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Z E L U C O.

VARIOUS VIEWS
OF
HUMAN NATURE,

TAKEN
FROM LIFE AND MANNERS,
FOREIGN AND DOMESTIC.

BY DR. MOORE.

----- Cur tamen hos tu
Evasisse putes, quod diri conscia facti
Mens habet attonitos, et surdo verbere cædit,
Occultum quatiente animo tortore flagellum?
Pœna autem vehemens, ac multo sævior illis,
Quas et Cæditius gravis invenit aut Rhadamanthus,
Nocte dieque suum gestare in pectore testem.

Juv.

IN TWO VOLUMES,
VOL. I.
A NEW EDITION.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR T. CADELL AND W. DAVIES, STRAND.

1810.

1810

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VARIOUS VIEWS
OF
HUMAN NATURE,
TAKEN
FROM LIFE AND MANNERS
FOREIGN AND DOMESTIC.

BY DR. NOBLE.

THE SECOND EDITION, WITH
CORRECTIONS AND ADDITIONS,
BY THE AUTHOR.

IN TWO VOLUMES,
VOL. I.
A NEW EDITION.

Printed by Richard Taylor and Co.,
Shoe Lane, London.

1810

ZELUCO.

CHAPTER I.

Strong indications of a vicious disposition.

RELIGION teaches that vice leads to endless misery in a future state; and experience proves that, in spite of the gayest and most prosperous appearances, inward misery accompanies her; for even in this life her ways are ways of wretchedness, and all her paths are woe.

This observation has been so often made, that it must be known to all, and its truth is seldom formally denied by any; yet the conduct of men would sometimes lead us to suspect, either that they had never heard it, or that they think it false. To recal a truth of such importance to the recollection of mankind, and to illustrate it by example, may therefore be of use.

Tracing the windings of vice, however, and delineating the disgusting features of villainy, are unpleasant tasks; and some people cannot bear to contemplate such a picture. It is fair, therefore, to warn readers of this turn of mind, not to peruse the story of Zeluco.

This person, sprung from a noble family in Sicily, was a native of Palermo, where he passed the years of early childhood, without being distinguished by any thing very remarkable in his disposition, unless it was

a tendency to insolence, and an inclination to domineer over boys of inferior rank and circumstances. The bad tendency of this, however, was so strongly remonstrated against by his father, and others who superintended his education, that it was in a great degree checked, and in a fair way of being entirely overcome.

In the tenth year of his age he lost his father, and was left under the guidance of a mother, whose darling he had ever been, and who had often blamed her husband for too great severity to a son, whom, in her fond opinion, nature had endowed with every good quality.

A short time after the death of his father, Zeluco began to betray strong symptoms of that violent and overbearing disposition to which he had always had a propensity, though he had hitherto been obliged to restrain it. Had that gentleman lived a few years longer, the violence of Zeluco's temper would, it is probable, have been weakened, or entirely annihilated, by the continued influence of this habit of restraint, and the rest of his life might have exhibited a very different character; for he showed sufficient command of himself as long as his father lived: but very soon after his death, he indulged, without control, every humour and caprice; and his mistaken mother applauding the blusterings of petulance and pride as indications of spirit, his temper became more and more ungovernable, and at length seemed as inflammable as gunpowder, bursting into flashes of rage at the slightest touch of provocation.

It may be proper to mention one instance of this violence of temper, from which the reader will be enabled to form a juster notion than his mother did, of what kind of spirit it was an indication.

He had a favourite sparrow, so tame that it picked crumbs from his hand, and hopped familiarly on the

table. One day it did not perform certain tricks which he had taught it, to his satisfaction. This put the boy into a passion: the bird, being frightened, attempted to fly off the table. He suddenly seized it with his hand, and, while it struggled to get free, with a curse he squeezed the little animal to death. His tutor, who was present, was so shocked at this instance of absurd and brutal rage, that he punished him as he deserved, saying, I hope this will cure you of giving vent to such odious gusts of passion. If it does not, remember what I tell you, sir; they will render you hateful to others, wretched to yourself, and may bring you one day to open shame and endless remorse." Zeluco complained to his mother; and she dismissed the tutor, declaring, that she would not have her son's *vivacity* repressed by the rigid maxims of a narrow-minded pedant.

CHAPTER II.

"See how the world its veterans rewards!

A youth of frolics—an old age of cards."

POPE.

BEING now freed from that authority which had hitherto stimulated him to occasional exertions, Zeluco renounced all application to letters. This was partly owing to the love of dissipation and amusement natural to boys, but principally to the influence of a maxim very generally adopted by servants, and by them and other profound observers instilled into the minds of the young heirs of great fortunes, whose faculties it too often benumbs, like the touch of the torpedo, and renders them incapable through life of every praise-worthy exertion. The maxim is this—That learning, although it is sometimes of service to

those who are intended for certain professions, or are in any way to gain a livelihood by it, is entirely useless to men whose fortunes are already made.—It is hardly to be conceived how many young minds have been checked in the progress of improvement by the secret operation of this malignant doctrine.

The neglect of letters was compensated, in his mother's opinion, by his assiduous application to dancing, fencing, and other accomplishments of the same class. Indeed, she imagined he bestowed superfluous pains even on these, being persuaded that nature had done so much for her son, that there was no need of the ornaments of art.

Being captivated with the uniform of some Neapolitan officers, Zeluco, at an early period of his life, announced a decided taste for the profession of arms. This heroic resolution was highly approved of by all those to whom he communicated it; which, indeed, was generally the case whatever he communicated, because he associated only with those who were ready to approve of all he did or proposed; for it was another miserable trait in this young man's character, to prefer the company of obsequious dependants, who on no occasion withhold their assent, to that of men of a liberal spirit or of equal rank with himself; a feature which infallibly puts an end to improvement, and renders a man at length as disagreeable to society as society is to him. The tender affection of his mother was not greatly alarmed at the martial resolution of her son, because in the Neapolitan dominions the profession of a soldier having no connexion with fighting, this indulgent parent knew that her son's military ardour would subject him to no other danger than is attendant on reviews: to this she submitted, being aware that glory could not be obtained for nothing.

The pacific situation of the Neapolitan army, however, was not Zeluco's reason for preferring it; for he

was naturally of a daring spirit. He, like many other idle young men, was attracted to the profession of arms by a relish for the dress of an officer, and by the vanity of command over a few soldiers. At this time he thought no deeper on the subject. An application was therefore made by this indulgent mother for a commission for her son; between which period and the time of its being granted, Zeluco counted the moments with the most fretful impatience; for although he had already ordered his regimentals, and often indulged himself in the pleasure of strutting in them before a mirror, yet he experienced the agonies of Tantalus till he could appear with them abroad. As the exigencies of the service did not require the immediate presence of Zeluco, he was permitted to remain at Palermo, and was introduced by his mother into a select circle of her own acquaintance, which, she informed him consisted of *the very best company* of Palermo, where he would acquire the most useful of all knowledge—the knowledge of the world—and this too in the most agreeable and most effectual manner.

This society was principally composed of a set of ladies of quality—maidens, wives, and widows—respectable undoubtedly on account of their sex and age; and a few gentlemen, who bore a wonderful resemblance in character to the ladies. Whatever business or avocation the members of this society had, besides those of cards and sleep, it must be confessed that such avocations occupied but a moderate share of their time, as all of them spent six or seven hours of the four-and-twenty in the former, and none of them allowed less than nine to the latter.

Zeluco's bloom, vivacity, and aptitude in learning the different games, procured him many flattering marks of attention from the female members. These for some time pleased the youth himself, while his mother was highly gratified with the congratulations

poured out on all sides on the promising talents and charming appearance of her son ; she reflected with pleasure also on the vast advantage which he enjoyed in being, at such an early period of his life, removed from the contagion of frivolous company, and introduced into so polished a circle. What degree of improvement a steady and persevering cultivation of this society might have produced in Zeluco, was not fairly tried ; for the flattery and blandishments of the old ladies soon became insipid, and he strayed in search of pleasure to those haunts where she appears with less decorum and more zest ; soon after, he joined his regiment at Naples, where he passed most of his time with a few young officers, who, with an equal passion for pleasure, had not equal means of indulging it, and were therefore too apt to flatter his vanity and bear his humours.—The love of pleasure seemed to increase upon him by indulgence, and was greatly cherished by the ill-judged prodigality of his mother, whose fondness could not resist his unrelenting importunity for money. The means with which this furnished him of indulging all his humours, in a country where rank claims an almost despotic sway over the lower orders of mankind, joined to his keeping company only with dependants, cherished and invigorated the seeds of caprice, selfishness, pride, and injustice, which had been early sown in the breast of Zeluco, and perhaps generated those which did not originally exist. With no pursuit but pleasure, and with superfluous means of attaining it, he enjoyed very little, being the constant slave of humour and caprice ; and, besides, he looked forward with such fretful impatience to the period when the law allowed him the uncontrolled command of his fortune, as was sufficient of itself to embitter all his present enjoyments.

The original source of his wretchedness, and what

had augmented, or perhaps generated, this miserable impatience of temper, was the indulgence of his humours, and his being too liberally supplied in the means of gratification; but he himself imputed all his misery to the scanty allowance granted by his tutors, and to his not being of age.

Previous to this period he returned to Palermo; and although he did not attend his mother's assemblies with all the punctuality that she wished, yet he could not always resist the importunity of a mother who was ready to make every sacrifice for his gratification, and who exacted nothing in return but that he should give her the pleasure of seeing him admired in public, and condescend to bestow a little of his company on her in private.

The happy moment he had so anxiously sighed for arrived; and his guardians devolved into his own hands the entire conduct of his fortune. But while he remained in Sicily, on account of certain arrangements for which his presence was thought indispensably necessary, an incident occurred which detained him longer than he intended.

CHAPTER III.

“Virtue she finds too painful an endeavour;
Content to dwell in decencies for ever.” POPE.

ONE of the most important personages of the society into which Zeluco had been introduced; was the Countess Brunella, a lady who took every opportunity of insinuating that she had been in her youth greatly distinguished for her beauty. Nothing however remained to justify her pretensions, except this single consideration, that as she had no fortune, and possessed no amiable quality, it was impossible to account for the marriage which raised her both to rank and fortune,

but by supposing that, at the time it took place, she was handsome. Her charms, however, whatever they had once been, were now entirely fled: but she still retained all the vanity, insolence, and caprice, which ever attended the bloom of beauty, with the addition of that peevishness and ill-humour which often accompany its decay. Her insolence, however, was only displayed to the unprotected, and her ill-humour to her servants; for to her superiors she was always obsequious, and to her equals she displayed an everlasting simper of approbation. This woman's benevolence was regulated by decorum; her friendship by conveniency; and all her affections by etiquette. Her heart had no concern in any of these matters.

She was chaste, without being virtuous; because in her it proceeded from constitution, not principle. Guarded by the breastplate of frigidity, which, like the ægis of Minerva, repels the shafts of love, she walked through life erect, and steady to the dictates of decorum and self-interest, without a slip or false step.

Inexorable to all helpless females who, from the frailty of nature, or the perfidy of man, were observed to totter, or even to stoop, in their progress, she insisted that they should be forever excluded from the society of the upright: and if any person showed a disposition to palliate their errors, this vulture of chastity quitted, for a moment, the frail bird on whom she had pounced, and turned her envenomed beak against those who were for showing the smallest degree of mercy; and being freed by nature from any propensity to one particular frailty, she indulged, without bounds, in the gratification of envy, hatred, slander, haughtiness, and other vices of the same class, for which, from her childhood, she had discovered a decided taste.

This lady had a niece who lived with her. The young lady had little or no fortune in her own posses-

sion, and as little in expectation from her aunt, who was too vain and ostentatious to save any of her income, ample as it was. But the countess flattered herself that she should procure her niece such a marriage as would instantly supply all deficiencies, and raise her to wealth and grandeur. She made several unsuccessful attempts for that purpose: the failure proceeded more from dislike of the aunt, than from the want of attractions in the young lady.

A little after Zeluco came of age, the aunt fixed her eyes on him as a commodious match for her niece. —She was not unacquainted with his irregularities; but as she considered rank and fortune as the great essentials in a husband, these being secured, she thought the rest of small importance. On former occasions she had proved, that she looked upon age and infirmity as no obstacles to the honour of being a husband to her niece; and by the pains she now took to draw in Zeluco to a marriage, she made it clear that she considered profligacy as an objection equally frivolous.

She began by paying uncommon attention to the mother of Zeluco: as the Countess Brunella was her superior by nuptial rank, this attention greatly flattered the vanity of that weak woman. —She had for some time observed that Zeluco seemed to pay more particular regard to her niece than to any other young lady at Palermo; and she carefully instructed her in the arts of cherishing a moderate degree of liking into a violent passion. But this young lady, with less prudence, had much more sensibility than her aunt. The genteel figure and alluring manners of Zeluco seduced her into all the unsuspecting confidence of love; but he, amidst affected passion, preserved all the circumspection of determined perfidy.

Whilst the aunt, therefore, was artfully planning what she considered as an advantageous match for her

niece, the unwary young woman granted, without marriage, what her aunt in similar circumstances had carefully preserved ; not from any value she put upon the thing, but merely because she knew that by that means alone she could secure the husband who then paid his court to her.

Zeluco soon became tired of his conquest, and disgusted with the tears of the unhappy girl. He neglected her with an unfeeling indifference more unpardonable than the crime he had committed. This being observed by the aunt, she questioned her niece, who candidly confessed what her situation would in a short time have revealed.

The countess expostulated with Zeluco, attempting to obtain by threats, what integrity and a sense of honour ought to have inclined him to perform. He treated her threats with derision, and with all the coolness of a veteran in iniquity he told her that, if *she* chose to keep her niece's secret, *he* should ; in which case, by the industry of her aunt, she might still be provided with a husband : In the mean time, added he sarcastically, it is to be hoped you will make your own niece an exception from your favourite maxim, that all who have made a single false step should be for ever excluded from respectable society.

The young lady retired to a relation in the country ; and the adventure might have remained unknown to the public, had not the aunt, in the madness of her resentment, prompted a Neapolitan officer, who depended on her interest for his promotion, to call Zeluco to an account for his conduct on this occasion. Zeluco, who was constitutionally intrepid, had for some time wished for an opportunity of fighting a duel, the éclat of which was wanting to his reputation. He went out at the first hint with the Neapolitan, and, being an admirable swordsman, wounded and disarmed him ; and thus became an object of greater ad-

miration in the eyes of many ladies than ever, both on account of this duel and the occasion of it.

The rage, disappointment, and wounded pride of the aunt, when she knew the event of the duel, rendered her exceedingly miserable; but as in her prosperity she had no feeling for the unfortunate, her own misfortunes excited no compassion. Some of her most intimate acquaintance, who passed for her friends, involving the niece in their hatred of the aunt, betrayed a malicious satisfaction at the fate of the unhappy young woman. And what was equally unjust, the public indignation at the base conduct of Zeluco was not so great as it ought to have been, merely because the person he had ruined was the niece of this odious dowager.

This woman might have gone through life with as few enemies as friends, had she remained passively selfish; but she was making continual professions of friendship; she affected to be the dearest friend of all her acquaintance, and to take a most extraordinary share of interest in all their concerns. Each of them in their turns discovered that her professions were false;—from her acquaintance they became her enemies, and beheld her misfortunes with joy, which otherwise they would have regarded only with indifference.

CHAPTER IV.

The gratitude of a son to an indulgent mother.

A SHORT time after this adventure, Zeluco passed over to Italy, and in the different states of that luxurious country he spent two years, in every voluptuous and expensive gratification that his own imagination, or that of the profligate company he kept, could suggest. His mother had parted from him with

reluctance; her fond partiality remained strong as ever, in spite of all the proofs of a vicious disposition he had displayed: she viewed his character in a manner precisely the reverse of that in which Desdemona contemplated Othello's; she saw Zeluco's *mind*, *in his visage*; and as this was fair and regular, she fondly believed it to be a faithful index of the other; imputing all that part of his conduct which she could not justify, to the warmth of youth, which time and reflection would soon correct. She extracted a promise from him, before they parted, that he should write to her regularly twice every month till his return. And as she had observed on many occasions that he was by no means exact in fulfilling his engagements, she took this promise with some solemnity, and made him renew it oftener than once, adding, that if he neglected, she should certainly imagine that something very terrible had happened: she therefore entreated him very earnestly, by a punctual correspondence, to save her from such a painful idea.

The manner in which Zeluco fulfilled this engagement, will set his filial affection in a clear point of view.

In a very short space after his arrival on the continent, he began to think the writing a few lines every fortnight to his mother a piece of intolerable slavery.—And being, while at Rome, confined to his chamber, on account of a complaint which debarred him equally from pleasure and amusement, he thought this a commodious opportunity of anticipating the trouble of a correspondence which was apt to break in upon him at less convenient seasons. He therefore wrote a number of letters to his mother, a little varied in the expression, and properly dated; these he arranged according to their dates, and then calling his valet de chambre,—There, said he, carry one of these letters to the post-house every fortnight; and when they are

exhausted let me know, that I may prepare some more for the old lady.

It would be equally superfluous and disagreeable to follow Zeluco through the scenes of extravagance, folly, and vice, in which he acted a principal part for two or three years in the various towns of Italy. Although he had been happy during the whole of that short period, it would have been happiness rather too dearly bought at the expense of the misery and remorse he felt on finding his credit exhausted, and his fortune involved to such a degree, that nothing but a long and steady course of œconomy could possibly extricate it :—but he had not even the recollection of happiness to comfort him for the ruin of his affairs ; his fortune had been dissipated in debauchery, without pleasure ; in magnificencé, which conferred not respect ; and in gaming, which sometimes drove him to the brink of desperation. Let this general account save us from entering into a detail of adventures which bear the strongest resemblance to those of so many profligate young men who have acted the same parts on the same theatre.

When his money and credit were nearly exhausted, he joined his regiment at Naples ; where, after having remained a decent time to entitle him to ask a new leave of absence, he made application for permission to pass over to Sicily for the arrangement of his domestic affairs.

On his return to Palermo he had no immediate resource but in what his mother could spare him from her own jointure ; and these supplies were not granted without strong remonstrances against his extravagance. Those, however, he heard with apparent patience, and repeated assurances of amendment, as long as she had either money or credit remaining ; but when both were exhausted, he showed the same impatient and overbearing temper to her, of which he had always

given proofs to the rest of the world ; but what in the one case she had palliated as the ebullitions of youthful spirit and vivacity, in the other she considered as the most unheard-of cruelty and ingratitude. In the bitterness of her heart, she enumerated every instance of indulgence, generosity, and affection she had shown him, and upbraided him for the returns he had made, in terms dictated by rage and disappointment. He answered with the most insulting coolness and the most stinging indifference. The unhappy woman was wounded to the soul. She had looked forward with parental impatience to the hour of her son's return. Her spirits had risen or fallen as that happy epoch seemed to advance or to recede.—Her daily prayer, and nightly dream, was this darling son's return, improved by experience, accomplished by travel, the object of universal admiration, while she imagined that she herself should be envied by every mother in Palermo.

Her disappointment was as severe as her hopes had been sanguine.—She felt

“ How sharper than a serpent's tooth it is
To have a thankless child.—”

She retired to the house of a poor relation who lived in the neighbourhood of Palermo ;—one whom she had neglected in the pride of her prosperity ; a circumstance which made her misery more acute, and her misfortunes less pitied. In this retreat, after languishing a few months, she died heart-broken.

The emotions of remorse which took place on this event, in the conscious mind of Zeluco, were not of long duration ; his embarrassed circumstances gave him more lasting uneasiness ; for, notwithstanding his estate was now disburdened of his mother's jointure, he was still under the necessity of confining himself to a very scanty revenue.

Being mortified with the idea of remaining either in

Sicily or the kingdom of Naples while his affairs were in this embarrassed situation, he applied to a brother of his father, an officer of rank in the Spanish service, who was then at Madrid, declaring a desire of entering into that service, on condition of obtaining the same rank in the Spanish service which he had in the Neapolitan, with the hope of future promotion. He had already got leave from the Neapolitan court for this step, with a recommendation from the minister. His plan was to put his estate under management till such time as the most pressing debts were cleared; and he thought, with the remainder of his fortune added to his pay, he should pass his time more to his mind in the character of a soldier, than he could by observing a languid system of œconomy in Sicily.

CHAPTER V.

The love of a very young lady.

*“ Fallere credentem non est operosa puellam
Gloria.”* OVID. EPIST.

WHILE Zeluco waited the result of this application, a young lady of Palermo became, by the sudden death of her brother, heiress of a very considerable fortune; for although her father was still alive, and her mother only forty years of age, yet as she had not proved pregnant for many years, the daughter's succeeding to her father's whole fortune was considered as next to infallible. This certainly was the opinion of Zeluco, and he immediately applied every art of insinuation he was possessed of, to gain the affections of this young lady.

Zeluco was of a very elegant as well as vigorous make; his person was finely proportioned; and although some people who pretended to skill in phy-

siognomy asserted that they could detect the indications of ill-nature and of a vicious disposition in his countenance, yet, in the general opinion, and particularly in that of Signora Rosolia (the young lady in question), he was a very handsome man. Rosolia was one of those young ladies who, when they greatly approve of a man's face and figure, are inclined to believe that every other good quality is added thereunto.

A gentleman, superior to Zeluco in all respects but external figure, had for some time, with the approbation of her parents, paid his addresses to her. But no sooner had the new lover made a declaration of his passion, than he appeared in her eyes preferable to the old. On what this preference was founded appeared afterwards, when Zeluco lamented his hard fate in having a rival who was countenanced by both her parents: for Rosolia then assured him that this could proceed solely from their not being informed of Zeluco's sentiments; but, as soon as they are, added she, they will certainly prefer you as a son-in-law to Signor Michelo.

I am extremely happy to know that you are of that opinion, cried Zeluco.

I am quite certain of it, said she.

You have heard them speak upon the subject then? said he.

No, never; replied she.

Idol of my soul, cried Zeluco, how then are you certain that they would prefer me to Signor Michelo?

Because, replied this judicious young lady, there is no comparison between you. Every body that has eyes must see that you are a far handsomer man.

However flattering it might seem, Zeluco was a good deal disappointed when he was informed of the circumstance on which she founded her hopes, and he

thought his surest course was to get possession of the young lady's fortune and person in the first place, and to solicit the father's and mother's consent afterwards.

Having expressed his gratitude on account of the favourable sentiments she entertained of him, he told her, that parents often viewed things of this nature in a different light from their children:—That his rival had probably secured the favour of her father and mother, by applying to them in the first instance; because her fortune, not her heart, was that gentleman's sole object.—That he, on the contrary, had given no hint of his passion to *them*, but had applied directly to *her*, because it was her heart alone that he was solicitous about. As for fortune, it was what he had always despised, and had not the least weight with him in his present suit;—of which disinterested way of thinking he was ready to give her an immediate proof, by marrying her secretly without any person's consent but her own, and without the certainty of a single sequin.

The young lady, in answer to this, told him, that she could not comply with his proposal without impiety; for that her mother had been alarmed on a former occasion with the assiduities of a person she did not approve, had conducted her to the *Madre Chiesa*, and in the chapel of St. Rosalia, in the presence of the saint herself, had made her pledge her solemn promise, never to give her hand in marriage without the consent of her father and mother; assuring her, at the same time, that they, on their part, should never exact of her to marry any man contrary to her inclination.

It is impossible for me therefore, added this pious young lady, to break the engagement, without incurring the displeasure not only of my parents but also of my patroness, who hitherto hath always displayed great

kindness to me, and will certainly not easily forgive the breach of an engagement to which she herself was an eye-witness.

Zeluco, perceiving that the idea of provoking St. Rosolia filled the lady's mind with horror, did not think it prudent to insist at that time on the point he wished to carry;—he took her promise, however, that she would not mention what had passed to her parents, till he had time to reflect on what were the properest measures to adopt.

This injunction she punctually observed.—At their next interview, he told Rosolia, that he had been considering what she had said, regarding the promise she had given to her mother in the chapel of her patroness; that he was not surprised to find this made great impression on one of her piety and understanding. This, and similar instances of the goodness of her disposition, he said, endeared her to him more and more; for although the graces of her face and person had made the first impression on his heart, yet it was the beauties of her mind, the amiable sweetness of her disposition, her piety, and above all her admirable good sense, that riveted his chains. Zeluco had an opinion, that people in general are most gratified when praised for those qualities in which they are most deficient. On this principle, he never failed to praise this young lady on the superior excellency of her understanding.

He then proceeded to observe, that with respect to the engagement which she imagined she had entered into at the Madre Chiesa, she had evidently been surprised into it, and it was not to be supposed that St. Rosolia could, *in her heart*, approve of so rash a vow, especially as it had been made without her previous consent; adding, that as for himself, he was certain that he should not survive the refusal he was sure of receiving from her mother:—he therefore left it to the

young lady to consider, whether it was probable that St. Rosolia, her patroness, and without a doubt the most compassionate of all the saints, would approve of a measure which would infallibly occasion the death of a person who was, and had ever been, her faithful votary. And all for what? To gratify hard-hearted parents, who only consulted their own avarice and disregarded true love.

As the tenderness of this young lady's heart was equal to the weakness of her understanding, and both infinitely surpassed those graces and beauties which Zeluco had so liberally imputed to her, she began to be convinced by his reasoning, and melted by his entreaties; but having, in the course of their conversation, said that she was quite certain of prevailing on her father at least to give *his* consent,—for he had always been in the highest degree indulgent to her, and never had, in any one instance, withstood her persevering solicitation,—Zeluco, contrary to his first opinion, thought it would be most prudent to allow her to try to move her father; and if in spite of her sanguine hope she should fail, he still would have it in his power to persuade her into a secret marriage.

CHAPTER VI.

The reasoning of a young lady in love.—The weakness of a father.

THE impatience of the lady's love made her seize the very earliest opportunity of acquainting her father with the state of her heart, which she did in very pathetic terms.

The astonished father at first insisted on the encouragement which had been given to her first lover, the real worth of his character, and the advantages of such

a connexion. To these arguments the lady opposed her love for Zeluco, and her indifference for the other.

The father hinted at the embarrassed situation of Zeluco's circumstances.

The lady declared that this gave her peculiar satisfaction, because it afforded a proof to the whole world, that in so material a point as the choice of a husband, she was superior to all low and sordid considerations, which could not fail of raising her in the esteem of the judicious, and would for ever ensure to her the gratitude as well as the love of her husband.

The father suggested, that while she thus proved the disinterested purity of her own conduct, she could not be certain that her lover was actuated by the same noble and disinterested motives.

To this the daughter with equal readiness and warmth replied, that Zeluco had already given the most undoubted proofs of the generous turn of his mind, his superiority to all mercenary views and sordid considerations, by the magnificent manner in which he had spent the greatest part of his own fortune.

The father shook his head with an air of dissatisfaction, and then mentioned the libertine character of Zeluco, the number of women he had seduced, and his neglect of them afterwards; dwelling with emphasis on the cruel treatment of the Countess Brunella's niece.

This was an unlucky argument, and produced an effect directly contrary to what was intended. The young lady acknowledged that Zeluco had been wild and rakish;—most young men of spirit were;—that he had turned the heads of many young women—no wonder, he was so very genteel and handsome;—that he had afterwards neglected them because he found them unworthy of his esteem, and they, of course, accused him of inconstancy;—that Signora

Brunella's niece was a *very weak young woman*; it was not to be supposed a man of Zeluco's good sense would ever dream of taking such a person for his wife;—that, for her own part, she was aware, that by entirely possessing a man so greatly admired by all other women, she must be exposed to the envy of her own sex;—but that internal tranquillity, and domestic happiness, would enable her to despise their disappointment and malice; for she knew that Zeluco had fixed his heart upon her, and her alone; was now determined to reform, and to be constant; and all the world allowed that reformed rakes made the very best of husbands."

The young lady's last arguments seeming rather to alarm than convince her father, she had recourse to a method of reasoning which she had often found successful when all others failed.—She burst into a flood of tears, sobbed as if she had been ready to expire; and, when she recovered her voice, declared that her heart was fixed upon Signor Zeluco, who had given her the surest proofs of the sincerity of his love, and of his noble and generous character;—that happiness in marriage depended on mutual affection and endless passion, and not at all upon fortune;—that she would wander over the wide world with her lover, blest in his fidelity, and depending on St. Rosolia for protection and sustenance, rather than live in the greatest affluence with any other man, although he were the first monarch on earth, or even the king of Naples, Jerusalem, and the Two Sicilies himself:—that these were her unalterable sentiments, or, if any alteration could happen, it would be that of an increase, not a diminution, of her love, for she felt it augmenting every hour; and finally, she entreated on her knees, that he would prove himself an affectionate father to a daughter who had always loved and honoured him, and would obey him in every thing but in this one

point, which, she was sorry to say, was out of her power; and which if he insisted upon, he would soon behold her laid in the same grave with her dearest brother, whom he had so long and so bitterly lamented.

Before the daughter had finished this affecting address, the good-natured father was also in tears; and as soon as he was able to speak, he raised her up, with an assurance that her happiness was his chief object in life, and he would do every thing she could desire to promote it.

Having thus melted her father to compliance, she begged, in the next place, that he would use his influence with her mother, that she might likewise consent to the only measure that could make her truly happy; which the good-natured man engaged to do.

CHAPTER VII.

The prudence of a mother;—and termination of everlasting love.

THE father speedily had an opportunity of breaking the subject to his lady, assuring her at the same time that he was convinced their daughter would never marry any man but Zeluco; so that she had best save herself the trouble of endeavouring to prevent it, as he had already said every thing that could be said, and without effect.

He was then proceeding to give her an account of the scene which had passed between them, when she saved him the trouble, informing him that she had overheard the whole in an adjoining room, where she happened to be when his daughter had made the pathetic attack upon him above described. Perceiving that her husband's heart was quite melted by the

daughter's tears, and his resolution moulded to her views, she declined all discussion with him; and thought it not prudent to let him into the plan which she had already formed in her mind, to disentangle her daughter from a connexion fraught with ruin and remorse. She contented herself, therefore, with saying coolly, that although she did not much relish the match, yet, as she could not think of crossing her daughter's inclinations, she certainly would not persist in opposition, if, on full deliberation, the young lady continued in the same mind; and at all events she would take no step without the concurrence of her husband, who, she was pleased to add, was a much better judge in a matter of such importance than she could pretend to be.

In reply to this the husband said, that he candidly acknowledged that he was *a far better judge*; adding, that it was impossible for him ever to change his mind.

Not quite, my dear, said the wife meekly: you were under the necessity of changing your mind before you could relinquish the *unalterable* resolution you told me yesterday you had formed of giving your daughter to Signor Michelo, whom we then equally approved of.

I did not know *yesterday*, said he, a little disconcerted, that Zeluco was the *only* man who could make our daughter happy.

He then went and acquainted his daughter that he had prevailed on her mother to consent to her marriage with Zeluco.

The young lady flew in a transport of joy to her mother; asked her forgiveness for having disposed of her heart without consulting so indulgent a parent; informed her, that she was now absolutely certain of St. Rosalia's being pleased with her choice; and as-

sured her, that for the future she would be the most obedient and dutiful of all daughters.

The mother thanked her for her good intentions, and asked her how she came to be so certain of the saint's acquiescence.

Because, replied the pious young lady, as I have been able to think or even to dream of nothing for some time but my marriage with Signor Zeluco, after attending mass this very morning I retired to the chapel of the saint, and looking her devoutly in the face, and watching her eyes, I humbly entreated to know whether she approved of my passion or not?—On which the sweet image of Rosolia looked in the most propitious manner;—and at length with a gracious smile nodded assent.

Nay, said the mother, after such a testimony of approbation there can be no doubt.—And have you equal proofs, my dear, of Signor Zeluco's love?

Stronger, if possible, answered the daughter;—he has sworn it to me a hundred times; and, besides, I have it under his hand.

These are proofs indeed, said the mother; and, continued she, you have no reason to doubt that all this love is for you alone, independent of your fortune!

Santa Maria! exclaimed the daughter, Signor Zeluco is not only the most loving, but also the most disinterested of mankind.—He has often assured me, that he should be still happier if my fortune were less, that he might prove to the world how far he is above all mean and mercenary views.

Then it is highly probable, said the mother, that he will enjoy the felicity he so earnestly desires; for I shall now inform you, my dear, of what I did not choose to hint till I was quite certain of it: I am several months gone with child, which at any rate will

reduce your fortune one half; and, in case of a son, will leave you a very moderate portion.

I wish with all my heart you may have a son, my dear mother; for I should like a little brother of all things, cried Rosolia.

Very well, my dear, said the mother, you will probably obtain your wish. But, continued she, I suppose you would not wish that your marriage should take place till I am recovered of my lying-in, that I may join in the pleasure of such an occasion.

Good heaven! certainly not, answered the daughter; and immediately went, in raptures, to communicate these glad tidings to Zeluco, whose joy at the parents' acquiescence was prodigiously damped on hearing of the situation of the mother. His chagrin was evident on his countenance.

I perceive, said the young lady tenderly, that the postponing of our happiness till my mother shall be delivered grieves you.

Very severely indeed, said Zeluco.

Be not afflicted, my dear Zeluco, said this love sick maiden: I will endeavour to prevail on her to consent to our union before she is delivered.

Zeluco begged she would not attempt it, as it might give offence, and render her mother averse to the match altogether.

She then in the most endearing manner assured him that the delay gave her very near as much uneasiness as it could him; but he, on the other hand, protested that he felt the disappointment with greater poignancy than she could possibly do; which, however, he would endeavour to bear rather than risk disobliging her mother, especially in her present condition, when the smallest importunity might injure her precious health.

But, good God! added he, did you never before suspect that she was in this condition?

Never, said this penetrating young lady; though I am surprised at it; for the moment she mentioned it I plainly perceived that her waist was uncommonly large.

Zeluco retired in all the agonies of disappointment; but determined to be more fully informed before he gave up a pursuit on which he had founded the reestablishment of his fortune.

He called the following morning on a certain monk, who occasionally exercised the function of a physician, and was known to be employed in that capacity by the mother of Signora Rosolia.

After an affected consultation on his own health, he turned the conversation on hers.

The wary mother, having thought it probable that Zeluco might question this man, had prepared him in what manner to answer his inquiries: the medical monk, therefore, assured Zeluco that she was in the way that he and the best friends of her family could wish.

What, is it true then, replied Zeluco, *what I have with so much pleasure heard*, Signora Maria is really with child?

Nothing of that nature can be more certain, replied the physician, than that she is pregnant of one child; some think from her appearance that she will have twins.

Twins! cried Zeluco.

Yes, signor, continued the doctor, that is the opinion of some who are thought judges in such matters; but, in my own mind, no indications however strong can ascertain the point with such precision as those people pretend;—that she has one lively child seems beyond a doubt; that she will have two, I will not positively assert.

Why, doctor, said Zeluco, it is a very long time since she was in the same situation.

If she has twins, replied the monk gravely; she never was precisely in the same situation; it is true, indeed, that when a woman has once had twins, she will afterwards be more likely to have them again.

Pray, how long is it since she had her last child? said Zeluco.

About nine or ten years, replied the physician.

Is it not uncommon, after such an interval, for a woman to recommence bearing children? said Zeluco.

It is a little singular, replied the monk; but when a woman does recommence, she generally proceeds with more spirit and perseverance than if no such interruption had taken place:—therefore, as Signora Maria is only forty years of age, I should not be surprised if, by the favour of the blessed Virgin, who is her patroness, she should have several children before she leaves off child-bearing entirely.

Several children! repeated Zeluco with an accent of anger;—you must imagine her patroness has prodigious powers in such matters.

Do you call the powers of the blessed Virgin in question? replied the monk in a threatening tone.

Heavens forbid, father! said Zeluco with an expiatory look.

Let me tell you, signor, continued the monk in an authoritative style, that the powers of the Virgin are unlimited; it were impiety to doubt it.

I have not the least doubt, cried Zeluco, taking the monk in an affectionate manner by the hand:—so far from calling her power in question, I am convinced, my dear father, added he with a hypocritical accent, that she could bring it about without the assistance of the husband.

Unquestionably she could, said the monk.

Zeluco being now persuaded of the reality of Signora Maria's pregnancy, took his leave of the monk; and hav-

ing two days before received a letter from his uncle at Madrid, assuring him of promotion in the Spanish service, he resolved to set out for that city as soon as possible. When he received the letter, his determination had been to secure his marriage with Signora Rosolia in the first place, and then deliberate what answer he should make to his uncle's letter; but having now resolved to have nothing more to do with the fair object of his disinterested and unalterable affection, he seized the opportunity of a vessel ready to sail for Barcelona; embarked with a single servant, and a very moderate quantity of baggage; and after a prosperous voyage arrived at that city. Being very impatient to get quickly to Madrid, he ordered his servant to have every thing prepared for the journey as soon as possible. While these arrangements were making, he intended to have amused himself by sauntering through the town, but was prevented by a heavy shower of rain.—I do not know what in the devil's name to do with myself, said Zeluco.—You had as well take this opportunity of writing to Signora Rosolia, said his valet;—she may perhaps be a little surprised at our sudden departure. Ay, so I will; bring me pen, ink, and paper, said Zeluco, yawning.

The servant supplied him with the materials for writing; and this ardent lover, renewing his fits of yawning very frequently during the performance, at last finished the epistle.

Signora Rosolia, when she heard of Zeluco's having sailed for Spain, immediately fainted, as is usual with young ladies when they are abandoned by men who pretend to be dying for them, and whom they consider as the only men who can make them happy.—She continued for some weeks subject to hysterical affections: these, however, gradually disappeared; and her old lover, by the mediation of her mother, renewing his courtship, she was in due time prevailed on to

give him her hand. Her mother then informed her that she was mistaken in the notion of her being with child. And the day after her marriage, the daughter in return declared to her mother, that she herself had undoubtedly mistaken the image of St. Rosolia, being now convinced that her present husband was the only man who could make her completely happy.

I hope, my dear, said the mother, he is the only man who will ever attempt it.

CHAPTER VIII.

His generosity gets credit for what was due to his resentment.

ZELUCO was received in the kindest manner by his uncle at Madrid, who viewed his past extravagances in the most favourable light, considering them as entirely proceeding from youthful vivacity and imprudence. He therefore treated him with all the respect due to the head of his own family; introduced him to every house of distinction; flattering himself, that the ardent spirit of his nephew might excite him to the same impetuous pursuit of military glory with which he had followed pleasure, and fondly hoping that he would one day arrive at higher distinction than he would have attained by an unambitious prudence of conduct in the Neapolitan service, which afforded no opportunity of displaying military genius. After pointing out the advantages he would derive from his birth, he inculcated the necessity of distinguishing himself by activity as an officer, that he might give an early impression in his favour, and smooth the way to that rapid promotion he had reason to expect from his exertions in an army where discipline was greatly relaxed, and in which few men of rank distinguished themselves.

Zeluco was appointed to a regiment then on its march to one of the sea-port towns, but with permission to remain at Madrid till the troops should arrive at the place of their destination, and were completed. He spent this interval in those societies to which he had been introduced by his uncle; and being sufficiently sensible of the graces of his own person, he was not without hopes of engaging the affections of some female as wealthy as signora Rosolia, and whose mother was less liable to pregnancy.

At some of those assemblies gaming to a considerable depth was permitted. Zeluco had always been fond of play, and had acquired, at the usual expense, a very great knowledge in most games; yet he by no means possessed that degree of coolness and command of temper which is requisite for a gamester: he was sensible of this himself, but he could not always resist the temptation of gaming; and sometimes not satisfied with the play at the assemblies, he went in search of deeper stakes at less creditable houses.

At first he was fortunate, which encouraged him to attend those houses more constantly. One unlucky evening, however, he lost all the money he had about him, amounting to a considerable sum; most part of it was won by a person who had lately appeared at Madrid, assuming the character of an Hungarian gentleman, with the rank of a lieutenant-colonel of hussars in the Emperor's service. As the company played for ready money only, when Zeluco had lost his, he sat in very ill-humour, looking over those who continued to play: in this disposition it was not unnatural in him to suspect that the person who had won his money had, by other means besides superior skill in the game, assisted his own good fortune. Zeluco watched him with the most malignant attention, wishing to detect him in some unfair trick, and ready to quarrel with him even if he should not.

The game was pass-dice. A young stranger held the dice, and had already won four times; and as his whole money had been covered each time, the sum before him was now sixteen times larger than what he had originally staked. But while he seemed preparing to throw a fifth time, there was only about a third part of the money which he now had on the table taken by the company.

On observing this the stranger said, Does nobody choose to take more? Every body declined, on which he put the residue of the money into his pocket; but as he shook the box, being about to throw, the hussar officer cried Banco; and the others took up what they had staked.

The rule of the game is, that if any one person offers to take the whole, the rest of the company, who have taken smaller sums, immediately withdraw their money in favour of the person who offers to stand against the entire bank; that is to say, the whole sum which the person who holds the dice has on the table.

The hussar meant to avail himself of the equivocal situation of the case: if the dice should prove fortunate to the thrower, he intended to pay the exact sum on the table; but in case the dice turned against the stranger, he resolved to claim not only that, but also what the young gentleman had just put into his pocket.

The stranger threw and lost. Take your money, said he, shoving the whole parcel to the Hungarian.

The latter insisted on having that also which he had put into his pocket, saying, it belonged to the bank as much as what remained on the table, since there had been no intervening throw.

The young gentleman was astonished at this demand, asserting, that the money he had pocketed was entirely out of the question, having been withdrawn before the Hungarian had spoken. That if the officer

meant both sums, he ought to have declared that meaning when he called Banco; adding, that in case he had done so, or if the company had set against the whole of his winning, he himself had determined to pass the box, and not have risked so great a sum at one throw.

