

DUTY AND INCLINATION:

A NOVEL.

EDITED BY

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"Thought contending with thought;
Reason and the affections at variance with each other."

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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DUTY AND INCLINATION.

CHAPTER I.

“ Now they reach thee in their anger !
Fire and smoke and hellish clangour
Are around thee !”

BYRON.

IT was about the end of April, when the wind at early dawn blows fresh and chill; the moon had shone full in the hemisphere of its rest, serene and solemn, an undying lamp, shedding its unsullied beams upon a world of sin and woe, and equally illumining the path of the wicked as that of the virtuous; cold and pale she was now retiring to the far west, giving place to the rising of a morn, eventful, and involving the fate of many.

The General and his attendants were mounting the eminence before them, undulating in ascent, and more than a mile in length; scarcely had

they advanced half way, when clamorous sounds and shouts of discord met their ears; having ordered the troops to follow, the General and his aid-de-camp sprang forward and attained the summit, where, alas! no troops awaited their coming.

Fired with impetuosity and an overheated zeal, impatient of delay, Major Harrold, in opposition to the commands of his General, had advanced to meet the combatants;—not perceiving the numbers of rebels, secreted in every direction, in a thickly-set country, beneath hedges of furze and brambles, this ill-judged officer had precipitated himself with the troops under his command into the very abyss of destruction.

The Irish peasantry, in all their ferocity of character, headed by leaders bold, daring, and outrageous as themselves, might well, in the horrid picture they then presented, have realised what the imagination might have conceived of the untamed savage or beast of prey precipitating with equal brutality on their victim.

What a scene of confusion, desperation, and carnage was destined to meet the eye of the General! The wild, infuriated Irish, thronging with their long terrific pikes, had broken the ranks of those brave soldiers, so worthy of a better fate; the ground

received the slain, and streams of blood dyed the surface of the earth.

It was enough. Aghast, struck with horror and dismay, the General and his companions awaited the coming up of the forces; the former, during that short interval, reflecting upon what he had best determine: should he pour into the heat of action, in order that by keeping up a continual firing of musketry, so large a body of men might strike panic into the rebels? Advancing bravely in front of the ranks, he exhorted them to do their duty; firm and undaunted they obeyed:—but, alas! their columns were dispersed; the previous success of the rebels, in their carnage of the advanced guard, had given them an earnest of a second victory.

To spare a still greater and useless effusion of blood, nothing remained to the General but a safe and honourable retreat, and which he executed with the greatest coolness, having lost but few of his men. In the disordered state of the country, the General considered the retreat he was making to be most essential for the safety of the Fort, which he had left to the discretion of a battalion of superannuated veterans, and which required therefore to be put under an immediate and strong armament. Mournful and silent, the General and his aid-de-camp turned to retrace the path

they had trodden, reflecting upon the many cut off in their prime, low and bleeding on the sod, heaped promiscuously; no honoured grave but the yawning pit to receive their disfigured bodies.

“What a deplorable error,” thought the General; “in what cruel fortune am I involved! and which might have been prevented had the ill-fated Major obeyed my orders. A short delay, and he would have been supported by the body of forces he was made aware would follow him, so much more numerous than those he commanded, which were but as a handful compared to the hordes of savages he had to encounter.” Nought could exculpate that officer from so perverse a disobedience of his General’s orders,—having been sent forward, as previously planned, merely to reconnoitre, and upon no condition to have engaged without the chief’s own personal express command; such had been the strict, deliberate, and urgent injunctions repeatedly given upon his leaving the Fort. He had fallen a victim to his indiscreet courage; and, what was still more poignant to reflect upon, the havock, the ruin, the desolation his fate involved, rendered it doubtful whether even one individual had escaped to tell the dreadful tale.

Again, as the General continued his reflections, every mischievous occurrence uniting to oppose

him, might, when his conduct was reviewed, make it appear that he had not himself acted as an officer on duty ought to have done; and he deeply lamented his unfortunate delay, caused by the treacherous negative of the rebel to the question whether an armed force had passed his house. True, it seemed that to have mistrusted his veracity before just cause of suspicion had occurred, would have implied an unwarrantable mistrust also of the officer on whose implicit obedience he relied. Fatal abuse of confidence! Survive he cannot, thought the General; and better for him so, since, if living, his fate would be a court-martial, and dismissal from the service with disgrace.

“This unhappy defeat,” he observed to his aide-camp, “arising through the imprudence of Major Harrold, now numbered with the dead, in giving further audacity to the victorious rebels, instilling into them hopes of future success beyond their most sanguine expectations, cannot but entail the worst consequences.”

Deeply grieved, Captain Curtis expressed poignant regret, and forcibly lamented that he had allowed himself to have been buoyed up with such high anticipations of victory as he had been the preceding evening.

“My dear Curtis,” replied the General, taking

the blame upon himself for having, in the natural yielding of his character, attended to his counsels, "it is always thus that, in a military career, we are exposed to the chances of good or ill fortune, and what has now befallen us all (more particularly myself as chief) demonstrates that the issue of our schemes, prudent or not, depends as it were upon the cast of a die. Had we happily been in time to check the impetuous ardour of Major Harold, the suggestion would instantly have occurred that cavalry alone would be of service here; two or three regiments of dragoons, fiercely riding over and trampling down that barbarous throng, were indispensable towards gaining us the victory. Desperate emergencies require desperate energies. The fatal hour is past, and it is now too late to reason."

Thus occupied in discourse, the General was scarcely sensible of the exhaustion his mind and body underwent, till suddenly pulling up his horse's reins he slackened his pace, approaching a small cabin, whence at no great distance a woman was seen bearing with her a pail.

His orderly dismounting, asked the General if he would not like to refresh himself with a draught of new milk, drawing as he spoke a bottle-case from his pocket, in which he had provided brandy.

Being answered in the affirmative, he ran to the cabin to procure a jug or basin of the beverage. Meanwhile, as the woman approached, the General threw her a piece of silver, to allow him to taste the contents of her pail.

During this short interval, a bold and daring rebel, with fiendlike intent, like a serpent crouching in ambush awaiting the moment to inflict a deadly wound, was concealed in the covert of the hedge, the distance only of a pistol-shot from the General. Pausing for an instant with savage joy to feast his eyes upon his prey, secure within his reach, his certain victim, he deliberately aimed the weapon and pulled the trigger: the piece missed fire! A second attempt was made, but with the same result. What but the interposition of Providence saved the unsuspecting General, who, spurring his horse onwards, was speedily borne from the murderous aim!

Blasphemy and curses burst from the villain; he cast the weapon to the ground, furiously resumed it, picked the lock, essayed again, and with effect; the ball destined to fell the General to the earth lodged itself in the decayed trunk of an intervening tree.

A considerable sum had been offered by the chiefs of the insurrection for the General's head;

no wonder then, with such a reward for his assassination, danger and death menaced him every moment. The only place of safe and honourable refuge from certain destruction to his followers and himself was the Fort, and thither then, seeing that the post of safety was become that of duty, the General retreated. His soul wept as he crossed the drawbridge at the thought of those who had passed it the preceding evening, never more to return.

The day was already far advanced, when the General made his way directly to the apartment of Mrs. De Brooke, where, awfully impressed as she had been in his absence, the instant her eye caught her husband's, every tremulous anxiety seemed confirmed; she scarcely dared to make inquiries, but flying to embrace him, awaited in dread expectation his speaking. Brief was his tale of woe! horrid in its recital! yet it seemed but as a beginning to more portentous evils; it came but as one loud burst of thunder on her ear, the darkened elements presaging deeper and more aggravated peals. Thus lost in sorrowful anticipations, she was roused from them by the hasty injunctions of her husband to lose no time in making arrangements for herself and children quitting the Fort.

“Within these boundaries,” said he, “no female

must remain ; no line of distinction can be drawn ; if, as my wife, you were suffered to stay, I should not feel a right to send away the wives of others. A packet has been sent for express, to transport you to the shores of Wales, and will be almost in immediate attendance to receive you. Make the most of your time,—it is but short,—whilst I hasten to write my despatches, and lay an account of this disastrous affair before Government.”

In a case so clear and just, Mrs. De Brooke could not expostulate, but with a dejected mien, giving a summons to her attendants, employed them and herself in making preparations for her departure.

Despite the general hurry and commotion, and the necessity of a prompt obedience to orders, Captain Curtis, however, swayed by the tender interests of his heart, had stolen a moment to send to his wife a hasty account of the defeat ; urging her at the same time to quit without delay, and put herself and family under the protection of the General, in order that she might share whatever might be the fate of Mrs. De Brooke. Striking a panic into all to whom the news was extended, Mrs. Curtis, her relations and friends, together with many of the gentry in and about the neighbourhood, took instant flight.

Thus Mrs. De Brooke, in the midst of trouble on her own account, was frequently called upon to condole with those who were continually flocking in, and forming an assemblage in her drawing-room—how different in appearance from those which she had there so often entertained!—now, as herself, awaiting, anxiously desirous to embark.

Few were the moments allowed for composing their scattered and agitated thoughts. A messenger summoned them to the beach, where the boat was resting upon its oars, to convey them to the vessel lying off at sea. The tide was about retreating—no delay could be admitted.

Giving precedence to her companions in distress, Mrs. De Brooke, leaning on the arm of the General, followed with her daughters. Arrived at the water-side, the sorrowful group prepared to leave the country. The oars were dashed amidst the billows, mingling their sounds with the many adieus and farewell accents, successively repeated, and silently answered by those who waved aloft their arms, as they mournfully stood contemplating the bearing away over the trackless ocean that lovely and endearing train, solaced, however, with the hope of soon returning, and of passing the interval on a coast not remote.

Mrs. De Brooke reached the side of the vessel, then under weigh, whilst the General, having seen her and his daughters ascend to the deck, hastened to give reception and audience to the colonel of the regiment and officers awaiting his further orders.

CHAPTER II.

“ Ah! show them where in ambush stand,
To seize their prey, the murderous band!
Ah! tell them they are men.”

GRAY.

REIGNING as a monarch in that strong but confined fortress, every eye watched the motions of the General, all submitted themselves with implicit confidence to his control. Though thus in the plenitude of power, the task he had to perform was not the less weighty, as, like so many links in a chain, every subordinate rank depended upon him for support and direction. To avoid confusion and trouble to his officers, he daily admitted them to partake of his repasts, sumptuously distributed, where, without excess, the glass was freely circulated, and quaffed to the General's loyal toasts. His ease and suavity, his gracious and condescending manners, won the good-will of all.

The whole adjacent country continued in a state of commotion, yet the General did not deprive himself of his usual horse exercise beyond the pre-

cinets of the Fort ; often traversing with his suite the spacious strand, while the advancing tide left upon his charger's rapid hoof its glittering traces. Protected by the ocean, if danger from the rebels was to be apprehended, it came but from the distant land, where not unfrequently were discerned an assembled few, in secret converse, but too weak or irresolute to make any attack, beyond their reach and artful stratagems as was the General.

Sometimes, however, to decoy him nearer and throw him off his guard, they cunningly sheltered themselves beneath the furze, brambles, or fences that lay beside the pathway ; some more deeply malignant, and treacherously intent upon their purpose, tossing their hats in the air, might be heard to cry, "Long live the General! huzza!" Thus, as carnivorous vultures watch to englut their prey, the rapacious rebels enjoyed a savage delight in the hope of ensnaring him, whose head once severed would become a prize of such high value, and who, brave to excess and devoid of all personal fear, was often seen in advance, boldly and incautiously outriding his companions—sometimes even approaching within the boundary where the assassin meditated his villainous aim.

And wherefore lie skulking in ambush? Why, when so desperately sanguine, did not these bravos

in purpose come more openly forward, by making at once an attack upon the Fort, which to have reduced within their grasp would have gained them a decided advantage, and furnished resources innumerable? But more artfully devised and coolly calculated seemed their plans, than to attack by open force a place so apparently strong and inaccessible.

However long this insurrection among the Irish had been brooding in secret, yet it was undoubtedly from the defeat of General De Brooke, or rather from the fatal neglect of orders and presumptuous rashness of Major Harrold, that it first acquired extension and confirmation; its final suppression and total extinction remained for the more fortunate General Haughton, who, with the troops committed to his orders, having to contend with an enemy so powerful, yet so undisciplined and so wildly impetuous, neither yielding to constraint nor control, the measures he resorted to could alone prove effectual.

Having received their directions, inspired with an ardour fierce as those they fought against, several regiments of well-ordered cavalry precipitately thronged upon the rebels while assembled in concourse from their many secret haunts in the town of R——. The horse, obedient to its rider,

charged violently upon them; the broad sabre mowed them down from side to side; resistance was impracticable; bloody was the combat and great the slaughter; many thousands of that sanguinary band lay heaped upon the earth. With but little loss on the side of Government was this memorable victory achieved over the misguided Irish; it then remained only to throw their bodies, thickly strewed in masses on the ground, collectively into deep pits and trenches dug for the purpose.

Tranquillity was restored to the country, but not to the mind of De Brooke; for another was come to rob him of his laurels! Thus, in his military career, as in every other circumstance of his life, misfortune seemed destined to pursue him! The means by which General Haughton conquered the rebels were those which had been foreseen by De Brooke as likely to prove effective, and which, had such devolved on him, might have been equally well performed. Happy, however, would it have been for him had his name in this instance been associated with that of General Haughton, who, elate with newly acquired fame, determined to raise himself a step higher in popularity and favour, and that by building his elevation on the downfall of

De Brooke, who having superseded him in command, the irritable feelings of General Haughton had never ceased to be mortified, and the more so from some slight imputations of irregularity having been laid to his charge, from which, now that he had risen into notice, and some weight might be attached to his depositions, he resolved to exculpate himself, by making it appear that whatever disorder had existed, still actually did so under the command of his successor. How far he was enabled to accomplish this malicious plan the course of our narrative will show.

Perhaps there were few individuals filling military posts of responsibility less formed for public business than General De Brooke. Distinguished as he was for mental capacity, and furnished with the elegant acquisitions of intellect, however skilful and active in the warlike manœuvres and discipline of military life, yet he was by no means calculated to undergo the drudgery attending upon continued and serious application, which yet, in the career of duties devolving upon him at so important a post, were equally essential to the good of the service as the more agreeable and brilliant exercises of reviews and inspections.

But to counterbalance his own constitutional

inaptitude for business, impelled also by a deep sense of duty, and ever bearing near his heart the interest of the Government by which he was employed, he had appointed clerks worthy, as he conceived, of the various trusts he reposed in them, as also a general superintendent, his confidential secretary, to inspect their accounts.

Meanwhile, the country being reduced to order and to a tranquillity more stable than before the breaking out of the rebellion, Mrs. De Brooke awaited the commands of her husband to resume, as formerly, her station at the Fort. Having, as we have seen, taken refuge on the coast of Wales, rather than advance into the interior and more agreeable part of the country, she had preferred establishing herself in the small town of Milford Haven, its vicinity to the coast affording her a speedy communication of news relative to the progress of the rebellion. This event terminating sooner than she had expected, after much painful solicitude the wished-for summons of the General reached her.

Speedily wafted across the seas, she was safely landed on shores exhibiting anew scenes delightful and congenial to her remembrance, but for the thought of the tumult and alarm that had suc-

ceeded. Hailed by affectionate greetings springing from the endearing ties of conjugal, paternal and filial tenderness, the morrow came, and day succeeding to day stole on as formerly.

The autumn was far advanced, but still that season brought with it enjoyment. Mrs. De Brooke renewed her excursions around the country, when she was often shocked in beholding the awful scenes occasioned by the late ravages. Superstition and fanaticism had led these barbarous people to the most frenzied acts of intolerance. Temples where the Protestant votary was wont to lift up his soul in prayer, became theatres of the most dreadful outrages: shut within those consecrated walls were men, women and children, who, falling into the grasp of ignorance and bigotry, were doomed to perish before the altars of their God, in a manner afflictive to humanity. Consumed by the all-devouring flame, fit emblem of an infernal zeal, their groans and shrieks conveying a savage joy to their murderers, until heard no longer, faint and dying, these victims of an intolerant superstition were buried in the conflagration amidst the ruins forming their funeral pile. "May your sufferings in death atone for errors past," was the prayer breathed by Mrs. De

Brooke whenever the blackened remains of martyrs made by the sanguinary rebels in their struggle for victory met her eyes.

Preferring the social meetings of the Fort to the perpetual round of gaiety at W——, no new occurrence intervened to vary the even tranquillity of the seasons, until a period of five years had elapsed since the General first took possession of the district and staff-duties to which he had been appointed.

Another year was yet wanting to complete the term within which, since the favour had been conferred upon him of extending the period of his command, his present appointment was bounded,—a favour doubtless arising from the invariably strict fulfilment of his duty. The circumstance that but one year more was to be passed at the Fort, suggested, in its train of anticipations, futurities to the minds of the De Brookes—the pleasing idea of returning to England, not as they had left it, but in a manner becoming themselves, their rank and condition; conscious meanwhile of the praiseworthy motive, so dear to the fond pride of both parents, that of giving the last finish to the education of their daughters. Alas! these fond expectations, though destined to be realised in part, eventually brought in their train a sad reverse of

fortune—a change the more afflicting as it was wholly unforeseen.

