For sometimes Tyranny would persecute,

And sometimes curse with its vile aid, the cause
Which, left to man's unbiass'd sense of right,
Would lead him on to peace and charity.

A good old man, whose purity of faith
His foes discovered, by the fact too plain,
That his meek life adorn'd it, fled in haste
From the destroyer to the wilderness.
The aged pilgrim, who had toil'd all day
With falt'ring steps beneath a summer's sun,
Reach'd, as the evening closed, the moorland hut,
Then a lone ruin in the forest dell.
The young companion of his flight, who held
His trembling hand, and look'd into his face
With eyes that smil'd, tho' tears were ling'ring there,
Would a young shepherd of the forest seem,
If shepherd weeds could hide the loveliness
Of one more lovely than the fabled nymphs
Which haunt the forest with their huntress queen.
" Father," she said, " here have we shelter found.
Shelter is all we need—here let us rest.
We have refreshment for to-night, at least.
You have the Holy Book in which you read
Words of the Comforter : and I have still
My mother's wild Welsh harp, of varied song.
You oft have said its notes have power to charm
Away the cloud which dims the present hour;
For they recal the days of many joys
To memory, though they're fled, and help the heart

To rest upon the hours of many hopes,
Which, for the pure in heart, God has in store."

"Gertrude, my child, those hours of many hopes
Are not far distant," thus the good man said.
"Why, like a tim'rous bird, my child, have I
Fled to the desert, when the martyr's crown
Was just descending on my aching brow—
Good men and angels waiting to proclaim
Me more than conqueror through him I serve?
But that I longed to linger round thy path,
And fan those hopes into a quenchless flame,
Ere I depart from earth, to be at rest.
Come, strike again thy harp of varied song,
And let its simple melody once more
Lull our worn hearts, or wearied souls, to rest."

Softly her fingers touch'd the speaking chords,
As her meek heart breath'd forth her vesper song.

EVENING HYMN
OF THE
PERSECUTED PILGRIMS.

Lord of the Desert! Mighty One
  Who rul'st unseen, unheard,
Dost feed the flowers with thy dews,
  Dost fill the forest bird;

Receive the homage of our hearts,
Still trustful, though in fear,
Secure, in weakness, we repose,
For Thou, our strength, art here.
Grim darkness fills the desert cave—
But Thou, our light, art here to save.

Lord of the Desert! merciful
Are all thy ways to man,
Though men to men are merciless—
Whose lives are but a span;
Save our destroyers from their guilt,
With snares our path who hem,
Let Thy protection shelter us,
And Thy forgiveness them.
Trustful our wearied eyes we close,
Great guardian of the night's repose.

The peace, the persecutor never knows,
Descended on the pilgrims, and they slept.
But, ere the morn's dim grey had turn'd to light,
A hurried footstep through the cavern pass'd,
And broke the transient charm. Alarm'd, they rose,
Weak to resist, but mighty to endure.
"Footstep of darkness—echo of the night,
Why dost thou wander where the feeble rest?"

Sternly the old man ask'd. A voice replied—
"Arnolf of Herne brings tidings to his friend,
And God enable thee to meet them well.
Thy enemies have found thy last retreat—
The pass is in their hands; thy forfeit life
Thy recantation only can preserve."

"Father," the maiden cried, "there is *one* hope.
O turn not thus in anger from your child—
Behold me kneeling—kneeling at your feet,
That I may kiss them—wet them with my tears.
O, *look* upon me, *see* my agony,
And tear not from my heart that only hope."

With trembling hands he rais'd her from the ground,
And fondly bent his cheek to hers, and wept.
The stern defier of the tyrant—wept;
The bigot's fearless conqueror, in tears
Shed the last weakness of a father's heart.

"Gertrude," he firmly said, "there is no hope,
Except in that which kills my hope in God.
To thee, young Arnolf, I bequeath my child;
And to my native land, whate'er they be,
The consequences of my faithful life,
Thus faithful unto death. My task is done.
As on the thirsty flowers the dews descend,
The honey-blossom and the poison plant,

May God's compassion rest upon us all,
CONDEMN'D OF OTHERS, I WILL NONE CONDEMN.[*]

* * * * * *

The martyr pass'd through flames to his repose.

* * * * * *

As to the thicket flies the trembling fawn,
Which sees its parent seized by furious hounds,
So, from his death-scene, flew the heart-struck maid
Back to the valley of the hermitage.
And many days and many stormy nights
The villagers had sought for her in vain.
Arnolf remained in bonds. The vale, at length,
By accident, a moorland hunter sought.
There, by the fountain sat the forlorn maid,
Her long dark tresses waving heavily,
Wet and dishevell'd, to the moaning breeze;
Her dimm'd eye wildly fix'd on vacant space,
Tearless, yet speaking grief no tears could ease;
And in her hand, clench'd with convulsive grasp,
A remnant of the ashes of the pile
Was firmly clasp'd. The hunter paused, in doubt
Whether the dreadful spectacle was real—
Whether the maid was kindred yet to earth,
Or an unquiet ghost, whose cruel wrongs
Had broke the slumber of the sepulchre,

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[*] "Damnatus alils, ipse neminem damnat."—*Grotius on the Death of Arminius.*

(For so the Moorsman earnestly believed
The wrongs of life disturb the sleep of death ;
And cruel were the wrongs that maid had known.)
Unconscious of his presence, Gertrude sung,
With modulation sweet, her evening hymn ;
Then burst into a maniac laugh, and shriek'd—
" His aged locks ; his white—white, silvery hair—
Savage—they shall not burn my father's hair ! "

" O, every curse that follows wicked deeds
Awaits for those who did," the hunter said ;
" But none shall hurt one sacred lock of thine,
Until he tramples o'er the lifeless corpse
Of Hawke the Hunter."

" O the sky was red,"
In sad soliloquy the maid resumed,
" It blush'd with lurid anger when they flung
The old man to the roaring deadly flames !
But his white locks—O, they were beautiful !
I nurs'd them in my childhood ; 'twas my pride
To see them curling round his smiling face,
While his meek soul was blessing me—
To watch the glossy tinge of golden hue
Which shot across their deep and comely brown.
But darkness fell upon his spirit, care
And bitterness of soul, soon turn'd them white.
And then they tore him from my heart—yet on—

On—on—I followed to the last, and saw
The dark smoke passing through his aged locks,"

"My heart is weeping blood," old Hawke exclaim'd.

"Speak not of blood—the spirit of the fell,
The Powerful, will not allow it here.
He heard my shriek, here by the Hermit's cave.
'Twas He who gave me back my father's hair."

Here, to the hunter stretching forth her own,
She gave into his hands the sacred dust.
This precious relict on his bended knees
The aged swain received; while burning tears,
Like water from the desert rock, flowed fast
O'er cheeks which tears had rarely wet before.
But, as he touched the maiden's proffer'd hand,
'Twas burnt and rigid, stiff and motionless.
Gently he led her to the hermit's fount,
To lave it in its healing waters cool;
While she look'd wistfully upon her hand,
Or sadly look'd into the hunter's face,
Like an unconscious, unresisting child.

"Go home with me," he said; "and share with them
My children's portion—happier days may come;
And night and morning thou shalt say thy prayers;
And we will learn to add our prayers to thine."

She rested on his friendly arm and wept,
Unconscious of the meaning of his words;
Whate'er it was, she saw 'twas kindly meant;
And as the shower the sun-scorch'd plant revives,
So did her tears refresh her stricken heart.
And, as the mother guides her wayward child
From hidden danger, with the gentlest mien,
The rude old hunter led her from the vale.

Arnolf released, soon flew to claim his bride,
(But many months of dread suspense had pass'd
O'er the young lover, in his prison cell.)
Her mind its native energy had gain'd,
But settled sadness rested on her soul.
She knew, she valued, and return'd, his love;
But, from the world she shrunk with cureless dread.
Their bridal mansion was the Hermit's cave—
And that became their dwelling-place, their home.
Its eastern oriel was their place of prayer—
Where Celtic mothers had adored the Sun;
Where Romish devotees had worn the rock
Keeping long vigils to their patron saints;
The banish'd Protestants, whom love had join'd,
Bowed down in meek sincerity to pray.

Such is the progress of the human soul
In ev'ry age, in ev'ry land: mankind
Have felt their homage to the Cause of all

Was justly due—which they could only pay
According to the knowledge which they had.
Pause, child of dust—condemner of the weak!
What is the *motive* of thy furious zeal?
Is it to man thou'rt labouring to do good?
Look on his errors with a brother's pain—
And on his sorrows with a brother's grief.
Is it to God—the Great unveil'd—the Good,
Thy trembling spirit struggles to display
Its anxious homage, and its pious zeal?
Seek to acquire a knowledge of His will,
According to the means which He has given.
That knowledge of His will acquired—OBEY!
Thus shall thy life be filled with all the bliss,
Which in a space so brief can be contained;
And Death shall rock thee like a child to sleep,
Tired of its sports and satisfied with joy.
Long did young Arnolf and his Gertrude live.
The precepts of the martyr in their hearts,
Were in their plain and humble lives displayed—
Save that they shunned his proselyting zeal.
They lived in solitude and died in peace.

IV.

Their sons were dark-hair'd shepherds of the moor,
Sturdy of limb, patient of toil, and brave.
Their hearth, the scene of hospitality
Became; their cot, enlarged, a moorland farm.

They knew but this—they never had a foe,
And every human thing that cross'd their path
Bore, in their sight, the stamp of brotherhood.
They heard, indeed, of rank, and wealth, and war;
Of mad contention, of deceit, and woe:
For these were oft by long-known beggars named,
And gave old Ralph the pedlar power to waste,
With stories of distress, the long dark night.
For many generations they remain'd
Thus simple, hardy, humble, poor, content.

* * * * *

A mother of the vale—whose sons a storm
Had caught, benighted on the hill, while there
Warm in the joys and perils of the chase—
Went forth at midnight with a flambeau lamp,
That its faint beams might guide them, or her voice
Might fondly warn them homeward. But the stream,
Swollen by the midnight rains, had filled the gorge,
The pass into the valley; and her sons
Saw the light die among the boiling foam,
And heard her death-shriek echo thro' the dell.
And oft, in after times, they fondly deemed
Her warning voice pass'd by them on the breeze,
When secret danger lurk'd around their path.
And often, in the silent twilight hour
Which links the day and night together, they,
Returning from the upland with their spoil,
Invoked her, as their mother, in the pass,
And thought the echoing voice which made reply,

Spoke oracles of highest worth to them.
"Sons of the Echo," thence their youth were nam'd.
Tradition has preserved their chorus song.

CHORUS OF FOREST HUNTERS,

OR, SONG OF THE

SONS OF THE ECHO.

Queen of the valley,
Who dost dwell
In the wood echo's
Citadel.
The day's last light is on the mountain;
The vesper star hangs o'er thy fountain.
Thou in thy cloudy car hast been
Where th' earth's fairest sights are seen.
Sprite of the Moorland—viewless voice,
Which way to wealth should be our choice?
Speak, if thou hearest. Speak, O, speak.

ECHO.

Speak, O, speak.

QUESTION.

Far o'er the waters are their lands
Where gold is like the river sands?

ANSWER.

The river sands!

QUESTION.

Where, in the groves of rich perfume,
Earth's fairest blossoms ever bloom?

ANSWER.

Ever bloom!

QUESTION.

Where, in the deep night of the mine,
The flame like diamonds richly shine?

ANSWER.

Richly shine!

QUESTION.

Who plucks them from their gloomy grave?
The nobly free, or fettered slave?

ANSWER.

Fettered slave!

CHORUS.

Carryl, Harold, Hubert bold,
What have we to do with gold?
What with the woods of rich perfume?
What with diamond cavern's gloom?
No thoughts of these shall ever move us;
Our wealth's at home, in hearts that love us.
Our wealth's at home—at home—at home.
None else shall move us.
In those we love, and those that love us.

V.

From these my father was descended; but
Pursuit of wild adventure, or of gain,
Had drawn into the vortex of the world
His kindred of the vale; and he alone,
In uncorrupted purity, retained
Their manly habits and their simple fame.

My own first feelings let me now recal.
The gradual opening of my infant mind,
Ere Education had dispell'd the cloud
Which hung upon my soul: that awful doubt,
That consciousness that nought was well explain'd,
Which made the common intercourse of life
Appear a dark bewildering mystery.
Where all the senses in sweet concord act,
Soon as the eye can sparkle at the light;
As curls into a smile the infant lip—
The ear drink in the lullaby of love
Which the fond mother chaunts—the child begins
To lose its artless, simple childishness,
And ev'ry hour does make it less a child.
But, where one avenue to truth is closed,
One medium thro' which knowledge lights th' soul
Is dimm'd, the child's simplicity remains
Through youth's gay stages, on to manhood's bloom.
The thoughts and feelings of a child remain'd
With me to young maturity; and thus
They are, as 'twere, engraven on my heart.

Our cot was sheltered by a lofty rock,
On whose rough sides, in gay festoons, were hung
Sweet honeysuckle coronals, entwined
On the wild-briar, with its simple rose.
And leaping gladly on from ledge to ledge
A little waterfall fell trickling down,
Like stream of falling diamonds, till 'twas lost
In its soft bed of snowy, dancing foam.
This was the fountain of the Anchorite,
From which a streamlet dash'd along the vale.
Th' wild flowers drank its waters, and imbib'd
A stronger fragrance and a livelier hue
From what they sipp'd. And thus along the dell,
E'en where its silvery waters were conceal'd,
Its wild, capricious course was traced
By fresher verdure and a deeper bloom.
The morning called me forth to sport all day
Among the bonny flowers which strew'd the dell;
And evening found me with delight fatigued.
All day I saw no face but those I loved;
At night their fondness hush'd me to repose.

Unknowing evil—dreaming not of care,
I knew no wish unsatisfied—no want
Or fear of want—*I knew not I was dumb!*
Or that I needed ought, to me denied,
But granted to the fortunate and gay.
Sometimes, indeed, I saw a falling tear
Veil the dark flashes of my father's eye,

When pressing me in fondness to his heart.
And I was troubled with the dreadful thought
That I had pain'd him. Then his lips would move:
My mother's, too, would move in sad reply.
My own were motionless, or mov'd in vain!
My mother then would strive, with signs of love,
Some answer to her own impassioned looks
From me to draw, I knew not how to give.
She then would turn away in agony,
Of vain regret and disappointed love.
A shadow thus would cross my infant mind,
Leaving behind a dark bewildering doubt;
But like the cloud which rides the summer breeze,
It flitted by—and all was bright again.
At length the guardian of our little flock,
My father, went one stormy day to town.
The winter snows were melting on the hills—
Th' first spring rains had swoll'n the troubled streams,
The beauteous fountain of the rock, enraged,
Rush'd down a cataract of boiling foam.

Years passed away, ere I could understand
What had befallen. But this the simple tale.

My father marshall'd on his fleecy charge,
With stern command, or cheer'd them like a friend;
Until, alarm'd, they rush'd into a stream,
And strove to pass an oft-accustomed ford,
Through which, in summer days, they plash'd along,

O'er shining pebbles, now the torrent's bed.
My father followed them and strove to save,
But, with his struggling charge, was swept away.
—The Dumb Boy's father never spoke again.

The color of my life was changed. Till then
I knew not sorrow—never heard of Death—
Or of his follower's grief, and want, and fear.

That direful day belongs not to the past—
'Tis present still—'tis always with my soul,
Its memory will not die : like other days
Which come and go, and then are with the dead—
It does not fade. 'Tis burnt into my heart.
I can relate each strange, bewildering scene,
As one by one they struck my aching sight,
And froze my heart with terrors unexplained.

I watch'd my father winding down the vale.
The storm was raging fearfully. His flock,
With heads hung down, and slow, unwilling gait,
Well taught by instinct, slowly left the plain.
E'en bold old Rover, faithful to his task,
That else went forth with wild exulting bound,
Turn'd from the storm, and piteously look'd back.
My father only seemed unmov'd and stern.
My mother, busied with domestic cares,
Left me all day to count the lagging hours
When from the town my father would return.

With joy I hail'd the twilight's gathering gloom.
His savory meal was smoking on the hearth;
His well-dried garments waiting; and his chair
Already occupied his favorite nook;
A stool beside, that I might sit and rest
My head upon his knee. 'Twas ready all.
My mother, smiling at my eager looks,
Sign'd that my father now would soon be home,
Parted my locks, and while her moving lips
Seem'd uttering holy words, impress'd my brow
With one long, sweet, impassioned kiss of love.
—Then starting wildly, flung me from her arms.

A stranger youth came rushing through the storm,
(I shut my eyes—the spectre still is here,)
With livid cheek, with pale and trembling lip.
Some tale of dread he told, I could not hear.
(I never wish'd for power to hear till then.)
My mother's agony, like scorpion stings,
Thrill'd thro' my quivering heart. I knew not why
The stranger's story should have pain'd her so.
I fondly seiz'd her hand—she heeded not—
She flung me from her!—rush'd into the storm—
I look'd, the stranger boy was also gone,
And I, bewildered and alarm'd, alone.
—I look'd around—the cottage seem'd to smile
In cheerful blaze of fagots on the hearth
As it was wont to look at evening time,
When from the chase or from the field he came;

And all was ready now for his return.——
Then first some vague suspicion stung my soul,
That all was vain.—My heart felt lock'd in ice.

Soon through the twilight came a mournful train
Of men, with looks appall'd, who brought a bier.
Our friendly neighbours, thronging all around,
Who in the hamlet live, far down the stream.
My mother, in the dreadful interval, so changed,
That lonely, trembling, unobserv'd, I stood
And look'd into her face, and scarcely knew
The features love had graven on my heart.
Her long dark tresses, not in comely bonds,
But floating wildly to the troubled breeze.
No tear was in her eye—but there was grief
No tears had power to mitigate; 'twas fixed,
As if by fascination, on the bier,
Where lay some object dreadful to behold,
From which she had no power to turn away.
I mix'd among the crowd to look at it—
It was my father, hush'd in tranquil sleep!

I felt his dark brown locks, and they were wet.
His eyes were scarcely closed. His parted lips
Were motionless and pale, and pale his cheek.
But what I chiefly look'd for, still was there.
A smile of quiet happiness and peace—
Of mental rest, of sweet enduring love.
While that remain'd my father was not chang'd!

Though fear of evils which I knew not of
Shot through my quivering heart—I lost not hope—
I never dreamt he would not wake again.

Officious hands soon bore him from my sight.
Why came my mother not to comfort me?
She knew no other could explain the scene.
And there I wander'd through the gazing crowd,
All looking on me with their dreadful eyes,
As if stern heaven had fix'd some mark on me,
Dividing me from sympathy and care.
One after one I took their trembling hands—
They shrunk with horror; led them to the fire,
Show'd them the meal was waiting his return;
Then felt his garments—show'd them they were dry;
But still they wept, and still they shrunk away.
Wearied, bewilder'd, and alarm'd, at length
I sat me down upon my little seat
To rest my head upon his chair, and wept.

Brief record of a day of lasting pain!
The day which shut out childhood from my mind,
With all its passionless and tranquil joys.
I sunk into a troubled fever'd sleep,
A child—and woke from it a care-struck MAN.

The sun had mounted o'er the hills, his beams
Stream'd on my lonely couch, I woke,
(Some friendly hand had laid me on my bed.)

A vague sensation of some evil change
Flash'd through my mind—I rush'd towards the vale.
Surprised, I found the fields, the stream, the flowr's,
Unchang'd and beautiful: the midnight storm
Had but refresh'd them; and the morning sun
Look'd on his favorite children with a smile.
—There is no sadness of the soul so deep
As that which fills the heart condemn'd to look
In desolation on the scenes it once
Look'd on with fondness, when 'twas fill'd with joy.
Nature is always beautiful, in calm or storm;
But as it gains its beauty through the eye,
So all its pleasantness is from the heart;
The varying, changeful weather of the mind,
Makes all things beautiful or all things sad.
The tranquil happiness which reign'd around,
Which oft, till now, had nurs'd my fairest dreams,
And lull'd my spirit like a soothing balm,
Oppress'd my heart. Again I sought the cot;
But that which made it *home* no more was there.
My mother was forbidden from my sight;
And of my father, all I knew was, that
Some dreadful mystery hung around his bed,
For there he slept, and all were weeping round.
Thus, many days in agonising doubt
Pass'd slowly by, and all was mystery still.
At length a friendly train of neighbour guests
Came thronging round the cottage, and I saw
They had prepared to move him from his bed.

Was now the hour my father would awake?
A mingled gleam of hope and agony,
Like an electric thrill, pass'd through my heart.
Onward we journey'd to the field of graves;
My soul absorb'd in wonder, not despair.

The closing scene, as all I can describe.——
The setting sun was sinking to the hill;
The air was hush'd into a holy calm;
A yellow lustre rested on the fields,
Clothing all earthly things in hues of heaven.
With solemn looks, all circled round the bier;
And one, who seem'd a minister of good,
The vassal of some power, to me unknown,
Seem'd whisp'ring benedictions to the crowd.
The locks of age were bared—the curls of youth—
As if all felt the presence of some power
Mighty and Merciful, in whose dread hands
The destinies of trusting man were plac'd.
Perhaps the mighty LORD AND CAUSE OF ALL!
His name to me unknown; but Him my soul
Had look'd for and acknowledged in the dark;
For simple nature never disbelieves
Or even *doubts* the Being of a God:
It is the wasted learning of the wise
Which to that *climax of absurdity*,
Conducts the vain, delighted to grow blind.

What! would it all at last conclude in joy?
Would some great power, descending from his throne,
Awake him from his frozen, dreadful sleep,
And give him to our arms? My blood was fire!
And expectation turn'd to phrenzy now.
At last they placed him in the cruel grave,
And sign'd to me that I must go away.
What! go away and leave my father there?
I rush'd into his grave—I tried to speak—
My heart, I thought, had burst—my tortured brain
Could bear no more—and all around grew dark.

I fell into a deadly sleep; and hours,
And nights, and days, unheeded pass'd.
A mass of images, disjoin'd and wild,
Floated before my fevered, aching sight.
—At times, old Rover, and the frighted flock
Rush'd by me furiously in wild alarm;
—Then would my father hold his face to mine,
His bright eye fill'd with love and tenderness,
And then a whirlwind hurl'd him from my sight;
Then, as I stood beside our cottage hearth,
With deep impatience waiting his return,
My mother, stooping to caress and bless me—
Impenetrable darkness fell on all—
I, in the sable cloud, bewildered, lost!
And then would come the dreadful messenger;
And, following him, the weeping, fear-struck crowd,

All gazing on me with their dreadful eyes,
As some fate-stricken, doom'd, and blighted thing.
To shun these spectre visages, I turn'd,
And saw one gazing on me with unchanging love;
It did not move—it did not turn away—
It settled, like a fix'd, substantial form.
A flood of recollections rush'd on me.
In that pale, pensive, lovely countenance,
Of watchful tenderness, I recognized
My mother's face—I rush'd into her arms:
O, how I long'd to speak to her, and hear
The soothing melody of her sweet words!
For, ah, our meeting eyes the truth had told,
That I was ALL to her—she ALL to me.

My health restored, our cot again became
A scene of sweet tranquility. The flowers
Of summer met the autumn blasts, and died.
Winter, with long dark nights and gusty storms,
Had held his surly rule, and pass'd away;
And the spring flowers again were in their bloom;
Sadness succeeded grief; we loved in peace,
Not now unknowing sorrow, as of yore;
That happy ignorance could ne'er return,
But sweet affection sooth'd our soften'd pain:
When strangers visited our lonely cot,
And held my mother long in deep discourse,
She thank'd them with her smiles, then look'd on me,
And burst into an agony of grief.

She sign'd to me to say that they were good,
And meant us kindly, *but that we must part.*
O, what was good to me apart from her?
—It was decreed. I with the strangers went,
To meet with crowds, but still to be alone:
For *loneliness of heart* was there my lot.
—My mother died—I saw her face no more.

I went to where bland Charity provides
Instruction for the destitute, and there
Soon learnt my lot to understand, and thus
To make brief record of my simple tale.

O, Immortality! Life of the Soul!
Thou art no vision of the dreamer's mind,
Sprung from the care-fill'd heart—no FANCIED cure
For *real* evil—Life's realities
Are but the phantom's of the cheated sense,
Ideal mockeries, *compared to thee.*
The harmony or discord of the nerve
With strong delusion haunts the troubled brain,
But its unseen, retired inhabitant,
The *seeming unsubstantial* home of Thought,
ALONE HAS SUBSTANCE.* Adamantine rocks

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* ALONE HAS SUBSTANCE.—Sir Humphrey Davy, when under the influence of nitrous oxide, exclaimed to Dr. Kinglake, "Nothing *exists* but thoughts; the universe is composed of impressions, ideas, pleasures, and pains!" The author, however, only means that no material thing has an *enduring* substance. A union of atoms gave it existence, a separation of its atoms destroys—and the diamond of the mine becomes like the bubble of the stream "a nonentity"

Melt like the vapours of a summer's morn;
The heavens and the earth become as nought,
Their atoms separate, they are no more;
E'en should their atoms *perish* at the word *
Of Him who bade them be, Thought will endure.
The holy impulses, the glowing love,
Called by Time's flitting objects into life,
Are for Eternity. Material things,
With their constituent particles, may pass;
But from His presence never can depart
Those whom His love created to enjoy,
And wooed to love Him, as their greatest good.
That love is sweet reality. The sense,
The trembling heart, the half-material mind,†

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* From what was recorded of the atomic philosophy of Leucippus, the philosopher of Abdera, who flourished 428 years before Christ, down to the recorded opinions of modern system-mongers, whether we examine the Theism of Plato or the Atheism of Epicurus, or the opinions of their followers, it is not easy for us to find any opinion so satisfactory as that—The EXISTENCE *as well as the arrangment* of the atoms or constituent particles of the universe is the result of the will of Him who said "let there be light and there was light."—What Reginald here glances at, and will perhaps contend for more at length at some future time, is that the annihilation of matter, the agent created only to cause impressions on mind, would be perfectly consistent with the perfections of the Deity. But the annihilation of mind in its state of imperfection yet showing such vast capabilities of perfection; its destruction as an abortive intelligence, would be inconsistent with the perfections of the moral governor of the universe.

† THE HALF-MATERIAL MIND.—This refers not to the *substance* but the *faculties* of the mind. It is evident that a large proportion of our faculties, the animal propensities, have reference only to our present state of existence. When therefore, we "shuffle off the mortal coil" these, in all probability, will remain with us *only in their*

With all their objects, give it birth and die;
Like flowers of the wilderness, they fade,
But, dying, shed their everlasting seed—
The spirit—germ of never-dying Thought.
Each baffled hope becomes a substance then;
Love, like a banish'd angel, is recall'd
To dwell for ever in its seat of bliss;
And Joy, a winged messenger of heaven,
But seen to vanish in this wilderness,
Becomes the fix'd companion of the soul.
Such is the Dumb Boy's destiny. *He lov'd,*
That love immortal might inform his mind:
The objects of it died, that he might know
HIS FINAL, EVERLASTING DWELLING-PLACE
IS NOT AMONG HIS KINDRED OF THE EARTH.

Lady, farewell, the Dumb Boy knows your sign,
'Tis loveliness with kindness sweetly blended.

effects. How beautiful is, then, the idea of Lord Herbert; that, thus unencumbered, the nobler faculties of the soul may expand, and display powers as wonderful as the eye and the ear did at our birth into this world. That the faculties which even the lower propensities have called into action are blossoms of eternity. The mind does not die, like its kindred of the earth; it does not perish with its first love, but struggles on to *more than can here be granted*—to the enjoyment of the PERFECT—THE INFINITE—THE ETERNAL.

LINES

Addressed to the senior boys of the West of England Deaf and Dumb Institution, suggested by a visit to that excellent and most interesting establishment.

I tried to read with care your silent looks—
They spoke intelligence and happiness.
I came to pity, but I found you blest
Beyond the common lot of those who dwell
Among life's cares and vanities. I thought
Of you as exiled and cut off, deprived
Of life's mild courtesies, communion sweet
Of mingling souls, and interchange of mind,
I deem'd creation's ever-varying scenes,
To you a fair inexplicable blank—
And such you were, and such were nature's works
To you—till mild philanthrophy devised
(Taught by the sciences which serve the good,)
Th' means to wake your slumb'ring powers of thought,
And reach'd each forlorn spirit's loneliness.
Now as the sparkle of each speaking eye
Proclaims our thought made yours; as you record

With rapid hand upon the wall your own,
We hail the dawning of each deathless mind,
And welcome kindred spirits to the light
Of immortality and endless joy.
To think you happy, and to see you pleased,
Is the reward of those who do you good;
And every hour of happiness you taste
Made happier, sweeter, by the good you learn,
Will be to them a source of future joy,
A pearl dropp'd into heaven's chancery.
Swift as the mind conceives, the silent hand
Records upon the wall the passing thought;
But your's, unlike the mystic hand which wrote
The message of high wrath to Babylon,
When, sunk in sloth and luxury profane,
Her prince brought forth the golden vessels meant
To grace the temple services, to aid
In rights unholy to his gods obscene,
E'en while the Persian, at his hundred gates,
Waited to quench his revelry in blood.
Your's, though in *silence* moved, speaks to the eye
Of mild benevolence, a gentler truth—
A sweeter and a kinder message, sent,
Like the pluck'd olive leaf, to waken hope
Though travelling on the confines of despair!
—Fathers who deemed you in the living world
Dead to its joys and comforts, now behold
You link'd in sweet communion to your kind:
—Mothers, who saw with breaking hearts your eyes

Fix'd in mute eloquence of love on theirs,
And strove from your unconscious lips to draw
The answering sound in vain, here read the words
Of sweet affection, which you could not speak,
With meek delight, and are at length consoled.

In you we see the wonder-working hand
Of Him, who, in his bounty *wise*, bestows
The proper portion of his good on all,
And would not leave you hopeless, though bereft.
His stern rebuke the ruthless north wind hears,
When from the frozen caves he rushes forth
And locks the billows in his cold embrace,
Traversing wilds of never-melting snows;
Yet on *our* shores his reckless wing he folds,
And visits, with a harmless kiss, the rose,
Charged that he swell not with too rude a breath
The scarce fledg'd linnet's yet unpractised wing;
Charm'd to a zephyr, he is taught to breathe
In gentlest whispers round the fresh clipp'd lamb:
Lambs of His sacred fold! 'tis thus for you
God tempers keen affliction into good.

You know my sign! In kindness think of me;
I shall retain remembrances of you;
I wish you good and happy. Now farewell.

AMUSEMENTS AT THE BARTON HOUSE.

"Sheltered from the blight, Ambition,
Fatal to the pride of rank."
CUNNINGHAM.

"Gay hope is their's, by Fancy fed,
Less pleasing when possest;
The tear forgot as soon as shed,
The sunshine of the breast;
Their's buxom health, of rosy hue,
Wild wit, Invention ever new,
And lively cheer of vigour born;
The thoughtless day, the easy night,
The spirits pure, the slumbers light,
That fly the approach of morn."
GRAY.

Reginald's story being completed, a long pause ensued, and it seemed as if each person present was occupied with the emotions it had occasioned. Mrs. Aubrey was the first to break silence. Although her looks had betrayed great satisfaction at some passages of the tale which had pleased her, it had greatly affected her, for it had recalled to her remembrance scenes in which she had taken a deep and melancholy interest. "Poor fellow," said she, "it is dreadful to reflect that, in addition to his sufferings occasioned by the death of his parents, he was haunted for a year or two with a needless dread of poverty.

"And that dread was needless?" said I, eagerly.

"Yes, indeed," said she. "His father and mother lived in the retired manner he has described more from choice than poverty. The estate they farmed was their own; .and, from their frugal manner of life, every year increased their store; and a very short time before his mother's death, a relation, who had made money abroad, left her a very comfortable provision for herself and son. She had just taken the necessary legal steps to secure this property, and had made a will in which she had appointed Mr. Aubrey and two neighbouring gentlemen her son's guardians, when an accident deprived her of life, Reginald being at the time at the institution. But I must drop the subject; see how eagerly he is watching my lips, he will find out what I am talking about, and it will break his heart."

"It surprises me," madam, "said I, making an effort to pass from the melancholy part of the subject, "that, sincerely as he appears to be attached to you and Mr. Aubrey, he does not name you in his tale as friends of his early days."

"We were not much known to him in his childhood," she replied. "We resided in a distant part of the county until the death of Mr. Aubrey's father, who, during his lifetime, occupied the Barton House. He died at a great age, a short time previous to Mrs. Arnolf's death; but she was well known to us, having been distantly related to Mr. Aubrey. Her husband—perhaps you will be surprised to hear—though a plain moor farmer, was a well-informed man, although his studies were of a peculiar kind—he had read a great deal of the controversial divinity of past ages; and I rather think his son must have gained much of his antiquarian lore from records he had made of the oral traditions of the country."