This pretended colonel, however, who was a stout man, with a long sabre and a formidable pair of whiskers, was loud and boisterous in asserting his right to the whole. The stranger defended his cause but faintly; the company in general, whatever they thought of the justice of the case, did not seem disposed to assert the stranger's claim against this ferocious hussar.

In this state of affairs, Zeluco, who burned with resentment against the person who had won his money, said, it was a clear case, and that the Hungarian had a right to nothing but the sum on the table when he first spoke; adding, he was convinced if he had lost he would have paid no more. How, sir!—what do you mean? cried the Hungarian, turning fiercely round to Zeluco. I mean precisely what I said, replied the latter. What, sir! repeated the hussar, in a loud tone of voice, and putting his hand to his sword. Yes, sir, cried Zeluco, and further, I mean to cut the throat of any rascally adventurer who dares be insolent to me: saying this, he half drew his sword, when the company interposed. The hussar affected not to have heard Zeluco's last words, but said, in a softened tone, that if the company were of opinion that his claim was not strictly just, he was willing to yield it.—Willing or unwilling, you shall yield it, cried Zeluco; and the company being *now* unanimous in favour of the stranger, the pretended Hungarian officer withdrew from the assembly; and next morning early he left Madrid, afraid that this incident would produce an investigation exceedingly pre-

judicial to him, being conscious that he had no title to the character he assumed.

This adventure was much talked of, and did a great deal of honour to Zeluco. It was peculiarly agreeable to his generous uncle; who having heard that his nephew had been unfortunate on the night in which he had behaved with such spirit, he presented him with a sum sufficient for clearing all his expenses at Madrid, and equipping him in the genteelest manner for his expedition to the West Indies. Zeluco himself, having no immediate prospect of meeting with another Rosolia, grew tired of the formality of Madrid, and impatient to join his regiment, which he understood had now arrived at the head-quarters.

This resolution being communicated to the uncle, was imputed by him to a laudable zeal for the service. The worthy veteran assured him that he would take particular care of his interest, and assist his promotion with all his influence at court, making no doubt but his efforts for that purpose would be rendered successful by the rising reputation of Zeluco.

The regiment was in a very short time completed, and soon after embarked for the island of Cuba, where it arrived in safety.

CHAPTER IX.

The remonstrance of an old officer.

“ La férocité naturelle fait moins de cruels que l’amour-propre.”

Duc de la ROCHEFOUCAULT.

ZELUCO possessed not the generous ardour of a soldier; his impatience for promotion was excited by the hopes of emolument more than a thirst for military glory; and if he was willing to suffer fatigue and incur danger, it was because in his present situation they

were necessary for his obtaining some lucrative command, that might speedily furnish him with the means of pleasure and luxurious enjoyment, which he considered as the only sensible pursuits in life.

Having heard that the commander in chief was a very strict and attentive officer, and Zeluco's views being now centred in military promotion, he was impatient to acquire favour and recommendation by distinguishing himself as a disciplinarian. Naturally selfish and unfeeling, he was not checked in the prosecution of this plan by any sentiment of justice or compassion; provided he could make the men under his command more dexterous in their exercise, or more smart in their appearance, than others, he regarded not the inconveniency or torture he occasioned to them. Nor did he care whether this was of use to the service or not; he was convinced it might be of use to himself, and that was sufficient. Without temper to make allowance for the awkwardness of recruits, or equity in proportioning punishments to crimes, his orders were often dictated by caprice and enforced with cruelty. He exacted from the private men such a degree of precision in the manual exercise, and in the minutiae of their dress, as was almost out of the power of the most dexterous and best disposed to observe.

Provoked and irritated on finding that the soldiers did not arrive at that degree of perfection which his vanity required, and becoming daily more unreasonable and unrelenting by the exercise of power, he exhibited many instances of cruelty on a detachment from the garrison of Havannah, of which he had for some time the command.

His conduct on that and other occasions came to the knowledge of the commander in chief by the following incident:

A soldier having committed some slight mistake in

the exercise, Zeluco treated him with great severity, which the man endured with all the passiveness which military discipline exacts;—till Zeluco, swelling with the insolence of power, expressed himself in this barbarous and absurd manner: If you are not more alert for the future, you scoundrel, I will cut you to pieces and send your soul to hell.

To this the man replied with tranquillity:—Your honour may cut me to pieces if you please, but I thank God it is not in your power to send my soul to hell.

This very sedate answer, while it raised a smile in others who heard it, augmented the rage of Zeluco.

Do you mutiny, villain? cried Zeluco.

I do not, indeed, said the soldier.

I'll let you know in due time, said Zeluco, whether you do or not.

He ordered the man to be carried to the guard-prison and put in irons.

Zeluco had been long disliked by all his fellow-officers.—On talking over this matter with some of them, in order to prepossess them with the opinion that what the soldier had said amounted to mutiny, he found them little disposed to consider it in that light; he was in no haste, therefore, to bring the man to a court-martial, being convinced he would be acquitted: but he had it insinuated to the soldier himself, that if he would acknowledge a mutinous intention, and implore mercy, he should be liberated without a trial; whereas, if he were tried, he would certainly be severely punished.

But the soldier, secretly encouraged by those of the officers who most detested Zeluco, refused to make any such avowal, and remained in irons.

Meanwhile the chaplain of the regiment, having visited the soldier, approved of his conduct, declaring he could not justly be punished for an answer so ortho-

dox. He next day informed the commander in chief of the whole transaction.

This gentleman, unwilling to rely entirely on the account he had received, sent for some of the officers belonging to the detachment, and obtained from them the same information which he had already received from the chaplain.

In the mean time Zeluco, having got a hint of what was going on, freed the soldier from confinement. But the indignation of the commanding officer being roused by what he had heard, he made inquiries into Zeluco's conduct to the soldiers on other occasions; and soon discovered with astonishment, and some degree of self-condemnation, that many acts of unnecessary severity and oppression had been committed by Zeluco. Having blamed some officers, whose duty he thought it was to have informed him of those transactions sooner, he sent for Zeluco, and in the presence of all the officers of the battalion to which he belonged he addressed him to the following effect :

Signor ZELUCO,

I think it my duty to deliver my sentiments to you before these gentlemen on a subject that ought to be well understood by every officer, but of which it appears by your conduct you have formed very erroneous notions.

Strict discipline is essentially requisite for the well-being of an army; without which it degenerates into a lawless mob, more formidable to their friends than enemies,—the ravagers, not the defenders, of their country.

But it is equally essential that discipline be exercised with temper and with justice. A capricious and cruel exertion of power in officers depresses the spirits of the private men, and extinguishes that daring ardour which glows in the breast of a real soldier.

Is it possible that a man of a generous mind can treat with wanton cruelty those who are not permitted to resist, or even to expostulate, however brave they may be?

I believe, sir, you have not as yet served in time of war; but I will inform you, that in the course of my services I have seen common soldiers gallantly face the enemy, when some officers, who had been in the habit of using them with insult and cruelty, shrunk from the danger.

You are sufficiently acquainted with the condition of private soldiers to know, that when they are treated with all the lenity consistent with proper discipline, still their condition is surrounded with such a variety of hardships, that every person of humanity must wish it were possible to alleviate it.

Only reflect, sir, on the smallness of their pay; how inadequate to the duty required of them, and how far beneath the intrinsic value it bore when it was first fixed; yet this grievance remains unremedied in some of the wealthiest countries of Europe, even in those where the greatest attention is paid in other particulars to the rights of mankind. But weak as the impression may be which the soldier's hardships make on the cold heart of the politician, one would naturally expect they should meet with sympathy in the breasts of their own officers; the men best acquainted with their situation, whom they are constantly serving and obeying, who are acting in the same cause, and exposed to the same dangers, though not to the same hardships with themselves. It is natural to imagine that, independent of more generous motives, their own interest, and the idea of self-preservation, would prompt officers to behave with mildness, at least with equity, to the soldiers under their command. How many officers have been rescued from death or captivity by the grateful attachment and intrepidity of the soldiers! I myself, sir,

once lay on the field severely wounded, when, in the midst of general confusion, officers and men flying promiscuously, I was carried to a place of security by two soldiers, at the infinite hazard of their own lives. From one of those, indeed, I might naturally have expected some exertion in my favour; he was a Castilian, born on my own estate: but I had no claim on the other, except as an officer who had always behaved equitably to him in common with the rest of my company;—he was an Irishman.

Had I treated him with caprice or ill-nature, would this foreigner, or even would my own countryman, have made such a generous exertion to preserve my life? No, sir; if they had refrained from giving me a fresh wound as they fled past me, which soldiers are not unapt to do to cruel officers, they certainly would at least have consulted their own safety by continuing their flight, and left me to be trampled to death by the enemy's cavalry, as I certainly must have been, had not these two soldiers removed me from the spot on which I lay.

But waiving every consideration derived from the ideas of personal safety, there is another kind of selfishness which might induce officers to behave well to soldiers; that is, the pleasure of alleviating, in many respects, the unavoidable hardships of our fellow-creatures, and the consciousness of being loved by those around us.

At this part of the general's remonstrance Zeluco raised his eyes mechanically, with that kind of stare which a man gives when he hears what he thinks a very extraordinary proposition.

It is true, sir, I assure you, continued the Castilian; next to the approbation of his own conscience, nothing is so grateful to the heart of man as the love and esteem of mankind. In my mind he is an object of compassion, in whatever situation of life he may be placed,

who is not sensible of this from his own experience ; and surely no man can be tolerably happy who thinks himself the object of their hatred.

We all know, gentlemen, continued he, turning a moment from Zeluco to the other officers, that the love of soldiers, important as it is to those who command them, may be acquired on easier terms than that of any other set of men ; because the habit of obedience in which *they* are bred, inclines them to *respect* their officers ; unbiassed equity in the midst of the strictest discipline commands their *esteem*, and the smallest mark of kindness secures their *gratitude* and attachment. I have ever endeavoured to preserve a steady and regular discipline among the troops I have had the honour of commanding ; yet I have the happiness to believe, that I am more loved than feared by those among them who have had the best opportunity of knowing me.—One of the greatest pleasures I ever enjoyed (I see some here who were with me on that occasion), was in overhearing an advanced guard of soldiers talk affectionately of me, when they knew not I was near them : I will own to you, sir, it came over my heart like the sweetest music : and if I thought myself the object of the secret execrations of the men under my command, it would spoil the harmony of my life, and jar my whole soul out of tune.

Signor Zeluco, what I have heard of your behaviour to the soldiers I am willing to impute to a misplaced zeal for the service. It is difficult to believe that a man of birth and education could have been prompted to the severities you have exercised by other motives.

This consideration, joined to the regard I have for the recommendation of my old friend your uncle, has weighed with me in not subjecting certain parts of your conduct to the judgement of a court-martial.

With respect to the soldier whom you confined so

long and so improperly in irons, you certainly treated him from the beginning with too much severity. The natural awkwardness of a recruit is to be corrected gradually, and with gentleness ; severity confounds him, and increases the evil that is to be remedied. To give way to anger and passion on such an occasion is inconsistent with the dignity which an officer ought to preserve before the men, and is always attended with injustice. As for this man's answer to your very intemperate menace, although a soldier under arms ought not to make any reply to an officer, yet, all the circumstances being weighed, what he said was excusable ; to endeavour to torture it into mutiny would be absurd.

You ought to remember, gentlemen, that as military discipline looks to the general tendency and remote consequences of things, more than to their intrinsic criminality, many actions are treated as crimes by the military laws which in themselves are innocent or frivolous. And when a soldier, irritated by undeserved insult, overleaps subordination, and repels the wanton tyranny of an officer, however he may be condemned by the unrelenting laws of discipline, he will be absolved by the natural feelings of the human heart, which revolts at oppression ; nor will he appear, even in the eyes of those who think his punishment expedient, an object either of contempt or aversion. But when an officer, armed with the power, and intrenched within the lines of discipline, indulges unmanly passion, or private hatred, against an unprotected and unresisting soldier, in what light can this officer appear, either in his own eyes or in those of others ?

Signor Zeluco, I have thought proper to explain my sentiments to you thus fully before these gentlemen, who have been witnesses to your conduct since you first joined the regiment, and who I do not think

entirely free from blame for not making me acquainted with it. I have only to add, that the considerations which prevent my laying the whole before a court-martial cannot operate a second time. I hope, sir, that for your own sake you will keep this in your remembrance, that while I insist upon all the troops under my command performing their duty with punctuality, I will not permit the poorest sentinel to be treated with injustice.

The soldier whom you used so harshly may still appeal, if he pleases, to a court-martial; it will be prudent in you to find means to prevent him.

Having said this, the general dismissed the company. Zeluco made a present to the soldier more than sufficient to satisfy him. And his expectation of sudden promotion in the army being greatly damped by the general's harangue, he formed the resolution of quitting the road to military renown, and of turning into a path more agreeable to his talents, and from which he hoped to reap greater advantage.

CHAPTER X.

Gratitude to a friend.—Curiosity in a maid.

ZELUCO had formed an acquaintance with a Spanish gentleman, to whom he had brought a recommendatory letter from his uncle at Madrid, and from whom he received daily marks of attention and civility. As this gentleman, though of but a moderate fortune, lived in a most hospitable style, and was of a character less reserved than the Spaniards in general are, Zeluco found him a very convenient acquaintance, and cultivated his good opinion with such assiduity, that he gained at last his entire confidence. In the course of

their intimacy, the Spaniard informed Zeluco that he had long paid his addresses to a widow lady possessed of a very valuable estate of her own, and a large sum of money secured in mortgages on some of the best estates in the islands of Cuba and Hispaniola ; that she had, on his first making proposals, protested in positive terms, according to the established custom of widows, against ever entering into a second matrimonial engagement ; but that of late he had observed, with much satisfaction, that her objections became gradually weaker, both in their nature and in the manner in which they were urged ; and that he now had good hopes of their being soon removed altogether : that as her great fortune was entirely in her own power, as she had no children, and was in herself a woman of good disposition and of a cheerful temper, he expected many advantages and much domestic happiness from the union.

Zeluco was introduced to this lady's acquaintance by her lover ; and having made a cautious and minute inquiry into the state of her finances, he was satisfied that they rather surpassed than fell short of the account he had received of them ; and from that moment formed the design of supplanting his unsuspecting friend.

But he did not think it prudent to pay his court avowedly to a woman who was almost betrothed to another ; and that other a person from whom he received hourly civilities, and whom he acknowledged as his friend.

He assailed her, however, with the eloquence of glances and sighs ; which, while he affected to conceal them from her, he took particular care should not escape her observation : and as often as they seemed to be discovered he endeavoured to blush, and then assumed an air of uneasiness and confusion.

When he was in her company, which happened as often as he decently could, he added to this the most

obsequious approbation of whatever she said; and the general tendency of his discourse, though often addressed to others, was to adopt and illustrate those sentiments and opinions which he knew to be hers.

By these means, aided by the graces of his person, he gradually made advances on the heart of the widow; and in a short time gained a decided preference over the old lover. But although this skilful engineer was fully sensible of the impression which he made, he declined sending an open summons, trusting that his masked battery of sighs and glances would extort from the fortress itself a proposal of surrender. To hasten which, he took care to engage the widow's confidential maid in his interest, by ordering his own valet to make assiduous love to her, and instructing him in what manner to proceed after he had gained her heart.

The attentive valet began his operations without loss of time. Having spent a few days in general courtship, he told her that he had something of an important and very secret nature to communicate to her private ear.

To my private ear! cried the maid.

Assuredly, my dear, said the valet, to yours, and to no other person's.

This so mightily raised the curiosity of the maid, that she gave him a rendezvous in a grove of her mistress's garden; merely, as she herself repeatedly assured him, to know what this important matter was; for she owned it was beyond the compass of her power to divine what it could be.

The valet gained her heart as he had been ordered; and in the intervals of his own successful passion he observed the other instructions of his master.

CHAPTER XI.

“ Rien ne pese tant qu'un secret ;
 Le porter loin est difficile aux dames ;
 Et je sais même sur ce fait
 Bon nombre d'hommes qui sont femmes.”

LA FONTAINE.

AFTER having lived for some time together in a state of mutual happiness, the valet presented himself one day to his mistress with every appearance of sorrow. This tender-hearted maiden (for she had never been married) affectionately inquired into the cause of his grief. The valet answered, That it was all on account of his unhappy master, who, from being the most cheerful of mankind, was of late become the most dejected and heart-broken.

Have you no notion, said the maid, what has occasioned such a melancholy change ?

No notion ! replied the valet, I know but too well what has brought it about.

And pray, for goodness' sake, what can it be ? said the maid impatiently.

That, replied the valet, is what no earthly consideration will make me ever divulge.

No ! cried the maid ; and for what reason ?

Because, said the valet, I have promised never to mention it to any human creature.

I insist upon knowing it immediately, said the maid.

I beg you will not, cried the valet ; it would be horrid in me to divulge a secret with which I have been intrusted — my master never would forgive me.

Your *mistress* never will forgive you if you do not, said the maid.

Only consider what you require of me, rejoined the

valet ; to break my trust ! To press such a thing is an attack on my honour.

Well, exclaimed the maid, have you not made an attack on *my honour* ? Is all your pretended love come to this ? To refuse the *first* favour she ever asked to her who has granted you the *last*. Was there ever such ingratitude ? O ! I shall burst with vexation. —Yes, continued she, weeping, if you do not immediately tell me the cause of your master's misery, you will render me ten thousand times more miserable than he.

There was no resisting such a rational and pathetic remonstrance. The valet unfolded the whole mystery. His poor master was desperately and hopelessly in love with her mistress ; for knowing that she was in some measure engaged to a friend of his own, he was a man of such delicate honour, that he would pine away his very soul in secret rather than interfere with a friend : that he ate little or no food ; never slept a wink ; sighed from morning to night :—and as for my own part, continued the valet, how shall I be able to support the loss of such a generous master ! for he is the most liberal of men ; one who thinks he never can sufficiently recompense those who do him even the smallest service.

The maid expressed her admiration at the account he gave of his master, particularly at his neither eating nor sleeping ; she likewise approved very much of his sighing night and day for love. She knew that such things were common formerly, for in the course of her studies she had read of them in books. But I fear, said she, they are not much the fashion among lovers of the present age. Yet I must confess, continued she, that your master is to blame for not acquainting my mistress with his passion.

He never will, replied the valet ; nothing will ever prevail on him to come in competition with his friend ; he will rather pine away his very soul in secret.

He is very much to blame, said the maid ; for allow me to put a case which has this moment come into my head.—If so be that many men were to act in the same manner, it would be a great hardship on the fair sex ; for many of them might accept a man who was not very agreeable to them, while others, whom they would have preferred, are pining away their souls in secret ; for, if they always pine in secret, how is a woman to know that they are pining at all ? And a prudent woman, continued the maid, will secure what she can get, rather than run the risk of getting nothing. It is therefore a clear case, that your master should speak out, and acquaint my mistress with his love ; and who knows, added she with a significant nod to the valet, what may happen, since your master is so generous a man ?

Generous ! cried the valet, you can have no notion how generous he is ; nobody ever did him a service without being rewarded far beyond their expectations : but as for speaking of his passion to your mistress, it is what he never will do ;—but no doubt it might be happy for both, that she knew how much he loves her ; for I confess I tremble for his life : for rather than offer himself in competition with his friend, he will conceal the flame which consumes him within his own breast.

Jesu Maria ! cried the maid, conceal a flame within his breast !

Yes, continued the valet, and sigh his soul to the last puff unobserved, like the dying flame in a dark lantern.

The maid burst into tears at this affecting image ; and after endeavouring to comfort her, he begged of her never to mention to any of the human race what he had told her,—but particularly not to her mistress.

I am sure, replied the maid, my mistress would not deserve to be numbered among the human race, if she

allowed so faithful a lover to expire in any such manner.

It would, indeed, be ten thousand pities, said the valet; but you will never give a hint of what I have told you.

I give a hint! exclaimed the maid; I will be cut into ten thousand pieces first.

So saying she left him, and went with all possible speed, and informed her mistress, as the valet expected, of all he had said; ending the narrative, which the lady listened to with evident satisfaction, by declaring, that in the whole course of her life she had never heard of such an ardent lover as Signor Zeluco.

Ardent! said the mistress; what can you know of his ardour?

All that I know, replied the maid, is, that he carries a flame in his breast; and is, besides, a much handsomer man than Don Lopes.

Thy head, said the mistress, is always running on beauty—a prudent woman will think of more essential qualities.

To be sure, every prudent woman, like your ladyship, will do so, replied the maid; but there is no judging for certain but by experience; though in all appearance Signor Zeluco has every essential quality as perfect as Don Lopes, and is a handsomer man into the bargain.

Well, but, said the widow, smiling, you would not have me go and court this handsome man of yours—would you?

No, assuredly, said the maid; I am always for supporting the dignity of our own sex:—but I would have you to dismiss Don Lopes.

What, before Signor Zeluco makes any proposal? cried the widow.

Yes, said the maid, he will not dip an oar into the water till Don Lopes is dismissed: this I know from

good authority, that till you have given a final answer to Don Lopes, Signor Zeluco rather than speak will expire.

Expire! cried the widow.

Yes, indeed, madam, I am assured that Signor Zeluco is that kind of man.

He is a very extraordinary kind of man indeed then, resumed she.

That I am informed for certain he is, said the maid; for although he is languishing for love of your ladyship, yet rather than open his mouth to you on the subject he will certainly die.

Die! nonsense! cried the widow.

Yes, die, cried the maid; and, what is worse, die in a dark lantern: at least, I am told that is what he is in danger of.

CHAPTER XII.

Heroic love.

ALTHOUGH the widow affected to laugh at the maid, and despise her advice, yet she had for some time been in expectation of a declaration of love from Zeluco; and having gathered from her maid's discourse what the obstacle was which prevented it, after consulting her pillow, she determined to overleap the barriers of female delicacy, and encourage him to a declaration of sentiments which were highly agreeable to her.

Zeluco paid her a visit at a time when she was disengaged from all other company, and she had previously given orders that none should be admitted while he remained with her.

When they met, the lady's countenance was dressed in smiles, and her whole manner announced the most encouraging frankness. But on the brow of Zeluco

care and solicitude seemed to sit brooding, and the sighs of despondency burst, as it were, involuntarily from his bosom.

They conversed for some time on indifferent subjects; but Zeluco displayed such absence of mind, and made so many pauses of melancholy import, that the conversation was continually interrupted.

I fear, said the lady tenderly, that some secret care preys upon your mind.

Zeluco, heaving as profound a sigh as ever was heaved on any theatre, threw up his eyes, and was silent.

Why will you not disclose the cause of your affliction? said the widow.

Alas! madam, the cause of my misery cannot be removed; my complaint is past remedy; why, therefore, should I disquiet others with sorrows which are peculiar to myself? especially, why should I disquiet those whose happiness it is my ardent wish, and would be my greatest pride, to promote?

I know not who have the honour to be of that number, said the widow with diffidence.

My most fervent desire, madam, would be to promote the happiness of——Here he hesitated, and seemed in a state of trembling confusion.

The happiness of whom? cried the impatient widow.

Alas! madam, do not insist upon my disclosing sentiments which I have so long striven to suppress, and still wish to conceal; sentiments condemned by the voice of friendship, though inspired by the purest love; sentiments which, if known, might render me odious and criminal in your eyes.

I am convinced you labour under a mistake, sir, said the widow; pray tell me therefore whose happiness it is you wish so earnestly to promote?

The happiness of the most deserving and most

amiable of her sex, cried Zeluco, fixing his eyes ardently on the widow;—but this blessing never will be in my power.

If I am the person you allude to, said the lady, throwing her eyes modestly on the ground, and blushing with all her might, I must acknowledge that it is in *your* power more than in that of any man alive.

There was no resisting a hint so directly favourable as this. Angels and saints of heaven! cried Zeluco, am I awake, or am I deluded by a dream of felicity! —And so he poured out a rhapsody extremely insipid in itself, but mightily relished by the hearer. This was followed by a long conversation, in which the lady removed all the scruples of Zeluco, by assuring him of what he was convinced was not strictly true, that she never had any intention of giving her hand to Don Lopes; and that although he, Zeluco, were entirely out of the question, she never would: that the gentleman was much mistaken if he had entertained any such hopes; and she would seize the first opportunity that offered to inform him of this.—Zeluco begged, if she was resolved on that measure, that she would execute it in the least offensive manner possible: an advice which she promised to follow.

In the next conversation which Don Lopes had with the widow, while, inspired by the most flattering hopes, he began to urge his suit, and was endeavouring to remove those objections which the lady had formerly stated against a woman's engaging in a second marriage; an expression fell from her which did not so much imply a reluctance to marriage as to choosing him for her husband. On his appearing surprised, and humbly requiring an explanation, the lady acknowledged, that the prejudice she had so strongly entertained against a second marriage was now effaced by his very judicious arguments, many of which would never have occurred to her uninstructed judgement, and she should always

retain a grateful sense of the pains he had taken to free her mind from an error so prejudicial to society. But, at the same time, after a thousand apologies, she confessed, that, although she was convinced of the propriety of her marriage, yet she had not that degree of love for him which, in her opinion, was necessary to constitute happiness in the marriage state. That she should be extremely glad to remain on a footing of friendship with him (for she really had a high esteem for his character); but unfortunately not that *passionate ardour of love*, which alone could ensure felicity to a married couple; and therefore, on his own account, as well as hers, she begged he would desist from his suit.

The gentleman thanked her for her esteem, and the obliging attention she displayed for his felicity; hinted, that if she had been equally explicit sooner, it would have saved both herself and him some trouble; and begged to know whether he might be permitted to ask, if the sentiments she expressed proceeded entirely from her indifference to *him*, or were in part owing to a *passionate ardour of love* for some other man.

After throwing her eyes on the ground, and covering her face with her handkerchief, the lady declared, that, contrary to her wishes, and without any design on his part, she felt such an attachment to his friend Zeluco, as rendered it highly improper for her to give her hand to another; particularly, she was incapable of such injustice to a person for whom she had so high a regard as the gentleman to whom she then spoke.

You are certain that Zeluco is unacquainted with the preference which you give him? said the gentleman.

I know not what he may suspect, answered the blushing widow; I only know that he never explained himself to me, nor, I am convinced, ever will, what-

ever his sentiments may be, while it is believed that you continue your pursuit.

My pursuit terminates here, madam; and I will myself inform Zeluco of his good fortune, continued the generous Spaniard: since I cannot have the happiness I expected myself, I will not stand in the way of another whom you prefer, and who very possibly may render you happier than I could.

This well-meaning and candid man acquainted Zeluco, according to his declaration, of the widow's sentiments. The consummate hypocrite expressed great surprise and concern at the intelligence, and affected infinite reluctance, in accepting of a piece of good fortune, however desirable in itself, which had befallen him at the expence of so dear a friend. All this affectation and mummery was in due time overcome, and Zeluco's nuptials with the widow were celebrated in form.

CHAPTER XIII.

“ On ne trouve guère d'ingrats, tant qu'on est en état de faire du bien.”

ROCHEFOUCAULT.

As the gentleman who so generously had quitted his claim had never, during his courtship, shown any anxiety on the subject of settlements, Zeluco also waived all discussion of that kind, that he might appear equally disinterested. He knew, however, that by the lady's will, as it then stood, her fortune, if she should have no children, would devolve to one of her relations. This destination he thought he should prevail upon her at his leisure to alter; and as the lady was near fifty years of age, and never had a child by her former husband, or, as far as he knew, by any other person, Zeluco thought there was little danger of his being shoved out of her fortune, either by her

relations or his own offspring. The lady herself, indeed, did not look upon her having a pretty numerous posterity in such a desperate light as it appeared to others: for in her latest settlement, which was not of an old date, she had specified the provision of her second begotten son or daughter, her third, her fourth, and so on, and with the most laudable and truly maternal solicitude she had amply provided for a dozen of her expected progeny.

Zeluco appeared equally obsequious after marriage as before, making every effort in his power to engross and secure the affections of his spouse, who on her part became every day more dotingly fond of him; and at length, all the regard, kindness, and friendship, she formerly felt for other relations and connexions, were totally effaced, and the whole affection of her heart centred in her beloved husband.

One idea, however, intruded into her mind, and disturbed her happiness; this arose from her husband's profession, which she dreaded might occasion a separation between them, and expose him to the hardships and dangers of war. She often conjured him therefore, with all the eloquence of love, to abandon a situation which kept her in perpetual alarm, and embittered the sweetest enjoyments of her life.

Zeluco disliked the profession as much as his lady, and was fully resolved to quit it; but he was equally resolved to make his yielding to her entreaties subservient to another plan which now occupied his thoughts.

He always replied to her endearing solicitations on that head with every appearance of grateful acknowledgement, expressing at the same time the greatest reluctance to give up a profession of which he was passionately fond, and in which he expected to obtain glory and preferment.

This affecting contest was often renewed. On one

occasion, Zeluco, exaggerating the advantages he might derive from continuing in the service, said, that if he should be as fortunate as some other officers, he might be enabled one day to redeem the estate of his ancestors, and appear with splendour and reputation in his native country. He probably expected, that in consequence of this hint she would have put it in his power immediately, by making over her fortune to him;—but whether from not fully comprehending the import of what he said, or from some remains of prudence, she made no direct answer; and her fears respecting her husband's profession seemed to relapse into a slumber, when they were suddenly roused by her receiving an anonymous letter from one who pretended great anxiety for her happiness, at the same time informing her, that war would very soon be declared; that her husband's regiment was destined for immediate service, in a secret expedition, of which he himself had already received intimation, though out of tenderness he concealed it from her.

This alarming news at once awakened her apprehensions and lulled her prudence. She tenderly expostulated with her husband for concealing intelligence of such infinite importance to her peace of mind. Without absolutely admitting the truth of her information, he used it as a fresh argument against the propriety of his quitting the army. If he had hesitated, even in the time of peace, how could he in honour agree to it on the eve of a war? This convinced her of the truth of the intelligence.

But you have not heard, cried the half-distracted woman, that war is yet declared?

With whatever certainty it may be expected, it assuredly is not actually declared, replied Zeluco: if that were the case, even you, my dearest love, could no longer wish that I should leave the army; nor could I after that allow of any entreaty on the subject.

Well, thank Heaven, it is not yet too late, cried she, and immediately leaving Zeluco, she ordered an irrevocable deed to be made out, by which her whole fortune, real and personal, was transferred to her husband. This she showed him; telling him at the same time, that she would deliver it into his possession the moment that he resigned his commission. After the highest expression of admiration, at what he termed her generosity of soul, and some very heroic sentiments denoting the reluctance with which he had sacrificed the hopes of military glory, he concluded, by repeating a line from a Spanish poet, equivalent to this from Pope's *Eloisa* :

“Fame, wealth, and honour, what are ye to love?”

This scrap of poetry, though not very applicable on such an occasion, was heard with rapture, and considered by the enamoured lady as exceedingly in point.

Having obtained liberty to resign, he quitted the army, to the great joy of his lady, and of the regiment to which he belonged.

CHAPTER XIV.

“*Proprium humani ingenii est, odisse quem læseris.*”

TACIT.

THE heroic mark of love above mentioned was the last that Zeluco was solicitous of receiving from his lady; for he seemed ever after very willing to dispense with all indications of her passion, and his expressions of affection towards her diminished in their energy from this period. She, at first with gentleness, and afterwards with a mixture of acrimony, remonstrated with him on this alteration. But it has been observed, that

complaints and remonstrances seldom prove restcatives to a languid love. In the best and mildest dispositions they do no good, in acrimonious dispositions they exasperate the disease.

Zeluco bore the murmurings of his wife from the beginning with but an ill-dissembled patience, became more and more morose and sulky as they were continued, and his behaviour terminated in avowed contempt and open abuse.

The unhappy woman, finding herself thus neglected, insulted, and despised by the person on whom she had fixed her affections and bestowed her whole fortune, gradually sunk into despondency; and after enduring all the bitterness of self-reproach, she died at the end of two years.

Disappointment and disquietude had attended Zeluco through the whole of his life: notwithstanding the great acquisition of fortune he derived from his marriage, even his matrimonial state had been embittered with continual chagrin. This was the natural effect of his own vicious conduct; yet by a partiality of self-deceit, which is very common, he always imputed his missing of happiness to other causes: few people blame themselves, while it is in the power of self-love to twist the charge against others. All the discontent and fretfulness which Zeluco experienced during the lifetime of his wife, he thought originated in the ill-humour and bad temper of that unhappy woman.

When he was freed therefore from what he considered as the only obstruction to his happiness, he expected that what he had hitherto pursued without attaining, was at last within his reach.

But to render his felicity more certain and permanent, he thought it necessary to bring his estate to the highest pitch of improvement; after which he proposed to return to Europe, and there in splendour and

magnificence enjoy every pleasure that his heart could desire.

In the prosecution of this plan he laboured with such assiduity and impatience as kept himself in everlasting fretfulness, and proved fatal to several of his slaves, some of whom expired under the exertions he forced them to make, and others under the punishments he inflicted for the smallest remissness or neglect.

Zeluco was now in that situation in which the understanding cannot improve, and the disposition is the most likely to degenerate: avoiding and being avoided by every person of a liberal and independent mind; living almost constantly on his own estate, with a set of people over whom he had unlimited power; seeing no person whose character he much respected, or whose censure he so much dreaded as to put him on his guard against the overflowings of passion, or make him check the impulses of caprice; of course he became every day more unreasonable, passionate, and cruel; and at length was unable to hear with patience the most candid and rational remonstrance, flying into violent fits of rage on the most trivial occasions; and when his domestics had the good fortune to execute his orders with such precision and rapidity as left him not the least pretence for blame, he then turned his rancour on the climate and soil, the vicissitudes of the weather, bursting into ridiculous fits of passion at the commonest and most inevitable occurrences.

The daily habit which this odious man thus acquired of tormenting himself, would have afforded satisfaction to all who were witnesses to it, had it not been accompanied with the diabolical propensity to harass and torment all those unfortunate creatures whom Providence, for reasons we cannot penetrate, subjected to his power.

When a man of a good disposition is of a peevish,

fretful, and capricious temper, which unfortunately is sometimes the case, the uneasiness which he needlessly gives himself is lamented by those who are acquainted with his entire character. But when a villain is the slave of caprice, and of course a self-tormentor, his misery affords satisfaction and amusement to all who know him. And although they durst not display it openly, yet it undoubtedly gave secret satisfaction to every one of this wretched man's slaves, to be witnesses to the disquietude and misery of their persecutor.

Zeluco having been represented as avaricious as well as cruel, it may be said that the first of those dispositions would prove a restraint upon the last; and that the suggestions of self-interest would prevent his pushing cruelty the length of endangering the lives of his slaves.

It is a common argument against the necessity of new laws for the protection of slaves, that they need no protection from a just and humane master, because he will never injure them; nor from a master of an opposite character, because his own interest will be their protection: but let it be remembered, that men who are not naturally compassionate, who are devoid of religious impressions, and in the habit of giving vent to every gust of ill-humour, are apt, in the violence of rage, to become deaf to the voice of common-sense and interest, as well as of justice and mercy. An unfortunate gamester throws the cards into the fire, and regrets that they have not feeling; a choleric man breaks and destroys the furniture of his house, however valuable: and how often do we see men in an absurd rage abuse their most serviceable cattle! But a thousand causes, which must occur to every one, expose *human creatures* to the vindictive rage of ill-tempered proprietors, in a much greater degree than inanimate things or the brute creation ever

can be. And we find in fact, that cruel and passionate masters, however interested in other respects, do gratify their ill-humour against their most valuable slaves at the expense of their interest.

It will be alleged, that in all the Christian colonies the slaves are so far protected from the injustice of their master, that none of them can be condemned capitally, but after a trial in a court of justice. Long experience has made it clear, however, that the proprietors of land in those colonies, Christians as they are, show little disposition to listen to the complaints of slaves, or interfere with each other respecting the manner in which slaves are treated; and when it is whispered about that a slave has expired under the lash, or has died in consequence of the arbitrary punishment of his master, people in general are not fond of the trouble of collecting proofs, or appearing in the character of accusers; particularly when the delinquent is a white man, of interest perhaps in the colony, and the sufferer a black slave. Besides, there may in many instances be a full conviction of the crime, and yet the criminal may not be deemed within the grasp of those vague laws which the policy of Europe has thought sufficient for the protection of slaves from the cruelty of their masters. The law may direct, that a master shall not order more than a limited number of stripes to be inflicted for any fault that his slave commits. But if the law requires no proof of the fault, except the allegation of the master, what security has the slave that he shall not be punished unjustly, or that his master shall not, as often as he pleases, repeat the punishment at such intervals as keep him out of the reach of the law? It must be owned that the slave has no security from such abuses, which is tantamount to putting it in the master's power to torture his slaves to death with impunity. Such laws are no safeguard, but rather a

mockery of the unhappy race of men they pretend to protect.

This unlimited power, which is left in the hands of the masters, has a bad effect both on the slave and the master. It tends at once to render the first more wretched, and the second more wicked. How many men have, for a great part of their lives, supported the character of well-disposed good-natured people; and on going from Europe to the West Indies, and becoming proprietors of slaves, have gradually grown ill-tempered, capricious, haughty, and cruel! Even Zeluco, though of a capricious, violent, and selfish disposition, was not naturally cruel; this last grew upon him in consequence of unlimited power. His severity to the soldiers arose from a desire of gaining the favour of the commander, by rendering the men under his immediate command more expert than others. In pushing this point he disregarded, indeed, the sufferings of the men; because his excessive selfishness engrossed all his feelings, and left him quite indifferent to the feelings of others; he still was not positively cruel. Uninfluenced by passion or rage, he had no satisfaction in giving pain; he was only unconcerned whether they suffered or not. And afterwards, when he became the absolute master of a great number of unfortunate creatures, whom he considered as his property, he thought he had a right to make the most of them. And he was informed by those who have heads for such a calculation, and hearts to act in consequence of it, that to force slaves to their utmost exertions, and purchase new ones as the old expire, is, upon the whole, more oeconomic than to treat them with a certain degree of gentleness, and oblige them to no more labour than is proportioned to their strength, although, by this means, the purchases would be less frequent. A person who passed for a very sensible man, who formerly kept an inn on one

of the great posting roads in England, and was at this time a considerable proprietor of land in one of the West-India islands, had assured him, that he had found this to hold with regard to post horses; and the argument was equally just when applied to slaves. Zeluco therefore had originally no direct intention of injuring his slaves; his view was simply to improve his estates to the utmost; but in the execution of this plan, as *their* exertions did not keep pace with *his* impatience, he found it necessary to quicken them by an unremitting use of the whip. This produced discontent, murmurs, sulkiness, sometimes upbraidings, on their parts; rage, threats, and every kind of abuse, on his: he saw hatred in all their looks, he presumed revenge in all their hearts; he became more and more severe, and treated them as he imagined they wished to treat him, and as he was conscious he deserved to be treated by them: at length he arrived at that shocking point of depravity, to have a gratification in punishing, independent of any idea of utility or advantage to himself.

This, unfortunately for a large proportion of mankind, is often the progress of unlimited power, and the effect which it too frequently produces on the human character.

If the reign of many European proprietors of estates in the West Indies were faithfully recorded, it is much to be feared that the capricious cruelties which disgrace those of Caligula and Nero would not seem so incredible as they now do. And perhaps no memoirs could be more affecting to a candid and humane mind, than those of many negroes, from the time of their being brought from the coast of Guinea, till their death in the West Indies. The fate of one of Zeluco's slaves, called Hanno, being connected with our purpose, may, without impropriety, be mentioned here.

CHAPTER XV.

“ ——— Merciful Heaven !

Thou rather, with thy sharp and sulphurous bolt,
 Splitt'st the unwedgeable and gnarled oak,
 Than the soft myrtle ! O, but man ! proud man !
 Drest in a little brief authority,
 Most ignorant of what he's most assured,
 His glassy essence—like an angry ape,
 Plays such fantastic tricks before high Heaven,
 As make the angels weep.” ———

SHAKESPEARE.

HANNO, the slave mentioned at the end of the foregoing chapter, allowed symptoms of compassion, perhaps of indignation, to escape from him, on hearing one of his brother slaves ordered to be punished unjustly. Zeluco, having observed this, swore that Hanno should be the executioner, otherwise he would order him to be punished in his stead.

Hanno said, He might do as he pleased ; but as for himself he never had been accustomed to that office, and he would not begin by exercising it on his friend. Zeluco, in a transport of rage, ordered him to be lashed severely, and renewed the punishment at *legal* intervals so often, that the poor man was thrown into a languishing disease, which confined him constantly to his bed.

Hanno had been a favourite servant of his lady's before her marriage with Zeluco ; he was known to people of all ranks on the island, and esteemed by all who knew him. The Irish soldier who had carried the commanding officer from the field, as was related above, was taken into that gentleman's service some time after, and remained constantly in his family from that time ; this soldier had long been acquainted with Hanno, and had a particular esteem for him. As soon as he heard of his dangerous situation, he hastened to see him, carried him wine and other refreshments, and continued to visit and com-

fort him during his languishing illness. Perceiving at last that there was no hope of his recovery, he thought the last and best good office he could do him was to carry a priest to give him absolution and extreme unction.

As they went together,—I should be very sorry, father, said the soldier, if this poor fellow missed going to heaven; for, by Jesus! I do not believe there is a worthier soul there, be the other who he pleases.

He is a black, said the priest, who was of the order of St. Francis.