Gratifying to the General as was the consciousness of having made friends in all around him—ever receiving protestations to such effect—he but little dreamt of a secret enemy, who, like a midnight robber, was working in the dark, plotting to undermine his welfare: credulous and unsuspecting, the trust and confidence he had reposed in his employers unfortunately favoured the designs of the insidious General Haughton, who commenced his hostile operations under pretence of loyalty and devotion to the public service.

At this critical juncture the health of their eldest daughter began visibly to decline; and conformably to the advice of her physician, they decided that unless she were timely removed from so bleak a situation as the Fort to an inland climate, the most fatal consequences might be the result. In fact, her native air was to be preferred, as that likely to prove more congenial towards effecting the renovation of her health, and to this natural remedy they resolved to have recourse. But could the General have penetrated into the concealed machinations of his enemies, that, like some hidden mine ready to explode beneath his feet, awaited but an occasion, rather than have entertained ideas of

quitting his post, he would undoubtedly have been intent alone upon redoubling there his circumspection and vigilance.

Little suspecting the use about to be made of his absence, and under the pressing calamity of his daughter's illness, and repeated expostulations made to him on that account by her mother, he was at length induced to pen a letter to Government requesting a short leave of absence. Deeply interested in the fate of his child, his intention was to conduct her, with Mrs. De Brooke and her sister, to the shores of England, and thence to Bath; where, on account of the salubrity of its springs, he proposed to remain some time with his family, until the expiration of his leave, when he purposed returning to his post alone, in order to accomplish the remainder of his term.

Receiving a favourable answer to his letter, it being then about the end of October, he lost no time in embarking for England.

The wind was temperate and the sea calm until arrived within some leagues from land, when clouds darkened the horizon, and the gale by degrees became tempestuous. Beating upon the billows, long was the vessel seen combating with the raging elements. A lofty rock, of angular form, juttred itself into the sea, which the utmost maritime skill at-

tempted in vain to avoid; again the sailors tack, but with no success. Every instant of time exposed the vessel to the tremendous hazard of being split upon the craggy and protruding eminence before her.

During a scene so calculated to infuse terror, the General, unshaken by the danger, was moved only by the plaints and cries of his wife and eldest daughter, to relieve whose fears he descended to the cabin, but was quickly followed by two or three male passengers, with looks so much bespeaking a certitude of danger, as still further augmented the fright he was essaying to appease.

Mounting upon the deck, washed by the foaming surf, he gave instant orders to the captain to change the course of his vessel and steer for the port they had quitted; when, nearly arrived in harbour, how gladly did even the stoutest heart amongst the passengers descend the side of the ship to take a seat in those boats which, upon the first signal of distress, had left the Fort to reconduct them thither!

Happy would it have been for General and Mrs. De Brooke had they, so recently escaped by a providential deliverance from a watery grave, regarded that event as ominous, and revoked their purpose of departing from that coast on which

the General had reigned with so much honour and splendour, and which for more than five years had offered to them so secure and peaceful an asylum. Had they listened to that silent but warning voice, that perhaps is sometimes sent to dissuade us from our favourite selfwilled projects, they might have been furnished with the means of detecting and frustrating the encroachments of their enemy. In escaping that pit yawning under their feet, mortifications, regrets, and sorrows might have been averted, and the brightest prospects have succeeded.

Their friends at the Fort, who had never ceased with their telescopes to watch the vessel in its tossings upon the tumultuous wave, welcomed the return of the amiable General, who had been the idol of all hearts, and his interesting family with the most lively protestations of joy. Partaking of the hospitable entertainment given him by the officer appointed to take the command in his absence, it seemed as if each there collected separately vied in civility, hoping to induce him to change his purpose and stay amongst them. Alas! had he consulted his own private judgment he would have done so, but again, erring from the kindness of his heart, it was renounced: private feeling, in one so little selfish, was never suffered to

weigh against the virtues and desires of those who were dear to him.

The day being spent, he retired to the dwelling he had so recently vacated, once more to repose under its friendly roof with his family, under the supposition that, as the storm had ceased, as soon as the morning spread her beams they should be a second time summoned to embark.

Scarcely, however, were all things hushed in quiet, and sleep had closed their lids, than a loud knocking at the outer door aroused them, succeeded by a voice vociferating from below, that as wind and weather permitted, the packet was under weigh. What was to be done but arise and obey the message? The captain of the vessel could not take upon him to submit to the General's special orders, having other passengers on board, nor could he command the elements to be propitious at his pleasure.

Mrs. De Brooke in the first instance deliberated; she was half inclined to change her mind, and let the vessel sail without her; but in the next moment, swayed by her usual courage, she prepared to go: the lights, but just extinguished, were re-illuminated; all was hurry and confusion. The sisters were awakened from the sound repose into which they had sunk. The superior officers of the garrison

were in attendance to conduct their General to the beach, where no sound was heard save the dashing of the oars as they cut through the wave. Then running alongside the vessel, the officers handed their fair companions on board; they descended with them to the cabin, where, after remaining a short interval, they bade their last farewell, with feelings of deep regret, to the General and his family.

They then returned on shore; whilst the packet, driven along by favourable gales calmly through the darkened shades of night, made progress for the coast of Cambria.

CHAPTER III.

“ An open foe may prove a curse,
But a pretended friend is worse.”

GAY.

HAVING landed in Wales, the General and his family, after a due interval of repose, pursued their journey through the beautifully diversified and mountainous country which lay before them.

On account of the extreme debility of Oriana, they made but easy journeys. The exhaustion under which she laboured was evident, notwithstanding the united efforts of the parents to relieve it; and their anxiety on her account continued to fluctuate in proportion as the symptoms of weakness and fatigue she exhibited increased or subsided, until their entrance into the attractive city of Bath, the place of their destination.

In possession of a handsome income, the General determined to provide for his wife and daughters an establishment proportioned to his means. An elegantly furnished house, in one of the most admired parts of the town, was soon chosen.

What could the new possessors of it desire more than the renovation of health and strength to Oriana? Inhaling an atmosphere so mild and pure, it was not in vain that, for so youthful and hopeful a votary, the aid of Hygeia, tutelary genius of the place, was invoked—proved by the many fragile forms to be seen daily recovering their health.

The beneficial effects of change of air, and also diversion from novelty of scene, becoming apparent in the renewed constitution of Oriana, she was enabled in common with her sister to pursue her studies, and to give her attention to the finishing part of her education, for which the most competent masters were engaged.

In forming a select acquaintance, time passed very pleasingly to Mrs. De Brooke, until the arrival of the period appointed for the General's return to his post.

Previously, however, to his leaving Bath, a circumstance occurred, greatly calculated to impress his mind with just apprehensions and uneasiness as to what the future might involve. He received an anonymous letter, imparting tidings of a nature for which he was but little prepared. The language in which this letter was dictated was at once pathetic, strong, and decisive.

It described two persons, officers of superior and equal rank; in the one the General might have perceived himself depicted in colours flattering to his feelings, as relating to his conscious rectitude, his mercy, condescension, lenity—in a word, all his amiable virtues were extolled and even exaggerated. In the other were portrayed the opposite qualities, rigour, heartless pride, and ambition—his enemy! to be guarded against with the greatest circumspection. Concluding with an earnest exhortation to be on his guard ere it was too late, and endeavour to parry, if possible, the blow already levelled to overthrow him, the writer had subscribed himself—A Lover of Humanity!

Such were the contents of that singular epistle, perused and reperused, and, however the General might be disposed to question its veracity, with increased inquietude. On referring to the date, he found it had been designed to reach his hand at a much earlier period. That it had not done so doubly distressed him, and was an additional motive for hastening his departure; taking leave accordingly of his family, he set off to embark for Ireland.

In the meanwhile Mrs. De Brooke, participating in the uneasiness of her husband, confined herself

to the circle of a few select friends, refusing to mix in those large and brilliant entertainments to which she was often invited.

The most intimate of her associates were a Mr. and Mrs. Blake and their son, a youth under twenty, the sole fruit of their union, the sole representative of a respectable family, and heir to extensive possessions: idolized by his parents, the most tender cares had been lavished upon him. Mrs. Blake neglected no opportunity of courting the attention of Mrs. De Brooke, showing her an assiduity and complaisance extremely flattering.

So great was the intimacy of these ladies that they were seldom seen but in company together. Mrs. Blake, in particular, made parties at her own house, for no other purpose than that of indulging the gratification of entertaining her new friends. The sisters of Mrs. Blake were equally desirous of making themselves agreeable to the Misses De Brooke; and with this view they would often accompany them in their walks, and solicit the permission of their mother to allow them to join their evening parties.

When confined to a family circle, Mrs. De Brooke offered no objection; but at the tender age of her daughters, she was averse from introducing them much into company, under the fear that such

diversions might tend only to withdraw them from their studies, so precious, and to which every moment of their time was then dedicated.

Nevertheless, sometimes yielding to the entreaties of Mrs. Blake, she took Oriana, by way of indulging her musical taste, to a concert. On such occasions Mr. and Mrs. Blake seldom failed to be accompanied by their son. He was a young man of prepossessing aspect, and of mild deportment, but reserved, and unbending only to a few; his frequent intercourse with the De Brookes rendered them of the number of those to whom he felt no disinclination to address himself.

Having no desire to dispute the wishes of his parents, he ever suffered himself to be led by their advice, well persuaded that they were always directed in their designs towards the promotion of his future welfare and aggrandizement. Thus cooperating in their plans, his fond parents redoubled their civilities to Mrs. De Brooke, who was far from discerning the interested motives which swayed them, or the object aimed at by the whole family of which the young Blake was heir, viz. that of obtaining for him the hand of Oriana in marriage; overlooking, in the blindness of their ambitious views, the extreme youth of the parties; so desirable in many respects did this alliance

with the De Brooke family appear to the Blakes, in the survey of their views for the attainment of their favourite end. In the first place Oriana was the grand-daughter of Sir Aubrey De Brooke, that highly distinguished and meritorious officer at the court of his sovereign ; next to him in station and consideration stood his son, General De Brooke ; and last, though not least in estimation, was Oriana herself, possessing the most attractive and showy qualifications.

Thus Mr. and Mrs. Blake pictured to themselves the pride and pleasure with which Mrs. De Brooke and the lovely plants of her culture would be received after so long an absence by the family of the General. Then came the joy and exultation they naturally conceived Sir Aubrey might feel when the period arrived for introducing his grandchildren at court, blooming in every youthful attraction. In following up still further the train of their conjectures, they thought it not unlikely that those charming sisters, so highly deserving of notice, might, as their years advanced, be selected to fill some place about Her Majesty's royal person, perhaps as maids of honour.

With hopes so splendid, it was no wonder those parents were desirous of forming a marriage con-

nexion for their son with one every way worthy of their most sanguine wishes. But of moderate origin themselves, and conscious of their inferiority; they passionately thirsted after aggrandizement, and to this they fancied themselves entitled on the ground of the very large fortune of which their son was the future inheritor.

Thus circumstanced was Mrs. De Brooke at Bath, while still unconscious of the secret wishes entertained by her friends, when the General, having made some important arrangements in the state of his affairs at the Fort, proposed rejoining her.

It will be necessary, however, to retrograde, and give some information of the occurrences which had happened there during his absence.

Having arrived at his late quarters, he found to his mortification that the anonymous letter he had received bore but too faithful a representation of the truth, and that he was in a manner deprived of his command. Of all the afflictions he had formerly endured, none had fallen so heavy as this. Charges brought against him which he was unprepared to vindicate;—the subordinate persons under his command being accused of want of order in their accounts,—Government money

squandered,—peculations practised,—a torrent of iniquity seemed to have burst forth to pour its inundations over his head.

“And what secret enemy,” thought he, “‘like the black raven hov’ring o’er my peace,’ has thus so treacherously overwhelmed me by such calumnies—so unexpected, so derogatory from the high and just principles of honour, integrity, and uprightness, from that strict rectitude in which I have been accustomed to walk and to view my actions, and which, notwithstanding the unjust opprobrium cast upon me, I find to be an invincible support and shield.”

In the first place he called around him his clerks, and busily and in earnest undertook the inspection of his papers, even to the most minute accounts, in which the Government was concerned. But, alas! in doing so, he but truly discovered that fraud and duplicity had been practised against him, secret connivances and collusion of which he could have had no idea. His books were mutilated, and none seemed disposed to afford him the explanations he desired; evasive answers were given to his questions by those who had seemed to have been bribed to his destruction.

That enormous abuses existed was evident, but of these he himself felt perfectly innocent.

“The fault of too great confidence and credulity will readily and with justice be imputed against me, but that I have been guiltless of these connivances there can arise no difficulty in making appear. Grant, heaven! that such wickedness may flow back to the vile source whence it has sprung!” Such was the silent but emphatic soliloquy of the ill-fated De Brooke on leaving the Fort for W——, where, at that interval, was the hero who had suppressed the rebellion, General Haughton, basking in the lustre of his fame.

In all the fulness of injured feeling, De Brooke called upon him, hoping he might throw some insight upon so nefarious a transaction, little conceiving he was addressing himself to him who was agent in his overthrow and ruin. He had even so far mistaken the feelings which influenced General Haughton, as to expect from him real sympathy, and fairly calculated on the benefit of his advice towards redressing his grievances.

The perfidious General, assuming ignorance of what, in his officiousness and pretended zeal for the public service, he had himself stirred up, readily assumed the mask of friendship, and adopted with ease towards the unsuspecting De Brooke the language of commiseration, in that hackneyed flow which the hypocrite has ever at

command—flippant on the lip, but foreign from the heart! He was a man of whom it might be justly said,

“A smile eternal on his lip he wears,
That equally the vile and virtuous shares.”

Open and candid himself, De Brooke was far from suspecting deceit in others: and far was he from then diving into the real feelings of him who promised to befriend him, extenuate his conduct to Government, soften its aspersions, and bring if possible the really culpable forward to justice.

Thus ended an appeal, vainly and fruitlessly addressed to the heart of one by nature selfish, and swelled by the triumphs attending upon recent victory. General Haughton was not the being whom the private sorrows of an individual could affect with gratuitous feeling, least of all those of an officer upon whose ruin he hoped to build his own advancement, and rise another enviable step in his military career. “Truth,” reasoned De Brooke, in returning from the conference he had held, “truth must find its advocate; the purity of my intentions, the disinterested zeal with which I have been ever actuated, must speak for itself.”

With ample means before him, how many in his situation might have availed themselves of its ad-

vantages for selfish purposes, and in the speedy acquisition of wealth and independence, have found no inadequate indemnity for other losses,—even of fame, honour, and character trampled in the dust! Scrupulous as he had been, and abhorrent from such principles and practices, how poignant to be accused of having acted otherwise! Thus wrought upon, he determined to call for a public investigation of his conduct: “Let them at once,” exclaimed he, “brand me with dishonour, or make my innocence appear clear as the noonday light!”

His request having been acceded to, it remained for him but to make the preliminary arrangements, for which due time was allowed him, and lay a statement of his case before the Court of Inquiry. Cheered by the conviction that he should arise triumphant, free from every imputation made against him, he sunk by degrees into that calm philosophy of feeling which none, under like circumstances, can attain, but they whose hearts are shielded by conscious integrity: availing himself of the delay, he stole away from care and business to pass the interval with his wife and children.

He arrived at Bath just at the time when reports were in high circulation relative to the match that was forming between the son and heir of Mr. and Mrs. Blake and his daughter Oriana. Of this

rumoured engagement, the parents themselves, ever anxious to make it appear to the public as already an event fixed, were the industrious propagators, and this with the design to forward their pretensions. It was with an accent and emphasis characteristic of her ruling passion that Mrs. Blake, on being asked by a lady of her acquaintance whether it were really true that her son was about disposing of himself to the daughter of a Major,—“No, indeed,” retorted she with a consequential air; “not to the daughter of a Major, but of a Major-General!” This passing within the hearing of Mrs. De Brooke, she failed not to repeat it to her husband. “Heaven grant it may be so,” replied he; “under the many storms and tempests doomed to fall upon my devoted head, it will be a consolation to see my children exempt from my misfortunes.” So happy an establishment for his elder daughter he conceived was a desirable presage of one equally fortunate, at some more distant period, for the younger.

CHAPTER IV.

“No more with affection shall memory blending,
The wonted delights of our childhood retrace,
When pride steels the bosom, the heart is unbending,
And what would be justice appears a disgrace.”

BYRON.

THUS far the matrimonial scheme so zealously contemplated by Mr. and Mrs. Blake in favour of their son had been successful; and the father was about demanding of the General the accomplished Oriana for his daughter-in-law, when, at so important a crisis of bright and flattering expectation to all parties, so untoward was their destiny, that suddenly clouds began to darken and deform the fair prospect that had arisen so cheering to their view.

It chanced that amongst the numerous votaries of fashion and pleasure who were assembled to partake of the gaieties of the place, Mrs. Arden, accompanied by her husband, had come, as their custom was, to spend a month or two during the spring season at Bath.

The General had at different intervals main-

tained a correspondence with his sister, which, on either side, had not been deficient in professions of mutual affection, and, on the part of Mrs. Arden, a kind interest for the welfare of her nieces. Previous to the appointment of De Brooke in Ireland, she had ever acted in concert with Sir Aubrey; but at that period to have softened her father's displeasure against her brother might have been beyond her power. The sanguine temper of De Brooke and his generous disposition inclined him to hope the best, and to put the most favourable construction on the proceedings of his sister.