"It is not, madam," said I, "altogether a singular instance, although such instances are now becoming very rare. The *old* Protestant families of the county, from whom the illustrious victims were selected to give their testimony to what they believed to be the truth, in the persecutions under Mary, esteemed it a religious duty of the first importance carefully to instruct their descendants in the faith of the Martyrs. Hence there survived among them, even after some of them had fallen into poverty and obscurity, a taste for such learning as you have described. This was greatly aided by such families possessing larger collection of books than were then generally found in the possession of agricultural families. These were, no doubt, calculated to perpetuate the prejudices as well as the faith of those who had contended in the awful times of persecution, but they served to cherish a love for contemplative habits and speculative studies, where you would least expect to find them. However, this accidental possession of the means of gratifying such tastes, did not usually affect alike the different members even of the same family. According to their natural dispositions, one boy, perhaps, would be struck with the love of learning (for such was the name given to it,) while the others would remain mere fiddlers, wrestlers, or fox-hunters. In such cases, however, the learned boy was not considered, as might be expected, the flower of the family—in many cases he has been considered as good for but little, and his attachment to literature esteemed a misfortune."

"And very justly too," said Mr. Aubrey, "too much of it to occupy a man's thoughts who has to make a market of the productions of his hands, depend upon it is not good; and what earthly use is a vast deal of that dismal stuff you call antiquarian learning, a raking among the bones of the dead to find out the vanities and follies of past ages. As to that boy's story, Mrs. Aubrey thinks it does him credit; and it certainly does some credit to his feelings; but for my part I wish I had not heard it: it is all very well for young people to indulge in those dismal amusements, but melancholy thoughts are bad companions for an old man to go to bed with. But, Dinah," said he, addressing his daughter, a pretty rosy maiden of the Moor, about seventeen, "was there not something in it about a Harp?"

Dinah, who perfectly understood the tendency of this far-off question, blushed deeply, and replied, "Certainly, sir."

"Certainly there was," said Ernest Mortimer, starting up, for he took the hint; "there was something said about ‘A wild Welsh harp of varied song;’ and Miss Dinah’s harp, sir, only needs to be moved a very little out of that corner, and it will be all ready.”

“Very good, very good,” said the jovial old squire, delighted at the prospect of changing the amusement; “Let us have a little music and a song or two: in the mean time I shall go a little nearer to the chimney—those gentlemen who like it will be so obliging as to join me—we will try what a pipe and a jug of amber ale, together with music and singing, can do to drive this melancholy story, and everything else that is melancholy out of our heads to-night. “And, Dinah” he continued, “Ernest is *the stranger* to-night, and seems, moreover, much inclined to make himself useful to you, do try to select a song which will be to his taste.”

Dinah, as she took her place at the instrument, again blushed deeply, as if her father had thus expressed aloud what she had been thinking of. Earnest appeared to understand the blush, for his eyes seemed to flash fire, as he busied himself with the manuscripts of songs, and selected for himself one the title of which seemed to please him.

The only objection which I conceived there would be to this kind of amusement was, that poor Reginald would be excluded from all participation in it; but I was mistaken: Mrs. Aubrey had informed him what was about to take place, and, by supplying him with a manuscript of the song to be sung, had put him in possession of the substance of our entertainment; he therefore sat keenly observing the manner of the singer, and the effects of each passage of the song on us, and, as it proceeded, actually seemed to take as much interest in the thing as any one present.

After a short prelude, Dinah, with much sweetness, sang the following

SONG.*

THE SAILOR'S WIFE TO HER SLEEPING INFANT.

The tempest cloud with sullen frown
Rides on the fierce-wing'd blast of Night,
And surges crested white with foam,
With restless rage and ruthless might
Break on the sea-beach rapidly:

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* This juvenile production of the author's is inserted here in consequence of its having had the good fortune to be very prettily set to music, by Mr. Peter Foot, of Ashburton, Devon, who has succeeded in giving to his music a sweetness of expression, which, to a certain extent, corrects the deficiency of the lines. The author begs to take this opportunity of explaining why so many of these lyrics are introduced into the story. It is, with him, not so much a matter of taste as of necessity. *It was these songs, and other poems which have already appeared in the periodicals, which he was requested to collect and re-publish; the present volume, therefore, owes its origin to that request.* As many of these songs *must* appear in the work, he conceives he can, by weaving them into the narrative, so arrange them as to make them amusing, by their variety,—an advantage which they would have entirely lost if they had been all placed together at the end. However slight the thread which unites them, or however insignificant in themselves, like the shreds of paper which form the ornaments of the tail of a boy's kite, they may look somewhat the better for being tied together. Those, therefore, who condemn the introduction of songs into a prose narrative, will have the kindness to remember that the songs are not written for the story but the story for the songs—at least the present chapter.

Yet, sweet my boy thy sleep shall be,
No storm within thy guiltless breast,
And guardian angels wait on thee
To watch thy couch of harmless rest,
And guard the sleep of purity.

But anxious fears thy mother feels,
Which from her eyelids slumber chase,
As by thy side she weeping kneels
And gazes on thy infant face,
Unconscious, smiling placidly.
With fond delight I think I see
(Delight, though sore chastised with pain,)
The smile of him, who far at sea
Strives with the all-resistless main,
And tempest raging fearfully.

Hard toiling on the reeling deck,
No rest to-night thy father knows—
If, sinking with the shatter'd wreck,
Around his head the billows close,
Raging in might resistlessly;
Still *then* on thee, my boy, he thinks,
His heart, disdaining selfish fears,
Still is his soul, as low he sinks,
For thee and for thy future years,
In prayer uplifted anxiously.

"Now, Mr. Ernest Mortimer," said Mr. Aubrey, who, whatever he might think of the song, certainly spoke in a tone expressive of a sly satisfaction, at the manner in which the pretty Dinah had executed it, "Now Ernest, my friend," said he, "since you left us you have heard the songs of other lands: you have heard the harpings, and the guitarings, and the semi-demi-quaverings of the brilliant beauties of the continent, who are said greatly to excel, in those accomplishments, the fair daughters of Britain; we wish to give you an opportunity of showing us how you have improved by that advantage."

"I have enjoyed that advantage," said Ernest, "it is most true; but I fear you will find, sir, that I have profited by it but little. However great may be the admiration with which we hear the songs of foreign lands, it is when absent from her that the songs of our native isle find the most faithful and certain echo in our hearts. Instead, therefore, of a fresh importation from Venice or Naples, since your choice has fallen on me, I must offer you a song altogether British, entitled

THE MEETING OF THE EXILES.*

Thy proffer'd hand though cold to me,
Come, stranger, let me press,
And friendly shall our greeting be,
Though in the wilderness.

---

* Music—"In the Merry Morn."

Thou canst not take the kinsman's part,
Thou canst not fill the dreary void
Which dwells within the banish'd heart
Where hope and love have been destroy'd.

But thou hast wander'd far, like me,
From where thy kindred dwell,
And felt the cureless agony
Breath'd in a last farewell;
It is enough, I take thy hand;
I ask not friendship warm from thee,
But this I feel—the stranger's land
Is cold alike to thee and me.

Then pledge with me this rosy bowl,
And quaff right valiantly,
One feeling fills each fearless soul,
And this our pledge shall be—
The heart which bleeds but rarely bends,
And bravely onward to the close
Maintains its generous warmth for friends,
Its noble scorn for heartless foes.

"This is pressing us close, Julian," said Mr. Aubrey, laughing; "and we must not be unmindful of our Moorland reputation; I think we must give them something of our own: shall we have "My dwelling I've made with the Brave and the Free?"

Julian cheerfully complied, and gave the following

SONG.

Let me dwell on the hill, there the rude tempest daring,
Let me tread its rough side, though 'tis sterile and bare,
Though the keen winter blast is there fiercely careering,
No breath of the slave has e'er tainted the air;
And the wild hunter's cabin my palace shall be,
For my dwelling I'll make with the brave and the free.

An aged man came to the porch of my dwelling,
In the heat of the noon where I sought to recline;
Of the pleasures of wealth and of pomp was he telling—
Saying, sell but thy freedom, and wealth shall be thine.
Ah! no, I replied, pomp is needless to me,
For my dwelling I've made with the brave and the free.

A fair maiden there came, with the smile of the lovely,
Though a tear like a pearl dimm'd the beam of her eye;
With love's witching words 'twas her purpose to move me;
Music dwelt on her lip, full of love was her sigh.
No, I cannot sell freedom to buy even thee,
For I've sworn that I'll dwell with the brave and the free.

Like the wild bird which floats on the breeze of the mountain,
With its pinions unclipp'd and its voice unrestrain'd;
Like the wild deer which sips at the gush of the fountain,
Will I live—and the yoke shall by me be disdain'd;
And my last wish on earth, when I leave it, shall be,
Lay me gently to rest with the brave and the free.

The following morning the whole party assembled at the breakfast-table.

"I hope, sir," said Tom Stirlington, addressing Mr. Aubrey, that Reginald's melancholy story has left no permanent ill effects with you."

"Not the least," replied he; "and I am now almost ashamed of having been so much affected by it last night. My excuse must be, that I knew the parties, and respected them."

"If I mistake not," said the wine merchant, you have no objection to the amusement of story telling—your objection is to that particular tale?"

"You are perfectly right," replied Mr. Aubrey; "I like the amusement, but I must confess to you that I would rather hear a cheerful story than a sad one. Nothing is more painful to me than to become interested for parties during the progress of a tale, and to see them left in irremediable difficulties and misfortunes at the end. I might be pleased even with a story of distress, but it must have a fortunate and happy conclusion."

"Then I think," replied Tom Stirlington, "I know a story which would suit you exactly: it relates to the adventures of a simple-minded creature, whose good-humoured vanity, which aimed at general approbation, had, at one time surrounded him with all the comical distresses which usually cause so much misery to the sufferer, but so much amusement to others; and whose destiny conducted him so well through them, that he is now as happy as a good-tempered little blockhead can be."

"That is the sort of thing I should like to hear," said the squire. "After the business and amusements of the day, we shall all re-assemble at the tea-table, perhaps you will then have the goodness to relate it."

"With pleasure," said Tom Stirlington; "but as I have excited the curiosity of the company, allow me to take advantage of that circumstance, by making the best bargain I can. I will relate 'Brother John, or the Comforts of Neutrality,' on condition that my friends Ernest and Julian Mortimer, who are professed story writers, will follow it up by giving us something better."

"I will answer for them," said Mr. Aubrey; "for I think it impossible they can have any objection to such a proposal. Now, ladies and gentlemen, I hope it is perfectly understood, and will be perfectly agreeable to all, that we shall re-assemble to hear Mr. Stirlington's story this evening at seven precisely."

As the company arose from table, I found that I was in some danger of being left alone, as preparations were making, by which I saw that the company would be separated until the time Mr. Aubrey had mentioned.

The wine merchant had consented to what he evidently considered a great condescension: he had agreed that his far-famed and matchless horse Dragon-fly, (with whose history and adventures the reader will shortly be better acquainted), should enter into partnership with a stout gelding of Mr. Aubrey's, and the both being attached to a vehicle, very properly designated a "Sociable," in it he should drive the young ladies to a neighbouring town, to which he was going in quest of gain, and they in quest of pleasure.

Mr. Aubrey and the young sailor were preparing, with a great deal more bustle than the occasion required, for a sporting excursion; and this had led to the introduction into the hall of a rabble rout of pointers, spaniels, and curs of every description. During the confusion which this had occasioned, my young friend and favorite, Julian Mortimer, had made his escape.

Reginald still retained his seat at the table, apparently occupied with deep and sad reflection—he was even paler than usual, and a darker shade of melancholy rested upon his beautiful features.

"Poor fellow," said Mrs. Aubrey, "the dark fit is upon him; the excitement of meeting his young friends, yesterday, after their absence, and of having his story read, has proved too much for him: he will now wander away to some melancholy place on the moor, and we shall see no more of him for many hours."

"Well, well," said Mr. Aubrey, "let the boy follow his own fancy."

"Certainly," she replied, "I acknowledge the propriety of that, yet I cannot always do so without some anxiety: when those fits of moody excitement come over him he seems never to be pleased unless he is in danger, and in situations which strike me with horror; at such times he will scale the dreadful crag over which rushes a waterfall, that he may play with the waters as they gush forth in all their fury from the rock; at another time he will be seen on the very summit of a precipice, stretching forth his arms over the ravine below, like a young eagle about to take its flight."

"The common-sense view of the thing appears to me to be this," continued Mr. Aubrey: "he is deprived of a very large portion of the amusements which occupy the thoughts of other young persons, and it is my opinion that we ought to allow him to find amusement when and how he can. You have already seen the consequences of crossing him, when, in your weak fondness, you sent Bolt, the ploughboy, to watch and take care of him: he first motioned Bolt to go away and leave him alone; but Bolt, true to his trust, refused; on which he soundly thrashed the ploughboy, and sent him blubbering home again."

The mention of this fact called forth a hearty laugh from Ernest Mortimer, in which Mr. Aubrey as heartily joined.

"It was the only time," said Mrs. Aubrey, "I ever knew him do an unkind act, and bitterly did he repent of it; and bitterly did I regret the mistakes into which I had fallen, by which I had unintentionally caused his sufferings. It is very difficult to understand the feelings of a creature so sensitive and yet so cut off from the common intercourse of life. I sent the ploughboy away for several days, fearing his presence might irritate and vex him, during which time he was restless and most miserable—I knew not what he wanted; he searched every part of the premises—every field on the estate; and at last, on an awfully stormy day, he wandered for many miles, alone, across the moor, to the cottage of Bolt's father, where, finding him, he forced him to accept all the money he had in his possession, and seemed to ask his pardon in a manner so touching, that poor Bolt was almost heart-broken, and came back earnestly requesting me to take the money Master Reginald had given him, and wept a great deal more at their reconciliation than he had done at their quarrel."

"I shall think the better of Bolt for it," said I, "as long as I live."

This was touching upon a proud point with Mr. Aubrey; he rested the end of his fowling-piece upon the floor, and proudly drew his tall, athletic figure up to its full height, and, with a smile of satisfaction, said—"Ah, my friend, they are rough and uninstructed, ill-spoken, and at times, no doubt, ill used; but those who know them best, know there are many genuine beauties in the simple hearts of the Devonshire ploughboys."

By watching, unobserved, the lips and manner of the different speakers, it was evident Reginald had become aware that he was himself the subject of our conversation, but was left in suspense as to its purport; and his keen black eyes seemed almost to flash fire as they wandered with the most pathetic expression of anxious inquiry, from the face of one speaker to another.

This, Mrs. Aubrey observing, she hastened to relieve his anxiety, and by signs rapidly made on her fingers, said, "We all say you should not stay out long to-day;

and that you should avoid all dangerous places; and, for my sake, I know you will do so."

Words can but faintly convey an idea of the touching expression of his noble features, as he lifted his flame-like eyes to hers in thankfulness. I, for a moment, turned away: when I again looked around, the Dumb Boy had flitted, like a noiseless shadow, from the room.

Mrs. Aubrey now leaving the room to attend to domestic affairs, and the sporting gentlemen at the same time taking their departure, I was left without even a cur to keep me company. I strolled into the garden.

My attention was soon arrested by a beautifully-situated summer-house, so placed as to command a view of a romantic and most picturesque valley, through which a mountain stream rushed rapidly, brawling and foaming among the blocks of granite rock, as if impatient of the delay their obstruction occasioned; the rushing sound of its progress was heard on the hill like an incessant and soothing murmur. The valley was considerably wider down the stream than at the point on which the summer-house stood, and opened so as to admit of a view of the distant country. Its course was winding and irregular, and hill after hill was seen to swell up on its sides in every variety of fantastic form and every shade of perspective, until the last bold and lofty tor which crowned the scene, from its great distance, was scarcely distinguished by the eye from a faint azure cloud. To enjoy this scene more at my leisure, I entered the building, and was agreeably surprised to find my young friend Julian

Mortimer there. His attention was so absorbed by a manuscript which he was reading, that he was not at first aware of my approach. On perceiving me he appeared so disconcerted at being thus discovered, that I was about to retire: he, however, politely invited me to stay, saying —"Since you have thus discovered me, I will take this opportunity of asking your advice. By the arrangement made this morning, both Ernest and myself will be obliged to produce a story after the one to be related by that most positive of all commercial men, Mr. Tom Stirlington. I own to you that I have ventured to write poetry, but that, I fear, will be little to his taste, and will give even less satisfaction to Mr. Aubrey. The only prose tale I ever attempted to write is unfortunately one of which Mr. Stirlington is himself the hero. In it I have called him plain Tom Stirlington, and in other respects spoken of him with far too much familiarity; and, what is still worse, I have placed some of the humourous traits of his genuinely excellent character in a light truly ludicrous—all which will be embarrassing; but I must endeavour to disguise some of the events, and change the names, before I can venture to produce it for the amusement of the company. I for some time assisted Mr. Stirlington in his counting-house, and went with him on several journeys of business, by which I had opportunities of seeing the various characters I shall mention, and of becoming acquainted with the events I have recorded. The real facts of the case, however, by your permission, I will now read to you."

Accordingly he read the following story.

TOM STIRLINGTON,

OR THE

WINE MERCHANT OF THE WEST.

"HER MERCHANTS ARE AS PRINCES AND HER TRAFFICKERS ARE THE HONORABLE OF THE EARTH."

TOM STIRLINGTON,

OR THE

WINE MERCHANT OF THE WEST.

"Her Merchants are as Princes, and her Traffickers are the honorable of the Earth."

CHAPTER I.

"This life has joys for you and I;
And joys that riches ne'er could buy;
And joys the very best.
There's a' the pleasures o' the heart—"
BURNS.

Tom Stirlington is the son of a plain but wealthy farmer, who, in the northern part of the County of Devon, cultivates an estate, which, together with a generous and hospitable disposition, he has inherited from his forefathers.

I call the subject of this narrative plain "Tom Stirlington," for by that familiar name he is best known throughout the county; and those who know the people of Devonshire well, will be convinced that their having so universally dropped the appellations of ceremony, is a high compliment paid to him ; for it may be regarded as a proof of his having succeeded in pleasing the majority, and in gaining the approbation of all classes. The term *Mister* is an appellation of politeness habitually used, and deemed indispensable in the common intercourse of life, and thus often wasted on the worthless and obscure; but the man who has been entirely *un-Mister'd* throughout a whole county, can be neither the one nor the other. *Worthless* he cannot be, for it is beyond all probability that a whole community should pride themselves in claiming a familiarity with the undeserving; in such cases people *Mister* the wretch, and keep him at a distance. *Obscure* he cannot be, for then he would belong to that unhappy class of exiles, the members of which are known to the waiters at the road-side taverns, as *genelmen*, every valuable and important particular concerning them being unkown, an expression of indifference, within the bounds of civility but bordering on contempt, is therefore selected. It is awful to reflect how many an honest heart, already sinking under the cares of life, has had the capstone added to his miseries by hearing himself designated *the genelman* in number six or number ten, as the case may be. It grates upon the tortured ear—it casts a gloomy shade over the care-sick soul—it convinces the poor creature that, whatever his cares, he is here beyond the reach of sympathy,

> How lov'd, how valued once, avails him not,
> To whom related, or by whom begot;

though the title-deeds of the "bold Buccleugh" were in his portmanteau—though the blood of all the Howards be in his veins, he must consent to be *Sir'd* and *Mister'd* into a kind of wishey-washey respectability, a thousand times more irksome to be borne than even contempt—because, however insufferable it may become, it cannot be resented.

In describing a person, as much advantage can sometimes be gained by saying what he *is not* as by telling what he *is*. Tom Stirlington, therefore, was not of that class of unhappy outlaws above-named, for everybody called him by his own proper name; and, in his fortunate case, that capricious and many-headed monster—the public—by common consent, dropped that abominable *Mr.*, which has destroyed the peace of millions.

I am no enemy to the titles which distinguish rank—I do not mean to condemn nor even to sneer at them; they prove that the individuals who bear them, or those from whom they are descended, possess, or have possessed, something of worth or ability to distinguish them from the insignificant mass, and therefore their *proper operation* is to stimulate those who enjoy them to aim at a higher moral excellence, a purer honor, a more disinterested and lofty philanthropy: and, notwithstanding the number of unfortunate exceptions, I am of opinion that such *is* their *actual* operation in the formation of character in a vast majority of instances in Great Britain, or, to confine myself within the limits of my own knowledge, at least among the "worthies of Devon." Yet, with all my respect for titles, I am still of opinion that seldom has a title *added* to a man's name conferred half so much honor on him as is often tacitly allowed to him by the dropping, by common consent, the usual appellative.

> " A Prince can mak a belted knight
> A marquis, duke, and a' that;
> But an honest man's aboon his might,
> Guid faith he maunna fa' that.
> For a' that, and a' that,
> Their dignities, and a' that;
> *The pith o' sense and pride o' worth,*
> *Are higher ranks than a' that,*"

says Robert Burns, who was himself one of the lowly-born aristocracy of intellect, who, dead or alive, has never had his name profaned by the addition of the common-place *Mister*.

When old Sir Anthony Absolute was offended with his son, he did not threaten to disinherit him, but contented himself with the more awful threat that he would never call him *Jack* again. However whimsically it might have been expressed, an awful threat it was, for a father to tell his son that the familiarity of friendship (without which the tie of relationship is but a galling bond,) should cease between them for ever.

When the English people wanted an epitaph for John Dryden, it was agreed that " his epitaph should be his *name alone*;" and the single word " DRYDEN" was inscribed upon his tomb. Lives there a wretch with heart profane and soul so thoroughly steeped in the very essence of vulgarity, who would have prefixed a *Mister* to it? How completely would the poetry of the allusion have vanished—the very soul of the compliment would have expired ; a national compliment, which amounted almost to the sublime, would have been turned at once into the very superlative degree of Tom-foolery. One's blood boils at the very idea. The blockhead who would have inscribed the word *Mister* before the name of Dryden might as well have tacked the words *man-milliner* to the tail of it.

Whether guided by these illustrious examples or not, the people of this part of England have long been in the habit of treating their especial favorites in a similar manner. With the propriety of the thing I have nothing to do : since I have taken upon myself the office of their chronicler, I am bound faithfully to record their manners and their peculiarities. The *idea*, in the practice I have mentioned, seems to be that as "True loveliness when unadorned is then adorned the most," so true respectability when the less flattered is then the most respected and respectable.

Stirlington's general popularity has been by no means gained by servility to the upper orders, or by a vagabond good-fellowship only with the humblest. No man better understands what are his just claims to respect, and no man is less likely to forego them. Although every person feels at ease in his company, nobody, either his superior or inferior in rank, would ever think of taking an undue liberty with him. His self-respect just hits the happy medium—which consists in yielding to every man the just degree of respect to which he is entitled, and letting him see that the same measure of justice is expected from himself; but with this "special observance" it cannot be denied that good humour is the prevailing characteristic of Tom Stirlington's manner, and good-nature the distinguishing feature of his character. In comfortable circumstances—with a mind at ease, though kept in a state of healthy activity by constant employment—possessed of robust health and an exuberant flow of animal spirits, with a quick sense of the ludicrous and a rich enjoyment of the ridiculous, it is scarcely in a person's power, though his soul were steeped in gall and bitterness, to refuse to enjoy the luxury of a laugh with a man whose mirth appears to be the overflowings of a heart at peace with itself and with all mankind, especially when his character is of that genuine worth, that any person may say this is a man on whose support I may reckon with confidence whenever I want it for any cause which is really a good one.

Bred up in a farm-house in a retired village, associating with the neighbouring agricultural families in his youth, (a connexion he has never given up nor ceased to derive pleasure from,) there is no doubt some of his habits, ways of thinking, and tastes, may be attributed to that early association: for Tom Stirlington is not composed of those stiff materials which can entirely resist the impression of what old Mr. Chester* designates "the intensely vulgar sentiments which are called the national character." Among the predilections which he derived from this source may be named, as pre-eminent, a great fondness for horses, and of the field-sports in which they are employed, with the usual unbounded confidence in his own judgment as to their merits. It is a sociable and convivial foible, which, whatever other unpleasantness it may lead a man into, it never leads him to suspect his own judgment. If the horse wins, or performs some extraordinary feat, that is entirely to be attributed to the judgment of the owner and the skill of the rider: if he breaks down, fractures a limb or two of the owner's, or dislocates the neck of an acquaintance, or any trifling blunder of that kind, of course it is to be attributed solely to the purest accident. Possessed of this by no means uncommon infallibility of judgment, the leading articles of the merchant's creed are—that to risk life and limb in the chase is a mere secondary consideration compared to the honor of being in at the death; and that to drive a smart "turn-out" on the road, with a horse of first-rate "blood, pedigree, and paces," if not absolutely necessary to human happiness, is, to a wealthy and respectable dealer in the "rosy juice," at least, indispensable to felicity of the highest order.

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* This of course alludes to that exquisitely-drawn character the antiquated dandy in "Barnaby Rudge."

An excellent whip himself, his derision of the scarecrows he sometimes meets upon the road *pretending* to use that much-degraded instrument, is immeasureable; when, as is usual, their conceit is in proportion to their awkwardness. The "roasting" of a spooney of that kind, or the frightening a scarce-fledged dandy of the counter into hysterics, who, perhaps, *pretends* to drive, and thinks himself up to a thing or two, when a donkey possessed of the spirit of a young gander would resent the insult of his controul—this is rich fun to him. This fancy, in his younger days, was carried out in a series of practical jokes, irresistibly comical to the jokers, but most tormenting inflictions on the poor creatures joked upon; and if ever he made an enemy it was by this means. For although perhaps it is a pity that sage truth should spoil a good joke, yet I believe it is a fact which the united experience of mankind confirms—that the man who has been injured *may* forget his resentment, but the fool that has been laughed at never will.

I will not, however, detain you by a longer description of the foibles of his character, which may, perhaps, in the estimation of some, cast a shade on the brightness of that which is substantially excellent, but proceed with the relation of some events which brought out the nobler qualities of his heart.

When I spoke of Stirlington as the son of a plain North Devon farmer, perhaps I led you into the error of supposing that he was the founder of his present handsome fortune; but that is not correct. In his youth he was adopted by an uncle, his father's brother, who was a substantial wine merchant in one of the large towns of the county, which I shall not designate by name, but which, perhaps, in the course of my story, you will more than guess at. This uncle, Ralph Stirlington by name, being a bachelor, had some years before bred up and handsomely provided for Tom Stirlington's elder brother

Augustus Stirlington, who, at the time of Tom's joining his uncle's establishment, was settled as a wine merchant at Lisbon, and had rapidly increased the fortune he had derived from his uncle's bounty.

Stirlington went into town a rosy farmer's boy, but was prepared for his future destination by a good education at the grammar-school at ———, where his youthful associates were of a rank rather superior to his own, though, perhaps, many of them had not expectations near so good as his were. I mention this fact because it had not only a visible influence on his manners and address, but gave him the advantage of establishing, early in life, not only on a commercial but on a friendly footing, one of the most respectable connexions in the county. His education complete, by the time he had passed through the necessary gradations of the wine vaults and the counting-house, his uncle found himself able to indulge in the quiet luxuries of a comfortable home, and placed him on the driving-box, not a little vain of the personal recommendations and high promise of his gay, good-humoured, and decidedly handsome young representative. The only objection to this arrangement, on the part of Mr. Ralph Stirlington, was, that he found himself minus of the many deep, rich peals of laughter with which he had been accustomed to digest his dinners, and deprived of Tom's songs and jokes at supper-time, which had become, from habit, as necessary to him as the glass of brandy and water which he used to call his "nightcap"; which glass of brandy and water, be it recorded for the enlightenment of the curious, was made according to the celebrated recipe of the renowned Dutchman, Mynheer Von Dunck, which was in the proportion of one quart of brandy to a pint of water. "It is really wonderful," Mr. Ralph Stirlington was accustomed to say, "that the knowing old Dutchman did not turn tee-totaler, and exclude the water altogether. Still his notion was not a bad one; and there is some comfort in following the example of a man so celebrated."

Notwithstanding the consolation which he derived from the "good familiar creature," the evenings of Tom's absence passed heavily, and the mirthful energies of the old man's heart were thus, as it were, kept bottled up for a week together, only to be relieved on the nights of Tom's return, when he would impose upon himself, the weather being favourable, the heavy task of walking into the country to meet him, for the purpose of being driven back by him, and pass the evening in one continuous and joyous roar at the comicalities Tom had picked up on the road. Comicalities there are to be picked up on every road if a traveller has but sense to observe them, like Tom Stirlington, wit to express them, and good-nature enough to avoid introducing into them the venom of uncharitableness.

It had been, however, the custom of Mr. Ralph Stirlington for many years to relieve the monotony of his town life, chiefly devoted to business, by coming down annually to visit his friend Mr. Aubrey, here at the Barton House. To give to this yearly visit as much as possible the dignity of a sporting excursion, it regularly commenced on the 31st of August, that he might indulge in the harmless delight, on the 1st of September, of shooting at partridges, not killing them, according to the humane and merciful practice of town-bred sportsmen in general. That his nephew should accompany him on these occasions was a matter of the most positive necessity, a thing not to be dispensed with. Necessary it was on many accounts, one of which only I shall name here: that is, it was needful to keep up the sporting reputation of the family; for, thanks to his early education, Tom Stirlington was a very different shot from his uncle, and although good Mr. Ralph was obliged to submit to the degradation of eating birds of another person's killing, it was a capital recover to be enabled to answer the banter of his brother sportsmen, by saying "Well, well, it is better that *the boy* should have some skill in those things than that I should waste much time in practising them."

Notwithstanding that Uncle Ralph frequently stated that Tom had been, for some years, more than five feet ten inches and a-half high, *a boy* he still called him and still considered him, until an accident which occurred in this summer-house on a bright September evening awfully undeceived him.

Here I may be permitted to observe, that good-tempered uncles should go into such places as retired summer-houses with extreme caution; if they have a hobble in their gait, it should by no means be diminished on such occasions; and, whether they feel a tickling in their throats or not, it would be advisable for them to cough slightly; otherwise it is impossible to imagine how unfit the scene they may witness may be for the observation of a staid old bachelor. Ralph Stirlington taking a walk in the garden after dinner, being in a brown study, slowly and softly approached the summer-house; the door had been cautiously closed, but, by the contrivance of some imp of mischief, the latch had not caught, and it flew noiselessly open at the slightest touch; the evil genius of the place presided also over the floor, for it was covered with a thick garden matting: thus, neither Angela Aubrey nor Tom Stirlington, who stood looking out of that window which overlooks the valley, the casements of which were open, were aware of his approach. The lady's eyes were fixed upon the stream below, dashing and foaming along among the rocks, as intently as if the moor maiden had never looked on mountain stream before. The gentleman's left arm, with more fondness than ceremony, clasped her slender waist—his right hand was employed in lifting a fair hand of her's to his lips, and never did Catholic, in penitence or in joy, kiss crucifix with half the devotion and affection with which he kissed it. The language he used I will not pretend to report—it consisted of a few unconnected sentences, the general purport of which was an inquiry if she really loved him. The only answer he received was a faint and almost inarticulate "yes."

"I know not," said Uncle Ralph to himself, "which I had better do, laugh or cry!"

Although this sentence was meant to be uttered internally, unfortunately the last word "cry" was uttered aloud.

Tom Stirlington turned round electrified with surprise, and the fair Angela, with a faint shriek, sank upon the bench, covering her face with her hands in much confusion.

"Hoity-toity! fire and faggot!" said the corpulent wine merchant. "Here's goings on—here's concealments, intrigues, treasons, and gunpowder plots!"

Tom Stirlington stammered out something about—"a joke—an excellent good joke."

"Joke me no jokes, young man," said the senior sternly. "I've been deceived—I've not been confided in—I've been treated as nobody—is that a joke? No answers—no impertinent replies. My excellent friend Aubrey kept in the dark—the rights of hospitality violated—is that a joke? You have won the heart of his daughter—is *that* a joke, you unnatural monster? You have wasted an immensity of time already by not marrying her—surely you will allow that *that* is no joke. Sir, you shall not joke with me upon serious subjects. You shall marry her upon the spot—this very moment."

"With all my heart," said Tom Stirlington, who saw that there was no safety but in yielding, or seeming to yield, to the whim of the moment.

"Now there's some sense in that," said Uncle Ralph, sitting down a good deal conciliated; and, resting his hands upon his knees, with the most comical gravity he proceeded to make the following proposal. "Now, Tom," said he, "don't laugh—don't look impertinent, but strive to go through this business with the appearance of good sense with which you have begun it. Your unaccountable shyness, your want of confidence in me, your truest friend,—be quiet, I will not be interrupted nor answered,—your want of confidence, and my stupidity in not remembering you were no longer a boy, have been the cause of the loss of much most precious time. The thought of marrying you to a daughter of Aubrey's, now it has once penetrated my thick head, will never allow me to sleep more until the thing is completed. Hear me—the parson of Crazycot has been sporting with us all day; to-be-sure, he has paid more attention to the pocket-pistol than to the fowling piece; he is still in the hall, seated at the table where you left him when you sculked off, you lucky dog, on this precious business. He is monopolising all the conversation to himself, but with his nose so close to a decanter of brown sherry that he seems addressing *it* alone. By the blessing of Heaven, who has protected its servant through a day of trial, he is yet sober enough to perform the ceremony, but too drunk to refuse. Let it be done at once."