His soul is whiter than a skinned potatoe, said the soldier.

Do you know whether he believes in all the tenets of our holy faith? said the priest.

He is a man who was always ready to do as he would be done by, replied the soldier.

That is something, said the Capuchin, but not the most essential. Are you certain that he is a Christian?

O, I'll be damned if he is not as pretty a Christian as your heart can desire, said the soldier; and I'll give you a proof that will rejoice your soul to hear.—A soldier of our regiment was seized with the cramp in his leg when he was bathing; so he hollaed for assistance, and then went plump to the bottom like a stone. Those who were near him, Christians and all, swam away as fast as their legs could carry them, for they were afraid of his catching hold of them. But honest Hanno pushed directly to the place where the soldier had sunk, dived after him, and, without more ado, or so much as saying By your leave, seized him by the hair of the head, and hauled him ashore; where, after a little rubbing and rolling, he was quite recovered, and is alive and merry at this blessed moment. Now, my dear father, I think this was behaving like a good Christian, and, what is much more, like a brave Irishman too.

Has he been properly instructed in all the doctrines of the catholic church? said the priest.

That he has, replied the soldier, for I was after instructing him yesterday myself; and as you had told me very often that believing was the great point, I pressed that home. By Jesus, says I, Hanno, it does not signify making wry faces, but you must believe, my dear honny, as fast as ever you can, for you have no time to lose;—and, poor fellow, he entreated me to say no more about it, and he would believe whatever I pleased.

This satisfied the father.—When they arrived at the dying man's cabin, Now, my dear fellow, said the soldier, I have brought a holy man to give you absolution for your sins, and to show your soul the road to heaven; take this glass of wine to comfort you, for it is a hellish long journey.

They raised poor Hanno, and he swallowed the wine with difficulty.

Be not dismayed, my honest lad, continued the soldier, for although it is a long march to heaven, you will be sure of glorious quarters when you get there. I cannot tell you exactly how people pass their time, indeed; but by all accounts there is no very hard duty, unless it is that you will be obliged to sing psalms and hymns pretty constantly; that to be sure you must bear with: but then the devil a scoundrel who delights in tormenting his fellow-creatures will be allowed to thrust his nose into that sweet plantation; and so, my dear Hanno, God bless you! all your sufferings are now pretty well over, and I am convinced you will be as happy as the day is long in the other world all the rest of your life.

The priest then began to perform his office;—Hanno heard him in silence,—he seemed unable to speak.

You see, my good father, said the soldier, he believes in all you say. You may now, without any

further delay, give him absolution and extreme unction, and every thing needful to secure him a snug birth in paradise.

You are fully convinced, friend, said the priest, addressing the dying man in a solemn manner, that it is only by a firm belief in all the tenets of the holy catholic church, that— God love your soul, my dear father, interrupted the soldier, give him absolution in the first place, and convince him afterwards; for, upon my conscience, if you bother him much longer, the poor creature's soul will slip through your fingers.

The priest, who was a good-natured man, did as the soldier requested.

Now, said the soldier, when the ceremony was over, now, my honest fellow, you may bid the devil kiss your b—de, for you are as sure of heaven as your master is of hell; where, as this reverend father will assure you, he must suffer to all eternity.

I hope he will not suffer so long, said Hanno in a faint voice, and speaking for the first time since the arrival of the priest.

Have a care of what you say, friend, said the priest, in a severe tone of voice: you must not doubt of the eternity of hell torments.—If your master goes once there, he must remain for ever.

Then I'll be bound for him, said the soldier, he is sure enough of going there.

But I hope in God he will not remain for ever, said Hanno—and expired.

That was not spoken like a true believer, said the priest; if I had thought that he harboured any doubts on such an essential article, I should not have given him absolution.

It is lucky then that the poor fellow made his escape to heaven before you knew any thing of the matter, said the soldier.

As the soldier returned home from Hanno's cabin

he met Zeluco, who, knowing where he had been, said to him, How is the d—d scoundrel now ?

The d—d scoundrel is in better health than all who know him could wish, replied the soldier.

Why, they told me he was dying, said Zeluco.

If you mean poor Hanno, he is already dead, and on his way to heaven, said the soldier ; but as for the scoundrel who murdered him, he'll be d——d before he get there.

CHAPTER XVI.

The Portuguese.

SOME time after this an occurrence took place, which contributed more to render Zeluco less cruel to his slaves than all the occasional attacks of compunction he felt for the death of Hanno, or than all the laws existing for the protection of Negro slaves.

A rich Portuguese merchant, who had been settled for several years in the town of Havannah, had lately purchased an estate contiguous to that of Zeluco, who displayed a great inclination to cultivate his acquaintance by every kind of polite attention.

He frequently visited this merchant at his house in town, and offered him every kind of accommodation which his estate afforded, while the Portuguese was repairing a house on his new purchase for the reception of his family.

This very obliging behaviour of Zeluco seemed extraordinary to all those who knew him, and did not know that the merchant had a very handsome wife, who was fond of admiration, and not entirely free from coquetry.

Zeluco was much struck with her beauty, and used all his art to seduce her. She, on her part, although

not entirely insensible to the charms of his face and person, was still more pleased with the eclat of having a man of his rank and fortune among the number of her admirers, and probably had no idea of ever making any other use of him. This lady was one of that class of women, who, being kept out of the way of temptation, and not vigorously attacked, will preserve the citadel of their virtue inviolate through life. She was apt, however, through vanity, to expose some of the outworks a little too much, which invited the attacks of the enemy; and although she had no serious intention of ever formally surrendering the fort, she might possibly through inattention, have allowed it to be surprised by a *coup de main*.

This lady was allured into an epistolary correspondence with Zeluco; at first on the most trifling subjects, and with the knowledge of her husband, to whom she showed the billets. By degrees, however, it happened that she received some which she thought it unnecessary to communicate.

When the Portuguese brought his family to the house which he had repaired for their reception, Zeluco's intercourse with them was more frequent; and he often walked with the husband and wife in a sequestered field situated between his own house and that of her husband.

With some difficulty Zeluco at length prevailed on her to promise to meet him at this place towards the close of an evening, when he knew that her husband was engaged on business, which would necessarily detain him very late, at the house of a gentleman who lived at a considerable distance.

From the time that Zeluco's correspondence with the lady became of a nature that she was rather shy of communicating, he always employed one particular slave, who, he imagined, was very cordially attached to him on account of a few indulgences which were

granted to him previous to his being intrusted as an agent in this business.

In this conjecture, however, Zeluco was greatly mistaken; those slight favours had not eradicated from the man's mind that hatred and thirst for revenge which his master's former treatment had planted there.

Having come to the knowledge of the intended interview, he actually went and communicated all he knew to the husband, and returned rejoicing in the hope that his detested master would be assassinated that very night.

The lady, however, had accidentally seen this slave with her husband, and remarked, that from the time the slave had spoken to him he was uncommonly thoughtful, morose, and agitated.

This led her to suspect that her husband was informed of the appointment, which she herself had already begun to repent of, and to hesitate about keeping.

After maturely weighing every circumstance, she determined to reveal to her husband what she thought he knew already.

She approached him therefore with an air of sincerity and contrition, saying, she was about to acquaint him with something which lay like a load upon her mind; that she had without scruple indulged an acquaintance with Signor Zeluco on account of the friendship he expressed for her husband, and his polite and obliging behaviour to herself; but that of late she had been surprised at a change in his manner of addressing her, which had terminated in a declaration of love: that she had been restrained from mentioning this to him sooner, being unwilling to give him uneasiness, and in hopes that, from the manner in which she had received his declaration, he would not venture to renew it: but finding he persisted in his

criminal assiduities, and had even gone the length of proposing that she should meet him privately and unknown to her husband, she thought herself bound in duty to conceal this behaviour of Zeluco's no longer, but to inform her husband of the whole.

Here she made a full stop:—and the husband, perceiving that she meant to add nothing further, said,—Have you then informed me of the whole?

She took heaven and earth to witness that she had.

I did not hear you mention that you had promised to meet him, said the husband.

The lady, having recovered from a short embarrassment which this observation occasioned, replied, That she had been so much shocked with the proposal, and in such confusion, that she could not now recollect every word of what she had said; but that she had immediately left him: and whatever, added she, has fallen from me, which he may construe into a promise, I am conscious that I never should have gone near the place: of the truth of this, the information I have just given you is a sufficient proof; and if I have erred in concealing this matter so long, my error proceeded from a desire of preventing mischievous consequences, and out of tenderness to you.

The eloquence and fair pretences of the wife at length lulled the suspicions and soothed the rage of her spouse with respect to herself; but his rancour against Zeluco remained in full force, and he threw out some threats of determined revenge. The wife was alarmed at this; for although she was now resolved never to renew the intrigue, yet being conscious that she was in some degree to blame herself, she would willingly have prevented any mischief from befalling Zeluco: with this view she begged of her husband to overlook and despise the vain attempt which had been made, and leave the man to be punished by the mortification of disappointment, and the thoughts

of the ridiculous light in which he must be conscious that he stood in the sight of both. The husband seemed to acquiesce in his wife's reasoning, but was determined to satisfy his revenge, a plan for which had already occurred to him.

Having persuaded his wife to go to bed earlier than usual, he dressed himself in her clothes, and throwing a white mantle over his head and shoulders, he slipt secretly out of his house, and with vindictive impatience walked to the place of rendezvous, where Zeluco had been waiting ever since the appointed moment.

With reviving joy, and by the glimmering light of the stars, he perceived a person in female attire approaching; and never doubting but it was the object of his wishes, he sprang forward with bounding velocity to meet her embrace; but at that instant his boiling blood was frozen on hearing the following words pronounced in an unnatural voice,—The spirit of thy wife, she who fell a victim to thy perfidious cruelty, sends thee this. On which the Portuguese plunged his stiletto into the breast of Zeluco, who immediately fell to the ground. The blow was given with goodwill; the weapon rushed to the hilt; and the husband, convinced he had killed him, returned quietly to his own house, without his wife or any of the family having suspected that he had gone abroad.

CHAPTER XVII.

The reward of inhumanity.

ZELUCO lay for some time on the ground before he could collect his terrified and scattered senses; and when he had in some degree recovered them, he was still unable to account for what had happened: some-

times he believed he had in reality seen the ghost of his deceased wife ; and every circumstance of his ungrateful and perfidious conduct to her rushing on his memory, at a moment when he thought himself on the point of entering into a state of retribution, filled his mind with horror, and drove him to the brink of madness, from which perhaps he was saved by the quantity of blood he lost as he lay on the ground.

After passing several hours in a state of terror and remorse, the day beginning to dawn, he felt himself, though in a very weak condition, able to move ; and at length, by the aid of a tree, at whose root he had fallen, he got upon his legs, and then attempted to move towards his own house ; but soon through faintness sunk again to the ground, where he lay a considerable time longer in anguish, and despairing of relief. At length he saw some of his own slaves going to their morning labour.

In a tone very different from that in which he had been accustomed to address them, with whining humility he implored their succour, and begged they would have the goodness to carry him home.

At the sound of a human voice expressive of distress the slaves sprang eagerly to give their assistance ; but the instant they perceived it was their master, they stopped short with looks of abhorrence, as if it had not been a man but a wounded serpent they saw writhing on the ground. Some turned aside, willing to be thought not to have observed him ; others looked as if they enjoyed his agony. None offered him assistance ; and it is not probable he would ever have reached his own house alive, had not one of his managers joined them. By his authority he was at last carried thither, and the best medical and surgical aid was immediately sent for. The wound upon the first examination was thought mortal ; and the universal satisfaction that this occasioned, as soon as it cir-

culated among this detested man's slaves, was very evident, in spite of all their endeavours to control their features and gestures. After languishing many weeks, however, the symptoms at last became favourable. During all the time in which it was doubtful whether he was to die or to live, the mind of the patient himself was hardly more cruelly agitated between fear and hope, than that of every slave, male and female, that belonged to him. And when he was pronounced to be out of danger, so fully was he loaded with their hatred, that the news produced a shock like that of electricity over his whole family. A number of slaves who happened to be at work in the garden under the window of Zeluco's bed-chamber, burst into a loud and uncontrollable howl of sorrow when his recovery was first announced to them.

The patient, alarmed at the sound, asked the physician then sitting by his bed-side, what it meant. The physician, who understood it no more than Zeluco, went to inquire, and, having discovered the true source of the outcry, returned to the patient.

What is the meaning of that howl? said Zeluco; it seemed prompted by sorrow.

It proceeded from your slaves, answered the physician; they are inquiring after your health.

Well, what then? cried Zeluco.

Why then, answered the doctor, I suppose they must have been told, by *mistake*, that you are worse, and likely to die. I have frequently known slaves express their grief in the same manner, when they were in danger of losing a good and humane master.

The irony of this reply was wormwood to Zeluco; he fell into a gloomy fit of musing, and made no further inquiry; neither did he, during his illness, or after his recovery, give any satisfactory account of the manner in which he had received the wound. Whatever his opinion might be, his fears were dissipated; and when

he was able to weigh circumstances, he abstained from suggesting any suspicion against particular persons, or from making any investigation of the subject.

CHAPTER XVIII.

“Ye who one bitter drop have drain’d
From slav’ry’s cup, with horror stain’d;
Oh, let no fatal dregs be found,
But dash her chalice to the ground.”

HELEN MARIA WILLIAMS,

FOR a considerable time after Zeluco was out of danger from his wound, and even after he began to walk abroad, and resume the management of his affairs, he appeared more pensive than formerly; and although his thoughts seemed of a gloomy nature, yet he did not burst out into those violent fits of rage that had been customary with him before that accident. But the impression which it made on his mind gradually diminished, and the sentiments of dread and remorse, which influenced his conduct for a time, wearing quite away, his former dispositions returned with his bodily health.

One day as he was walking around his estate with the physician already mentioned, who had called upon him on his return from visiting a patient, Zeluco gave pretty strong indications of a relapse into his former cruelty. The physician, who was a man of sense and humanity, checked him, and expressed sentiments of compassion for the deplorable condition of the poor slaves.

They are, said Zeluco, the most villainous race alive.

They certainly are the most unfortunate, said the physician.

Let them perform their task as they ought, replied the other, and they will not be unfortunate.

Why, it is not a slight misfortune, said the doctor, to have *such* tasks to perform.

They are in a better situation than when they were in their own country.

That would be difficult to prove, said the physician; but were it certain, I should think it a bad reason for treating them ill *here*, merely because they had been very ill treated *there*.

Negro slaves in general, all over the West Indies, said Zeluco, are in a better condition than the common people in most countries in Europe. I have heard this asserted a thousand times.

If it were so, said the physician, it would convey a dreadful idea of the condition of Europeans; but the thing is impossible, signor.

How impossible? said Zeluco.

Because, even if slaves were in general fed and clothed as well as you are yourself, yet while it is in the power of their master to impose what task he pleases, and punish their faults according to his humour, their condition must be infinitely worse than that of the cottager, whom nobody can abuse with impunity, and on whom the cheering spirit of liberty smiles as he reaps the fruit of his own industry.

You have certainly, said Zeluco, borrowed that sentiment from an Englishman; some of those enthusiastic fools who are pleased to bear the insolence of mobs, and to sacrifice many of the conveniences of life to the empty shade of freedom. Yet I have heard some, even of *their* West India proprietors, assert that the negroes of those islands were happier than the common labourers in England.

There is nothing too absurd for some men to assert, said the physician, when they imagine their interest is concerned, or when it tends to justify their conduct.

And were a law to be proposed now against the slave-trade, or to render the condition of slaves more tolerable than it is at present, which is more likely to happen among the generous enthusiasts you mention than in any other country, it would perhaps be opposed by those very proprietors: but would you impute such opposition to tenderness to the slaves, and a humane wish to prevent their becoming as miserable as the common labourers in England?

I am told, however, replied Zeluco, that your English in general are a most logubrious race, and that there is much melancholy and discontent in their country with all their liberty.

I am told, answered the physician, that there is much frost and cold in their country with all their sunshine, yet it has not been as yet clearly proved that the sun is the cause of either.

Well, but to return to the slaves, said Zeluco, I do not perfectly understand what is your drift. Are they not my property? Have I not therefore a right to oblige them to labour for my profit?

With regard to the right which any man has to make a property of other men, and force them to labour as slaves solely for his benefit, I suspect it would be difficult for the greatest casuist that ever lived to make it out.

Why so? replied Zeluco; I am assured that the slave-trade is authorized by the Bible. You are too sound a Christian, my good doctor, to controvert such authority.

Without considering whether those who furnished you with that argument did it with friendly or unfriendly intentions to the Bible, signor, and without touching any controvertible point in the Scriptures, I will just observe, that charity, benevolence, and mercy to our fellow-creatures, are not only authorized, but in the plainest unequivocal terms repeatedly ordained, in

those writings. Let therefore the proprietors of slaves begin, by conforming their conduct to those injunctions, and then they may be allowed to quote Scripture authority in support of such property.—*Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.—Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye so to them.—Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.*—These are the words of the author of Christianity, whose whole life was a representation by action of his own precepts. Let the proprietors of estates in America and the West India islands consider how far their treatment of the negroes is agreeable to his doctrine and conduct; and their time will be better employed than in perverting detached passages of the Bible, and endeavouring to press that which is proclaimed peace on earth, and good-will to men, into the service of cruelty and oppression.

After all this fine sermon, said Zeluco, you do not pretend to assert that negroes are originally on a footing with white people; you will allow, I hope, that they are an inferior race of men?

I will allow, replied the doctor, that their hair is short and ours is long, that their noses are flat and ours are raised, and their skin is black and ours white; yet after all those concessions, I still have my doubts respecting our right to make them slaves.

Well, doctor, said Zeluco, if you are determined to dispute our *right*, you must admit that we have the *power*, which is of much more importance.

While I admit *that*, signor, I most sincerely wish it were otherwise exercised.

How the devil would you have it exercised?

We should, in my opinion, exercise it with more moderation and lenity than some of us do, said the physician.

Lenity, cried Zeluco, to a parcel of rascals, a gang

of pilfering dogs, downright thieves! why, as often as they can, they steal the very provisions intended for my own table!

You cannot be much surprised at that, signor, when they are pinched with hunger.

You would have them pampered with delicacies, forsooth, and never punished for any crime?

No, sir; but I would certainly allow them a sufficient quantity of wholesome food; and perceiving that all my neighbours are liable to commit faults, and being conscious of many failings in myself, I should not expect that poor untutored slaves were to be exempted from them, nor would I be relentless or unforgiving when they were discovered.

Poh, poh—that is not the way to deal with negroes; nothing is to be made of them by lenity; they are the laziest dogs in the world; it is with the greatest difficulty sometimes that my manager can get them roused to their morning work.

Consider, signor, how natural it is after hard labour to wish to prolong the intervals of rest.

Rest! cried Zeluco angrily; they will have rest enough in their graves.

Well, signor, replied the physician, shocked at this brutal remark, it would be fortunate for some people that they could promise themselves the same.

But, doctor, said Zeluco, taking no notice of the last observation, can you really imagine that such treatment as you seem to recommend, would render slaves of equal benefit to the proprietors of West India estates?

Ay, signor, replied the physician, that is coming directly to the point, which a man of sense would wish to investigate, leaving all the foreign matter concerning *religion* and *humanity*, which embarrass the argument, out of the question.

Well, considering the business with a view to a man's interest or profit only; long observation on the

conduct of others, with my own experience, which has been considerable, convinces me that the master who treats his slaves with humanity and well-directed kindness, reaps more benefit from their labour than he who behaves in a contrary manner. There are many instances of ingratitude, to be sure, but it is not natural to the human heart : we naturally endear ourselves to those to whom we impart pleasure, and men in general serve with more alacrity and perseverance from love than fear. The instant that the eye of the manager is turned from the slave who serves from fear alone, his efforts relax ; but the industry of him who serves from attachment is continually prompted by the gratitude and the regard for his master's interest which he carries in his breast.

Besides, signor, how infinitely more pleasing is it to be considered as the distributor of happiness than the inflictor of pain ! What man who has it in his power to be loved as a benefactor, would choose to be detested as an executioner, and see sorrow, terror, and abhorrence in the countenances he daily beholds ? Come, signor, continued the physician, having during the course of your illness given you many advices for which you have paid me, pray accept of one from me gratis ; you will reap much satisfaction from it, and it may prevent your being exposed to new dangers, similar to that from which you have with such difficulty escaped.—My advice is this : Alter entirely your conduct towards your slaves ; scorn not those who demand justice and mercy ; treat them with much more indulgence, and sometimes with kindness ; for certainly that man is in a most miserable as well as dangerous situation, who lives among those who rejoice in his sickness, howl with despair at his recovery, and whose only hope of tranquillity lies in their own death or in his.

The physician having made this remonstrance took

his leave. Zeluco remained musing for a considerable time after he was gone; the result of his reflections was a determination to behave with more indulgence to his slaves, being alarmed by what was suggested, and convinced that such conduct in future was highly expedient for his own personal security. Those resolutions were however very imperfectly kept. Indeed, Zeluco had already given so very bad an impression of his character, that a much more thorough reformation must have been continued a long time before it could answer the purpose of recovering the good opinion of the public.

Perceiving, therefore, that all intimacy with him was rather avoided, he gave over every attempt of cultivating new acquaintance; and, as it frequently happens to those who have deservedly forfeited the public esteem, he endeavoured to indemnify himself for the loss of character and the want of respectable society, by an unbounded indulgence in sensual pleasure, and the company of a few dependents; to which he added the contemplation of accumulating wealth, which indeed was the only *mental* enjoyment he had, as well as the only cause of his remaining out of Europe; for, according to the custom of money-makers, he had set his heart on a particular sum, and was resolved not to quit the superintendance of his own affairs till he had acquired it, after which he proposed to pass the rest of his life in uninterrupted enjoyment.

In this manner, therefore, Zeluco spent a few more miserable years in the West Indies; miserable surely they must have been, for what bodily gratifications, what accumulation of riches, could prevent that man from being wretched, whom no one approached that could avoid it, whom no one served but through fear, and who was conscious of being the object of the hatred and execration of all who knew him?

Fatigued and jaded by a life of comfortless voluptu-

ousness, and finding a favourable opportunity of disposing of an estate he had purchased to great advantage in the island of Hispaniola, as well as a considerable part of his estate in Cuba, he granted a lease of the remainder, settled his affairs, remitted his money to Europe, and prepared to return to his native country, in expectation that his wealth would procure him there that happiness which he found it unable to produce in the West Indies. But before he finally left this part of the world, he resolved to settle an account, which, in his own vengeful heart, he thought he justly owed to his neighbour the Portuguese merchant.

CHAPTER XIX.

Perfidy and revenge.

IN giving an account of Zeluco's adventure with the Portuguese merchant, it was remarked, that he slipped out of his own house and returned unobserved by his wife or any other person. With like caution he ever after abstained from mentioning what had happened.

When it became publicly known that Zeluco had been stabbed, the Portuguese expressed equal surprise, and rather more concern than other people, and was exceedingly attentive in sending messages of inquiry about his health.

One of Zeluco's slaves having run away the same evening on which his master was stabbed, it was generally believed that this slave had done the deed. Zeluco himself encouraged that report, and for obvious reasons discouraged all pursuit or search for the fugitive. He had no doubt, however, that the real perpetrator of the fact was the Portuguese; and strongly suspected that the wife was an accomplice. On his recovery, however, he thanked his Portuguese neigh-

bour with the most satisfied air imaginable for his obliging inquiries, and descanted with every appearance of conviction on the treachery and ingratitude of the fugitive slave who had so basely attempted to murder him.

No man was ever more ready to forget a good office done to him than Zeluco, and none ever more tenaciously remembered an injury: these opposite turns of disposition generally go together.

While Zeluco carefully concealed his suspicions within his own breast, he determined to act as if these suspicions amounted to certainty, and to be fully revenged of both the husband and wife. He saw, however, that it behoved him to act with great circumspection, and it was not easy to form what he considered as a suitable plan of revenge; for, whatever concern the Portuguese had seemed to take in the health of Zeluco, he did not carry his dissimulation the length of renewing their intimacy. His wife, likewise, observed the utmost reserve towards Zeluco, giving him no opportunity of demanding an explanation of what was past, or of renewing the intrigue.

She had not proved with child during the first two years of her marriage, but in the course of that in which her adventure with Zeluco took place she bore a son. As the husband had been uncommonly anxious to have children, his impatience on that head had made him almost despair of ever having any. His joy on the happy event was equal to his former uneasiness, and his fondness for his wife was redoubled by his satisfaction in being a father; while the augmented attention which he paid her, joined to the natural affection she felt for her child, operated a favourable alteration in her character, and confirmed her virtuous resolutions.

Zeluco understood, with redoubled wrath and malignity, that two people he mortally hated lived with

mutual confidence, and in the happiest union. Sometimes he had the mortification of hearing them quoted as a striking example of parental affection and conjugal felicity. He at length founded his scheme of revenge on a knowledge of these circumstances, and resolved to attack their happiness in its source.

By a few presents, and the intervention of his valet, he gained the maid of the Portuguese; and without exactly explaining what his views were, he prevailed on her to be subservient to them.

He was informed by the girl, that the nurse sometimes carried the child to a shady seat at a small distance from her master's house. Zeluco passed that way one day, when he knew of the Portuguese and his lady being elsewhere. He expressed the greatest joy at the sight of the child; took it in his arms, and fondled it with every appearance of the tenderest affection. He earnestly and repeatedly begged of the nurse to be exceedingly careful of the sweet infant, presented her with a purse of gold as a reward for her past care, and promised her another in due time, provided she persevered in her tenderness. He earnestly entreated the woman not to mention what had passed to her master; and taking his leave with seeming reluctance, entreated her to return to the same place with the child as often as she should know that her master was absent, or engaged with company. He had several interviews of the same kind in the same place within the space of a month.

Whatever reflections occurred to the nurse on these secret visits, and his extraordinary affection for the child, she kept a prudent silence, and hoarded them carefully up within her breast, as a precious fund to be expended among her particular friends and gossips on future occasions.

Zeluco at length arranged matters so that the lady and her maid approached the place while he was ca-

ressing the child ; and as soon as he was satisfied that they observed him, he delivered the infant with precipitation into the nurse's arms and retired.

The lady, greatly surprised at what she had seen, questioned the nurse ; who with some hesitation (as the maid was present) told her all that passed, without suppressing a circumstance, except that of her having received the purse.

The lady was more and more at a loss what construction to put on so strange and unlooked-for an incident.—She asked the nurse, Whether she had ever mentioned this matter to her master ?

No, never ; I do assure your ladyship I never did, replied the nurse with earnestness.

I do not know why you should not, said the mistress, with affected unconcern ; as there seems something a little extraordinary in this man's taking so much notice of the child, I think it would be proper that my husband should be informed of it.

Lord, madam, said the maid, who was instructed to prevent this, if the nurse were to inform my master of all those who caress and seem fond of the child, she could do nothing else ;—every mortal is struck with his beauty ; and Signor Zeluco, in admiring and caressing him, does no more than others. To mention him in particular to my master would seem exceedingly odd. The mistress seeming still to balance whether it would not be her safest course to acquaint her husband—the maid continued : I will refer it to the nurse, if any body could ever look on the child without admiration.—The nurse declared, that nobody ever could.—Only look at him yourself, madam, continued the maid ; observe how like an angel he smiles. Can you be uneasy, or think it extraordinary, that all the world should admire and wish to caress such a delightful creature ?

The mother, whose eyes were fixed on the child

during this harangue, thought, as she gazed, that the incident which had given her uneasiness was less extraordinary than she had at first imagined; and at length allowed herself to believe, that it was very natural for Zeluco, or any other person, to behave as he had done.

Let those who are ready to accuse this poor woman of excessive weakness, remember that she was a mother, and that the infant, though far from being handsome, was her first-born and only child.

Yet as she is represented as not deficient in quickness of thought and clearness of understanding, she may be thought to have acted inconsistently with this character, in attempting to conceal from her husband what he was so likely to come to the knowledge of, from the babbling propensity natural to nurses and maids. If I am not mistaken, however, the sex in general are apt to shrink from present inconveniences, even when sensible that by encountering them they would obviate the risk of future misfortunes. The lady was certain that the knowledge of Zeluco's secret visits to the child would throw her husband into immediate ill humour, and awaken very disagreeable reflections in his mind. She flattered herself, that he might never hear a word of the matter, and she could not bear to disturb the present calm to secure herself from a future storm, which possibly might never occur. In behaving as she did in this particular, she will be kept in countenance by many who act on the same principles in matters of far greater importance; but she seems to have been entirely forsaken by her natural sagacity, when she anxiously enjoined the nurse and her own maid to conceal what had happened from her husband. For it required but a superficial glance of their dispositions to perceive, that this was giving them an additional incitement to reveal it.

She was probably tempted to this inconsiderate step, by the knowledge she had that Zeluco was soon to return to Europe; and she lost no time in persuading her husband to remove with his family to his house in town, that Zeluco might not be tempted to seek another interview; and she resolved to keep herself and the child sequestered from any chance of meeting him before his departure from the island.

Zeluco being informed of these circumstances by the maid, who, on the pretence of some necessary arrangements, remained one day after the departure of her master and mistress; he, in prosecution of his base scheme, gave her a letter, which he desired her to place in such a situation as to be observed by the former, and seem to have dropped from the latter. When the maid joined the family in town, she executed these orders with but too much dexterity. While she stood behind her mistress, who was writing, the husband entered the room a little abruptly, and told his wife that somebody wished to speak to her in the parlour. She immediately locked up her papers into a small writing-desk, and withdrew.—As she rose, the maid took that opportunity of dropping the letter she had received from Zeluco, beneath the seat her mistress was quitting, and immediately followed her out of the room. The husband picked up the letter, which was unsealed, ruffled, addressed to his wife, and conceived in the following terms:

“It is impossible for me, my dearest soul, to express the happiness I have enjoyed in seeing and caressing the sweet pledge of our mutual love; I shall never forget your kind attention, in directing the nurse to the spot where I had that delicious enjoyment. I must, however, acquiesce in the prudence of your determination, to persuade your tyrant to move for some time to his house in town, where an interview may be arranged with less danger, and I shall wait

with as much patience as I am able for that happy moment.

“*P. S.* I continue to disguise my writing, and earnestly recommend to you the same precaution.”

The astonishment and rage of the Portuguese on reading this may be easier imagined than described; seizing his wife's writing-desk, which stood upon a table, he carried it into his own apartment, and there read over and over the fatal scroll which filled his heart with anguish. Notwithstanding the disguise of the writing, he easily distinguished it to be that of Zeluco,—which left him no doubt of his wife's infidelity. The first violence of his wrath and indignation might have proved fatal to her, had it not been damped and counteracted, in some measure, by the grief and dejection he felt, that the child he so dearly loved, and had been so proud of, might not be his own, but the offspring of his detested enemy.

The impression of sorrow, from whatever cause it is derived, mollifies the violence of rage, and the conflict of those opposite sentiments in the present instance repressed a little the madness of the husband's fury. However convinced he was of his wife's guilt, he could not be certain that the child was *not* his own: and all his rage against the mother could not unloose the bonds of affection which nature and the child's infantine endearments had twined around his heart.

Hearing the voice of the nurse and the maid in the passage, he called them into his apartment, and shutting the door, he, with as much serenity as he could assume, questioned the nurse, whether any man was in the use of accosting her at a particular place which he named, and of caressing the child.

The woman denied that any such thing had ever happened.

Be sure, woman, that you speak truth, said the Portuguese.

I would not depart from the truth, said the nurse, for all the gold in Mexico.

The Portuguese repeated the question, and the nurse gave the same answer.

Thou abominable wretch, cried he, I have certain information of the contrary; and nothing but an avowal of the truth shall save thee from punishment here, and a long expiation in purgatory hereafter!

I have told the truth, said the woman, hesitating with conscious falsehood.

The Portuguese, with augmented rage and repeated threats, continued to question her.

She at length acknowledged, that Signor Zeluco had several times met her at the place he mentioned, and had shown great fondness for the child.

Wretch! cried the enraged Portuguese; why did you deny this?

The nurse was silent.

What harm did you imagine there was in that man's seeing and caressing the child?

No harm in the wide world, said the nurse; for if there had been any harm I should never have permitted it.

Wherefore then did you conceal it from me? and wherefore did you so solemnly deny it just now?

The confounded woman finding herself so hard beset, and quite unable to extricate herself by prevarication, acknowledged, that she had concealed it from him at the request of her mistress.

I suspected as much, cried the husband.

But my mistress, interrupted the maid, desired her to conceal it for no other reason but merely that your honour might be saved the uneasiness of hearing that another man was in the practice of caressing and showing such paternal affection to your child.

The wrath of the Portuguese, which had been for some time glowing, was so instantaneously kindled by this suggestion, that he struck the maid an unmanly blow on the face, so that the blood gushed from her nose and mouth; in which condition she ran to her mistress, who was just returned to her own apartment.

The poor woman was exceedingly terrified at her husband's violence, and her fear was not diminished when she understood the cause of it. She was now sensible of her imprudence, in concealing from her husband Zeluco's treacherous visits to her child, and in depending on the discretion or fidelity of servants. She knew nothing however of the letter, and imagined that her husband's ill-humour proceeded solely from his hearing of Zeluco's behaviour. She thought her best course was to explain the whole to him without further delay.

She flew into his apartment, assured him that the information which displeased *him* had given still more vexation to *her*, and that when the nurse acquainted her with it, her own first impulse had been to mention it directly to him; that she sincerely repented her not having done so, for she was now convinced that a virtuous woman should have no secrets concealed from her husband.

The Portuguese, who had listened hitherto with a stern countenance, burst into a laugh, which, forcing its way through features distorted with anger and the thoughts of vengeance, chilled his wife with horror. She proceeded in a confused manner to assure him, that however improper it was not to acquaint him with what the nurse told him, she had refrained for no other reason than to save him uneasiness.

Your faithful confidant and you adhere I find to the same story, and are both equally tender of giving me uneasiness, said the Portuguese, renewing his fright-

ful laugh; but be assured, faithless woman, that you shall not deceive me twice, and that your punishment, if possible, shall equal your guilt.

What guilt? Alas! I know no guilt, cried the trembling woman; I am innocent as the babe newly born.

Before you have the effrontery to speak of innocence, you should learn to be more careful of your letters—look at this, cried he, holding the letter open before her eyes.

Holy Virgin! cried the astonished woman, as she perused the letter; I never saw this paper before,—it is a forgery of the villain's to deceive you, and ruin me.

How came this forgery of the villain's to drop out of your pocket? said the husband.

It assuredly dropped not out of my pocket, replied she; for as I hope for mercy from Heaven I never saw the paper before.

No, never; to be sure, said the husband, with a ghastly sneer; You—you are innocent as the babe newly born.

I am indeed, exclaimed the wife; and when you have patience and coolness to examine the whole matter, you will find so.

What examination is necessary? cried he; what confirmation can be added to such a letter as this?—this infallible evidence of your shame!

That letter is an evidence of nothing, but of the mean revenge of a disappointed villain. I beseech you therefore, added she, laying hold of his arm; I earnestly beseech you, for the sake of your child, for your—— Think not, interrupted he, shaking off her hand, to deceive me again;—begone to your chamber, and repent, for be assured that I will have ample revenge. So saying, he thrust her rudely out of the room, and shut the door with violence.

She was put to bed, and passed the rest of the day and the whole night in anxiety and terror.

CHAPTER XX.

Unjust accusations seldom affect us much, but from some justice in them.

As soon as he was alone, the husband broke open her writing-desk ; but after a very strict scrutiny he found nothing to justify the insinuations of the letter, or in the smallest degree to confirm his suspicions :—But what confirmation is needed, said he, of her criminal connection with this man ?—why should he wish to see the child in a clandestine manner ?—why did she order the nurse to conceal this from me ?—And above all, this letter, in which he has in vain attempted to disguise his hand-writing, *must* have fallen from her pocket !—O ! her guilt is manifest.

In reflections of this nature, and in forming plans of vengeance, the Portuguese passed as sleepless a night as his lady.

The following day she was so ill that she kept her bed ; the husband went not once to inquire for her, nor did he send any message : he also kept his apartment, and was heard walking backwards and forwards with a hurried pace the whole of that day. The next forenoon the physician who had formerly attended Zeluco called accidentally, and was taken immediately to see the lady, one of the servants having informed him she was indisposed.

As she had the greatest confidence in the doctor's good sense and prudence, and knew also that her husband had a very high opinion of him, she informed him of the true cause of her illness ;—Zeluco's visits to the child ; her own imprudence in ordering the

nurse to conceal them ; of his hearing of them ; his jealousy thereupon, and of the horrid anonymous letter.

The first thing that struck the physician in her narrative was, that no motive was assigned for the base scheme the lady imputed to Zeluco : he hinted this to her.

She said, it must have proceeded from the natural malice of the man's wicked heart ; she knew of no other motive.

The physician observed, that it was hardly credible that any man would form such a shocking scheme without some more particular cause.

The lady, perceiving the force of this remark, thought herself obliged to mention her first connection with Zeluco ; although that was a subject on which she never thought without pain. She could not help however giving as favourable a gloss to her story as possible, by declaring, that Zeluco had formerly had the insolence to make love to her ; that no woman was safe from an insult of this nature ; yet, as it is generally imagined that men seldom make such declarations but where they have reason to hope they will be well received, she had naturally wished to conceal this incident, though she had heard his wicked proposal with equal surprise and horror ; and had, in consequence of his persevering, been obliged to acquaint her husband ; and, finally, she now suspected that the pride of the man hurt by her resistance, so different from what he was accustomed to, had prompted him to this diabolical scheme on purpose to ruin her.

It is evident that in this narrative the lady did not adhere exactly to the truth, but thought proper to sink the circumstance of her having at first agreed to meet Zeluco. If all those forgive her for this part of her conduct, who, in relating facts in which themselves are concerned, are apt to leave out what

makes against them, and put in the most conspicuous point of view whatever is in their favour, it is to be presumed that the Portuguese lady will not be censured by a vast number of our readers.

The physician, it is probable, made allowance for a bias so very general among men, and from which the fair sex themselves are not entirely free.

After inquiring very minutely into every circumstance, his suspicion fixed strongly on the maid as an agent of Zeluco's. On his hinting this to the lady, she declared, that of all her family this girl was the last she could suspect; because she had always displayed the most unbounded attachment to herself, and often expressed, particularly of late, an aversion to Zeluco.

This did not weaken the physician's suspicions.—Poor girl, continued the mistress, she is of a delicate constitution, and subject to hysterical fits; she was much terrified by my husband's treatment of herself, but still more on seeing me so ill. I happened to say that I feared it would kill me; on which she was seized with a violent trembling, and has kept her bed ever since.

The physician asked, whether the lady had ever intrusted this maid, who seemed to be a great favourite, with any secret which it would give her uneasiness to have revealed.

The lady answered, with some warmth, that she had no such secret; that she cared not if all the actions of her life were made public; that she defied the power of malice;—and thus she ran on with a zeal and fluency natural to people who are endeavouring to justify themselves, and are conscious of not being entirely innocent; she concluded by asserting, that there was no part of her conduct she wished hid from the world.

The physician having waited till, being out of breath,

she stopped, he then calmly observed, that his question was not of so extensive a nature as she seemed to imagine; that he was not so impertinent as to inquire whether she had ever done what she wished to conceal from the world, but only whether *her maid was acquainted* with any thing of that nature.

Certainly not, said the lady; since I am not myself conscious of any such secret, how is it possible that my maid could be acquainted with it?—I admire the acuteness and logical precision with which you reason, madam, said the doctor; but I should be glad to know whether this maid was in your service at the time you mention, when Signor Zeluco paid his addresses to you.

If she had, she could have known nothing of that nature, said she. Certainly not, said the doctor; but I wish to know the fact, Was she or was she not? She was not, answered the lady. So much the better, resumed the doctor. I ask pardon, madam, for being so inquisitive; but I thought it of importance to have this point cleared up before I visit the maid, which I now mean to do with a view to discover, if possible, by whose means the letter was thrown in your husband's way; if that can be traced to the person you suspect, your justification follows of course.

So saying, he left the lady, and was conducted into the maid's chamber, and left with her alone. The maid immediately inquired how her mistress was?

Your mistress is very ill indeed, replied the physician, looking at her with a penetrating eye; some monster of wickedness has been bribed to ruin that worthy woman: you know of the forged letter which was thrown in your master's way—do you not?

I have heard of such a thing, said the maid, changing colour.

Have you any notion who has been guilty of such a perfidious action? said the physician, still fixing her,

Lord, sir! how can I have any notion? replied the maid.

Could you have believed, resumed the doctor, that such a viper crawled upon the earth?

I could hardly have thought it, replied the maid, with a languid voice.

Do you not think that the vengeance of heaven will pursue the vile wretch? said the physician.

Perhaps *she* will repent before she dies, said the maid, trembling.

She! repeated the physician—how do you know she is a woman?

Me!—I,—I know nothing;—no, nothing in the least, said the maid, in confusion; only if she *is* a woman, I hope she will repent before she dies.

If she is a woman, cried the physician, she is a disgrace to her sex, and the vengeance of heaven will overtake her in this life, and hell awaits her in the next, unless she confesses her crime, and prevents the ruin of an innocent lady:—But how are you yourself? you seem very ill.

I am indeed not well, replied the maid. The physician, feeling her pulse, cried with a voice of surprise, Good God, you are very ill indeed;—let me see your tongue.—Gracious heaven! what is this!—why, I had no idea of your being in this way.

O, dear doctor, cried the maid, do not frighten me; you do not imagine I am in danger of dying?