But the period had now arrived which was to put her sincerity to the test, and to prove what were the genuine sentiments of her heart. Residing in the same town, thought the General, by her display of opulence, her splendid equipage and sumptuous style of living commanding the attention of the public, on the tenor of her conduct, as regards my family, will depend its elevation or its fall. From the many inquiries her letters had contained respecting his daughters, it was natural for him to suppose she would rejoice upon an occasion being presented of forming their personal acquaintance, and of receiving them at her house; but he resolved that unless they were to be accompanied by their mother, she should never have that

gratification: however fatal had been the circumstances connected with his clandestine marriage, time, together with the approved and known worth of the partner whom, under such powerful incitements and interesting circumstances, he had selected, combined also with the publicity which he had given to his marriage, was certainly sufficient to do away the past, and elicit for the future sentiments towards him of greater philanthropy and brotherly love.

With these reflections he embraced the earliest opportunity of paying his sister a visit, when, if his reception was not so cordial as he might have desired, it was not such, however, as to provoke his displeasure. Having, since her union with Mr. Arden, learnt the art of dissembling, it was not difficult for her to assume a sort of demeanour and routine of expression in which the natural feelings had no share: add to this the constant habit of submitting her opinions to the rule of her husband's, who, as a man remarkable for acute perceptions, was highly respected and considered by her as an oracle of wisdom, he became the complete guide and arbiter of her most minute decisions.

The result of this conformity was an almost total extinction of the affection, at no time immoderate in degree, she had hitherto entertained for

her brother, whose fraternal feelings, on the other hand, had suffered no abatement from absence or time, being only suspended in consequence of her past neglect, and the uncertainty of her future conduct relative to his family. For the sight of her was well calculated to renew the pleasing memory of early years ; her only brother, and she his only sister, when living under the roof of his honoured and respected mother, they naturally felt an interest in each other, the greater in proportion as it was undivided.

It cannot be doubted, however, that in her case new connexions and associations had gone far to obliterate the old, when even De Brooke's mind continued to be chiefly occupied with the same train of ideas that had mingled themselves with the first impressions which the news of his sister's arrival had awakened. Full of anxious concern, therefore, on a subject that still lay nearest his heart, he would have given utterance to his wishes, but forbore to do so, supposing that on such a point it rested more with his sister to be the first to mention, viz. that of the introduction to her of his wife and daughters. Finding, however, that she remained perfectly silent on that head, after a due interval he took his leave, retiring from her house more depressed in spirits than when he entered it ;

nor did he think proper, under existing circumstances, to renew his visit, until Mr. Arden had in his turn made his call upon him.

Frequently the General met him in public, when he never failed to join his promenade, and to enter with him on topics of conversation. Happening on one of these occasions to approach near the house of De Brooke, he was induced to enter, and the General conducted him into the room where his daughters were engaged in pursuing their morning's avocations. Oriana was practising at her harp, on which her powerful and brilliant execution struck forcibly on his ear, and he could not refrain from expressing his admiration. Rosilia's beautiful assemblage of drawings, as displayed before him, again called forth his praise, notwithstanding it was a part of his character to be usually slow in making obliging commendations. The intercourse between the two families extended no further; though both frequenting the same public circles of amusement, Mrs. Arden and Mrs. De Brooke were never seen in each other's company, nor were they ever seen to meet at private parties; giving rise to the animadversions of a vain and invidious world, rarely sympathising with neglected virtue, but ever flowing on with the stream of prosperity and grandeur.

The select and respectable acquaintance that had before attached themselves to Mrs. De Brooke, began by degrees to drop their visits, and often to her courteous rencontre gave but an ungracious return. Amongst those whose slights were the most apparent and surprising to her were Mr. and Mrs. Blake, with whom coldness, indifference, almost disdain, had assumed the place of that excessive cordiality, attention, and respect which had so lately marked their behaviour towards the family of De Brooke.

To what might a change so sudden be attributed, if not to the unjust obloquy thrown upon this deserving family, arising from the unmerited neglect of them by the Ardens, a circumstance well calculated to fix the observation of the curious, and to provoke the aspersions of censure and envy? It was their unfortunate presentation at Bath, their fastidious disdain, which had blasted the blooming hopes of the delighted parents, anxious for the prosperity of their lovely and beloved children, at the moment when they were anticipating their introduction into those circles of which they were born to be the pride and the ornament.

Not the eldest only could the General have advantageously placed in the bands of matri-

mony, but, in despite of her extreme youth, the younger also; a man of fashion and of fortune would have paid homage to her merits, and would have solicited her hand in marriage, had he not been withheld from so doing by the persuasions of his friends, in consequence of the evil reports propagated to the discredit of the mother, and the discordance reigning between families so nearly related.

Injured as he was, and tracing his disappointment to the true source, the General was hurried on by a too great precipitation to knock at Mr. Arden's door, who not happening to be at home, he demanded admittance to his sister. Finding himself alone with her, he began, whilst in the heat of anger, to reproach her, as the author of his grievances.

He laid before her the expectations and hopes, especially those having relation to his eldest daughter, which she had been the means of frustrating: "Before you made your appearance in Bath," said he, "my wife was courted and respected, beloved and esteemed; but now, her acquaintance, dropping off by degrees, will soon neglect her altogether. My daughter might have formed an advantageous settlement but for you; it is you whose unaccountable reserve towards their

mother—nay, frown not—has been the cause of ruining her fortunes, and not hers only, but those of your other niece, little expecting and as little deserving to find in their aunt envy of their happiness, enmity against their peace.

“For my own part, and that of my wife, we may place ourselves above it; but for those dear objects of our continual solicitude, to see them, whilst rising into maturity and favour and merited admiration, so early subjected to the frowns of oppression and contumely of the world, makes my heart bleed! And if to have laid waste the prospects of my unoffending children be now a subject of triumph, I pray that such unnatural exultation may speedily turn to remorse of conscience and self-upbraidings for the unworthiest, most unlooked for, and most unpardonable cruelty.”

Big with indignant feeling, Mrs. Arden heard her brother vent against her the bitterness of his soul, when, endeavouring to modify the tone of her voice, as she had before successfully moderated that of her agitated feelings, she replied: “Brother, forbear your reproaches, let me beseech you; you will find it more reasonable to do so, when I assure you the conduct you so vehemently complain of has been adopted by the express injunctions of my father, who has forbidden me, under pain of his

lasting displeasure, to hold intercourse with any part of your family.”

“ But, my dear sister,” expostulated De Brooke, “ can your heart accede to such a prohibition? Would it not be more amiable in you to seek to soften the harshness of him who enjoined it,—I will not call him father?” “ Can it be possible, brother,” returned she, “ you should so far forget yourself as to suppose your sway over me should supersede that of my father, and prevail upon me to act in direct contradiction to his commands? No, believe me, I never shall!” “ Which is at once to tell me,” resumed De Brooke with impetuosity, “ that you mean to spurn at us, and crush beneath your feet every rising hope and fair prospect of my children.”

“ If such,” continued she, “ is the construction you put upon my actions, I cannot alter them; you are at liberty to think as injuriously of me as you please. My father is prejudiced against your wife; he is resolved never to acknowledge her as a part of his family; it is therefore certainly not for me to do so. As far as your daughters are concerned they claim my pity; and I should be glad to have it in my power of being serviceable to them.”

“ My daughters,” ejaculated the General, “ are

all that a parent can desire! and who has formed them such but their mother? Who has watched over their tender infancy but their mother—who has set them examples and lessons of virtue but she? Ought they then in justice to be preferred, and rank above her in esteem?—the greatest breach of justice would it be: and never shall they outstep that virtuous woman, who merits so much at their hands; nature and common feeling forbid it.” “All that you observe,” replied Mrs. Arden, “seems no doubt very plausible, according to your own conception of the thing, but it will not advance her in my father’s estimation—her birth and quality so inferior to what he might have expected in your wife.”

“Her birth and quality!” re-echoed the General, his eyes flashing fire; “if, when the daughter of an honest country vicar, she was not your equal, now, assuredly, as my wife, she takes precedence above you, in whatever circle you may chance to meet.” During this ill-judged speech of De Brooke, the injured pride and mortification it provoked in Mrs. Arden were never to lose their impression.

To be placed, in the sphere of fashion, below the level of one so inferior to her as she considered Mrs. De Brooke, born and bred in rank and amid splendour, the daughter and favoured child of the highly distinguished Sir Aubrey,—gathering at

length her suspended articulation, she exclaimed, " 'Tis from my father I take my degree; 'tis as the daughter of the great, the wise, the respected Sir Aubrey I receive suffrage. And far from having (as your insidious remark would convey) sunk my name or birth in my marriage with Mr. Arden, his fortune confers upon me greater dignity, as the daily homage of the world may testify." With this, rising, she made a motion towards the door, but turning suddenly, she added, " If such, brother, are to be your future conferences with me, I must beg your visits may not be frequent, as they can effect no good result whatever to yourself, but materially tend to the injury of my health, unaccustomed to such disturbances." Having so said she again seated herself; and the General, suppressing further invective, hastily seizing his hat, withdrew.

After this dispute the General and Mrs. Arden carefully avoided, during a period of several weeks, all occasion of meeting; but it chanced one day that the former, whilst walking with his daughters on either side of him, came accidentally in front of Mr. and Mrs. Arden. Never having before seen her nieces, curiosity induced Mrs. Arden to stop and accost her brother. Oriana, having thrown aside her veil, more particularly fixed her attention,

whom, by her lesser stature, having heard that her sister had outgrown her, she recognised as the elder; and who, according to the accounts given by her father, might be reputed amongst the most accomplished of her sex. Of a delicate constitution, the dazzling whiteness of her complexion, animated by a slight carnation, in addition to an intelligence and vivacity of expression peculiarly her own, struck forcibly upon the notice of her beholder.

The General having answered as reservedly as was possible, passed on, being determined not to gratify her by an introduction to his daughters, although it was evident his sister had lingered for the purpose. " 'Twas my sister,—Mrs. Arden—your aunt," said the General, as they continued their walk. " Indeed!" replied Oriana; " was she truly Mrs. Arden?" her heart throbbing at the recollection of the look of approval bestowed upon her.

Rosilia's heart throbbed also, but with different emotions; the words, " my sister, your aunt," sunk instinctively within her, creating a softened impulse there to the filial and sisterly tie—she possessed another closely allied, related, according to the degrees of consanguinity.

From that time the thoughts of Mrs. Arden, though frequently directed towards the children of

her brother, became still more so. Nature had implanted kindly feelings within her, which, however circumstances might seem to smother them, yet at certain moments forcibly predominated. The desire she had often felt to see her nieces had then been gratified, though but in part as regarded Rosilia, yet sufficiently to draw from her eulogiums to her advantage. Thus prepossessed in their favour, gladly would she have promoted a further acquaintance: her bosom secretly yearned for her brother's children—her kindred, her own blood.

How different was the sentiment awakened for them to that experienced for the nieces of her husband; to whom, forbearing to express the full extent of what she felt, she merely said, how happy it would make her to become better known to her nieces! But this remark, ere it fell from her lips, Mr. Arden had prepared himself to combat. His own family and pecuniary interests urged him to take a part in keeping asunder the former breach between Sir Aubrey and his son; for notwithstanding the largeness of his own personal revenue, and the abundant stores he had amassed from his professional labours, it was ever one of his most urgent desires to add to it, on his wife's side, as great an accumulation as he could. Having nephews in his brother's family, supplying to him the

place of heirs, and equally as attached to them, and as ambitious of their interests, as if they had sprung to him in direct succession, no bounds were set to the fortunes with which he wished to enrich them; unwarrantably aiming to grasp at that which, in justice, truth, and honour, ought to have descended through his wife to her own surviving relations.

In consequence of this ruling motive, it may be easily conceived he was never deficient in those arguments or persuasions that could in any way tend to influence Mrs. Arden in taking part with her father against her brother and his family. Thus, whenever the friendly feelings of benevolence and humanity gained admittance to her heart, he as instantly endeavoured to stifle them by an appeal, subtle and artful, such as, "And what would Sir Aubrey say? you surely would not wish to act in opposition to your father! see what he writes!" unfolding the letter ever at hand in his waistcoat pocket. "Have nothing to say to them, neither the daughters nor the mother; if you notice the one the other will come next."

"Never," hastily interrupted Mrs. Arden, "never shall I forget what I owe to my father with respect to Mrs. De B., or oppose his just resentment on the score of my brother's marriage. However,"

said she, softening her tones, " his daughters, poor things, will you not allow that, innocent as they are, *they* might claim our pity? Highly educated, brought up also in morality and virtue, might they not merit something at our hands?"

The taciturn air of disdain that passed over the brow of Mr. Arden as his wife endeavoured to raise her nieces in his estimation was rebuke sufficient, and caused her in the next moment to add, " However, blameless as may be my brother's children, you are doubtless perfectly right in your judgment, Mr. Arden, of how I should conduct myself towards them, and I shall therefore be guided entirely by your decision."

Shortly after this conversation, the season for the Bath festivities having elapsed, amongst the votaries of fashion taking their flight to London were Mr. and Mrs. Arden. The General having taken his house at Bath for a year, the term had not yet expired; but as the period appointed for the Inquiry was drawing near, he again took leave of his family, to pursue the route leading to the place of his embarkation for Ireland.

In the meanwhile, Mrs. De Brooke, though forsaken by the worldly and all such as followed in the train of wealth and ostentation, was yet rewarded by retaining a few of those congenial friends

that knew how to appreciate her merit, and afford a solace to her leisure hours, which otherwise might have passed tediously in the absence of the General.

CHAPTER V.

“ Without misfortune what calamity !
And what hostilities without a foe !
Nor are foes wanting to the best on earth.
But endless are the lists of human ills ;
And sighs might sooner fail than cause to sigh.”
YOUNG.

AFTER much useless delay, the Court of Inquiry appointed to investigate the past proceedings of General De Brooke whilst holding the command of the district of W——, took its course, during which, by continual search and secret information, through the least corrupt of his agents, he was enabled to detect the deceit and treachery employed by his arch-enemy General Haughton, carried even so far as to suborn his private clerks to bear false testimony against him. So scandalous a provocation was not to be endured ; betrayed in the grossest manner, his private feelings, equally as his public character, called aloud for redress.

Instantly, therefore, he sent General Haughton a challenge, appointing the hour and place where to meet him, there to make reparation for the in-

jury he had done him. To this the General did not deign or did not choose to write an answer; cowardice, he thought, could hardly be imputed to one who, since his recent display of valour against the Irish insurgents, had gained so much applause—in the zenith of favour, and had received, besides, the thanks of the Administration. As for his conscience and the counsel of his own heart, he knew how to keep them secret. De Brooke, however, was not to be so satisfied, but having his indignation still more roused by this apparently disdainful silence, he boldly determined in person to provoke him to the combat; and called at his door for the purpose of holding that language which should compel him to render the satisfaction required, or else to repair his injured reputation and his unsullied honour.

Following up the servant to the private door of his master, De Brooke heard him say, “Deny me by all means!” which still further aggravating the latter, he burst into his presence. Folded in a loose dressing-gown, Haughton sat at a table overlooking some papers. Disconcerted by an intrusion so unexpected, he fixed a deep scrutinizing eye on De Brooke, who stood before him pale and trembling with the violence of that invective already bursting from his lips.

Passion and impetuosity accompanied his words ; his rage was vented without interruption, till at length, exhausted, he remained as if ashamed of his own violence, or as if confounded by the tranquillity of his enemy, who sensible of the advantage his own more placid exterior must gain over his antagonist, with an assumed calmness had followed De Brooke in all the bitter reproaches he had pronounced against him, not without a consciousness that they fell not upon him undeservedly, exciting for the moment an inward compunction for the injuries he had done him.

Ambition, the love of popularity, and, to call it by no more odious name, rivalry in the race of his profession, having induced him to charge as accessible to corruption one who was his equal in military merit, and one who he was convinced bore equally with himself the stamp of unblemished honour,—how, then, he silently asked himself, could he enter into single combat with such an individual on such grounds, however furious his appeal to arms?—his was the aggression. Was he, by yielding to the present provocation, to incur the desperate alternative of either losing his own life, or of taking that of his adversary, whom already he had robbed of his good name, and

thus heap upon his unhappy family ruin upon ruin?

As to private animosity he felt none; even his public designs were fully answered: but since they had carried him so far, to retract was impossible. Every reflection he had previously given to the subject forcibly convinced him of the impolicy of accepting the challenge of De Brooke; for, were the circumstances connected therewith to become known, his credit and veracity might be so far questioned as to render it apparent that, rather than a devoted zeal in the service of Government, considerations of his own aggrandizement alone had actuated his proceedings against De Brooke.

“ Thus conscience doth make cowards of us all.”

The only plan, therefore, he conceived left for him to adopt, was to conciliate, and, by a pretended show of concern and friendship, gloss over the evils he had committed, rather than, by provoking further enmity, give confirmation to the suspicions already excited to his discredit. Assuming one of those habitual smiles under which he could so well disguise his real sentiments, he begged De Brooke to moderate his impetuosity, doubtless naturally to be expected from one so situated, but which he

could assure him, as far as himself was concerned, he could not indulge without injustice.

He further stated that he had no personal ill-will towards him whatever ; that though the object of so many harsh upbraidings just poured forth against him, they had not excited in him the least feeling of wrath ; that he felt for him as much as one friend could feel for another, and most sincerely lamented that the unpleasant task had fallen upon himself of making inspection into the abuses which were said to exist at the depôt ; but this being the case, as nominated chief agent in the investigation, a responsibility was attached to the task.