Unfortunately, however, "the law's delay," a proverbial nuisance in this country, stood in the way of the proposal. In addition to that, the third party, whose presence would have been indispensable at the ceremony, and whose consent would have been somewhat desirable, the fair Angela, had taken advantage of the moment to make her escape.

However, Uncle Ralph neither rested himself, nor allowed anybody else to rest, until the ceremony was indeed completed—the business transferred to Mr. Thomas Stirlington—his own roomy mansion and well-furnished wine vaults given up to him, with such an amount of property, as astonished even Mr. Aubrey at his bounty.

"My good friend," said Ralph Stirlington, "call it not bounty in me, that I do this for them; the two great blessings of my life have been that boy's affection and your friendship. I have had some pleasure in gaining wealth, because I have done it honestly; and, reserving a competency for myself, it shall be my pleasure to see the boy and girl enjoy the rest.

CHAP. II.

"A living rose, blooming and unconscious of the thousand cankers of earth and air."—Bon Vivant.

Ten years, the tenth part of a century, is a period of vast importance in human life; for, to say nothing of the many painful steps by which so large a portion of our journey must have been accomplished, whether it has been filled with joys or sorrows, or what is more usual, some portion of both; even though these have passed away, and left not a "wreck behind" for memory to dwell upon, and become a blank, as such a period may have been to an antiquated bachelor, well off in the world, whose joys are apt to fall into satiety, and whose chief trouble is the want of care, as the reader will anticipate was the case with Mr. Ralph Stirlington, yet it is important, for it must have cut out a large portion of an existence so ephemeral as the longest human life certainly is: but it is a privilege which story-tellers have enjoyed from the time when the Archangel related the story of the creation to Adam, in Paradise, to the present day, that *we* can pass over such a period by one single bound, like that of the traveller in the seven-leagued boots, and jump to another part of our history, as easily as Cæsar could plunge into the Rubicon and drown the reputation of a soldier of the Commonwealth in Empire and Infamy.

Ten years after the event related in the last chapter, Ralph Stirlington was residing as a retired bachelor at ——. The fingers of Time had played with his raven locks, and the portion of them which remained had turned into a vigorous iron-grey: in no other respect was his personal appearance altered, for he had resisted the wear and tear of doing nothing with an iron strength of constitution truly remarkable. Still he was a bachelor much puzzled; for he had become so fond of Angela, that it was most difficult for him to decide whether it was her or Tom Stirlington who was his prime favorite, although it was notorious to every one else, that their only child, a pretty little black eyed girl, named Evelina, now in her ninth year, had, to a certain extent, superseded both.

Tom Stirlington came upon the road in a fair time to inherit not only the substantial respectability of the firm but all the popularity it had gained by the facetious and unassuming good humour of his uncle. This was by no means likely to be diminished in his hands; but there was one part of the establishment which had been entirely revolutionized by him. The stout old hack and heavy and substantial vehicle which had conveyed the portly person of the elder Mr. Stirlington from stage to stage with slow but punctual regularity, had been exchanged for a light and elegant modern stanhope, and a horse, which, in the opinion of his owner, united everything which can be imagined as perfection in that noble animal. His sire was of established reputation and untarnished pedigree, and his dam had been bred by Tom's father, and was by no means of plebeian rank; and, moreover, the name of this fastest-trotting gig horse in the West of England, be it known, was Dragon-fly.

The world may have produced such a curiosity as a woman who was beautiful, but knew it not, or was not vain of it; diadems may have been placed on the brows of those who were not dazzled by their glitter; but for a man to possess such a "turn-out" as this, and not to be vain of it, would have proved, as Sam Slick words it, that there was no such thing as "human natur" in his composition. This little vanity was not displayed in words—by his incessantly talking of his own exploits, or the feats of his horse, but by his actually giving the "go-by," as the phrase is, to everything upon the road; by his actually *performing* the feats which other persons boasted of; but by one freak, which, in hands less skilful, would have been of very questionable character: it consisted in driving up full speed (trot of course,) to the door of a Devonshire inn, stopping suddenly and turning nearly at a right angle, again at full trot bolting down the rough and narrow passage which usually forms the entrance to such a place of entertainment.

Having performed this feat with even more than usual rapidity, he rushed into the yard of the Green Dragon, an inn situated in a town some miles west of the place of his residence, so suddenly, that he surprised the landlady, a very tall, ungainly, savage-looking person, in beating most cruelly, with a rod, a child of exquisite beauty, who, just as he arrived, had sunk upon her knees before her furious tormentor, and was most piteously holding up her little hands, which were wounded and bleeding, as a frail protection to her delicate and lovely features.

On seeing this, Stirlington gave Dragon-fly so sudden a check that he reared and capered about in the greatest confusion and alarm; then throwing the reins upon his back, he sprang out of the vehicle at the imminent risk of his life, flew to the spot, and wrested the weapon from the furious woman with such an expression of deep indignation and disgust, that she stood cowering before him like a dismayed she wolf, and evidently expected, at first, that he meant to take a fearful retribution for the injured child by applying the rod to herself. The servants of the house stood grinning at a distance, apparently expecting the same thing, with no little satisfaction. Stirlington did not, however, forget what was due to woman, even in her most degraded form, as the perpetrator of a cowardly act of cruelty, but repeating his expression of heartfelt indignation, he flung the rod furiously into the air, and it passed like an arrow over the adjoining buildings.

While this was passing, Margery, the chambermaid, had rushed forward, and, with many expressions of sympathy and condolence, had borne away the unfortunate and now almost fainting child. Seeing this, the traveller went into the commercial-room without speaking to any one; for although he resolved from the first to sift the thing to the bottom, he deemed it advisable to put a seal upon his lips until he had regained his usual coolness.

Mrs. Bunce, the landlady, however, boiling with fury and panting for revenge, having retired into the bar, and having steadied her nerves with a glass of brandy and water, made according to the Von Dunck recipe slightly improved, proceeded to call around her the servants of the house, in hopes to induce them to give such testimony as would enable her to bring an action of assault.

Having seated herself in a large arm-chair, with the dignity of an unfortunate princess in a tragedy, she said, with a voice of most insinuating mildness—"Will Ostler," addressing the official of that capacity, who was a tall lanky man, with a dark, shrewd, determined-looking countenance; he lost, however, considerable height by a curvature of the back, which made him what is called round-shouldered, and by a bend in both his knees, which caused them to be, like the Siamese twins, inseparable, while his feet lay straggling abroad, and had decidedly parted company for ever. The habitual expression of his countenance was a leer of reckless humour, so that it was impossible for a person to look upon Will without laughing, and feeling at the same time that Will was laughing at him. This comicality of nature's own pattern was, however, on the present occasion, in an unusually sullen mood.

"Ostler Will," said Mrs. Bunce, "I owe you a glass of brandy and water, for I saw that you was a-comin' to purteck me when that brute was a-strikin' me."

"Kip the brandy and water, Missus," said Will, "vor I wasn't a-goin' to due no zich a thing."

"But you saw him strike me, Will?" said Mrs. Bunce, sweetly.

"Nae, Missus," said Will, clenching his huge fist and striking it heavily on the counter. "Nae! I didn't; but I zeed you strike the poor cheeld sever'l times."

"Then, Bob Boots," said Mrs. Bunce, "I am sure *you* did see him strike me?"

The person thus addressed was a good-tempered, pudding-faced, bullet-headed little man, whose nose, nature, instead of making the most prominent feature of his face, as is usual with the Caucasian race in general, had rendered, in a frolic, the most insignificant; while his mouth was an immensity, literally stretched from ear to ear.

Bob began and ended every sentence with a sort of husky laugh, which sounded like a repetition of the syllable hick, uttered in rapid succession.

"Hick-hick-hick," said Bob, "he didn't strike you, mum; but, by Gosh, I think he wid if you hadn't let alone the little maid when you did—hick-hick-hick."

Mrs. Bunce proceeded to question all her servants in a similar manner, with a similarly unfavourable result, until she came to Margery, a pretty little rosy-faced chambermaid, who stood in a corner, wiping her eyes.

"I'm sure," said Mrs. Bunce, with great fury, "it will be of no use for me to ask of you—"

"No, Mem," said Margery, "it *is* of no use to ask me to tell falsehoods to please anybody. Mr. Stirlington did not strike you, the more's the wonder, considering what a thunder-and-lightning passion he was in, and he being so kind and merciful that no one dares even to ill-use a mouse before him. And I am sure, Mem, if he knew the rights of it, he would say that if people have other people's children left to their charge, that they ought not to be used as brute beasts, however faulty their parents might be—and if there was property left with them—"

"Silence! and be gone," said Mrs. Bunce, rising from her seat with great rage. "Get along every one of you, as a cowardly, white-liver'd, treacherous set of fools, who would eat my bread and yet see me beaten to a mummy, and take the part of those who injure me. Begone! and close the door after you, that I may see no more of you, you infernal varments."

Left to herself, Mrs. Bunce again applied to the consolations of the brandy-bottle. "So," said she, "on account of the nest of vipers with which I am surrounded, I shall not be able to have my will with that conceited, prating jack-an-ape, Tom Stirlington. But I'll prick their hearts for it—I'll punish them; and I'll torment him some other way—I'll wait for time and place—but I'll do it if it be not these twenty years. And, this commercial coxcomb once gone, as to that child, I'll flay her alive, though every jackass in my yard and stables should rise up in rebellion against me—I'll flay the little wretch alive."

Stirlington, who had mechanically thrown off his travelling garments, and seated himself by the fire, in the commercial room, during the passing of the scene before described remained occupied with painful reflection. At first a feeling of indignation at the conduct of the landlady overcame every other, but it soon subsided into one of the deepest sympathy and anxiety for the child. "She certainly was beautiful," said he, "if my recollection does not deceive me, very beautiful, and must be nearly of the same age as my own poor little Effie, and as innocent and helpless, and even more lovely—but no matter, beautiful or not, she must be cruelly wronged. It is impossible that a child of such tender years can have done aught to deserve such treatment—no conduct of hers can have furnished the shadow of a shade of an excuse to justify it. What can I possibly do for her? How will it be possible for me to rescue her from the execrable wretch who could use her in that manner?" His heart promptly asked the question, but it was not easily answered; and he sat confounded and irresolute, repeating it to himself, so absorbed in his painful reverie that he knew not he had a companion in the room, until he was awakened from it by the timid pressure of a soft little hand laid fearfully upon his own; he turned round, and the object of his reflections stood beside him.

The child was very plainly but neatly attired; her cheeks were pale from recent terror and suffering, but her beautiful lips retained the hue of a fresh-blown moss rose. Her hair, which was a fair auburn, with a slight golden tinge where the light shone strongly on it, had evidently been re-arranged by some kind and sympathizing hand. Her eyes, which were of the color of the clear sky of a summer's night, were timidly raised towards his own, with a mingled expression of hope, gratitude, and apprehension; and, speaking very slowly, with a strong foreign accent, she said—"You I vill tank—I not afraid—" But tears of apprehension burst from her beautiful eyes even while she thus expressed her confidence in her unknown protector.

"God help thee, child, thou hast no cause to fear from me," said Stirlington, soothingly; but rising, as a sudden fit of his indignation returned, pacing the room, he said, "How execrable must have been the cruelty which has brought a creature so young and innocent to look with so much dread and doubt upon the face of a stranger."

Turning again towards the child, he discovered that, unaware of the meaning of his words, she had become alarmed at his angry manner. Her little limbs trembled —her features had now become so deadly pale that nought retained its primitive color except the dark blue eye, and that was fixed upon him with such an expression of dread as the habitual endurance of cruelty alone could have called up on the features of a child. She would have sunk to the ground but for his timely support. Stirlington again sat down, and soothing her by every method compassion could suggest, she soon recovered.

"No—no," said the child, reassured. "I not afraid—not afraid of you, signor." But anxiously looking round the room, as if to ascertain that she was not overheard, she continued—"I not vicked—I not scum of the eart—but I no understand;" and, as if the more fully to explain her meaning, she pointed with her little wounded fingers to her forehead—" No, no. I no understand."

Her sympathising companion now observed that the blood had been washed off from her fingers by some kind hand, and little shreds of white cloth tied carefully round them; but across the forehead itself, white as the drifted snow, on which every blue vein which approaches the surface was faintly and delicately traced, from the right eyebrow to the hair there extended, a red mark, evidently caused by a recent blow, showing the reckless cruelty or demon-like malice with which the child had been corrected for an error which, according to her own imperfect explanation, arose from her having misunderstood some direction given to her.

"Merciful Heaven," said Stirlington, "and hast thou been thus treated because thou did'st not understand?"

"Yes, yes," exclaimed the child eagerly, "dat is so. I no understand."

All this was so entirely out of the merchant's way of business, that the further he proceeded in it the more he felt confused. The rich man's ready solace for the ills of poverty, alone occurred to him. He put money into her hand.

The child looked wistfully at it for a moment, and then allowed her hand to drop by her side, as if it contained what she had not sought, and did not value. This he instantly observed; and the conviction flashed across his mind, and seemed to burn, as it were, through his heart, that the child could not have been bred among the lower classes entirely; for, an eager desire to possess money, is, perhaps, the most general characteristic of children so bred, which is forced upon them by the example and necessities of those by whom they are surrounded. She stood for a short time, with an expression of confusion and disappointment, apparently labouring to bring out some idea which she could not find words to express: at last, fixing her sparkling eyes on him she said, "You, kind signor; but Rosabel no friend,"

"Then I will be thy friend, so help me G——!" exclaimed Tom Stirlington.

The child placed both her hands in his, which rested on his knee—bent eagerly forward, and looked up into his face with an expression of the most searching and anxious inquiry, as if to make sure that she had not misunderstood the meaning of his words. The scrutiny satisfied her—she burst into a joyous laugh, which was, however, instantly drowned in a flood of tears. As if she had now obtained what she wanted, she replaced the money in the palm of his hand, and closed his fingers upon it with her own little wounded hands, and bent down as if to kiss them.

At that moment the sound of a hasty footstep in the passage without, seemingly approaching the door, caught her attention. Alarmed, she sprung into the middle of the apartment, clasping her little hands together, and, with an expression of great terror, stood watching the door with trembling anxiety. The footsteps, however, passed on: and the child, perceiving that she had escaped the danger of detection, looked towards her new-made friend for a moment, placed her finger lightly on her lip, as if to enjoin him to silence, and glided quickly from the room.

CHAP. III.

"There is an hour, a pensive hour;
(And oh, how soothing is its power!)
It is when twilight spreads her veil
And steals along the silent dale.
* * * * * *
There is a tear of sweet relief,
A tear – of rapture not of grief;
The feeling heart alone can know
What soft emotions bid it flow."
Felicia Hemans.

I said that Stirlington had resolved from the first to investigate the matter, and extend his protection to the injured child; but his interview with Rosabel herself had changed what was but the cold resolution of justice into a burning impatience and fixed determination not to rest until he had done something towards accomplishing her deliverance: yet he felt the strongest repugnance to open any communication with the brutal landlady upon the subject; and to seek information from her menial servants, unknown to herself, would be acquiring that which he could not rely upon, by means he could not approve of. "But what," said he, "is to be done? It is now near dark, and by daylight in the morning I must be on my way to Cornwall. In the fortnight which will elapse, before I return, the old wretch will have completed her cruelty, and have broken the heart of that sensitive and lovely child. It is true I am ignorant of the facts of the case; but this is a point I cannot be deceived in—*the child must be innocent*—at some time she must have been tenderly and even genteelly bred—every tone, every gesture, bespeaks it. But the punishment I saw her receiving, it is evident, from the child's manner, was not a sudden ebullition of passion, but a portion of a system of cruelty to which she has been subjected by the iron-hearted wretch into whose hands she has fallen. I have it!" said he, starting up and pacing the room rapidly, like one suddenly relieved from a great difficulty. "I will write to Angela concerning it. Bred up at the Barton House, not far distant, she knows the character of almost every person in the town: I will request her to come down and investigate the case, and judge for herself—and if she deems it right she shall take the child under her own protection. God of compassion I thank thee! Once under her care the child is safe." Saying this, he reached the candles, which waited on the sideboard, hastily lighted them, without summoning a servant, and proceeded at once to carry his benevolent resolution into operation.

Mrs. Bunce, in the mean time, remained satisfied with the comforts of the bar, considerably consoled, but so far from being refreshed into good humour, that she sat in her easy chair "nursing her wrath to keep it warm," and repeating her determination to seek the first opportunity of revenging herself on Stirlington, as if she feared she should forget it. As to her own servants, she was delighted to think her means of making them miserable depended only on her own will; and, as to the child, the traveller once gone, she would be again in her power. "Well, I hope," said she, "this bangs the height of impudence, for this conceited commercial to come here and breed a rebellion in my house by interfering about what does not concern him; but I'll match him for it—I'll match the whole of them; but for that little wretch who has been the cause of all of it, won't I match her? Ha, ha, ha,—won't I be revenged of her? If she is not black and blue by this day week let no one ever take my word again."

Meanwhile, the servants were holding a council of war, standing beside the kitchen fire. It was commenced by ostler Will.

"Well, Margery," said he, "where's Missus?"

"Snug enough in the bar," said Margery.

"And there may she remain," said Will, with great solemnity, "until zich times as the devil is empower'd to claim his own property."

"Amen," said Bob Boots.

"Now, Will," said Margery, "when I left the Barton House, where I was brought up, you got me this place—and the place isn't so bad if the missus was bearable; and you have behav'd like a father to me ever since, because I have no father of my own; but if she do behave to the child as she have lately done, I'll leave the place and take the dear little thing with me, though I beg the streets to find bread for her. But what be'est a-crying for, you old fule?"

“Because Madge,” said Will, “I know'd thy father, a prime good-hearted old chap, who was killed in Waterlue, and that was zacly the sort o' speech he wud a made hiszel. Now, as to missus, if she ever due strike the cheeld agane, when I'm there, if I don't break every bone in her infurnal skin, I'll be d——.”

The accusing spirit, who flew up to heaven's chancery with the intended oath, grumbled all the way, at being obliged to go on such a message, and even to this day it is uncertain whether the recording angel took any notice of it whatever.

Well,” said Margery, “as to Mr. Stirlington, there's no tea ordered—no bed bespoke; I do think it's all on account of his taking on so about poor little Rose.”

“Never know'd un sarve his hoss as he hath now in all my life,” said Will. “Man and boy I've know'd un on the road vur twelve years. He draw'd down the reins on his back, and left un cap'ring about the yard like a mad thing, and never ax'd vur un since. Not that the hoss shall be the wuss us'd on that account.”

“Hick-hick-hick,” said Bob Boots, “wet feet—only think o' that—after splashing about the yard; wet boots—hick-hick—with all his purticklerness. I've roasted his slippers to a cinder. Wet boots—my eye—hick-hick.”

“It's all about the child,” said Margery, exultingly. “I'll tell you what I done. I made her as tidy as I could, and put her silently into the commercial room.”

“Well done,” said Will, that was right—thy father couldn't have acted up to the harticles of war better.”

"Hick-hick-hick—By the great snake," said Bob Boots, "that was a purty fancy."

"To-be-sure it was right, Madge," said Will, "very right—he can do something for the child, and no doubt will. Thy father and I, Madge, were boys together. I never went a sodg'ring as he did—good reason why—(here Will cast a knowing glance at his legs)—but a man may be crooked in his body yet straight in his mind. And, to my mind, a man who'd zee a hinn'cent cheeld ill-used is wuss than a wild Hotneytot—and, by all accounts as we gits from furrin parts, that's a breed zumwhere 'tween the great American sea-sarpant and a Bengal tiger."

Will was prevented from a further display of his learning, by Stirlington's bell being rung furiously; and, after so long a delay, each of his humble admirers considered it must be his or her important services he needed—they all, therefore, hastened to answer this summons, and thus entered the presence of the wine merchant in a body.

"William," said he, "I must have this letter taken to the post-office immediately; if it is too late for the mail, I must have a fleet horse and a trustworthy rider to take it to my house to-night."

"It shall be there to-night," said Will, "if I run all the way with it myself," and immediately disappeared.

This important affair dispatched, Stirlington now allowed himself to be surrounded by all the comforts which the attendants considered he stood in need of; and at daybreak was on his journey to Cornwall.

With this Cornish journey we have nothing to do, further than to state that it occupied the period of a fortnight, as had been anticipated. The evening had closed, after a wet and stormy autumnal day, such as of all others is calculated to make the traveller, whom darkness has overtaken on the road, sigh for the light and warmth of a comfortable home, when Dragon-fly dashed into the well-lighted streets of ——, the place of Stirlington's residence. At the corner of a street, with his head slightly bent downwards and his right hand resting on his knee, in an attitude of anxious attention, stood Bolt (formerly a ploughboy in the employ of Mr. Aubrey, and now a smart groom in the service of Mr. Stirlington.) He had assumed the attitude above described on hearing the sound of an approaching vehicle, to endeavour to recognize the far-famed trot of the merchant's matchless steed.

I might as well take this opportunity of observing that Bolt was now transformed into a smart, trim-looking serving-man; that he seemed inclined to unite all the dandyism of his new profession with the simple good humour and home-spun honesty of his former character. His cheek still retained the rosy hue of the "Children of the Moor," and Bolt was, altogether a good-looking fellow, and the studied neatness of his apparel, and his self-satisfied air showed him by no means unconscious of, or inclined to undervalue, that advantage. Although he had lost none of the ploughboy's good-hearted simplicity and artlessness of soul, he had evidently been considerably raised in his own estimation, by his promotion to the service of the wine merchant.—I have been thus particular in describing Bolt, for we shall often meet with him again.

Dragon-fly was, no doubt, a favorite with his master, but he stood ten times higher in the estimation of Bolt. The pride and exultation with which he spoke of his beauties, graces, and exploits, was truly amusing. The stanhope arrived—Bolt touched his hat smartly and respectfully to his master, but addressed his favorite only.

"So-ho, my poor fellow," said he, "I hope you have had enough of it by this time—get up there with your items—but we'll put you to rights, and no mistake.—Stand still, will you?—You shall remember the sabbath-day with the best of 'em.—Can't you be quiet?—Never mind, we'll put you to rights, my lad, that we will."

Tom Stirlington, smiling at these whimsical greetings between his famous steed and his superintendent of the stables, (for to tell the truth they were both favorites, and seemed mutually to recognize each other,) left his stanhope in the charge of Bolt, to be driven to the back part of his premises, while he proceeded to the front, to keep an engagement to which he had never been known to fail of being punctual to a minute—it was his meeting with his wife and daughter after an absence which had been equally unpleasant to all three. Having consulted his repeater under the lamp, he was pleased to find he was punctual to the time when he knew he should be expected; and his quick, firm tread, ascending the steps which led to his house, seemed to speak of an anticipated pleasure;

and the joyous rattle of his latch-key, as it echoed through the passage, bespoke the haste of expected delight. So great was the confidence entertained by his household of his punctuality, that, as the parlour door flew open and displayed a well-lighted room, furnished in a style of comfortable elegance, a servant was engaged in completing the preparations for tea, by placing the boiling urn on the table. Even at this joyous moment, which was to reward him for the toil and anxiety of a fortnight, there was one feeling of anxious suspense resting more heavily upon his heart than probably he would have liked to have confessed even to Angela. He entered the room, and it vanished in a moment. By the side of his easy-chair, on which hung his dressing-gown, and by which had been placed his slippers, in affectionate anticipation of his arrival, stood the beautiful orphan of the inn. She was very neatly attired, with an appearance of blooming loveliness which even he was not prepared to expect. She stood motionless and trembling, her little hands folded on her apron, with her expressive dark blue eyes fixed on his countenance with that mingled look of hope and apprehension, and timid reliance upon his compassion, which, on a former occasion, had shot into his soul.

A look of unutterable satisfaction rewarded his wife; but he spoke not a word. Without greeting the little object of his compassion, he sank heavily into his seat. He wished to hide his emotion by feigning more than usual fatigue—it would not do: he passed the fingers of his right hand twice across his eyes—a slight moisture was effused. No matter—with it escaped every particle of his fatigue—every remnant of his anxiety. Mrs. Stirlington knew her time, and affectionately took his hand. Evelina, who had been alarmed by the unusual manner of his entré, sprung into his arms, and as he eagerly kissed the beautiful features of his child, she flung her arm around the neck of the little stranger, and drew the lovely face of the orphan close to her own.

That bright sunshine of the soul which is the reflection of a generous deed settled in all its glory upon him.

But there was not much time to indulge in sentiment, for a furious ringing of the house-bell was followed by Bolt's hasty answer to the summons, and Uncle Ralph's deep rich voice, demanding—" Is your master home ?"

" Yes, sir, ten minutes," replied Bolt.

" Tom," said Mr. Ralph, entering the room, " you have stolen a march upon me—I calculated on being here before you. I fear we have spoiled an excellent mail-coach driver by making a gentleman of you."

" Let us all have tea," said Barnaby Rudge's raven: and, as if he had acted as master of the ceremonies on the present occasion, the now happy company took their places at the tea-table. One part of the arrangements certainly surprised Tom Stirlington—but he is not the only gentleman who has been taken by surprise at his own table. Evelina, as was her usual custom, took her place at the right side of Uncle Ralph, and, by his (Uncle Ralph's) directions, the beautiful little stranger seated herself at the other. That the child should be rescued and protected, certainly he had most anxiously desired—but that she should be received into his house as one of the family, and placed upon a footing of equality with his own daughter, was not the thing he had at first intended; yet, in that capacity she had been received into his house and remained for a fortnight. This is carrying the thing rather too far, thought he, and I must speak to Angela about it. Yet, when he looked round the table, he felt an insuperable reluctance to begin the subject. First, there sat the child herself, happy and beautiful, perfectly unconscious that her presence was an intrusion, receiving every kindness with an appearance of timid gratitude, yet, with an elegance of manner which plainly indicated that her earliest associations had been with people of education and polished manners. His eye next fell upon the gay and expressive countenance of Evelina, whose bright smile and animated manner seemed to indicate that in her new acquaintance she had received the accession of a new delight. Moreover, what had been done had certainly received the perfect sanction and authority of Uncle Ralph, who, in his simple-hearted benevolence, had never dreamt of any impropriety in the thing, and now sat between the children as much pleased as either of them; and it was difficult to decide at which he was most amused, the sprightly conversation of Evelina, or the broken English in which the interesting little stranger attempted to reply to it. Above all, there sat his beloved Angela, apparently unconscious of any impropriety in what had been done—perfectly satisfied with the part she had herself taken in the transaction; and, from time to time, stealing, with her bright eye, glances at him, which showed how proudly her very heart exulted in the part which he himself had taken in it. "Pooh," said Tom Stirlington to himself,—"what a fool a man's heart sometimes makes of him; but how much worse than a fool must be the wretch who has never heard its whispers? Well, well—they are happy in their brief delusion—let them be happy in it still. It shall not be said that the first hour of my return was the time when their pleasure was first darkened by my untimely scruples; they enjoy it, and I will enjoy it with them."

The conversation between the uncle and nephew was now directed to the usual subject on such occasions. Old acquaintances were inquired for—old anecdotes related—the present state of things upon the road inquired into, and detailed; but all the laughable occurrences which had come to the traveller's notice on his journey, as particularly to Uncle Ralph's taste, were described and dwelt on. Evelina, who inherited a large portion of the satirical humour of her father, entered delightedly into all this; but fearful that Rosabel, from her imperfect knowledge of English, would lose a great deal of the good things her father was repeating, stopped him from time to time, that she might explain them to her, and this she did with such whimsicality of expression and oddity of manner, that Tom Stirlington found his own comedy entirely surpassed, and Uncle Ralph, overcome by the comicality of the scene, found relief only in one roar of irrepressible laughter.

CHAP. IV.

"We twa hae run about the braes,
And pu'd the gowans fine;
But we've wand'red mony a weary foot,
Sin auld lang syne.
We twa hae padl't in the burn,
Frae mornin' sun till dine;
But seas between us braid hae roar'd
Sin auld lang syne."—BURNS.

From the time when Tom Stirlington left the Green Dragon to proceed on his Cornish journey, it will, no doubt, have been anticipated that he would in all probability find little Rosabel at his own house on his return; yet the reader may not have expected, any more than himself, to find her at his own table, the companion of his daughter. Some little explanation of that fact may therefore be acceptable, and, moreover, desirable to be here given, as it will serve to illustrate the characters of the persons whose deeds and destinies we are endeavouring to trace.

The letter despatched from the Green Dragon by the mail, as before described, reached its destination on the same evening. From the forcible and earnest manner in which it detailed the facts of the case, it was well calculated to communicate to Mrs. Stirlington the feeling of strong interest for the child, under the influence of which it had been written: she accordingly arrived at the Green Dragon about noon on the same day on which her husband had left it. Margery—who, as before stated, had been bred up in the house of her father—immediately waited upon her. From her Mrs. Stirlington learnt the few particulars which were known respecting the child's real situation. She was the daughter of an itinerant artist and picture-dealer, who had for some months lodged at the Green Dragon. He had stopped there with his wife about nine years before, when the child was three months old. The chief part of the interval they had spent upon the Continent: that would account for the child's imperfect knowledge of English—besides, her father scarcely allowed her to converse with any one, and always spoke to her in a foreign tongue. About twelve months before, on their return to this country, the mother had been drowned. Mrs. Stirlington immediately remembered the man as a very clever artist, whom her husband had employed about the period of their marriage. Of the mother she also knew something—for she had been well bred up, and was respectably connected, in the North of Devon. She had eloped from her friends with the painter; and, notwithstanding that act of folly, she was universally pitied, as a person deserving a better fate than she had found with a handsome and clever, but dissipated and profligate husband. The story of her death was well known to her, as was the fact that a short time after her unfortunate marriage her family had all emigrated to Canada. Margery went on to state that the picture dealer came to the inn a few months ago—that he had kept the child confined almost entirely to her own room, but indulged himself in a continual course of drunkenness and gambling. That a young tradesman having accompanied him into the country, with considerable property in his possesion—they were seen playing cards at a road-side public house—that they parted company, the young man being in a state of intoxication, the artist pretending to go towards a neighbouring town, and the tradesman to return home: on the road the young man was waylaid and robbed. Suspicion having fallen upon the artist, he had been committed for trial. There had been pictures, and, Margery suspected, jewels of some value, left in the hands of Mrs. Bunce. She, no doubt, retained the child in her house with the expectation that the father would be transported, and there would be no one to demand a particular account of the property from her.

The circumstances were of so painful a character that they at first considerably damped Mrs. Stirlington's hope of being enabled to benefit the child; but, Margery having carefully prepared her for the interview, introduced poor Rosabel herself. The child's extreme beauty, disfigured as it was by the marks of recent cruelty, her winning manners, her gratitude for every kind word, and the dread she appeared habitually to feel of Mrs. Bunce, had the effect on her which the compassionate chambermaid anticipated it would have. Mrs. Stirlington resolved, therefore, to avail herself of her husband's permission, and take the child into her own house, at least until his return, when he might himself decide as to her future destination. To gain Mrs. Bunce's consent to that arrangement was the only remaining difficulty. Mrs. Stirlington had sufficient self command to conciliate that vindictive woman with ladylike mildness; she assigned as a reason why she wished to remove the child to her own house, for the present, a desire to show her a kindness for the respect which she had entertained for her late unfortunate mother; and, having prudently concealed all knowledge of the valuables left with Mrs. Bunce, by the father, the landlady was induced to give a sort of sullen consent.

Tom Stirlington had seen Rosabel, as he considered, at the inn, in the capacity of a menial servant; and he no doubt anticipated that, if received into his own house, it would be in that capacity she would be admitted there. Mrs. Stirlington, however, aware that to that situation the child had never belonged, nor could she with any degree of propriety treat her as belonging to that rank, felt, that however destitute she might have become by her father's vices or misfortunes, she had no right, under the guise of charity, to place on a footing with her servants the daughter of a person whose original situation had been but little inferior to her own. Between the kitchen and the parlour there is a "great gulf;" but in the house of a wealthy tradesman, like that which divides the happy from the condemned, it contains no intermediate station. Having introduced her into the house in the character of a temporary visitor, it was not consistent with Mrs. Stirlington's sense of propriety, nor with that genuine goodness of heart which distinguished her character, to inform her daughter that there existed, with respect to Rosabel, certain humiliating circumstances which would degrade her beneath her own rank: the children therefore met as equals, in happy ignorance that there existed aught which should repress the kindling of that affection for each other, which, in childhood, is often as rapid in its growth as transient in its duration. Evelina inherited a great deal of her father's social good humour, and a natural desire to be surrounded by those from whom she could draw amusement, and towards whom the warm affections of her heart might expand unchecked. This disposition in the children was mutual; but hitherto their little hearts had been solitary—for Evelina's health had been, at times, so imperfect, that she had been educated entirely at home, and had therefore rarely met with companions of her own age. The delight which the children took in each other's society was therefore very great, and the rapidity with which it ripened into the warmest affection was very different from what might have been expected under ordinary circumstances. There was, however, another party to the transaction, whose whimsical, but simple-hearted and genuine, good nature, at once decided the little visitor's position in the family, at least until the return of Stirlington from the west, who was no other than Uncle Ralph. The good old gentleman had gone into the country to spend a couple of days with a friend when Tom Stirlington's letter arrived. On his return, which was on the day after Mrs. Stirlington's visit to the Green Dragon, she called on him to acquaint him with what had occurred. She had a heart at peace with itself, for she could look back with satisfaction on the motives by which she had been guided; but she was aware that her having taken into her house, even as a visitor for a short time, the daughter of a suspected felon, was a case on which difference of opinion might be expected to exist; that the majority would be against her; and she had no assurance that, when acquainted with all the circumstances of the case, even Tom Stirlington would entirely approve of what she had done. In the anxious position in which she stood, she saw the importance of securing the alliance of Uncle Ralph. She felt that she had here exercised benevolence in a manner which was unusual—and there is a deference due to the usages of society, which rarely admits of a woman choosing for herself a line of conduct at variance with public opinion; and although she felt that the act was a commendable one, there was a delicacy of feeling in Mrs. Stirlington which caused her to shrink from the censure and misrepresentation it might subject her to. Whimsical and eccentric as Uncle Ralph might be, yet such was his acknowledged worth, that his countenance and support would be a great defence to her; and should he disapprove of the somewhat hasty step she had taken, perhaps his experience might enable him to suggest some means by which it could even now be remedied. We are as chaff upon the stream of life, and the motion of one straw agitates all those which come in contact with it. The method which Mrs. Stirlington took to work upon the feelings of Uncle Ralph, so that he might approve of what she had done, was attended with such success, that she found herself pledged beyond remedy to persevere in the course which she had taken.