Danger! said the doctor; yes, assuredly: yet, perhaps,—at least, I hope you still may recover;—that is, provided you—in short, I will do all I can for you;—but if you have any spiritual or worldly affairs to settle, you had best set about it directly.

The doctor, having ordered her some medicines, went into the apartment of the Portuguese, whom he found alone and in a very gloomy mood. He expressed satisfaction, however, at seeing the physician,

who immediately told him that his lady had informed him of what had happened. Her assurance must equal her guilt, cried the Portuguese, to enable her to mention it. He then poured out a torrent of abuse against his wife. The physician did not think proper to interrupt him; but when he had done, he coolly asked what proofs he had of her guilt?

The Portuguese enumerated the circumstances of Zeluco's behaviour towards the child, his wife's having instructed the nurse and maid to conceal it, and then showed him the letter.

The physician, having heard him patiently, endeavoured to make him sensible that all these circumstances were not sufficient to justify the inferences which he drew against a lady who had always behaved with affection to him, and the greatest tenderness to his child. Besides, added he, these circumstances, inconclusive as they are, lose much of their weight, if they can all be accounted for on the very probable supposition of their being contrived by an enemy.

The letter!—the letter!—cried the Portuguese.—Well, said the doctor, the letter is of a piece with the clandestine visits; it was no difficult matter to bribe some person to throw a letter in your way in such a manner as that it would appear to have dropt from your lady. Recollect if there was any person in the room with her immediately before you observed the letter.

Nobody but her own confidential maid, said the husband.

And if an enemy had formed the scheme of ruining you both in this manner, who would he think of seducing as an assistant so likely as the domestic who attended her person?—Consider also, continued the doctor, how very improbable it is that she would keep such a letter in her pocket.

If guilty people were always cautious, they would not be so often detected as they are, said the Portuguese.

But is it not natural to think, rejoined the doctor, that the same want of caution which made her wear a letter of this importance carelessly in her pocket, would have appeared when you examined her papers? Did you find among them any other letters to the same purpose with this?

He answered, that he had not.

This, therefore, is a fair presumption, said the doctor, that there never was any; that the letter you found was purposely thrown in your way by the direction of some person equally the enemy of you and your lady.

CHAPTER XXI.

Comfortable hints to married men.

WHILE they were conversing, the Capuchin, who had attended Hanno in his dying moments, was introduced. This venerable person was spiritual director to all the Christians white and black in the family. The Portuguese immediately ordered, as was his custom, some cold victuals and a large flask of wine to be set before the father, who had only time to drink a few glasses, when a message came from the sick maid, who earnestly wished to see him. He was rising with reluctance from his repast, when the physician begged his delay for a moment; and taking the Portuguese to a corner of the room, he, in a few words, explained his intention; which the other, on whom the doctor's arguments had already made some impression, having approved, they turned to the father, who in this interval had finished his flask of wine. The doctor then informed him, that a very unfortunate affair had hap-

pened, in which he might be of service; that in short a discovery had been made, that the lady of the house had been unfaithful to her husband, as was proved by a letter from her lover, which she had dropt; that a plan was already formed for punishing her in an exemplary manner; that in the mean time she was kept in confinement till endeavours were made to discover those who had assisted in carrying on the correspondence with her lover, as there was reason to think she had been assisted by some person in the family.

The Capuchin, who was a little warmed with wine, and who valued himself greatly on his eloquence, and on the happy talent he thought he possessed of consoling the afflicted, could not allow so fair an occasion of displaying it to slip unimproved: addressing himself therefore to the Portuguese, he expressed his concern for the misfortune which had happened to him, observing at the same time, that however painful it might be, his case was by no means uncommon; for that a large proportion of husbands laboured under the same calamity. Not, continued he, that I mean to insinuate that any number being in the same predicament renders you, my worthy friend, less a cuckold than if you were the only one upon earth. I only mention this circumstance, because, although not much to the honour of human nature, yet there is reason to think that mankind in general derive consolation from the thoughts of others being in the same disagreeable situation with themselves. I therefore assure you, that even among my acquaintance there are many, some of them very respectable gentlemen, to whom the same accident has happened that there is so much reason to think has befallen you, notwithstanding which they live as easy and comfortably as they did before; this depends entirely on people's way of thinking.— Things of this kind are undoubtedly rather unpleasant at first; but when we are accustomed to them, they

give little or no uneasiness ; for habit reconciles us to any thing.

The Capuchin was a man of influence in the island ; and the Portuguese, who had been, although unjustly, accused of Judaism, had more reasons than one for wishing to keep on good terms with him ; yet he could not help betraying his impatience at the reverend father's manner of comforting him, by a most agonizing contortion of countenance at the last observation ; which the other observing, he added, I perceive, sir, that you do not bear this dispensation with the resignation you ought ; I must therefore desire that you will keep in your remembrance, that it has been undoubtedly permitted for some wise purpose ; it will therefore be as impious as unavailing for you to murmur, for what has happened admits of no remedy. Now that the thing is done, it cannot be undone, at least I never yet heard of any method by which a man can be uncuckolded : this, my valuable friend, is the peculiar cruelty of your case ; another person commits the crime, and you who are innocent suffer the shame. And what is still more vexatious, although one wicked woman can place her husband in this opprobrious state, all the virtuous women on earth cannot take him out of it. I beg you will further observe—— Here the eloquent father was interrupted in the middle of his harangue by another message from the maid ; and was with some difficulty prevailed on by the physician to go directly, without waiting to finish his discourse.

When he was gone, the physician remarked to the Portuguese, that in the present state of the maid's mind she would probably confess every thing she knew to the father, and was impatient to see him for that very purpose ; that although the Capuchin was bound not to mention what was revealed to him in confession, yet there would be no great difficulty in gathering

from him, particularly in his present trim, the import of all the maid should say, without his intending to inform them of a tittle.

The physician was right in his conjecture. The maid, terrified with the idea of immediate death, made a confession of her sins to the priest, and particularly acknowledged that she had been prevailed on by Zeluco's valet, to throw under the chair of her mistress a paper which he gave her, and which she now, to her great affliction, understood had produced the most mischievous consequences to her mistress; but the import of which she did not fully understand at the time; otherwise, she added, in alleviation of her conduct, she would not have been accessory to so great a crime.

The priest, although not the clearest-headed of his profession, had understanding enough to tell her, that the best reparation she could make was by a full avowal of this to her master, and he refused to give her absolution on any other conditions. On the maid's consenting to this, the father returned to the Portuguese, whom he found in his apartment with the doctor; and addressing himself to the former, he begged that he would attend him to the maid, who had something of the last importance to communicate.

They went accordingly, accompanied by the physician. The maid, with a flood of tears, and the most earnest supplications to her master for his forgiveness, made an avowal of what she had told the priest: confessing at the same time, that she had prevented her mistress from informing him of Zeluco's interviews with the child, which was her intention the moment she was informed of them; and this the maid owned she had done at the desire of the same valet who had given her the paper.

The Portuguese with difficulty restrained his indig-

nation against the woman; at length, however, he was prevailed on to say he forgave her, and immediately desired to see the nurse. When she appeared, he asked in what manner his wife had expressed herself when first she was informed of Zeluco's behaviour to the child. The nurse naturally, and without hesitation, declared, that her mistress had insisted on her husband's being informed directly, but was dissuaded from that measure by the maid.

After a few more questions, being fully convinced of his wife's innocence, he repaired along with the priest and the physician to the apartment in which she was confined;—apologized in the most earnest manner for the ill-treatment she had received; begged her forgiveness for the suspicions he had harboured; declared his perfect confidence in her virtue, which, he added, it should never again be in the power of villany or malice to shake.

CHAPTER XXII.

“ ——— He
Compounds for sins he was inclin'd to,
By damning those he had no mind to.” BUTLER.

THE lady behaved with the utmost propriety on the occasion; throwing the whole blame on the villain who had woven such an artful net of circumstances as might have caught the belief of the least suspicious of husbands.

Dearly shall he pay for his villany, said the Portuguese.

Leave him to the torments of his own conscience, rejoined his wife.

In case his conscience should not torment him sufficiently, said the father, the deficiency will be

amply made up to him before he gets out of purgatory.

The physician then drew the father out of the room, thinking the husband and wife would complete their reconciliation in the most satisfactory manner by themselves. He told them, however, as he retired, that he would have the pleasure of dining with them, and then walked with the priest into the garden, where he remained till dinner was announced.

His view in remaining was to endeavour to turn the Portuguese from thoughts of revenge, which he suspected to be brooding in his breast.

Being left alone with him after they had dined, he observed, that however strongly he was convinced of Zeluco's being the writer of the letter, yet as he had had the precaution to disguise his hand-writing, it would be fruitless to found any legal prosecution upon that circumstance.

I despise all legal prosecution, cried the Portuguese; but I will find means of doing myself justice without any such tedious and uncertain process. The physician apprehending that he meant to challenge him, represented that as a most absurd and uncertain method of repairing an injury; and the Portuguese, who had no such plan in his head, listened calmly to his arguments, and at length seemed to be convinced by their force, on purpose to deceive the physician, and prevent his suspecting the real design he had in view.

In a short time Zeluco was informed that the base train he had laid for the ruin of the Portuguese and his lady, with every circumstance of his perfidious conduct, was discovered by the husband; and although the particular cause of their misunderstanding was not publicly known, yet he was told that it had been whispered about, that he was hurrying out of the island to avoid the resentment of the merchant.

This rumour determined him to postpone his voy-

age for some time, that he might give his enemy an opportunity of calling him to the field if he chose it ; or in case he did not, that the world might be convinced that Zeluco himself was not afraid to give him that species of satisfaction.

It appears in the course of this narrative that Zeluco, however defective he was in other virtues, possessed a considerable share of constitutional intrepidity : in the early part of his life, from sheer vanity, he had oftener than once courted opportunities of distinguishing himself by a duel ; and through the whole of his life he showed, that whatever injustice or wickedness he was tempted to commit, he had also sufficient firmness to justify, if he thought that measure expedient ; or to fight any person who accused him when he thought proper to deny it. Courage was indeed the sole virtue he admired in others, and the only one he possessed himself. It has been often said, that cowards only are cruel ; but although it is natural to think, and observation will justify the opinion, that they are more apt to be so than the intrepid, yet there are but too many proofs that one of the most respectable and brilliant qualities which can adorn the character of man, is sometimes united to the most odious that can disgrace humanity, and that courage is not incompatible with cruelty.

Of this Zeluco was a striking example ; and the same person who with little regret had forfeited the good opinion of every virtuous mind, could not brook to have it thought that he feared the resentment of the man he was conscious of having injured, or that he would make any apology to him, rather than run the risk of injuring him in a more violent manner.

In the mean time the suspicions of the physician were not entirely removed by the dissimulation of the Portuguese. Notwithstanding the latter's declining to seek legal or honourable redress from Zeluco,

the doctor perceived something in his manner, which gave him the impression that the Portuguese meditated a less justifiable measure than either : his benevolence inclined him to prevent what his sagacity and knowledge of the man's character led him to suspect. His suspicion was confirmed a very short time after by the merchant's wife, who, under pretence of being indisposed, sent him a very urgent message to come and see her.—With perturbation of mind she told him, that she had reason to dread that her husband had formed a very criminal project of being revenged on Zeluco, and watched an opportunity of putting it in execution. She was prompted to this step by no regard for Zeluco, but from a horror at the intended deed, and from anxiety for her husband ; adding, that she was afraid of displaying much concern, partly because she did not wish that he should know of her being suspicious of what he intended, and partly that she might not awaken the jealous disposition of her husband :—with tears in her eyes, therefore, she entreated the doctor to exert all his influence to turn her husband from such an unjustifiable design ; or, if he failed, to use such means as his own prudence could suggest to render it ineffectual.

The good doctor applauded her conduct, and seized the earliest proper opportunity of renewing the subject, which he had once before touched on to the Portuguese ; adding, that he feared he still harboured vindictive intentions against Zeluco ; representing the danger of such a scheme ; that, however cautiously it might be executed, he would infallibly be considered as the perpetrator.—I know no other reason which you can have for suspecting that I harbour such intentions, said the Portuguese, but your thinking it impossible, after what you know of this man's behaviour, that it should be otherwise.

You are mistaken, replied the physician ; I think

it *ought* to be otherwise; and this is not my reason for harbouring suspicions.

I do not tell you, said the Portuguese, that your suspicions are well- or ill-founded; but could you be surprised *if* it were as you suspect?

Nor shall I be surprised, rejoined the doctor, if you are convicted and executed for gratifying your revenge in such an unjustifiable manner. Come, come, sir, added he, allow yourself to be guided by reason, and not impelled by passion, in this matter: consider what a dreadful situation your wife and child will be in, should any misfortune befall you in consequence of such an attempt. The wisest plan you can follow, since this man is on the point of leaving the island, is to let him go in safety, and it is probable you will never see him more.—Here the Portuguese shook his head.—Then, sir, resumed the doctor, your next best measure is to challenge him honourably.—What right has a man who has acted so perfidiously to expect that he is to be so dealt with? said the Portuguese. None, replied the doctor; but were I in your place, I should be more solicitous about what was reputable for myself, than about what my enemy had a right to expect. I only hinted this as being of two evils the least; and the best argument that can be made use of to one who despises the Christian religion.

I do not understand you! What do you mean? said the Portuguese.—Why, that you are in that predicament, answered the physician.

Who! I despise the Christian religion! cried the Portuguese, in terror and amazement.

You seem at least to despise one of its most important precepts, said the physician; from which it may naturally be concluded, that you have no great respect for the rest.

I do not comprehend what you mean, rejoined the Portuguese.

Yet I have expressed my meaning very plainly, said the physician; I really do not think you can with propriety be called a Christian.

Jesus Maria! exclaimed the Portuguese, you fill me with horror! Why, sir, I take the Holy Trinity, the Blessed Virgin, with St. Joseph her husband, St. James, and all the host of heaven, to witness, that I attend mass regularly, and have always from my infancy believed in every article of faith which our holy mother church requires; and I am ready to believe twice as much whenever she is pleased to exact it: if this is not being a Christian, I should be glad to know what is.

Nay, my good friend, resumed the physician, it is a matter of indifference to me what you do or do not believe; I am not, I thank God, your or any man's father confessor: but if you understood the *spirit* of the Christian religion half as well as you believe what the church exacts, you will find that your attending mass, and all your faith into the bargain, will not make you a Christian, while you indulge such a violent spirit of revenge.

As for that, replied the Portuguese, neither the church nor the Christian religion have any thing to do with it; that is my affair, and depends on my private feelings; and it is impossible for me ever to forgive a villain who attempted to injure me.

It is because he attempted to injure you, that it is in your power as a man, and your duty as a Christian, to forgive him. Had he never injured you, nor even attempted it, continued the doctor, it would indeed be impossible for you to have the merit of forgiving him.

It will naturally be imagined, from the vindictive character of this Portuguese, that he was a hypocrite, and pretended to more faith than he really had; but this was not the case. It never had occurred to his

mind, that there could be any doubt of the truth of those tenets in which his father and mother had instructed him, and which he heard venerable-looking men in sacred habits proclaim from all the pulpits of Lisbon. He was decidedly of opinion that none but monsters of wickedness, who ought to be burnt in this world by way of preparing them for the next, could harbour any doubts on such important points; he had indeed occasionally heard it hinted, that some of those doctrines were incomprehensible, and others contradictory; but this did not convey to his judgment any reason for doubting of their truth. He never omitted, therefore, any of the ceremonies prescribed by the church: he confessed his sins regularly, performed penance faithfully, would not eat a morsel of meat on a Friday on any consideration; and with the most punctual perseverance repeated daily his Pater Noster, Ave Maria, and Credo, to the last bead of his rosary. A person who thought that the whole of Christianity consisted in these and other ceremonies, could not but be surprised and shocked to hear his claim to the name of a Christian disputed. As to that thirst for revenge on every real or imaginary injury, which he had indulged from his childhood, and some other culpable propensities to which he was addicted, he considered all of these as venial foibles, which were more than expiated by his obedience to mother church in more essential points; and when his indulging in those culpable practices to which he was by temper or constitution prone came in question, he shrugged his shoulders, and said, Well, I thank God, they are neither heresy nor schism.

The physician, however, endeavoured to give him a different notion of these matters, founding most of his arguments on passages of a sermon to be found in the gospel of St. Matthew; for this happened to be a physician who sometimes read the Bible: there are,

it would appear, some of that kind in America. The Portuguese, at first, thought the passages in question of a very singular nature; and as they were plain and intelligible, and contained nothing mysterious, he could hardly believe that they were quite orthodox: besides, he was a good deal surprised that certain articles which he thought of great importance were not touched upon: yet on being informed who the person was who had preached this sermon, he could not deny that it had a fair chance of being sound Christianity. The physician having brought him so far, found little difficulty in persuading him that it was his duty as well as interest to leave Zeluco to his own wicked heart, which carried its punishment within itself; hinting also the probability of his falling sooner or later within the grasp of the laws of society, which his passions continually tempted him to violate.

It was probably owing to the remonstrances of this extraordinary physician that Zeluco left the island in safety, and the Portuguese merchant was indebted to him for being freed from the two most tormenting dæmons that can possess the human heart, jealousy and the spirit of revenge.

CHAPTER XXIII.

“ To whom can riches give repute and trust,
 Content and pleasure, but the good and just?
 Judges and senates have been bought for gold;
 Esteem and love were never to be sold. POPE.

WHEN it was evident that the Portuguese had no intention of calling Zeluco to account for his base behaviour, he publicly announced the time of his departure from the Havannah; and having freighted a vessel entirely for his own use, after a prosperous voyage he arrived at

Cadiz, where he was detained for some time, but as soon as he had transacted his business he proceeded to Sicily.

Soon after his arrival at Palermo, Zeluco furnished a house expensively, and began to live in a most magnificent style; inviting every person of distinction to his table, and entertaining in the most sumptuous manner. This way of living, with the idea universally entertained of his great riches, soon acquired him a numerous acquaintance and the warmest professions of attachment.

Zeluco, who had never known any motive of action but self-interest, was not deceived by such professions; but while he plumed himself on account of his superior penetration, he was the dupe of his own maxims, which, being drawn from the feelings of a corrupted heart, were often erroneous.

Insensible himself to the ardour of friendship, he thought there was no such sentiment, and most certainly never had a friend. What the world calls friendship, in his opinion was merely a compact of conveniency or interest between a class of people, in which it was tacitly agreed, that when, by the loss of fortune, health, or otherwise, any individual of the association became useless to the rest, all further connection with that person terminated of course.

Had Zeluco been satisfied with thinking this was *often* the case, he would have been in the right, but he was convinced it was *always* so, and there he was wrong: all declarations of attachment and friendship, therefore, he viewed as indirect attacks upon his purse; the punctual attention paid to his invitations, he *rightly* considered as nothing else than a proof of the excellency of his cook, and of the superior flavour of his wine.

The favourable notion which he entertained of the symmetry and beauty of his own person and face, in-

clined him however to believe, that the partiality which several of the ladies displayed towards him was void of hypocrisy, and proceeded from sincere personal attachment. For Zeluco had no sooner returned to Palermo than he became an object of great attention, and sometimes a subject of controversy among the ladies.

The elegant turn of his person and the graces of his countenance were universally admired, and even his character and disposition were favourably thought of, from that common trick of the fancy which gives the head and heart as much sense and virtue as the face has beauty. But he had not remained long at Palermo ere his real character began to develop itself; and then the graces of his countenance were called in question, and his features were said to convey an idea of malevolence, or even atrocity:—this happened from another play of fancy, which transfers the deformity of the mind into the face.

Pleased with the attention paid him by the men, and the favour of some of the women, he passed his time less disagreeably than he had done in the West Indies. But that degree of popularity which he had obtained at his arrival gradually diminished; his temper, naturally insolent and overbearing, detached the most respectable of the men from his society; and the intolerable caprice of his disposition, joined to a continual jealousy of temper, rendered him at last odious to the women. He therefore with great satisfaction embraced a proposal made by a Sicilian nobleman, more distinguished by rank than character, of accompanying him to Naples.

In that gay city he immediately set up a still more splendid domestic establishment than he had at Palermo; and as he played deep, and with apparent inattention, he was considered as a valuable acquisition by some very fashionable societies.

CHAPTER XXIV.

“The frail one’s advocate, the weak one’s friend.” POPE.

Soon after his arrival, he was presented to Signora Sporza. This lady was the widow of a Neapolitan nobleman, one of the poorest of a class of men in which few are rich. He had lived for two years after his marriage in a degree of magnificence more suitable to his rank than fortune, and died very opportunely when he had nothing left to live upon.

As, contrary to the advice of her friends, she had relinquished great part of the funds appropriated for the security of her own jointure, to relieve her husband’s difficulties, she had nothing to support her after his death, but the revenue arising from the small part which remained, and a very moderate pension granted to her by the court.

She lived however in a decent, not to say a genteel style, which was the more surprising, because, although her husband had left no money to maintain her, yet he contrived to leave a child by another woman for her to maintain.

Signora Sporza was not acquainted with this circumstance till several months after her husband’s death, when she was informed of it by the mother, who was then in a starving condition, and who, as the wretched woman herself expressed it, would not have applied to her for relief, had she not been driven by compassion for her infant more than for herself.

Those same relations who had advised Signora Sporza not to relinquish any part of what was secured by marriage articles to herself, for the sake of an extravagant husband, exclaimed against the indecency and folly of her supporting an adulterous bastard and its wicked mother; they insisted upon it, that she, of all women, had the least call to take such

a load upon her. All the answer which Signora Sporza made to these exclamations and arguments, was desiring them to find out some other woman or man, if they pleased, who would maintain the unhappy woman and her child, in which event she was willing to yield up her claim. Till that is done, added she, however indecent it may seem, I must be indulged in this folly.

She accordingly took both the mother and child into her house, where, contrary to the prediction of her relations, that the two serpents she was taking into her bosom would certainly sting her, they greatly contributed to her happiness; for the wicked woman became a most grateful and serviceable domestic, and Signora Sporza grew as fond of the child, who was a very sprightly boy, as if he had been her own.

This lady was of a character which rendered her universally agreeable; she supported the inconveniences of very narrow circumstances with so much gaiety and good-humour, understood the art of arranging her parties so judiciously, and animated them with such pleasantry, that her assemblies were thought the most agreeable though the least splendid in Naples. As she was well received every where, and her house frequented by the most fashionable company, Zeluco thought it worth his while to cultivate her acquaintance, and he was for some time a pretty constant attendant at her assemblies. One circumstance, however, made him less so than otherwise he would have been; the play in general was not so deep as in many other assemblies, owing to Signora Sporza's discouraging it as much as she easily could. Independent of more permanent ill consequences, she declared an aversion to deep play on account of the immediate gloom with which it overspread every countenance engaged in it, to the entire destruction of all good-humour and pleasantry. But Zeluco had a greater relish for

deep play than for either good-humour or pleasantry; and as he sometimes met at Signora Sporza's with people of the same turn of mind, they were apt to indulge their humour in spite of her remonstrances, which indeed, however seriously *meant*, were always jocularly made.

Among the British subjects at this time at Naples, there were two young Englishmen, Mr. N—— and Mr. Steele, who lodged in the same house, although of very different characters. The honourable Mr. N—— had already made the tour of Europe, and returned to his native country more free from narrow prejudices, less infected with foreign fopperies, and more improved both in knowledge and in manner, than the generality of his countrymen who have made the same tour. After remaining a few years at home, he was seized with a complaint in his breast threatening a consumption, for which he was advised to return to Italy, and resided for the most part at Naples, where he intended to remain a year longer, although at this time he seemed to have in a great measure regained his health.

Mr. N—— had been well acquainted with Signora Sporza during his first residence at Naples, and was now on the most friendly footing with that lady. Besides his companion Mr. Steele, he had introduced to her acquaintance another countryman of his own—Mr. Squander. This gentleman was distinguished by spending more money with less enjoyment than any English traveller in Italy. Without any knowledge of horses, or any love for the animal, he kept a stable of English horses at Naples. His incitement to this was, his having heard a certain peer who had a violent passion for the turf mentioned with admiration for having established a horse-race in the English style. Mr. Squander matched one of his horses with one of his lordship's, and had the renown of losing a greater

sum than ever was lost at a horse-race at Naples:—what rendered this the more memorable though the less surprising was, that he rode himself. He gave frequent entertainments, to which he invited his own countrymen only; they generally ended in drunkenness, noise, and riot. He bought pictures, statues, and seals, because they were highly praised by the venders; and afterwards gave them away in presents, because they were despised by the rest of the world. Without any inclination for gaming, this young man was ready on the slightest invitation to join any party at deep play, and had sometimes been drawn into that above mentioned at Signora Sporza's. As he was the only one of this party devoid of skill, and who played without attention, he generally lost the most, and sometimes was the only person who lost at all.

How Mr. Steele came to be connected with Mr. N—— will appear hereafter; but as he and Squander had been presented by him to Signora Sporza, she was particularly uneasy to see them throw away their money. She was uncommonly attentive to strangers, and rather partial to the English;—by her frank and engaging manners, she gradually overcame their natural reserve, and dissipated their timidity; and some of that nation who from the time of their crossing the Channel had never dined but with a club of their own countrymen, and had never gone twice to any other assembly at Naples, were insensibly prevailed upon to attend those of Signora Sporza; and at length they went with pleasure instead of reluctance.

At her assembly one evening, Signora Sporza perceived the same party forming with which Mr. Squander had lost so much money. Why do you not advise your countryman, said she in a whisper to Mr. N——, to avoid these people? they will pillage him of all his money.

Because, replied Mr. N——, my countryman hates advice more than he loves money.

You Englishmen, resumed she, perhaps consider advice as an encroachment on that liberty you are so fond of.

Certainly, said Mr. N——, smiling; the Cherokees, and other refined nations in America, think in the same manner.

Will you not try then to keep him out of those people's hands? said she.

I should try in vain, said Mr. N——; but if you please to draw him off to a safer party, whatever he may wish, he is too awkward, and will be too much embarrassed, when a lady speaks to him, to be able to excuse himself.

Basta! cried she; and immediately accosting Squander, We have need of you here, signor, said she; and so she engaged him for the evening with a party who played at a very small stake.

Signora Sporza thus using all her address to prevent deep play at her assemblies, and to save the unwary from being preyed upon, the gamesters gradually paid her less attention, and at last entirely forsook her house, for that of another lady with whom Signora Sporza was on ill terms, and who, out of mere spite, established an assembly at her own house on the evenings which Signora Sporza had fixed upon.

Zeluco, although he now possessed far more wealth than he could enjoy, required the agitation of gaming to ward off the intolerable languor which is apt to invade unoccupied minds, and also to preclude reflection or retrospect on past conduct, which in him was always attended with self-condemnation. He therefore became a constant attendant at the rival assembly, and a considerable time had passed since he had waited on Signora Sporza, when he observed her one

evening at the opera, accompanied by two ladies, neither of whom he had ever before seen: the elder a genteel-looking woman, between forty and fifty years of age;—the other about twenty: he gazed on the latter, and thought her by far the most beautiful woman he had ever beheld; the longer he looked, he was the more confirmed in that opinion: he now regretted the coldness subsisting between him and Signora Sporza, and resolved to use all means for removing it, as the most easy way of being introduced to the lady whom he so much admired. Impatient as he was to address Signora Sporza, he hesitated about doing it that night, lest she should impute it to the real cause. A glance from the young lady brought him at once to decision; he could no longer command his impatience; but leaving Signora Sporza to put what construction she pleased on his behaviour, he suddenly darted from his own box, and entered that in which she and the two strangers were. With eagerness, and in the most obsequious language, he apologized to the former for not having paid his duty to her of late, imputed it to indispensable business, and begged to be permitted that honour the next morning, alleging he had something of importance to acquaint her with. Having finished his apology, he bowed very respectfully to the strangers, and then looked with significance at Signora Sporza, who heard him with the reserve of offended pride, taking no notice of his significant look; but, after a grave bend of her head to him, resumed her conversation with the strangers as if no other person had been in the box. In spite of this very cool reception, Zeluco kept his place in the box, and his eyes almost constantly riveted on the young lady, till the opera was finished, and then attended them to their carriage; after which he went home and ruminated all the rest of the night on the charms of the fair stranger.

He waited next morning on Signora Sporza, who had not been an inattentive spectator of the impression which her young friend's beauty had made on Zeluco; she allowed him with the most cruel tranquillity to go through the ceremony of explaining his pretended affair of importance, without interrupting him, or assisting him in his way to the real business which she well knew was the object of his visit.

She heard him without seeming to take any interest in what he said;—the important affair did not draw from her a single observation: he was so much disconcerted by the coldness of her behaviour, that he was unable to introduce any discourse regarding the strangers. He wished to do this in an indirect manner, as a thing in which he took little concern, and waited for a favourable opportunity.

Do you know, said signora Sporza, interrupting the silence, how many birds his majesty killed yesterday? I heard he went early a-shooting.

A-propos, replied Zeluco; Pray, Signora, who is that lady I had the honour of seeing with you yesterday at the opera?

Very *à-propos*, indeed, said she; May I ask which lady you mean? there were two in the box with me last night.

Two! cried Zeluco: O yes; I now recollect there were two;—but I mean—I mean the *elder*.

She is a very near relation of mine, replied she, suppressing a smile; and then turned the conversation to a different subject, which, with the awkward manner in which he had introduced his favourite topic, increased his embarrassment. Yet before he took his leave, he recovered his presence of mind so far as to let a china snuff-box he had taken off the table fall on the hearth, where it instantly shivered in pieces. After making becoming apologies, he took his leave, and the same day sent a gold snuff-box, enriched

with diamonds, with a letter to Signora Sporza, entreating her to accept of the one as an atonement for having destroyed the other.

CHAPTER XXV.

“*Digna minus misero, non meliore viro.*” OVID.

SOME few days after this, Zeluco again waited on Signora Sporza. She received him with more frankness than at his last visit; he imputed this to the benign influence of the snuff-box: as soon as he was seated, she whispered her maid, who instantly withdrew.

They talked for a while on the common incidents of the place; of a new singer that was expected; of a violent explosion which had happened the preceding night from mount Vesuvius; of the queen's having seemed out of humour at the last gala; of a man who had stabbed his rival in the street at mid-day, and then had taken refuge in a church; of a religious procession that was to take place next morning, and of a ball in the evening.

Zeluco endeavoured to turn the conversation from those topics, so as that it might seem to fall undesignedly on that which was the object of his visit. Signora Sporza observing this said, I will give you the history of the ladies by and by, signor; but I expect two people immediately, to whom you have rendered a most essential service; and you must permit them to thank you in the first place.

He could not possibly comprehend her meaning: but soon after the maid introduced a very handsome young woman, plainly dressed, with a child in her arms, followed by a genteel-looking man, who seemed to be a tradesman, and a few years older than the woman.

Zeluco was greatly surprised at their appearance.

This is your benefactor, Camillo, said Signora Sporza, addressing herself to the man; the generous person who enabled me to free you from prison.

I am greatly indebted to you, signor, said the man in a most respectful yet manly manner; and although I do not absolutely despair of being one day enabled to repay what you have so humanely advanced to liberate me, yet I shall never be free from the strong sense of obligation I feel towards you.

Ah, signor! cried the woman, unable to contain herself, you do not know what a worthy and noble-hearted man you have relieved; you do not know the extent of the blessed deed you have done; you have preserved my sweet infants from death; you have ransomed my beloved husband from prison, and you have saved my poor brain from madness. O signor! had you but seen—— Here the tears obscured her sight; the recollection of her husband's condition when in prison, with the keen sensations of gratitude, suppressed her voice;—she was ready to faint;—her husband snatched the child from her arms, and the poor woman sunk down on a chair which Signora Sporza suddenly placed to receive her.

Camillo, with his child in one arm, supported his wife with the other; while Signora Sporza chafed her temples with aromatic spirits.—Margherita will be well immediately, Camillo, said Signora Sporza; see, she recovers already.—Thank Heaven, cried Camillo with fervour; then begged leave to conduct his wife home. Signora Sporza attended her with Camillo and the child into another room, ordered them some refreshment, and desired they might not leave the house till she came back.

All this was as great a mystery to Zeluco as it is to the reader.—If I had suspected, said Signora Sporza to him, as she returned to the room in which he had

remained, that this poor woman would have been so much affected, I should have spared you the scene; which I will now endeavour to explain:—I have known this young woman from her childhood; she was always the most cheerful sweet-tempered creature I ever knew. By my recommendation, on the death of her mother, she was taken into the service of the Marchesa de B——; and in a short time she became her favourite maid. The marchesa is liberal, and the girl was as happy as a maid could be whose mistress has the misfortune of being put out of humour every day as soon as she rises: the cause of her ill-humour was without remedy, and grew daily more inveterate; it proceeded from her observing more gray hairs on her head, and more wrinkles in her face, every morning than she had seen the day before: but although her peevishness was diurnal, it did not last long at a time, for Margherita powdered her hair with wonderful expedition; and as soon as her face was varnished, and her toilet finished, she contemplated herself in the mirror with complacency, recovered her cheerfulness, and Margherita was happy for the rest of the day.—Meanwhile, the man who has just left us fell in love with her, and she fell in love with him; and from that moment the girl's mind was more occupied with her lover than her mistress; whose head, after this incident, was neither so expeditiously nor so neatly dressed as formerly. When the marchesa found out the cause of this alteration, she was very much out of humour indeed, and told Margherita, that she must either give up all communication with the lover or with her:—So you will consider the difference between me and him, continued she, and then decide. Margherita accordingly did consider the difference; and decided in favour of the man.—After leaving the marchesa, she passed more of her time than ever with her lover; and their mutual love increased to a very alarming height.

Neither of them, however, ever thought of any other remedy than marriage; and notwithstanding the numbers who have found it a radical cure for love, to this couple it has hitherto proved ineffectual; in the opinion of the poor people themselves, the disease rather gains ground, although they have now been married two complete years, and have two children.

The husband, who was at first employed in the coarse preparatory work for sculptors, has himself become a tolerable artist; he redoubled his industry as his family increased, and saved a little money.—Margherita on her part cheered him under his labour, by the most active attention to family œconomy, by everlasting good-humour, and undiminished affection. The bloom and growing vigour of their children was a source of joyful foreboding to both.—It was delightful to contemplate the happiness of this little family. I often called on Margherita, purely to enjoy that happiness; health, content, and mutual love resided under their humble roof: obtaining with difficulty the superfluities, or even necessaries of life, they tasted pleasure with a relish unknown to those who have the overflowing cup of enjoyment constantly pressed to their lips. The gloom of their poverty was cheered by some of the brightest stars of pleasure, and by the hope of permanent sun-shine. But all this fair and serene prospect was suddenly obscured by a terrible storm. The imprudent husband, impatient to become rapidly rich, was persuaded to collect all the little money which he had saved, to accept of a larger sum on credit, and to risk the whole in a commercial adventure:—the whole was lost;—and the obdurate creditor immediately seized on all the furniture and effects of this little family, and threw Camillo into jail.—Margherita, half distracted, came and told me her story. It happened by a superabundance of ill-luck that I was very low in cash myself, and had overdrawn my credit with my

banker; I gave her what I had, but it was not sufficient to procure her husband's liberty, which happened to be what poor Margherita was most solicitous about. I begged of her to call on me the following morning, determining then to go in search of the necessary sum; but before I set out, the snuff-box, of which you desired my acceptance, arrived: instead of going to borrow money, signor, which, if you ever had the experience of it, you must know to be the most disagreeable thing on earth, I went and sold the snuff-box, and in my opinion to very great advantage; for the sum I received has not only freed the poor fellow from prison and redeemed his effects, but also makes him a little richer than he was before his unfortunate attempt in commerce. I informed the joyful couple that I had received the money from you, which in effect I did; they know no more of the matter; and now that you have heard the whole, and have seen the family whom your bounty has saved, I am convinced you will approve of what has been done.

Zeluco expressed great admiration of the benevolence of Signora Sporza, but insisted on redeeming the snuff-box, and restoring it to her. This she absolutely refused, saying, that the circumstances which she had related formed the only consideration which could have prevailed on her to accept of a present of that value; but she was willing to receive from him a snuff-box of the same kind with that he had so fortunately broken, which she would wear as a memorial of that happy event. Zeluco, finding her obstinate, was obliged to agree to this compromise of the matter.

It was already observed, that Zeluco was greatly surprised when Margherita was presented to him: he had, however, frequently seen her before; and this was one reason of his being a little confounded at her appearance at Signora Sporza's; but on recollecting, that

although he knew her, yet she did not know him, he reassumed his composure.

In going to church, Margherita usually had passed the windows of Zeluco's apartment, and he had often remarked her as she went and returned to and from mass.

Being somewhat captivated by her face and person, he employed an agent to find out where she lived and what she was; and afterwards commissioned the same person to engage her to meet a *very honourable gentleman*, who was greatly captivated with her beauty, at a house appropriated for a rendezvous of this nature. Margherita rejected the offers of the agent, baffled the arts employed to seduce her, and would have nothing to do with the very honourable gentleman.

This unexpected resistance increased Zeluco's ardour. His valet was acquainted with the man who had lent Camillo the money which the imprudent fellow had sunk in the ill-judged commercial adventure. This man, who thought his money in little or no danger when he first advanced it, was now exceedingly uneasy, and had already begun to press Camillo for payment. The valet acquainted Zeluco with those circumstances, who instructed the valet to persuade the creditor, that it was vain for him to expect that ever Camillo could pay the money; and that as long as he was left at large, none of his friends would think of advancing it for him; but that, if he were thrown into prison for the debt, some of his or his wife's friends would then certainly step forth for his relief.

The man scrupled to use so violent an expedient; but having mentioned it to his wife, by whom Margherita was envied on account of her superior beauty, and hated on account of her unblemished character, she pressed her husband to adopt this harsh expedient, as the only means of recovering his money. The creditor, however, still hesitated, till the valet assured

him, under the obligation of an oath of secrecy, that he knew a person who would advance a sum sufficient to pay all Camillo's debts, rather than allow him to remain long in prison; and he became bound himself to do this if Camillo was not released by the other within a month.

Zeluco, who took care not to appear in all this infamous transaction, imagined, that when Margherita was once separated from her husband and humbled by distress, she would then listen to the secret proposals he intended to renew through his former agent.

The creditor having given orders to his attorney to proceed to extremities against Camillo, went himself into the country, that he might avoid a scene which his heart was not hard enough to support. But his orders were executed very punctually on the very day in which Zeluco was so much struck with the beauty of the young lady at the opera. She had engrossed his mind so entirely, that from that moment he never once thought of Margherita, till he saw her introduced with her husband at Signora Sporza's, and found that the present he had sent to that lady with a very different view, had been the means of relieving a family brought to the brink of ruin by his insidious arts.

CHAPTER XXVI.

“On aime à deviner les autres, mais on n'aime pas à être deviné.”

ROCHEFOUCAULT.

WHATEVER shame or compunction Zeluco felt on receiving praises he so little deserved, for conferring benefits which he never intended, he certainly supported the character he had to act with great assurance.

After the compromise already mentioned, Signora Sporza gave him the following account of the ladies

whose history he was so impatient to know. The elder, she said, was her cousin-german, and widow of Colonel Seidlits, an officer lately deceased, in the king of Prussia's service. She was a Neapolitan by birth, who finding it disagreeable after her husband's death to remain at Berlin, where she could not afford to live in the same style she had formerly done, had lately returned to her native country, with her daughter Laura; that she inherited from her father a small estate in the Campagna Felice, and her inclination for removing from Berlin to Naples had been strengthened by the hopes of making good a claim she had in right of an uncle, which, although of no great value in itself, was of great importance to her in her very circumscribed circumstances; and which, however just, did not the less depend on the favour of the minister.

Zeluco expressed much concern that two ladies of their merit should labour under difficulties; adding, that on account of their connexion with her, he should think himself very happy in having it in his power to be of service to them.

Signora Sporza penetrated into the motive of Zeluco's proffered services; but she also knew that he was on an intimate footing with the minister, and might be of essential service to her cousin in the affair of her claim, the decision of which had been hitherto protracted on the most frivolous pretexts in the most litigious manner. It must be confessed, that, in the warmth of Signora Sporza's zeal to serve her friends, she was often regardless of the motive from which those who served them acted: could she have induced Zeluco to serve Madame de Seidlits from pure and honourable motives, no doubt she would have preferred it; but that not being in her power, she thought the next best was to secure the same effect whatever produced it. After thanking Zeluco therefore for his obliging offer, she added, that if he would do her the

pleasure of calling in the evening, she would present him to her two relations; and that Madame de Seidlits would herself explain to him the grounds of her claim.

Being introduced accordingly to the two ladies as a friend of Signora Sporza, he became intoxicated with the elegant sweetness of Laura's manner, which he found equal to her beauty, and listened with much seeming attention and apparent solicitude to the history of her mother's suit, expressing great zeal to serve her on that or any other occasion.

The nobleman with whom Zeluco came to Naples had considerable influence with the minister; Zeluco himself had more; both were employed in giving him a favourable idea of Madame de Seidlits's case, or rather in inspiring him with a desire of promoting it, independent of the right on which it was founded. It is probable that Zeluco was thinking on something else during that part of Madame de Seidlits's narrative, for the foundation of her claim was what he was unable to explain, but it was also what the minister showed no anxiety to understand. Soon after, however, he publicly hinted, that having taken much pains to get a clear idea of Madame de Seidlits's claim, he was led to believe that the judges would decide in her favour. As the minister's prophecies of this kind were generally accomplished, Madame de Seidlits was congratulated on this happy omen, as if she had already gained her cause; and she imputed this fair prospect to the interposition of Zeluco.