“ That abuses and frauds have taken place, General,” added he, “ you must doubtless be aware ; but that you have no share in them will be also seen, as urged by yourself in your own defence, and which cannot fail as soon as the examination takes place to acquit you.” Completely disarmed by this plausible language, or rather hypocritical effusion of words, General De Brooke had nothing further to advance than to make some slight apology for the warmth into which his injured and greatly excited feelings had betrayed him, little suspecting how much he had been made the dupe of perfidious artifice and intrigue.

Nothing then remained but to occupy himself

in collecting the various information necessary to aid him towards effecting his acquittal, and for this purpose he engaged an able counsellor, a man of activity and talent, accustomed to and skilled in the art of pleading. Thus occupied with a multiplicity of business to which his memory was unequal, some of the officers under his late command, who were more conversant with the concerns of the depôt, and who were alike implicated with himself, in that critical moment, when so much depended upon the clearness and perspicuity of their evidence, involving no less than loss of honour and its consequent humiliation, lent him their assistance to place each point in that due order and arrangement indispensable to appear before the Court,—that tribunal of justice to which he had himself appealed, and upon the decision of which depended his rise or fall, the future fate and fortunes of himself and family: leaving this important affair thus pending, having been several months absent, he hastened to rejoin his family.

After so much vexation, perplexity, and trouble, how soothing to his soul was the sight of his wife and children! Although ties the most valued were broken, and his friends, relatives, and country had forsaken him, and although his reputation was at stake, yet how cheering the thought that one in-

dividual at least existed on whom he could implicitly rely ; one to whom he could confide the secret trying conflicts of his heart, one who would not fail to pour into its lacerated wounds the balm of sympathy and consolation ! Rising into a fresh existence by her presence, the demon of despondence was chased, while he endeavoured patiently to await the judgment that was to be passed upon him.

No longer holding any military appointment, and the lease of his house at Bath having expired, the world was before him where to choose. Dismissing the instructors of his daughters, whose proficiency rendered their attendance unnecessary, he decided to remove with his family to London ; the motives for taking him thither being the circumstance that it was the seat of Government, the position in respect to it in which he was placed, and above all, the desire he felt to lay the statement of his case before his father. The reception he met with from Sir Aubrey was that which habit had made familiar to him, arising doubtless from parental hope frustrated, and pride mortified.

After a due interval De Brooke besought his kind and impartial hearing while he spoke to him of his affairs, in which he delivered himself with the confidence of one who had met with a treat-

ment as severe as it was unmerited,—Sir Aubrey, during the recital, betraying a warmth of feeling and energy almost equal to his own, surpassing his expectations, upholding his just indignation, attentively listening to the circumstances of the interview connected with the challenge his son had given General Haughton ; and after uttering some words expressive of scorn, he added, “ You have been ill-treated, scandalously ill-treated, of which there cannot be a doubt ; but what an error in your judgment, Aubrey, to have quitted your post at the very moment when your command at that station was drawing to its close—what an unfortunate leave of absence was that you desired at so momentous a period !”

“ Alas, Sir,” replied De Brooke, “ could we penetrate into the events of time, many of our greatest evils might be avoided ; but this is superhuman, and therefore not within the province of mortal scrutiny : my daughter’s declining state of health was the cause.” Sir Aubrey coldly turned aside ; however he had admitted of his son’s claims in other respects, the motive he had assigned for withdrawing from his command was in his estimation but little satisfactory.

He was, however, put into complete possession of all the circumstances in which originated his son’s

misfortune—the treacherous part acted by General Haughton, the result of infamous jealousy, self-love, and sordid ambition. How soon might his son during his appointment in Ireland, without difficulty or labour, have amassed together riches in abundance, and whether attained by just or unjust measures, would have no weight in the general estimate or rather false balance given to such considerations by the infatuated many, those idols of Fortune, ever ready to sacrifice their better feelings at her golden shrine! the truth of which, so candidly and zealously supported by De Brooke, was irresistible to Sir Aubrey, as was also the persuasion of the impossibility, without the eyes of an Argus, of superintending concerns so perplexed and complicated.

From the conviction of his honour, strict integrity, and uprightness of conduct, evidently seen in the distressed but steady bearing of his son in every detail he had afforded him, Sir Aubrey determined to use his endeavours, without at the same time compromising himself where impartiality was essential, to reinstate his unhappy son in the favourable opinion of Government.

As gold from its dross, so De Brooke arose pure and bright from that “fiery ordeal,” the investigation of the Court. Nevertheless, how incomplete

was his triumph! Nothing responded to his feelings in the way of recompense for the many hours of misery and distracting cares he had endured. Overlooked, receiving no indemnity for his losses, promises had, indeed, been made him, but which remained unfulfilled; while his enemy and rival, skilled in all the arts of deception, sported also in all the lustre of a favourite, received fresh rewards, was decorated with the red riband, and installed a Knight of the Garter.

Far was it from De Brooke to pass a comment on his monarch's pleasure, who, in his rival, perceived, doubtless, but the man who had effected an achievement deserving of his approbation; and far, also, was it from him to cherish rancour or envy against the General for the sudden good fortune into which he had risen; but the feeling which oppressed him was the painful conviction that while the sun of General Haughton was shining bright in the meridian of his fame, he was eventually the cause his own was setting! Such were the poignant reflections which left their sting on the pillow of De Brooke. Never from that period did the name of General Haughton fall upon his hearing, or enter into his thoughts, even when, from the serenity imbibed from religious contemplation, all anger or animosity was chased from his heart,

than it was associated with the idea, "the man who has ruined myself and family!"

Mrs. De Brooke and her daughters resided in the gay capital of London comparatively secluded, associating with but a few friends, the most intimate of whom, as formerly, being Mr. and Mrs. Philimore; to whom was now united their eldest son, Edmund Philimore, who, having grown to manhood, had left his college avocations, for the purpose of exercising his ministerial functions in the church, and who formed an agreeable acquisition to the society of his parents and their friends.

Mrs. Herbert also had flown to embrace her dear children—such being the epithet she ever bestowed upon Oriana and Rosilia.

Her son, the former youthful admirer of the younger sister, had then attained the age of twenty; his mind fraught with recollections of the past, he could not, without revived impressions, survey the object which produced them. His person was tall and well made, his features regular, yet withal deficient in expression: it remained for the maternal eye alone of good Mrs. Herbert to contemplate him with the satisfaction of one who discovers nought to disapprove.

With all a parent's pride she had presented him before Rosilia, her favourite, with whom she thought

it impossible not to acknowledge the perfections with which nature had gifted him. Contrary, however, to her sanguine expectations, it proved otherwise. The memory of past familiarity threw upon the manners of Rosilia an unusual reserve, probably arising from a certain refinement of ideas above his slender endowments, or from an incapacity of appreciating them, which was in itself sufficient to prohibit an association, which the fond and deluded mother secretly hoped might, at no very distant period, lead to a more intimate and dearer tie.

Through the interest of a friend, the young Herbert had just obtained a commission, and was in the expectation of embarking for India, where, in the indulgence of juvenile hopes, he conceived wealth and prosperity of easy attainment. But whether such in the future were realized, and how far his imagination coincided in his mother's dreams of happiness for him, the course of our narrative will determine.

CHAPTER VI.

“Laden with honours, glory, fame,
The monarch's favour'd vassal came,
And o'er his veteran brow and mien
Mild grace and dignity were seen.”

THE health of Oriana, which had appeared to be perfectly re-established, again underwent a change; the condensed atmosphere of so large and crowded a city as London proved hurtful to her delicate constitution. Mrs. De Brooke, therefore, in her maternal anxieties, determined to resort with her daughter a second time to Bath.

The General being so situated as to deem it of the utmost importance to present himself at the War Office, in order that the promises there made him might not sink into total forgetfulness, he was under the necessity of remaining in London, reserving to himself Rosilia for his companion.

During the absence of her mother and sister, and when her father was engaged in business,

Rosilia spent her time chiefly with Mrs. Philimore, who, ever amiable and obliging, sought to entertain her young friend in a variety of ways—sometimes by reading together the best modern productions, sometimes by the use of the needle, and in works of embroidery, and, to vary either sedentary occupation, by walking, and the resource occasionally in the evening, of going to the theatre or opera; this being indulged in with judicious care and moderation, was rendered in some measure conducive to useful reflections, tempering in some degree her natural timidity, and furnishing new ideas of life and manners. However kindly considerate as was Mrs. Philimore in promoting such diversions, it seemed surprising to Rosilia that her son Edmund Philimore (of whom we have before spoken) took no share in them. Since the departure of her mother and sister, his character and manners seemed to have undergone a perfect change; good-humour and pleasantry had given place to gloom and silence; seldom present but at those hours usual for the family to assemble, when involved in abstraction he seemed indifferent to all that passed. Inexplicable as was this conduct to others, the cause was but too well known to himself; of strong and ardent feelings, hope suddenly baffled had saddened his soul, leaving it the prey of despondence.

Notwithstanding Mrs. Philimore thus monopolized the time of Rosilia, an evening's *tête-à-tête* with her father was greatly prized and appreciated by her, whenever it happened that he preferred remaining at home rather than joining the circle at his friend's house.

Filled with a grateful sense, as was the General, of the warm interest exhibited by Sir Aubrey in his late concerns, he was not deficient in paying him, at certain intervals, his due respects; and it being the season when Mr. and Mrs. Arden inhabited their town-house, he in like manner did not omit giving them at stated periods a passing call. From the circumstance, perhaps, of Mrs. De Brooke's absence, or perhaps from sisterly feeling, happy to show kindness to her brother in proportion as Sir Aubrey was less inclined to judge him harshly, or modelling her actions by those of her father, whichever of these causes operated, Mrs. Arden was indubitably more friendly to her brother than of late years had been customary with her.

The language she addressed to him was gracious and conciliating; but more so whenever his daughters became the topic of conversation between them.

“My dear brother,” said she on one of those occasions, “though my nieces are but personally known to me, believe me, I truly feel for them

those sympathies usually accompanying so near a relationship. What I feel, in truth, comes direct from the heart; it being a sentiment more in connexion with the affections than I have ever experienced for the nieces or nephews of Mr. Arden—allied to me but by marriage.”

Softened, flattered, pleased, the General, taking her hand, pressed it with fraternal tenderness, saying, “My dear sister, such are the operations of nature, diffusing themselves into your thoughts; and there, from the goodness of your disposition, reigning unchecked, they inspire the kindred sentiments you have just uttered.”

In pursuing the train of her awakened feelings, she exclaimed with warmth, “Brother, you have promised to dine with us to-day; will you indulge me further and bring with you your daughter Rosilia? I cannot reconcile your leaving her at home: pray afford me the satisfaction of seeing her accompany you here to-day.”

Unable, from the previous discourse they had held, to combat any longer her wishes, the General hesitated not to accede to her request; departing from the former resolution he had adopted, never to suffer his children to enter his sister’s doors unattended by their mother. Thus having given his promise, which escaped his lips in a moment of

kindness, as he walked homeward he trusted that his then easy compliance might, at some future period, be attended with the happy result of their respective families becoming united in the bonds of mutual amity and concord.

“My dear child,” said he, with apparent unconcern, after a short conversation with Rosilia upon indifferent topics, “I am going to dine with my sister, Mrs. Arden, to-day, and mean to take you with me. She has much desired your coming, and I have agreed that you shall go. You know I do not approve of your bestowing too much attention upon your toilet, but in this instance I wish you to be well attired—that is, neatly, simply; a plain dress becomes you most, and will be the most adapted for the occasion, as we shall be, if I mistake not, *en famille*.”

Asking no questions, but expressing the joy she felt, Rosilia hastened to obey her father, and in a short interval appeared before him exactly in accordance with his wishes.

Placing her arm under his, they proceeded together, and in the space of half an hour found themselves at the door of one of those spacious abodes in the centre of the handsome buildings in Grosvenor-square, and were ushered by a portly, consequential butler to Mrs. Arden’s usual sitting-

room, whose work-table remained the same as when the General had left her; but its mistress was no longer visible. From a large, low window the sun partially spread its gilded rays over a rich Turkey carpet, and other articles of expensive elegance decorated the apartment. The sweet notes of a piping bulfinch seemed to increase those tender feelings which were stealing insensibly over the heart of Rosilia, as, advancing from an inner apartment connected by folding-doors, her aunt graciously came forward to meet her.

A year having elapsed since Mrs. Arden had caught but an imperfect view of her, had added infinite embellishments to her person, and Mrs. Arden contemplated her niece with a silent approbation and delight, far exceeding that she had ever bestowed upon another,—those forms of perfect regularity, but of lifeless expression, cold within and without, faithful to the Grecian statue they resembled. Rosilia just emerging from childhood into the woman, the simplicity of the former and the intelligence of the latter seemed by turns to be struggling with each other to gain the ascendancy,—modest, unobtrusive, graceful in all she said or did.

Mrs. Arden expressed herself to her brother highly pleased and proud of the new acquisition she had formed by his introduction to her of his

daughter ; whilst Rosilia, on her side, was charmed by the kind suavity and condescension of her aunt.

Happy season of youth ! when all that is novel strikes upon the imagination, and is exalted with a fervour admitting of no alloy.

The General having brought his daughter early, in order that she might have leisure for making acquaintance with her aunt, left them, with the intention of rejoining them at the dinner hour. After the indulgence therefore of a *tête-à-tête*, Rosilia accompanied her aunt in her usual everyday drive. Descending to the carriage, followed by her aunt, the livery attendants having taken their stations behind, Mrs. Arden, having made some purchases for herself at several fashionable shops, and a few presents for her niece, visited a circulating library in Bond-street, where having lounged away an hour or two in chit-chat amongst her acquaintance, and taken a few turns in Hyde Park, she was driven home ; during which interval she insensibly fell into a comparison between the nieces of Mr. Arden and Rosilia. Weary of the continual society of the former, and the commonplace topics they discussed, she resolved to make the latter, as long as her stay in London permitted, her frequent companion. She felt proud and flat-

tered that the advantages were so much in favour of her niece; the Misses Arden having by close application to languages, mathematics, and voluminous histories studied but to become dull, and to be deprived of those active intelligences of brilliant imagery, taste, and sentiment which give to woman's mind its loveliest ornament.

Arrived at home, Mrs. Arden adjourned with Rosilia to her dressing-room, and whilst, changing her morning's attire, she arrayed herself in the splendid costume of a rout, to which, as on most other evenings, she was then engaged, to divert Rosilia during the intermediate time she displayed before her the contents of her jewel-case, richly studded with precious stones. Rosilia was not a mere superficial observer of things, but enjoyed the pleasurable advantages of a contemplative mind; and hence the sight of these sparkling gems was equally gratifying to her mental as to her outward vision; for herein were exhibited to her view the wonderful works of the Creator, combined with the ingenuity of the creature; then raising her thoughts still higher, from *effects* to *causes*, she soared on the wings of a vivid contemplation into the sublime regions of the Revelations, which presented to her searching mind

that "great city whose light was as a stone most precious, clear as crystal; whose walls were garnished with all manner of such, and whose twelve gates were as twelve pearls." How magnificently grand this imagery! thought Rosilia; it is doubtless symbolical of vast interior realities,—of too great magnitude, she was well aware, for the comparatively feeble grasp of her comprehension to encompass.

Mrs. Arden, little imagining what was passing in her niece's mind, felt pleased at seeing her thus intently survey the treasures of her casket. Having made her arrangements, she descended with Rosilia to the drawing-room, where was Mr. Arden, who, rising, made Rosilia his bow, accompanied by a stateliness of manner greatly calculated to inspire her wonted timidity, had it not been in some measure dissipated by the cheering presence of her father, who, in spite of the misfortunes he had experienced, still brought good humour into every circle.

It had been arranged between the General and Mrs. De Brooke, that after a few months given to the restoration of the health of Oriana at Bath, they were conjointly to meet in the county of Somerset, in order to inspect the beautiful Villa of

Mount Zephyr, then offered on lease, proposing, should it suit them, to make it their future residence.

Through the influence of Sir Aubrey, the General had obtained the certainty of being shortly put into possession of some Government allowance—an annual stipend for the support of his family becoming daily more necessary. His mind, therefore, being at rest on that score, he did not wish wholly to withdraw from life, but to remain sufficiently within its enjoyments to afford them occasionally to his daughters. He had the happiness of hearing that the salubrious springs of Bath had again revived Oriana, and hoped, as the spring-breezes further advanced, he should meet her shortly perfectly restored.

Fascinated as was Rosilia by the charm of those new affections awakened in her for her aunt, she could not think of their interruption but with pain. Almost daily Mrs. Arden called to take her for an airing in her carriage, and she had become, with her father, a frequent guest at her table. Thus in the habit of associating with her niece, Mrs. Arden sometimes spoke of her to Sir Aubrey and Lady De Brooke, in terms that could not fail to excite interest, and weaken insensibly that disinclination the former had felt ever to behold

an offspring of that alliance his son had formed, inflicting upon him so heavy a vexation.

Wishing to do a kindness to her niece, as also to gratify her brother, Mrs. Arden, in still further seeking to impress Sir Aubrey in favour of Rosilia, had in view the benevolent desire of introducing her to him. Seizing an auspicious moment for urging her intreaty, Sir Aubrey consented, and it was agreed upon that within a short period Mr. and Mrs. Arden should spend the day with them, and be accompanied by Rosilia and her father.