She opened the consultation by presenting to him her husband's letter.

"It is a long epistle," said he; "dreadfully badly written—confoundedly blotted; and I verily believe my spectacles are too old for me—I can make nothing of it. It appears to me that it is something about old mother Bunce having beaten a girl. Is it so?"

"That is the subject," said Mrs. Stirlington timidly, for she felt disappointed and alarmed at his coolness, so unusual when his humanity was appealed to.

"Is there anything so rare in that?" said he. "I never visited the house in my life without seeing that old she bloodhound do some disgusting act of cruelty and malice or other. Servants must be corrected. Such a wretch as she is will no doubt do it violently and villanously. But there is the law for their protection—what is it to Tom, or to you, or any of us?"

"It is a case of great tyranny," said she faintly, "of most brutal cruelty."

"My dear Angela," said he, "so it may; but is Tom Stirlington, a commercial traveller, to turn knight-errant, and go from stage to stage reforming the moral characters of all the landladies upon the road? Don Quixote fighting with the windmills would be but a fool to him. Ho-ho," continued he, "I see how it is: the girl was of exquisite beauty—ha-ha-ha! Why he grows quite sentimental. I'm afraid you will find that he gets your milliner to lend him the stray volumes of a circulating library. He certainly is studying romance in private. I dare say we shall shortly find that old mother Bunce is some wicked enchantress, and her persecuted handmaid, this exquisite beauty, is some stray princess, dreadfully disguised, of course."

"You will find, sir," said Mrs. Stirlington firmly, "that she is neither, as you suppose, a servant of the house nor a disguised princess, but one for whose destitute and helpless situation you cannot fail to feel compassion—she is the grand-daughter of your old acquaintance, Millwood, of Northfield Farm."

"Millwood, of Northfield!" said he, his tone of indifference now changed to one of the deepest interest. "Why, Angela! he, and I, and your husband's father, were boys together in the same parish—he was the first shot in the county."

Angela now felt assured that the conversation had taken the right turn. "Yes, sir," she replied; "and, I have heard you say he had a horse, a very superior hunter, which brought him in first at the death at the Barnstaple Fair stag-hunts for many years—"

"Tom's father always being second," said Mr. Ralph, with enthusiasm. "The horse poor Millwood rode was called Blue-bottle. Why, Angela, Millwood and I have bagged more game in one day than any other two men in the hundred."

"So I have heard," she said: which was perfectly correct, for she had frequently heard it from himself; although she had heard also, from others, how very insignificant was the share which Uncle Ralph could justly claim of the sanguinary honors of that memorable day.

"*Heard* of it!" said the elder. "My dear, you *must* have heard of it—it was in all the newspapers of the week; the only time my name ever went into print except in an advertisement. Poor Millwood! his super-excellent horse was Blue-bottle—his crack fowling-piece was a regular Joe Manton—he had the best breed of spaniels in the North of Devon. But we grow old as we go on, and so passes away the glory of the world. What is this mystery about the child?"

"She is the child of Millwood's only daughter, who, some years ago, eloped with a portrait painter, and afterwards went with him to the Continent."

"I have heard of the scoundrel," said he; "and his having so long escaped the gallows has always been to me an unfathomable mystery. But this poor child is the only one of Millwood's race who now treads the turf of our native isle, the rest being all in America."—He held the unread letter in his hand.—"What does Tom say about it?"

"In that letter," she replied, "he recommended me to go down and investigate the matter, as he had no time."

"He was right," said the merchant. "I will never call him a Quixote again as long as I live."

"I went down yesterday," said she.

"Bravo! my girl, I thank thee."

"I found Margery, the chambermaid, so disgusted with the service of Mrs. Bunce, that she was about to leave it. She had long been the only friend the poor child had. I engaged the chambermaid for my own house, and brought the child with me."

"Bravo! again," shouted Uncle Ralph. "Angela, thou hast long been dear to me, as the wife of Tom Stirlington—dear to me on thy father's account—and ten times dearer on thy own, but never wert thou half so dear to me as at this moment."

"But," said she, "there are so many unpleasant circumstances connected with the father—"

"The more reason have we to take care of the child," was the reply.

"But I know not how Stirlington would deem it proper she should be treated in our house."

"Treated! Angela; why, with kindness, to-be-sure—if not, he never deserves to have a house over his own unhappy head again."

"Of that I feel perfectly assured," said Mrs. Stirlington, colouring at the bare idea of his intending otherwise.

"If you feel assured ofthat, then," said the elder, "go home and do it. Come, I will go with you; come along: come along."

In Uncle Ralph's opinion, the mere fact of her being unfortunate made no difference as to the treatment the grand-daughter of an old friend should receive; and Mrs. Stirlington, who had sought a supporter and found a leader, calmly yielded to the pressure of circumstances until the return of her husband, as described in the last chapter.

CHAP. V.

> " But pleasures are like poppies spread,
> You seize the flower, its bloom is shed;
> Or like th' snow-fall in the river,
> A moment white, then melts for ever;
> Or like the borealis race,
> That flit ere you can point their place;
> Or like the rainbow's lovely form,
> Evanishing amid the storm."
>
> TAM O'SHANTER.

I described the evening of Stirlington's return as one of unmingled satisfaction to the whole family, in which the happiness of the little stranger was not forgotten. I mentioned, however, as an exception, a slight feeling of surprise, and of uncertainty as to the propriety of what had been done with respect to Rosabel, which arose in the mind of the merchant himself. This was dismissed for the time, like a painful visitor; and he was enabled to yield himself up to the enjoyment of the moment, made complete by witnessing the enjoyment of all around him. On the following morning, however, we find him in his green-house, bending over the beautiful exotics which it contained with a delight almost infantine, or, at least with that strong feeling of admiration for these loveliest children of the earth, in which the stoutest hearts and noblest minds are sometimes found to participate with childhood. The blasts of autumn had passed by them, but had not been allowed to breathe on them, they therefore retained all the brilliancy of their summer beauty. He was alone; although Bolt deemed it desirable that he should attend at a respectful distance, under pretence of expecting orders, but, in reality, to receive the reward of his vigilance, by witnessing his master's satisfaction at the care which he had taken of his favorites in his absence.

"Bolt has proved himself a careful lad," said he; "everything has been managed as it should have been, but I must find fault with something, *if it be only to show him how little I see to find fault with.* Bolt," said he, speaking aloud—and in a moment the grand vizier stood beside him: "I think that stand of geraniums much too near the door."

"I believe, sir," said Bolt, regarding the arrangement with great solemnity, "that it was placed there by your own order."

"Very well, Bolt, very well, indeed," was the answer. "I am much pleased to see that there is nothing to find fault with except what has been done by my own orders. Now had you not better prepare for church?"

"Thank you, sir," said Bolt, with a smile of grateful satisfaction; and left the garden as proud as "Cæsar with a senate at his heels."

Kings and Princes are the distributors of ribbons and garters, but it is the good hearted man, in all the relations of life, who is the distributor of happiness."

"Yes," said Stirlington, thoughtfully, "the flowers of the earth are beautiful, and those which kind Providence has scattered around *my* path, are, to use a homely phrase, in good order; but the most fragrant has its thorn, and the most lovely some tarnish of imperfection. And so is it with the joys of life: even those most bright and pure have some feeling mingling even with their birth to dim their splendour and to tarnish their beauty; and, from this common lot of the delights of human existence, the joys arising from the purest benevolence, are not exempt. I am not decidedly satisfied with respect to that beautiful and interesting child. If, however, I commence the inquiry where such inquiries ought to commence, and carry it into the chambers of my own heart, I discern there no motive to find fault with. Angela, also, has erred, no doubt from the best intentions, or rather from her having misunderstood mine; yet I must speak to her about it. To retain the child in our own house on a footing of equality with our daughter, would be an act of generous folly, connected as she is, which would be entirely inconsistent with that nice sense of propriety which every one owes it, as a duty to society, to set an example of respecting. However unpleasant it may be to disturb their present pleasure, I must speak to Angela about it."

At the moment he had formed for himself this prudent resolution, he was interrupted from reflection by a summons to the breakfast-table.

With all his native excellence of heart, Tom Stirlington was by no means a romantic man, and he certainly was not entirely free from a dread of being laughed at and called so. Many of his best jokes and keenest satires had been directed against persons who had that failing. Those who most enjoy a laugh at others, invariably have the greatest dread of being laughed at themselves; and he felt that the story related by the satirical and malicious, would give them opportunities of reprisal which it was desirable should be guarded against. The confiding benevolence of Mrs. Stirlington, resting entirely on purity of motives, caused her to overlook—and the simple-hearted good will of Uncle Ralph, rendered him profoundly unconscious of—the view which society would take of the case. Stirlington therefore felt that the responsibility of protecting the credit of the family, rested, in a great measure, with himself.

These reflections rushed rapidly through his mind as he passed from the garden to the parlour. He accordingly entered the breakfast-room with a firm resolution (to quote again his own words,) to speak to Angela about it.

Notwithstanding all the jests which the satirist, and the lamentations which the moralist, have uttered, to prove the frailty of good intentions, and their worthlessness when too frail for execution—yet a man deserves some credit for having come to a wise and prudent resolution, although he may never carry it into practical operation. Who can penetrate the veil which hangs over a single moment? Who can anticipate what it will bring forth to alter the current of life? That current of life is a stream which man, in his pride, pretends to navigate, but which usually bears him helplessly along, like the leaf of autumn flung among the foam of the torrent.

He found Evelina reclining on a sofa—a deadly paleness overspread her features, and that bright black eye which had, on the previous evening, seemed to bespeak the laughter of the inmost heart, was dimmed into a dull heavy expression of languor and suffering. Mrs. Stirlington sat at the table, selecting for her every delicacy which she thought could tempt her to take refreshment. These were handed to her by the orphan of the inn, and one by one received, but returned, with an imploring look, which seemed to say, do not be angry with me because I refuse your kindness.

" Poor Effie is far too ill to go to church," said her mother.

" If she stays at home, who will be her nurse?" said Stirlington.

The little stranger clasped her hands, with that beautiful attitude of anxious emotion, which I have before attempted to describe, and fixed her eyes on his with that peculiar expression which has often been before noticed, and which I have faintly attempted to describe by saying it seemed a look of mingled hope and apprehension. She thus stood, with her beautiful features beaming with some proposal which she had not courage to make.

Evelina understood the meaning of her looks, and said, "Yes, papa, Rosabel will be my nurse."

This arrangement was accordingly agreed to.

On their return from the morning service, Mr. and Mrs. Stirlington found Uncle Ralph at home, and some unexpected visitors, who remained there the rest of the day.

At an early hour on the following morning, Stirlington commenced a journey into Somersetshire. On the next Saturday night he returned to his home; but the happiness which, on the former Saturday, seemed to hover over it, and which had so delighted his benevolent heart, dwelt there no longer.

Who does not remember some moment in his life in which he seems to himself to have lived years—in which the joys and the sorrows of his past and future days seem to have met? These are, to the agitated spirit, distinguished from all other of the little points, the aggregate of which sums up our earthly time. It is like the meeting of the thunder-clouds which have slowly journeyed on to their collision—they rush together—the bright electric flame expires again in the deepest darkness. Such is a moment of agitation in a life of quietude—and such was this memorable evening to Ralph Stirlington.

The brilliantly lighted shops of —— were in the full blaze of their magnificence—their windows were still ornamented with those unrivalled productions which display at once the wealth, the manufacturing energies, the patriotism, the cupidity, the vanities, and follies of a people to whose character there is no ancient parallel nor modern rival. The gay customer was still lounging among the splendours of those temples of pleasure; and the care-worn man of business was still active in those, to him, abodes of anxiety. The night presented that aspect of gloomy horror, which, in the early autumn, precedes a gathering tempest. At this unusual hour, and in this unpromising state of the weather, the portly figure of Ralph Stirlington was seen to pass hastily before the brilliantly illuminated windows of the principal street, and to bury itself in the deeper shade of the avenue towards the London road. Notwithstanding the haste with which he advanced, he at times stopped, as if reluctant to proceed, but, after a moment's pause, he would walk on again, as if chiding himself for that brief delay. "How have I longed," murmured he, "to hear the rattle of his wheels, when, in his boyish days, I went out to meet him. How have I enjoyed the hearty cheer with which he would hail the first sight of the old man's hobbling progress. Old fool! old fool that I was, to think that those things could always last! Did I suppose that the world should be filled with joy for him and me only, but with sorrow and anxiety for others? Yet, even then, I did not forget what was due to those whose lot it was to suffer. At least," said he, and here he spoke aloud, "I am sure *he* never did. There may be those who looked with envy on his comforts, and will look with pleasure on his sorrows; but when they speak of want of sympathy with the distressed, no one will ever cast that into the teeth of Tom Stirlington."

Here the old man stopped suddenly—grounded his stout walking-cane on the road—rested both his hands on it—bent down his venerable head, and burst into a flood of tears.

A hard-hearted and thoughtless world may laugh at him for shedding them, at me for recording such an incident; but precious are the tears of such a heart as his. One, possessed of the most beautifully creative fancy which has ever wandered among the cares of this life, has imagined that the tear of *penitence* is an offering so acceptable to the Throne of Mercy, that it could open the gates of Paradise to the banished, when presented there.* The tear of *penitence* shows the longing of the spirit to RETURN to the Author of all Good—the tear of a genuine sympathy shows, that however it may have wandered in darkness and error, that spirit has never entirely forsaken him.

Absorbed in his feelings, the good old man stood resting on his cane, unconscious, for a time, that the storm which had long threatened had at last burst over him.

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* The Peri and Paradise, in Tom Moore's Lallah Rookh.

"I must return—I *must* return!" at length said he; "and, perhaps, I shall do no good by staying here; I sent Bolt up to him yesterday—but if he do not cross him at Chard, he will not return to-night, and to-morrow will be too late. I ought to be the first to break it to him—but I am not, I feel I am not, equal to the task—I must return."

Musing in this manner, he returned to his own house, satisfied to keep watch at the drawing-room window.

When the vehicle, containing Bolt and his master, emerged from the darkness of the high road into the lamp-light, Stirlington's capital horse was pushed to even more than his usually rapid pace, but exhibited symptoms of exhaustion and fatigue—showing the anxious impatience with which even the favorite had been pressed, to perform a journey of unusual length. Tom Stirlington saw that several sympathising friends and old acquaintances passed him in the street, but no one ventured to hail him; auguring the worst from that circumstance, he kept on without noticing any one. A turn in the street brought them in front of Mr. Ralph Stirlington's house, and his nephew's heart seemed to sink within him as he saw a bulky shadow passing heavily between the windows and the lights upon the table; as they approached, it became evident that the party within had caught the sound of the carriage: a slight twitching of the blind on one side, showed that he wished to catch a glimpse of the passing vehicle without being seen to do so. It was badly managed. A pause of unutterable anguish shot into the heart of Tom Stirlington. "Poor old man—poor old man!" said he; "in this moment, so dreadful to us both, he is thinking only of me."

Here Dragon-fly began to caper about, as if his master's emotion had been communicated to him; which, indeed, it is very likely, was in some measure the case, from his unusual manner of driving.

There was nothing in the act of the impertinence of vulgar familiarity, but it was an expression of the genuine sympathy of a true but humble friend, when Bolt laid his hand timidly on that of his master, and, by a gentle pressure, seemed to solicit leave to take the reins into his own hands. At any other time Bolt would as soon have thought of seizing the reins of government; and his generous heart seemed ready to burst when the gentle pressure was slightly returned, and the reins given up to him.

But why are those trivial things recorded? They are the outpourings of generous hearts to each other—they are recorded in the archives of heaven.

How completely mingled are the follies and sorrows—the vanities and sufferings of life—its gravest cares and its emptiest occupations. At the time when the heart-stricken traveller was being thus conveyed through the principal street, by his sympathising but humble attendant, the night coaches were thundering onwards to their outward journey, and the mirthful melody of their buglers floated merrily upon the autumn breeze, as if in derision of all the care and sorrow which might be within the reach of its sound. The "in-sides" were drawing their travelling-caps over their eyes, indulging in the hope that now and then a brief and troubled sleep would relieve the irksomeness of the journey; and the "outsides" making up their minds, as well as they could, to the tranquil horror of an outside night. At the same time, the theatre had disgorged its thoughtless multitude: on the one side a group of critics were discussing the merits of a "star," and eyes which were turned on the sorrowing father with indifference, were ready to fill with tears at the imaginary sorrows of a dramatic heroine: on the other side, a knot of boys, who had lately been elevated to the seats of the "gods," were rejoicing over the humours of a comic song, as if they had found the "new delight."

The carriage stopped suddenly and silently at Stirlington's own door, a quantity of turf having been spread before it to deaden the sound of passing vehicles; Bolt sprung lightly to the ground, and stood at the head of his favorite, but without offering a word of comfort or condolence to him. At the top of the steps, holding the door half open, with her face hidden in her apron, stood Margery. Stirlington passed in without speaking. Bolt sprung eagerly up the steps, and in an anxious whisper exclaimed, "How is it, Margery—how is it?"

"Oh, Bolt," said she, "that ever we should live to see this day! He is gone to the death-bed of his child."

CHAP. VI.

> "The fleecy cloud on which I ride,
> To Araby is bound."
>
> Walter Scott.

So entirely have I been occupied with the homely joys and sorrows of this excellent family, that I have only been able to mention the name of one important member of it, who will now claim our particular attention. I stated that Tom Stirlington had an only brother, some years older than himself, who, chiefly by the bounty of his uncle, Mr. Ralph Stirlington, had been many years established as a wine merchant, at Lisbon. The fortune thus put into his hands had been greatly augmented by a train of uninterrupted commercial success. During a brief visit to this country, while a young man, he had married the daughter of a gentleman of very ancient family in the north of Devon; but whose fortune, though respectable, was scarcely equal to his family pretensions. The great personal recommendations and gentlemanly manners of Augustus Stirlington soon made him an acceptable lover to Mary Harfield; although the stately old squire, her father, at first looked extremely stern at the idea of marrying his daughter to the son of a man of acknowledged worth, but still, to make the best of it, a plain but wealthy farmer, living in a neighbouring village. Family pride is a long-lived and obstinate vanity with those whose conduct and ways of thinking it has once been allowed to influence: but there is one idol before which even this visionary demon bows down—it is wealth! The merit of the young man was undeniable; but, perhaps, even that might scarcely have over-ruled the scruples of old Mr. Harfield had it not been backed up by his Portuguese dollars. Be that as it may, the nuptials were celebrated—the lovers made happy—and Augustus Stirlington became, for a time, a resident at Harfield House. In tracing the influence of circumstances on the formation of his character, I should not omit to state, that although a young man of considerable experience in the world, for his years, yet, at the time of his marriage, Augustus Stirlington was still young enough to receive fresh impressions from the circumstances by which he was surrounded. Even the fondness of Mary Harfield for him was expressed with that polish and delicacy which distinguish the manners of those, who, from their childhood, are surrounded by the refinements of birth and station. It is true, that by the haughty old squire he was treated with the most cordial kindness, yet with a ceremonious respect, which, so far from leading to familiarity, constantly reminded him (to use a dramatic phrase,) of the necessity of acting up to the part which he had been, by circumstances, called on to play. This, operating upon a character by no means deficient of ambition and a little spoiled by the early possession of wealth, caused him to assume a manner of guarded urbanity towards the old friends of the family, which was the greatest possible contrast to Tom Stirlington's hearty good humour. His popularity, therefore, quickly declined; and even the members of his own family (his father in particular,) began to regard him as one raised above their own level. Persons who felt perfectly at ease in the company of Tom Stirlington, felt confounded and abashed in the presence of the wealthy and highly-connected Lisbon merchant; and even his brother found his stately reserve a check upon his own hilarity and good fellowship. At Harfield House, Tom Stirlington was by no means at home—his conversational stock-in-trade consisted chiefly of counting-house and road-side anecdotes, which were there out of place; and, for the first time in his life, he was made to feel almost ashamed of that character in which he had so much and so justly prided himself, that of a dashing and successful commercial man. The departure, therefore, of Mr. Augustus Stirlington for the Continent, with his blooming bride, was regarded as something of a relief to all parties; for, notwithstanding their respect and regard for him, his residence in England had brought people together whose tastes were different and habits dissimilar. Mr. Harfield could return to his favorite study of the genealogies and heraldic distinctions of the "worthies of Devon" uninterrupted by persons who took no interest in the matter,—honest John Stirlington could devote again his whole heart and soul to the cultivation of his estate,—his son Tom was soon on the road again, in excellent good humour, and not ashamed of being so,—and Uncle Ralph returned to town, with an entire fresh collection of sporting anecdotes, picked up during his temporary residence in the country—a stock-in-trade of which he stood considerably in need, the old one having grown much the worse for wear. The substantial regard between the parties had never been, however, diminished; this was especially true with respect to the brothers—there was in both the same native goodness of disposition, but their manners were different—the grand aim of life was dissimilar, and the character was moulded accordingly; that ascendancy which an elder brother sometimes gains over the younger, by a seniority of years, was never entirely lost by Augustus Stirlington over his brother—it was maintained in after life by the superiority of his talents, and cheerfully yielded by Tom, from that deference which he believed due to his more extensive experience and knowledge of the world. The correspondence, therefore, which was kept up between them was an exchange of sentiments of the truest brotherly affection, and of the firmest friendship which the tie of relationship could possibly be instrumental in cementing. This union of the two brothers, divided by the Bay of Biscay, was further strengthened, if possible, by their common interest in one who became almost equally dear to them both—Augustus Stirlington's eldest son. While Tom Stirlington was yet an unmarried man, and residing with Uncle Ralph, Harfield Stirlington, the youth above alluded to, had been sent to this country to receive an English education, at the grammar school at ——, under the superintendence of Tom Stirlington and the guardianship of Uncle Ralph. Notwithstanding that his guardians decidedly became his playfellows in the holidays, he made a very respectable progress at the school, and grew up a handsome, lively, generous, but spoiled boy; and such he returned to Portugal, a short time previous to Tom Stirlington's marriage.

Young, handsome, and wealthy, he was soon introduced into the society of young men his equals in age and fortune, and became a Lisbon man of fashion, engaging in those reckless adventures there esteemed so indispensable to the character, with all the generous-hearted confidence of a young Englishman stimulated by vanity and charmed by novelty. A great deal of this, however, he had the art to conceal from his father; and his mother, who delighted to see him well received in what she had been led to consider the best company, and regarded his follies and gallantries as the excusable excesses of early youth, aided in the deception; although, to do Mrs. Stirlington justice, she herself was little aware of the excess to which they were carried.

The year after Harfield's return to Lisbon, a check was, for a time, put upon his gaities, and a temporary reformation effected in his conduct, by the death of his only sister. to whom he was most sincerely attached, and whose loss plunged his parents into the deepest affliction.

This melancholy event was followed, at no great distance of time, by the death of their second son, just before his intended departure for England to receive his education; and in a few years he was followed to the tomb by their youngest son, a very promising little fellow, seven years of age. This latter event took place just at the time of Mrs. Stirlington giving birth to a daughter, who proved so delicate that she was given up to the care of Pietro and Ursula, two old servants who had married and settled some leagues in the country, and whose daughter, Cospetto, was Mrs. Stirlington's personal attendant.

Such a dread had the fond bereft parents of the air of the Portuguese metropolis, that they determined that their fragile but lovely little blossom should remain almost entirely at the beautifully-situated residence of honest Pietro. It had the advantage of an elevated and picturesque situation, some miles from the sea: it was a spacious mansion, and had long been the family seat of a very ancient but decayed family. The present owner, Don Garcias de Toromendo, had, for some, time resided entirely in Spain, whether to make his fortune or to conceal his poverty was uncertain. Honest Pietro had been bred on this estate; and when he quitted the service of the English wine merchant, he found Don Garcias anxious to let the mansion to some one who, in his absence, would cultivate the estate and the extensive gardens; and Pietro was possessed of capital enough to undertake to do this on his own account. Thus Don Garcias could preserve the appearance of having his family mansion inhabited by his own retainers. Tastes, however, widely differ upon that subject: to have a household there who would transmit him a yearly rent, was far more congenial to the taste of Don Garcias de Toromendo than to keep an establishment at his own proper cost. Although certain suites of apartments were retained especially for the owner, a large part of the house was entirely in the possession of Pietro; several spacious and comfortable apartments were therefore prepared by Ursula for the use of invalids who might be recommended a temporary absence from Lisbon. This enabled Mrs. Stirlington, who had remained in a weak state of health ever since the death of her youngest son, occasionally to reside at the Castello de Toromendo, (for having been formerly a place of strength it was dignified by that name,) and there at once to cultivate her own health and her little daughter's affections. At times Mr. Stirlington also was a frequent though a brief visitor. The mansion itself was old, and partly ruinous, but it was surrounded by magnificent gardens and pleasure-grounds, laid out according to that style where Nature seems to preside and Art appears only as her handmaid, employed to soften down her too luxuriant beauties—according to the plan of the Moorish conquerors of Granada, the founders of the Alambra, whose taste had at one time influenced that of the whole peninsula.

It was Augustus Stirlington's favorite relaxation from the cares of business to wander with his child through these delightful solitudes, and muse of Old England and her people, while she played among the flowers, so delicately beautiful, that, to the fanciful, it might seem as if one of the genii from the gardens of Irem still lingered among those scenes of blooming magnificence and oriental splendor. The bee, cloyed with the honey of its hive, does not find it so intensely sweet as when it wanders over the fields and finds it scantily scattered among the blossoms of the heather bell. The father and the child met only in their hours of pleasure, and they derived nought but pleasure from such associations, the hold which they took on each other's hearts was therefore strengthened by the halo of light which imagination cast around their intercourse, instead of being weakened because that intercourse was not more frequent.

But the most frequent visitor to the Castello de Toromendo was Harfield Stirlington. Gay, reckless, and dissipated, he was not depraved; young, and yet untaught by experience, as he was, while he fondly gazed upon the beautiful features of his sister he at times almost suspected that fashion was folly—that what was called pleasure was a delusion—and that happiness dwelt with innocence like hers. If thoughts like these did for a moment intrude, they were of short duration, however, with Harfield—they were soon drowned in the laughter with which he would superintend her sports. One rich source of amusement to him, was the volubility with which she conversed with him in Portuguese, and her hesitation, difficulty, and frequent blunders when required to translate her own ideas into English: this was easily accounted for—all day she conversed only with Pietro and Ursula, and their servants, who spoke no English; she heard that language from her English relatives alone, who were occasional visitors, and even they, in order to hold pleasant intercourse with the child, were obliged to converse with her in Portuguese.

One morning as Harfield Stirlington rode up the avenue which leads to the grand entrance of the Castello, to visit his sister, followed by Fidato, as smart and roguish-looking a liveried man as ever mingled in the *intriques* of Lisbon, and, at some distance, by a trusty muleteer, leading an extremely small white pony, which he intended as a present for his sister, he was surprised to meet a cavalcade of horsemen. A short distance in front of them rode a middle-aged chevalier, dressed in a military uniform, mounted on a spirited steed, which he managed with the perfect address of a skilful horseman: mingling, however, with the ease of his carriage was that haughtiness of bearing, aided by the stern, scornful expression of his swarthy features, which might mark a man who had had to battle with the world and had done so without one particle of good will towards it; upon his dark complexion might be traced the livid hue of disease and suffering; and his right hand was suspended by a sling. His followers might be military men of inferior rank, or of no rank at all, for though all were armed in an extraordinary manner, they were very variously attired; the only one who wore a uniform similar to his own was a very young cavalier, who rode next to him, upon a lively steed, chaffing with impatience, which the rider rather encouraged than repressed, as if the slow pace at which the elder chevalier proceeded was equally irksome to both. The avenue was of spacious width, and the party ascending it and the party descending seemed to meet each other with equal surprise; they appeared inclined, therefore, to pass each other at a cautious distance: Harfield was, however, near enough to observe that the look of surprise with which the elder chevalier had at first regarded him had changed into one of haughty and sullen displeasure; still he seemed inclined to allow him to pass without addressing him, and as Stirlington could by no means divine how he should have incurred that displeasure by appearing on grounds where he had hitherto been encouraged to consider himself at home, he was man of the world enough to return the frown only by a look of careless defiance, and passed on. His attention was, however, soon attracted by the sound of hoofs and the jingle of military accoutrements, and on turning he perceived the younger cavalier was rapidly approaching him; on observing this he courteously turned to receive him.

"Go you to the Castello," said the stranger, "to inquire for Don Garcias de Toromendo?"

There was nothing in the question itself offensive, but the insolent air of assumed superiority with which it was put rendered it so; the young Englishman therefore replied to it with an air of careless disdain, showing that he perceived the offence but felt himself above it.

"I do not," said he, "go to visit Don Garcias, neither have I the pleasure of his acquaintance."

"My uncle has then commissioned me," said the chevalier, "to inquire what business brings you to the Castello."

"I go there," said Harfield, "to visit my sister, who has for some time resided there."

"In apartments, I apprehend," said the nephew of Don Garcias, ' which, in my uncle's absence, the steward has been allowed to let to strangers?"

"Certainly," said the Englishman; "in apartments hired from Pietro Gonzalo, whatever he may be."

The Portuguese bit his lip at the last insinuation, and continued, in a tone of increased insolence, "You will permit me to inform you, signor, that the apartments which face the east, reserved for the proprietor, are at present occupied by his family."

"I thank you for the information," said Stirlington; "but I had no intention to intrude myself on the family of Don Garcias;" and bowing carelessly in answer to De Toromendo, he passed on to the Castello.

"Oh, signor," said Ursula, "here are surprising proceedings! Don Garcias has been here for many days with his young and beautiful wife, whom he married in Spain. That terrible and vindictive Don Diego, his nephew, is with him, and such a set of fierce-looking ruffians, as appear to be only fit for the castello of a bandit. God defend us! and send them well away again, say I.

"Silence! and begone, old crone," said Pietro Gonzalo, who was bustling about with an air of the most consequential importance, greatly raised in his own estimation by having been placed at the head of Don Garcias's establishment. "My master is accompanied, signor, by several gentlemen of the first consequence, who are engaged, like himself, in defending the rights of Don Carlos, in Spain, against those who frame hateful constitutions as an excuse for treason to their liege lord the king. Yes, yes," said he, "that is the cause—their constitutions are mere cloaks for disloyalty, as Don Diego has well explained to me, who hates a constitution as much as he does an Englishman—that is to say, he can endure neither the one nor the other."

The usual cringing servility of Pietro, changed into this coarse insolence, convinced young Harfield that now he had been flattered by his feudal lord and his nephew, that all the obligations he was under to his father were but as dust in the balance; he saw that the pompous and insolent blockheadism of Pietro was unmasked in gratitude, and felt immediately convinced that to leave his sister there in such company, with only his protection, was by no means commendable: but learning from Ursula that Don Garcias and his companions were not likely to return for more than a week, he resolved to remain for a few days, as had been his original intention, to teach his little sister to ride the beautiful pony he had brought her. In the mean time he resolved to send the muleteer to Lisbon with a letter, in which he would inform his mother of the change which had taken place at the Castello, and recommend her to take the necessary steps for the removal of the child when he himself left it.

On the following morning Harfield Stirlington had forgotten the existence of Don Garcias and the stupid insolence of Pietro, and was resolved to give his little sister her first lesson in her equestrian exercise. Fidato had prepared the pony for the purpose, in a retired walk at the end of the gardens, closely shaded from the morning sun. The little pupil succeeded to admiration, and her palfrey proved the most gentle and docile little creature imaginable. As the pony had stopped to enable Fidato to make some arrangement which he deemed desirable, a large wolf-hound, lately arrived at the Castello with Don Garcias, sprang over the fence and rushed immediately at the pony, baying dreadfully; before there was the slightest chance of its being prevented, the pony rushed off at full speed, and the agonized brother and his frighted attendant saw him pass a turning in the walk, the child still on her seat, but without the possibility of retaining it. Harfield rushed after; but shortly found her in the arms of a young and beautiful lady.