From this time he had frequent opportunities of seeing and conversing with Laura, and he exhausted all his power of insinuation to ingratiate himself into her good opinion, but without success. This young lady had more penetration into character, and a far juster way of thinking, than any of her sex with whom he had hitherto been acquainted; the same arts which

had rendered him agreeable to many of them, had a contrary effect on her: she was not pleased when she observed, that, as often as he found her alone, his conversation was much interspersed with compliments on her beauty. She had been sufficiently accustomed to sweeteners of this kind, not to value them above their worth; and she had remarked, that they proceeded as often from a contempt of the understanding, as from an admiration of the beauty of the person to whom they were addressed. But whatever doubts Laura might have of Zeluco's sincerity, when he expressed a high opinion of *her* merit, there was something in his air and manner which convinced her he had a very high opinion of his own. In this, however, Laura was in some degree mistaken; for, notwithstanding the loftiness of his manner, Zeluco's self-conceit was confined to his external figure, to his address, and his natural talents; he was conscious of having neglected the opportunities of improvement, and lamented the want of certain accomplishments which he with envy saw others possess; for, with whatever plausible varnish he concealed his foibles or vices from the sight of others, he found it impossible to hide them from his own; so that, when flattery poured the honey of adulation into his cup, the unconquerable power of conscience often turned it into gall, and rendered him unable to swallow the nauseous draught: yet by a singular effect of selfish caprice, though sensible of his own failings and vices, he detested all whom he suspected of having sufficient penetration to see into his real character, and of harbouring the same sentiments with himself. He could support the company of those only upon whose understandings he imagined he imposed, by giving them a much better idea of his character than it deserved. This accounts for his constant preference of ignorant society, and for the gloom and dissatisfaction which

attended him as often as he was not engaged in such pursuits as kill thought and reflection. Yet this dissatisfied miserable man, on whose mind repentance and remorse were often obtruding themselves, was, on account of his wealth, and the splendid style in which he lived, considered by many as remarkably fortunate and happy.

We are never more apt to be mistaken than in our estimate of the happiness of grandeur. The grove overlooking the precipice has a fine effect at a distance; we admire the sublimity of its situation, and the brightness of its verdure when gilded by the rays of the sun; we grudge no labour in scrambling up to this seat of pleasure, which, when attained, we often find cold and comfortless, overgrown with moss, pierced by the winds of every quarter, and far less genial than the sheltered bank from whence we set out. In like manner many men, who are viewed with admiration and envy at a distance, become the object of pity or contempt when nearly approached. Of this we may be most assured, that all the decorations of rank and the smiles of fortune cannot prevent the intrusions of remorse and self-condemnation upon a mind sensible of having abused talents, and neglected through life the opportunities of improvement; far less can they convey happiness, or even tranquillity, to one conscious of perfidy, cruelty, and ingratitude. But Laura did not at this time know that the peace of Zeluco's mind was disturbed by intruders of this nature; and the vain satisfaction which he frequently enjoyed from the contemplation of his face and figure, she imagined extended to his whole character, and rendered him, in her opinion, by much too well satisfied with himself.

However profuse of panegyric Zeluco was, as often as he happened to find Laura by herself, yet he always

stopt short, and abruptly changed the tenor of his discourse when her mother joined them.

This did not escape the observation of Laura; and one day, on his making this sudden transition as Madame de Seidlits entered the room, Laura said to him gravely, There is no need, signor, for you to fly from the subject on which you have dwelt so long! I do assure you, the praises of my beauty are to the full as agreeable to my mother as they are to myself.

At this unexpected remark, Zeluco's countenance suddenly displayed strong marks of displeasure, and even rage; but recollecting himself, he instantly smoothed it over with the smile of good-humour; and having bowed, and inquired after the health of Madame de Seidlits, he turned to Laura, saying, I fly not from the subject, madam; the praise of your good qualities is the most delightful of all subjects to me; but a sudden thought struck me immediately before your mother entered the room.

A sudden thought seemed to strike you also *after* she entered, said Laura, if one may judge from the alterations in your countenance.

I know nothing of my countenance, said Zeluco with a careless air; but I have great satisfaction at my heart in informing you, madam, continued he, and turning to Madame de Seidlits, that your claim is admitted to its fullest extent, of which you will have more formal notice this very day from the court.

Madame de Seidlits expressed a strong sense of obligation to Zeluco, imputing her success to his influence and exertions: he on his part affected to place it wholly to the justice of her cause; expressing astonishment, however, at its having been delayed so very long, and with an ostentatious air of modesty disclaiming any kind of merit from *his poor feeble* efforts.

When Zeluco withdrew, Madame de Seidlits spoke of him with all the partiality of gratitude. Laura as-

sented with coolness and moderation; she had observed something in his looks and conduct which displeased her, and conveyed some faint suspicion of his motives. Madame de Seidlits did not refine on looks or language; she founded her idea of Zeluco's general character on the personal obligations she lay under to him. On occasions of this nature, the mother is generally more prone to be suspicious than the daughter; in this particular instance it was otherwise: Laura had as much sensibility to the impressions of gratitude as her mother; but having doubts respecting Zeluco's disposition and motives, she would have been more pleased if the favour had come from another hand.

CHAPTER XXVII.

“ La physionomie n'est pas une règle qui nous soit donnée pour juger les hommes; elle nous peut servir de conjecture.”

LA BRUYERE.

MADAME de Seidlits felt great satisfaction in the thoughts of her having at length obtained justice; and the good and friendly character of Zeluco was the frequent theme of her panegyric. When she was dwelling one day on this favourite topic, It is unfortunate, said Laura, that the expression of his countenance corresponds so ill with the qualities of his heart.

I do not know what you mean, my dear, said the mother; few men are so handsome as Signor Zeluco.

It is, I believe, generally thought so, said Laura; but I confess I am not of the general opinion.

No! that a little surprises me.

When I speak of the expression of the countenance, resumed Laura, I mean something different from beauty or ugliness: there are many men whom I

think plainer than Signor Zeluco, whose countenance has nothing of that expression, which I think rather disagreeable in his.

Am I to understand, child, said Madame de Seidlits, smiling, that a man may be too handsome to be agreeable to you?

You would laugh at me if I said so, replied Laura; yet if a man seems too sensible of his being handsome, you must admit that he is the less agreeable on that account.

When a man happens to be handsome, replied Madame de Seidlits, people are apt to conclude, without any other reason, that he is vain of his looks.

I am not, however, so unjust, said Laura: for example, I agree with the general opinion in thinking Mr. N——, the Englishman who is so often at our cousin's, very handsome; yet he is so free from airs and all appearance of conceit, that it is impossible to think him vain. *His* features express goodness of heart, but I have seen features which, considered separately, seem as good, and yet the countenance on the whole to which they belong, conveys the idea of the reverse.

I do not admit, replied Madame de Seidlits, that this is the case with Signor Zeluco's.

Perhaps I am whimsical in this point, said Laura; but I am convinced a man may be hard-favoured, and yet give no idea of his being a bad man. And with respect to Signor Zeluco, I do think that those who do not know from experience that he is of a good character, might be apt to suspect him of a bad.

Nothing depends more on whim, or is more uncertain, than the pretended art of physiognomy, said Madame de Seidlits.

Yet it never fails to have some influence on our opinion, cried Laura.

It ought not, replied Madame de Seidlits; it may

mislead us greatly : Did you ever, for example, behold a more lovely face than that of the wretched woman we saw the other night at the opera ? yet her profligate life is well known. You may recollect also, how very hard and unpleasant the countenance of your father's friend Colonel Sleiffen was ; yet there never existed a worthier man. You ought therefore, my dear Laura, to beware of imagining that vice is connected with deformity, or virtue with external beauty.

I beg pardon, my dear madam, replied Laura, but I might use the two instances you have given in support of my argument ; for the opera woman you mention, in spite of her beauty, I should never have thought a person of a virtuous disposition ; and I always imagined I saw benevolence shining through the harsh features of Colonel Sleiffen.

I suspect, replied Madame de Seidlits, that a previous knowledge of their character led your opinion in both cases ; and I am sure that candour and charity ought to prevent our suspecting any person of being bad, till we have reason to believe so from their conduct.

I do assure you, my dear mother, said Laura, that it always gives me pain to think ill of any body, and it affords me sincere pleasure to find them better than I expected.

Have you any reason to think ill of Signor Zeluco ? said Madame de Seidlits with some emotion ; I remember you said something that seemed unpleasant to him as I entered.

Why, no,—no, replied Laura, with a little hesitation ; he was paying me a few compliments, and stopped short as you entered. I only hinted to him that I liked no conversation when you were *not* present, that he judged improper when you were. But as to thinking ill of him,—I have—I have no reason ; we were talking of his looks.

They afford no reason indeed, said Madamé de Seidlits; I hope experience, my dear, will teach you to judge of worth by some more certain criterion than the features of the face.

I hope it will, my dearest madam, replied Laura, taking her mother's hand affectionately in both hers, and till then, my opinions shall be directed by your judgement; of this you may rest assured, that nothing can ever influence me to think ill of those whom you *continue* to think well of.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

"Illa quidem primò nullos intelliget ignes."

OVID. *Metamorph. lib. ix.*

ZELUCO had been disconcerted, as has been mentioned, and was a little piqued at the manner in which Laura received the compliments that he paid her, and what she said in his hearing to her mother; but he was still more mortified to perceive the indifference which she displayed towards him on all occasions, notwithstanding his peculiar attention to her, and the pains he took to gain her regard. Had Laura been thoroughly acquainted with Zeluco's character, the distaste she had to him would not have been surprising, but she had not had sufficient opportunity of knowing him; she saw something in his manner indeed, and in the expression of his countenance, which she did not like; yet it might have been expected that the elegance of his person, and the splendour of his wealth, would have inclined her to get the better of this prejudice, as perhaps they would, had not her imagination been prepossessed in a manner which will appear singular.

Laura's father had a son by a former marriage, who

was now a captain of dragoons in the Prussian service. This gentleman's most intimate friend was the Baron Carlostein, a man of family and very considerable fortune. They served together under the great Frederic, in the short war concerning the Bavarian succession.

After one unfortunate skirmish, a small detachment which Carlostein commanded formed the rear of the retreating party, and defended a particular post with great obstinacy, that the main body might have time to make good their retreat: as he was falling back at last, his detachment was surrounded by a numerous party of Austrian hussars, and, notwithstanding a very steady resistance, would have been cut to pieces, or made prisoners, had not Captain Seidlits, at the head of a few dragoons, made a desperate charge, by which the hussars were dispersed, and Carlostein, with the survivors of his detachment, brought off.

This was the commencement of a very intimate friendship between these two officers. At the termination of the war, Captain Seidlits prevailed on his friend to pass a few days at a little villa belonging to his father in the neighbourhood of Berlin; Laura was then a child between ten and eleven years of age.—She had often heard her father, and other officers, mention Carlostein as a young man of the greatest hopes; she had heard many ladies talk of him as remarkably genteel and amiable. Her brother had written in terms of high admiration of Carlostein's conduct in the action above mentioned, and she had heard his letters read to the company at her father's table. When Laura understood, therefore, that the person whom she had heard so much applauded was coming to her father's house, she expected to see a hero. The appearance and manners of Carlostein did not belie her expectation: during the short stay which he made at the villa, he was treated by Colonel Seidlits and his lady with that distinguished hospitality

which it was natural they should pay to a man of his character and rank, the intimate friend of their son. What Laura had heard of this young officer, the respect paid him by her parents, the affectionate attachment of her brother, his own figure and elegant manners, tended to fire her fancy, and render him, in her mind, the first of human beings. He had received a wound with a sabre on one side of his brow, which reached beneath his temple : the scar was covered with a slip of black plaster, appearing peculiarly graceful in the child's eyes, and a confirmation of the heroic character of Carlöstein. Colonel Seidlits and his lady perceived Laura's admiration of their guest, and were amused with the earnest manner in which she sometimes looked at him, and the pleased attention with which she listened when he spoke.

The colonel one day observed her examining a print of Le Brun's picture of the family of Darius.—What has caught your fancy here? said he, coming behind, and tapping her on the shoulder. The child imagined that she saw a likeness to Carlöstein's in the countenance which Le Brun gives to Alexander.—Do you not think, replied she, that this face, pointing to Hephæstion, has a resemblance of my brother?

The colonel having looked attentively at the print, and observing the resemblance which *really* had attracted Laura's attention, fell a-laughing, and replied, No, my dear, I cannot say I do,—but I own I am somewhat surprised that the resemblance between *this* face, pointing to Alexander, and your friend Baron Carlöstein, seems entirely to have escaped so accurate an observer as you are.

The child seemed a little out of countenance; and when Colonel Seidlits recounted the circumstance to his lady, he added, I should be glad to know at what age a young lady begins to disguise her sentiments?—At the same age that young gentlemen begin to dis-

guise theirs, replied Madame de Seidlits; when they suspect, from the behaviour of those around, that there is something wrong or ridiculous in their sentiments. We first taught Laura, continued she, to admire the baron; and afterwards, by laughing at the child for the marks of admiration which she shows, we give her a notion that there is something ridiculous in it: of course she wishes to conceal what exposes her to railery. A boy would have done the same.

I imagine, not exactly in the same way, replied the colonel.

Carlostein went soon after to his estate in a distant part of the Prussian dominions; he afterwards passed some time in France; on his return to his own country, his duty as a soldier kept him with his regiment, and he had never after seen Laura, or thought of her more than as an agreeable child, the sister of his friend.

The impression which he made on *her* imagination was certainly stronger, and more permanent; although her parents considered this partiality of Laura's to Carlostein as

“ A violet in the youth of primy nature,
Forward, not permanent; sweet, but not lasting,
The perfume and suppliance of a minute*.”

Laura herself endeavoured to conceal it to prevent the railery to which it exposed her; yet it had some influence in making her reject the addresses of more than one lover before she left Germany; all of whom were thought advantageous matches, considering the smallness of her fortune. She found them to fall so far beneath the accomplished Carlostein, that she did not hesitate a moment. The same impression, though now considerably weakened by time, tended to make her view Zeluco with indifference, and often with

* Shakespeare.

dislike: so much did he fall below that model of which she still carried the traces in her memory. In this preference, Laura proved that her judgement was not directed by external appearance; for, in the general opinion, Zeluco would have passed for a handsomer man than Carlostein.

CHAPTER XXIX.

*“ Non te Penelopen difficilem procis
Tyrchenus genuit parens.”*

HORAT.

HOWEVER much Zeluco was mortified and piqued at the indifference of Laura, his passion for her rather seemed to augment than to cool. As the house where he had the most convenient opportunities of meeting with her was that of Signora Sporza, he thought it indispensably necessary to keep that lady in constant good-humour with him: with this view he cultivated her favour with the most respectful assiduity. He attempted in vain, however, to prevail on her to accept of any present of value: she always declined his offers with good-humour and gaiety, saying, Nobody in whom she was particularly interested was at that time in *prison for debt*; but when any such case occurred, she would apply to him for a ring or snuff-box proper for their relief. Zeluco considered all this as mere affectation and grimace, and was convinced that she would, in due time, unfold the particular mode in which she wished to be indemnified; for he took it for granted, that indemnified in one shape or other she intended to be, for whatever civility she showed, or whatever trouble she took on his account. In the mean time, he plainly perceived that she would not stoop to be directly assisting to his views on Laura.—He imagined she had come to a resolution to observe

a neutrality, till such time at least as she could exact a very large subsidy for acting as an auxiliary. But in these conjectures he had entirely mistaken the character of the lady.

Bred in a country where a very free system of gallantry prevails, Signora Sporza certainly did not view it in the light that a virtuous woman ought. In her youth, she had been a coquette, and she retained something of that appearance at an age when coquetry is less tolerable; which gave a handle to her enemies to insinuate that she had carried matters beyond the point at which simple coquetry is supposed to stop; this, however, they were never able to ascertain;—and as those who were most industrious to spread the insinuation, were, with better grounds, thought to be in that predicament themselves, their malice had the less effect. Her constant good-humour, humane disposition, and easy manners, rendered her highly agreeable to society in general; and she had lived on the best terms with her husband, undisturbed with jealousy, notwithstanding his being an Italian.

Her talent for raillery she managed with such address, as to render it entertaining in general, without being offensive in particular. Mere dull downright scandal, which had no object but the gratification of malice, she detested, and considered the circulation of every story to the disadvantage of others, as inexcusable, even although founded in truth. When a connexion of a particular kind subsisted between two people of different sexes, nobody was more quick than Signora Sporza in perceiving it; yet she was never heard to give the least hint of her knowledge or suspicion of such an intrigue. If the parties met openly at her assemblies, she received them with her usual politeness; if either of them made her acquainted with their intimacy, she would not suffer them to visit her afterwards. She never would be the confi-

dante of a love intrigue ; because accessories, she said, were as guilty as the principals, with far less temptation : besides, she added, as the loving couple generally quarrel afterwards, and sometimes go the length of hating each other, part of this hatred may extend to those who encouraged their connexion.

Another of this lady's maxims was, that nothing should ever be told concerning one friend of another, particularly to a husband of his wife, or to a wife of her husband, which would give them pain to know. If what is told is false, all the world agrees, that the tale-bearer has done a very ill thing ; and if it happens to be true, in Signora Sporza's opinion, a much worse ; for a malicious falsehood, said she, ceases to do harm, when the truth comes to be known, but the mischief attending a malicious truth is more durable. Jealousy, whether well or ill founded, she considered as the greatest plague of society ; a jealous husband or wife she thought the most odious of all odious animals, and as carefully to be excluded from good company as mad people or cut-throats. She had no scruple in declaring that, in her opinion, the man was devoid of principle who intrigued with any gentlewoman, however willing she might be, before such gentlewoman was provided with a husband, or at least within a very short time of being so : and she thought *that* man was very little better, who did not take due precautions to prevent his intercourse with a woman of reputation from becoming public, even although the lady was married.

As Signora Sporza had no favourable opinion of Zeluco from her first acquaintance with him, and even strongly suspected the nature of his views on Laura ; it will seem extraordinary that she did not communicate these suspicions to Laura, or to Madame de Seidlits, for both of whom her esteem and affection hourly increased :—the truth is, it was this very affection that prevented her. She expected to make Zeluco's at-

tachment to Laura, and his influence with the minister, of service to her friends in other schemes which she meditated for their benefit; but she saw plainly, from the avowed principles and undeviating conduct of both the mother and daughter, that on the slightest idea of his views on Laura they would renounce all connexion with Zeluco, and spurn at every advantage that could attend it. Having a very high opinion, therefore, of Laura's prudence, on which she relied much, and believing in her aversion to the man, on which she relied more, she permitted him quietly to proceed in his scheme, convinced however that he would be successful only in promoting hers.

There certainly was little delicacy in Signora Sporza's way of thinking on this and some other subjects; and as she was of a friendly benevolent disposition, and possessed some excellent qualities, it is to be regretted that they were intermingled with any of baser alloy.

Our only reason for describing men and women as animals of heterogeneous composition, made up of bad as well as good materials, is, that we have hitherto always found them so; but we shall be happy to delineate uniform and perfect characters as soon as we have the good fortune to meet their prototypes in nature. There is room to fear, however, that they are as difficult to find as they would be agreeable and easy to describe; and that the race of those perfect beings, incapable of weakness and invulnerable to vice, who are ever armed at all points, and cased in virtues as the knights of chivalry were in mail, has entirely failed, as well as that of those tremendous giants, void of every virtue and replete with every vice, who lived in the same ages:—till these opposite extremes, men entirely good or completely wicked, appear again, we must be contented with that mediocrity of character which prevails, and draw mankind as we find them, the best

subject to weaknesses, the worst imbued with some good quality.

In a character, such as that of the person whose story we have the unpleasant task of recording, there are, perhaps, fewer good qualities than in any other, because cruelty was become the basis of Zeluco's character, at least a total disregard to the feelings of his fellow-creatures, when any interest or gratification of his own was in question.

This disposition of the mind, we conceive, admits of fewer good qualities, and is connected with a greater number of bad, than any other of which human nature is susceptible.—Montaigne, indeed, has said, "*Nature a (ce crains-je), elle-même attaché à l'homme quelque instinct à l'inhumanité**." But it is to be hoped, that the instinct he mentions belongs only to devils, and that a *disinterested* pleasure in the sufferings of others exists not even in the most wicked of human breasts. It is sufficiently deplorable that any of mankind are capable of pursuing what they consider as their own interest, and sometimes interest of a very frivolous nature, at the expense of extreme misery to their fellow-creatures. The proofs, however, of this degree of cruelty need not be drawn from the stories of giants, and records of chivalry; they are frequently found in more authentic history, and may be adduced from the conduct of too many of the heroes and great men of antiquity; not to mention the great men of our own days, whose sentiments and conduct, however different from those of the former in every other respect, have a wonderful resemblance to their predecessors, in this article of insensibility and disregard of the misery of others.

* *Essais de Montaigne, livre xi. chap. 11.*

CHAPTER XXX.

A perfidious attempt.

As Zeluco now found more frequent opportunities than ever of being in company with Laura, he continued his assiduities with increased zeal, and strove by every means of insinuation with which he was acquainted to gain her good opinion: but with all the pains he took and the art he used, her behaviour to him never exceeded the bounds of common politeness, and sometimes a kind of politeness which savoured a little of dislike.

Although few men had less tenderness than Zeluco for the self-love of others, none could feel more exquisitely when their own was wounded; he perceived Laura's indifference with indignation, and would have endured it with still more impatience, had he not found a balsam to alleviate the smart in the very root from whence it sprang. His vanity, while it made him feel the indifference of Laura, persuaded him that she was deficient in penetration, and did not relish the graces with which he thought himself adorned, as women of taste usually did. "*L'amour propre*," as Rochefoucault finely observes, "*empêche bien que celui qui nous flatte soit jamais celui qui nous flatte le plus.*" It might be thought that this mean opinion of Laura's taste would tend to diminish the force of his attachment to her; but we must remember that Zeluco's love was entirely sensual: he thought Laura's face the most beautiful, and her person the most piquant, he had ever seen. The qualities of her mind he regarded not.

The attentive and complaisant manner in which Madame de Seidlits always behaved to him, convinced him that he enjoyed *her* good opinion; he perceived

also, that she had a taste for show and magnificence, and was a little out of countenance sometimes on account of the want of those superfluities which custom has rendered almost necessaries in a certain rank of life. On this weakness he founded an opinion, that, with proper management, she might be gradually brought to wink at the connexion he wished to form with her daughter; a piece of complaisance, however shocking, which he had already met with in more than one instance.

He resolved therefore to begin his horrid design by fixing an obligation of an important nature on her, unknown both to her daughter and Signora Sporza: he waited on her one forenoon, when he knew the two other ladies were abroad; and precluding what he had to propose with many apologies, he said, that the high esteem he had for, and the sincere concern he took in her interest, had prompted him to make some inquiry into her circumstances; and that he was much grieved to find they were so ill-proportioned to her merit. As your husband, continued he, belonged to another service, I find it will be difficult to have this remedied by the bounty of this court; but you will oblige me infinitely (especially if you will agree to keep it a secret from every other person without exception), by permitting me to be your banker for an annual sum, till such time at least as your own affairs are better arranged. So saying, he presented her with a note of very considerable value.

The blood mounted into Madame de Seidlits's face at this proposal, and she immediately replied, with an air of surprise and displeasure, that she was sorry he had taken the trouble of making an inquiry of such a nature; that he had received an erroneous account of her affairs, which were not in a situation to justify her in accepting assistance of that kind from any per-

son ; but more particularly from one with whom she had no natural connexion. She added, that she should always have a proper sense of the obligation which, unexpected and unsolicited on her part, he had already conferred on her ; but she was determined to be exceedingly cautious of permitting a load to be increased which she had already felt too heavy for her to bear without great uneasiness. Having said this, she withdrew, throwing such a look at Zeluco as his conscious heart interpreted into a suspicion of his base design. He remained some time fixed to the spot, and then returned to his own house in much disturbance of mind.

He was now convinced that he had made a false estimate of the character of Madame de Seidlits ; that he had betrayed his scheme on her daughter, and dreaded that he should be deprived of the pleasure of visiting her any more, without which he felt he could enjoy little comfort or repose.

After much reflection, and after forming and rejecting various plans to remove the effects of this rash step, and reinstate himself in the good opinion of Madame de Seidlits, he at length sent her the following letter :

“ I AM much afraid, my dear madam, that I have offended your delicacy by my proposal this morning, which I am now convinced was made in too abrupt a manner, owing to my having received some vexatious news of a domestic nature, which will oblige me to embark for Messina within a few days. Having little expectation of returning to Naples, I grasped too eagerly at the happiness of serving a person I so highly esteem, and whom there is reason to fear I shall never see again. I hope you will forgive my precipitate zeal ; for, however just your reasons may be for rejecting the satisfaction aimed at, I hope you will never

have any for denying some share of your regard to him who is, with the highest esteem, and the warmest prayers for your happiness,

“ Madam,
 “ Your most obedient
 “ and most humble servant,
 “ ZELUCO.”

Although Madame de Seidlits's pride had been alarmed by Zeluco's proposal, she had no suspicion that it was dictated by any base motive; and therefore she was not without uneasiness, even before receiving this letter, lest she had behaved with too much loftiness to a well-meaning and friendly man. She became entirely of this opinion the moment she perused the letter; her candid mind was filled with remorse for her own behaviour, and sorrow for his threatened departure.

She directly sent him a letter, apologizing for her behaviour, and entreated him not to leave Naples without seeing her once more.

CHAPTER XXXI.

“ — *Tamen ad mores natura recurrit
 Damnatos, ſæva et mutari nescia.*—”

Juv. Sat. xiii. 239.

WHEN Signora Sporza and Laura returned from their airing, Madame de Seidlits informed them, that Zeluco had paid her a visit, and that he intended to leave Naples. She mentioned this in such a manner that they naturally thought the sole design of his visit had been to acquaint her with his sudden departure; this she did to prevent any inquiry concerning the real

motive of his visit, which, in compliance with Zeluco's request, she intended to conceal.

Signora Sporza was greatly surprised at Zeluco's sudden resolution: it appeared unaccountable to her, who was convinced his affections centered at Naples, and did not believe that any business would appear of sufficient importance in the eyes of a man of his character and fortune, to draw him from the place where his affections were fixed.

Laura was uneasy because she saw her mother so; for, independent of that circumstance, she would have been pleased with the departure of a man whose company was disagreeable to her.

The reader needs not be informed that Zeluco had no intention of leaving Naples, and that the story of vexatious news, which obliged him to embark for Sicily, was an invention, calculated to remove all suspicion of his real plan from the mind of Madame de Seidlits, and to convince her, that his proposal could be dictated by pure benevolence alone; for if, previous to making it, he had already formed the resolution of quitting Italy, with no view of returning for several years, and little chance of ever seeing her or her daughter again, the offer must have been well intended, whether she thought it became her to accept it or not.

But it was necessary that he should seem in earnest before he sent the letter to Madame de Seidlits; therefore he announced his intention to the domestics of his own family, ordered several things to be prepared and packed up, called in his debts, ordered inquiry to be made about a proper vessel for transporting him and his suite. In short, he acted his part so well, that none of his acquaintance, except Signora Sporza, had any doubts of his intention.

When Zeluco received Madame de Seidlits's answer to his letter, he began to resume his old opinions:

his mind, habituated to hypocrisy and deceit, could not enter into the natural movements of an honest heart, apprehensive of having acted ungenerously, and throbbing with eagerness to make reparation, he imagined her answer displayed an inclination to accept of his offer, and thought her stately behaviour had been assumed on purpose to enhance the value of her future acquiescence, or perhaps was a temporary triumph, with which the good lady chose to indulge her vanity; but having been driven to immediate decision by the unexpected news of his departure, she was now ready to capitulate on reasonable terms.

He did not continue long in this way of thinking; for when he waited on her the following day, and Madame de Seidlits having repeated her apology for the coolness of her behaviour at their last interview, he began to hint, though in a distant way, at a renewal of his former proposition; but was immediately stopt short, by her rejecting it with equal firmness, though with less anger than at first. She added, in the most obliging manner, that she had taken the liberty of requesting to see him; because she could not bear the thoughts of his leaving Naples after such a cold interview as their last, without expressing that sense of gratitude which she should ever retain for his goodness to her on a late occasion, and without wishing him a good voyage.

There was so much virtuous dignity and unaffected candour and benevolence in the whole of her discourse and deportment, as overawed his insidious tongue, and checked every presumptuous hope that began to spring up in his breast.

At his taking leave, Madame de Seidlits, with some degree of solemnity and fervour said, Heaven direct you, sir, wherever you go, and bless you with all the prosperity and success which your disinterested conduct and benevolent character deserve! The con-

science of Zeluco smote him at this petition, and he felt a pang sharp as the stiletto of the Portuguese.

Disappointed, humbled, and self-condemned, in broken accents, and with a faltering tongue, he was withdrawing, without having the assurance once to pronounce the name of Laura, when Signora Sporza and that young lady entered the room: even then he was unable to recover himself so far as to address them in his usual manner; after bowing to each, without uttering a word, he hurried out of the room.

His agitation spoke more powerfully in his favour with Madame de Seidlits, than he could himself have done had he been ever so cool and recollected; that confusion which proceeded from disappointment, perfidy, and conscious guilt, she imputed to the sensibility of a benevolent heart, on being separated from friends, without the hope of seeing them again for a long time.

Laura, without being so fully convinced of its justice, acquiesced in the construction of her mother.

Signora Sporza could not account in a satisfactory manner for the behaviour of Zeluco; but she was too much convinced of the selfishness of his disposition, to believe that he could be much affected with anything unconnected with his own personal interest or pleasure.

He was under the necessity of continuing the preparations for his departure for some days; but on the arrival of the first vessel from Sicily, he pretended that he had received letters, informing him that the business which required his presence was happily and unexpectedly terminated; so that his voyage was no longer necessary.—This news he allowed to reach the ladies in the common course of circulation, fearing that their delicacy might be hurt by his sending a formal message to acquaint them with it; as that would imply his thinking his motions of more importance to

them, than they might incline to have believed: but on his waiting on them a few day after, he was highly pleased when Madame de Seidlits chid him for omitting to send her a piece of intelligence which gave her much pleasure. He looked at Laura, in hopes of her showing marks of agreeing with her mother; but as she felt differently, she seemed as if she had not heard what her mother had said. Signora Sporza, looking slyly at Zeluco, said, I am less surprised than my friend, having all along had a prepossession that something would occur to prevent this voyage.

CHAPTER XXXII.

The importance of a man to himself.

ZELUCO was now on a better footing than ever with Madame de Seidlits, visited her more frequently, and became more and more enamoured of her daughter. The natural gracefulness of her manner, the lively good sense of her conversation, and the winning sweetness of her temper, would have attracted the admiration of every man of sentiment, although these qualities had been connected with a face and person of the common kind. Even in the eyes of Zeluco, sunk as he was in sensuality and debased by vice, the filial affection, the graceful modesty, and benevolent heart of this amiable young woman, gave additional poignancy to those external beauties which hitherto he had esteemed as all that is valuable in woman.

From the observations which Zeluco had made on the conduct of mankind, confirmed by what passed within his own breast, his opinion was, that virtue was mere varnish and pretext; and whatever apparent disinterestedness, generosity, or self-denial, there were in the conduct of any person, that if the whole

could be chemically analysed and reduced to their original elements, self-interest would be found at the bottom of the crucible: he was, besides, of a suspicious temper, and convinced that for the most of their actions mankind have secret reasons very different from the ostensible. If, therefore, the motive announced was of a generous or disinterested nature, he never believed it to be the real one, but turned his eyes in search of a motive where self-interest predominated.

In the present case, not being able to conjecture any advantage that could accrue to Laura from behaving with so much reserve to him (as to disliking him, he thought that impossible), nor any benefit which Madame de Seidlits could derive from rejecting his proposal, especially as he had annexed no condition to it; he laboured to discover what could impel two women who were not devoid of common sense to act in such an irrational manner. And after much deliberate reflection, he at length imputed the whole of their conduct to a scheme concerted between the mother and daughter, with the aid of Signora Sporza, to take advantage of his passion for Laura, and, by assumed dignity in the one and reserve in the other, to allure him into a marriage.

Replete with this notion, he determined to be more sparing in his attentions to Laura, to pay his court with ostentatious assiduity to a young lady of family and considerable beauty then at Naples; and by alarming Madame de Seidlits and Laura with jealousy, and the fear of losing him for ever, induce them both to more complaisance.

He acted the part he intended so well, that within a short time it was generally believed at Naples that a treaty of marriage was on foot between Zeluco and the young lady in question; and he took particular care that Signora Sporza and her two friends should

have more reason than others to be convinced of the truth of this report.

In requital for the pains he gave himself in his new assumed character, he had the vexation to perceive, that those of all his acquaintance who took the least interest in his behaviour and in the news he had circulated, were precisely the persons he wished to affect the most; that Madame de Seidlits and Signora Sporza heard and believed it with the most perfect indifference; and if there was any alteration observable in the behaviour of Laura, it was that she seemed a little gayer than formerly.

Finding that a stratagem which he imagined would have greatly disconcerted the supposed scheme of the ladies, and produced something favourable to his own views, had entirely failed, he now thought proper to relax in his assiduities to the young lady in question, and renew them to her whom, for some time, he seemed to have abandoned.

He was the more eager to return to his former society at Signora Sporza's, as he understood that Mr. N——, the English gentleman formerly mentioned, spent a great deal of his time with her, and in the company of Madame de Seidlits and Laura. He could hardly indeed allow himself to imagine that any woman who had eyes could prefer this Englishman to himself; yet, recollecting that the tastes of women are wonderfully capricious, he felt some sensations of jealousy on hearing of the visits of Mr. N——. Having prepared a plausible story to account for his late absence, and what he thought a mighty well-turned apology, he again waited on Madame de Seidlits. He had no opportunity, however, of pronouncing his apology; for as no notice had been taken by Laura or her relations of his retreat, the same inattention was paid to his return. He was received as if he had passed the preceding evening with them; Signora

Sporza saying, just as he was about to make his apology,—This is lucky enough, as N—— cannot be with us; we were in want of somebody to form our party.—Pray, Signor, draw a card.

Baffled in all his plans of seduction, his usual amusements becoming insipid, and his former pleasures nauseous, feeling himself incapable of any enjoyment out of the company of Laura, the obdurate and haughty spirit of Zeluco was obliged to relinquish every idea of obtaining the object of his wishes by what he called conquest, and to think of proposing articles of union.

This last recourse was the more mortifying to him, as it was a favourite maxim of his, that no man in his senses would ever think of entering into the state of matrimony, but by the door of wealth or ambition; yet impelled by desires which he could not gratify on other terms, he now found himself obliged to sue for admission into that state without the attractions of either wealth or ambition.

After a long internal struggle, he at last waited on the mother of Laura, and without much ceremony or circumlocution, for he had not the least doubt of success, he acquainted her with his honourable intentions respecting her daughter. Few things could have been more agreeable to Madame de Seidlits than such a proposal.

During the first violence of her grief and dejection of spirits on her husband's death, she felt the diminution of her fortune as an inconsiderable evil after so great a misfortune; but now that the sharpness of her sorrow was somewhat blunted by time, she began to be more sensible of the inconveniences and mortifications attendant on narrow circumstances.

Her husband, like most Germans, was fond of show, and had encouraged his wife in a more expensive style

of life than he could well afford. She herself, in other respects of a very amiable character, was not without vanity; she was desirous that her house, furniture, and equipage, should not only be genteel but splendid. It is not surprising, therefore, that the minute œconomy which was absolutely necessary in her present circumstances should be highly disagreeable to her, even on her own account, but still more so on account of her fondness for Laura, whom she eagerly wished to see possessed of all the elegancies of life, and for whose smallest pleasure she was ever ready to sacrifice any gratification of her own; indeed, all her own gratifications, even those of her vanity, were more sensibly enjoyed by her in the person of her daughter than in her own.

As Madame de Seidlits foresaw that Laura's marriage with Zeluco would probably be accompanied with many conveniences to herself, would put her beloved daughter into that state of affluence and splendour which so well became her, and as Zeluco was a man of whom she had a good opinion, she heartily rejoiced at the proposal which he made. Having therefore in polite terms thanked him for his good opinion of her daughter, she said she would inform her of his proposals, and then leave the matter to her own decision.

That is all I wish, madam, said Zeluco.

For, continued Madame de Seidlits, Laura's dutiful behaviour gives her a claim to the utmost indulgence, and her excellent understanding renders it improper for me *strongly* to influence, far less to control her on such an occasion.

Control! repeated Zeluco; Have you reason to think your daughter's affections are already engaged?

I know they are not, said Madame de Seidlits; had that been the case, I should have begun by telling you so.

Then, madam, said Zeluco, it is to be hoped there will be no need of control.

Madame de Seidlits was not so sure of Laura's agreeing to Zeluco's proposal as he seemed to be, and therefore had spoken in doubtful terms, which he thought unnecessary, and a little ridiculous.

Having obtained leave to make his proposals to Laura herself, he withdrew, fully convinced that they would be most acceptable; but somewhat abashed, that, to arrive at the wished-for goal, he was under the necessity of taking the detested road to matrimony.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

Maternal affection.—Filial duty.

THAT very evening Madame de Seidlits took occasion to mention Zeluco to Laura, in terms agreeable to the good opinion she had formed of him, and the gratitude which she felt for the good office he had done her; and then added, She was convinced he would make a good husband.

Perhaps he might, said Laura, to a woman who loved him.

A man of generosity and worth must command the esteem of a virtuous woman, answered Madame de Seidlits; and that, my dear, is often a stronger pledge of happiness in the married state, than the fantastical notions some women form of love.

Alarmed at the significant manner with which Madame de Seidlits pronounced this,—Laura, looking earnestly at her mother, cried, Heavens! what does this mean?—has Signor Zeluco—sure he cannot think—

Yes, Laura, said Madame de Seidlits, he thinks of

you, and you only;—and this day he offered to make you mistress of his hand and fortune.

The blood immediately forsook Laura's face; she became as pale as snow, and seemed ready to faint.

My dearest child, exclaimed Madame de Seidlits; what is the matter?

Oh! mother, said Laura, in a feeble voice, will you give me to a man I cannot love?—will you order your Laura—?

How can you talk so, child, said the mother?—when did I order you?

Alas! said Laura, is not every indication of your wishes obeyed as an order by me?

For which reason, replied Madame de Seidlits, I have no wishes but those which you can with pleasure obey.

It has been the happiness of my life, said Laura, to obey,—to anticipate your wishes, when it was in my power; But can you wish me married to a man whom I cannot love? or would you make such a requital to the person who has obliged you, as to give him a wife without fortune, and without the least affection, without even—

For Heaven's sake, my dear, do not talk in that manner, interrupted Madame de Seidlits; you well know, I can desire nothing but what is for your good; but I beg you may hear me calmly, your decision on this matter is of great importance. You must be sensible of the sad reverse of fortune which has befallen you by the death of your father; his rising prospects in the army, his generous spirit, and above all his love for us both, have accustomed you to a style of life very different from what our present circumstances can support. In the mean while, Signor Zeluco, a man of a friendly and benevolent character, and of a vast fortune, offers you his hand, and is ready to rescue you from all the inconveniences of poverty, and to place

you in a state of affluence which you never before experienced. But you say, you do not love him.—Well, if that continues to be the case, there is no more to be said; I shall never desire you to give your hand to a man whom you cannot love;—but I fear, my dear, you are misled by false and romantic notions on that head.

Is there any thing unreasonable or romantic, said Laura, in refusing my hand to a man who in no degree interests my heart? But you have alluded to the inconveniences of our present confined circumstances,—as affecting *me* in a more *particular* manner. I know not, continued Laura, if I understood my mother right?

The narrowness of our circumstances are a source of unhappiness to me *on your account only*, replied Madame de Seidlits.

From this moment then, my dear madam, let that source be dried up, said Laura; for our present circumstances, confined as they are, give me no uneasiness: and be assured, that if you can bear them cheerfully, all the inconveniences attending them are bliss to me, in comparison with affluence as the wife of Zeluco,

Well, my dearest girl, I have done; you have said enough, and more than enough;—you shall never again hear him mentioned as a lover by me.

My dear mother, cried Laura, with tears of affection, how can I requite you for this goodness?

By following the dictates of your own virtuous heart, said Madame de Seidlits; be you happy, my dear child, and I am contented.

I *am* happy! exclaimed Laura, throwing her arms around her mother's neck; How can I be but happy while I am blessed with such a parent?

Madame de Seidlits then informed her daughter, that Zeluco had desired to have an audience of her by

himself, in which he would make his proposals; which she had agreed to.

Laura begged with earnestness that her mother would take on herself the office of acquainting Zeluco with her determined sentiments. But Madame de Seidlits urged her promise, and that Zeluco might consider himself as disrespectfully used; adding, with a smile, you must allow me, my dear, to carry *one* point in this negotiation. Laura acquiesced, and next morning mustered up all her resolution for a scene which she thought on with a good deal of uneasiness.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

“ Si on croit aimer sa maitresse pour l’amour d’elle on est bien trompé.”

ROCHEFOUCAULT.

ZELUCO called at Madame de Seidlits’s the day following: after he had waited a few minutes alone, Laura entered the room pale and in evident emotion, without looking him in the face, pointed to a chair, and desired him to be seated, placing herself at the same time at a respectful distance.

No doubt, said he, your mother has informed you, madam, of the sentiments with which your beauty and merit have inspired me, and with the purport of this visit.