What a happiness did such intelligence convey to Rosilia! the summit of her wishes seemed realized; and to whom was she indebted for it? Her heart beat high with delight and gratitude as it replied, "to her aunt! her kind, indulgent aunt." She was, then, about to form an acquaintance with her father's father; to behold him near her! Her grandfather! the high, the powerful, the distinguished Sir Aubrey! The brilliancy of her imagination cast into shade all that might tell against him, and invested his public celebrity and renown in colours the most glowing.

In readiness to attend the signal, her aunt's carriage drove to the door, into which being handed by her father, who took his place beside her, it rolled swiftly over the ground to the house of Sir

Aubrey, keeping pace with the anxious expectation of Rosilia: a sort of timid confusion heightened the colouring of her cheek, as she descended and followed her aunt to the apartment of Lady De Brooke, whom they found alone, seated on a sofa, at the extreme end of a spacious saloon. She arose to meet her visitors; and as she did so, her countenance wore a pleasing and agreeable affability; perhaps a more experienced critic than Rosilia might have discovered, in the turn of her lip, a something denoting a talent for the satirical. Be it as it may, her reception of her guests was frank and easy.

They seated themselves; but scarcely had a few minutes elapsed, than an opposite door opening, presented to the eye of Rosilia an object of a most noble and dignified mien. Mr. and Mrs. Arden rose to receive him; De Brooke did the same, and coming towards his daughter, led her by the hand to introduce her to Sir Aubrey—to him who had so often dwelt upon Rosilia's juvenile fancy, invested with all the splendour of greatness, the concomitant of martial talent, judgment, and wisdom.

Sir Aubrey was arrayed in a frock uniform, bearing the insignia of knighthood; though aged, yet free from infirmity; his majestic stature con-

trasting itself with the light and airy form of the young Rosilia, his grandchild, whom, with a condescending aspect, taking by the hand, he bent to salute. Then raising himself, he stood, as a tower, exalted in mute grandeur; whilst she seemed budding at its base a humble snowdrop: and as the dewy morn bathes its pure white petals, so, her soft head reclining, the lucid tear bedewed her spotless bosom. Or, viewed in a light still more interesting, she might have appeared as a harbinger sent from Heaven, for the purpose of chasing away discordant feelings, and pleading forgiveness for her parents as a benediction upon herself!

Cold, indeed, stern and obdurate must have been the heart that could resist an appeal so touching, beautiful, and eloquent as this; and yet Sir Aubrey, a courtier and a man of the world, unaccustomed to indulge in the soft luxury of the tender emotions, felt but half their force.

Charmed as was De Brooke at the outward effects of his Rosilia's sensibility, yet at the same time pained at the situation of his child, conscious that she attracted all eyes upon her, and fearful also of the misinterpretation of affectation or weakness given to it by her ladyship, he looked at his sister, who, comprehending his wishes, lent

her kind interference, and conducted Rosilia from the apartment. Passing into a recess and small corridor opening into a grass plot, Rosilia, in taking several turns with her aunt, had leisure to subdue the overflowings of her feelings. When mistress of herself, composed and calm she rejoined the party.

Seated by her grandfather during the hour of repast, as soon as the domestics, who thronged the doors in bearing away and replacing the luxuries of the table, had retired, being more at liberty to think and indulge reflection, Sir Aubrey became the subject engrossing her thoughts. Perhaps she might have felt awed by the dignified seriousness of his usual aspect, had not such been dissipated the moment of his addressing her, when his countenance relaxed into a pleasing benignity, which inspired her at once with confidence and delight.

And so passed the evening; until, locked within the silent recess of her own chamber, young and enthusiastic, embracing new impressions with ardour, involuntary sighs sprang from the nature of her contemplations. How delightful, were fate ever to ordain her to move in that orbit of splendour, above the common routine of existence! An enchanted country lay before her! and

various were the scenes of beauty it presented to strike and fascinate her attention.

Suddenly, however, the mirror of her fancy became obscured, the view darkened, and she descended by degrees to the recollection of the coldness, restraints, animosities, and family differences she had heard from her infant years ; all of which seemed to her to be wrapped in an impenetrable veil of mystery. Yet it was in vain she sought to dispel it from her thoughts, or to discover any efficient cause in which it originated. This appeared a hopeless case.

Submitting herself, therefore, to the kind protection and unerring guidance of Him who is perfectly acquainted with all our ways, and who foresees all that finite beings call contingencies, she passed the nocturnal hours in sweet repose, cheerfully and calmly meeting her father the next morning at the breakfast-table.

CHAPTER VII.

“What, though we wade in wealth or soar in fame?
Earth’s highest station ends in ‘Here he lies.’”

YOUNG.

HAVING previously given a day to Mr. and Mrs. Arden, the General proposed leaving town. His sister had expressed much regret on the occasion, and particularly to Rosilia, who had felt deeply touched by so considerate a kindness. The Philimores also had testified their concern; even Edmund, whose conduct had appeared to her so singularly fraught with gloom, shook her by the hand with that frank cordiality he had been formerly wont to show: after some words of “Remember me to Mrs. De Brooke,” and with the concluding part of his speech fluttering upon his lips, he withdrew, and his former gloom overshadowed his brow as he retired.

Nothing occurred during the short journey of the General and his daughter until they reached

Newbury, where Mrs. De Brooke and Oriana were already in waiting to give them the joyful meeting. The health of the latter seemed perfectly restored, and she listened with much gratification to all her sister had to communicate as having passed since their separation.

The country place their parents had come to inspect with the desire of taking, lay within a few miles of Bath, it being no other than the beautiful villa in which we found the De Brookes at the beginning of our narrative. It was there that the General, with his family, fixed his residence; it was there that he had hoped to have found peace and rest from the past turmoils of life, in that enchanting spot, in which he might have desired to have ended his days, had not Fate, ever unpropitious to him, chased him from it. In constant expectation of some military remuneration, like the widow from her cruise, he had been drawing from his little fund, dreading to fall into those pecuniary embarrassments by which formerly he had been so long a sufferer.

After several weeks' residence in his villa, an alleviation was given to the usual turn of his reflections by a letter from his sister, couched in the kindest terms, expressive of her gratification in having made acquaintance with Rosilia, and her

desire then to do so equally with her sister Oriana. Having removed for the summer months to a country seat, not far from the neighbourhood where resided her brother, she gave him a cordial invitation to come and spend a few weeks with her; requesting of him also to afford her the company of his eldest daughter, Oriana, specifying that Sir Aubrey was to be of the party; and since Rosilia had taken precedence of her sister in obtaining the first introduction, she was the more desirous of seeing Oriana, not wishing to confer an advantage upon her youngest niece that had not been equally afforded to the eldest.

Highly gratified by the opportunity then offering of affording Oriana those advantages which her sister had enjoyed, the General wrote an immediate compliance with the invitation; and the next day set off with his daughter for Fairfield Lodge. After her aunt's kind reception upon her arrival, Oriana had but time to divest herself of her travelling dishabille, and prepare to meet a large company assembled in the saloon. The decorations of art were infinitely advantageous to Oriana, and in the present instance she arrayed herself with more than ordinary taste. With a perfect command of herself, easy and graceful, she entered with her aunt the wide circle, which immediately

rose. As Mrs. Arden advanced to introduce her niece, Sir Aubrey came forward to meet her, regretting that he had not seen her first in private, fearing, like her sister, she might be touched with similar emotions ; the apprehension, however, instantly vanished, when Oriana, free from the least embarrassment, received his offered hand, no thought intruding to cloud for a moment the animated character of her countenance and manners.

Drawing inwardly a comparison between the sisters, though he had been but little moved by Rosilia's sensibility, yet it had infused into his mind a conscious pleasure, of which he had not lost the remembrance ; and when he was asked by Mrs. Arden which of her brother's daughters he preferred, he unhesitatingly answered Rosilia, the younger.

If the manners of Oriana were eminently attractive, if found to be the most accomplished, Rosilia bore from her the palm of beauty. If, of a quick and clear intellect, Oriana, as if from intuitive knowledge, seized upon and comprehended a subject,—Rosilia, given to reflection, thought and contemplation, possessed a judgment less liable to err, more interiorly cultivated and refined. If less dazzling in conversation than her sister, she interested more. If Oriana charmed by her vivacity

and sparkled by her wit, Rosilia touched and penetrated the heart by the sweet serenity of her deportment. The one, as a brilliant coruscation playing in a summer sky, might enchant the fancy and ensure the suffrage of a moment; the other, as a lovely constellation, though less vivid, yet from its undeviating steadfastness never failed to leave upon the observer impressions more truly gratifying, solid, and lasting.

The subject more particularly engaging the mind of Sir Aubrey De Brooke, during his visit at Fairfield Lodge, regarded his son. He had greatly participated in his recent calamity, deriving its source from the base machinations of General Haughton, but from which, rising clear of every false aspersion, so fully acquitted, his character appearing in all its native worth and integrity, he had merited a better treatment at the hands of Government than to be put off so repeatedly by promises, whilst new favourites were preferred before him. These considerations at any former period might not have so much afflicted Sir Aubrey as at the present they were found to do, from the growing interest he took in his grand-daughters.

“Those girls,” thought he, “in whatever class they move, whatever circles they frequent, cannot but command attention and become conspi-

cuous,—the light, the idle, and the dissipated of the other sex might be led to flutter about them ; admitting that their morals remained unimpaired, the chance of forming an honourable and advantageous alliance might be wholly frustrated, as had already been the case, and might be so again.” In a word, he resolved to uphold and patronize them, meritorious as they were, and by thus acting, in the close of life, to shed a lustre upon his private, as he had already done upon his public character. When, from the strength of his reasonings, Sir Aubrey once traced for himself the line of conduct to be pursued, he was never observed to deviate from it: strictly inflexible, it was to this high moral principle he might have owed his rapid and extraordinary rise.

On the evening of the second day, he announced his intention of returning to London. He felt himself oppressed ; an unusual languor had stolen over him ; and though all at Fairfield Lodge were attentive to his least wish, home he conceived most suited to his truly indisposed state.

De Brooke the next morning sincerely felt, and expressed, regret at seeing his father depart so suddenly ; but more from the cause, it being evident that since the preceding evening his illness, from his altered looks, had increased. Nevertheless

De Brooke felt relieved from a certain embarrassment he never could surmount in the presence of his father; it appeared as if Sir Aubrey possessed urbanity for all but him; his looks, which were benignant to others, seemed clouded when he turned his eyes on him; the lowest lackey subservient behind the chair of his master, he was persuaded, had a heart more light, was sensible of a more interior liberty, than himself. Sometimes, fearing to be taxed with dulness in not contributing his share to the general conversation, he tried to conceal the burden which pressed upon him by an assumed gaiety foreign to his feelings or the tenor of his reflections; when perchance overacting his part, he drew upon himself severe animadversion. "What astonishing levity! what lightness of spirit in one so situated!" was the harsh judgment passed upon, and repeated to him.

De Brooke during the period of youth had been guided more by his *Inclination* than his *Duty*, and felt acutely sensible that he had irretrievably forfeited the paternal regard; yet in having severely suffered for his errors, originating in the head, but never in the heart, the compunctious feelings of his latter years had made him most particularly desirous to regain, if possible, the favourable estimation of his father; but alas! the period had

gone by, and it was now too late, being still doomed to appear before him under false and unfriendly colours. The flattering reception given by his father to his daughters, however, was no small alleviation.

The dry reserve of Mr. Arden's manners towards him was also tolerated, from the unfeigned approbation he had expressed as to the musical talents of Oriana; and from the knowledge that the request made to him by his sister, to leave his daughter with them for a few weeks, came from his own particular desire. A great lover of music, Mr. Arden enjoyed the idea of profiting by Oriana's accomplishment in that respect—a consideration only that could have influenced him, in detaining under his roof the daughter of De Brooke.

The General, accordingly, was about returning alone to the Villa, when a letter to his sister from Lady De Brooke informed her, "That Sir Aubrey had but ill borne his little journey to town, and was, at the moment of her writing, suffering extreme pain." Calculated as was this account to throw the party assembled at Fairfield Lodge into much alarm, Mrs. Arden thought proper to defer the company of Oriana till another occasion, in order that, should Sir Aubrey still betray unfavourable

symptoms, she might be enabled, at a moment's notice, to return to her house in London.

This being decided upon, the General, accompanied by Oriana, set off for his home.

Scarcely, however, had a few days elapsed since he had parted from his sister, than, in concurrence with the agreement he had made with her, she wrote to inform him that herself and Mr. Arden were about leaving the country immediately, to be near her father, having received fresh intelligence with respect to the increase of his malady, and of a nature to create much apprehensions for his safety.

Deeply participating in the uneasiness of his sister, the General on his part lost no time in repairing to town. His presence might not be desired, yet the feelings of a son, duty—indispensable obligations he conceived attached to the filial tie—claimed his doing so, in order to pay his father the respect due to his suffering situation.

Establishing himself in small lodgings contiguous to his father's abode, he determined there to await the issue of his indisposition, which, from the accounts he gathered, he found to be in no way diminished.

Finding that, through the medium of his sister, Sir Aubrey had been apprized of his being in town,

and prepared to see him, he called at his door, and was admitted into his private chamber, where Sir Aubrey, who had but just risen, was supported in an elbow chair, seemingly suffering the most acute anguish; his mien nevertheless bore a dignified composure. With a condescension De Brooke rarely experienced, he extended him his hand, which, respectfully bowing over, he carried to his lips. Then seating himself, Sir Aubrey, in somewhat enfeebled accents, entered upon the subject of his malady, evincing in his remarks, notwithstanding the exhaustion of his body, a mind still powerful.

Thus occupied, the physician entered, and, soon after, her Ladyship. Glancing a look of reserve upon De Brooke, and one of anxious inquiry on the doctor, she tremulously asked him how he found his patient. His pulse, he replied, announced fever! but which not being violent, he hoped to allay; that Sir Aubrey, though advanced in age, had yet a strong constitution; that on account of the inflammatory symptoms attending his malady, he had doubtless much to contend with; but he had reason to hope he would surmount it, and if not restored to his former vigour, at least to the enjoyment of tolerable health; that as he had already taken from him much blood, it might be

unnecessary to repeat the operation ; and above all, he added, quiet and tranquillity were of the utmost and last importance.

Lady De Brooke again looked with severity on the General, which, had he interpreted it, meant to reproach him, from the probable nature of the conference he had held with his father, with being the cause that he then experienced a return of fever. Undaunted by a possibility of dying, yet encouraged by the physician, Sir Aubrey, as well as his Lady, was inclined to suppose his malady might terminate favourably.

On the doctor communicating with his patient, De Brooke withdrew. Truly solicitous for the recovery of his father, he did not omit to call frequently, when he was sometimes accidentally admitted, but oftener dismissed with the message, "My master is too ill to allow of being seen." Mortified at these denials, which seemed to put him on the level of a stranger, he often thought it possible his name was not announced to his father, and that he was kept in perfect ignorance of his visits. It was easy for him to discern that his presence near his father was not agreeable to her Ladyship ; and which truly was the real motive why he was so seldom allowed the interview he sought.

Highly tenacious of preserving over the mind of Sir Aubrey an undisputed sway, Lady De Brooke had seen with great reluctance the ascendancy his grand-daughters were acquiring, which she artfully hoped to repress by throwing discountenance on the visits of their father, and thus keep open that breach which, to all appearance, was about being repaired. By slight allusions relative to the fatigue his son's conversation gave him, and by an apparent disquietude on that account, her self-interested feelings lay concealed, leading Sir Aubrey to imagine that such sentiments and feelings towards him ever sprung from the strongest affection.

The severe treatment necessary to be resorted to under inflammatory cases, whilst it affords alleviation on the one hand, exhausts and impairs on the other; and thus with Sir Aubrey, contrary to the hopes maintained, in combating with his malady, it was evident his strength became daily weakened, insomuch that at length danger, in its most imminent degree, was apprehended. And yet, at such a crisis, known to her Ladyship, the son was sent from the father's door with the usual message, "My master, Sir, is too unwell to see any one."

"Is there no possibility of gaining admittance?" returned De Brooke. "Will you oblige me by going

instantly to announce my name, and tell my father how grieved I am on his account, and how solicitous I am to see him?"

"I cannot, Sir, upon pain of her Ladyship's displeasure," answered the servant; "she will not be intruded upon, and she has given me peremptory orders not to admit any one."

"Even me?" asked the General; "has she in particular mentioned my name?"

"She has, Sir."

Aggrieved, afflicted in the extreme, De Brooke left the door of his dying parent. "Perhaps," thought he, "ere he approaches his end, he may think proper to send for me; surely they will not then deny me!"

That awful and solemn moment was indeed approaching, and Sir Aubrey was heard then to call upon the name of his son: "Aubrey, Aubrey! why does he absent himself, why does he not come to see me?"

Exist there any so savage on the face of the earth, as that the voice of nature or feeling is not sometime or other attended to? Are there any so barbarous who, when all of earth is finally closing upon the view,—the occasion presenting itself without solicitation or seeking for the reconciling of past differences,—can stifle the awakened conscience,

open wide the breach and tear asunder those ties, never more to unite, such as ought to bind together, in one common concord, the parent and the child?

Alas! that such barbarity may exist, witness in the case of the unfortunate De Brooke—banished from smoothing the dying pillow of his father! from the hallowed gratification of profiting by those kinder feelings suggested by the heart's compunctions! Heaven itself seemed working in his favour, and yet he was forbidden to prostrate himself at his father's couch, there to solicit his pardon and his blessing!