"She is safe, signor," said she, with much naivette; "she is quite safe. See, she fell on those roses; she has scarcely crushed them—she is quite safe."

We must draw a veil over the progress of error. We need not describe the easy conquest made by the lovely Donna Teresa of a heart sufficiently susceptible and not armed by those safeguards of morality which could lead it even to shun the first temptation. Suffice it to say that from this hour the young wife became to Harfield Stirlington an object of eager pursuit. He was aided by all the talents of Fidato, who was intended by nature for a clever lad, but who, by an early initiation into the vices of Lisbon, had been made a villain.

Teresa had been bred up in a convent in Estremadura, in Spain, to which she had been removed from her parental roof at an early age, and from which she had only been taken to become the wife of Don Garcias. The question as to whether she loved him or not had never been asked her—she had never asked it of herself; for at the time of her marriage she was willing to submit to any arrangement which promised change and a release from the restraints of the nunnery. Through the skilful management of Fidato she now frequently met Harfield at different parts of the gardens and grounds, all of which meetings seemed to her as accidental as their first had been. With respect to her husband, she now discovered that she feared and hated him, and dreaded nought so much as his return.

Of Harfield she at first entertained but little alarm, he treated her with the most scrupulous respect, and adhered most strictly to the promise given to Don Diego, not to seek admittance into the apartments inhabited by the family of Don Garcias. Under pretence of showing her some ancient paintings on glass which he had seen in an old neglected corridor, open to the visitors of Pietro, he induced her to meet him there. One investigation of the paintings did not satisfy them; and this being a sort of neutral ground, they frequently after met there, Harfield having discovered that she could gain admittance to this by a sliding panel, which would lead her from her own apartments into the corridor unobserved by her own domestics.

When the muleteer arrived at Lisbon with Harfield's letter, Mr. Stirlington had gone to Evora, where he was detained a week, and Mrs. Stirlington being in a very weak state of health, was unable to make the necessary arrangements for the child's removal, and therefore was content that she should remain at the Castello de Toromendo until his return, under her brother's protection, whose motives for thus withdrawing himself for a time from the pleasures of the metropolis, she thought she could not sufficiently admire. Time was thus gained for the imprudent intercourse to continue. Mrs. Stirlington's health became daily so much worse, that Monsieur De la Motte, a French physician who attended the family, declared that a removal to her native country was now the only chance of saving her life. It was therefore resolved that she should remove to England, taking her little daughter with her, and two female English domestics, leaving Cospetto, the daughter of Pietro, to superintend the household at Lisbon.

Soon after the departure of his mother and sister for England, the indefatigable Fidato brought to Harfield the fatally pleasing intelligence that Don Garcias was about to set out with his nephew, Don Diego, to a distant part of Portugal. Under pretence of ill health (in which deception he was assisted by Monsieur De la Motte, the physician before named,) he again took up his abode at the Castello, in the apartments of Pietro Gonzalo. Diego, however, unexpectedly returned to the Castello, and finding that young Stirlington was residing there, suspected the cause. He hated Teresa, because his uncle's marriage with her had cut him off from the prospect of inheriting the wreck of his fortunes, which, small as that might be, was his only hope. He accordingly first alarmed the suspicions of the husband, and then set such a watch upon the lovers, that their clandestine and guilty intercourse was discovered. Don Garcias, wounded and in ill health, determined on a revenge which should at once gratify his thirst for vengeance and conceal his dishonour from the world. The proud and vindictive Diego eagerly entered into his plans, as he hated both the victims, and it would be most in accordance with his own views.

The Donna Teresa died suddenly at the Castello, and Harfield Stirlington having returned to Lisbon, was assassinated in the streets of that city as he returned from a late party of pleasure. Before either of these events took place, it was given out that Don Garcias de Toromendo, and his nephew, Don Diego, had joined the army of Don Carlos, in Spain. The bleeding corpse of his boy was brought to the house of the despairing father on the same day that letters arrived from Tom Stirlington, stating that the vessel in which his wife and daughter had embarked for England, had been wrecked on the coast of Ireland, and that both had perished.

CHAP. VI.

> "To do aught good will never be my task,
> But ever to do ill my sole delight;
> And out of good still to find means of evil—
> Which oft times may succeed, so as perhaps
> Shall grieve him, if I fail not, and disturb
> His inmost counsels from their destin'd aim."
>
> MILTON.

Although superstitious feelings have been ridiculed by the witty, condemned by the wise, and proved by the philosophical to have their origin in a heated imagination and misguided fancy only, yet men of the strongest minds have found it easier to laugh at them in others than to shake themselves entirely free of them. Tom Stirlington slowly and heavily ascended the stairs leading to his daughter's chamber, the staircase being dimly lighted by the shrouded lights in the vestibule and one shrouded lamp at the head of the stairs. Perhaps the home of domestic comfort never presents so chilling and depressing an appearance as when thus dimly but permanently lighted for the night, showing that sorrow has banished rest from it during the usual hours of repose. The silence which reigned around was deathlike, only broken by the ticking of the clock which stood on the stairs—passed a hundred times unnoticed during the day,—it now claimed the undivided attention of the ear; it seemed as if it was some unearthly, restless thing, whose destiny it was to wake while all around enjoyed the blessings of repose, and whose task it was to measure forth and count the last throbs of a heart expiring in agony. As he ascended the stairs it struck one. The sound shot through the heart of the sorrowing father.

"Is it indeed so?" said he. "Has the silent flight of time again brought us to that awful day so fatal to our family? It is the 8th. of November; and twelve months ago on this fatal morning the bleeding body of poor Harfield was laid at the feet of his distracted father: on the same day arrived that dreadful intelligence which it was my hard task to communicate to him, which, added to the other harrowing event, crushed the noblest heart which ever beat in human bosom. Poor Augustus! even at this dreadful hour what are my sorrows when compared with thine? Could I have thought that He, who, to correct thy errors, deemed it needful to fill thy cup with so much bitterness, would see nought to correct in me? Yes, the fatal hour is returned, and it is now my turn to bear with manly resignation the trial it may bring."

This resolution was soon put to the test, for the door of his daughter's room silently opened, and in a moment Angela flew into his arms.

There is little of interest, and nothing of novelty, in the anxieties of a sick chabmer, we will not, therefore, detain the reader by a long description of them. Evelina had remained for many hours in a tranquil and deathlike sleep—her medical attendant, a sincere friend of the family, sat beside her, watching with great anxiety the time of her awaking: pale, and worn with fatigue and confinement, watching the little sufferer also with an appearance of the deepest interest, sat poor Rosabel—Evelina had scarcely allowed her out of her sight during her illness; and, anxious in everything to gratify her, Mrs. Stirlington had consented that Rosabel should also keep watch at this important crisis. The little patient awoke—recognized her father with a faint smile, and taking the hand of Rosabel placed it in his, and immediately closed her eyes, as if anxious again to seek the quietude of repose.

While Tom Stirlington stood affected by this little incident, the medical man prepared to take his departure—shook him heartily by the hand, and declared that from the manner of her awaking, his hopes of her recovery were greatly strengthened. His hopes proved to have been well founded, for from that period she slowly recovered.

It is not, under these circumstances, matter of surprise that many weeks passed away before the thought of anything unpleasant, arising from their adoption of the little stranger, recurred to the affectionate parents. Mrs. Stirlington had a great deal of her husband's genuine goodness of heart, but far less knowledge of the world, and therefore was not so quick in anticipating its censures. She seemed only anxious to forget the subject, and contented herself by ordering that Rosabel's father should by no means, at any time, ever be named in the presence of either of the young ladies; and because the subject was a painful one to her, with far less curiosity than is generally attributed to the fair sex, she remained unacquainted with all the particulars of Rosabel's history, except what had been gathered at the inn.

As Evelina became convalescent, poor Rosabel's health was found to have suffered considerably from the confinement and want of regular rest, which Evelina's fondness for her had imposed upon her, and which Mrs. Stirlington had reluctantly consented to her enduring, from her strong wish to keep her daughter pleased and tranquil. Air and exercise were necessary for both. Tom Stirlington evinced no surprise when told, at the breakfast-table one morning, that they were about to take it together; but, having gone into his office to prepare for his Cornish journey, (the time for taking which had again arrived,) he was visited, it must be acknowledged, with some slight relapse of his old complaint, when he saw Bolt drive a dashing phaeton up to the door, and Mrs. Stirlington get into it, with both children, attired in elegant and costly carriage costume—the young ladies being dressed exactly alike. "Well," said he, "Angela is determined to go the whole animal in this affair, for certain. It may not be exactly right; but I scarcely know what to blame in it. Psha,—'tis an ungrateful task to blame a beautiful woman; and I never saw Angela look more so than at present. There, too, is little Eff., with the rich bloom again upon her cheek and the bright sparkle again in her laughing eye, assisting her little friend into the carriage with a look which seems to say the drive would be nothing without her. Rose, too, receives the attentions of Bolt with an air of easy elegance, which seems to indicate that it appears to be nothing more than is due to her. Who Uncle Ralph's disguised princess may at last turn out to be, it is impossible to conjecture; but one thing is certain, that whether she be a disguised princess or not, even the illustrious lady on the throne of England, elegant and lovely as she is, need not to be ashamed to acknowledge her. People will say I make a fool of myself, no doubt; I half suspect that I do—but—but there they go—may pleasure and happiness attend them all."

Stirlington's punctuality in matters of business was so relied upon at the Green Dragon, that preparations on rather an unusual scale were there made for his reception, on the day when he was expected. Mrs. Bunce, since his last visit, had had sundry misgivings of mind as to the consequences of having given offence to her customer, and had determined, if possible, to effect a reconciliation. Accordingly, when Dragon-fly was seen dashing down the street with even more than his usual rapidity, she was seen standing at the door of the bar, dressed as if for an unusual occasion; her cap, to increase her native loveliness to the utmost, adorned with an extra bob or two of scarlet ribbon, her features made up into a smile which approached the agreeable as near as they could possibly be brought to it, her hands folded before her, as she stood in an attitude to drop a respectful curtsey as the vehicle should make its far-famed "bolt" down the passage: on the other side of the entrance stood waiter, who had just put the door of the commercial-room invitingly open, with his hand reached to the yard bell ready to give the signal of the expected arrival—which signal, however, was needless, as Ostler Will stood at the bottom of the passage, with his hands resting upon his knees and his face turned round the corner of the butment behind which he had thought proper to place himself that he might witness, without personal risk, the merchant's favorite exploit: Bob Boots, with a pair of slippers in one hand and a boot-jack in the other, had drawn himself up behind a post on the other side of the passage, for the same purpose. To the astonishment and dismay of them all, Tom Stirlington kept his eyes perseveringly fixed on the little tassels of white cotton which hung at the end of the small triangular nets with which Bolt had adorned the ears of his favorite, and cast not a glance towards the inn: Dragon-fly himself dashed on as if he regarded his former place of rest and refreshment with contempt. This drew them all to the front, to witness the conclusion of so astounding a phenomenon. A little further down the street, the crash of the vehicle rapidly turning was heard, and in an instant it disappeared down the passage of another, and hitherto considered inferior, establishment; in which bells were immediately heard to ring and servants were seen hastily flitting to and fro with all that bustle which forms so strong a contrast to the usual quiet of a country inn, and to the experienced eye and ear are certain announcements of an important arrival.

Without speaking, Mrs. Bunce strode hastily into the bar, where alone she found consolation on all occasions which tried her temper. "This comes," said she, "of his infernal pride—his diabolical insolence—his wanting to make himself out as of more consequence than anybody else: but I'll prick his heart for this—I'll make him repent of interfering with what does not concern him; he shall be glad to leave me alone another time, without showing such airs as these."

Will Ostler, in the mean time, had retired into the depths of his own dark dominions, the bend in his back considerably increased, and his crooked knees even closer together than ever: Bob Boots, with an expression of features as near to serious as his broad flat countenance could assume, slowly followed him; he found him with a broom in his hand, hard at work in dispersing the litter and otherwise putting into disorder the neatly-prepared stall intended for the reception of Dragon-fly.

"Hick-hick-hick, the snap's down," said Bob; "the snap's down, by the great snake, Will—the snap's down."

"It's no use 'pon earth, Bob Boots," said Will, sullenly, "vor you vor to go vor to try vor to hindiver to tell me better than what I knows. If you mean by zayin' the snap's down, that old missus is done up—you'm right—vor she's settled, all to immortal smash."

Here a long pause ensued; for it is not easy even for men of genius to keep up a conversation where no difference of opinion exists.

"I b'lieve she rents the house," at length resumed Bob, of old Mr. Aubrey out at the Barton?"

"If living in a man's house from year to year and never paying no rent at all be kall'd rentin' it, whey then she do," said Will.

"Hick-hick-hick—Wine bill long's my leg," said Bob; "never settled since old Mr. Ralph's time,—snap's down, by Gosh."

"If you mean by that," said Will, "that old Mr. Aubrey wull put missus to trubbel 'cause Mr. Stirlington have took a niff about that little maid, you'm mistaken; or if you mean to go vor to zay that he's like them there half-rav'nus half-starv'd kimmershells wot bring in zitch hosses of that zort if man an' hoss was put togither in a zawpit they'd begin to eat one th' other,—if zich fules as that git offended in one thing, they'll hact ungen'rous, and untradesman-like in another; but tis'n zo with Mr. Stirlington—they'm abuv zitch ways as that, the whole fam'ly ov 'em. If-so-be you think he'll hinjer missus out of revenge, you'm a true-born'd thoro'-bred jackass, and no mistake: but here's th' point, Bob—mind me now—if he leaves the house, there isn't a kimmershell-man on the road will stop to 't—that's the moral on't."

"Didn't I zay that the snap's down?" said Bob.

"Yes, Bob," replied Will; "but what's the use ov thy zayin' it—thee cassn't tell me better than what I knows. But look, Bob; there goes Miss Deborah Mangleshape into the bar, as vull ov malice and unchritableness as a egg's vull o' meat. She's fine company vor missus! They'll be snug enough together for the next hour or two;

and the old scratch himself might be proud to make one of the party. Let you and me drink confusion to them all three."

The lady thus announced was a maker, and for aught I know a mender, of fashionable corsets. She was aware that her having lost the favor of Tom Stirlington and his influential family, must be the cause of much embarrassment to Mrs. Bunce, and would, perhaps, at no distant day be productive of absolute ruin to her, and had therefore called, to exult secretly over her distress and humiliation, in a friendly way.

Miss Deborah Mangleshape was not one of those who carry their heads too high, for the whole length of her interesting person elevated it not above four feet from the ground; but what nature had denied in altitude it had supplied in breadth: upon her broad shoulders was placed a large, round, bullet-shaped head, and confined to them by a neck so short that it was entirely out of sight—so that (to use Will Ostler's elegant comparison,) with its large green gogling eyes and capacious mouth, it seemed to turn like a turnip-lantern on a butter-churn.

"Hick-hick—what a queer dumpy little body 'tis," said Bob Boots; "why she's every bit as thick as what she's long—hick-hick."

"Yes," said Will, "and as vile in heart as what she's comical in person. If twasn't vor the difference in the length ov 'em missus and her might rin together in a curricle. If the old Nick doesn't git the both ov 'em in the long run he can't have sense enough to carry on his own business. But come along Bob, while they'm engaged in ill wishing—which is worse than witchcraft—let thee and I try if the bands of friendship don't grow the stronger the more they be wet."

Bristling with the accumulated finery of every description of frill, flounce, and furbelow, which the skill of her dressmaker could introduce into a space so limited, the amiable lady thus described presented herself at the door of the bar, and inquired with a voice of most insinuating sweetness if she might come in.

"Ha-ha-ha," said Mrs. Bunce, "come in, my dear! by all means. I'm most happy to see you. What lucky chance has gained me this favor?"

Here the ladies most cordially shook hands. Mrs. Bunce was perfectly well aware of the *friendly* motive of her neighbour's visit, and therefore determined to hide all appearance of chagrin under the mask of boisterous merriment. "I'm quite alone you see, my dear; and therefore I'm quite delighted that you have dropp'd in to help me to enjoy my holiday, it is so rare a thing for me to be alone: do pray be seated."

Miss Deborah now placed herself as nearly in a sitting position as a lady of her height could do on a chair of ordinary dimensions.

"Dear me!', said Mrs. Bunce, in malicious allusion to her personal deficiency; "is that chair too high? Would you prefer the stool, my dear?" Here she pointed to a foot-stool so ridiculously low, that had the lovely Miss Deborah accepted the proposal she would have seemed, to the eye of a stranger, to have fallen into that situation into which persons are proverbially liable to fall who attempt to sit on two stools.

Biting her lip with suppressed anger, she declined the offer; and Mrs. Bunce, perceiving that under pretence of a polite attention to her guest's comfort she had had the satisfaction of mortifying her vanity, became more cordial than ever; she discussed the scandal of the whole town with so much rapidity and tact, that Miss Deborah panted in vain for an opportunity of wounding her feelings in any way, or coming to the subject of her visit: at last she exclaimed,

"Well, mum! if I stay here much longer you will be the death of me; you are so witty and agreeable, that I shall laugh myself into convulsions; and I never saw you look so beautiful as in those splendid red ribbons—they are becoming to a degree. What a clever man that Dabbleclout the dyer is—he can make any soiled, worn-out old thing look equal to new; I declare, mum, he has done that with your superlative fine ribbons." Here she spread forth her hands in apparent delighted admiration of the trimmings, but in reality exulting at the mortification of the hostess on being reminded that the ribbons had passed from disgrace to honor under the rosy fingers of Dabbleclout the dyer.

Disguised as this piece of petty malice was, it was entirely seen through by Mrs. Bunce, who gave her full credit for the motive: she therefore replied to it sharply and haughtily—"Leave my ribbons alone, my dear—

I have been too much used to the compliments of your betters to take any notice of the like unto you."

With this she flounced out of the room, giving some order to a servant, leaving her amiable visitor to digest her politeness as she could.

"The like unto me! hey,"—grumbled Miss Deborah—"the like unto me! Well, I never. I know the time when she was one of the dirtiest servant wenches in the town. She came here to live with the silly old landlord just before he had a fit of the gout—she nursed him—it lasted some months—by the time he got well it was time for them to get married: the like unto me! There's one comfort—my character is not, like her red ribbons, a soiled thing glossed over."

These reflections having passed through her mind, by the time of Mrs. Bunce's return she was fully prepared for mischief. Accordingly she said, with the most innocent look and the sweetest manner imaginable—

"Dear me, mum; I'm surprised to find you so quiet, you us'd to be all of a bustle when Mr. Stirlington was here. I saw him drive in at our end of the town like any madman, as usual. Really, mum, he ought to be prosecuted; and they say there is an act of parliament to punish such ones for being furious."

"Then he ought to have been punished," said the landlady, "long ago: the violentness of his temper ought to be put down by law. But I wash my hands of him—you need not, my dear, be afraid of finding him here, kicking up an uproar in every corner of the house, as he us'd to be—he dares not show his impudent face in my house."

"Dear me! how singular," said Miss Deborah, in well-feigned astonishment.

"No, my dear," continued Mrs. Bunce, "he dares not to come here; he served me barbarously when he came down on his last journey. However, I was so foolish as to forgive him. My disposition is too tender and forgiving by half, my love; but I was loath to hurt the feelings of his wife, poor unhappy creature—for, my dear, as I may tell you in confidence, it was all on account of that misbegotten little wretch, the child who was left upon my hands by that cut-throat villain the portrait painter—"

"Oh, I heard," said Miss Deborah, with great sweetness and humility, "that his child and all his property was left in your hands."

"Ha-ha-ha!" roared Mrs. Bunce with an hysterical laugh, but wincing under the insinuation, as her fair friend intended she should; "property indeed! that beats everything! Where should such a vagabond as he get property?—ha-ha-ha! My dear, I had a better opinion of your sense."

"Dear me, mum," said Miss Mangleshape, "pray don't be angry; I merely said what everybody says—not that I know anything of the matter myself: but what right had Tom Stirlington to interfere about that vagabond child?"

"More right than people think of," said Mrs. Bunce. "Listen to me."

"Yes, mum," said Miss Deborah, eagerly.

"Come closer," said the landlady.

The amiable corset maker drew herself to the edge of the seat, but even that would not do, it was not close enough for Mrs. Bunce, so she slid down on the before despised stool, on which she sat looking up to her entertainer with eager and inquisitive looks, while she bent over her, and, in an almost inaudible whisper, said—

"About that child, Stirlington has the right of a father. She is a love-child of his own."

"The Lord purteckt us!" said Miss Mangleshape, with great perturbation. "What a monster! I wouldn't trust myself in his company for five minutes. When a hinnecent, hamiable young creature gets into the hands of such ones, mum, the most virtuoustest resolutions are like the snow before the sun."

"I dare say, my love," said Mrs. Bunce, soothingly, "that you find them so. But, in regard to Stirlington, believe me he *is* a monster in every point of view. My heart aches for the poor milk-and-water, hen-hearted thing, his wife. *I* would have plucked his heart out. Only to think, my love, of his sending the poor thing down here with a tale of a tub about *her* respect for the child's mother: he forced her actually to take the baseborn little wretch into his own house, where she has ever since been treated as one of the first quality. It was but yesterday that a friend of mine was in town and saw her driving through the streets with his own wife and daughter."

"Merciful heaven!" said the maker of corsets; "the sins of the flesh in our times beats plague, pestilence, and famine!"

"Yes, my dear. But so it was; and I wonder not at your virtuous indignation—one's blood boils to think how law and gospel are put to open shame by such brutes: yes, she was a-seen but yesterday a-riding through the streets with his own wife and daughter, deck'd out even in more finery than they were allowed to wear: I was told that she was looking about her—that infamous child was—as bold, and as impudent, and as brazen as brass itself; and Stirlington's wife and daughter in comparison to her were looking quite like a hinferior sort of people."

"Dear me, dear me!" said the fair Deborah, with a deep groan; "it must be the very abominations of the wicked woman of Babylon, who sat upon the seven hills, clothed with scarlet—with a knowing glance at Mrs. Bunce's head-dress; and yet" said she, "it makes me laugh, too, to think of that Miss Angela Aubrey—she was a beauty, as people used to call her, and as high-minded as need to be, and now turn'd into a mere nursery maid for this wine merchant's base children—ha-ha-ha,—it makes me laugh; we shall see the downfall of more than one of them—ha-ha-ha!"

Here the landlady's laugh was a 'ready chorus.'"

"I used to work for Miss Angela," continued the rectifier of the female figure, "when she lived out at the Barton. I do some things for them still—for that is their pride, Mrs. Bunce, their foolish pride, to have it said they never desert an old servant or an old tradesperson: I always am told to call upon her for orders when I go to town. She looks very well, and seems very happy."

"All deception, my dear. Though the poor tame creature takes it so quietly, everybody knows she is dying of a broken heart; and so I am sure she ought to if she has any heart to break."

"But do you think, Mrs. Bunce," said Miss Deborah, "that she rightly knows the worst of it? Do you think she is aware that the little vagabond wretch is his own daughter?"

"If she does not," said Mrs. Bunce, "she ought to be brought acquainted with it; if she does know it, she is as bad as he is."

"I'm going up to-morrow," said Miss Mangleshape: "I shall call as usual for orders—I shall soon find out whether she knows it or not. I'll be bound for it she shall not die in ignorance."

"You are very right, my dear, very right," said Mrs. Bunce. "But you surely are not going? Do, pray, indulge me with a little more of your company."

"Really, mum," said the little dumpy corset maker, fairly raised upon her legs, though not much higher than before, "I must go—your company is so bewitching that

I have stayed longer already than I ought;" and shaking hands most cordially, the acquaintances separated, apparently the warmest friends on earth.

"So," said Mrs. Bunce, when her visitor had left, "that little ugly lump of gall and bitterness will bring the thing up to Stirlington's wife, will she? Well, well, that is something—it will make the poor silly thing repent of having interfered in the matter at all. As to him, whether she takes it quietly or not, it will sting *him*—ha-ha-ha!—sting him to the heart. I dare say I shall have the child back again in a week,"—here she clasped her hands with demonlike energy, as the hope of vengeance rushed on her mind. If so, shan't she suffer for all the mischief she has done? I won't care for the mischief itself if I can but make her suffer for it. But whether I have that comfort or not, this I know, that Deborah Mangleshape's interfering with the matter at all will bring upon her the vengeance of the whole family—her sole dependence is on them and a few fools who follow their example. Poor Deborah—ha-ha-ha!—she, at least, will be like a snake choked with its own poison."

Miss Deborah, as she moved rapidly towards home, thus reflected upon the past and the future—

"Well, this *is* really glorious. I'll tell this to Mrs. Stirlington; it will tear her poor foolish heart to hear it—but she will think it kind in me. Mr. Stirlington cannot blame me for telling what I have heard, as I shall instantly say where I heard it; but his vengeance will fall on old Dame Bunce—he will press for his bill—

Mr. Aubrey will come in for his rent; then some folks who have got a few pounds may get married and become mistress of the Green Dragon; and, instead of looking down on the like unto me, old Mrs. Bunce may be reduced to the state from which she rose, or worse—ha-ha! —or worse, and, like satan, the father of lies, be scorched —scorched—scorched to death in her own flame."

CHAP. VII.

"O, had I but the wings of a dove, that I might fly away and be at rest."

"He looks forward from the little inn of our mortality to the long summer journey which lies before him."—BULWER.

The brief winter of that beautiful climate had passed over Lisbon as if it had only visited that fair city to give warning that it was the time of its more terrific rule on the hills of the north, and the spring was in all the freshness of its first rich bloom. Augustus Stirlington lay reclining on a sofa in his library, apparently too weak to quit the recumbent posture: at a table near the sofa sat Anselmo Gilianez, a monk of the order of St. Francis. The mother of Father Anselmo was a native of Ireland, he had, therefore, been bred up among the English and Irish residents at Lisbon, and had thus been acquainted with Mr. Stirlington from the time of his arrival there. Though Anselmo Gilianez was more than twenty years the senior of Augustus Stirlington—though their ways of thinking varied as much as might have been expected from the natives of different countries, whose occupations were so widely dissimilar, and, above all, though their faith differed more importantly than all the rest, they had long been friends. A book lay on the table before the Franciscan, and with that he seemed chiefly occupied, although he from time to time directed a look of compassionate interest towards the couch of his sick friend, showing that it was there that his thoughts were principally engaged.

The apartment was a spacious and a splendid one, for all the richest productions of the East and of the West which could contribute to its splendor had been there collected, and arranged with the purest taste. The life-like statues which rested on their pedestals around might, to the fanciful eye, appear to be the rightful inhabitants of the room, and its owner their guest. Chosen and arranged with the purest taste, they exhibited, however, in their possessor, a fondness for those objects which are calculated to awaken grave, and even sad reflection, rather than for the gayer productions of the luxuriant fancy. They seemed, therefore, fitting spectators of the scene—the effect of which was greatly heightened by the glowing tints reflected from the rose-colored draperies partially shrouding the windows, which were open to the balcony to admit the fresh evening breeze: the scarlet draperies were so placed as partially to exclude the too brilliant rays of the setting sun, and thus a kind of rosy twilight was diffused through the apartment, which seemed to communicate to the almost living marble all of life except its activity. This apartment remained as it had been arranged by the direction of Mrs. Stirlington, a few days previous to her departure for England. Portraits of her children had been hung around the room, and she was enabled to complete the number by what was an invaluable addition in the estimation of the fond father, a very striking resemblance of their youngest child, who was about to accompany her to the land of his nativity: this latter portrait had been completed a few days previous to their departure. Although the sight of these in his lonely moments, looking, as it seemed, upon him with their appearance of blooming beauty and happy innocence, was to the bereft parent most painful; yet he had never been enabled to acquire sufficient resolution to order them to be removed. The fear of encountering this sight had, sometimes for days together, banished him from his library; yet he resolved that even every trivial ornament should remain as directed by his wife: the only alteration which he allowed was one brought about by a little stratagem of Father Anselmo's. The good Franciscan had observed that, even after returning cheerfulness had seemed to indicate a temporary forgetfulness of his irretrievable loss, a sudden glance at the portrait of his adored wife, would recal all the sorrowful associations connected with her loss to his mind with painful and sometimes overwhelming force. During the absence of Mr. Stirlington from home for a short time the benevolent Franciscan had caused an elegant silk drapery to be placed before it: the curtain at first seemed to annoy and offend him, but respecting the friendly motive with which it had been placed there he did not name it; it was allowed to remain—and from that time the resemblance of the lovely features of Mary Harfield had remained as closely veiled from human sight as those which had been buried in the depths of the ocean.

Upon the present occasion the complexion of Augustus Stirlington exhibited the paleness of mortal disease, yet his features had lost nothing of their lofty expression, nor his dark eye aught of its keen, stern look of firm decision and intellectual vigour, which bespeaks a man capable of thinking for himself and determined to exert that privilege. The conversation was commenced by him.

"Father," said he, "I am dying—surely though slowly dying—the death struggle, though it may not come immediately, will not be long delayed."

The good priest approached him in silence—in silence the friends shook hands; the benevolent features of the kind-hearted Franciscan assumed an appearance of the deepest sympathy and sadness, but the noble countenance of Augustus Stirlington expanded into a bright, unearthly smile.

"I ask not pity, good Father Anselmo—I need it not—I *need* it not; two years ago I *should* have needed it—then I was a man who had been raised, by a train of uninterrupted success, to the height of my ambition—from obscurity to wealth and greatness, and possessed of the strongest hopes that there were those who would follow me who would emulate all that had been commendable in my life, inherit the proceeds of my success, and bless my memory—but whose happiness would be for a time interrupted by my departure. Oh, *then* it would have been terrible to die."

"My son," said the monk, "I fear these thoughts are far too agitating for you in your present weak state."

"No, father, no; they ease my heart of the intolerable load caused by a silence too long continued; they have ever been present with me, while you and others have kindly exerted yourselves to make me forget them. I could now arise, and, with untrembling hand, pluck away that friendly veil which hides the resemblance of those features the shadow of which I have not so long dared to look upon. The period of my loneliness—the night of my desolation draws to a close; I shall soon be with them, or cease to regret them. Oh, father! even you—though you have numbered many years, cut off from the endearments of life as you have been—know not how easy is the flight of the spirit when the ties which have bound it to the scene of its earthly pilgrimage have once been strong and have at last been all cut asunder."

"My son," said the priest, "there is an appointed time for man once to die—the time unknown—the will of Him who appoints it inscrutable; but while life remains it has its duties—we must not relinquish ourselves to Death from mere unwillingness to live."

"Yet," said Mr. Stirlington, "that is the fatal, the incurable disease which has brought me thus to the confines of the grave; I am surrounded by wealth and luxury only to feel their noisome insufficiency—by ease and comfort only to feel the wearisomeness of leisure—and my bosom is filled with cultivated affections, strengthened by habit and exercise, only that I may feel that the world to me is a blank—that they have no object to fix upon."

"But," said the friendly Franciscan, "there is the green island of your birth, my son, and the friends of your childhood."

Anselmo paused, for a shudder of agony seemed to convulse the whole frame of the suffering man; but covering his face with his hand, he remained some time silent,—

"O God!" at length he exclaimed with a deep groan. "thou alone knowest how I have longed to see them both, the friends of my youth and the land of my nativity; but to them I shall never, never return! How, in my desolation, could I look upon the green pastures of Devon, through which I once passed with so much pride, surrounded by so much happiness? Friends of my early days! how could I receive the incense of their affection offered to a cold and broken heart? No, father; *your* friendly hand must close my eyes, and not the hand of kindred affection; I must die in the tranquil despair of loneliness."

"Speak not of despair, my son," said the monk compassionately, "it is a word which should not be upon the lips of the departing——"

"Father!" said Mr. Stirlington, suddenly raising himself into a sitting posture, "our faiths differ."

A thrill of compassion, amounting almost to horror, shot through the heart of the sympathising priest, and a convulsive shudder shook, for a moment, his every limb.

"Father," said Stirlington, "our faiths differ—but I spoke not of hereafter when I spoke of despair; the first yearning of my heart, even in childhood, was after immortality—the first conviction of my mind when reason dawned upon it was as to its reality. Mine has been a life of busy occupation, and not devoted to the tranquil contemplations of the cloister; but as I have journeyed through the wilderness that conviction has still, like a pillar of cloud, travelled on before me, and it turns into a bright light as the shadow of the tomb hovers over me."

"Prince of compassion, Redeemer of the earth, I thank thee!" ejaculated the monk, crossing himself devoutly.

"But, good Anselmo," said the dying man, "the controversies which have divided the hearts and the opinions of men must not be discussed under the shadow of the valley of death. You have been my friend in life, and at this awful hour you will not desert me."

Here he held out his pale, cold, wasted hand to the Franciscan.

None but the sincere in faith, whose sympathies the blight of bigotry has not blasted, can tell how warm and yet how bitter was the tear which Anselmo Gilianez shed over it.

"My son," at length the monk resumed, "this agitating conference must be brought to a close—it is too much for you, and it betrays me into weakness which I thought long self denial had excluded from my heart; but, I again repeat it, it is this despondency of life which is depriving you of it."