She has, sir, said Laura, and I am sensible of the honour your good opinion does me; the obligation you conferred on my mother demands, and has my warmest gratitude;—but—

Zeluco, construing Laura’s confusion in his own favour, stepped across the room, seized her shrinking hand, and exclaimed, Talk not of gratitude for trifles, my whole fortune is now at your disposal; and you

will, I hope, name an early day that the rites of the church may unite us for ever.

The security implied in this abrupt address offended the delicacy and roused the spirits of Laura: she disengaged her hand, and throwing an indignant look at Zeluco, said, Carry your fortune, sir, to some woman more desirous and more deserving of it; I have claim to share it with you on neither account.

Zeluco, surprised and piqued at her manner, answered, I am sorry you seem offended, madam; I hope there is nothing in the proposal I have made to hurt your pride.

Without giving grounds for an accusation of pride, replied Laura, I may be surprised at being pressed to fix a day for a purpose I never agreed to, and never shall.

I understood, madam, that your mother had been so obliging as to explain my sentiments and plead my cause; having her approbation, I flattered myself I should have yours, and that you would be willing to abridge unnecessary delay.

My mother, sir, has a warm and grateful heart, and is penetrated with a sense of your services on a late occasion; I hope I also have becoming sentiments on that head, of which the best proof I can give, is by assuring you at once, that it is not in my power to repay the partiality you express for me in the manner you desire. I hope, therefore, you will here terminate a pursuit which must be vain, and is so little worth your while.

I was informed, madam, said Zeluco, that your heart was disengaged.

You were informed rightly, said Laura.

What then are your *objections* to me? said he.

Since the reasons which determine me, said Laura, seem valid to those to whom I think myself account-

able, I must be excused from an explanation to any other person.

The possibility of his honourable proposals being rejected, had never once entered into the contemplation of Zeluco; on the contrary, he was convinced that all her former reserve was assumed for no other purpose but to allure him to this point; on finding them refused in so decided a manner, his heart swelled with anger, which he could with difficulty suppress.

Laura, perceiving the struggle, added, I do not mean to offend you, sir; but I think it my duty, on such an occasion, to assure you, that my determination is unalterable. I sincerely wish you happiness with a more deserving woman.

You are infinitely obliging, madam, said he, his eyes flashing with rage.

I must beg to be excused from attending you any longer, said she, retiring with some degree of precipitation.

She was no sooner gone, than Zeluco struck his clenched fist twice, with frantic violence, on his forehead, and rushed out of the house, before Madame de Seidlits, who meant to have waited on him, had time to reach the room.

The grateful heart of this well-disposed lady was hurt when she understood that Zeluco had left her house in so much displeasure; and even after hearing her daughter's account of the scene which had passed between them, she thought that Laura ought to have softened her refusal, and borne more calmly those signs of vexation and disappointment which Zeluco had displayed; which, after all, my dear, added Madame de Seidlits, are proofs of his love.

They might have been mistaken for marks of hatred, said Laura, and could not have been more

disagreeable to me had I known them to be really such.

When Zeluco returned to his own house, he poured out a thousand execrations against the sex in general, and the pride and folly of Laura in particular; abused his servants, and displayed many of those ridiculous extravagances which wounded vanity and disappointment prompt men of peevish and passionate tempers to exhibit. But after having sworn, raged, stamped, bounced and blasphemed for two hours together, he recollected at last, what was very obvious from the first, that these extravagances would not bring him nearer his object. The fermentation excited by this unexpected disappointment settled in a gloomy reserve, during which he avoided society, and passed great part of his time in meditating some scheme for getting Laura into his power, that he might at once satisfy his desires and his revenge.

He once thought of causing her to be seized, forced aboard a vessel, and of passing over with her to Tunis; and he had some conversation with a bold enterprising fellow, who commanded a trading vessel, then at Naples, was well acquainted with the Barbary coast, and had lived a considerable time at Tunis: this man, Zeluco had first become acquainted with at Palermo, and had taken great pleasure in listening to his adventures. He sent for him on the present occasion, and stating a case from which the seaman could not guess at the scheme he meditated, he sounded him with respect to the practicability of some such plan.

But while his mind was agitated with this villainous project, he occasionally visited Madame de Seidlits, who, by the complacency of her behaviour to him, endeavoured, as much as lay in her power, to compensate for that of Laura, which she could not help thinking had been too harsh to a person who

had conducted himself in so obliging a manner to them both. And she made no scruple of declaring to him, that she would have been better pleased that Laura had listened more favourably to his suit; which possibly might be the case at some future period. She advised him however not to urge her further at present; adding, that she should acquaint him, as soon as she perceived any change in the sentiments of Laura in his favour.

This discourse of Madame de Seidlits tended to turn the mind of Zeluco from the mad and vindictive projects with which it was occupied, the difficulties and danger of which also became more apparent to himself as he cooled.

But still feeling himself in an awkward and mortified situation, and unable to suppress the over-boilings of wrath and indignation at the sight of Laura, he determined on making another tour through Italy, and perhaps through France, in the hopes that a variety of objects would dissipate his vexation from the constant contemplation of one. When he arrived at Rome, he endeavoured to extinguish a passion which gave him unremitting pain, by plunging into that current of dissipation and debauchery from which he had of late abstained. This expedient had no better effect than his rage, execrations, and blasphemy had formerly produced. Invited to every splendid assembly and magnificent entertainment, indulging every gratification of sense, he *seemed* to be passing his days in joy, and his nights in pleasure; but was in reality the victim of chagrin and of disgust. His passion appeared to gain fresh force from the efforts made to subdue it; and the lovely form of the virtuous Laura, ever present in his mind, obscured even in his vitiated imagination all the allurements of those meretricious charms by which he endeavoured to efface it.

Unable to pursue his original plan, or to support a

longer absence from Laura, after pouring out a fresh torrent of execrations against her, he sent an apology to the Cardinal B——, with whom he was engaged to dine, ordered post-horses, and returned to Naples with the rapidity of a courier.

Madame de Seidlits received him with her usual politeness, but gave no hint of any change of sentiment on the part of Laura. He had the additional mortification, in a short time, to find, that though the mother seldom allowed herself to be denied when he called, yet it frequently happened that Laura did not appear during the whole of his visit.

While Zeluco's aim was seduction, all that he had expected from Signora Sporza was connivance; when he was afterwards driven to the resolution of making proposals of marriage, he considered her mediation as unnecessary, being fully convinced that his terms would be accepted as soon as made. Disappointed in both his plans, and excessively galled at Laura's not appearing when he visited her mother, he again had recourse to Signora Sporza, spoke highly of his admiration of her young friend, and ended a very pathetic harangue, by swearing, that his passion was, and had ever been, of the purest and most honourable nature.

Of what other could it be, Signor? said she. Could any body suspect you wicked enough to attempt an affair of gallantry with a woman of birth, who is unmarried?

He agreed that nothing could be more horrid than such an attempt; but that he had offered her his hand and fortune in the most respectful manner, which, to his great surprise and vexation, she had rejected.

It is natural, replied Signora Sporza, that you should be vexed on such an occasion; but there are so many instances of women refusing men who offer to marry them, that I see no reason for your being

greatly surprised. It was with difficulty that Zeluco could conceal the anger which glowed in his breast at this observation of Signora Sporza : after a short pause, however, he said, there was reason to fear that Laura had conceived a prejudice against him ; and entreated Signora Sporza, with whom he knew that Laura was quite confidential, to advise him what was the best method of removing this prejudice, and rendering her more favourable to his wishes.

I know of no qualities, replied Signora Sporza, by which a man has a greater chance of making a favourable impression on the mind of Laura, than by sincerity, good temper, and benevolence ; and were I to offer any advice, it would be, that you should rely on these, and these only.

Although Signora Sporza pronounced this with a serious countenance, the irony did not escape the observation of Zeluco : without seeming to take notice of it, he laid it up in his memory, and thanked her for her good counsel ; adding, that he was sorry to perceive that Laura seldom appeared when he visited Madame de Seidlits ; that probably this happened from her suspecting that he would renew his suit ; he begged that Signora Sporza would assure her, that he intended not to tease her with solicitations ; but that he earnestly wished for the happiness of being received by Madame de Seidlits on the general footing of a friend ; which he could not think was the case, when any of her family thought themselves obliged to be absent when he visited her.

Signora Sporza was so pleased with the apparent reasonableness and humility of this request, that the rancour and indignation which lurked in the breast of him who made it, entirely eluded her notice. She promised to acquaint her friends with what he had said ; and the following day sent Zeluco an invitation to meet them both at her house.

Madame de Seidlits joined with Signora Sporza in representing to Laura, that there was no necessity for her behaving with peculiar reserve to Zeluco after the declaration he had made; and she agreed to behave as they required, without arguing the point; although she would have been infinitely better pleased to have kept herself secluded from the company of Zeluco.

Zeluco now had frequent opportunities of being in company with the object of his wishes. He passed whole evenings with the mother and daughter, attentively studied the characters of both, and endeavoured to adapt his behaviour, and every sentiment he uttered, to what he thought would please them most; and notwithstanding the restraint to which this obliged him to submit, he had, on the whole, a sensation in their company more agreeable than in any other society however jovial or voluptuous. And had not his own character been intrinsically vicious, the continuation of the self-command he was thus obliged to assume, and the efforts he made to please, might, perhaps, have effected a favourable change in his own disposition: for nothing is more powerful in alluring the heart of man to virtue, than the society of amiable, accomplished, and virtuous women.

CHAPTER XXXV.

“——*Novas artes, nova pectore versat
Concilia.*——”

VIRG.

It was already remarked, that a portion of vanity formed part of the character of Madame de Seidlits, and sometimes obscured the lustre of her best qualities: she was apt too frequently in conversation to introduce the names of persons of very high rank, with whom her husband had been intimate in Germany,

and who had occasionally visited her when she resided in that country. She paid a minute attention to the ornaments of her person, and sometimes adopted a style of dress which suited her better at an earlier period of her life. Having been distinguished for beauty in her youth, of which there were some remains, she seemed more pleased with the share which she still retained, than sensible that far the larger portion was fled. This error in calculation many women fall into who have not the good qualities of Madame de Seidlits to compensate it; for her general deportment was genteel and elegant, her temper cheerful and complacent, her disposition benevolent and generous.

In Laura Zeluco observed a depth of reflection and solidity of understanding, which he thought incompatible with her sex, and is very uncommon at her age. This was joined to an elegant simplicity of manner, and a total want of affectation, equally uncommon; ever ready to remark, and fond of displaying, the accomplishments of others, she seemed insensible of those with which she herself was so eminently adorned.

No daughter ever had a stronger sense than Laura of what she owed to her mother; the affectionate care and solicitude with which Madame de Seidlits had watched over her infancy, and the unceasing attention she bestowed on her through life, were, in the mind of this young lady, obligations never to be repaid; and independent of all sense of obligation or filial duty, she had a high esteem for her mother's personal qualities. Neither gratitude nor esteem, however, prevented her seeing the weaknesses above enumerated: her clearness of sight was to her, in this particular, a source of uneasiness: and if she suspected any other person of being equally clear-sighted, she could not help feeling a temporary dislike to that

person. As often as any of the little failings above enumerated began to make their appearance, she endeavoured, with all the address in her power, to turn away the attention of the company, and with theirs, she would have been glad had it been in her power to have turned away her own.

But it was her happiness to reflect upon, and her delight to display, every graceful and good quality that belonged to her mother. Easy even to indifference about the common forms of respect when they regarded herself, she had a jealous sensibility of the smallest neglect or want of attention to her mother.

Zeluco remarked this peculiarity in the character of Laura; he saw that the compliments he sometimes ventured to pay to herself were always heard with indifference, and sometimes with disgust; while every just and well-founded compliment paid to her mother seemed to give pleasure to the daughter: declining, therefore, the beaten road of insinuation, he tried to gain access to the heart of the one by the praises he bestowed on the other.

It behoved him, however, to be on his guard, in what manner, and on what occasion, he risked his compliments; it was necessary they should seem at once just and *à-propos*. He once mistook his aim so far as to compliment Madame de Seidlits for a quality she certainly did *not* possess, and was instantly warned of his error by such a glance of indignation from the expressive eye of Laura, as prevented his ever repeating it.

But as often as, on proper occasions, he remarked with justice and delicacy on the good and amiable qualities that *really* belonged to Madame de Seidlits, which he frequently did with equal penetration and address, it was evident that Laura listened with looks of more complacency than she ever displayed when

he spoke on any other subject. He acquired by study and use such a masterly manner of dwelling on this favourite theme, that Laura's aversion began to diminish; and she could not help feeling sentiments of approbation and good-will to the person who furnished her with so sweet a source of enjoyment.

This alteration in the sentiments of Laura was observed with more pleasure by her mother than by Signora Sporza, whose esteem for Laura and her dislike of Zeluco had increased with her acquaintance with both. Her dislike of the latter, however, did not proceed entirely from her own penetration; she had received such an account of him from a female correspondent at Palermo, as confirmed and greatly augmented her original ill opinion, and made her averse to the idea of his ever becoming the husband of her young friend, notwithstanding the temptation in point of fortune for such an alliance. But being convinced that her mentioning her sentiments on this subject to the mother or daughter, would prevent their ever again having any connection with Zeluco, she therefore was silent; at the same time determined, if it should be necessary, to speak in sufficient time.

But although Signora Sporza concealed from Madame de Seidlits and her daughter the opinion she had of Zeluco, her real sentiments were detected by the jealous and penetrating eyes of the man himself. There is perhaps no sentiment which it is so difficult to conceal from the person who is the object of it, as violent hatred: a moderate adept in the art of dissimulation may impose on those for whom he feels no esteem, or whom he even holds in contempt; and, if he has an interest in it, may persuade them that he has a high respect or even veneration for them; this, in some measure, accounts for so many people of the highest rank being ignorant of the true rate at which

they are estimated. For the indications of contempt are easily restrained, and those of admiration as easily assumed; but it requires the powers of a finished hypocrite to hide hatred or aversion. Such strong feelings it is difficult to control, and prevent their discovering themselves by some involuntary appearance in the countenance or manner. It is not surprising, therefore, that Zeluco became fully convinced that Signora Sporza had a very unfavourable opinion of him, and was averse to his ever succeeding with Laura. The rancour which gathered in his breast on this discovery was of the most deadly kind; but he endeavoured to hide it till he should find a proper occasion of giving it vent; and being, notwithstanding her sex, a better dissembler than Signora Sporza, he for a long time succeeded.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

“ Full oft by holy feet our ground was trod,
 Of clerks good plenty here you mote espy.
 A litle, round, fat, oily man of God,
 Was one I chiefly mark'd among the fry :
 He had a roguish twinkle in his eye,
 And shone all glittering with ungodly dew,
 If a tight damsel chaunc'd to trippen by ;
 Which when observ'd, he shrunk into his mew,
 And straight would recollect his piey anew. ”

THOMSON.

ALTHOUGH Zeluco perceived with pleasure the change which had taken place in Laura's behaviour to him, he did not choose to rely entirely on his own address; but as he now believed he had no aid to expect from Signora Sporza, he resolved to seek other allies, and even attempted to draw them from the church itself,

a quarter in which one would think he had little interest.

Father Mulo was an ecclesiastic more remarkable for the rigidity of his manners and opinions than the depth of his intellects.—Father Pedro was a monk of a different order, indulgent in his disposition, agreeable in conversation, naturally shrewd, and what piety he possessed was far from being of a morose kind. He had adopted the ecclesiastical profession from necessity not inclination, and he endeavoured to assume an air of gravity and self-denial, which was equally discordant with the turn of his mind, the rotundity of his person, and to his rosy complexion, all of which announced him *Epicuri de grege porcus*. The warmth of father Pedro's constitution had formerly drawn him into some scrapes from which it required all his address to disengage himself, and rendered him exceedingly cautious ever after. He had behaved with peculiar circumspection ever since he had been at Naples: and being a man of more understanding than most of his brethren, he was chosen by Signora Sporza as her father confessor, and through her recommendation he now acted in the same capacity to her two friends, in preference to Father Mulo, who was their relation. In a short time, Father Pedro, whose manners were gentle and insinuating, gained the entire confidence of Madame de Seidlits, and was rather well thought of by her daughter. Father Mulo was by no means pleased with the choice his relations had made; yet as they behaved to him in all other respects with much deference and attention, no open breach took place between the father and any of them on this account.

Zeluco having informed himself of the character of those two monks, and knowing their connexion with Madame de Seidlits, he thought it might be of importance to gain them to his interest.

He began with Father Pedro, whose favour he endeavoured to acquire by all the address and powers of insinuation he was master of, setting out by choosing him for his ghostly father; and to the gentle penance which he enjoined for the venial faults which Zeluco thought it expedient to confess, he frequently imposed upon himself a mulct in money, which he delivered into the hands of the father, to be applied to what ever pious use he thought proper.

This behaviour on the part of Zeluco gave great satisfaction to Father Pedro, who not only received his visits with pleasure at his convent, but more frequently waited upon him at Zeluco's house.

After a pretty free repast, during which the father displayed much good-humour and jovialness, Zeluco, seizing what he thought a lucky moment, informed him of his passion for Laura

This ghostly father assuredly had never imagined that the sudden veneration which Zeluco professed for him, proceeded either from an admiration of his character or countenance; on the contrary, he had all along suspected its real source. He was not a man of very great delicacy of sentiment, and certainly was not troubled with prejudices of a superstitious nature; yet there were occasions on which he thought it expedient to affect as much terror for the horns of Satan as his brother Mulo was really impressed with. Zeluco had no sooner mentioned his passion for Laura, than the monk started as if a culverin had unexpectedly exploded at his ear, displaying as much astonishment and horror in his countenance as if the devil had appeared before him in full uniform, with his cloven feet, longest tail, and largest pair of horns.

What is the matter with you, my good father? said Zeluco; do you perceive any thing unnatural or extraordinary in my desiring to be united in holy wedlock with a virtuous and beautiful young lady?

The father, although he had long perceived Zelucó's fondness for Laura, had never heard of his proposing marriage to her, nor had he any idea that such was his intention. When Zelucó mentioned his love, the father took it for granted that he was about to request his aid on a different system; but finding that he really intended marriage, the monk began to imagine that he had played off his pantomime a little inadvertently, and was at a loss how to give a plausible account of his own affected surprise: he endeavoured to colour it, however, as well as he could, by saying, that as his business with Zelucó was of a spiritual nature, he could not help being very much surprised at the mention of a thing so different from what he was accustomed to have any concern in.

I do humbly hope, my worthy father, said Zelucó, that you will think you have a natural concern in this, as I can assure you my happiness not only in this world, but very possibly in the next, depends on my being able to prevail on this young lady to accept of my hand; for my heart is so fixed upon her, that I do not know what desperate measures I may be driven to, if she continues obstinately to refuse me.

The monk seemed to soften by degrees. Zelucó gave him a full account of the proposals he had made, the settlements he had offered, Laura's unaccountable obstinacy; concluding by informing the monk, that he had laid apart a sum of money which, in case of success in his honourable proposals, he would request the father to accept, and appropriate to whatever pious or useful purpose he thought most expedient; but on this express condition, that it should remain an everlasting secret to all the rest of the world; Because, added he, an ostentatious display of such donations destroys, in my opinion, any little merit there may be in making them.

The father agreed to this last condition with some

seeming difficulty, praised Zeluco's modesty and charitable disposition, and finally assured him of all the assistance in his power. In the first place, said he, I will use my influence out of friendship to you: secondly, from the regard I have for Madame de Seidlits and the young lady herself, who so perversely opposes her own happiness; and lastly, and above all, I will use my interest in your favour for the sake of religion and the poor, as both must be benefited by the success of your honourable views.

This ecclesiastic, partly from probity and partly from prudence, would have rejected a bribe to assist in any project which he thought wicked or unlawful; but he had no scruple in allowing himself to be well rewarded for doing what he approved, and would, of himself, have been happy to promote without any bribe at all.

Indeed he had no notion that Madame de Seidlits or her daughter had a serious intention of standing out against a match which he thought so advantageous for both. He imputed their refusal to affectation, caprice, or a desire of indulging a few feminine airs; and he had a meaner opinion of Zeluco's understanding, on account of his being in this manner the dupe of a little female vanity.

And so impatient was he that the *poor* should reap the fruits of Zeluco's promised liberality, that the first time he found Madame de Seidlits alone, he expressed much surprise that she had never told him of Zeluco's addresses to her daughter.

Madame de Seidlits replied, that after Laura had given her negative, she thought it best not to mention a subject which might be disagreeable to Signor Zeluco, and was so foreign to those in which the father was usually employed.

It is true, replied Pedro, I am principally interested

in your spiritual concerns, but by no means indifferent to the temporal welfare of your family.

Madame de Seidlits then informed him of all the particulars.

I have such an opinion of Signora Laura's filial duty and affection, said Pedro, that I am convinced, if you were to press this matter earnestly upon her, she would consent.

It is not impossible but she might, said Madame de Seidlits, for which reason I shall be particularly careful not to press her.

Father Pedro expressed astonishment at her taking so little concern in an affair of such importance to her daughter's happiness.

It is because it is of so much importance to her happiness that I leave it to her own judgement, said Madame de Seidlits; Laura is endowed with prudence and good sense, and she is certainly the best judge of her own feelings; if Zeluco ever becomes more agreeable to her, importunity would be superfluous; and if he does not, it would be cruel: besides, I have given her my word never to urge her on the subject, and I will assuredly adhere to my engagement.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

“ For he a rope of sand could twist,
As tough as learned Sorbonist,
And weave fine cobwebs, fit for scull
That 's empty when the moon is full;
Such as take lodgings in a head
That 's to be let unfurnished.”

BUTLER.

THE father was prevented from reply, by Laura's entering the room with Father Mulo. Before any account is given of the conversation which this venera-

ble man introduced, it is necessary to throw a retrospective glance on incidents which occurred long before: from this an idea may be formed of the characters of Colonel Seidlits, and others, connected with our purpose.

Without recapitulating the circumstances by which the colonel and his lady became first acquainted, it is sufficient to observe, that their marriage took place before the father knew any thing of the matter; but he expressed infinite concern, and probably felt some, on hearing that his relation was the wife of a heretic. When she went with her husband to Germany, the zealous father continued from time to time to remind her in his letters of the dangers she incurred in a land of heresy, and furnished her with the best arguments he had at his disposal, to enable her to adhere to the religion in which she was bred, stimulating her at the same time to attempt the conversion of her husband, by which she would acquire immortal glory, effect her husband's salvation, and secure to herself the comfort of his company both in this life and that which is to come.

The father being infinitely delighted with both the style and arguments of those letters, he could not deny himself the gratification of showing copies of them to several of his acquaintance; and as the intention of showing them could not be mistaken, his acquaintance in general were good-natured enough to praise them to the monk's contentment; one old maiden aunt of Madame de Seidlits's, however, whose zeal for religion and hatred to heretics increased with her years, seemed to approve of the correspondence less than any other person to whose inspection he had submitted it.—When Father Mulo hinted this to her, she told him that she was so provoked at the odious heretic who had seduced her niece, that it was not in her power to wish in earnest for his conversion, for she could not

bear even to hear his name mentioned ; and she was very certain she should faint at the sight of him whenever she met him, were it even in heaven.

But the father had too much ardour for making converts, to follow the suggestions of this virgin ; he therefore continued to transmit such morsels of eloquence as, in his opinion, could not fail to operate the conversion of Colonel Seidlits.

But the reverend father's zeal being far more conspicuous than his arguments were convincing, Madame de Seidlits never thought proper to communicate them to her husband ; while he, on his part, left his lady, without molestation, in the full enjoyment of her religious opinions, and at perfect liberty to worship God in the manner which her conscience approved. This he had promised when he married her ; and he would have thought it inconsistent with honour to have tried to bring her over to his own persuasion, even although he had been certain of succeeding. The colonel has been blamed for this by many zealous protestants : we do not mean to approve or censure his conduct in this particular, but only mention the fact, leaving it to better judges to decide whether he was blameworthy or not.

Madame de Seidlits herself, who was pleased with all her husband's behaviour to her, was peculiarly delighted with what she called his delicacy in this point ; and when Father Mulo insisted peremptorily in one of his letters on knowing whether she had ever made any attempt to convert her husband, or had shown him the forcible reasoning contained in his letters to her ; she was obliged to acknowledge that she had done neither, and gave for her reason, that her husband having left her at liberty on the subject of religion, she thought it would be a bad requital in her to tease him.

Father Mulo, in answer, endeavoured to demon-

strate the weakness of that argument. It is not necessary to transcribe the whole of the father's letter; the following paragraph will, in all probability, be thought sufficient:

“ It was natural enough in you, my dear madam, to apprehend that your own arguments would be too feeble to convince your husband; but it is surprising that you do not perceive, that those I provided you with are of a very different nature; indeed, they are such as seldom fail to persuade even the weakest minds. From this you may judge what impression they would make on a person of such good sense as you describe your husband to be.

“ You say that it would be improper in you to tease *him*, because he never attempts to disturb *you*, nor allows any other person to trouble you on the subject of religion: but you do not distinguish, my dear madam, the great difference between the two cases. For your husband, indeed, to make any attempt, or to allow any to be made by others, for the purpose of seducing you from your religion to his, would not only be improper, but also highly criminal, and for this very sufficient reason, *because it is criminal to draw any person whatever from truth to falsehood*. But for you to labour, without ceasing, to prevail on your deluded husband to abjure his own faith and adopt yours, is in the highest degree meritorious; *because it is highly meritorious to lead any person whatever, and far more a beloved husband, from falsehood to truth, or from darkness to light*.

“ After having cleared up this point, I have only just to hint, that instead of reasoning upon what I inform you it is your duty to do, your safest course, my dearest cousin, will, for the future, be, to perform it implicitly, for reasoning is by no means what you shine in: and although you are generally allowed to be endowed with very good common sense, and suffi-

cient understanding to conduct common affairs, take my word for it, your immortal soul is of too much consequence to be intrusted in your own hands."

This remonstrance had not the effect which, in Father Mulo's opinion, such forcible reasoning and such rational requests ought to have produced. What contributed, perhaps, to render Madame de Seidlits the more unwilling to touch on such subjects, was an incident of which she was informed about the very time when the monk was urging her so earnestly.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

"No sooner could a hint appear,
But up he started to picquer,
And made the stoutest yield to mercy,
When he engaged in controversy,
Not by the force of carnal reason,
But indefatigable teasing."

BUTLER.

A YOUNG protestant clergyman, a distant relation of Colonel de Seidlits, came about this time to Berlin.— He had applied himself with ardour to the study of controversy. He was distinguished by his wonderful faculty of creating disputes where they were least expected, and by his invincible courage in maintaining them when begun: he often asserted, and with truth, that he had never yielded an argument in his life.— He was greatly admired for the flow of his pulpit eloquence, and the force of his reasoning, by all who were previously of his own opinion. The longer this happy ecclesiastic lived, he seemed to be the more confirmed in the favourable impression which, from his boyish years, he entertained of his own talents, and in his contempt for those of others; and became at length so powerful in self conceit, that he would, without hesitation, have engaged a whole conclave of

his adversaries, being convinced not only that he could overturn all their arguments, but that the prejudices of education, the considerations of interest, and the allurements of ambition, must all yield to the irresistible strength of his demonstration.

This gentleman was sometimes invited to dinner by Colonel Seidlits, and was made welcome by his lady as often as she saw company in the evening.

In return for those civilities, he thought it incumbent on him to point out to her the absurdities of the popish religion, as preparatory to her conversion to Calvinism. With this view he was apt to introduce questions of a controversial nature, and at one time threw out a sneer at the doctrine of transubstantiation, in the presence of Madame de Seidlits.

This was repeated by one of the company to Colonel Seidlits, who, the next time he saw the clergyman alone, said to him mildly, I am not certain, my good sir, whether I ever informed you that my wife is of the Roman Catholic church.

You never informed me, replied the other; but it is long since I knew that Madame de Seidlits had that misfortune.

You may, if you please, leave her misfortunes to those who are more naturally concerned in them, said the colonel; but since you knew of what I was in hopes you had been ignorant, I own I am surprised that you could speak of one of the articles of her faith in the manner you did, in her presence.

I recollect what you allude to, said the clergyman; but really the article in question is so absurd and incomprehensible, that it is impossible to mention it otherwise than in terms of derision.

Pray, replied the colonel, do you believe in all the doctrines to be found in the public creeds and formularies of our own church?

That I do, replied the divine; and would die at the stake, were it necessary, avowing them.

Then I hope you have a better reason for thinking transubstantiation absurd, than merely its being incomprehensible?

There is no article in any of the protestant creeds so incomprehensible as that you mention, replied the divine.

I did not know there were degrees in incomprehensibility, said the colonel; if there is any proposition which I am quite unable to comprehend, it will be difficult to state another which I can comprehend less.

I will undertake to make you comprehend distinctly every article of the creeds you allude to, said the divine, with an undaunted air.

Rather than impose such a task upon you, said the colonel, allow me to continue to believe them without fully comprehending them.

Well, colonel, you will do as you please; but surely it would afford you great satisfaction if your lady could be prevailed on to embrace the same religion that you profess.

No; I cannot say it would, replied the colonel coldly.

Good God! that seems very unaccountable; Will you be so good as to tell me your reason? said the other.

Because the thing cannot happen, sir, without either my changing my religion, and I intend no such thing, or by my endeavouring to persuade my wife to change hers, which I have solemnly promised never to do: besides, I am certain that Madame de Seidlitz is an amiable woman, and a most excellent wife, with the religion she professes; and there is no knowing what alteration a change of sentiments might make.

What alteration, but a favourable one, can accrue

from renouncing one of the worst religions in the world for the best?

As to which is the worst and which the best, said Seidlits, the world is much divided.

The protestant religion is gaining ground every day, said the clergyman; and there is reason to hope, that in a short time there will be more protestants in the world than papists.

That to be sure is very comfortable news, said the colonel; but it can have no weight in the present argument; because, ever since the beginning of the world, there have been greater numbers devoted to false religions than to the true; and even now, if the question were to be decided by a plurality of voices, the religion of Mahomet might perhaps carry the palm both from the protestant and Roman catholic.

But you yourself are a protestant?—*you at least* prefer the protestant form of worship to all others? said the clergyman.

I certainly prefer no other form of worship to the protestant, replied the colonel.

Then I should be glad to know, said the clergyman, with a triumphant air, *wherefore* you prefer no other? the same arguments which convinced you, might convince your lady.

No, said the colonel, that they could not.

Why so? said the clergyman. By what powerful arguments were you persuaded to adhere to the protestant religion?

By this powerful argument, replied the colonel, that I was born in Berlin, and bred at Konigsberg.

That answer smells of infidelity, colonel, and implies that you consider religion merely as an affair of geography, and of little or no importance in the world, said the clergyman.

It implies more than I intended then, replied Seidlits; for although I do think that nine hundred an

ninety-nine in a thousand of mankind are determined in the religion they profess by the place of their birth and education, I do not infer from thence that religion is of no importance: on the contrary, I am convinced that those who cherish religion, perform the relative duties of life in the most conscientious manner.

So you put all religions on the same footing? said the clergyman.

By no means, answered Seidlits; I know indeed of no religion which does not inculcate morality; but as I have not had any opportunity of observing the influence of other religions on men's conduct, I speak of the Christian religion only;—which, if I am not mistaken, contributes greatly to render mankind better and happier even in this life.

You speak of the reformed religion, I presume? said the clergyman; for as to the absurd tenets of the Roman catholic creed, it is impossible for you, or any man of sense, to respect them.

I speak not of the creeds which, since the Christian æra, have been composed by the fathers of either church, replied the colonel; I have not leisure, perhaps not understanding, sufficient to weigh or compare them with due precision. My observation regards only the precepts given, and the example set, by the Author of Christianity himself, and in which both churches are agreed. The good effect which a due impression of those divine precepts has upon the mind, seems, I confess, very evident to me, whether the individuals on which it operates are Roman catholics or protestants.

That you, by accident, have met with Roman catholics who were reckoned good moral men, I shall not dispute, said the minister; but that any part of their goodness proceeded from their religion, is what I can never admit.

Why not? said the colonel; the moral precepts of both religions are the same.

The spirit of those who profess them are very different, however, resumed the minister. When did the protestants display the same spirit of persecution that the papists have so often done?

Let us remember, replied Seidlits, that the church of Rome was established in power when the first reformers began to attack its doctrines; that an attack on its doctrines endangered the power and riches of its clergy: that it is natural for mankind, when they have long been in possession of power and wealth, to be exceedingly unwilling to relinquish them; and the clergy do not form an exception to this general rule: they, as well as others, are apt to be extremely angry with those who attempt to dispossess them; besides, let us recollect that all established governments think they have a right to use severities against revolting subjects, whatever good grounds those subjects have had for revolting,—and——

But remember, interrupted the clergyman, the perfidy and cruelty displayed by the Roman catholics in the massacre of St. Bartholomew—think of the shocking reign of the gloomy bigoted Philip, and the enormities of his unrelenting general the Duke of Alva.

I do think of them with horror, said the colonel, and I have no mind to palliate such dreadful instances of human wickedness and delusion. I only meant to hint, that those ought not to have credit for not displaying the same spirit who were not in possession of the same power. I am willing to believe, however, that with equal power they would not have committed equal excesses; though I am sorry to say that instances might be mentioned, which create a suspicion that more power would have perverted the spirit of some of the most distinguished reformers, and might

possibly have the same effect on their successors. It is therefore fortunate for the clergy of Holland, Switzerland, some parts of Germany, and other countries in Europe, that there is little danger of their degenerating from that cause.

I doubt much whether that is a fortunate circumstance, replied the clergyman; for although riches, power, and pomp have a mischievous effect when prostituted to the unworthy, yet they are suitable to the character we bear of the ambassadors from Heaven, and might give more weight to our admonitions.

Power and wealth are the great corrupters of the human heart, said Seidlits, and might spread their baneful influence even to the *ambassadors* themselves; in which event, in lieu of that spirit of toleration, benevolence, and humility, which distinguishes them at present; a great accession of power and riches might gradually inspire them with pride and ambition, and render them at last little better than so many cardinals and popes.

Never, never, cried the clergyman; the spirit of protestantism is too averse to any such alteration.

The spirit of human nature, however, has a mighty tendency that way, said Seidlits.

Learning and deep reflection correct the depraved tendencies of our nature, resumed the ecclesiastic, and leave the mind equally free from the degrading absurdities of superstition, and the impious sophistry of scepticism.

That is a state of mind devoutly to be wished, said Seidlits.

Is it not? cried the parson with exultation; You yourself allow that superstition is degrading to the mind of man? continued he.

I do, replied the colonel; and the more readily, as I never said it was otherwise.

Well, I will now prove to you, that scepticism is

as uncomfortable as the other is degrading. I hope you have no pressing business at present, continued the parson, because, to put the subject in a clear light, it will be necessary to divide it into three heads, and then subdivide each of these into four principal branches.

To begin then with the first and most important of those three heads.

Any degree of doubt or uncertainty, particularly on matters of high importance, has been considered in all ages as irksome, and——

I ask pardon for interrupting you, said the colonel; it is only to know whether you mean to prove, that to a well-disposed mind a state of certainty is more agreeable than any degree of doubt on religious subjects?

That is precisely what I am going to demonstrate, resumed the parson.

I will save you the trouble, said Seidlits, for there is nothing of which I am more firmly convinced.

Is it not astonishing then, said the other, that so many should be so foolish as to persevere in a state of uncomfortable doubt?

Very astonishing indeed, said the colonel; especially as it is in every body's power to believe whatever will afford them most comfort.

I perceive, said the parson, you have perused my treatise upon the faculty of believing.

The colonel nodded.

I there clearly prove, that the Roman catholics have too much faith, and some sects of the protestants too little; and then carefully point out the golden medium which mankind ought to adhere to.

It is very fortunate for mankind, said the colonel, that *you* know it.

It is so, resumed the parson; for of this happy me-

dium it may be said, more emphatically than of any thing else, *nescire malum est*.

If I am not mistaken, said Seidlits, an answer to your work was published by a certain French abbé, who, according to the custom of his countrymen, seemed very fond of jesting.

That was a most abominable and a most provoking performance, cried the parson with great vehemence; but jests are no arguments, colonel.

No; nor arguments are no jests, said Seidlits; yet this provoking abbé endeavoured to make a jest of all your arguments.

There will be no jesting in hell, however, said the parson, with a vengeful aspect.

True, said the colonel; when you have once got him there, the laugh will be on your side—

But pray, colonel, resumed the minister, do you imagine that your lady has ever read my book?

I should rather think not, said the colonel.

What a pity! exclaimed the other; it would go a great way to cure her of many prejudices.

The remedy would be rather violent, said the colonel.

Perhaps it might seem a little so at first, rejoined the clergyman; but were I to converse with her on those subjects, I should begin in gentle terms.

That would be very proper, said the colonel.

The sooner I begin then the better, said the parson; after I have talked with her for a few hours, she will be able to decide between the two religions on rational principles.

I have already decided, on what I think rational principles, said the colonel, not to disturb her.

You have decided very erroneously, resumed this persevering ecclesiastic.

Let me intreat you, my good sir, interrupted the

colonel, not to interfere in my domestic concerns, but to mind your own business.

I beg leave to inform you, Colonel Seidlits, said the clergyman, with a dignified air, that I consider the propagation of Gospel truths, and the unmasking of imposture, particularly those of the church of Rome, as *my* business; and I will embrace every opportunity of doing both, in spite of the united opposition of men and devils.

The colonel having looked very earnestly for some time at this violent reformer, at length said, I beg your excuse, sir, for having engrossed so much of your valuable time; it is a mistake I shall never again fall into. So saying, he pulled off his hat, made a low bow, and walked away. The moment he entered his own house, he gave orders that his relation should be no more admitted.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

“ Multa pufans, sortemque animo miseratus iniquam.”

VING. ÆN. l. vi.

THE attention which Colonel Seidlits displayed in preventing his lady from being disquieted in her religious opinions, and the delicacy of his behaviour on every occasion, was felt by her with affectionate gratitude. She was, however, by no means so easy in the contemplation of her husband's being a protestant, as he was in that of her remaining a Roman catholic; and although the arguments of Father Mulo did not prevail on her to attempt his conversion, yet few things could have afforded her greater satisfaction than to have seen her husband adopt from conviction, what she considered as the only true religion. But with what face could she speak to him on a subject which he never

mentioned to her, and which he permitted no person whatever to disturb her about? Any attempt on her part to alter his sentiments, implied that she considered herself as wiser than he; whereas she only considered herself as more fortunate, in having been educated in a better religion.

These and similar considerations, which occupied the mind of this worthy lady, were sometimes on the point of being sacrificed to the anguish she felt as often as the idea of her husband's continuing in heresy, and all the dreadful consequences, occurred to her terrified imagination; for the natural clearness of her understanding and the serenity of her disposition, were clouded and disturbed by the terrific aspect and unrelenting severity of some of the doctrines in which she had been instructed.

This anxiety of mind on her husband's account always increased in proportion to the hazards he was exposed to in the exercise of his profession, and became particularly severe in the course of a tedious illness, into which he fell in consequence of a blow by the but-end of a musket, which he received on his breast at the battle of Hochkirchen. This contusion produced a spitting of blood, and was supposed to lay the foundation of that illness of which he afterwards died.

Soon after the battle, the colonel was carried to a place of safety. And Madame de Seidlits, having obtained a pass from Marshal Daun, hastened to the village in which her husband was; where she attended him during his long illness with equal patience and tenderness. At one time he was, by the mistake of the physician, thought in immediate danger. The anxiety which had so long lurked within the breast of Madame de Seidlits now became too violent for her to conceal; the very acute sorrow which she endured from the thought of losing a husband she highly es-

teemed and dearly loved, was absorbed in the keener anguish arising from the awful idea of the danger which threatened his immortal soul ; and this impressed her with the more dread that it seemed to give him none.

Her terrors on this subject were augmented by a letter which she received from her indefatigable relation Father Mulo ; who, having heard of the colonel's illness, most charitably entreated her to exert herself now or never ; as there was no possibility of salvation for her husband, unless he relinquished heresy, embraced the catholic faith, confessed his sins, and obtained absolution. One argument, he thought, proved the good policy of this measure beyond the power of reply ; it was this :—The protestants themselves, said this ingenious priest, admit that well-meaning and virtuous persons may be saved, notwithstanding their dying in the Roman catholic persuasion ; whereas we assert, that no heretic, however virtuous in other respects he may be, can enter into the kingdom of heaven : it is apparent, therefore, that your husband runs no risk in following your advice, but the greatest by neglecting it.

The agitation and confusion of Madame de Seidlits's mind prevented her from seeing this kind of reasoning in the same light in which her good sense would have presented it in a calmer moment.

One day, therefore, when her apprehensions on the colonel's account were at the height, after much circumlocution, with infinite delicacy, but in the most pathetic terms, she communicated her fears to him, and concluded by urging him to forsake his own religion, and embrace that of the church of Rome.

Having heard her with the utmost attention and some degree of surprise, the colonel said, I fear, my dear, you are too much alarmed on my account ; but I assure you I have passed an uncommonly good night,

and I feel myself better than I was yesterday.—I am most exceedingly glad to hear it, said Madame de Seidlits; but let this be no reason for preventing a measure of infinite importance, which cannot be taken too soon, but may be delayed till it is too late.