After the most lingering and excruciating sufferings that ever mortal endured, and submitted to with the most astonishing fortitude, Sir Aubrey De Brooke departed this life, leaving his unhappy son a prey to the greatest sorrow.

Though not called upon to assist in the funeral rites, yet, a true mourner in heart, he beheld his father's bier as it passed on its way for interment, attended by the greatest military pomp. The friend of his Sovereign, nought was omitted that could pay honour to his memory or heighten the solemnity of the procession, which, as it passed, displayed to the view of the afflicted De Brooke the Princes of the Royal blood. Be it to the credit

of our British Princes, that in thus condescending to honour the remains of a subject, when found worthy of such a tribute paid to their fidelity, they ennoble and exalt themselves, and live in the hearts and the esteem of their country!

In a retired spot, unobserved by any, with feelings amounting to agony, De Brooke contemplated the pompous but sad scene of one so closely allied to him. "May his soul rest in peace!" exclaimed he. A concourse of people following, obscured his vision, and he withdrew to conceal himself from the possibility of observation, to pursue in the deepest privacy the train of his melancholy reflections.

CHAPTER VIII.

“ And who can chase the sorrowing sigh
When discord’s voice sounds loud and nigh ;
When fortune, sportive, makes display,
Beguiles, and then withdraws her ray ?
In early life, alas ! thus doomed
To see thy fairest hopes entombed.”

THE object which had detained the General in London now no longer existing, he would have returned to his country villa. But previous to his departure he addressed a letter of condolence to her Ladyship, the widow of his lamented father, couched in terms the most respectful, and deeply expressive of participating in the loss she had sustained. The performance of this duty, so incumbent upon him, could not but be supposed to conciliate her Ladyship’s future favour and esteem.

Nevertheless, how confounded, how amazed he

was ! how utterly incomprehensible seemed the reply he received !—dictated in the most poignant and bitter invectives, upbraiding him as the cause of bringing his father to a premature grave, in the perpetual sorrows, mortifications, and disappointments he had, throughout his life, burthened him with,—ending at length her dreadful charges and accusations by the passionate exclamation, “ Might she never have the misery to see him cross her path again ! ”

Tried as the General already had been by the melancholy occurrence of his father’s death, it was with increased perturbation of feeling he perused this phrensied epistle. From what motive could it proceed ? Could the heart of the writer coincide in what her pen had expressed ? Came it from that overwhelming grief, causing those wanderings, those delusions of reason, portrayed in ideas so enormous, so torturing to the feelings of a son ? Could he for one moment suppose that such sentiments derived their existence from the least shadow of truth ?

And how was he answerable for his father’s death, since, according to her Ladyship’s account, admitting even that the mind of Sir Aubrey had

been thus painfully affected, the nature of his malady was such as to be entirely unconnected with the mental powers? Besides, those powers had been exhibited, in all their native vigour, even to the last stage of his life, and had wonderfully operated in sustaining him during the whole course of an excruciating and protracted illness.

“No!” thought the General, “view the subject in any light, and it cannot but be seen that when an inflammatory disorder spreads its destructiveness throughout the frame, at an age within a few years of eighty, but little hope can reasonably be entertained of recovery.”

Soothed by such reflections, the warm stream which had fled to his heart again circulated through his veins. However inwardly he might deplore his early errors, or whatever might have been his misfortunes, he was certain they had never so much unhinged his father as to produce the fatal catastrophe alluded to by her Ladyship. If her feelings were not heightened, by excessive anguish, into a sort of temporary delirium, the letter she had written to him sprung from the politic and subtle motive of shutting her doors against him—the doors of that dwelling which, after her own demise, ought properly to descend to himself, in right of

succession ; to hide from his view those appendages, family paintings, and splendid services of plate bearing his crest and arms.

Such were the conceptions the most obvious and natural which could occur to him, and which a copy sent to him of his father's will was decidedly calculated to confirm. To the principal part, which had been written at a distant period, some codicils were added of later date, but none since he might have indulged in better hopes of allotment arising out of the introduction of his daughters to Sir Aubrey.

Had not the General been denied intercourse with his father during moments when, in making his peace with the Deity, his heart might have become accessible to pity and forgiveness, in acknowledging him,—though unwise and unreflective, yet well-meaning and amiable, he might have revoked his former testament, written under impressions of resentment, and have proclaimed De Brooke his lawful heir ; instead of which he was but barely named,—a few trifling legacies were left, to be distributed between him and his children ; and those in a manner that his stepmother might afterwards either annul or confirm them, according to her caprice or pleasure.

And what remained for him but passively to submit? To dispute the legality of so cruel a treatment as that dealt out to him during the period of his father's provocations against him, was now impossible. Even from the grave Sir Aubrey's voice of disapprobation might sound upon his ear—he had carried his unforgiveness there!

“But no!” exclaimed the General, starting at the thought, “my father died a Christian, and I should not accuse him unjustly; my father called upon my name in his dying moments, as I have been confidently informed on indisputable evidence; his heart had returned to me; and that his fortunes also would have returned is highly probable, had those about him acted fairly, honestly, and uprightly!”

Under such aggravated calamities to himself and family, the General might have sunk into despondency, had not the Royal bounty just at that interval acted in his favour. The first governorship falling vacant had been promised for his son, and from motives of attachment to the memory of the deceased, and no longer to keep the former in uncertainty and suspense, he was immediately granted a sinecure appointment, held by military commanders of note; and as such, though not lucrative,

yet waiving interested considerations, the General was gratified to find he had become the successor of an ancient peer.

Thus honoured, what could prove with greater force to the world, and to the military of every rank, that he had in no ways forfeited the Government favour—that from the late inquiry passed upon his conduct, his name and character remained pure and unblemished? Taken in this sense, however small the revenue he had acquired, and however late in coming, it was received with joy and thankfulness. By bounding his wants and ambition it might be found adequate, if not to the expenditure of Mount Zephyr, yet to some humbler retirement.

He returned to his family. The summer months had passed away, the winter was succeeding, and the days of mourning for the lamented Sir Aubrey were about expiring, when the visit of Oriana to her aunt, interrupted on account of the sudden indisposition of her grandfather, was desired to be renewed; the invitation included her sister, and Mrs. Arden proposed sending her carriage to convey them to Fairfield Lodge. This act of complaisance from his sister was very gratifying to the General, as it proved that no cessation of her kindest feelings towards him had taken place since the death of his father.

Passing over much of the time as it elapsed at Fairfield Lodge, suffice it to say, that Lady De Brooke, who was of the party, conducted herself to the sisters in a manner the most courteous and amicable. Previous to the death of Sir Aubrey, her Ladyship had suffered from an accumulation of maladies, which, during the past year of her widowhood dejection and sadness had greatly increased. A retirement from the busy scenes of life in consequence had afforded her many profitable moments for reflection, having taught her, in recalling the memory of her husband, to subdue those bitter feelings she had harboured against his progeny; her jealousy, in particular, entertained towards his grand-daughters decreased with the cause exciting it.

Had Sir Aubrey lived, it was his intention to have patronized them; and how better could she honour his memory than by a performance of the acts he meditated, and thus afford herself peace of conscience by redressing the injuries she had done them? With such reflections, desiring to put into immediate practice the good resolutions she had formed, it had been by her express wish the invitation from Mrs. Arden had been given.

As to their father, she could not bring herself to

see him, fearing that, if she did so, the force of former impressions might rekindle. The poet too truly says, "they never pardon who have done the wrong;" and Lady De Brooke had not yet reached that degree of virtue which might have enabled her to make concessions to one whom she was conscious she had injured.

Lady De Brooke left town, therefore, to give the wished-for meeting to the sisters at Fairfield Lodge, when, in bestowing her exclusive attention on the objects which had called her thither, she was often charmed by the wit and vivacity of Oriana, and soothed by the sweetness and gentleness of Rosilia; inwardly admiring each alternately, she felt delighted at becoming their benefactress, and styled herself their old grandmamma. Nothing could be more conciliating or flattering than the whole general conduct of her Ladyship to the daughters of De Brooke. Sometimes, in playful raillery, she described the partners they might select, the advantageous and brilliant matches she would form for them, did they suffer themselves to be guided by her influence and advice.

On the New-year's day, and Twelfth-night, a large company had been invited to celebrate the season;—and who more calculated to ornament the circle than those fair sisters, arrayed in fashionable

elegance! Her Ladyship, with friendly nods and encouraging smiles, sought to chase from Rosilia that wish to retire from the notice she elicited. Bearing away the palm, how willingly would she have yielded it to another, had not her Ladyship's agreeable condescension emboldened her, turning from the language of flattery, to join in the intellectual sentiment, the thought that flowed from cultivation and refinement.

It was thus that time passed at Fairfield Lodge, until Lady De Brooke expressed a desire for returning home; previous, however, to which, arrangements had been made by her for receiving the sisters under her roof, at some agreeable place of public amusement to which she intended resorting the ensuing summer.

Making many signals of adieu, when stepping into her carriage, she was driven from their sight. Alas! those sisters little thought, amidst the fair dreams of happiness they indulged in, they should never see her Ladyship more! No sooner was the cup of expectation raised a second time to their lips, than it was again to be dashed from them!

They returned to the villa of their parents shortly after the departure of her who had filled their young minds with gratitude in the pleasing recollection of her kindness towards them. The

various maladies that had so long afflicted her Ladyship began towards the spring of the year to assume an alarming appearance. Having accustomed herself occasionally to the use of opium to lull the pains of body and of mind, she began to administer it with indiscretion in quantities injurious to the powers of her intellect, acute and discriminating as it had been; her rational faculty became stupified, and she sunk, during long and repeated intervals, into states of lethargy.

Scarcely had fifteen months elapsed since the decease of Sir Aubrey, than he was followed to the tomb by his lady.

Thus, too, those fair prospects again were blighted which seemed to open and smile more propitious than before on the daughters of De Brooke. She, who was in no way related by blood, but who had become so friendly to their interests—who, above all narrow prejudices or contraction of sentiment, had it so greatly in her power to advantage them, uniting at once both the inclination and ability to do so,—was now no more.

Of a temper generous to excess in carrying into execution schemes well-digested and approved of with ardour, the only object she had felt worthy of recalling her to her former existence—to scenes of life, otherwise wearisome and insipid, was to

bring into notice the grand-daughters of her late husband, and form for them establishments accordant with the rank they held in society; publicly make them known, by introducing them into those distinguished circles she frequented, as the grand-daughters of the late Sir Aubrey De Brooke; and, by so doing, reap the reward of her goodness, in the peace, satisfaction, and content diffusing themselves, as a natural result, over the remnant of her days. What more remained for her on this side of Heaven than, when the last trying moments came, to close her eyes amidst the lamentations and regrets of those she left behind?

“ Procrastination is the thief of time.”

When too long delayed, how futile are all human intentions!—those of her Ladyship proved truly so, for no sooner was her purpose formed of retrieving the past and of making some signal alterations in her will in favour of the sisters, than the ability became lost—reason became absorbed in apathy, and the scenes of past existence faded for ever from her view.

On this event, the ill-fated De Brooke, having no further hope, frustrated in all he had ever allowed himself to encourage, might truly have exclaimed of the world, “ ’Tis a cheating sprite,”

and have renounced for the future building upon its uncertain and precarious base. His sister, however, Mrs. Arden, was still in being, and might still befriend her nieces;—she who could with justice claim the merit of having brought them forward to the notice of those who were now no more, whose bodies mingled with the common soil, but whose souls were gone to an hereafter, there to answer for those ruling affections and motives which had influenced their conduct *here*.

Meanwhile, from the incompetency of the General's income, as we have already seen, to support the expenses of his villa, and dreading a repetition of those pecuniary embarrassments in which he had been formerly plunged, he brought himself to the decision of retiring from the world and all its vain pretensions. He fled to solitude—to humble life—to the far distant, lonely haunts of Wales—there to live unmolested and obscure with his beloved wife and engaging children, those tender ties which formed at once his solace and his pride.

CHAPTER IX.

“ His eye was meek and gentle, and a smile
Play'd on his lip; and in his speech was heard
Paternal sweetness, dignity, and love.”

COWPER.

IT was among the wild and solitary valleys of Glamorgan that General De Brooke and his family sought their last asylum from those dark clouds of adversity that had gathered over their destiny; and nowhere could a spot have been found better suited to shroud them from the intruder's gaze, and seat them in peaceful obscurity, than this they had chosen.

Their cottage, though it was adorned by the rustic simplicity of the Gothic style, yet was not without some trifling decorations of modern fancy. To the arched roof and painted door and window, were added tasteful verandas, with fretwork, through which roses and jasmine entwined, and intermingled their delicious perfumes. In the eastern direction, a small plantation of fir and larch, sycamore and plane, with a grove of lofty trees beyond,

pleasingly rescued them from the gaze of prying curiosity ; while the southern aspect presented to their view the extensive and blooming Vale of Aberdare, widening as it advanced, and exhibiting a succession of objects the most picturesque and engaging. The Cynon was seen as far as the eye could reach, sometimes contracted between a narrow defile, and sometimes enlarged in space, ranging along by the side of a path, here and there obstructed by craggy rocks, partially overshadowed by the dark umbrage of majestic trees, from which, at no great distance, formed by the rude hand of nature, was a deep and hollow cave ; its roof of massy rock was shaded by a clump of tall and stately elms.

A spot so wildly romantic it was impossible to contemplate, without realizing to the fancy those superstitious tales of elves and fairies which the peasantry of the neighbourhood usually related with such innocence and credulity. A few paces beyond the cave, the airy magic of an Alpine bridge, suspended over the Cynon, contributed strongly to impress the imagination with an idea of old provincial fictions ; slight, narrow, and tremulous in appearance, it seemed indeed more adapted for the tread and haunt of fawn or fay than adequate to the support of human feet. Distant mountains

clustered together, and towering aloft, finally closed the rich and beautiful scene.

Such was the sublimely attractive landscape our heroines Oriana and Rosilia were destined to contemplate. Linked together, arm in arm, they frequently ranged over the lonely peaceful country adjacent to their dwelling, listening to each other's tales, heightened by the colouring of youthful fancy, yet modified by intellectual culture. However irksome at such an age might be found the continual sameness of retired life, time usefully employed left them little leisure for repining. Oriana, gay and sportive from nature, ran her light fingers over the keys of her piano or strings of her harp, and thus found a solace from ennui, whilst Rosilia endeavoured to dispel the solitary hour by a book, the pen, or pencil, indulging in all the luxury of a refined and cultivated taste. Each occupied by their respective talents, or seeking amusement in their various mental resources, scarcely an interval in the day was unprofitably spent.

Nevertheless, when the charm of novelty became abated, and all around was familiar, the image of one far distant often stole upon the thought of the younger sister, invested with that imposing elegance of mien so conspicuous in his last interview, reviving those sentiments of painful absorp-

tion she had vainly sought to expel; and when, even at the time she conceived that no earthly motive could ever tempt her to become the partner of Douglas, she secretly, unknown to herself, cherished the idea, fatal indeed to her future peace, that if his affection for her was truly so strong and ardent as he had expressed, he might still be led at some future period, perhaps not very remote, to discover her even amidst those deep sequestered shades of her present existence, however impenetrable they might appear;—at such moments only, when beguiled by a delusive hope, was she made sensible of an extinction of mental sorrow, so as to leave her free to participate in her sister's accustomed cheerfulness.

The first year of their residence amidst those still haunts had passed with but little interruption from society in general, with the exception of one with whom they had formed a friendly intimacy, and who had proved to them a very desirable acquisition.

It was in a summer evening's walk, replete with charms to our little family, that they chanced to pass a delightful small abode, rendered almost impervious to the sight by the thick foliage surrounding it. Mrs. De Brooke supposed it to be a mile distant from her home, and feeling somewhat fa-

tigued, in compliance with the request of her daughters, she proceeded to raise the latch of the little gate leading to the enchanting cot, when a gentleman of placid, humble, yet dignified mien, who might have numbered fifty years or more, appeared at the door of his modest habitation.

Mrs. De Brooke would have retired, but he advanced to meet her, as also the General, begging them to walk in and rest themselves.

“The evening was sultry,” said he, “and the ladies might be fatigued.”

His invitation was accepted. Encouraged by the candour his countenance exhibited, they accordingly entered, and when seated, the neatness and simplicity of all around charmed them equally as did the owner of this lovely retreat. His mild and gentle look, his sable habiliments, announced him, as they supposed, a minister of the Gospel. His eye, dark and penetrating, might have inspired awe, had not the smile of true benevolence accompanying its searching glance infused confidence, at once portraying a virtue severe yet flexible. In contemplating still further the physiognomy of their new acquaintance, a slight contraction of brow might have denoted to the De Brookes that he too had experienced those shafts of calamity from which few are exempt.

The General could not forbear thinking it was rather extraordinary that one of such refined manners, one so superior and intelligent in his conversation, should inhabit a spot so remote from the polished life they had themselves quitted, and where his abilities and usefulness as a minister must of necessity be extremely limited in a place chiefly inhabited by peasantry, or at best the opulent farmer, whose intellects seemed adequate alone to comprehend the rude unlettered dialect of the country. Nevertheless the General could not but felicitate himself upon his good fortune in having formed an acquaintance with Dr. Loveworth, (for so he called himself,) one so likely to become congenial to him, and one who on his part was no less sensible of a similar satisfaction, having been for some time seeking for an occasion, which then accidentally offered itself, of becoming known to the new inmates of The Bower.