"Yes, yes, father; I know it—I feel it—it is the reluctance of the soul to enter upon the ordinary pursuits of trifles which fatigue without exciting me: nothing to wish for, nothing to hope, my torn and lacerated heart seems *unwilling* to beat. But, father," he said—and here he suddenly stood up, which the monk beheld with as much astonishment as if a corpse had been suddenly reanimated in his presence, "good father, and my sincere friend—you say that my disease is a mental one—I believe it; but it is not the less mortal on that account:—yet,"—(here he fixed his eyes earnestly upon his companion, and sunk his voice to a low, confiding whisper,)—"being in the mind, it may have affected its own proper organ—my brain is bewildered,—in the loneliness of the night, on my sleepless pillow, there come to me dreams, waking dreams, and although they relate to impossibilities, my nerves feel re-strung and my heart reanimated.

Could Harfield, only Harfield, stand again beside me in the graces of his fatal beauty, with that bland intelligent smile which was printed on my heart when I dreamt that he was untarnished with dishonour; or had the assassin but spared his heart and blighted his name, and had done it *wrongfully*, I could go forth to battle with the world by the side of my young champion as strong to repel its injustice and to redress his wrongs as ever, ever in my life I was. Or could but those lovely blue eyes which seem to tremble as they look upon me from that picture once more be fixed on mine—could I but once more see my last, my loveliest child—"

"But, my son," said the Franciscan, sorrowfully, "these are impossibilities."

"I know it," he replied; "the false creation of the heart-oppressed brain; and I have nothing to do but to die—to welcome death, and calmly, gladly pass away."

As he said this, he suddenly sunk upon the sofa, instantly deprived of the strength which a momentary enthusiasm had supplied him with.

A slight tapping at the folding doors which opened into an adjoining corridor now attracted the attention of Father Anselmo, and he was far from displeased to find that it was Monsieur Jacques De la Motte, the French physician, requesting permission to enter. The professor of the healing art capered up to the sofa with many grimaces, followed by Ursula, often before named.

"Here is Signora Ursula," said he with the patronising air of one who was often admitted to Mr. Stirlington's retirement, and therefore thought himself entitled to ask a favor for her. "Signora Ursula, monsieur, the wife of Signor Pietro Gonzalo, magior-domo of the Castello de Toromendo, and mother of the Signora Cospetto, the superintendent of your own household, come to you with the strangest of all imaginable petitions—it is no other than that you should take upon yourself the office of a priest, and hear a confession."

"A confession?" exclaimed the Franciscan, annoyed at this ill-timed impertinence.

"Yes, holy father," replied the physician, "a confession of crimes so horrible, of offences so revolting, that she, Cospetto I mean, will not place confidence even in me."

"My daughter Cospetto, signor," said Ursula, addressing Mr. Stirlington, "believes herself to be dying: there is something which presses heavily on her conscience, but she will confess it only to you."

"To me!" exclaimed Mr. Stirlington, faintly. "Of what nature *can* such a confession possibly be?"

"May the holy San Nicholas defend us!" said Ursula: "it is impossible to conjecture—she will give no hint to me—she seems driven to distraction when I talk of her confessing it to Pietro, her father, as is most natural she should. Holy Virgin! Mother of God! defend us; if it should prove to be aught relative to the wicked ways or the murder of Signor Harfield——"

In an instant Mr. Stirlington stood on his feet: his cheek, lately so deadly pale, burning with the crimson glow of impatience—his weak frame seeming strung with supernatural energy.

"Father," said he, "I am ready; lead the way, I will go instantly, and hear it all—all, though each word be as a scorpion sting to my tortured heart"—(and he here advanced a step or two, then paused.)—"Father," said he, "lend me your friendly aid, I am still weak; De la Motte, your arm—I can go, however. Anselmo, look not thus compassionately upon me; De la Motte, there is no cause for that look of alarm: but I must be quick—haste, haste, delay is death. O God! will this dreadful task never be done, never, never complete?"

Here he rested heavily upon his supporters; gradually sunk into the friendly arms of Anselmo, and was again laid on the sofa in a state of complete prostration and utter helplessness.

De la Motte took two or three rapid turns through the room, finishing each with a pirouette like that of an opera dancer, (for his whirligig brain was only excited to a state of activity by motion so rapid that it would destroy all power of thought in others,) talking to himself all the while in French, English, and Portuguese, whichever language most readily suggested itself, he exclaimed—

"Mon Dieu! By Gar! Sacra! San Nichole! Diable! Here is one dilemma! here is one immergency—one, two immergency! Here are two patients, one dying to disgorge a secret, the other will soon die unless he be allowed to swallow it. Holy Virgin! they must be brought together: there will be some dreadful agitation, but like the mixture of the solution of an alkali and an acid it will go off in an effervescence and leave them both flat enough; they will then be either within the reach of physic or beyond it for ever. Mon Dieu. Ursula, bring together all the domestics in the house: haste! haste! There is no bringing a secret out of purgatory: it is true the parties may soon be both together there, but the disclosures they make there will be lost to us. Diable! Make haste, make haste."

De la Motte here busied himself in preparing a restorative for Mr. Stirlington, which seemed to awaken him from his apparently deathlike swoon; but he lay passively looking on upon the preparations which the physician thought proper to make, while Anselmo chafed his temples with a white napkin dipped in some fluid prepared by De la Motte.

The preparations at last complete and the domestics assembled, the folding doors leading to the corridor were thrown open, and the sofa, mounted on rollers for such an emergency, passed with a noiseless, and, to the patient, almost imperceptible, motion over the rich carpets of the library and corridor, at the extremity of which it stopped at the door of Cospetto's apartment.

Arrived there, Monsieur De la Motte made strenuous efforts to enter, but was repelled politely but firmly by Anselmo; he therefore remained pacing the corridor with great perturbation and ill-concealed resentment.—The reader who participates in his curiosity must participate in his disappointment, for the disclosures made by Cospetto must be told in the regular course of the narrative. All that was known at the time was that Mr. Stirlington, having been conveyed to his own apartment, a conference was held between the monk Anselmo, the French physician, and Lopez de Gama, the chief director of Mr. Stirlington's commercial affairs; that immediate inquiries were set on foot after a young English seaman named Ben Brackle, who had been at Lisbon when a boy and had lately returned there on board a ship called the "Resolve;" it was ascertained that she had sailed for Smyrna some weeks before: orders were immediately given that a swift sailing vessel of Mr. Stirlington's should follow her and bring him back with all possible dispatch to Lisbon; that upon this point the monk appeared most anxious, and that the Frenchman declared that, dead or alive, the sailor must be found and compelled to return—although strong suspicions were entertained that the physician scarcely knew why; that Cospetto recovered, and was, as soon as fit for removal, sent to the Castello de Toromendo, and there kept from all intercourse with strangers by the jealous care of her father, Pietro Gonzalo.

While half of Lisbon was set into a state of agitation to apprehend him, and the other half were trying to define why the wealthy merchant should despatch a ship on purpose to bring back an obscure British seaman, and all determined to conclude that it forboded something dark and dreadful, Ben Brackle was resting thoughtlessly upon the bulwarks of the "Resolve," not exactly thinking on nothing, but on no particular thing long at a time; sometimes a thought of his widowed mother would cross his mind, and of her cottage-home in one of the quiet villages in the north of Devon; sometimes he thought what a paradise the cottage would become when lighted by the bright smile of the pretty Cospetto: but while his reflections thus passed from the past to the future, he could not make up his mind to think seriously of either, and he filled up the vacancy by singing short snatches of the old songs of merry England, of which, from its frequent repetion, the favorite seemed to be

"The flag that's braved a thousand years
The battle and the breeze."

CHAP. VIII.

"The witch has raised the storm, and her ministers have done their work."—CONGREVE.

The amiable Miss Deborah Mangleshape, true to her purpose, journeyed by the stage to the town in which Mrs. Stirlington resided, the day after her conversation with Mrs. Bunce, which had put her in possession, she hoped, of the means of destroying Mrs. Stirlington's peace of mind, under the guise of a humble, fawning friendship, and of ruining her excellent friend Mrs. Bunce by complying with her own request to tell the story.

Every other business which she had in the town was dispatched with hasty impatience. Mrs. Stirlington, to her great comfort and delight, received the maker of corsets in her dressing-room, to which Margery was soon summoned to take part in a cabinet council, on matters far too delicate and important to be here recorded. The children, Evelina and Rosabel, were engaged in studies proper for their age, in a closet which adjoined the dressing-room, the door of which was open, but the governess who attended them there, on account of their ill health, was fortunately absent. Margery took every opportunity which business admitted of to throw a little gossip into the conversation respecting the news at the town of her former residence: this gave Miss Deborah a capital opening, and when she thought her fawning flatteries had sufficiently wrought on Mrs. Stirlington, she, with great humility of manner, by which she strove to disguiset the coarse vulgarity of the communication, and many professions of regard and gratitude by which she endeavoured to make her malicious design appear a conscientious act of duty and disinterested regard, she brought out the intelligence which she had the night before received from Mrs. Bunce.

It was received by Mrs. Stirlington with painful surprise, but dignified and indignant silence, with the exception of one brief sentence, in which she firmly but calmly expressed her conviction of its entire falsehood, and desiring that she might be no further insulted by the subject, she left the room. This, however, was not the temper in which Margery was disposed to take the thing: with all the privilege of a favorite, when her mistress had left the room, she reproached the staymaker loudly with mischievous intentions in coming there to repeat scandals which she bluntly declared she knew to be entirely of Mrs. Bunce's own invention. This provoked a reply; which brought a still louder and more angry answer; which was, however, cut short by a piercing shriek uttered by Evelina in the closet. Poor Rosabel had fallen senseless on the floor.

The usual restoratives were resorted to, with the usual beneficial effects; but Mrs. Stirlington, who had been hastily summoned, observed that big pearly tears began to force themselves under her silken eyelids, showing that she had recovered a perfect consciousness of what had occurred; yet she kept her eyes still closed, as if she feared to open them. Compassionating this state of feeling in the delicately-minded and sensitive girl, she resolved, with Evelina, to retire for a short time, leaving her for the present to the kind attentions of Margery.

"Weep on—weep on, my darling child," said Margery, compassionately wiping away her tears, "it will do you good; it will do me good to weep with you for company, though it would do *me* more good to see that ugly little bundle of ill will, the staymaker, dipp'd in a horse-pond and toss'd in a blanket, and Mrs. Bunce sharing in the same for air and exercise. Don't you be out of heart Miss Rose—don't you be out of heart, my dear."

Rosabel suddenly rose up. "They have left me!" she exclaimed, "left me when I seemed to die! They believe it all!—they will fling me to the street—I shall perish—but I will die blessing them."

"Indeed, Miss Rose, you must not flurry yourself in this way; Missus and Miss Effie only went away that you might be quiet and happy; they will soon come back, and all will be well again."

"Never,—never!" she exclaimed; "oh, never. The sweetness of our love is gone—they must not disgrace themselves by loving me; and when my heart is broken they must not shed a tear over my grave."

"Hush, hush, my dear Miss," said Margery; "do please to try to compose yourself, for I hear missus coming, and she will be so vexed to see you take on in this way."

Mrs. Stirlington entered the room with a firm and stately step; and, to Margery's utter astonishment, attired in a carriage-dress. She signified to Margery that she might leave, and was instantly obeyed. A sudden coldness seemed to spread itself round poor Rosabel's heart as she observed her altered manner, and she sat observing her with that look of mingled love and apprehension which her wayward fortunes had often caused her lovely features to assume.

Mrs. Stirlington observing this, her pity and regard for the child overcame every other consideration, and as she pressed a fond and motherlike kiss upon her throbbing forehead, their tears mingled upon her cheeks. Soon recovering, however, Mrs. Stirlington said—

"My dear Rosabel, what we have to-day heard is equally painful to us all; but I hope I can venture to expect that my wishes, when known to you, will be strictly complied with: that is, that you will never in any way allude to this mischievous falsehood, or to any part of your early history, to Evelina or to any one else; all that is necessary to be said to Evelina with respect to what we have heard to-day, I have said myself—she is satisfied; her respect for your feelings will prevent her from naming it to you; your regard for hers, for mine, for Mr. Stirlington's, will, I trust, deter you from ever entering with her upon a subject of conversation so improper. False, entirely false as it is, it is still unfit to be spoken of, particularly in her presence."

Poor Rosabel found this a great and kind relief, but she could only press the hand of her generous patroness in silence.

"I have never," continued Mrs. Stirlington, "alluded to the persons with whom you were connected before you came here, nor in any way to what had been your situation. Your knowledge of English was then so imperfect that you would scarcely have been able to gratify my curiosity even if I had inquired. That is not now the case; and you are now old enough to understand the motives and wishes of your best friends. I shall ask you no questions myself, that you may understand that while you reside here I consider these things ought not to be spoken of to any one, but particularly to Evelina."—(Poor Rosabel wept still in silence.)—"But," said Mrs. Stirlington, dropping her voice to a tone of soothing compassion, as if she herself suffered pain by being obliged to make a communication which she knew would give it, "I feel that now I have my husband's reputation to protect—my daughter's estimation and place in society to defend; this I can only do, by showing to all the world that I scornfully reject this most unfounded calumny, by treating you publicly with the most marked respect, as well as with that kindness which first my pity for you suggested, and now my strong regard for you will cause me to continue. But still, Rosabel, we must part."

The child turned deadly pale—a convulsive trembling seemed to pass through her whole frame, but she spoke not a word.

"Be not alarmed, my poor child," said Mrs. Stirlington, soothingly, "we will never, never forsake you: Mr. Stirlington did not adopt you to desert you—he will ever continue to you his protection; but he must find suitable means of doing so. I myself, my dear, dear Rose, while you deserve it—which I know you always will—I will ever be a friend, a mother to you."

Rosabel turned a look of most keen and eager inquiry on the face of her kind and sympathising protectress, as she asked—

"And Effie, will she—*may* she still be my friend—my sister?"

"Assuredly she may—assuredly she will," said Mrs. Stirlington.

"But I shall not see your kind face," said the child, "though strangers may tell me that you still love me. I shall not see him,"—(here her voice became almost inaudible, and she seemed to fear to attempt to speak the name,)—"not see *him* when he returns, and look into his face that my eyes may say I thank him, though my lips are silent—and Effie, dear Effie, I shall not be there to laugh when she is gay, or sooth her when she is sorrowful."

"My dear Rosabel, these things have been pleasures to us all—but they must not continue," said Mrs. Stirlington firmly, although a tear stood in her kind, mild eye, while she said it: "but Margery has by this time prepared Evelina for our drive; go up, that she may prepare you. Bolt will soon bring round the phaeton—be sure you put on the dress which is so much like Evelina's."

In the lobby, however, as they descended to enter the carriage, they encountered Uncle Ralph. Mr. Ralph Stirlington was no man of mystery himself, neither did he like mysteries and concealments in others; this Mrs. Stirlington knew, and although she shrunk at first from the disagreeable subject, she resolved to communicate to him the unpleasant rumour she had heard. Sending the children on to enter the carriage before her, she invited him into the dining-room, and, with cheeks flushed with indignation and wounded delicacy, disclosed to him the communication she had just received from the amiable Deborah Mangleshape. To her great astonishment, however, instead of that warm sympathy with her which he usually evinced when aught occurred to hurt her feelings—instead of that tremendous burst of indignation with which he was accustomed to receive anything calculated to annoy his nephew—Mr. Ralph heard the first part of the communication with tolerable gravity, but as she proceeded, was visited with sundry comical twinklings of the eye and twitchings of the muscles of the face, which gradually widened into a broad, hearty laugh, and ended in a roar so long and loud, that he was obliged to throw himself into an arm-chair and give vent to his humour before he could recover breath to reply to his mortified companion.

"The little princess," said he, "a child of his own? Well, 'tis an idea worth a butt of Oporto! I never need to stand a joke from him without a retort more as long as I live. We will have a novel written upon it, Angela—it shall be called 'The Monster Unmasked,' or the 'Hen-hearted Wife,' my dear. Capital! capital! It began in romance, it has proceeded in mystery—bravo—and will, no doubt, if old Mother Bunce has but fair play, end in some direful disclosure, by which Tom Stirlington will be proved to be some monster of iniquity, a real demon of hypocrisy, who has all his life long played the good fellow with a bad heart."

"Really, sir, it pains me to hear you talk thus, though it be but in jest," said she.

"What, feeling hurt? looking serious? Ha-ha-ha! That *is* laughable, indeed. Well, my dear, since you do not like my manner of concluding the romance, we'll save his life at the end, and finish by clearing his character—we will take him into a court of justice—we will bring an action of defamation &c.,—we will engage council to prove, by a train of evidence, that this much-injured dealer in Burgundy and Champaign is as innocent as a young forest buck pursued by a couple of staghounds of the feminine gender, who have most viciously fixed their fangs in his haunches."

"But one serious word," said she. "The carriage waits; you will not, I hope, disapprove of my intention of taking the children together to all public places, that I may prove, fully prove how scornfully I reject this unfounded slander."

"Disapprove! my dear. I admire, I respect your motive. The more the merrier—I will go with you and prove the same thing: come along—thy heart, my girl, is the very counterpart of old Aubrey's; but I can't help laughing to see you look so serious; why you look as dismal as if a mad dog had bitten the whole pack. Come along—let us all go together. But—ha-ha-ha,—I have the whip-hand of Tom for life."

CHAP. IX.

> "O 'tis a pleasure to angle for fair-faced fools! Then that hungry gudgeon, Credulity, will bite at anything. Why, let me see; I have the same face, the same words and accents, when I speak what is true and when I speak what is not. Dear dissimulation is the only *art* not to be *known* from *nature*."
>
> COMEDY OF THE DOUBLE DEALER.

During the prevalence of the noontide heat, so oppressive in a hot summer's day in Portugal, two persons had taken shelter from it in the ancient corridor, before named, of the Castello de Toromendo—Monsieur Jacques de la Motte, the French physician, and Pietro Gonzalo, the custodian of the mansion.

The very small legs of the physician were engulfed in an immense pair of riding-boots, to which were attached a pair of spurs so enormous that it seemed matter of wonder how limbs so delicate could wield weapons so formidable. In his hand he held a riding-whip of the same gigantic proportions; it seemed as if the professed opponent of death, the last enemy of mankind, had come forth resolved on expedition and prepared to overcome every obstacle which might oppose his progress. These weighty preparations were, however strongly contrasted with the other parts of his equipments. His waistcoat of fine silk was embroidered with every kind of gaudy color which the looms of Marseilles could possibly mingle together: his coat, of a bright pea-green, embraced his slender person so closely, and was completed by a swallow-tail so slender, that it might have figured in a Parisian ball-room: his hair was arranged on each side of his head in two large bunches, to make the most of it: but the crowning ornament of this singular figure, was a hat, the narrow brim of which was curled up on each side, which might have reminded the fanciful of a crop-eared terrier, and the crown tapered as it ascended and grew beautifully less towards the summit (to describe it geometrically,) like the frustrum of a cone, or (in a more homely phrase) like the bottom part of a broken sugar loaf.

His companion, Pietro Gonzalo, was a dark, swarthy, heavy-looking person, whose beetling forehead and large eyebrows so completely overhung his black eyes that they seemed to glare from under them with an expression which was at once gloomy, sinister, and cowardly; for his glance, though expressive of the worst feelings was never directed to the face of the person addressed.

"And so," said the Frenchman, "my excellent and admired friend Pietro, this was the scene of their guilty intercourse—and that is the dreadful sliding panel in the wainscot which admitted the young deluded wife and brought her to the arms of that deceitful profligate, Harfield Stirlington."

Pietro answered with an assenting grin, but his beetle brows at the same time seemed to contract into a deeper frown.

"Pietro, my good friend, it was a very villanous affair."

"Villanous! yes, signor; but what is that to these accursed heretics?" grumbled Pietro.

"O, nothing, nothing," replied De la Motte: they boast of their superior morality, but it is all hypocrisy. They expect everything to bow down to their low-born insolence—their commerce-created wealth; to that they think our wives and daughters should be subservient."

"Never, never! by San Iago," exclaimed Pietro. Rather than that thoughtless thing, *my* daughter, should marry an Englishman, I would plunge a stiletto into her disobedient heart."

"Right, right, my most penetrating and excellent friend," said De la Motte. "Marry an Englishman? Diable! It would be a pity that the pretty Cospetto should be destroyed in that way. But then, my friend, you must be careful of that horrible Pen Rattle, or Battle, or whatever be his dreadful unpronouncible English name."

"Ben Brackle," said Pietro—"may purgatory receive him! what of him?"

"He is brought back."

"May lightning strike the accursed ship that did it," said Pietro.

"The ship dropped anchor in the Tagus this morning, and to-night the criminal will be brought to the house of the wine merchant to undergo his first examination. Now, is my little favorite, the pretty Cospetto safe? for, Signor Pietro, you must still be on your guard, for they are such daring villains those English, and fortune so often favors their boldness that you cannot reckon upon one of them as being subdued though he be at the foot of the gallows or fettered to the guillotine. Is your daughter safe?"

"As safe as a prisoner can be in the secret apartments of this castello—"

"The secret apartments of this castello, my excellent friend," said De la Motte, interrupting him, "were not safe enough to guard the honor of the Donna Teresa."

"Then!" exclaimed Pietro, turning pale with rage, "she shall be safe if I chain her to the wall of the deep dark dungeon, under the centre tower, which is cut into the heart of the living rock."

"Pietro Gonzalo, you are indeed the most prudent and exemplary of fathers; but such bold, successful devils are these English, that even your pious precautions may fail," said the physician; "but their stupidity is equal to their pride and heretical wickedness—*they put no one to the torture,* my friend; they will allow no criminal to be proceeded against until they have obtained what they foolishly call evidence or proof. Now, listen to me: your daughter knew, for a long time, of the crimes of this seaman, her lover, but did not disclose them until she believed herself to be dying: when, therefore, she comes to take her part in this foolish English farce, of giving evidence, no doubt she will give such testimony as will save his life."

"Rather than she should do that," said Pietro, "the entrance to the dungeon of the castello, known only to me, shall close upon her for ever."

Here there was a slight movement of the sliding panel. Pietro looked towards it, but it was closed; he sprung to it, but it did not open on that side: he at last concluded his fancy had deceived him.

"Pietro Gonzalo," resumed the physician, "you are a most praiseworthy and pious father, for any fate is better for the pretty Cospetto than to be the wife of an Englishman, particularly that sailor, Ben Rattle, or Battle, or Brackle, or whatever his heinous barbarian name may be—the man is stained with so many crimes. By Gar! Mon Dieu."

"But what crimes does the villain stand accused of?" inquired Pietro.

"Crimes, Pietro? they are numerous, they are legions. He is accused of every crime which the wit and ingenuity of man, assisted by the agency of hell, could have invented. It is supposed that he had formed a plan to assassinate the wealthy merchant; to empty his well-stored wine vaults, and to carry off his heavy money coffers to the Gulf of Mexico; that he was to become the captain of a Rover of the Bay of Honduras; and Cospetto be turned into the queen of a pirate ship, and rule with the black flag nailed to the mast over her head: for I heard her say, in the ravings of her delirium, that she had deeply, deeply wronged Mr. Stirlington, her kind and good benefactor, as she called the haughty Englishman."

"She shall remove to the dungeon this very night," exclaimed the father.

"Very right, Pietro, very; until this danger is passed and the English sailor tortured to death; but that I fear the foolish prejudices of Mr. Stirlington will scarcely allow. Then, Pietro, Cospetto muttered in her fevered wanderings that he had certainly been concerned in the death of Mrs. Stirlington and her child."

"But," said Pietro, "how have all these things become known through Lisbon?"

This question startled the physician for a moment, for he knew that these reports, invented by himself, had been spread by their author only: but, standing on the tips of his toes, placing both hands behind him with his immense riding-whip, in that attitude he balanced himself, looking up to the ceiling, he seemed unwillingly to say—

"My dear friend Pietro Gonzalo, I am sorry—but I told you that those Englishmen are as stupid as they are proud. Mr. Stirlington, instead of placing full confidence in *me* or any other person worthy of it, puts all his confidence in the fat-witted monk, Anselmo, who, no doubt, betrays him to all the old women of his community—for a monastery of monks (San Francis excuse me,) is but so many old women in disguise,—and thus all Lisbon knows the secrets which the rich Englishman thinks he has so closely concealed. But, my excellent friend, I must return to Lisbon to hear the results of the examination: I will give you notice—and at the first alarm you will secure Cospetto in the secret dungeon."

"By San Iago, I will," replied the deceived father, or my life shall answer for it."

He was, however, mistaken. The moving of the panel had been caused by Ursula; who, knowing the Frenchman's meddling disposition and his power of working upon the dull but jealous mind of her husband, and seeing them go towards the retired corridor, she immediately concluded that mischief was at hand; she therefore had recourse to the sliding panel, which she had so far removed as to be enabled to see and hear what passed, unseen and unsuspected. On hearing her husband's determination to confine his daughter in the secret dungeon, she was struck with horror, and immediately closed it. She had received the keys of Cospetto's apartment, that she might convey refreshment to her—thither she immediately hastened, and communicated to her what she had heard.

"Ben Brackle accused of crime!" said Cospetto indignantly; "it is false—or, if accused, it is by that villain Frenchman himself; and he is innocent as the saints in heaven. Mother, I must now tell you, though my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth with horror. That wretch De la Motte is striving to murder an innocent man, who loves me, because he would himself betray me to dishonor."

"Cospetto," said Ursula angrily, "why has not this been before explained to Pietro thy father?"

"Because," replied the weeping girl, "it was not much trouble for me to refuse the comical old scarecrow, and so I was not alarmed. Had I told Pietro my father his proposals of infamy, he would have ruined us all by planting a stiletto in his black and treacherous heart."

"True, true," said Ursula. "What can be done? O, that dungeon—that dreadful dungeon."

"My kind, good mother," said Cospetto, folding her arms around her, "you will surely never, never let me be conveyed to it?"

"Alas! my child, how shall I prevent it?" said the alarmed mother.

"By allowing me to escape," she said. "See, I will knot together the sheets of yonder bed, and tie them to the window, I shall seem to have escaped in that way."

"There is no alternative," replied Ursula; "there is no time to lose. Promise me that when you reach Lisbon you will take refuge in the house of your former master. There, there—God bless thee, my child. I would rather suffer death than see the key of that dreadful dungeon turned on thee by the cruel hand of thy enraged father, who, if he had not been more stupid than Baalam's ass, and all the tribe of asses which has descended from him, would rather have thrashed the Frenchman out of the castello with his own large whip than have consented to such a thing."

Cospetto flew through the covered and shaded walks of the gardens, till she reached the woods beyond them; she then hastily pursued her way along a path which led into the depths of the forest beyond the domains of the Castello de Toromendo; this she knew, if her memory did not fail her and night did not overtake her, would lead her to Lisbon by a much shorter way than the high road.

At this time Monsieur De la Motte was mounting his mule at the entrance of the castello, the stirrup being held by the obsequious Pietro. As he rode down the avenue he murmured to himself—"The deep dungeon with the secret entrance! That is good. By Gar! the stupid old mule, the father, took it so well, that I had no need to name it. When a woman comes up from under ground, dead or alive, she is always a changed being from what she went down. I must keep up the alarm of that honest blockhead, Pietro, until the sailor is disposed of: I shall then persuade him to release her; she will take refuge with my French cousin, at Lisbon—such relations are easily found—then this girl, who has irritated me with an impertinent refusal, called me to my face scarecrow—by Gar, it was worse than that, it was *old* scarecrow—must be made to gratify both my love and my vengeance—ha-ha! perhaps both—ha-ha. Mon Dieu! that is one beautiful thought—ha-ha!"

CHAP. X.

> "In what particular thought to work I know not;
> But, in the gross and scope of my opinion,
> This bodes some strange eruption.
> * * * * * *
> What might be toward, that this sweaty haste
> Doth make the night joint labourer with the day,
> Who is't that can inform me?" SHAKSPEARE.

While Jacques De la Motte exulted over the advantage which he had gained, the present moment was, however, one of considerable anxiety to him. Mortified that the Friar Anselmo had alone been honored with the full confidence of Mr. Stirlington as to the real nature of Cospetto's disclosures, he had determined to lose nothing in public estimation by that circumstance; he had therefore invented and industriously spread the most absurd rumours, the authority for which he pretended to have derived from Mr. Stirlington himself. In this he was favored by the fact that Mr. Stirlington held no intercourse with any one, and that Father Anselmo had, a short time after the confession of Cospetto, gone on a pilgrimage to a distant part of the country: the field was therefore all his own, and offered to him a tempting opportunity to enjoy the temporary triumph of appearing to be the only one in possession of the facts connected with the mystery. Every wild conjecture of his disordered imagination had therefore been recklessly spread abroad as well authenticated truth; and in his malicious determination to destroy the sailor Ben Brackle, his rival, he had represented his destruction certain. The sailor having been at length brought back, the facts of the case (of which De la Motte was profoundly ignorant notwithstanding his pretended knowledge,) would now be made public, and the question seemed for the first time to strike him whether the tissue of falsehoods which he had so industriously woven to blacken the reputation, and, if possible, to hasten the destruction of his rival, might not prove injurious, nay, even destructive, to himself. But De la Motte was a man of considerable practice, and experience had taught him that he could place very great reliance on the bat-like instinct with which he could flit between the meshes of his own inventions.

There are some minds so constituted that the excitement of being surrounded by a tissue of falsehoods is all they desire, or nearly so. The questions of danger or advantage are with them merely secondary, and what is so often dignified with the appellation of their design, is, after all, a mere yielding to this strange and grovelling propensity. Of this character the Frenchman largely partook, for although he had plunged into this affair with all the recklessness of a desperate gambler, there was scarcely anything in his design on Cospetto or his hatred of Ben

Brackle to counterbalance the danger with which his falsehood surrounded him. The consciousness of the folly of his proceedings which rushed upon the mind of the physician, as he trotted down the avenue, brought with it none of the usual depressing effects on the nerves of the Gallic philosopher. In some men it might have produced regret and shame—on the son of Galen it produced a few bars of an opera air, humm'd forth with all the grimaces of a Parisian artiste. This brought him to the high road, when suddenly remembring that he was far from Lisbon, the scene of future mischief, he stuck both spurs into the sides of his mule at once: this salutation the animal only noticed by a sort of indignant snort and by hobbling from one side of the road to the other, without advancing a step; it was followed by a heavy blow of the immense whip, which caused her to place her both front feet firmly on the ground and stand quite still.

"Thou ugly incarnation of the spirit of obstinacy!" exclaimed De la Motte; "had Pythagoras lived in our time, he would have proved that, by transmigration, there had passed into thee the heretical spirit of some English old maid, grown grey and withered in the practice of that sole virtue, resistance. Diable! if so, there is as much glory in overcoming thee as in immuring Cospetto, that impertinent beauty, in the deep dungeon. I should be a greater ass than thy sire to be overcome by either. Bah!"

With this he plied the spurs with such dexterity, and rained such a shower of blows upon the mule with his enormous whip, that after a few moments apparently passed in uneasy reflection, she started into an enraged and furious gallop, looking all the time from side to side, as if she sought some convenient spot on which she could break her own neck in order to destroy her tormentor. On this point, however, she deliberated too long, for the physician soon drew up opposite the piazza in front of Mr. Stirlington's house.

In the hall he encountered Fidato. "Well," said he to the domestic, "what is now the state of affairs?"

"The sailor is in the house, waiting for Mr. Stirlington in the ante-room," said Fidato; "but all things remain yet in the greatest uncertainty."

"Of course," said De la Motte, with an air of knowing importance, "there is the greatest uncertainty whether this bloodthirsty English pirate shall die the death of a dog and be hung, according to the barbarous custom of the British; or be guillotined, according to the better and more refined taste of the glorious nation; or die by the torture, according to the more magnificent and noble practice of Portugal."

"But, signor," said Fidato, "is there no uncertainty as to his innocence?"

"Innocence! Mon Dieu! it is one great impossibility," replied the physician. "But, Fidato, I have suffered much, even to-day, to try to collect some testimony which might make it appear a little, a very little in his favor: I rode this morning to the castello, under the burning heat, which did penetrate my very brain—I passed the time of siesta in the society of that most respectable and stupid of all magior-domos, Pietro Gonzalo, the best and most tiresome creature upon earth—I have returned upon a mule, a beast which exerts the most singular sagacity in discovering the will of her rider only that she may perpetually thwart it. The trouble I am taking in this affair is wearing me to a skeleton. Such is the romantic generosity of my disposition. But, Fidato, before I proceed to take a part in the examination of this criminal I must have refreshment."

"It shall be prepared for you immediately," said Fidato.

"Then let it *be* immediately, Fidato; and while it is preparing I must hold a preparatory conference with the sailors who brought him hither. Lead the way."

The sleek Fidato, after a profound bow, obeyed, and the professor of physic strutted after him with all the assumed importance of a grand inquisitor about to investigate a state secret on which the existence of the Portuguese monarchy depended.