My dearest Theresa, said the colonel, taking hold of her hand, I view your present solicitude and impotency in the true light; I consider them as fresh proofs of that noble friendship and affection which has been the happiness of my life, and of which I ever had a grateful conviction; but I must assure you, that although I have never urged you, nor permitted any other person to urge you, on the same subject on which you now press me, it is not because I have less concern for your soul than you have for mine; nor is it from a want of partiality for the religion which I myself profess.—From what motive then has your forbearance proceeded? said Madame de Seidlits.—From a conviction, replied he, that you are as certain of salvation in your religion as I can be in mine.—You must believe then, said Madame de Seidlits with quickness, that both religions are equally good.—No, my love, that does not follow; for although I think there is much good in both, still I think my own is the preferable; yet, continued he gaily, as you possess so much more of yours than I do of mine, I imagine the superiority in quantity will make up for the deficiency in quality, and render you as secure as you can wish.

My dear colonel, replied Madame de Seidlits, is this a subject, or is this a proper occasion for jesting?

I beg pardon, my dear, said the colonel, I will be very serious: in one great and essential point we have the happiness to be of one opinion; both religions agree, that it is our duty to live a life of integrity, and do all the good we can to our fellow-creatures.

For which reason, interrupted Madame de Seidlits,

I am so anxious to do the greatest good possible to him who is infinitely the dearest to me of all my fellow-creatures.

None of them can be more grateful, replied the colonel, than I am for those good intentions; and you cannot doubt of my being willing to render you the same service; yet if you were to continue to press this upon me, and I the same upon you, the unavoidable effect of our eagerness to make each other eternally happy, would be the making each other eternally miserable; for what can be worse in this world or the next, than everlasting disputes between man and wife? Let us therefore avoid all disputable points, continued he, and endeavour to promote our own happiness, and that of our neighbours, by every means in our power. The most probable reason I can conceive for the unequal distribution of the comforts of life, is to afford mankind opportunities for the exercises of benevolence, gratitude, and other virtues, which I am inclined to believe is the most likely way of acquiring the favour of the Deity. We certainly have it frequently in our power to add to the happiness or misery of our fellow-creatures; to God Almighty we can neither do good nor harm; and therefore I cannot help thinking, that the conduct of our lives is of infinitely more importance, than our religious opinions, or the forms of our worship.—It has been already settled between us, continued he, that you shall educate our daughters in your way of thinking, as our sons shall be educated in mine; our mutual endeavour will be, to render them virtuous women and honest men, which implies benevolence and liberality of sentiment; if we succeed, I have no doubt, notwithstanding our having taken different roads, but we shall all meet in heaven.

God Almighty, in his infinite mercy, grant it may be so, cried Madame de Seidlits, in a transport of affection; for I am certain heaven will be no heaven to

me without those I so dearly love. Then recollecting herself a little, she took occasion, from what her husband had just said, to urge the last argument of her confessor:—Since you have no doubt, said she, of our meeting in heaven, although I retain my religion, and since those of our church declare there is no admission for those who persist in heresy, why will you not, my dearest husband, take the safer course, and embrace the catholic faith?

Here the colonel, smiling through the tears which his lady's endearments had previously forced into his eyes, replied, I confess, my beloved Theresa, that this last argument is so unworthy of your excellent understanding, that I am convinced you have had it suggested by some one of far inferior sense and candour to yourself. Consider that, in my conscience,—for whether I am right or wrong is out of the question;—but in my conscience I think the protestant religion preferable to that which you profess; yet you advise me, as the safest course I can take, to embrace yours; that is to say, to commit a piece of gross hypocrisy, and with a view to what? to impose on men? No; there might be sense in that; for men are imposed upon daily by hypocrites: but this piece of hypocrisy to which you advise me, is with a view to impose upon God, and to get smuggled into heaven as a Roman catholic, while in my heart and conscience I remain a protestant.

Madame de Seidlits seemed embarrassed: after a short silence, she said, I fear my anxiety makes me absurd; forgive me, my dear, continued she, for teasing you in this foolish manner.

I shall think myself for ever obliged by the affectionate and generous anxiety of my Theresa, said Seidlits.

How could I allow myself to think for a moment that such integrity, such manly generosity of mind, as

you have always displayed, said she, taking her husband by the hand, and such strict adherence to the dictates of conscience, can be rejected? These also were the virtues of the man whose memory you so much revere, your noble friend and patron the marshal.

Ah! my Theresa, cried Seidlits, Can the long course of honour and integrity pursued by the gallant Keith be forgotten and rejected of Heaven, because he was born in a protestant country, or perhaps entertained erroneous speculative opinions? I well knew the uprightness of his mind, have seen many instances of his humanity and benevolence even to his enemies, and have myself received proofs of his generous friendship; it will be my latest boast to have been a witness to those noble exertions in which he finished a life of honour in the field of Hochkirchen, where the gallant Prince Francis of Brunswick, a family so fertile in heroes, also fell. I thank Heaven I had the honour of assisting the marshal's intrepid endeavours in rallying and inspiring our disordered troops, in following him again and again to the charge; by which means the elated enemy was checked, our troops protected, the great monarch he served, and who honoured him with his friendship, enabled to retreat in such order as to pitch his camp within a few miles of the field from which he retired. This great officer himself refusing, although dangerously wounded, to quit the field, continued his exertions, till he received a second wound, which proved instantly mortal. And shall a parcel of ignorant monks, a gang of useless drones, deal damnation around on all who have not a ready faith in their legends and their—? But I ask your pardon, my dear, said Seidlits; checking himself; I did not mean to say any thing disobliging; but I heartily wish you would observe the dictates of your own understanding more, and listen to the suggestions of others

less; the virtuous conduct which you have hitherto pursued is your best security for happiness here and hereafter; permit me to endeavour to secure mine in the manner most agreeable to my conscience, and of course the most likely to be successful.

Forgive me, my dearest friend, said Madame de Seidlits, for this once, and I shall assure you, all the monks on earth shall never prevail on me to give you a single hint of this nature again. I am not a little ashamed of what I was foolishly induced to say;—Heaven be praised that you seem so much better than you were last night.

CHAPTER XL.

“ Shall man be left abandon'd in the dust,
 When Fate relenting, lets the flow'r revive?
 Shall Nature's voice, to man alone unjust,
 Bid him, tho' doom'd to perish, hope to live?
 Is it for this fair Virtue oft must strive
 With disappointment, penury, and pain?
 No; Heav'n's immortal spring shall yet revive,
 And man's majestic beauty bloom again.” BEATTIE.

THIS was the first and last dispute on religion that ever passed between Colonel Seidlits and his lady, although both continued attached to *that* in which they had been bred; yet, from this time, Madame de Seidlits seemed to adopt, in many particulars, the liberal sentiments of her husband. They lived together in the happiest union for several years after the general peace.

Laura, their only child, was educated according to the agreement between them, in her mother's religion.

It was already remarked, that the colonel never fully recovered his health after the contusion in his breast; on the slightest cold, and sometimes without

any known cause, he was liable to be seized with fits of oppressive and difficult breathing; a severe attack of this nature obliged him, by the king's express order, to quit the field in the middle of that short war between Prussia and the emperor respecting the succession of Bavaria. Having returned by slow journeys to Berlin, he soon after had the happiness to hear of his son's distinguishing himself by relieving the Baron Carlostein from the Austrian hussars. And at the conclusion of the peace, he retired to his small villa, with his wife and daughter, where he had the pleasure of entertaining the two friends, as has been mentioned. Carlostein he never saw more; but Captain Seidlits spent all the time he could be spared from his regiment in his father's family, with whom he lived in the greatest harmony.

But Colonel Seidlits's health gradually declined. This however was more apparent to others, than to those constantly with him; and Madame de Seidlits was for a long time deceived by the cheerful air her husband always assumed in her presence; for his mind remained in full vigour notwithstanding his bodily weakness. Having perceived, however, for some days, that he showed uncommon solicitude in arranging and settling his affairs, she took notice of that circumstance to him with an air of apprehension.

Is it not a sufficient reason, said he, my dear friend, that I know I must die some time or other, and that I do not know how soon?

But why disturb your mind with business at present? said she; you are certainly in no immediate danger.

You are not then of the opinion of the Duc de la Rochefoucault, replied the colonel, who says, *Il n'y a que la mort qui soit certaine, et cependant nous agissons comme si c'étoit la seule chose incertaine.*

That is applicable to me as well as to you, my dear, said Madame de Seidlits.

It is so, replied the colonel; and if I had become apprehensive of your dying as often as you prepared yourself for death, I should have been in continual apprehension ever since I knew you. The colonel said this with such an easy air, that Madame de Seidlits became less alarmed.

But although the colonel had none of the oppressive asthmatic attacks as formerly, he felt his strength melting fast away: he permitted none of his family, however, to attend him through the night; an old soldier alone, who had been long in his service, lay in his bed-chamber.

A few days after this conversation with his lady, having had a very disturbed night, he perceived the near approach of death. He caused himself to be raised in his bed in the morning, a little before the hour at which his family usually entered the room; they were unconscious of his illness through the night; his lady, with Laura and Captain Seidlits, sat around his bed;—when the colonel, smiling, said in a faint voice to his son, It is a long while, Seidlits, since I assured my wife, that, notwithstanding the difference of our sentiments on certain subjects, this company should all meet in heaven.

I hope your prophecy will be accomplished, sir, said the young man; but not for a long time.

It is my hope, replied the colonel, that it will be long before the rest of the company follow; but I feel that I must set out soon.

Ah, father! cried Laura, with a voice of sorrow.— Captain Seidlits looked with anguish at his mother-in-law.

Why do you talk so, my dear? said Madame de Seidlits; you seem a little faint this morning; but

you have often recovered from more oppressive symptoms.

Never, never! my beloved friend, said he; but you would not wish me to struggle any longer; the hope of perfect recovery has been long over, and the struggle is ending.

Alas! cried she, starting from her seat greatly alarmed, send for a physician.

If you love me, said he, let there be no intrusion.

She sunk on the bed, grasping his hand; Let my latest breath, continued he, declare my unaltered affection. I regret that I have been able to make so small a provision; but what can a soldier provide? I have served a heroic monarch with fidelity: he knows it. Your conduct, my Seidlits, looking at his son, has thrown comfort and gladness on the heart of your father, and made my declining years the happiest of my life. I know you will behave with duty to your mother, and affection to your sister. Farewell, my beloved Theresa;—farewell, my sweet Laura;—farewell, my Seidlits:—I resign you to *his* protection, into whose merciful hands I resign my own soul.—God Almighty bless you;—once more, farewell!—but I hope—I trust not for ever.—My eyes grow dim!—a dark mist overhangs them!—I see you not, my Theresa!—My children!—my organs fail!—yet my soul departs entire.—Father of mercy, receive my soul!—His voice failed, and after a few sobs, this gallant soldier expired.

Madame de Seidlits remained in speechless affliction, holding the cold hand of her husband for a considerable time after he had breathed his last. Laura, kneeling by her mother, wept without uttering a syllable; and Captain Seidlits, unable to comfort either, stood motionless with grief, till a servant entering the chamber, Seidlits supported Laura and her mother to their apartment, and then retired to his own.

CHAPTER XLI.

“ La gravité est un mystere du corps, inventé pour cacher les défauts de l'esprit.”
 ROCHEFOUCAULT.

COLONEL Seidlits left his family in very moderate circumstances. The king appointed a pension to his widow, and soon after promoted his son, who had only the rank of lieutenant, to the command of a troop of dragoons. This young man behaved with great generosity to his mother-in-law, and continued for some time after his father's death to live with her and his sister; but, on his being obliged to attend his regiment, Madame de Seidlits took the resolution of returning to her native country, which she put in execution notwithstanding the strongest solicitations on the part of Captain Seidlits, whose friendship and affection for them both made him exceedingly desirous of their remaining in Germany.

When we were led into this long digression, we left Madame de Seidlits in conversation with Father Pedro, which was interrupted by the coming of Laura and Father Mulo. The latter always harboured fears that Madame Seidlits's long residence in a country of heretics had diminished in her mind that salutary horror in which he thought they should be held by every sincere catholic. To counteract this, and to revive her faith in those points which he considered as most essential, he sent her, since her arrival at Naples, a large folio of divinity, earnestly entreating her to peruse it attentively along with her daughter, telling her at the same time that she might rely on having the second volume as soon as they had read the first.

Have you perused that admirable work, my dear daughter? said Father Mulo, seeing the book lie on the table.

I have begun it, replied Madame de Seidlits; it is

a book of too serious a nature to be read over superficially.

It is indeed a work of great weight, and requires the utmost attention, said Father Mulo.

It were fortunate, said Laura, if the authors of books which require so much attention, could write them so as to command it.

The business of an author is to write books, said Father Mulo, with becoming gravity; it is the duty of the reader to command his attention when he peruses them.

You are indeed too hard upon authors, my good young lady, said Father Pedro, to expect that they should not only write their books, but also be obliged to command the attention of their readers. My learned brother has, with more regard to distributive justice, divided the toil between the author and the reader.

In my humble opinion, replied Laura, smiling, he allots too large a proportion of the task to the courteous reader. It is not so easy a matter to command one's attention on perusing certain books as you seem to think. I own I never found mine more disobedient than in the perusal of that very admirable work which the reverend father recommends.

Your taste, I am afraid, said Father Mulo, addressing himself to Laura with much solemnity, is in some measure corrupted by books of profane history, or of amusement, whose merit consists in their eloquence, or perhaps in their wit.

And you may judge, my dear daughter, added Father Pedro, how little value ought to be put on that kind of merit, by its being often to be met with in the writings of infidels and heretics.

I should be better pleased, resumed Laura, to meet it elsewhere; but I hope, father, you do not think that where there is wit there must also be infidelity.

Why really, daughter, said Father Mulo, answering with more gravity of manner than depth of reflection; where there is much of the first, there is often reason to suspect some of the last.

I cannot be of that opinion, said Madame de Seidlits; for I have generally found true wit in better company; and although we sometimes find infidelity accompanied by wit, how much oftener are we shocked with pert ostentatious infidelity without any wit at all?

I am convinced my mother is in the right, cried Laura; and I hope you will allow, father, that there is not a necessary connection between them.

Father Mulo perceiving at length that he had spoken a little inconsiderately, was obliged to own, though with evident reluctance, that he hoped there was not.

I am *certain* there is not, added Laura; and I am obliged to my mother for having made me remark instances, both in conversation and in reading, where not only the strength of the arguments, but also the purest wit, was on the side of virtue and piety.

I can assure you, young lady, from my own experience; said Father Mulo, with an air of great sagacity, and wishing to retract his first assertion, that it is almost always the case;—true wit and eloquence are generally on the side of orthodoxy.

How comes it then that this author, said Laura, pointing to the large volume, has not seasoned his work with a little wit or eloquence, since there is nothing sinful in them; and they would have made it more universally read, and of course more useful?

How comes it? repeated Father Mulo, who was not famous for quick replies on emergencies of this kind,—how comes it, did you say?

Why it comes by the diabolical malice of Satan, cried Father Pedro, stepping in to the relief of his bro-

ther ; it is all owing to the spite of our great spiritual enemy, who is ever ready to enliven the works of the wicked ; and has, it would seem, perplexed the sense and darkened the reasoning of this excellent author, so as to render it a little laborious for the young lady to read his work with the attention it requires.

The greater the effort, the more meritorious will it be in the young lady to perform that duty as she ought, resumed Father Mulo.

True, brother, said Pedro ; and thus the malice of Satan is defeated, and, like the words of Balaam the son of Beor, what was intended as a curse is converted into a blessing.

Father Pedro had a sovereign contempt for his venerable brother ; and as he wished to retain his influence with Madame de Seidlits without participation, he was too ready to display him in a ridiculous light before her, as in the present instance.

But perceiving that he should have no further opportunity that day of prosecuting the object of his visit, he withdrew, leaving Father Mulo to dine with his two relations, which he did accordingly, and in such a manner as gave them no suspicion of his having already made a very ample repast at the house of a pious old lady, whose time of dining was two hours earlier than that of Madame de Seidlits : for it must be allowed, in justice to Father Mulo, that although he reasoned but feebly, and thought with difficulty, he digested with uncommon force and freedom.

CHAPTER XLII.

“ ——— With tract oblique
 At first, as one who sought access, but fear'd
 To interrupt, side-long he works his way.
 As when a ship by skilful steersman wrought
 Nigh river's mouth or foreland, where the wind
 Veers oft, as oft so steers, and shifts her sails ;
 So varied he.——”

MILTON.

FATHER Pedro having found Madame de Seidlits less tractable than he expected, resolved, on the next occasion, to sound Laura herself, and try to dispose her to the purpose he had in view. Accordingly, a few days after, on being left alone with her, he turned the conversation on the subject of charity; mentioned some individuals who distinguished themselves by the exercise of this virtue, and dwelt particularly on Zeluco, whom he represented as one of the most charitable persons he had ever known; adding, that those were happy who were blessed with benevolent and charitable inclinations, but much more were they to be envied, who were also blessed with the means of putting such inclinations into action.

Laura agreeing with him in this sentiment, he said, Would not you be happy, my daughter, to be in this enviable situation?

I flatter myself, replied she, that if I ever had a great desire to be rich, it proceeded from a disposition to relieve the distressed. But it has been remarked, father, added she, that those who have nothing to give, are wonderfully generous; and I myself have known some, who, when they had not the power, expressed the strongest inclination of being liberal; yet when they afterwards came to have the power, seemed entirely to lose the inclination. Those observations give me diffidence in myself; I am not certain what alteration riches might make in my own disposition.

I have no diffidence of you, said the father.

Of this, at least, I am certain, said Laura, that if I could know before-hand, that wealth would have the same effect on me that it seems to have had on some of my acquaintance, I should refuse it were it offered to me.

Depend upon it, my dear daughter, said Father Pedro, those you allude to never had charitable and benevolent dispositions; they have only affected to have them, when they well knew that nothing was expected, nor would be received from them. Their real dispositions appeared afterwards when they became rich.— But in you, my dear child, exists the reality, not the semblance, of benevolence; and riches could only enable you to extend your generosity, not render it more sincere.

Laura thanked him for his good opinion.

I should have still a better opinion of you, said father Pedro, if I had not been informed that you refused this very enviable power.

I have no idea of what you mean, said Laura.

Tell me, in the first place, my dear daughter, whether you really refused your hand to Signor Zeluco?

I did, said she without hesitation.

And what good reason could you have, my dear child, for rejecting so generous a man?

You will allow, father, that a woman may have good reasons for refusing a man for her husband, although she does not think proper to reveal them to her father confessor.

You ought to have very good reasons indeed, daughter, for declining such a fortunate and happy match.

But my particular sentiments and feelings might render it a very unhappy match.

How could it be unhappy for you, said the father, who would reap every advantage by the alliance?

If my husband could reap none, said she, that cir-

cumstance alone would make it an uncomfortable alliance to me.

Do not mistake me, my dear child; your husband would certainly acquire a beautiful, accomplished, and I hope a pious wife; but the gifts of fortune are all on his side. There are many beautiful and accomplished young ladies in Italy who would be happy to be united to Signor Zeluco: But what probability is there of your having the offer of a husband of superior fortune to his?

Not the least, said Laura; but, my good father, I thought the question between us related to happiness, not merely to fortune.

It does so, answered Father Pedro; And what do you think of the happiness of having it in your power, as well as in your inclination, to do good to others; to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, protect the orphan, and make the widow's heart sing for joy?

According to your own account, father, said Laura, all this is done by Signor Zeluco's fortune already; to embarrass such a generous and charitable man with the additional expenses which a wife occasions, she added with a smile, would be diverting into different channels that bounty which at present flows entirely upon the naked, the orphan, and widow.

There is no occasion for turning it into another channel, said the father, a little peevishly; but I perceive you are in a jesting mood.

You shall not be angry, father, said Laura; if you are offended, I must be to blame.

Nay, replied he, I am not offended, child; your vivacity cannot offend me; I wish, however, it may not lead you into error.

If it ever should, father, said Laura, I beg you will not, by way of expiation, enjoin me to give my hand to Zeluco, for that is a penance I shall never submit to.

Laura pronounced these last words with such strength of emphasis, as, joined to what her mother had said, greatly damped the sanguine hopes of Pedro, with regard to the success of his mission.

CHAPTER XLIII.

“ S’il y a un amour pur et exempt du mélange de nos autres passions, c’est celui qui est caché au fond du cœur et que nous ignorons nous-mêmes.”

ROCHEFOUCAULT.

IN the mean time Signora Sporza became so very fond of her two relations, that she preferred their company to those numerous assemblies in which she had been accustomed to pass her evenings. Having perceived that Laura had no great relish for them, she formed a small select party at her own house, which met two or three times a week, and to which the honourable Mr. N—, and a few others, were constantly invited.

This gentleman had long been on a footing of friendly intimacy with Signora Sporza, and now found an additional power of attraction to her parties in the lively and judicious conversation of Laura. Few men's company was more universally acceptable than Mr. N—'s; but what rendered him peculiarly agreeable to Madame de Seidlits and her daughter, was his acquaintance with the Baron Carlostein and Captain Seidlits. He became known to the first during his residence at Potsdam; and the baron, on his expressing an inclination to see the camp at Magdeburg, gave him a letter of introduction to his friend Captain Seidlits, who was there with his regiment; and Mr. N— always spoke of those two gentlemen in high terms of commendation.

Laura was seldom or never in company with Mr.

N—, without making fresh inquiry concerning her brother. It was not in Mr. N—'s power to talk much of him, without his friend Carlostein's being included in the circumstances of the narrative; and every anecdote relating to those gentlemen seemed highly interesting to Madame de Seidlits, and still more so to Laura.

Pray, sir, said she to Mr. N—, one evening when the rest of the company were engaged at cards, is my brother as fond of horses as ever?

He is remarkably fond of his horses, replied Mr. N—; and no officer in the army is esteemed a better rider.

He is very graceful on horseback, said Laura.

He is very much so, replied Mr. N—.

I do not think the scar on his face at all disfigures him, said Laura.

He had no scar on his face, madam, when I saw him, replied Mr. N—.

No scar? said Laura, with surprise.

No, madam;—not Captain Seidlits: his friend, the baron, indeed, has a very honourable scar covered with a piece of black plaster, which does not disfigure him in the least.

I thought you had mentioned him, said Laura, blushing very deeply.

A considerable degree of intimacy was gradually formed between Mr. N— and this young lady. It was hardly possible for them not to have a mutual esteem for each other. Laura had received the most favourable impression of Mr. N— from Signora Sporza, who had spoke of him as a man of sense, integrity, and benevolence; and her own observation of his conversation and behaviour confirmed her in the justice of her friend's representation. He, on the other hand, while he agreed with the general opinion of the graces of Laura's face and person, was still more struck with

her other accomplishments, with the genuine modesty and unaffected dignity of manner which accompanied her beauty : she was equally free from coquetry and disguise ; her sentiments of those around her might be easily guessed by her behaviour.

To those of whom she had but an indifferent opinion, she observed such a degree of cautious and polite reserve as rendered it very difficult for them to be on a footing of any degree of freedom or ease with her, however strongly they were desirous of being so. But to those of whom she thought well, and particularly to Mr. N—, she behaved with a natural frankness, expressive of confidence and good-will.

Yet although this engaging frankness of manner was extended to her male friends as well as her female, it was always attended with such expressive purity and dignity as precluded licentious hopes or wishes ; for innate modesty pervaded the easy openness of her manners, appeared in all her words, actions, and gestures, and presided even in her dress. As often as the mode seemed to lean to the opposite side, Laura had the art of making hers retain the fashionable air, while she corrected the circumstance which she disapproved.

Mr. N— had the same degree of esteem and approbation of Laura, which she made no difficulty of declaring for him ; and there was no engagement which he would have preferred to passing an evening at Signora Sporza's, when he knew that Laura was to be of the party.

CHAPTER XLIV.

Characteristic sketches.

MR. N— had for his servant out of livery, one Buchanan, a Scotchman, to whom his master's growing attachment to Laura gave the greatest concern; and his concern augmented in proportion to the beauties and accomplishments which he himself could not help observing in that young lady, and the good qualities he heard ascribed to her; for he had too good an opinion of his master's taste and penetration to think him capable of a lasting attachment to one who was not remarkably accomplished. But Laura had one failing which, in this man's opinion, neither beauty, nor fortune, nor understanding, nor an assemblage of every good quality of mind or person could compensate—she was a Roman catholic.

That his master should be captivated, and possibly drawn into a marriage with a woman of that religion, Buchanan considered as one of the greatest misfortunes that could happen to him, and he knew it would be viewed in the same light by Lady Elizabeth, Mr. N—'s aunt, by whom he had been placed with her nephew. The strong attachment this man had for his master, and his extraordinary zeal for his welfare, prompted him to intermeddle in matters which did not properly belong to him, and to offer his advice much oftener than it was wished or expected.

One day when Mr. N— dined at home, and expected nobody but Mr. Steele, who lived with him, the latter invited Mr. Squander, and he brought along with him a certain Mr. Bronze, one of those gossiping companions, who know every body, are of every body's opinion, and are always ready to laugh at every body's joke; who nestle themselves into the intimacy of men of fortune and rank, allow themselves to be laughed

at, are invited on that account, or to fill a vacant chair at the table; and sometimes merely to afford the landlord the comfort of having at least one person in the company of inferior understanding to himself, whose chief employment is to fetch and carry tittle-tattle; become at length as it were one of the family, and are alternately caressed and abused like any other spaniel in it. This person had, many years ago, come to Italy with a party of young English, who, as they posted through the country, dropped him sick at Ferrara; and having resided ever since in Italy, he was thought to have some taste in pictures, antique intaglios, cameos, statues, &c. and had picked up a considerable fortune by selling them to his countrymen who came to Rome or Naples.

Mr. Squander would not, for his own private satisfaction, have given a horse-shoe for all the antiquities in Rome, and had no more taste in painting than his pointer; yet, thinking that he must carry home a small assortment of each, were it only to prove that he had been in Italy, Mr. Bronze had been recommended to him as a great connoisseur, who would either furnish him with what he wanted, or assist him in purchasing it.

Buchanan waited at the side-board. They talked of an assembly, at which Messrs. N—, Squander, and Steele, had been the preceding evening. The first spoke with warmth of the beauty of Laura. The antiquarian, who had also seen her, said, her face had a great resemblance to a certain admired madonna of Guido's.—Mr. Squander observed, that he thought she was very like a picture which he had seen at Bologna, but whether it was painted by Guido or by Rheni, he could not recollect.—Mr. N— said, smiling, that it was probably done by both, as they often painted conjunctly;—but, however that may be, continued he, the young lady I mentioned, has one of the finest

countenances that I ever saw either in nature or on canvass. Buchanan, who was sorry to hear his master praise her with such a warmth, shook his head.

You have seen many handsomer in Scotland? said Squander, addressing himself to Buchanan.

I will not presume to make any comparisons, Mr. Squander, replied Buchanan; for, on the present occasion, I doubt they would be thought odious.

Mr. N— had often desired Squander to leave off the indecent custom which he had, of addressing the servants, but without effect. So taking no notice of what passed between him and Buchanan, he proceeded to praise Laura's accomplishments, particularly her voice, and her execution on the piano forte.

Your countrywomen, said Squander, renewing his attack on Buchanan, prefer the Scotch fiddle.—The antiquarian laughed very heartily, and all the footmen tittered at this jest, which Squander himself called a bon mot.—A bon mot! repeated Steele.—Yes, by G—d, said Squander, and as good a one as ever George Bon Mot uttered in his life. What think you, Buchanan?

It certainly bears this mark of a good joke, Mr. Squander, said Buchanan, that it has been often repeated; yet there are people who would rather be the object than the rehearser of it.

You are a wit, Mr. Buchanan, said Bronze, tipping the wink to Squander, and you will certainly make your fortune by it.

If I should fail that way, Mr. Bronze, I may try what is to be done by the haberdashing of intaglios and cameos, and other hardware, said Buchanan.

A great many more of your countrymen, indeed, have made their fortune as pedlars than as wits, resumed Squander.

The antiquarian burst into a loud fit of laughter at

this sally, clapping his hands, and crying, Excellent, bravo!

Buchanan, observing that Mr. N— was displeased at what was going on, made no reply, till Squander pushed him, by saying, What have you to say to that, Buchanan?

All I have to say, Mr. Squander, is, that I have known some of my countrymen, as well as yours, who were beholden to their fortune for all the applause their wit received.

Although Mr. N— could with difficulty refrain from smiling at this remark, assuming a serious air, he told Buchanan, there was no need of his further attendance; and when he withdrew, Mr. N— started another subject, which prevented the antiquarian and Mr. Squander from abusing Buchanan, for which he saw them prepared.

Mr. N—, however, spoke not in his usual affable manner to Buchanan the whole evening, and when he went out, addressing one of the footmen instead of Buchanan, as was his custom, he said, he was going to Madame de Seidlits.

Buchanan, imagining that his master was highly displeased with him, imputed it to his having shaken his head at the praises of Laura; and was now more convinced than ever, that Mr. N— was desperately in love with her, and in immediate danger of proposing marriage to her.

Under this apprehension he resolved to use every means, even at the risk of greatly offending his master, to prevent a measure which he thought diametrically opposite to his interest and happiness. Knowing that a certain baronet, who was uncle to Mr. N— by the mother, and whose presumptive heir Mr. N— was, had lately arrived at Rome, and was soon expected at Naples; Buchanan imagined the most likely means he could use to accomplish his purpose, was to inform

the baronet: he therefore determined to write to him all his fears relative to his master. Buchanan had been educated at an university, and had learning sufficient to render him a pedant; to have an opportunity of displaying his learning therefore, in all probability, was an additional motive for his writing the following letter to the baronet:

“Honoured Sir,

“HEARING of your arrival at Rome, I think it my indispensable duty to inform you, that my master, and your nephew, the honourable Mr. N—, has been seized with a violent passion for a young lady denominated Laura Seidlits, who lately arrived at this city from Germany. The young woman is of a comely countenance—*Vultus nimium lubricus aspici*, and, as far as I have hitherto been able to learn, of a very tolerable reputation. Yet, notwithstanding the fairness of her character and countenance, she is at bottom a black papist.—*Hinc illæ lachrymæ!*—This is the cause of my affliction; for were she as beautiful as Helen of Greece, Cleopatra of Egypt, or even as Mary Queen of Scots, she, being, like the aforesaid Mary, of the popish persuasion, would be a most unsuitable spouse for my master. Yet there is hardly a day goes over his head that he is not in this young woman’s company, and the Lord above only knows how far a headstrong youth, instigated by passion, may push matters, more especially as he generally meets her at one Signora Sporza’s, a very pawky * gentlewoman, who understands what’s what as well as any woman in Naples, and being the relation of the aforesaid Laura, will leave no stone unturned to get her linked to Mr. N—.

“I ONCE had hopes, that as the young woman attends mass regularly every day—for those poor de-

* Sly.

luded creatures show more zeal for their own superstition than some protestants do for true religion—I had once hopes, I say, that she might object to marrying a protestant. But I am informed, that, as the song is, *Her mother did so before her*, which has greatly diminished my hopes of refusal on her part; for it is natural to conclude that the mother has given the daughter a tincture of her own disposition, and you know, sir, that

“*Quo semel est imbuta recens, servabit odorem,
Testa diu.*”

“I am sure I need add no more to convince you of the misery that such a match as this would occasion to all Mr. N—’s relations, particularly to his honoured aunt, who holds Antichrist and all his adherents in the greatest detestation. You must likewise be sensible, that a popish wife, however fair her aspect, must give but a dark prospect to a protestant husband, inasmuch as her religion instructs her that she is not obliged to keep faith with heretics.—*Heu, quoties fidem mutatosque Deos flebit!*”

“These reflections are so manifest, that you will wonder they do not occur to Mr. N—; but you must remember, that he is blinded by the mist of passion, and in that state people cannot perceive the force of reason;—*Quid enim ratione timemus aut cupimus.*—Yet if you could find a plausible pretext for desiring Mr. N— to meet you at Rome, instead of allowing him to wait for you here at Naples, I am convinced he would obey your summons; and when he is removed from the opportunities of seeing this young woman, he may possibly be beyond the influence of her attraction, and above the wiles of her coadjutors; and you may then prevail upon him to listen to the voice of reason, abandon this land of superstition and delusion, where we have sojourned too long, and return directly to Britain; whereas it would be as easy

to whistle the *lavrocks out of the list* *, as to make him agree to this proposition while he remains within eye-shot of this same Laura Seidlits.

“ I am, with all due respect,

“ Honoured sir,

“ Your most obedient servant,

“ GEORGE BUCHANAN.”

The gentleman to whom this letter was addressed, had already received a hint from a friend of his at Naples to the same purpose ; he therefore determined to follow Buchanan's advice, and actually wrote to his nephew, that it was not in his power to proceed to Naples, as he had intended, and expressing a strong desire of seeing him and Mr. Steele at Rome.

However fond Mr. N— was of Laura's company, he could not think of allowing his uncle, for whom, independent of other considerations, he had a very great respect, to return to England without waiting on him ; he therefore took his leave of Signora Sporza and her two friends a few days after receiving this letter, and he and Mr. Steele set out for Rome, accompanied by Buchanan and two footmen.

Signora Sporza told him at parting, that she was herself engaged to a lady of her acquaintance, who had business of importance at Rome, to make that jaunt with her, so that she expected very soon to have the pleasure of meeting him in that city.

Squander, and two or three other young Englishmen, finding their time pass a little heavily without Mr. N— and Steele, followed them on the third day after they set out.

* The larks from the sky.

CHAPTER XLV.

“L’hypocrisie est un hommage que le vice rend à la vertu.”

ROCHEFOUCAULT.

ZELUCO plainly perceived at their next meeting the ill success of the father’s negotiation, in spite of the palliations with which it was communicated. As his hopes had been greatly raised, his disappointment was great in proportion: his enraged spirit, unaccustomed to restraint, on this occasion was deaf to the dictates of caution, and rejected the mask of hypocrisy; he raved like a mad-man, poured curses on both mother and daughter, particularly the latter, on whom he vowed vengeance for what he termed her insolence, and for all the trouble and vexation she had given him.

Father Pedro crossed himself, and began to repeat his Pater Noster.

Come, come, father, said Zeluco, do not let you and I keep up the farce with each other any longer. I know you have too much sense to lay any stress on these mummeries; and I am not such a fool as to think that a woman is to be won by crossings or prayers.

You have as good a chance that way, however, replied the father, as by swearing and raging like a fury.

I will have her one way or another! exclaimed Zeluco.

And what way do you intend to take next? said Pedro.

I’ll have her by force.—I’ll have her seized and carried aboard a vessel.—I’ll fly with her to Algiers! to the West Indies!—any where! exclaimed he with a loud voice, and stamping with his foot; for she shall be mine;—by all the gods, she shall!

Of all the gods, said Father Pedro calmly, the god of hell was the only one who was driven to the miserable shift of committing a rape to get himself a wife; do you intend to imitate *him*, signor?

I do not care who I imitate, roared Zeluco, were it the devil.

In the present case, however, you will not even have the satisfaction of imitating him throughout; for although you may hurry *yourself* to hell, you have little chance of carrying the lady along with you. I would advise you, therefore, to adopt some less desperate expedient.

What expedient? cried Zeluco; I can think of none; I can hardly think at all.—But if thou canst assist me in obtaining this woman, thou wilt eternally oblige me, priest; and thou shalt have money enough to build a church.

Although Zeluco in his rage thus threw himself open, and put himself in some degree in the father's power, the latter was resolved not to follow his example, and put himself in Zeluco's. He plainly perceived, indeed, that Zeluco did not imagine that he had acted from motives of piety; but whatever suspicions he might entertain, Pedro considered that there was some difference between being suspected of a villainy, and actually avowing it; he therefore assured Zeluco, that he would have no further connection with him in this business, and that he would inform against him if he made any criminal attempt on Laura. He acknowledged, he said, that as he had thought his marriage with that young lady would be happy for both, and agreeable to the worthy lady her mother, besides conducing to other good purposes, he should have been extremely happy to have promoted it; but after the furious and unwarrantable projects he had just heard of, he desired to have no more to do with it, directly or indirectly,

This calm remonstrance brought Zeluco to his senses ; he now perceived that the person he had to deal with, and whose assistance he still thought might be of use, was of too wary a character to act without a cover, to which he might retreat on occasion.

After a little recollection, he replied in conciliating terms, Surely, father, you cannot imagine that what has escaped me in a moment of passion is my serious intention ; my own reflections would very soon have convinced me of the folly and wickedness of an attempt which your prudence has in an instant put in a just light. I think myself most happy in such a friend, on whose wisdom I may rely, and whose counsels I shall ever be ready to follow. My love and respect for the virtuous young lady is such, that I will use every lawful means in my power to obtain her hand. I know the well-placed confidence which she has in you, and I most earnestly beg that you will use your influence with her in my favour. In the mean time, my dear father, I am sensible of the trouble which I give you ; and as the only way in which you permit me to show my gratitude is by enabling you to extend your benevolence to the deserving and the necessitous, I beg you will accept of this, which you will apply to whatever pious purpose you think proper :—So saying, he put a purse of sequins into the father's hands, assuring him of double the sum, independent of what he had already promised, on the successful conclusion of the business.

Now, my son, replied the monk, you talk rationally ; and reason always suggests a mode of action opposite to what is prompted by rage. You have already gained the good opinion of the young lady's mother ; please to recollect how you gained it ; not by violence, but by gentleness, by rendering her an essential service : and although the young woman herself seems indisposed towards you, yet who knows what a sense of

gratitude might do?—it might have the same effect on the daughter that it has had on the mother. The last obligation you laid on the family was of a pecuniary nature, which is more apt to make an impression on an old heart than on a young; but there are obligations which make deeper impressions on young hearts than on old.

What obligations are those?—I am ready to do whatever you direct.

Opportunities of this kind may occur, said the father, and then your own good sense will direct you how to profit by them. In your rage you proposed methods the most likely to make her detest you, and love those who should have the good fortune to free her from you; you spoke not like yourself, but like a *robber*, like a *ravisher*. A man who attempted what you threatened, would draw upon himself her just hatred; whereas he who did the reverse, who had the good fortune to save her from such an attempt, might probably gain her love.

Having said this in a very significant manner, Father Pedro took his leave. In spite of Zeluco's endeavours to prevail on him to be more explicit, after remaining for some time in profound meditation,—He who has the good fortune, said he, repeating to himself the words which Pedro had pronounced with emphasis; He who has the good fortune to save her from such an attempt might probably gain her heart. Who can make such an attempt?—How can I deliver her from dangers to which she is not exposed?

He conjectured, however, that the father meant to convey a hint to him respecting some emergency, which he knew would occur, although he was resolved not to be further explicit; and determined to observe his words and actions attentively, in the hopes of discovering his meaning more clearly.

Two days after, he was able more fully to compre-

hend the father's idea ; when he informed Zeluco that he had just left Madame de Seidlits and her daughter ; that Laura having often expressed a curiosity to visit Mount Vesuvius, her mother, who had formerly opposed it, had now agreed to it, on his offering to accompany her and Signora Sporza ; that accordingly he and these two ladies were to dine next day at Portici, visit the mountain in the evening, and return to Naples the same night.—If you are eager to be of the party, added he, I will endeavour to obtain the ladies' consent.

Zeluco, engrossed by reflection, did not give an immediate answer.

But I know, continued the father, you have been there already ; and possibly do not choose to return again.

Pray, my good father, said Zeluco, rousing from his reverie, at what hour do you propose returning to town ?

It is impossible to say exactly, replied Father Pedro ; I dare say it will be late enough, for I find Signora Laura wishes to see the explosions to the greatest advantage ; but I perceive we cannot have you.—I shall not, however, inform the ladies that I made you the proposal, or that you so much as know of the expedition, lest they should accuse you of want of gallantry. Adieu.—I can stay no longer at present.

What servants do you take with you ? resumed Zeluco.

I really do not know, said the father ; but I must be excused, I cannot stay any longer now ;—one of my penitents waits for me.—Servants !—let me see—there will be no need of many servants. I presume we shall have only Giacomo. The muleteers will be with us till we regain the carriage ; and then we shall have only the coachman and Giacomo to attend us to town. Saying this, the cautious monk hurried away,

leaving Zeluco satisfied respecting the meaning of his former hints.

CHAPTER XLVI.

“———Revenge, at first thought sweet,
Bitter ere long, back on itself recoils.” MILTON.

ZELUCO now determined to plan an attack on the ladies as they returned from the mountain, to drive off the assailants, and assume the merit with Laura of having saved her from robbery and assassination.

Having communicated his design to his valet-de-chambre, the confidant and accomplice of many of his villainies; the scheme seemed practicable and safe in all respects, except in the necessity which appeared of employing many agents. The valet, however, undertook the business with the assistance of only one person, and spoke with a confidence of success seldom acquired otherwise than by experience in similar scenes.

Being now convinced of Signora Sporza's dislike to him, and having a violent suspicion that it was through her means that Laura was so ill disposed towards him, Zeluco expressed some anxiety with regard to Signora Sporza, lest she might suspect the source of the attempt.—The valet assured him, that *she* should be particularly attended to, for he would order his companion to fire his pistol so close to her ear, that, though charged only with powder, it would confound her sufficiently to prevent her from making observations, and terrify the rest of the company into non-resistance.

This suggested a horrid piece of wickedness to the vengeful mind of Zeluco, which, however, he did not communicate to the valet; but next day, when he

understood that every thing was arranged, he desired to see the pistol with which the man was to arm his companion :—You are certain it is charged with powder only? said he.—I am very certain, replied the valet ; for I charged it myself. Let the fellow fire then directly at her head ; this will frighten her into silence, said Zeluco, and render every thing easy.—He then gave him very particular directions in what manner they were to behave to Laura ; and, sending the valet to fetch something from a distant part of the house, he slipped two bullets into the pistol : the hatred and thirst of revenge, which burned in his breast, against Signora Sporza, overcoming his caution, and prompting him to a measure which might have produced a discovery of the whole plan.