Whilst pleasingly engaged in conversation, Rosilia had left her seat to take a nearer view of a portrait that had some time riveted her attention; it was the full-length picture of a young female gracefully inclining her head towards a child, that, with infantine beauty looking upwards, returned her smiles. A pause in the discourse taking place, the General observed, that the opposite portrait to

the one his daughter contemplated must have been formerly a striking likeness of himself.

“ It was so, truly,” replied Doctor Lovesworth ; “ nearly five and twenty years have passed since I sat for that picture ; it was executed by an artist of some fame, as also the other. Yes, we each of us were taken about the same period.”

A deep sigh accompanied the close of his speech, called forth, as by some tender chord vibrating upon his soul, as if the resignation of the Christian had not yet finally subdued the sorrows of the man !

Continuing to view the portrait so formed to strike her fancy, Rosilia, no longer able to suppress her admiration, exclaimed, “ The mother, for so I suppose her, seems the emblem of charity, the child, of innocence ! combined in one, they represent the beautiful image of celestial truth and goodness !”

She turned her glowing countenance full of inquiry upon the Doctor, who was struck by a sentiment so charming, and, struggling with the deep emotion he felt, the tear which had risen to his eye was seen trickling down his cheek.

“ And will not the severe excuse a sigh ?
Our tears indulged indeed deserve our shame ;
Ye that e'er lost an angel, pity me.”

“She was, my dear young lady,” said he, recovering his serenity, “she was all that you imagine her—all that a kindred spirit such as yours may conceive of the angelic, a bright and lovely ornament of society and of her sex. Blessed with this treasure, I ever found her the most amiable and endearing companion; but,” he added, “we ought not to retrace past events with any appearance of sadness or discontent, as if we had not taught ourselves the useful lesson of making an entire surrender of our hearts to that wise Providence watching over our destiny, and who assuredly knows what is best for us in time as in eternity,—whose ways, inscrutable, are above our finite understandings to comprehend. But pardon me this slight digression.”

“My good sir,” returned the General, “a religious discussion is by no means uninteresting to myself or any part of my family; on the contrary, it is a theme peculiarly gratifying.”

“Yes,” rejoined Mrs. De Brooke, “it is indeed to us a pleasing topic, and we much lament that it is so generally banished from society for details of comparatively little importance.”

“It is indeed an observation but too true,” replied the Doctor; “we rarely meet with those who take much delight in a religious conversation;

those high and elevating subjects, so dear to the General and his worthy family,—those edifying topics that afford to us such solid enjoyment, are, unhappily, too much neglected by the many.”

“Perhaps,” said Oriana, “the most part imagine that to introduce religious topics would be impolite or unfashionable, or think that such discourse tends to burthen and oppress the mind with gloom, cause melancholy or an undue seriousness, and by degrees chase all disposition for gaiety and pleasure.”

“That such subjects being avoided,” continued the Doctor, “may not always spring from a total indifference upon religious points, is very possible; yet at the same time it argues that the mind is not duly affected, as it should be, with a matter of such high moment, for we never fail to lend a willing and attentive ear to what we find delightful. Even at all times and places, the soul, intent upon its progressive risings towards heaven, abstracting itself from temporal to the contemplation of eternal things, may glow with an inward harmony, a peace and bliss which, depend upon it, the fascinating, giddy charms of sense and the world can never so amply convey.”

In such conversation a very agreeable half-hour passed, when Mrs. De Brooke rising to depart, the General, in shaking Doctor Lovesworth cordi-

ally by the hand, gave him a warm and pressing invitation to his cottage, which having been with equal pleasure accepted, the Doctor offered to conduct his new friends part of the road on their way home.

“Your cottage, Doctor,” said the General, “bears, if possible, a more retired aspect than ours.”

“It is upon a smaller plan,” returned he, “which may contribute to give that appearance.”

“And yet,” added the General, “the hand of taste and culture has not been spared; you are doubtless fond of the country?”

“I am, indeed, truly fond of a country life, and particularly so of that little abode. Many circumstances have endeared it to me. It has been many years in my possession, and has witnessed some of the happiest moments of my life. I do not visit it as often as my inclinations would prompt me,—twice in the year I continue to rusticate in it a couple of months.”

“It is then not your constant residence,” said Rosilia, in tones of regret.

“We shall lose you for most part of the year,” added Oriana.

“We cannot,” replied he, with an affectionate smile, pleased at the interest he had already awa-

kened in the young people, "we cannot have all things according to our liking; fond as I am of that spot, I willingly forgo its pleasures: the ministerial duties in which I am engaged, and from which I do not wish to be freed, reconcile me to a town life. Those times that I escape to my hermitage, as I call it, a young clerical friend of mine officiates for me, much to my satisfaction, as well as that of my congregation. From some cause or other, mental it appears, his health has been much impaired of late; desirous to afford him the temporary advantage of breathing this wholesome air, I wished him to quit, for a time, his studies and his books, and to have accompanied me here this last visit; but not finding one competent to take upon himself his office, he declined. However, having at length satisfied himself in this respect, he intends shortly accepting my invitation. He is a young man of considerable parts, and so assiduous has he been to qualify himself for holy orders, that he has, indeed, too much neglected and impaired his constitution."

"The tranquillity of your hermitage, Doctor," said the General, "as also the pure soft breezes of this genial climate, may quite restore him."

"I hope so, truly," returned the Doctor; "my young friend is endeared to me more than I can

express. When I speak in his praise, I do but faint justice to his merit ; the utmost purity of morals and suavity of manner unite in Philimore, the Christian and the gentleman.”

“ Philimore !” exclaimed the General and his lady in a breath, “ Edmund Philimore ! doubtless the son of our old and esteemed friends.”

It was truly as they supposed, and they were mutually delighted at the prospect of having shortly so pleasing an addition to their society.

Finding the General’s cottage appear in sight, the Doctor wished his new-formed friends a good night, and left them to return to his hermitage.

CHAPTER X.

“ What scenes of glory rise
Before my dazzled eyes!
Young zephyrs wave their wanton wings,
And melody celestial rings.”

BEATTIE.

IF, upon a short acquaintance, Dr. Lovesworth made so favourable an impression upon the De Brookes, it greatly increased when his dignified character became still more unfolded to their view—when he exhibited the many virtues with which he was replete, and when his enlarged mind, intelligence, and wisdom became upon every interview more discernible.

In possession of friends and fortune, but above all distinguished for talent and worth, he had received church preferment, and taken his degree as Doctor of Divinity. He had been a widower about nine years, previous to which he had experienced all the felicity that the connubial state, when blessed with a kindred partner, can possibly afford,—when congenial minds unite in one, and form the true bond of reciprocal union. His par-

sonage had been the seat of every rural pleasure—every domestic enjoyment; life had seemed one delicious spring! Nor ever did he dream of the storm which lowered over his head and threatened to deprive him of his lovely partner. After a painful illness she departed this life, and was shortly followed by her child, when, like a blighted tree, he was left to bemoan his irreparable loss.

“ When such friends part,
'Tis the survivor dies.”

Time, the assuager of all human sufferings, at length restored him to health, exchanged his grief for composure, and recalled those sentiments of his religious belief which were previously imbibed, but which, in the first stage of his affliction, were partially obscured. He bowed with patience and submission to the will of a wise but inscrutable Providence, and his bosom swelled with gratitude for the many blessings surrounding him.

Few knew justly how to appreciate the merits of this excellent man, whose chief delight and constant care had been the study of the Sacred Scriptures; and well qualified was he to elucidate their mysteries, by penetrating through the veil of their literal sense; by this means, what might seem obscure was clearly understood, and apparent contradictions were reconciled. To the cursory peruser,

who had only gazed at the casket, and not discovered the jewels it contains, he would unfold the inestimable treasures of true wisdom, and exhibit to his astonished mind the “pearls of great price” which had been concealed from his mental sight; then, by apt illustrations and demonstrations the most cogent, he would prove the author Infinite. How clearly would he show the whole is one beautiful, sublime, and connected chain of love and wisdom, which adapts itself to finite comprehension, yet not to be fully fathomed in its depths profound by mortal or angelic skill!

Such was the inestimable Lovesworth,—a faithful disciple, a truly rational and illuminated scribe of the Lord,—one who, like former messengers of their Divine Master, by the world deemed visionary because but little known or understood, was nevertheless warmly received, because rightly appreciated, by the discerning and unprejudiced few.

Framing his views and forming his entire life and conduct by this heavenly and enlightened model, Doctor Lovesworth simplified to the unlettered the purest philosophy, and the most exalted and edifying principles of theology. His parishioners were daily in the habit of resorting to him for instruction,—happy to disseminate truths he had it in his power so ably to expound, and particularly in the

capital, where a free and extensive circulation was given to them, being truly the good shepherd who fed his flocks: "The fire within me must not be stifled; the voice which says within me, Speak, must receive obedience. Woe unto me if I preach not the Gospel!"

By this daily practice, and life of usefulness, the Doctor alleviated the recollections of the past.

So regular had been his custom of visiting his obscure retreat, that whenever he failed to do so his constitution suffered. The invigorating influence of country air he found to be essential, and the preference was given to his hermitage, prizing it more than any other of his possessions, it having witnessed the first scenes of his nuptial happiness. Accident had caused him to discover it, whilst making a tour with his bride through Wales, when charmed by the enchanting aspect of the spot, he had been induced to purchase it, and add decorations such as greatly embellished its picturesque beauty.

In possession of ample property, it was not from motives of retrenchment he had quitted the frequented scenes of life; sequestration during the first months of marriage had been his choice, equally as that of his partner;—'tis then, in that early period of near association, dependent upon

each other, that affection grows, and the matrimonial tie is strengthened. The beautiful blossom of conjugal love becoming closely knit, firmly braves the buffet of the blast, and defies all future injury. By the adoption of this prudent plan, Dr. Lovesworth had secured to himself the choicest fruits of wedded life, the mutual harmony, based upon the firm principles of reciprocal unity, which he believed would exist even beyond the grave,—which the chilling hand of death would neither blight nor wither.

He had not for some time felt a pleasure so lively as that which he experienced upon his acquaintance with the De Brookes; even upon the first interview he felt sensible of an assimilating partiality, and which, upon a nearer intimacy, became confirmed, arising from the separate endowments and virtues of each harmonizing together in one common concord, interest, and union.

In the course of a short period, as he had expected, he had the happiness of affording a welcome at his hermitage to his young friend the Rev. E. Philimore:—

“As bees mix’d nectar draw from fragrant flow’rs,
So men from friendship, wisdom and delight,—
Thoughts shut up want air,
And spoil, like bales unopen’d to the sun.”

“I am heartily glad to see you,” said the Doc-

tor; "but I am sorry to see the invalid portrayed in your looks. You must needs require rest after your toilsome journey. I will not listen to anything you may have to tell me to-night; to-morrow we shall have ample leisure for discussions of various kinds; and to-morrow I promise you a gratification equal to that your company affords me, the introducing you to a family known to your parents, and who, I assure you, entertain a high regard and esteem for yourself."

"My good Doctor," replied Philimore, "I suspect your kind partiality has led you to speak far more in my praise than I deserve: you have overrated my poor abilities, and this amiable family will find I have but slight pretensions to the commendations you have given me."

Impressed with this idea, some check was given to the wonted self-possession of Philimore, when, the following day, he accompanied the Doctor on his walk to The Bower. Nevertheless, a feeling he had rarely of late experienced occupied his mind; his ideas, long saddened and oppressed, resumed a portion of their native vivacity, together with a wish to please, and an ardent desire to render himself agreeable, and support the good opinion his friend had excited in his favour, but which, as he

was inclined to think it proceeded from vanity, he strove to subdue.

The air was fresh, and seemed in its breeze to waft a perfume from the wild flowers and heath, which grew in rich profusion along the verge of the hill, on one side bounding the path, while sheep and goats, browsing on the summit, were cropping the scented and nutritious herbage. The southern landscape widened into an extensive luxuriance, and as the eye descended to the vale, on the opposite side of the Cynon, was seen the village, romantically situated, its whitewashed roofs* occasionally intermingling with the darkened foliage.

Philimore slackened his pace, in order to contemplate the striking beauties such an assemblage of objects presented.

“What an enchanting country!” ejaculated he; “how diversified the scenery! calculated at once to delight the senses and beguile the imagination.”

“Hark!” said the Doctor, interrupting him, “methought I heard sounds more tuneful than the village church is wont to afford us.”

* The roofs of the cottages in parts of Wales are whitewashed.

They paused, but all was silent; nothing was heard except the warbling of singing birds in an adjoining grove: they renewed their discourse. In a few moments they paused again, when the melody, as it came borne on the breeze to the ear of Philimore, infused sensations consonant to his nature—truth, virtue, and almost saintly purity being impressed upon his soul. And such the harmonious tones, now full and sonorous, now faint and mellow, were calculated to awaken.

They had reached the grove, the music continuing, heightened into strains of greater execution as they advanced; but this was surpassed by excellence still higher: it was accompanied by expression, energy, and pathos—the notes gradually swelled, and gradually in softer murmurs died away. In these intervals there was breathed forth a strain of such exquisite modulation, of such melting sweetness, as could not fail to have touched and vibrated upon the coldest breast. How great then must have been their power over the warm, the sensible, and enthusiastic Philimore, heightened as was their effect by the varied beauties which surrounding objects presented to his view!

It was Oriana who had attuned her voice in unison to her harp; when, upon seeing Dr. Loves-

worth suddenly pass the window, she ceased, and the next moment Philimore stood before her.

The acquiescence of her mind to the enchanting harmony she had breathed was still displayed upon her countenance ; its usual animation had vanished, an expression of seraphic meekness prevailed, a sweet tranquillity hung on her brow, a gentle smile played upon her lip. The soft breezes from the open casement had partially disarranged her nut-brown ringlets, her flowing scarf fell in tasteful drapery around her slight and graceful person. Those snowy fingers that had produced such rapturous strains still pressed upon the tuneful wire. Her look, her attitude, seemed the effect of inspiration. Thus perfectly did she realize, to the outward vision of Philimore, the enchantress his imagination had pictured.

Oriana rose and left her seat, dissolving the magic that had seemed to rivet her beholder to the spot ; nevertheless, his heart beat high,—joy, delight, ecstasy, was diffused through every member. She who for the last two years had filled every thought and perception of which his being was capable, was again before him. So intensely was he moved, he could scarcely make due acknowledgments for the kind greetings he received, or

reply to the General and Mrs. De Brooke's inquiries concerning his parents. At length, however, with a modest and prepossessing grace, whilst satisfaction illumined his countenance, he was not deficient in offering remarks, naturally drawn from the occasion and circumstances under which he met the friends of his family.

“Your cottage, General,” said he, “exhibits to my view all that the most enwrapt or glowing fancy might conceive of an Elysium; 'tis truly an earthly Paradise.”

“The description may be somewhat exalted,” replied the General; “I must confess, however, I have rarely beheld more fascinating scenery than that in the vicinity of your friend's cottage and mine.”

“How few,” continued Philimore, “take pleasure in exploring beauties near their homes! Admirers of nature might, by a tour through Wales, be gratified according to the prevalence of their taste; whether the interesting and engaging, the lovely and the picturesque charm them, South Wales displays such landscapes in abundance. If to grandeur they give the preference, how bold are those sublime and stupendous objects in the North! Commanding indeed are its scenes, the misty sum-

mits of its towering hills, its cataracts, and steep perpendicular cliffs."

"The many ruined castles," added Dr. Lovesworth, "and once noble structures, mouldering into decay, variously dispersed about the country, must very much tend to augment the delight experienced by a traveller of taste."

"I think," remarked Mrs. De Brooke, "the country we inhabit is reputed to possess a very beautiful pile of antiquity, the second with respect to vastness in Great Britain."

"The observation is just," replied the Doctor: "I have had the pleasure of exploring Cherpihilly Castle, that truly stupendous fabric; no part of which is in any great state of preservation. The fox may howl beneath its once spacious and now broken roof, and may build its covert there, without being in the least danger of disturbance."

"These old romantic relics," said the General, "seem scarcely more ancient than are the genealogical descents of the inhabitants in some of the remote parts of the country."

"Such who style themselves Flemings," answered the Doctor; "they are a race proud and tenacious of their antiquity, and, in consequence, treat their neighbours with scorn and asperity,

preserving those animosities and feuds which occasioned so much division amongst them in former times."

Thus time fled, when the Doctor, with reluctance, rose to take his leave; Philimore followed, but not until he had glanced at Oriana a look in which his soul spoke, indicating a desire still to linger near her; whilst his ear caught the welcome invitation made by the General to renew his visits frequently.

"It will be my delight, my happiness," replied he with emphasis, "to accompany the Doctor in his usual walks to The Bower."

His heart fondly vibrated to what he uttered, and whispered, "To-morrow I shall see her again,—that sensible, animated, that accomplished girl! and perchance be indulged by her exquisite strains again!" The thought was exhilarating; the languor of convalescence departed, the bright hues of pleasure succeeded; and Dr. Lovesworth, unsuspecting of the cause, congratulated his young friend upon his very improved appearance.

The change also struck forcibly upon Rosilia, who remarked to her mother and sister, that when they had departed for Bath, on account of Oriana's indisposition, he was entirely lost and ab-

sorbed in melancholy reveries. "I hope," continued she, "he will not resume those downcast moods again, but be ever as he has been to-day."