While De la Motte practised every kind of absurdity to save appearances as long as possible before the domestics, he was secretly muttering to himself all the while—

"Mon Dieu! this conduct is incomprehensible. Here is this proud Englishman, now that by some strange alteration in him, he is willing to live—really vastly recovering. Although he owes his improved health to me, he has no gratitude—he will not let me know the secret; and to-day he will degrade me in the presence of his domestics, by excluding me from the conference. Diable! This is what these proud islanders call reserve. Bah! It is one accursed peculiarity of their abominable nation."

Although De la Motte was carefully excluded even from the ante-room, his ever-meddling propensity, like the evil genius of the place, was destined to influence the whole proceedings.

The captain and crew of the vessel which had gone up the Mediterranean to bring Ben Brackle to Lisbon knew nothing of the reasons which induced Mr. Stirlington to send for him in such haste; they only knew that a thing unparalleled in the commercial history of the world had taken place—that is, that a large merchant vessel had been dispatched on such a voyage for no other purpose but to bring back a common sailor; for although advantage had been taken of the voyage for commercial purposes, by the directions of Lopez de Gama, no orders to that effect had been given by the owner, and De Gama was far too proud of his own wisdom not to take full credit to himself for that act of prudence. They therefore had given full credence to the absurd rumours set afloat by the meddling Frenchman. Tom Taplin, the captain, however, carefully concealed this both from Brackle and his captain when he arrived at Smyrna. Ben having been informed of the dangerous state Cospetto was in, readily consented to return to Lisbon. The captain of the "Resolve" being under great obligations to Mr. Stirlington, and hoping that giving Ben up to him would be a benefit to the lad himself, readily acquiesced.

It was not, therefore, until they were out of sight of land on their return, and their supposed victim fully in their power, that he was informed that he was a prisoner, that he had been trepanned to go back to Portugal, accused of the most direful offences, and to undergo a punishment the most terrible.

Ben felt that he had conscious innocence on his side, but that everything else was against him. Moneyless and friendless, he was to be opposed to the princely merchant, who might be, for what he knew, as cruel and as prejudiced as he was wealthy and powerful. This would have been nothing had Ben had to meet his accuser in an English court of justice, but was not to be regarded without anxiety in a country where he had heard the most terrific accounts of confessions having been extorted, even from the innocent, by torture. Nor must it be forgotten that Ben was in love. No one who has ever been afflicted with that disease needs to be told how completely it mingles itself with all the other concerns of life. After trying every possible and impossible conjecture, Ben at length very gravely came to the conclusion that the whole was a plot to remove him that his persecutor might the more easily and with greater impunity destroy the honor of his adored and beautiful Cospetto. Absurd as this conclusion might appear, it must be acknowledged, in Ben's justification, that he knew nothing of Mr. Stirlington, his character, or his situation, and that the rumours which had been spread by De la Motte to forward his own base designs on Cospetto, and which he professed to have gained from Mr. Stirlington, were of a character to give a shade of probability to such an opinion.

Ben, under these circumstances, deemed it right to submit to his fate until he should come into harbour. His persecutors had no power over him but that of force obtained by fraud; and he resolved therefore to take the first opportunity of escaping them, to remain concealed until he could effect the liberation of Cospetto, and trust to fortune for the means of reaching merry England.

He was alone in the ante-room. Ben Brackle was rather above the common height, and remarkably well formed; of a dark complexion, which had been increased by the warm sun of a southern climate; his features, however, were handsome and manly, but his age did not exceed twenty; he was dressed with a degree of care and neatness which might argue that the advantage of his very handsome personal appearance was by no means indifferent to him, had not the expression of mingled indignation and anxiety upon his sunburnt countenance shown that such thoughts did not occupy his mind at present. His jacket, of the royal blue, and of a make well calculated to display to the best advantage his manly figure, was adorned with a profusion of shining white buttons, arranged in three rows in front, in the very extreme of nautical dandyism, and was perfectly free from stain: as were his white pantaloons, confined to his waist by a belt of shining leather fastened by a sparkling buckle of polished steel. Even his shoes (if this dignified chronicle can be allowed to descend to particulars so minute,)—his shoes, so low that they scarcely covered his toes, and left the blue and white striped stocking fully displayed, were prepared as if they were intended to be flourished off in a deck hornpipe rather than for so grave a business as that in which poor Ben now considered himself engaged.

"I assure yer 'onor," said Tom Taplin to the French physician, "that the lad's as smart a lad as was ever brought to the gangway for frolicking with the gals—he's come ashore, yer 'onor, rig'larly trick'd out—that is to say titivated—which means, in course, rigg'd to perfection."

"Trick'd? titivated? rigg'd?" said De la Motte, whose knowledge of English fell far short of the elegancies of Tom Taplin's vocabulary; "does that mean that he is very dirty?"

"Quite the revarse to that, yer 'onor," replied Tom. "It means as this—that the lad's dressed out fit to stand as maid of 'onor to the Queen of the Cannibal Islands; and that means as this, yer 'onor, that it is a hindication of the lad's mind, that he's not asham'd of nothing of it, that he will die hard, and that he will give trouble."

"Mon Dieu!" said the componnder of simples, "what fine heroic villains you English are! It will be a singular pleasure to superintend this lad's execution. A well prepared skeleton of him will be a fine moral lesson for posterity, by Gar."

To die hard, certainly, as the captain said, was Ben Brackle's intention—to give trouble he had no objection: but, as he stood alone in the ante-room, that cold depressing sensation which the lowly man is so apt to feel on entering the presence of his superiors took possession of him for a moment: the magnificence of the apartment awed him—and even the silently retreating domestic, closing the door with an air of cautious respect, seemed to remind him of the unusual situation in which he stood; but this depressing feeling of awe was soon followed by one of bitterness and indignation, which very shortly entirely overcame it.

"Is it not enough for this proud man," said he, "that his ships are afloat in every quarter of the globe, and that his house is like the palace of a nabob, that he can't allow a poor sea-boy to earn a livelihood in toil and in danger without being interfered with by him? Ah! it must be so—there is but one way to explain it. He has decoyed me from my ship—which was my home, my castle—and from my good old captain, who was my friend and like a father to me, and will now accuse me of crime, that I may look like the villain he wishes me to be thought before the people, who regard me as a wild beast; all that he may destroy me and worse than destroy the poor girl who is still faithful to me—true as the needle to the pole—and for that offence only locked up like a criminal by that mulish old fellow her father: it is almost a pity that I cannot belie my English nature and English breeding, and grasp the stiletto of a Portuguese, and stab at once at a heart so dark and villanous—"

He paused, for the door of the apartment silently opened, and the venerable figure of Anselmo entered from the library. The good father, it should be observed, had but the day before returned from his pilgrimage, and therefore had heard nothing of the reports which had been circulated by De la Motte. He had surprised the sailor in the attitude which he had naturally assumed as he uttered the last sentence; he therefore looked anxiously at his right hand, expecting to see there the murderous stiletto. Satisfied, however, on that point, he cautiously and silently closed the door. Ben Brackle, considering him in all probability an agent in the villanous scheme against him, turned upon him as he entered a look of such scornful and indignant defiance, that he approached him with the air of a man who had incautiously shut himself into the den of a tiger.

The monk at length broke silence—saying gently—"You are much agitated, my son, for which there is no occasion. Mr. Stirlington will soon be ready to see you."

"And I am ready for him," replied Ben, "and for you—and all the agents of darkness whom his wealth enables him to command."

"This surprises me," said the friar, "I cannot fathom its meaning. My son," he continued very mildly, "Mr. Stirlington will himself explain everything. He wishes to see you—"

"I know it!" replied Ben fiercely. "They told me so at Smyrna; *then* they spoke of large rewards I was to receive from him—fool that I was to believe them, for I had not earned them of him: they told me so again at Malta—but then their tone was changed: now they speak of torture, disgrace, and death; but I scorn his treachery and shall die defying his vengeance."

"You must calm this agitation, my son," said the priest, "before you enter the presence of Mr. Stirlington; he is far too weak to bear it."

"Too weak!" said Ben; "too weak to hear the words of his victim? Too weak to witness the torture? Then why does he do so? Why cannot you and his other slaves bring forth the instruments and watch them while they do their deadly work? He can boast of his triumph to Cospetto the same: and some one of less tender feelings than himself can tell my poor old mother that her boy has died the death of a criminal in a foreign land."

"A criminal?" exclaimed the friar. "Holy Virgin! what does this mean? Criminal didst thou say?"

"So they call me," said Ben Brackle, gloomily.

The monk cast a keen and penetrating, and, as Ben Brackle thought, a suspicious glance at him, which was increased as the priest sternly demanded—"Of what crime hast thou been guilty?"

"None!" said Ben Brackle, firmly, while his cheek reddened with mingled shame and indignation.

"Of what crime then art thou accused?" said Anselmo.

"I know not," replied the sailor, despondingly; "and how I shall defend myself I know not."

The monk folded his arms in silence, walked thoughtfully across the room, and finally passed into the adjoining corridor.

"This is a very mysterious affair," said he. "If this youth be taken in his present angry and agitated condition to Mr. Stirlington, it will be the death of him. He states that he is accused of crimes, against which accusation he knows not how to defend himself. Of this Mr. Stirlington knows nothing—I must prepare him for all this before the sailor is allowed to see him."

"Father Anselmo again appeared at the door of the ante-room and beckoned the mariner to follow him. Ben Brackle obeyed in embarrassed silence.

The faint blush of the summer twilight was mingled with the rays of the rising moon—but passing through the painted glass of the arched windows, diffused over the apartment a light so uncertain that the figure of the monk was but dimly seen passing rapidly down the corridor. Ben Brackle as rapidly followed.

The friar paused before an apartment, the door of which stood open, where Fidato was engaged in spreading a plentiful repast under the superintendence of Monsieur De la Motte. The physician calling loudly for some luxury which the domestic had neglected to procure: Fidato scampered off to procure it, followed by his tormentor.

Ben Brackle having cast a hasty glance around the room, turned to inquire why he was brought there; and, to his surprise, found that he was alone, the monk having glided silently from the apartment, and was in the act of locking the door: Ben sprung hastily forward to prevent this, exclaiming—"False-hearted, treacherous priest; why am I thus imprisoned here?" but the echo of the Franciscan's footsteps hastily retreating through the corridor was the only answer he received.

Ben took a hasty turn or two through the room, in great indignation. He was one of that class of politicians who, when surrounded by persons whose motives they do not understand, think they shall find safety only by thwarting and opposing them at every move; he therefore tried with all his strength and ingenuity to force the door open; yet slight, indeed, would have been the advantage he would have gained by so doing.

"Why did the treacherous old son of Beelzebub lock me up in this sly way?" said he. "I should like to give them a run for this deceitful trick; a breathing will be of service to the fat friar, and do no harm to that scaramouch of a doctor. Yet, after all, the prison they have chosen for me is not the most uncomfortable in the world, and, thanks to the Frenchman's management, there is no danger of starvation. I wonder, now, if it would be any great breach of good manners not to wait for compliments? That capon looks well—so does the ham; by jingo, upon the sideboard I see a dim vision of a decanter. It *is* a decanter, and filled with rare Oporto. The merchant really must excuse me—I beg the Frenchman's pardon—and as to the Friar, instead of saying grace before meat, he may come and sing mass after it if he likes. It would be horribly unmannerly, no doubt, to have aught to do with these French fricasées and nonsenses, of which I should not learn the names in a twelvemonth. Tom Taplin, our captain, a great ungainly lubber, knew what was just enough to keep life moving in me, and thought short commons a proper preparation for the gallows. Your health, Mr. Brackle. Thank you Master Ben; and confusion to the nest of varments by whom you are surrounded. But, by jingo, the windows open into a balcony!"

While this dignified soliloquy went on, the capon had become a perfect ruin—the ham had dwindled to a precious remnant; and so often did Mr. Brackle think proper to pledge Master Ben, that the bottle of port soon went hence to be no more seen. On observing the fact last mentioned by him, however, he started up, slung his hat to his shoulder by a ribbon, as if to prepare for an emergency, and in a minute was on the balcony. It was now nearly dark, and a thick cloud obscured the moon. Ben's resolution was taken in a moment—he sprung lightly over the trellis-work, and tying a strong silk handkerchief to one of the bars, he was enabled to descend so as to grasp the top of the capital of a pillar—in a moment his legs clasped the polished shaft, and the work was done: he slid gently down to the pedestal, from whence he vaulted lightly to the ground: he then deliberately adjusted his hat upon his head, and walked off with a slow and sauntering pace, as if he had just walked out for an evening stroll: he soon, however, came to a dark narrow street, down which he vanished with the rapidity of lightning.

By this thoughtless proceeding on the part of the sailor, after all the trouble which De la Motte and ourselves have taken about it, the mysteries of our tale are as far from an explanation as ever.

CHAP. XI.

"'The long and short of it is,' said Tedly, 'by my soul I can't tell the right from the wrong.'"—CASTLE RACKRENT.

A light and elegant desert was spread in the conservatory, in Tom Stirlington's garden, on a bright and beautiful summer afternoon. The company who had assembled there were shaded from the summer heat by the deep green foliage of a luxuriant vine, which had been so trained as to form a verdant canopy, excluding the sunbeams, except when the breeze passed playfully between the leaves and allowed a brilliant ray to shoot in for a moment and immediately to pass away. The beautiful and fragrant exotics filled the air with perfume, and by their unobtrusive loveliness seemed to woo the imagination to pure and tranquil enjoyment. Among the profusion of fruits, and flowers, and British and foreign luxuries which spread the table, stood decanters of sparkling wines of various hues and qualities, yet Mr. Ralph Stirlington, who had filled for himself a bumper, allowed it to remain untasted. Tom Stirlington's attention was so completely absorbed by letters which had that day arrived from Portugal, that he had not yet paid the customary compliment to his guest of filling a glass.

Mrs. Stirlington sat patiently turning over a book of elegant engravings, which, however, seemed to attract but very little of her attention, for she stole from time to time a glance, expressive of the greatest anxiety, to the unusually serious countenance of her husband.

Perhaps there is scarcely anything in the common intercourse of life more depressing than to sit down with one or two mirthful and laughter-loving companions, and to find them for the time sad and serious. This was particularly felt by Mrs. Stirlington; nor were her companions entirely free from the infection. After a few uneasy and impatient movements, Mr. Ralph made an effort to commence a conversation.

"Well, Angela," said he, "it is an old-fashioned custom, but I must do myself the pleasure of drinking your health, my dear; although your husband has not set me the example."

"I beg pardon," said Stirlington, hastily filling a glass; and, after the customary compliment to his companions, sipped a very little, and immediately again directed his attention to the letters.

Uncle Ralph having made this ineffectual attempt to gain the attention of his nephew, addressed himself to Mrs. Stirlington only, with the air of a man who was determined not to be silent, however ill-timed his conversation might be.

"So, the children are gone to Teignmouth?" said he.

"Yes, sir," she replied; "I thought we should be better without them, and they would be the better for the drive. Bolt has taken them in the phaeton, and Margery is gone to take care of them."

"The better? to be sure they will," resumed he. "Two prettier lasses you will not meet with in a day's march. Tom Stirlington's is a promising family—princess and all."

Stirlington laid down his letter, and looked seriously at his uncle; who, on perceiving that he had at last compelled him to attend to him, laughed heartily. On perceiving, however, a blush of wounded feeling on the countenance of Angela, he suddenly checked himself; and Tom Stirlington said, very seriously—

"My dear uncle, may I entreat most seriously and earnestly that I may hear no more of that very, very disagreeable invention of the enemy. Poor Augustus, even in this letter, comments again and again on the indiscretion and the dishonour of Harfield: it is that disgrace, that degradation of the English in a foreign land, which has sunk into his soul, and will ultimately bring him to the grave. For God's sake let him hear of nothing of the sort here, in his own dear land, affecting the reputation of his own family—for here he will shortly be, though I fear only to die among us."

"Augustus here? and to die!" exclaimed Mr. Ralph with the greatest emotion; "what can you mean?"

"After having so long and so strangely resisted all our persuasions to come home, will he at last consent to do so?" inquired Mrs. Stirlington.

"He will, indeed," said Stirlington sorrowfully; "but under the influence of a delusion so strange that I fear his sufferings have at length affected his understanding."

"Merciful Heaven! forbid it," said Angela.

"My poor boy—my poor boy!" groaned Uncle Ralph, "who wound himself round my heart when it was young, and then as joyous and unsuspecting as his own. Why did I ever part with him, to banish him to a foreign land for the sake of wealth and what is falsely called greatness?"

"You did that, my kind and generous uncle," said Stirlington, "with the same motive which has guided your conduct towards us in everything—a desire to sacrifice your own wishes, your own feelings, to our advantage. But Augustus must be rescued from his present situation: he appears to me to be surrounded by a set of persons who are, perhaps, interested in deluding him, and his life will very likely be destroyed by the agitation in which they constantly keep him."

"I will go to Lisbon myself," said Uncle Ralph, "to rescue him from such a nest of vipers."

" That will be needless, sir," replied Tom Stirlington. The thing is this: an artful maid-servant, of the name of Cospetto, has induced him to believe that his youngest child, (who we know was drowned on the coast of Ireland with her mother,) is still alive. She pretends to derive her authority for this from a young English sailor, named Ben Brackle, who was, we know, wrecked on board the same vessel, but miraculously escaped. This man went, after making the communication to the girl, up the Mediterranean; but a vessel has been dispatched to bring him back, and he is by this time at Lisbon, ready to take his, no doubt, preconcerted part in the plot."

" But is there no probability of the child's having been saved?" said Angela, eagerly.

" No, Angela," said Tom Stirlington, firmly, " not the slightest."

" Your reasons?" said Mr. Ralph, in great perturbation.

" First," he replied, " it is asserted that she was saved by a vagabond ventriloquist, who had a child on board of the same age. Is there the slightest probability that this man would doom his own child to certain death to save the child of another? Secondly, would the sailor, if really in possession of such information, have told it to Cospetto and left Lisbon without communicating it to my brother, and claiming the rich rewards which awaited the man who brought such information? And, lastly, would the mountebank have kept the child a burthen to himself, when we would have ransomed her from him at any price?"

"With every shilling I possessed in the world," said Uncle Ralph.

"Certainly, sir; and we must take human nature as it is, and not be misled by the foolish fancy that such people would act so manifestly in contradiction to their own interests. They will not be enabled to impose a fictitious child upon him, for he would be able to recognise her by a secret mark or sign, known only to himself, and described in this letter to me, under the promise of the strictest secresy. Under these circumstances I do not think it right to undeceive him as to the probability of finding his child in England or Ireland. The only way to rescue him from the hands of these mercenaries who are now playing upon his weakness, and to surround him by his truest and best friends, will be to endeavour to induce him to come hither in search of her: for the consequences of a final disappointment, now that the hope has once entered into his heart, will be as surely fatal at Lisbon as it could possibly be in England."

This line of policy was agreed to. The reader is now in possession of the nature of the disclosure made by Cospetto; the reasonableness of the anxious father's hopes must be explained by Ben Brackle himself.

The consternation occasioned by the escape of Ben Brackle, at the house of Mr. Stirlington may easily be imagined; but we must leave the parties assembled there to draw their own conclusions and make their own comments, and take a short moonlight ramble with the young hero himself.

The moon had risen to her full height in the sky, the clouds which had obscured her face in the early evening had seemed to melt away before the persevering brightness of her smile, and a flood of soft and silvery light was flung over the forests which bordered on the domains of the Castello de Toromendo, when Ben Brackle passed swiftly along a dimly-lighted path which seemed to lead into the deepest recesses of the woods. Ben's was not a heart easily daunted, and yet it must be acknowledged that his present prospects were by no means encouraging.

"Well," said Ben, "It is no use for me to be down on my luck; I have commenced my travels with a light heart, and I am resolved to keep it up as long as I can; for I am heartily glad of the trouble I shall have given the set of rascals from whom I have escaped; and I believe a light heart is the best of all travelling companions, though I must own I have to begin my travels ashore with some important deficiencies. I have fortified my stomach with one substantial meal, but where I am to get another is yet a glorious uncertainty. I'm in a foreign land; I have neither money, friends, nor character: money is the root of all evil, and I'm not encumbered with a penny of it; as to character, I have a capital one to run away from; as to friends, I hope I have got rid of all my old ones in this country, and have therefore a famous opportunity to look out for a fresh set."

In the last conclusion Ben Brackle was entirely mistaken; for at the moment when he concluded himself free from all old acquaintances, he was surprised to see a dark shadowy figure rise up on one of the boughs of a lofty tree, on which it had previously reclined, and now sat attentively observing him. Ben hesitated for a moment, but at length hailed this singular apparition with a resolute halloa, which was replied to only by a peal of hearty laughter. The figure, however, flung itself from bough to bough with the agility of a squirrel, and at last descended on the path before him from a height which seemed to threaten its destruction—the creature, however, descended unhurt, and remained capering, or rather rebounding from the ground like a tennis ball which had been forcibly thrown on it, and concluded by throwing himself on the ground, rolling rapidly over and over, laughing all the while so loud that the forest echoes were awakened by his mirth.

"What imp of the devil have we here?" exclaimed Ben Brackle.

"No imp—no devil, Don Brackle; but a gentleman you have long had the honor of being acquainted with," was the reply.

"Pablo Hermandez, by all that's comical!" said the sailor. "Hast thou run away from the ship where we were messmates? Whither dost thou come from—and whither art thou going?"

"Ben Brackle, my friend," said Pablo, "these are questions of little moment at present; and, besides, put in most ungentlemanly haste. Now, I ask you no questions—I heard thou wert in trouble—I see thou art escaped. It is enough—with me in these forests thou art as safe as in a fortress, until thou canst make sail for merry England."

"Bravo, by jingo," said Ben Brackle.

"Is it not very much bravo?" exclaimed the delighted Pablo; who, after having bounded from the ground with two or three astonishing capers, treated himself to another roll upon the grass and another fit of hearty laughter.

"But, Pablo," said the sailor, "you must a little explain to me."

"Explain what?" said Pablo; "that being good for anything—which a man must be on board ship—is an insufferable bore?—that I got tired of it, and determined to cut such stupidity altogether; that I ran away, and am again a beggar, to which profession I was born and bred, and for which by nature I was first intended. The case at present stands thus:—I was sent here to keep watch while our friends are preparing a feast in a neighbouring glen; there will be wine, mirth, and music—and of all three thou art welcome to partake. There needs no further explanation."

Whether Ben would at any time have raised a scruple at accepting such an invitation is uncertain, but it is most certain that he raised none at present, and he was soon in the glen, surrounded by the most ragged and grotesque, the merriest, and vilest company in Europe.

Wine having been procured, Pablo, who, to tell the truth, was really very glad of his messmate's escape, and proud of the recruit he had brought to the festival, became very communicative. The company were arranged in groups in various parts of the glen, and seemed to have no common object but to make the most of the present moment, and all to enjoy themselves in the way that best pleased them, so that the conversation of the sailor and his acquaintance proceeded without interruption.

"There are those, my friend," said Pablo, "who pride themselves upon passing through life by what they call the path of usefulness; but it's a dull and dismal pilgrimage. Let no one who regards his own happiness ever take to work, say I; but when I fell into the stupid error of thinking I should like it, I was in love, Signor Brackle—dismally, miserably in love, and crossed in my expectations."

"Indeed," said Ben, absently; for he found it difficult to confine his attention to the discourse of his ragamuffin friend: sometimes he thought, and could not help it, on his imprisoned Cospetto; sometimes on his native home and his widowed mother; sometimes he reflected rather sadly, but not despairingly, on his blackened reputation, all the worst parts of which would be, he knew, confirmed by his having deserted, and joined the ragged crew he had here fallen in with.

"Yes, Don Benjamin," continued Pablo Hermandez, "personal beauty, which *makes* the fortunes of other men in such affairs, entirely *marr'd* mine. She thought that no one would pity me, with my round, regular, smiling set of features; and she had had great offers, for she was herself a very model of deformity—her beautiful features were all drawn awry—she squinted with one eye and was blind in the other—she had a hump on her back—a withered arm—and was most interestingly lame, owing to the shortness of one leg."

"Pablo," said Ben Brackle, "surely that was the voice of some one in distress—a female."

"O, it's nothing—nothing, Signor Brackle," said his companion. "But, as I was saying, she had had most advantageous offers—she had refused a dwarf with a hump between his shoulders—and had actually denied a man without legs who played the guitar as he was trundled about in a wheelbarrow."

"But," said Ben, "that fellow yonder is actually dragging a female from the wood."

"Never mind, signor; that is the way in which we woo our charmers, and that is the way in which they inflame our desires, by seeming to resist."

Here a piercing shriek was uttered by the female alluded to. Ben Brackle was no longer in doubt—he rushed forward and found his pretty Cospetto in the arms of a ruffian.

That Cospetto should have lost her way in the woods—that she should have met a scout of the beggarly party, who, by promising to guide her to Lisbon, had decoyed her to this den of thieves—that he should have insulted her there—that Ben Brackle should knock him down—that the rescued girl should explain to her lover what it was Mr. Stirlington wanted of him—that Ben should perceive that he had therefore nothing to fear from him, but that the lovers had everything to hope—that as soon as the first light of the morning began to glimmer through the glades of the forest, they should agree to return to Lisbon, to throw themselves at his feet and implore his protection, are all events so natural, that no one will be surprised to find Ben Brackle with Mr. Stirlington in his library, on the morrow; and therefore every one will expect to find, in the next chapters, an explanation of the mysteries of this mysterious tale.

CHAP. XII.

> "Facts are chiels wha winna ding,
> An downa be disputed."
>
> BURNS.

A certain lady once became greatly delighted with Plutarch's Lives; read them over and over again, and extolled them as the most beautiful and ingenious of romances; but having unluckily discovered that they were all true, she cast them aside with utter contempt.

If we have catered for the taste of such a critic, by following the flights of De la Motte's fancy, or the more coarse and bluntly-expressed falsehoods of Mrs. Bunce, she will, perhaps, be amazingly discontented at the few grains of truth which we shall be enabled to shake out of such a heap of chaff. In such cases, when the mountains have been in labour, it is in vain to be discontented with the mouse which they may bring forth. We must pursue the even tenor of our way, looking neither to the right hand nor to the left. We can pay no attention to those elderly spinsters who will neither allow us to confine ourselves to the truth, nor to invent fictions after our own fancy. It is in vain for the antiquated damsel on the right to say—"Well, I never! Who would have thought such would have been the end of it? What a mighty fuss about nothing!"

Nor for the lady on the left to reply—"It is precisely what I expected from the beginning; and I have only been annoyed by the ineffectual efforts which have been made to conceal the end."

The fact is, we have taken our story for better for worse; and we think, like Oliver Goldsmith, that it is quite enough for us to say that we have done the best we could by it.

Cospetto was a shrewd, artful, Portuguese serving-girl. She had heard the story of a shipwreck from Ben Brackle, her lover; she heard that a child belonging to a lady, whose name Ben did not know, had been saved; she suspected that it might have been her master's child.

but she concealed her suspicions from Brackle for the following reasons:—Her master was in too dangerous a state to be trifled with by vague suspicions; her speaking of the thing would expose her clandestine engagement prematurely to Pietro, and bring upon her his persecutions, and upon Ben Brackle his vengeance. When Ben returned from the Levant, and was prepared to marry her and take her to England, affairs would be in a much more favourable position: she therefore resolved to conceal even from him her suspicions till then. Under the influence of the fear of death, she had changed her mind, as before described.

This incident will give the reader an insight into the character of Cospetto. It had nothing in it of the fearless candour and blunt honesty of her lover, but she had much greater dexterity in the management of affairs. By her advice, therefore, when they arrived at Lisbon, they went directly to the Franciscan monastery, and had an interview with Father Anselmo, who readily consented to prepare Mr. Stirlington for the meeting with the sailor, by explaining the mistakes under which all had acted.

Mr. Stirlington's indignation at the conduct of the Frenchman was immense; and he resolved to see him no more. Ben Brackle was now introduced into the library as a person worthy of that gentleman's confidence.

"I must first express to you, young man," said Mr. Stirlington, "my sincere regret that you have suffered so much trouble and anxiety on my account: the nature of the business on which I wished to consult you I of course was desirous to conceal until I had seen you."

"Yesterday I could have plunged a dagger into his heart," said Ben to himself, "now I could die for him." Addressing Mr. Stirlington, he continued—"I have been far too hasty myself, sir; I hope you will excuse me."

"The part you have taken in the affair was perfectly natural, and certainly not blameable."

Here he paused suddenly. After a moment, he spoke quickly, in great agitation, as if it was by a desperate effort he brought himself to the main subject of their conference.

"You returned from Lisbon to Britain, I understand, on board the 'Red-wing,' on her last voyage, and was miraculously saved from the wreck?"

"It's quite correct, sir," said Ben. "My uncle was master of her. When we sailed from Lisbon I was confined to my berth, by illness; I recovered very slowly, so that I was a mere idler all the voyage, except that I did little services for the passengers, who called me cabin-boy."

"Describe to me the passengers who were on board."

"I scarcely knew any of them by name," said Ben; "a great part of the voyage had passed before I left my berth, or saw any of them. Sailors are never very particular about names, but make up the deficiency by fancy names of their own. For instance, sir, there was an old Jew, that we always called Barabbas."

“Were there not women and children on board?” was the next anxious question.

“A lady, with a beautiful little girl; who was, I understood, the wife of some rich Englishman living at Lisbon, but whose name I cannot tell. I have tried a thousand times to remember whether I ever heard it or not; but if I ever did, I must have forgotten it long before I so much wished to recal it. There was also on board a man whom the sailors called ‘Fire-eater,” because he amused us with all kinds of sleight-of-hand, and was a ventriloquist; he had on board a wife and a daughter, who was just the same age as the lady’s child.”

“Were these children at all alike?” enquired Mr. Stirlington—[from whom, of course, the questions all came; so the repetition of that fact may in future be avoided].

“Seen at a distance, playing together upon the deck, as they often did on fine days, they might appear so; but not near. It was understood that ‘Fire-eater’ and his family were in low circumstances; but the lady was kind to them, and the children were dressed not unlike each other—but that was not the case at first, so I suppose it was managed by the lady’s kindness.”

“But was the likeness so strong that you would mistake the one for the other?”

“Not for a moment, sir.”

“You also knew the lady well? Look around you, and tell me if, among the various portraits in the room, you see any likeness of her.”

Ben commenced his scrutiny. He passed several without pausing a moment; at length he stopped before one which seemed to puzzle and confound him. Mr. Stirlington now stood beside him, observing with the most intense interest the effect of this portrait upon him. After a moment's hesitation, Ben said, decisively—

"It is like the lady, but not the lady herself."

A faint smile passed over the features of Mr. Stirlington as the sailor gave this proof of his judgment. It was the portrait of Mrs. Stirlington's mother—an excellent likeness. The mother and daughter had strikingly resembled each other.

But the calmness with which this cold, constrained conversation had hitherto been carried on, was here destined to be interrupted: for a portrait on the opposite side of the room attracted the sailor's attention. He sprung towards it—eagerly examined it for a moment, and exclaimed—

"That is the lady's child, so help me God!"

While this took place, Mr. Stirlington had hastily removed the curtain which had so long concealed the features of his late wife; and Ben, turning round as he uttered the last exclamation, continued in the same breath most emphatically—

"And that, sir, is the lady herself!"

All doubt of Ben Brackle's having had sufficient knowledge of the parties to render him a trustworthy evidence on that point was at an end. Mr. Stirlington, who, in order to ascertain that point, had hitherto suppressed his emotion by a violent effort, became now so overcome by it, that he was obliged to avail himself of the young mariner's assistance to reach the sofa, on which he reclined, covering his face with his hand, apparently incapable of continuing the inquiry.

" Sir," said Ben compassionately, " had we not better delay ?"

" Delay is death ! " said he—suddenly rising to a sitting posture. " Proceed—and as briefly as you can inform me what took place at the shipwreck."

" The evening had began to close; we were all convinced that the ship must founder during the night. It was resolved, as one last chance, that we should take to the boats and make a desperate effort to get on shore before dark. The lady had fainted in the cabin, and her child sat weeping beside her."

A convulsive shudder passed through the frame of Mr. Stirlington; and the sailor paused in alarm.

" Sir," said he, " I fear you cannot bear this; but I will be as brief as possible. My uncle came into the cabin, inquiring loudly for the man we called 'Fire-eater,' and, awful as the hour was, swore a heavy oath to find he was not there, but had at such a moment left his wife and child to the care of others. Yet, he said, the women and children must be put on board the boats immediately: the sailors seized the other woman and child; my uncle himself lifted the lady to carry her away, but the lady's child fixed her trembling blue eyes on mine so piteously."

The sailor paused for a moment overcome by his emotion.

"Take wine," said Mr. Stirlington; "you will find it on the side-board. Kindhearted, generous fellow; it is impossible a youth of such genuine feelings can in anything deceive me."