Before these two emissaries set out, Zeluco again repeated to the valet not to allow his companion to touch Laura, but to pull Signora Sporza entirely out of the carriage, and then fire the pistol in her face ; which would be the signal for Zeluco himself to make his appearance.

In the evening, Zeluco waited on Madame de Seidlits, where he found Father Mulo ; he affected great surprise when she told him that her daughter, Signora Sporza, and Father Pedro had set out that same morning on an expedition to Mount Vesuvius, and that they were not as yet returned.

When the night advanced without their appearing, Madame de Seidlits became uneasy ; the noise of every carriage gave her hopes that it was theirs ; and every disappointment when the carriage passed increased her uneasiness.

When Madame de Seidlits first began to express her apprehension, Zeluco withdrew on pretence of an engagement ; and Father Mulo remained, as he said himself, to comfort Madame de Seidlits, in case any

misfortune should really have happened to Laura and the rest of the party.

Madame de Seidlits had heard, in general, of people being sometimes hurt by the fall of the substances exploded from the mountain: her alarmed imagination prompted her to make particular inquiries on this subject; and Father Mulo's retentive memory supplied her with every instance of that kind which had happened for many years back; but he added, at the close of every example, that such a misfortune having happened to the people he mentioned, could not be considered as a positive proof that the same had befallen any of the company for whom she was so much interested; and if the like had happened to *some of them*, still it was possible that Laura was not the unfortunate person: for which reason, added he, my dear madam, you ought to keep yourself in perfect tranquillity, and hope for the best; because vexing yourself will be of no manner of use, but is rather a tempting of Providence, and may draw down upon your head the very misfortune you dread, or some other as bad. By such reasoning Father Mulo endeavoured, with uninterrupted perseverance, to quiet her fears.

What effect this method of conveying comfort might have produced on the mind of Madame de Seidlits, can never be known, for her imagination was too much alarmed to permit her to attend to his discourse: besides, although it may seem a bold word, no ecclesiastic ever possessed the faculty of speaking without being listened to, in greater perfection than the reverend Father Mulo.

On leaving Madame de Seidlits, Zeluco mounted his horse, and rode directly towards the place which he had fixed on for the attack. Having perceived his emissaries in waiting, he turned his horse without

seeming to take notice of them, and rode slowly backwards and forwards, till he saw the carriage coming briskly along. The valet and his companion, with masks on their faces, riding furiously up to the carriage, ordered the driver to stop, on pain of having his brains blown out; the driver instantly obeyed, and Giacomo fell from his horse on his knees, supplicating for mercy in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; to whom, after he had recovered his recollection a little, he added St. Januarius.—Father Pedro also prayed with much seeming fervency, invoking the aid of St. Dominic; and a whole host of other saints.

After the valet had taken the ladies' purses, which were instantly presented to him, the other fellow dragged Signora Sporza out of the chaise: she exclaimed that every thing had been delivered to them, and attempted to get into the carriage again; but the fellow, standing between her and it, presented his pistol, which flashed without going off. Zeluco seeing the flash, and hearing the screams of Laura, galloped towards the carriage, hollaing, and threatening the assailants with immediate death if they did not desist: but the fellow, whose pistol had snapped, fearing that he should not be thought to have performed his part properly, if he did not actually fire it, cocked it once more, and fired it off in such a hurried manner, that both the bullets passed the head of Signora Sporza, and one of them lodged in Zeluco's shoulder.

This staggered him a little; but the attackers flying, he came up to the carriage in time to prevent Laura from rolling out of it: she had retained her presence of mind while she considered the assailants simply as robbers; and after delivering their money, seeing Signora Sporza pulled violently out of the carriage, she called to Father Pedro to assist her; but on hearing the pistol fired, which she imagined had killed her

friend, she fainted in the chaise. Signora Sporza also was greatly alarmed; but seeing the aggressors fly, she rose from her knees, on which she had sunk when the pistol was fired, and assisted Zeluco and Father Pedro in their endeavours to recover Laura; who, as soon as she recognised Signora Sporza and the father, and understood that the danger was over, exclaimed, What blessed angel has delivered us from the ruffians? Father Pedro immediately answered, We all owe our deliverance to Signor Zeluco.—Signor Zeluco! cried Laura, with painful surprise. Yes, my daughter, added he, and here he is to receive our grateful acknowledgements. We are all highly indebted to you, signor, said she.—How providential was your coming! added Father Pedro.—Considering the hour of the night, said Signora Sporza, his coming seems miraculously so.

Zeluco then informed them how he was induced to meet them; that as he drew near the carriage, hearing the shrieks of Signora Laura, he rode up to the ruffians, one of whom, he said, he could have taken, had he not been more anxious to relieve them than to seize him.

The driver and Giacomo having now recovered from their terror, the carriage was prepared, and the company moved towards the town. Giacomo told the driver as they went, that he had made an observation which he would communicate to him as a friend, because it might be of use on future occasions of the same nature; it was this: that while he continued to implore the first three persons to whom he had addressed his prayers, no interposition had been made in his favour; but that as soon as he began to implore the protection of St. Januarius, Signor Zeluco had appeared for the rescue of the company. *Certo*, said the coachman, St. Januarius takes the greatest care of all his votaries on Mount Vesuvius and the neighbouring district, *ad ogni uccello suo nido è bello*; but out of

sight of the mountain, he assured Giacomo that St. Januarius was as regardless of prayers as his neighbours, and not more to be depended upon than those he complained of.

When the company arrived at the house of Madame de Seidlits, Father Mulo was giving her a circumstantial account of a robbery with assassination, which happened many years before on the road between Portici and Naples; and, as he with wonderful accuracy remarked, looking at his watch, much about the hour in which he was then speaking; he also detailed the providential manner in which the murderer was discovered, and how he was broken on the wheel, to the edification, as Father Mulo expressed himself, of all the beholders, and the great comfort of the murdered person's widow.

The powerful faculty hinted above, which the father possessed, and which shone with peculiar lustre in narrative, prevented these anecdotes from affecting Madame de Seidlits so much as they would otherwise have done. The sight of the company which now entered her house relieved her, however, from a set of very disagreeable reflections.

Father Pedro, in the presence of the ladies, gave her the history of their adventure, in which the generous intrepidity of Signor Zeluco made a conspicuous figure; and the watchful care of Providence in sending him to their deliverance was mentioned in the most pious terms.

Madame de Seidlits then poured out the grateful effusions of her heart in thanks to Zeluco, who modestly acknowledged that, on seeing her alarmed at the ladies not returning, and being himself exceedingly uneasy, he had, on leaving her, immediately mounted his horse, and galloped towards Portici, which he should ever consider as the most fortunate incident of

his life, with whatever consequence the accident which had happened to himself should be attended.

Accident! cried Madame de Seidlits: What accident?—and then perceiving blood on his clothes,—Alas! signor, said she, you are wounded! send directly for a surgeon!

Father Pedro, who, notwithstanding the blood, had reasons of his own for thinking that he was not at all, or in no dangerous degree hurt, said it would be best that Zeluco were removed to his own house, where the wound would be examined more conveniently, and proposed to accompany him immediately.

Madame de Seidlits, wringing her hands in the utmost grief, begged that all possible care might be taken of him; for she should never again know comfort if any accident should accrue to so worthy a man, particularly, added she, looking to Laura, on such an occasion.

Her daughter, with more composure, but with visible emotion, begged of Father Pedro not to leave Zeluco till his wound was dressed, which she hoped would not be found dangerous.

Father Mulo desired Zeluco to be of good cheer; for heaven *seldom* permitted villainy of this kind to pass unpunished; but that in case this wound should prove mortal, he might *rely upon it*, that the planners of such a daring attack would be brought to open shame; for, sooner or later, murders were always discovered.

Signora Sporza observed to Zeluco, who by this time was not the least alarmed in the company, that the wound could not be dangerous, as he had been able to sit on horseback while they were coming to town.

Zeluco was then put into a carriage, and slowly transported to his own house, accompanied by Father

Pedro, who did not choose to make any particular inquiry, nor to express the surprise he really felt at there being a wound at all; for, as the carriage went slowly, he was afraid of being overheard by the servant that walked by its side. The wounded man himself was silent, except that once he muttered, *Damn the awkward blockhead!* and afterwards, *What a cursed blunder!*

As soon as he was placed in his own bed-chamber, *Is the surgeon come?* said he to Father Pedro.

Do you really wish for a surgeon? said the father.

Certainly; don't you see how I bleed?

I see blood; but I had hopes it was not from your veins.

It is a cursed business: pray send for a surgeon, cried Zeluco impatiently.—*This was done accordingly.*

The valet and his accomplice had returned before Zeluco had even reached the town. The former, on hearing that a surgeon was sent for, and seeing blood on his master's arm, was astonished, and cried, *How it is possible, sir, that you can be wounded? For—*

Peace, babbler, said Zeluco.

Can any thing be more natural, said Father Pedro with a sarcastical smile, *than for pistols to make wounds, especially when fired by two such bloody-minded ruffians? But I must now leave you, signor; you may depend on my prayers for your recovery, and that you may soon reap the fruits of your generous valour.* He then withdrew, convinced that the wound was fictitious, and invented as a natural incident in the farce, which would be better acted by the master, the servant, and the surgeon, without his taking any part.

CHAPTER XLVII.

A medical consultation.

As Father Pedro went out, a physician and surgeon entered the room together. It was found that the bullet had entered the arm, near the shoulder, and, without having injured the bone or joint, was felt beneath the skin on the opposite side.

It was extracted without difficulty after an incision. The doctor and surgeon then retired to another room to consult. The latter was a Frenchman of some humour, a considerable share of shrewdness, and much of a coxcomb.

This wound is nothing, said the doctor.

We must try to make *something* of it, however, replied the surgeon.

It will heal of itself directly, resumed the doctor.

It must therefore not be left to itself, said the surgeon.

What further do you intend? said the physician: little more seems necessary, except applying some fresh lint every day.

Lascia far' a Marc Antonio, replied the surgeon; I will take care that his excellency shall not be exposed to danger on the high road for at least a month to come.

Unless it be to prescribe some cooling physic, and such a low regimen as will prevent his suffering from want of exercise, I can do nothing, said the physician.

That is doing a great deal, said the surgeon; it keeps the patient in low spirits, and renders him obedient.

But after all, how do you intend to treat the wound itself? said the physician.

I intend to treat it *secundum artem*, replied the surgeon.

Benè, lenè respondisti, said the physician; and so much for the wound.—Now, pray what say you to the news? continued the physician; they talk of a Russian fleet in the Mediterranean.

Whether that will take place or not, said the surgeon, depends entirely on the king's pleasure.

How so? said the physician; how can his majesty prevent it?

By threatening to sink them if they presumed to enter the Streights, replied the surgeon. The Toulon fleet will be sufficient.

Toulon fleet! cried the physician: Why, what king do you mean?

Why, the king of France, to be sure, replied the surgeon: What other king *can* I mean?

Vi prego di scusarmi, signor, cried the physician; but in speaking of the king *in* Naples, I thought the king of Naples might perhaps be meant.

A jè di Dio, signor, replied the surgeon; *non m'è venuto mai in pensiero*; but I believe, added he, looking at his watch, our consultation has lasted a decent time enough.

The physician being of the same opinion, they returned to the patient's bed-chamber. The doctor ordered a low diet, and cooling ptisans in great abundance.

What do you think of the wound? said Zeluco to the surgeon.

It would be rash to speak decisively at the very first dressing, signor, said the surgeon.

But what is your general notion? resumed Zeluco.

Why, signor, if my friend here will answer for keeping down the fever, I will do my best to save your excellency's arm.

Save my arm! exclaimed Zeluco; I would rather be damned than lose my arm, sir.

That may be, signor, said the surgeon, but people are not always allowed their choice on such occasions.

Zounds, sir! exclaimed Zeluco; do you think there is any danger of my losing my arm?

I am determined to save it, if possible, said the surgeon, and it will afford me great pleasure to succeed.

Here the physician interfering, begged of Zeluco to be composed, for nothing retarded the cure of wounds more than impatience; he hoped, by the great skill of his friend, every thing would terminate to his satisfaction, provided he would be resigned, and follow the directions that from time to time would be given him.

With much internal chagrin, Zeluco was obliged to assume the appearance of serenity, and he promised to obey the injunctions of those two learned gentlemen.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

The French surgeon.

THE following day the physician and surgeon did not think it expedient to take the dressings from the wound, but renewed their injunctions that Zeluco should be kept exceedingly quiet, take his medicines punctually, and strictly adhere to the coolest regimen. As the wound now was more painful than at first, the patient became apprehensive of losing his arm, and complied with the directions given, though not without breaking out frequently into violent execrations on the unlucky chance by which he was reduced to the necessity of suffering such penance.

Madame de Seidlits had sent a message, desiring that the surgeon might call at her house when he left his patient.

He went accordingly; and found Father Mulo with her.

I am extremely happy, madam, said the surgeon, to have this opportunity of paying you my devoirs; it is an honour I have long wished for. I perceive, by the brilliancy of your looks, that you are in charming health.

Pray, sir, said Madame de Seidlits with impatience, how do you find ——— ?

I ask you ten thousand pardons, madam, for interrupting you, said the surgeon; but I beg to know, before you proceed, how the amiable and accomplished young lady, your daughter, does ?

My daughter is very well, sir, answered Madame de Seidlits; now will you be so obliging——

You may command whatever is in my power, madam, said the surgeon, bowing very low.

Then pray tell me, sir, how you left your patient ?

I have a great many patients, madam; but I presume your ladyship inquires, at present, for Signor Zeluco.

I do, sir, and earnestly beg to know how you left him ?

Much better than I found him, madam—I have cut a bullet out of him.

Poor gentleman ! cried Madame de Seidlits.

He is not the poorer for that, madam, said the surgeon; he is a great gainer by what has been taken from him.

I hope he is in no manner of danger ? said Father Mulo, who was still with her.

Alas ! father, said the surgeon, how often are our hopes fallacious !—A heretic hopes to go to Heaven, which is impossible; Is it not, father ?

That certainly is impossible, said Mulo.

I knew, continued the surgeon, that you would be fully convinced of that great and comfortable truth.

But you do not think this poor gentleman in danger? said Madame de Seidlits.

A person of your ladyship's excellent understanding must know, replied the surgeon, that gun-shot wounds are often attended with danger.

This is only a pistol-shot wound, said Father Mulo.

Very judiciously observed, father, said the surgeon; *that* certainly makes a difference; it happens unluckily, however, that even pistol-shot wounds prove sometimes mortal.

The bullet, I understand, passed through his arm *only*? said Father Mulo.

Had it passed through his heart *also*, it would have been more dangerous to be sure, father, said the surgeon.

You have extracted the ball—I think you said so, sir? resumed Madame de Seidlits.

I have, madam, and quite in the manner recommended by Mons. Lewis at Paris; it is by much the safest. I never made a sweeter incision in my life.

It must have been very painful, said Madame de Seidlits, shrinking like one who suffers.

Painful!—not in the least, madam! replied the surgeon; I performed it with the greatest ease.

I imagine, said Father Mulo, the lady meant, that the operation must have been painful to the *patient*.

To the *patient*! Oho! cried the surgeon; your ladyship spoke of the *patient*—did you?

I did indeed, sir; I fear he suffered a great deal, said Madame de Seidlits.

Why, yes, a good deal perhaps; though I should think not a vast deal neither.—I have seen many suffer more;—in short, there is no knowing, said the surgeon, carelessly; then added with earnestness, But of this I do assure you, madam, that Monsieur Lewis's method is by much the best. I had the honour of

being a favourite élève of his—and, in some instances, have improved on his ideas.

— I dare say, sir, said Madame de Seidlits, willing that he should withdraw, you will do all that can be done for this gentleman. I shall be glad to know how he is after the next dressing. I have heard your skill much commended.

You are extremely polite and obliging, madam, said the surgeon, bowing: Your ladyship, no doubt, has passed some time at Paris?

I never did, sir; I shall expect to hear from you to-morrow.

I am surprised at that, said the surgeon; I could have sworn that you had lived a considerable time at Paris.

Pray, sir, resumed Father Mulo, will you be kind enough, before you go, to say whether or not you think this gentleman's wound will be long in healing? for I have not yet been able to gather from your discourse what your opinion is.

The art of surgery, my good father, replied the surgeon, consists in healing wounds *well* and *radically*, not soon and superficially; the last is the art of charlatans.

I honour the art of surgery, sir, said Madame de Seidlits: it is one of the most useful that mankind possess, and particularly so to the bravest class of mankind.

Your politeness can only be equalled by your excellent understanding, madam, said the surgeon. The art of surgery is not only the most useful and most honourable, but also the most ancient of all the arts; it can boast higher antiquity than the art of medicine itself.

Perhaps it may be so, said Madame de Seidlits.

I will have the honour of proving it to your ladyship, said the surgeon; then coughing and adjusting

himself like one going to make a formal harangue, he began—The earliest race of mankind——

I am fully convinced it is as you assert, said Madame de Seidlits, interrupting him; but I must really beg your forgiveness for being obliged to leave you at present. You will be so good as to let me know how your patient does after the next dressing?—Your humble servant, sir —Adieu, father.

When Madame de Seidlits was withdrawn: Is it possible, cried the surgeon, that this lady was never at Paris?

She never was, I assure you, replied Father Mulo.

That seems very extraordinary, said the surgeon.

I had a notion, resumed the father, that there was a considerable number of people in the world who never were at Paris.

Your reverence's notions are all wonderfully well founded, said the surgeon; but my surprise at present proceeds from my not being able to conjecture where or how Madame de Seidlits could acquire so much politeness and liberality of sentiment.

She was educated in a convent, said the father.

That clears up the matter at once, said the surgeon; for so were you, father, and yet perhaps you never were at Paris any more than the lady.

Never in my whole life, answered Father Mulo.

Nor at Moscow, neither? added the surgeon.

No, never, answered the father; though I have heard a good deal about *Muscovy*, particularly of late.

O, you have? said the surgeon.

I have, indeed, answered Father Mulo; some people tell me it is larger than Naples. What is your opinion?

About what? said the surgeon; I fear I do not quite understand what your reverence means.

I only asked which you believed to be the largest city, Naples or *Muscovy*?

Why, I should think Naples the most populous, answered the surgeon, though Muscovy stands upon rather more ground.

I had some suspicion of that kind myself, said Father Mulo.

CHAPTER XLIX.

An anodyne sermon.

Impediat verbis lassas onerantibus aures. HOR.

WHEN Madame de Seidlits left Father Mulo and the surgeon, it was partly to get free of the loquacity of the latter; and also because Laura, who did not choose to appear herself, waited with impatience to know the surgeon's opinion of Zeluco. That young lady had passed a very disturbed night, owing, in some measure, to the fright, but more to the uneasiness she felt on account of Zeluco's wound, or perhaps rather on account of the occasion on which he had received it; for it is more than probable that Laura would have felt less concern had he received the same wound in any other cause. Of all mankind the person she wished least to be obliged to was Zeluco.

Madame de Seidlits having perceived her daughter's anxiety, although she had herself been agitated by the alarming manner in which the surgeon had spoken, affected a degree of composure which she had not, and spoke to Laura as if there were no doubt of his recovery; she afterwards desired Signora Sporza and Father Mulo to talk the same language to her. The former did so naturally; for there appeared something mysterious and suspicious to her in the whole adventure, and she never once believed him in any danger.

Father Pedro visited Zeluco daily, but never thought

proper to ask any particular explanation of the accident by which he was wounded: nor did the latter ever talk to him but on the general supposition that the attack had been made by real robbers. Yet they so far talked without disguise to each other, that the father informed Zeluco of Laura's distress on his account, the mother's precaution in softening the accounts of his illness to her daughter, advising Zeluco, as the best means of keeping alive the interest which that young lady took in him, that he should not be in too great a hurry to announce his perfect recovery; and declaring, at the same time, that he had better hopes than ever of his success.

Several days after the adventure, Father Pedro found the three ladies together; and endeavouring to suit the account he gave of Zeluco with the sentiments he wished to inspire, he said, that, for his part, he did not know what to think of Signor Zeluco's state of health; that sometimes the surgeon imagined the wound disposed to heal, that soon after he declared that it had a worse appearance, and threatened the most dangerous consequences. But what gave him the greatest uneasiness was, that the physician, a man of great skill and penetration, had told him, that he suspected some secret anxiety of mind preyed upon his patient, producing a slow fever, which gradually undermined his strength, and destroyed the effect of the medicines; and he was much afraid would render a wound, which might otherwise have been cured, the apparent cause of his dissolution. Madame de Seidlits threw a look at Laura, as the father pronounced these words, and the young lady herself betrayed symptoms of great emotion.—Avaunt, thou prophet of evil! cried Signora Sporza with an air of raillery, see you not that this audience cannot bear a sermon from the Lamentations of Jeremiah? Nor is there need for such gloomy forebodings. I will be answerable for it, that our he-

roic knight errant's wound will heal in due time, in spite of the secret sorrow which preys on his tender heart.

Signora Sporza continued to slight every idea of danger, and endeavoured to keep up the spirits of her friends, which seemed ready to sink under the artful insinuations of Father Pedro.

Signora Sporza, in consequence of the engagement above mentioned, set out for Rome with her companion a few days after this conversation, having taken an affectionate leave of her two friends, both of whom were a little hurt at the want of concern she displayed on account of the illness of Zeluco, who, they imagined, merited more regard from her than she was willing to allow.

When she departed, Father Pedro circulated, without restraint, such reports as he thought would answer his purpose. One day Madame de Seidlits was told that Zeluco was a little better, the next a great deal worse; at one time it was given out, that the surgeon feared it might be necessary to amputate his arm, as the best means of saving his life; and the father was always at hand to lament, that his generous intrepidity should be attended with such consequences.

One day he filled Madame de Seidlits's mind with the greatest apprehensions for Zeluco's life; asserting that the agony of his wound was excruciating; that he had not slept for the three last nights, and that the fever threatened his brain.—What a benevolent and liberal friend; exclaimed the father, are the poor about to lose! And so he left both the mother and daughter in very great concern.

He had hinted to Zeluco himself, that he intended to give this impression, that he might act accordingly, and give suitable answers to all inquiries made about his health. The father's view was to imprint, in the

first place, a strong degree of compassion in the breast of Laura, in the hope that this would render her more favourable towards Zeluco; and he purposed returning that same evening to the ladies with exaggerated accounts of Zeluco's tortures, which, by totally depriving him of sleep, augmented the fever; and when he should perceive Laura's compassion strongly interested, he intended again to urge his suit, in the hopes of obtaining some favourable declaration from Laura, in the event of Zeluco's recovery.

This shrewd plan; however, was a little deranged. Father Mulo called on Madame de Seidlits two hours after Pedro had left her. When he had sat a little while, she begged he would be so obliging as to pay a visit to Signor Zeluco, endeavour to see him, and return afterwards to her; for his case, as she was informed, altered every hour, and she did not know whose account to depend upon. Laura joined in this request, that she might be relieved from the reverend father's conversation, which she had always felt uncommonly oppressive.

Father Mulo's connexion with Madame de Seidlits's family was known to all Zeluco's servants; therefore, although they had received orders to admit nobody to his chamber except the medical people and Father Pedro, yet they imagined that Father Mulo was meant to be comprehended in the exception. He was accordingly introduced.

But as Zeluco expected no such visit, he was not exactly in the situation he would have chosen, had he known of the father's coming. The wine and sweetmeats which were on the table had been placed there on Father Pedro's account, who was always pleased to find a collation of that kind ready arranged when he called. Father Mulo expressed great satisfaction at seeing him look so much better than he expected, adding, that it would afford consolation to his friends,

particularly to Madame de Seidlits, when he should inform them how well he looked.

Alas! father, said Zeluco; nothing is more deceitful than looks. I am in continual pain. I have not slept at all for these three nights. The physician thinks I might be better if I could get some sleep; but nothing he orders has the effect, the agony of my arm is so violent. Oh!—

You had best take a glass of wine; allow me to help you, said the father.

I dare not taste wine, replied Zeluco; but I beg you will help yourself to some; and pray, my good father, try at the same time, if you can, to taste those biscuits; you seem fatigued with walking in this sultry weather. There is a napkin to dry you with; you are in a very violent perspiration. Pray take another glass of wine. I will endeavour to suppress my complaints while you refresh yourself. The *lachryma Christi* is excellent; do taste it.

Father Mulo acknowledged that he was indeed very much fatigued, having visited many penitents that morning, and walked a great deal. After he had ate and drank very plentifully, thinking himself bound to repay Zeluco for his agreeable repast, he prepared to do it in the most ample manner in the only coin he ever carried about with him, a consolatory exhortation. He turned, therefore, from the buffet, and addressed himself to Zeluco in these words: The accident which has befallen you, my dear son, in all human probability, is the most fortunate that could have happened; you have had time during your confinement to reflect on your past life, and to repent of your manifold iniquities. As for the pain, it is temporary and trivial in comparison of the pangs which sinners endure in purgatory. Of what account are the frivolous enjoyments of sense? of what avail are all sublunary—? &c. &c. &c.

In this strain, and with an uniform monotonous voice, mightily resembling the drone of a bee, the father continued his harangue with wonderful perseverance, and shut his eyes, as was his custom when he prayed and admonished. It is difficult to say how long he might have continued, had he not been surprised into a full stop, in the midst of a sentence full ofunction, by the snoring of Zeluco; who, unwilling to interrupt the relation of Laura, and unable to attend to what he said, had been long lulled into sleep by the lethargic hum of his voice.

Father Mulo, opening his eyes, perceived the situation of Zeluco. As it was no ways uncommon to the father to find many of his audience in the same condition at the end of his sermons, he betrayed no marks of surprise on the present occasion; but after having with wonderful composure finished what remained of his bottle, and ate a few more biscuits, he walked softly out of the room, told the servant that his master had most providentially fallen into repose, and desired that he should on no account be disturbed till he awaked of himself.

Father Mulo, not choosing to be troubled with inquiries into particulars, sent a general message to Madame de Seidlits, importing that Signor Zeluco was a great deal better. This afforded much pleasure to both the mother and daughter; and the same evening, when Father Pedro called on purpose to strengthen the impression he had already made, they congratulated him on the comfortable accounts they had received of Zeluco. As Father Pedro had not seen nor heard of him since he had been last with the ladies, he was a good deal surprised at the intelligence; he could see no motive Zeluco could have for deviating from the plan that had been settled between them, and therefore declared his disbelief of the account which the ladies had received. Have you seen Signor Ze-

lucó since you were here? said Madame de Seidlits. Father Pedro owned that he had not.—Then our accounts are later than yours, and may be depended on; they come from Father Mulo, who was with Signor Zeluco, and sent me the message after he left him.

There is some mistake, said Pedro angrily; he cannot possibly be better.

One would imagine, however, said Laura, that there is nothing to put you out of humour in the intelligence we have received, and which it is certainly possible *may* be true.

The reason that I have to fear that it is not, resumed Father Pedro, recollecting himself, makes me averse to your adopting an opinion which will give double uneasiness when found to be false.

Whether it is false or true may be soon ascertained, said Madame de Seidlits, who immediately sent a footman to inquire. The messenger returned in a few minutes, and informed them, that Signor Zeluco had been asleep for several hours; and that he slept so calmly, there was every reason to hope he would be greatly better when he awoke.

Heaven be praised! exclaimed the father; some powerful soporific must have been administered to produce such a lasting effect.

Zeluco was at length awakened by Father Pedro himself, who was greatly irritated at what had happened, and burned with impatience to vent his ill-humour.

You seized a very seasonable moment truly for slumbering, said he, after a long altercation.

I seized it not, replied Zeluco; I am hoarse with telling you, that, in spite of all I could do, it seized me.

After I had melted them with the accounts of your sufferings, assuring them you had not slept for three nights, when I returned with the strongest hopes of

improving on this favourable disposition of Laura's mind, continued Pedro, it was too provoking to find them informed that you were in perfect ease, sound asleep, and the effect of all my labour annihilated.

If the whole world had been to be annihilated, I could not help it, cried Zeluco; your brother Mulo has power to lull Prometheus asleep, in spite of all the efforts of his vulture. I'll tell you, father, added Zeluco with vehemence, as if he intended a stronger illustration, *your* own eloquence is scarcely more powerful to rouse and animate, than *his* drowsy monodies are to benumb the senses.

This last stroke softened the wrath and smoothed the brow of Father Pedro. Well, well, my friend, said he with a smile, repining at what is past can do no good; all may yet be repaired: that this long and unexpected repose has been of service to your health must not be denied to the ladies, but remember that you are to recover very slowly, and that you may possibly relapse.

After a consultation of some length, they separated as good friends as ever.

CHAPTER L.

“ Il est aussi facile de se tromper soi-même sans s'en appercevoir, qu'il est difficile de tromper les autres sans qu'ils s'en apperçoivent.”

ROCHEFOUCAULT.

ABOUT this time, Madame de Seidlits received accounts of the failure of a house at Frankfort, in which her husband had placed most part of the money he had left for the use of his widow and daughter. In the same house also was the residue of the money produced by the sale of her furniture and other effects, when she left Germany; part of which had served to

defray the expense of her journey; the rest she had ordered to be remitted to her banker at Naples, and expected every day to hear that this was done, when the sad news of the failure arrived.

This news was accompanied, as is usual on such occasions, with the comfortable assertion that it was only a temporary stoppage of payment; for that the house would pay all it owed in time. However that might be, Madame de Seidlits felt very great immediate inconveniency from the accident: she had already contracted debts at Naples, for the discharge of which her sole reliance was upon this money: she concealed this misfortune from Laura, to save her the shock of such calamitous news, and in hopes that she might in a few posts have the first statement confirmed, that there would finally be no loss by the bankruptcy. In this distressing situation she lamented the absence of Signora Sporza, who was the only person to whom she could freely speak on such a subject; and she once thought of writing to her for a small supply of money for her immediate occasions: but fearing that this might not be convenient, or perhaps not agreeable, and having naturally a great reluctance to lie under a pecuniary obligation, she determined rather to part with her jewels, even those which she had received from her husband, and on that account valued far above their intrinsic worth: she accordingly applied to a jeweller, and sold them for a sum sufficient for the discharge of her most urgent debts.

Father Pedro having seen the jeweller, with whom he was acquainted, coming out of Madame de Seidlits's house, entered into conversation with him, and endeavoured, from a prying disposition not uncommon to monks, to sift from him what his business with her was; for he well knew that Madame de Seidlits was not in circumstances to purchase jewels. The jeweller, in consequence of her injunctions, evaded his ques-

tions, which more and more excited the curiosity of Father Pedro, who did not rest till he learned from one of the jeweller's workmen, what his master's business with Madame de Seidlits was.

This gave the father an idea of the distress of her circumstances far beyond what he had hitherto entertained, and inspired him at the same time with fresh hopes of success in the scheme he was so sanguinely engaged in. He immediately communicated the intelligence to Zeluco, adding, that he imagined it would be no longer necessary for him to exaggerate the uneasiness of his wound, but rather to admit the idea which the ladies had already received of its being better: although his general health was still delicate, this plan would allow him the benefit of enjoying the fresh air, the pleasure sometimes of seeing and paying his court to Laura; while the perplexed state in which the mother's circumstances seemed to be, with the admonitions which the father undertook on every proper occasion to give both to the mother and daughter, might at length dispose them to listen to his proposals.

Zeluco waited on Madame de Seidlits and Laura the following day; they both manifested sincere satisfaction at seeing him. Madame de Seidlits cautioned him, with all the solicitude of friendship, to be very careful of himself, till his health should be fully restored; and Laura, impressed with a sense of obligation, and softened by the danger in which he had been, behaved with more cordiality than she had ever shown to him before. He continued to visit them very frequently, and was always received in the same manner.

Father Pedro congratulated him on the very friendly reception which he met with, from which he augured an agreeable answer when he should next speak to Madame de Seidlits on the subject of Zeluco's suit, which he hinted he intended to do very soon; but the same circumstances which had imparted this confidence

to the mind of the father, revived Zeluco's original hopes of obtaining Laura without marriage. He imagined that the proud spirit of both mother and daughter, humbled by misfortune and terrified by the horrors of impending poverty, would in a short time acquiesce in the settlements he determined to make unclogged with the ceremony he detested.

He wished not, therefore, that the father, by a precipitate renewal of the proposal of marriage, should render it more difficult for him to succeed upon his own terms, as he expected, though perhaps at a more distant period.

The wound in his arm was now on the point of healing; but the fears he had undergone, the medicines he had taken, the regimen he had followed, had weakened him considerably, giving him also an appearance of sickness, which corresponded with the accounts that had been spread of his danger, and enabled him to support a delay in the gratification of his desires, with a degree of patience which he could not have displayed had he been in perfect health.

He begged of Father Pedro, therefore, not to urge his former suit at present, expressing an apprehension of disgusting the ladies by too much importunity; then talked of his sorrow at the thoughts of the distress they were in, wished that the father would prevail on Madame de Seidlits to accept of a sum of money, with which he directly presented him, on the pretence of its coming from a person who suspected her situation, but was unknown to Father Pedro and to herself, and was determined to conceal the transaction from all the world.

Although Zeluco behaved on this occasion with a good deal of address, spoke with great gentleness and in plausible terms, Father Pedro's penetration pervaded his hypocrisy, and he at once saw his motive and drift.

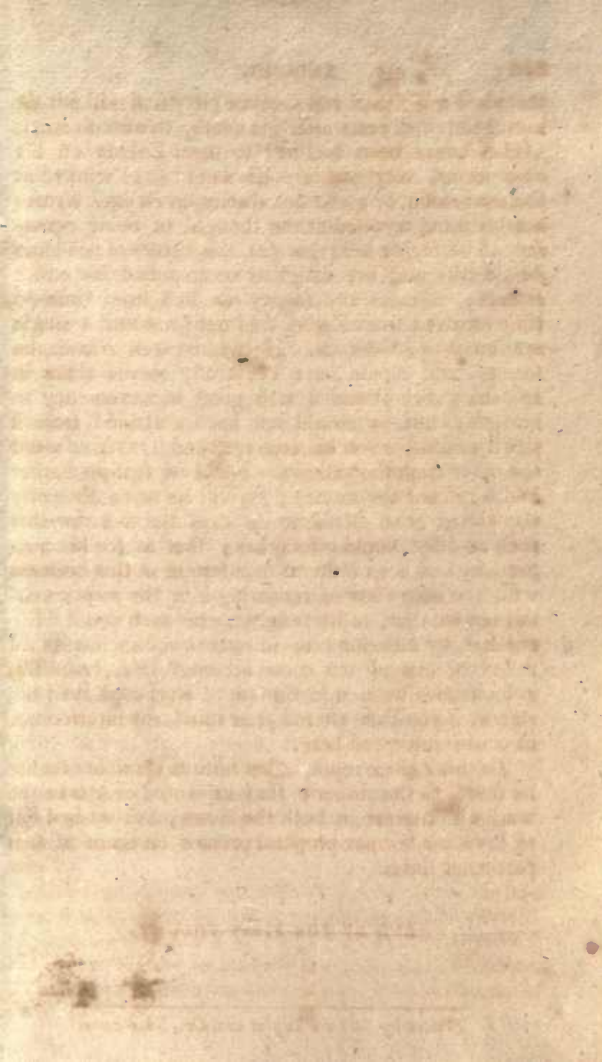
Father Pedro, it must be confessed, was not a monk of

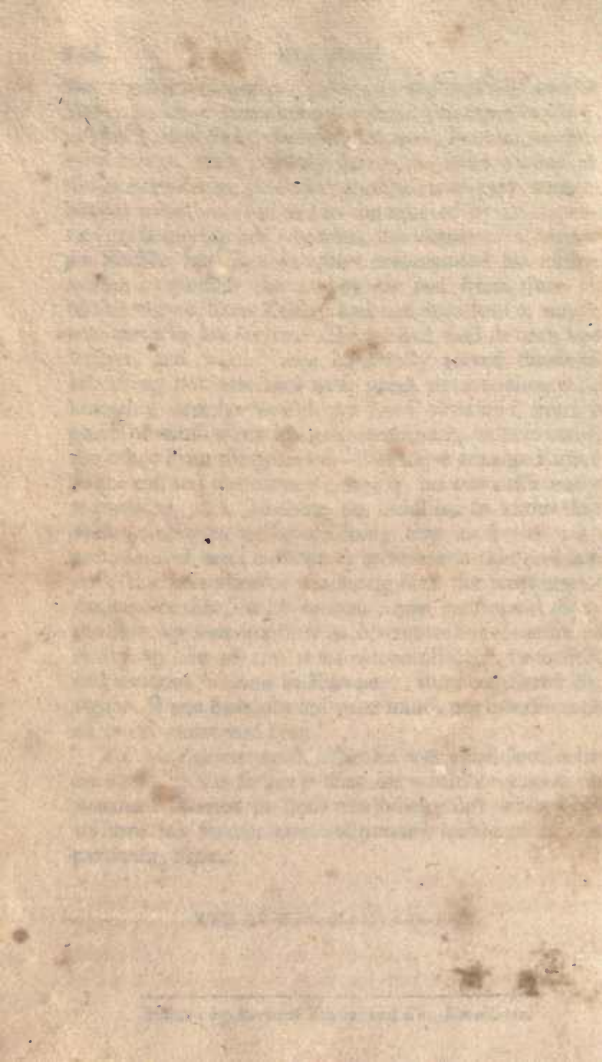
that rigid self-denial and sublime piety that will entitle him, a hundred years after his death, to canonization.

Had Laura been inclined to meet Zeluco on his own terms, very possibly he would have winked at the connexion, or given her absolution on easy terms; but his mind revolted at the thought of being accessory to betraying her: besides, the virtues of Madame de Seidlits and her daughter commanded his entire esteem; whereas the money he had from time to time received from Zeluco had not produced a single sentiment in his favour. He wished well to both the former, and would have cheerfully served them in any thing not attended with great inconveniency to himself; but he would not have abstained from a pinch of snuff when his nose required it, to have saved the other from the gallows.—For these reasons Father Pedro refused the money; saying, he was sufficiently acquainted with Madame de Seidlits, to know that such an offer would offend her; that as for his own part, he had been induced to interfere in this business with the sole view of rendering him the most essential service that, in his opinion, one man could do to another, by assisting him in his avowed inclination of marrying one of the most accomplished, beautiful, and virtuous women in Europe: But, continued he, signor, if you have altered your mind, my interference of course must end here.

To this Zeluco replied, that he was sensible of what he owed to the father; that he would ever take the warmest interest in both the ladies; but wished not to have his former proposal pressed on them at that particular time.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.







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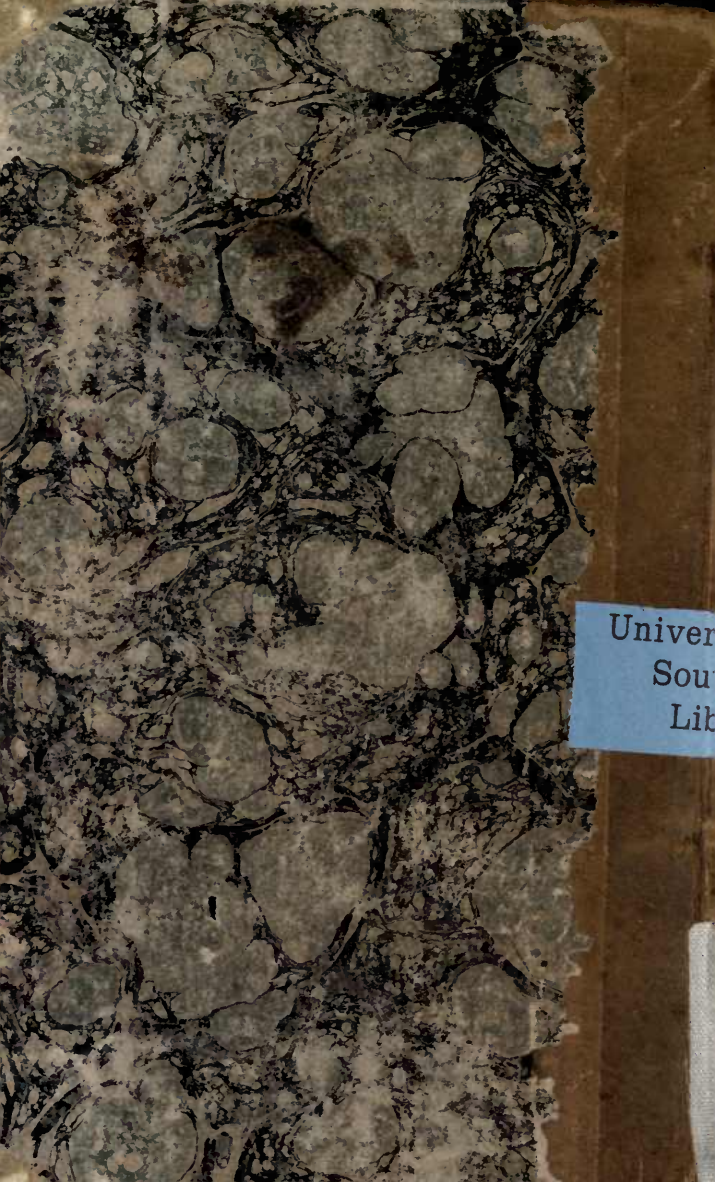
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