"Not for all the mines of Mexico and Peru," said Ben; "but I must be steady, though it is a sad story to tell. At that dreadful moment a little thing occurred which has fixed itself upon my memory—my heart; and although it may seem hardly worth while to relate such a trifle, it may serve to take off our attention a little from the most painful parts of what I have to relate. When my father was dying of a lingering disease, at our village in the north of Devon, he amused himself by rearing a little bulfinch; he taught it to whistle, and even to speak. After his death, when I went to sea, I took this bird with me; and I loved it with a foolish, boyish fondness, which was, perhaps, very silly, but I could not help it, for I was then but a boy: I used to fancy that the spirit of my father hovered over it; I loved to shut my eyes while he whistled and sung, and try to fancy myself in the little flower garden, where he used to hang—this was no doubt very silly and childish, and the ship's boys used to laugh at me and tease my bird; I have fought more battles on account of that bird than for any other cause whatever during my whole life: such strange fancies boys take up with. Whoever teased my bird was an object of hatred to me—whoever was kind to him I could do anything for them. Fire-eater's daughter always teased him, and I hated her; the lady's little girl was as fond of him as I was, and I loved her dearly. At this dreadful moment, when all was terror and consternation around, when even I had forgotten him, she clung to my neck, and, in her broken English, said—

"Pretty bird—take away, cabin boy."

I sprung to his cage—released him—gave him to her: innocent, and not conscious of the extent of our danger, she caressed him fondly; as we came upon deck, with her own pretty hand she flung him off upon the breeze, and my poor favorite escaped from that scene of terror and death by flight. I cannot describe to you with what joy I saw him flit away over the raging, foaming waters, and save his life; and how heartily did I wish that the poor child could do the same thing. Before I left the cabin—I should have told you, sir,—seeing the little girl was by no means fitly clothed to face the storm, every one else having forgotten her, I hastily wrapped a shawl around her, which I found lying by, and put upon her head a little blue bonnet, which I now remember had belonged to Fire-eater's daughter: I am firmly of opinion it was that blue bonnet which saved her life."

"Give me but one proof," exclaimed Mr. Stirlington, "that her life was saved, and my whole fortune is at your feet."

"I saw her myself, ashore, alive and hearty, many months after that," said Ben.

"God of Mercy!" exclaimed he, "accept a father's thanks, and compassionate the longings of a father's heart. Sailor, I have wealth — thou shalt have thy reward; I have a little of strength, of life, remaining—it must be all devoted to the recovery of my child. Preparation must be made for our immediate departure for Ireland. Now, hand me the wine—sit down, partake of it with me, thou art worthy—most worthy."

He cordially shook the sailor's hand, and Ben sat down.

"The little that remains to me of mental or bodily energy," resumed Mr. Stirlington, "must not be wasted by my being left to the agony of doubt, nor by recurring at some future time to a subject of so harassing a kind: you must describe to me at once how her life was saved."

"The women and children being in the first boat, as I was to go in the second with the captain, he sent me below for some papers which the poor old man thought might be of consequence to him. As I was about to go down, Fire-eater, who had all the time been below, rushed upon deck. I thought I never saw so pale and cowardly looking a villain in my life. Seeing that the first boat, with his wife and child in it, was gone, with the most dreadful oaths and execrations I ever heard, he took his seat in the second. As I went down I heard the most horrible shrieks and exclamations of despair issuing from a small cabin which the Jew had occupied: I tried to enter—it was locked, but the key was left on the outside; I opened it, and Barabbas the Jew rushed out, covered with blood, exclaiming that Fire-eater had robbed, attempted to murder him, and locked him up there to perish. When in the boats, we found that we had quitted a certain destruction in the ship for a very uncertain deliverance. Those in the first boat found it so difficult to get on shore that we were close together—I saw her capsize, and the little blue bonnet rise for a moment on the billow, when our boat shared the same fate."

A cold depressing feeling of doubt and incredulity seemed to spread itself around the anxious father's heart, yet he seemed desirous to cling to hope, for he exclaimed—

"Yet you stated that you had, many months after, seen my child alive?"

"I did, sir," said Ben Brackle. "It happened in this manner:—I was found lifeless on the beach, half buried in sand; when restored to life, I had no recollection of anything; I remained for many weeks in a raging fever, accompanied with delirium; I never saw any of the persons who escaped with me; I was told that two sailors besides myself had escaped, and a man who was not a sailor, who had brought on shore a child apparently dead, but who recovered. The sailors were gone to sea; and of the man with the child no one knew anything. In this state of uncertainty, after I recovered, I obtained employment and went to sea. It was many months after that our brig was at anchor in Belfast harbour. Our wages were good, and as we were just come into port, Bob Ranklin, a shipmate of my own age, and myself, being troubled with a sailor's greatest encumbrance—too much money—got leave to go ashore. We had been a voyage together, were excellent friends, but had frequently had a little sparring in jest, until we began to feel in earnest, and had unfortunately never fought it out: we drank and sang together at a public-house until we came to that point where we could not help shaking hands continually—one point above that is sure to be a fight: having sworn eternal friendship to each other until we had fairly picked a quarrel, we were taken off by a messmate, older and more sober than ourselves, to see a show, to prevent our fighting: at the show we were told we should see the Emperor of all Conjurors; when we arrived at the spot, this Prince of Magicians was Fire-eater! and the lady's child was taking money at the door."

"Merciful Heaven!" said the horror-stricken parent, "give me strength to bear this, and to rescue my child from a situation so horrible."

"Amen," said Ben; "for depend upon it, sir, the earth contains no villain equal to that conjuror. Well, sir, I sprung forward—knelt down to kiss her pretty hands, but she drew back from me alarmed, not knowing me at first. Do you not know me? said I. She looked at me earnestly, but did not speak. Did you not know pretty bird—pretty bird? 'Yes, yes,' said she eagerly; 'I know pretty bird—out on the sea—I know now—cabin boy, cabin boy.' And then she extended her pretty hands towards me, and burst into a flood of tears. Fire-eater, who then called himself Dermody, and who evidently recognized me, sprung forward and seized me rudely by the collar, and demanded why I insulted his child? 'Yes,' said Bob Ranklin, 'you basely, grossly, impudently insulted the child.' I denied it so indignantly and perhaps so abusively that he replied to me with a blow. I had been slicing an orange with a sailor's large clasped knife, and it was still open in my hand; I let it drop and struck at him; we fought until the police, who had been called by Dermody, took us both into custody; the villain ventriloquist came forward and accused me of having attempted to stab my companion evidently with intent to kill, and produced the knife which I had in my hand when the scuffle commenced as an undeniable proof; the magistrates, or whatever they might be, who heard the case, had difficulty to prevent the Irish mob from tearing me to pieces, and I was marched off to prison amidst the execrations of the multitude, and for the time was even glad to take shelter there as a refuge from their violence."

"But did you see the child no more?"

"Once, sir; and but for a moment. The moon, at midnight, shone brightly through the unglazed gratings of my prison; the window was too high to admit of my seeing anything immediately beneath it, but there I heard a light little footstep, and her own sweet voice say timidly, 'Cabin boy?' I answered, to let her know that she was right. In a moment I saw one little hand clasp the grating of the window, presently her face was raised on a level with it, then she lifted the other hand and dropped something into the cell; pronouncing in an accent of sweet farewell, once more the words 'Cabin boy,' she instantly descended. I anxiously called after her—she heeded not—I saw her in the bright moonlight pass rapidly over the rising ground opposite the window, like a shadow, and disappeared in an instant. In the morning I was released, for Bob Ranklin being sober declared the story of the intended assassination was a mere fabrication of the mountebank's. Dermody being sought for to confirm his testimony, it was found that the villain and all his establishment had decamped about midnight, and had gone no one knew whither. On looking after what she had dropped into the cell, I found it was a small purse containing a few sixpences (which had, perhaps, been given to her by persons visiting the booth, who might have been struck by her beauty); there was also in the purse a seal. The purse and seal are both here."

Ben drew from his bosom a small canvas bag, which had been suspended round his neck by a black ribbon, and from it he drew a purse of beautiful bead-work. Mr. Stirlington immediately recognized it as having belonged to his late wife; the seal he had for years worn suspended to his own watch; the impression was the well-known crest of the Harfield family, engraven on a topaz. It was the seal with which Mary Harfield had sealed her first letters to him, and had been fondly claimed from him at her departure for England, that her letters from thence might remind him of their happiest days, their early loves.

But we must pursue that subject no further. Hurrah for merry England!

CHAP. XIII.

> "Active in indolence, abroad we roam
> In quest of happiness, which dwells at home."
> ELPHINGSTON.

Mr. Stirlington, who, previous to Cospetto's communication, had allowed the powers of his once active mind to fall into the inertness and lethargy of despondency, had, by that communication, been raised to a better state of feeling. From that time he manifested a desire to husband his strength, and to use the means most likely to restore his health, which he had before thought himself unequal to and shunned.

Air and exercise, taken in the most monotonous or the gloomiest manner, are productive of some little variety and amusement, abstracting the thoughts from the one unvarying and corroding sorrow which dwells within. Thus, the good Father Anselmo observed with much pleasure, on his return from his pilgrimage, that his bodily health had greatly improved and much of his mental energy returned; but, after the interview with Ben Brackle described in the last chapter, his nerves seemed strung with supernatural energy, and his whole soul filled with a degree of ardour which admitted of no repose: it is true he had his hours of languor and exhaustion, but these were passed in the solitude of his chamber: when seen by strangers he was actively engaged in preparations for his journey to Great Britain, his eye illumined with the fire of hope, and his cheek glowing with a deeper and a richer tinge even than the bloom of his boyish days; yet Father Anselmo sighed heavily as he noticed this change. Mr. Stirlington's first care was to write to his brother and to request him to meet him at Waterford in Ireland; the ship which had brought Ben Brackle to Lisbon was soon fitted out for the voyage; Ben and Cospetto were soon ready to embark, Father Anselmo having in the meantime joined their hands with many hearty prayers for their welfare, and Mr. Stirlington bestowed a handsome dower on the roguish-looking little bride, who would have blushed a great deal during the bridal ceremony if she could, but Portuguese complexions sometimes do not admit of that, and indeed Cospetto's did not require it.

The brothers met at Waterford. It being arranged that Cospetto should for a time remain at the house of a respectable Portuguese female who had like herself married an English mariner. Augustus Stirlington, with his brother and Ben Brackle commenced their journey to the north of Ireland to begin their inquiries after the child. Tom Stirlington, having heard the sailor's story, considerably altered the opinion which he had expressed in the conversation which he held in the conservatory with Uncle Ralph upon the subject; and although his hopes were far from being so sanguine as his brother's, he entered into the matter with all the natural warmth of his active character. From the north of Ireland they traced the fugitives to Dumfries, in Scotland. At that town it appeared that Dermody had been guilty of some misdemeanour—that he had absconded for fear of the consequences—his establishment had been broken up, and all trace of him appeared to be lost; at last, however, they discovered an old woman at whose house Dermody the ventriloquist had lodged while in that town; she gave a most interesting description of the child, and produced a letter from her son, a dealer in tea settled at Crewkerne, in Somersetshire, in which he stated that he had some time ago seen her old lodger, Dermody, at that place with a company of strolling players, performing the first parts in tragedy with great applause, but passing under the more theatrical name of Bernard Bloomfield. All these particulars were communicated to Mrs. Stirlington by letters from her husband; the last she received was from Crewkerne, from which we shall make a short extract.

Crewkerne, Wednesday eve.

My dear Angela,—We arrived here to-day, but find that we are as far from the object of our search as ever. The people here remember the actor who called himself Bernard Bloomfield, and that he had a child with him who passed as his daughter, but the child spoke very little English, and he scarcely allowed her to converse with any person. The theatrical company left this place more than twelve months since. It appears they were on what is called a sharing speculation, and that they are now dispersed. By the merest accident I have, however, met with a commercial acquaintance whom I have for some years known on the road; he states that many months ago he certainly saw the actor in Cornwall, where he was delivering lectures on elocution, illustrating them with imitations of celebrated actors and specimens of ventriloquism. There is no other means of keeping poor Augustus's hope alive than by consenting to prosecute our inquiries in that direction, and with him to cease to hope will be to cease to live. Although I confess to you that I dread nearly as much his finding his child *what she is likely to have become* in the society she has kept as his not finding her at all. It is dreadful to anticipate (which he, however, does not seem to do,) how much of their manners and their ways of thinking the poor child may have become infected with: in fact, in such society she must have become, I fear, a sort of person with whom he, even in his youth, would have deemed it a degradation to have conversed. This will wound him to the soul. There was always a degree of austerity in his morality, a nicety of delicacy in his high sense of honor which I used to laugh at as preposterous, but which, in his present state of mind and of health, we must yield to; this makes me extremely regret that we have been so absorbed in other matters of late that nothing has been done with respect to little Rose. His impatience to recover his child, will, however, cause his stay at our house to be very brief at present; during which time Rose can be kept out of his sight by remaining in the apartments appropriated to the children; proper time can be taken to explain everything respecting her on his return, but at present it is needless to trouble him about her: to say nothing of the malicious but truly ridiculous misrepresentations of Mrs. Bunce (which, though false, would wound *him* severely), I do not think that even the *real facts* of the case would meet with his entire approval. My Angela will, I know, communicate this to the delicately-minded and affectionate child in such a manner as not to hurt her feelings. I hope Uncle Ralph's gout is better than when you wrote last; if he is well enough it would be highly desirable that he should have his first interview with Augustus at our house: it will be a most trying one to them both. We shall reach home on Friday evening about six."

Mrs. Stirlington was a person of active spirit, possessed of the best of feelings, but they did not absorb her attention from the practical performance of her social and domestic duties. She had no ambition to aspire to anything above her husband's real station in society, but at the same time she was most careful in nothing to fall below it; entirely above the petty rivalries in dress, equipage, and furniture, upon ordinary occasions, which lead ladies to outvie each other in extravagance, she felt that when her husband's wealthy and distinguished brother should become for a time their guest, nothing ought to meet his view which could bring to his mind a sense of degradation, or look, on their parts, as acknowledged inferiority; she had therefore taken advantage of her husband's absence (as the phrase goes) to put the house in order. The principal apartments had all been freshly painted and re-decorated, antiquated pieces of furniture had been removed and replaced by others of a more splendid and fashionable kind. These alterations had been carried to an extent which had nearly driven Margery out of her wits with delight, and caused Bolt to look on the improving appearance of all around with a degree of pride and satisfaction which had never been excited in him before except by the perfections of Dragon-fly. All this, however, had rather a contrary effect on the young ladies, Evelina and Rosabel. Such unusual preparations for the reception of the expected visitor awed them, and caused Evelina to look forward to the time of his arrival with dislike, and poor Rosabel to expect it with a sort of nameless dread which she could scarcely account for, but which she could by no means overcome. This feeling of anticipated unpleasantness which often casts a gloom over the coming hour when there is least occasion for it, was greatly increased in them both, and Rosabel's timid apprehensions heightened into complete dismay when informed of Tom Stirlington's request that Rose should remain entirely in the study and not join the family during his brother's visit. Feelings of this sort are produced by impressions made on the imagination—the most trivial things increase or lighten them.

Six o'clock had nearly arrived—the girls were alone in the drawing-room; Mrs. Stirlington, busied in preparations for the expected arrival, was not yet there; Evelina was splendidly attired, as if prepared to receive company; poor Rose remained, for the first time when that was the case, in the plain white frock which she would have worn when with the governess or on any ordinary occasion. As she employed herself in arranging her little friend's beautiful dark ringlets, she said—

"Now, my dear Effie, you do look so very—very pretty."

"And you, my dear Rose, do look so very—very sad."

"Ah! Effie; your father is coming—he is nearly here; you will fly to meet him; I must not fly to meet him though I love him too; he will press you to his heart—he will call you his own—OWN dear Effie; I shall be alone—there is no one to take *me* to his heart and call me his *own* Rosabel."

The girls started, for a carriage stopped at the door. Evelina flew to the window, and poor Rosabel with a light footstep but a heavy heart ascended to her destined hiding place, and seated herself sorrowfully in the window which faced the street.

Uncle Ralph only was in the vehicle which stopped at the door, his gout having compelled him to use what was, in his estimation, the most contemptible of all modes of conveyance, a handsome carriage and pair. In a moment Bolt and Margery were on the alert, with all the subordinates of the household, to give him assistance and help him into the drawing-room. They had not made half the arrangements for his comfort which their regard for the venerable old gentleman had suggested, when a carriage and four stopped at the door, and Ben Brackle sprung lightly from the dickey. There was that hushed silence about the vehicle the moment it stopped, which indicates that some grave feeling occupies the mind of all belonging to it.

Tom Stirlington, pale and dejected, quickly alighted; the post-boys looked back with an expression of melancholy interest. Augustus Stirlington descended with slow and fainting steps, assisted by his brother and the sailor; his face was deadly pale, but the expression of his noble features bespoke a calm and solemn resignation; his eye was turned upward, lighted with the dignity of death; he looked for a short time on the face of the old mansion in which his early and happy hours had been spent, as if blessing it, he pronounced but one word, and that sounded most solemnly to all present.

"Home!" said he, "home—home!"——and he was almost carried to the drawing-room.

The meeting between him and Uncle Ralph was a sad one—between him and Angela and her daughter most harrowing; Uncle Ralph wept like a child, and Margery with trembling hand wiped the tears from the face of the helpless old man; Bolt fancied he concealed his tears by bending over the flannels which he was tenderly adjusting round the old gentleman's feet. Augustus Stirlington was laid upon a sofa, and Ben Brackle, to whose attention he had become accustomed, holding a glass of water to his lips, when a deadly silence fell on all around. It was caused by the appearance of Rosabel, who silently and unobserved had gained the centre of the room; her little hands were lifted up and spread out before her with an expression of amazement—her eyes were wildly fixed upon the countenance of the stranger—her face was deadly pale—even her lips were white as marble—they were moving rapidly, as if trying to pronounce words which she had no power to utter.

Struck by the silence, Augustus Stirlington raised himself slowly on the couch; the child timidly retreated to the door, where she clasped her little hands, uttered a piercing shriek, exclaimed—

"It is—it must be!" and fell lifeless on the floor.

The strength of his manliest days seemed for a moment to have returned—Augustus Stirlington sprung forward, knelt down and caught her in his arms, exclaiming—

"My child! My lost child! The child of Mary Harfield."

Ben Brackle sunk upon his knees beside them, and exclaimed—

"It *is* the lady's child, so help me God!"

Evelina, not comprehending the scene, flew to her little friend and threw her arms around her neck. The muslin covering of her bosom became disordered, and the eye of the father rested on the secret mark. It was the semblance of a curled-up rose leaf, which had been noticed at her birth, and gained for her the name of Rosabel. There it now lay, fresh and beautiful as if the fingers of young love had just plucked it from the bowers of Elisium and flung it on its ivory resting place.

"Uncle—my brother!" said the father, "behold my child—my *own*—OWN lost Rosabel!"

With that he struggled faintly to draw her nearer, nearer, nearer to his heart, and fell lifeless by her side.

The usual restoratives were resorted to with immediate success on Rosabel; but the spirit of Augustus Stirlington had fled to that region where its errors will pass away in the smile of its Maker as the vapour of the morning melts before the sunbeam, and all that was good, and noble, and godlike in his heart, will flourish to all Eternity.

CHAP. XIV.

> "Nothing so difficult as a beginning,
> Except, perhaps, the end."
> BYRON.

The interest of our *tale* is at an end. We have endeavoured to draw a picture of real life, such as it exists in our own days. We have read a few passages out of that page of the book of life, which accident has opened to ourselves. The original still remains for the perusal of others. A few explanations are all that are now needed of us: some of our characters we shall in all probability meet again; a few must inevitably get married; the rest are "left for execution."

It is now evident that the travelling artist, whose real name was Albert Drummond, first spoken of as the supposed father of Rosabel, was the same person as Dermody the ventriloquist and Bernard Bloomfield the tragedian. The reason why he so often changed his name and occupation was, that in almost every place he went he was accused of some breach of the known, the *written*, nay, the very PRINTED laws of the land. If he was always accused wrongfully, he must have been like Bob Acres in the play "An Ill-used Gentleman." That point we will not investigate at present.

Tom Stirlington resolved to see this man. He had been sentenced to imprisonment for his offence; but it appearing that he had been concerned in many other offences, the partners of which were apprehended and awaiting their trial in London, he had been removed to the metropolis to furnish information against them.

"Yes, yes," said he, with the greatest *sang froid*, "it is true enough I rescued the merchant's girl from the waves instead of my own, by mistake; but I found about her person a casket of jewels of some value, which her mother had hung about her neck. When the poor little wretch lay panting at my feet, after I discovered my mistake, I had a mind to fling her back again into the sea; but while I deliberated the Irish bog-trotters came down. Before I had made up my mind they seized the child with the jewels still about her. I claimed and kept the child for the sake of the jewels; we did very well together, for the treasure lasted out; however, I am glad you have got her back again, and the remainder of the baubles you will find in the hands of old Mother Bunce."

Tom Stirlington left him in disgust, for there could be no doubt remaining as to the child's identity.

A very important change took place at the Green Dragon: Mrs. Bunce, having turned tee-totaler, remained up one night after the servants had retired to rest, to take a little brandy and water for "*medicinal purposes;*" it must have affected her head, however, for on ascending the stairs she fell backward, and so severely injured herself that she was ever afterwards unfit for business. She was found to be insolvent. Her friend, Miss Deborah Mangleshape, made desperate efforts to get married and take the Green Dragon, in neither of which she succeeded; for although by her machinations and exposures of Mrs. Bunce's circumstances, she succeeded in ruining her—when the inn became vacant, it was found that her money happened to be in a provincial bank, and one gloomy afternoon at half-past four precisely the partners thought proper to declare very politely to the public that they meant to take a short holiday, by suspending their payments: Miss Deborah is therefore at present waiting in the union workhouse until their payments shall be resumed. There, however, she enjoys the company of her amiable friend Mrs. Bunce; and they both enjoy the supreme delight of tormenting each other continually.

Lopez de Gama was left to wind up Mr. Stirlington's affairs at Lisbon: after De la Motte's exposure, having become suspicious of his character, he found, on investigation, that the physician had obtained certain sums of money from the firm under false pretences; he therefore sent the officers of justice in quest of him, and the physician scarcely had time to draw on his large boots, mount the immense spurs, which, with the enormous whip, were barely sufficient to overcome the obstinacy of his mule, and fly in great haste through the forests to the Castello de Toromendo. In his alarm he implored

Pietro Gonzalo to hide him for a time in the secret dungeon. Pietro, who had been informed of his attempts upon the honour of his daughter, by Ursula, received his proposal with a grim joy.

"Ha-ha," said De la Motte with great satisfaction, "these English villains and their vagabond Portuguese retainers may search for a long time before they will find me now."

Pietro's features expanded into a hideous smile.

It proved to be perfectly correct.

Whether the magior-domo meant to starve the Frenchman to death, is uncertain, and must remain so, for Pietro died suddenly of apoplexy, and was found a corpse in the garden of the castello, and no one but himself knew of the physician's being in the dungeon.

Don Garcias and his nephew were shot by order of Don Carlos, under suspicion of treason. The next heir to the castello, intending to rebuild it, the dungeon was discovered and opened; a skeleton, with a large pair of boots on, to which enormous spurs were attached, was found in it; the end of a large riding-whip was thrust into its mouth, the wretch having attempted to prey upon even that unpromising food in the agony of his last hunger.

On a Sunday evening Tom Stirlington sat alone in his drawing-room, Mrs. Stirlington and the young ladies having gone out; he wanted something to be brought to him from the kitchen—he rang the bell, but to his surprise no one answered it; he tried it a second time, but with the same success. There is an old saying, supposed to have been founded on fact, that "Even King John was obliged to wait while his drink was drawing." Now, it is a self-evident truism, that with whatever state and dignity a gentleman may be seated in his drawing-room, if he wants an article which is in his kitchen, that if he rings the bell and no person answers, there is but one alternative—he must either go without the article in question for a time, or fetch it himself. All the wranglers in all the universities in the kingdom, with all the rhetoric and logic that ever was or ever will be, cannot upset the fact or alter the result; so, however great might be the conflict between his dignity and his convenience, Tom Stirlington resolved to fetch what he wanted himself. He expected to find the kitchen deserted, and concluded that Bolt and Margery were abroad attending to their Sunday evening devotions. To his great surprise, they were both in the kitchen, engaged in a conference, to them so interesting, that they had neither of them heard the bell. Bolt, however, stood at one end of the table and she at the other, Bolt leaning eagerly towards her; but she had fairly turned her back upon him—had drawn the corner of her apron up into a little purse between her finger and thumb, and stood forming and re-forming it into every imaginable shape that could be thought of; her eyes never wandered from the corner of her apron for a moment. Bolt had just finished his proposal, and stood awaiting her reply.

"I tell you what, Bill Bolt," sobbed she; "if I was really fool enough to love you as much as you have the vanity and impudence to think I do, it would be of no kind of use whatever to preach up that sort of logic to me; I would rather lose my life than leave master and missus, and the young ladies."

"Psha!" said Tom Stirlington.

A clap of thunder would have been but a fool to that "psha," as Bolt himself afterwards candidly acknowledged. As to Margery, the excess of her fright only kept her from screaming aloud. Never were people upon earth half so much confounded before nor since. Tom Stirlington laughed heartily, took what he wanted, and left the room.

"Now," said Margery, "that comes of your keeping on so, Bolt; I always told you how it would be; now it's all blown—he will go and tell missus for certain sure."

"And supposing as what that he does," said Bolt manfully; "it can't hurt; they can't imprison us—they can't transport us; and I don't care what they do as long as they don't part us."

Margery turned quickly round, looked at him fondly for a moment, and exclaimed—

"Nor I either, to tell thee the truth, Bill."

But the moment she had said it, she darted towards the door, intending to make her escape. Bolt prevented this—caught her in his arms.——It does not appear necessary to proceed any further with the affair.——

Tom Stirlington did worse than tell *missus,* he told Uncle Ralph. Their destiny was instantly fixed—their fate was sealed. If they had lived in the days when "Cyrenius was governor of Syria," and there had went out a decree from Cæsar Augustus that all the world should be married instead of taxed, their fate could not have been more certain. Uncle Ralph declared that the thing admitted of no delay, and he was prevented from sending express for his sporting friend, the parson of Crazycot, to perform the ceremony at once, only by their putting their banns in next day at the parish church. Through the bounty of the Messrs. Stirlington, Mr. and Mrs. Bolt were enabled to take possession of the Green Dragon Inn, formerly occupied by Mrs. Bunce; and it is now acknowledged to be one of the most comfortable and best conducted commercial houses on the road.

Bolt makes an excellent landlord and a steady man of business; but, as it is my duty to state things as they are and not as what they should be, I am sorry to be obliged to record one slight deviation from that general rule.

Ben Brackle was about to go aboard to take the command of a large Portuguese trader, the joint property of the Messrs. Stirlington, in which somehow or other Ben had obtained a large share by way of encouragement—so he and Cospetto went down to the Green Dragon on a visit. At this time Ben and the landlord fairly bolted over the ropes—they scampered off together to Bolt's native village on the borders of the moor, and had such a "flare up" (as Ben called it) together that they kept the whole hamlet in an uproar of mirth for a week. Cospetto wiped her pretty eyes and tried to look sorrowful at this; but, as Margery said, there is no foreseeing such things before they happen—there's no helping them when they *do* take place, and therefore there is no wisdom in saying much about them when they have passed away.

Will Ostler and Bob Boots were fixtures at the Green Dragon. Will had been a friend and benefactor to Margery, after her father had been killed at Waterloo, when she wanted a friend—she did not forget it; and Will was a most invaluable servant. I do not deny that Will sometimes when they were alone forgot to say "missus," but that never happened before strangers; on two or three occasions he affectionately called her Madge to her face, at which breach of decorum Bob Boots was dreadfully annoyed, but it happened after Bob and Will had been trying their favorite experiment, which was—to ascertain "whether the bands of friendship do in reality grow the stronger the more they are wet."

Of Father Anselmo we heard no more. A friend of ours was at Lisbon some time since, and went to the Franciscan Monastery to inquire about him; in the cloisters of the convent he met two or three young novices, of whom he asked for Father Anselmo. They looked at each other—seemed to strive to refresh each other's memory, but at last ended by declaring that they knew nothing about him. In the splendid church of the

Franciscans, however, he met an aged monk, who journeyed by the assistance of a staff, and of whose tonsure a few white hairs alone remained. The venerable friar at first but imperfectly understood the question; but when he did comprehend it a momentary flash seemed to light up his dim and aged eye; he stood still—allowed his staff to fall within his hands, and looked upwards apparently engaged in mental devotion.

"Anselmo Gilianez," at length he said, "has been long at rest, my son;" and he waved his hand in the direction of the cemetery, and slowly passed on.

The stranger went into the burial ground; but for a long time feared that he should, even there, find no memento of the benevolent and friendly recluse; but at last he discovered a grave shaded by a large cypress tree, which had evidently been long neglected and forgotten—the turf had been rounded up, but the rains of many winters had sunk it nearly to a level with the surrounding sward; it had been planted with flowers, but weeds had grown up and choked them; at the head, however, he discovered a small and rudely-hewn broken stone—there was a short inscription; the letters had evidently not been chiseled by an artist, but the feeble hand of some old monk had inscribed them rudely with these words:

"TO THE MEMORY OF
MY BROTHER AND THE BROTHER OF ALL MANKIND,
ANSELMO GILIANEZ."

Ralph Stirlington sleeps with his fathers. The time, the manner of his death, or any particulars concerning it, I have not heart to record. May the resting place of his dust be sacred; may hearts like his long dwell around it; may their lives, like his, be a credit and a blessing to the County of Devon; and their united success long prove the prosperity of the place of his late residence,

THE CITY OF EXETER.

DETACHED PIECES.

THE MOORLANDS.

I.

Away let me speed to the Moorland heath,
Where the blue sky's above and the green turf beneath;
From the baseness, the folly, the pride of men,
Away let me haste to the mountain glen;
From their cureless hate or their false caress,
Let me fly to the stormy wilderness—
Where the rock-crown'd tors, in rude varied forms,
Lift their fearless brows to relentless storms—
Where the larch fir bends as the north winds moan,
And the snow-flake plays round the desert stone—
Where the osier is bending its leafless head,
'Till it brushes the turf of its native bed—
Where the bittern is heard, by the stunted wood,
To bewail her in cheerless solitude—
Where the lapwing inhabits the faithless fen,
And the fox and the martle have built their den—
Where the wild drake is laving its speckled breast
In the dark Moorland lake, its winter guest—

Where the hawk speeds in haste through the gusty sky,
Like a messenger sent on emergency.
If, in grief, my retreat—there no pitiless eye
Views th' sorrow 'twould scoff at insultingly;
If, in joy—there alone I'd an altar raise,
Where no passion or pride dims the brightness of praise.
From delights that betray, and from cares that oppress,
There is peace in the storm of the wilderness.

II.

Again let me speed to the Moorland glen,
When Summer has walk'd o'er the tremulous fen,
And breathing delight in her sunny hours,
Has strew'd the earth with her fairest flow'rs;
When in freshness and beauty the forest is gay,
And the hare-bell has crept where the snow-flake lay—
When the woodbine frail, by his strength upborne,
Hangs her beauty forth on the sturdy thorn—
When spotted with fleeces the uplands appear,
And the hill-sheep have climb'd to their summer lair—
When the breezes are hush'd, and the evening still
Seems to blush with delight on the western hill—
When the lark's on the wing, and is gone on high
To her joyful sojourn in the summer sky,
And her vesper lay from her cloud is given,
To the tranquil earth like a thing of heaven—

And the grey plover's whistle at close of day
O'er the silent waste passes plaintively—
When the shepherd-boy's song cheers the flowery glen,
And the turf-cutter's carol is heard in the fen;
With the poor, but the free, let me cast in my lot,
The oppressor is vanquish'd, the proud are forgot,
While I raise my bold anthem of thankfulness,
Alone and afar in the wilderness.

WOLFERN OF WARSAW.

In a cave of the desert—a hermit's lone cell,
  Two worshippers knelt at the close of the day;
One aged—the hermit who dwelt in the dell,
  One youthful and beauteous—a warrior so gay—
With tremulous accent the blessing was given,
  As the sire's feeble hand press'd the brow of the boy—
To Poland I give—'tis the stern will of Heaven—
  My darken'd soul's comfort—its last beam of joy.
Go, haste to the onset; thy war-shout shall be,
"Death only shall fetter the hand of the free."

Young Wolfern of Warsaw—brave, reckless, and gay,
  Gave to Bertha a sigh, to fair freedom a song;
Flew in haste to the conflict—"For Warsaw! away.
  Why heed ye the wrath on the Moscovite's tongue?

Let the tramp of each steed press an enemy slain,
Though the blood of the rider be spilt on his mane;
Let the serfs of the North feel the flash of your blade,
Till each white plume be sunk in the gore we have made.
For Warsaw and Freedom—our battle-cry be,
Death only shall fetter the hands of the free."

The morn woke in light on the Vistula's bank,
And blush'd as she look'd on that blood-mingled stream;
There *he* lay, like a firebrand quench'd, where he sank,
Sternly lovely in death, 'neath the morn's early beam.
Lone hermit, thy beauteous and brave had obey'd—
Met the slave of the Czar in the pride of his might:
See, the hireling, the Cossack, around him are laid,
But the soul of the warrior has fled in the fight.
Where he fell, raise his stone—let his epitaph be,
"Death only could fetter the hand of the free."

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