She looked at Oriana, who would have said, "lively, agreeable, intelligent," but checking the words ere they escaped her, she flung aside her work, and fled to the occupations of her garden.

Philimore possessed by nature a temper warm and inflammable, perhaps ungovernable; yet by an intense application to the duties of a profession loved with ardour, the one of his choice, and for which the enthusiasm of his character had led him to qualify himself, he had induced his natural disposition to yield to the control of reason's dictates, and to the mild discipline of true Christian rules. By his frequent study and contemplation of the sublime truths of Christianity, he had restrained every inferior principle of the mind within its due bounds, and often practised a rigid austerity in constraining himself to an habitual and scrutinizing review of his actions, that so he might subdue every inclination which was not strictly sanctioned by enlightened reason.

The preaching of Christianity he wisely considered a species of profanation, were he not to illustrate by his own example the sacredness of those precepts he enforced. This world, thought

he, is our state of trial and probation—it is to fit and prepare us for another!

Thus was he animated by zeal, hope, fervour—not for the popularity of mortal praise, but for the more glorious views of rendering himself worthy of that Supreme Being whose disciple he was, whose ministry he had taken upon himself to fulfil, and in whose presence he was continually acting. Could a steady adherence to such exalted precepts be too great, too rigid for him to practise? Was the gratification of the senses so powerful, so imposing, as that they could not be brought into subjection and obedience?

These questions he had often asked himself, but the proof was still wanting. The ordinary regulations of each day he might not have found difficult, the dissipations of midnight he might have forgone, the mind might be disciplined to undergo privations of various sorts, attendant upon those whose revenues are circumscribed.

Such he had been—such was Philimore—an ornament to his family and profession, correct and simple in his life. It was now to be seen how he would conduct himself for the future, and whether he could resist and combat those stronger passions, connected, as it were, with the inmost links of his being.

CHAPTER XI.

“ Fly these soft scenes! E'en now with playful art
Love wreaths the flowery ways with fatal snare.”

BEATTIE.

APATHY of character, and an indifference to the common concerns of life moving around him, had for some time lessened in Philimore his wonted energies and desires of rendering himself useful in his ministry. He had long breathed a close and condensed atmosphere, but being suddenly transported to one more pure and clear, he found his drooping spirits revive.

Those effects, of which he was sensible, perhaps proceeded from another cause still stronger, but which he was as yet unwilling either to acknowledge or scrutinize.

His future destiny seemed to be involved in a mysterious spell, which he feared to penetrate, and which seemed to link his ideas in a pleasing connexion with The Bower. “ That spot,” thought he, “ is surely consecrated to purer and more elevated joys than those which usually fall to the lot of erring man. Beings of a superior order are

its inmates ! How blessed, to pass one's life there, disencumbered of those restraints, those idle shows and vain exhibitions, affording delight to the worldling in his search to dissipate time, and lash the lingering hours into speed !”

Glowing as was the picture his fervent fancy was disposed to draw, yet some shades darkened the outline, when he considered that he placed the subject in a point of view only in harmony with his then existing feelings ; his thoughts ran solely upon those enjoyments of retired life, when each sex, mutually participating in them, unite in common concord and association with the other. Precluded from such delightful intercourse, he wandered alone over the lovely country which lay before him, but which, however richly diversified, could afford no real charm for him. A life of continual industry might help to dispel the langour of ennui ; but could it chase from the mind the image of joys entombed,—joys the highest that the human soul is capable of conceiving, adequate alone to give relish and stimulus to our wisest projects and pursuits ? It is the voice of Nature and of Heaven, that nought can stifle but those morbid affections springing from the world, its allurements, and corruptions !

“Those amiable sisters !” again thought he,

“surely a feeling of isolation must sometimes intrude upon their hearts, sensible and tender as they seem, and by exposing them to discontent, render even that lovely seclusion irksome.”

Nevertheless, tranquillity, ease, and cheerfulness had dwelt around Oriana; on the contrary, dejection and pensive sadness had encompassed her sister. The sphere of the former was delightful to him; that of the latter affected him also; each sweetly harmonizing within him, produced feelings and impressions he was desirous to suppose would hereafter as then exist undefined and indistinct.

His further reflections were interrupted by the entrance of Dr. Lovesworth, equipped for a morning's ride.

“Come, Philimore,” said he, “I have a horse in attendance for you; I mean to indulge you to-day in a little circuit round the country. We shall pass through some pleasing hamlets, and call upon some cottagers, whose unsophisticated manners will interest you.”

Philimore with alacrity prepared to obey the Doctor, and, as they commenced their ride, observed, “Are, then, the peasantry of this neighbourhood of such an order, as that you, Doctor, can find pleasure in entering their poor abodes? Admit they of instruction? Are their minds in any

way capable of receiving the life-giving spirit of truth? I had supposed them ignorant and illiterate beyond measure.”

“If you allude,” replied the Doctor, “to the extremely poor, they are as you describe them; they can but comprehend the harsh jargon of their native language; but these are few comparatively to the many honest and industrious families with whom I have formed acquaintance.”

The road was inconveniently rugged for any other mode of conveyance than the one they had chosen, deviating from the open path to pursue new ones, making their route easy by occasionally resting as they proceeded, to dwell upon those conspicuous beauties that on all sides attracted the eye.

Having reached the village, they fastened their horses to a shed, where were some farmers' boys, to whom they gave them in charge, and then went on foot to visit the Welsh Curate, who weekly officiated in the small chapel contiguous to his dwelling. He was a man in low circumstances, but of somewhat acute comprehension,—yet much prejudiced, illiberal in his way of thinking, and, by gross misconceptions, perverting the truths of the Holy Word, in such a way as to make it but little intelligible to the ignorant, or satisfactory to

the unbeliever. After some conversation, in which the Doctor and his friend discovered the ruling persuasions of the Curate, and how erroneously they were founded, they might have boldly combated his opinions, but rather preferred to accommodate to them for a time, than, by hasty and premature reasoning, disconcert their antagonist, and perhaps provoke in him a more tenacious adherence to his sentiments.

“Another time,” thought Philimore, “and I will endeavour to persuade him out of the ideas he has formed. May an Infinite Power above aid my humble attempts to lead this man from the darkness of preconceived error, into a brighter and fuller illumination—the souls of so many looking up to him for instruction. How important the charge—how awful the consideration—amongst the mists in which he is himself wandering, to mislead his flock! Forbid it, Heaven!”

As Philimore thus reflected, he inwardly prayed to his Creator to grant him to be a humble instrument in promoting the good he so ardently desired, by converting the Curate to his opinions, and thereby a Divine sanction and blessing accompany him, while absent from his own ministerial labours, during his sojourn with the Doctor.

“Is it not to be remarked, Doctor,” said he, in

reference to the discourse he had just held with the Curate, "that all denominations of Christians, whatever religion they profess, all assert their doctrines to be true?"

"And why," asked the Doctor, "but because they have been educated in them, and brought up under such a persuasion, without giving themselves the trouble to examine whether such doctrines are true or otherwise?"

"Or if they do examine," again observed Philimore, "it is from a desire of confirming themselves in the particular tenets of their ancestors, in which they have been born and instructed: this I fear is too evident in the case of the Curate whom we have just left."

"Too truly, my young friend; and thus they but too often confirm themselves in error. 'Search the Scriptures,' we are expressly told; and when this is done from the pure affection of learning truth, man is enlightened by the Lord, and he becomes confirmed in the good in which he is principled."

"What a motive is this, my dear Doctor, for us to obey the injunctions of our Divine Master, and, with a meek, reverential spirit, quaff at the holy fountain He has given us, and satisfy our righteous thirst after true wisdom!"

“The wisdom of knowing and loving God,” returned the Doctor, “and of exercising charity towards our neighbour, which is indeed true wisdom, and thus prove whether the doctrines that have been taught in childhood are true or false.”

“The most common topics of dispute and of variance on religion are chiefly on the subject of Faith!” observed Philimore.

“Alas! because the flame which gave light to truth is withdrawn, obscurity is introduced, which would never have been the case had good, that is Charity, preserved the pre-eminence; if Faith had not assumed the priority, the evil of contention would have had no foundation for existence—opinions could not have differed, and the Church would have been one.”

“How lamentable,” returned Philimore, “that, in reading the Word of God, such misconceptions and perversions of its sacred contents should take place!”

“Were the eye single, my dear Philimore, and the heart deeply impressed with the conviction, that, in studying the Divine Volume, we are opening a communication with Heaven; did no preconceived opinions or warmth of party zeal predominate over the mind in its researches,

a communication between the soul and its God would be the result!"

"What a privilege," exclaimed Philimore, "for a thinking being to meditate upon!"

"Most true," replied the Doctor, "it is a privilege within every one's reach, through that divine medium, to hold communion with our Maker, who, in his infinite wisdom and mercy, to effect his blessed intentions, has adapted the historical parts of the scriptures in a manner to render them agreeable and delightful to the mind; the prophetic parts are more obscure,—nevertheless, though indistinctly perceived by man, we have no less reason to suppose that they possess equally the virtue of drawing us near to the heavenly choir. While, with simple innocence and humble piety, we meditate upon them, in common with the whole contents of the inspired writings, angels become our attendant ministering friends, the sweet companions of our thoughts,—infuse into them the chastening ray of divine intelligence, which springs direct from the sun of Heaven,—the sun of suns, and resplendent orb of everlasting day."

The discourse was here interrupted, for, on returning homewards, they entered a few straggling huts and farm-houses that lay on the roadside; in all of which they were received with welcome,

the praises of good Dr. Lovesworth resounding from every inmate; blessings followed him, and everywhere might be traced the effects of industry, arising from his charitable donations.

Secretly resolved to follow in the steps of so devout and heavenly a guide, Philimore dismounted from his horse, highly gratified, receiving new vigour, both mental and bodily, from his morning's excursion.

Such a mode of passing time became to Philimore daily replete with increased delight. Availing himself too of the privilege given, he was almost a constant visitor at The Bower. Often accompanying the family in their walks, they rambled together over that romantic country, where nature, bountiful in her treasures, afforded them a display more blooming and magnificent than the most splendid domain ever gave to the lordly eye of its opulent owner. Unconfined, free from intrusion, they could range the verdant vale, the lofty hill.

Sometimes the enraptured Philimore would pause and point out to his fair friends some striking beauty,—the Cynon pursuing its winding course between luxuriant banks, and irrigating the meadows. Sometimes wandering in the grove, its warbling tenants enlivened them by their strains.

“Pleasures such as these,” softly whispered

Philimore to Oriana, as she stood near him, "are reserved for those whom Providence has destined for retired life. The rural shade, though it may exclude from those circles festive and brilliant, so much esteemed by the votary of fashion, yet equally exempts from the fatigue of pomp and the satiety of luxury."

It was on one of these occasions, when a sentiment similar to the preceding one escaped Philimore, that, upon his leaving them to return to the Hermitage, Oriana, in discourse with her sister, observed, "It is not impossible that Edmund Philimore supposes the retirement of the life we lead to be that of our choice."

"Such, however," said Rosilia hastily, "is far from being the case with me; such complete isolation never was nor ever will be consonant to my taste."

"Nor was it to mine before Edmund came to the Hermitage; since which, the former monotony of each day has been so agreeably varied, that I now feel quite reconciled to forgo the pleasure usually attendant upon giving and receiving visits."

"As to the variety," replied Rosilia, "to be gratified by what is called seeing company, scenes so presented would truly afford me little satisfaction, indeed, would rather, I imagine, affect me with a feeling of satiety and ennui."

“ But the society of a few well-chosen guests,” added Oriana, “ of cultivated minds and agreeable manners, such as are found united in our two clerical friends, are not persons of such a description to be highly prized and appreciated ?”

“ In this I fully agree with you, dear Oriana ; and it is my opinion also, that the less we incline to dissipated pleasures, the more social become our habits ; and, in consequence, those who might render themselves congenial to me, are not to be met with in the confined circle of our neighbourhood. When the good Doctor and Edmund depart, called away to pursue their official duties in London, will not our solitude appear to you as irksome as it did formerly ?”

“ Oh ! speak not of it, Rosilia,” interrupted her sister ; “ loneliness in such a case would be far less intolerable than that insipidity to be met with from minds barren of all intellectual and rational resource.”

“ Though the struggle is hard,” continued Rosilia, “ it is my constant endeavour to resign myself to this solitude, ever desirous of appearing pleased and happy, for the sake of our dear parents, and to sacrifice all minor considerations to what they conceive necessary to the welfare and interests of the family.”

“ I must frankly confess,” resumed Oriana, “ the consciousness that it is in one’s power to call sometimes upon a neighbour, and meet with the kind and friendly sympathies of the heart, manifested in the cordial and warm welcome, carries with it a certain delight which touches and affects the soul, makes an appeal to its feelings which is irresistible, and of which I never fail of being sensible when we visit at the Hermitage, or its inmates come to us. Edmund has the power of charming away time delightfully ; this you must allow, my dear Rosilia, to be true.”

“ I do allow it to be true, and I will, if possible, no longer complain of my seclusion, or view it in the light of a sacrifice ; such murmurings and repinings seem as though they sprung from the suggestions of vanity. And oh ! what delight is there not still left for me in the contemplation of nature, in the expansion given to the mind by the survey of the wide and beautiful Creation around us ! In the superior intelligences thus received, as the good Doctor said the other day, we learn to see the emptiness of all worldly things, and the grandeur and sublimity of an eternity.”

“ The Doctor seems to have strongly impressed you with his sentiments, dear Rosilia ; and tell me

now candidly, whether, in your religious range of thought, Edmund has no share."

"Certainly, in association with the Doctor, he has; it is not possible to conceive a mind more sublime, more indued with heavenly goodness, than his."

Scarcely had Rosilia ceased speaking than the delighted Oriana, with heart palpitating, observed Philimore in his approach to the cottage; shortly after, the sisters, mutually cheered and soothed by the short dialogue they had held, descended to meet him.

Sometimes, to diversify amusement, whilst his young friends and their mother were occupied with the needle, Philimore, reaching down a favourite author from the shelf, stocked with well-assorted works, selected passages to read, the most beautiful, tender, and pathetic, in narrative and description, so abundantly to be found in Young, Thomson, and Milton. The latter, it is true, was oftener preferred, perhaps arising from association of feeling influencing the taste; instinctively the pages were thrown open at the Fourth Book.

Philimore possessed by nature a voice full and flexible; but when the soul was engaged, entering into the sublime genius of the author, so replete with tender charity, the pure union and harmony

existing between our first parents, his pronunciation, emphasis, and delivery, varying with the subject, rendered the effect complete. He paused at intervals to exchange ideas, or to answer remarks as they occurred. Again the blissful scenes of Paradise were discussed—the graces, the intellectual and submissive charms of the incomparable Eve. The ineffable delight felt by Philimore awakened consonant sensations in his fair and susceptible auditors.

The frugal meal brought with it a cessation of these morning pleasures; twilight succeeded to the evening walk, when Oriana, at her harp, gave Philimore unbounded delight. Though possessing little skill in music, yet his natural but accurate taste afforded him the highest relish for compositions unfolding the language of sentiment. Oriana's voice penetrated his heart, and vibrated through every inmost fibre. This intense feeling, amounting almost to pain, generally succeeded the first impression of pleasure which her vocal airs inspired. These airs, perhaps, equally well performed by another, might not have produced the same effect. The charming Oriana, it is true, ever associating in the train of his ideas, greatly tended to heighten those softening emotions which her songs excited.

Sometimes, in compliance with entreaties, he would join in chorus, when the mellow bass of his harmonious voice gave an effect surpassing conception. The various, the powerful sentiments that thrilled in his heart breathed rapturously forth, giving energy and expression to his tones.

Often did the wandering shepherd, passing The Bower, hitherto accustomed to the sound only of the village harper, linger in the pathway beyond the plantations, listening to those strains of such inspiring tendency, so enchanting to his rustic senses; and when, at last, the dusk of evening warned him to retire, still resounding through the grove, even though remote and beyond their reach, the sounds in fancy met his ravished ears.

It was after such occasions as these, when returning to the Hermitage unaccompanied by the Doctor, that Philimore traced to their source those powerful sensations by which he was agitated; and poignantly, most sensibly alive did he then feel to the danger attending the encouragement of his passion. Should he take upon himself courage, and fly,—fly from the too fatal, but pleasing snare that enchained him? How could he resolve upon such a step! All other earthly charms or flattering allurements he might resist, but how could he stem the tide of those self-approving, virtuous feel-

ings which knit his destiny to that of the beloved Oriana! As the voyager securely sinks to rest, whilst the vessel bearing him calmly floats upon the unruffled surface of the deep, and dreams not of the tempest that may suddenly expose him to the fury of the elements, so Philimore, reposing on the bliss of the moment, yielded himself a willing captive to the fervour of love, whilst every thought of care or anxiety for the future was banished from his breast.

The sisters had each conceived the highest opinion of Philimore; their confidence in his virtue was unbounded, they thought it impossible he could err,—so replete with goodness, possessing morality without bigotry, the profoundest intellectual attainments without pride or self-superiority; with his equals gentle yet gay, with his inferiors mild and condescending; though his person might not be termed handsome, his *tout ensemble* was highly agreeable. With recommendations such as these, was it possible for him not to excite an interest proportionate to his talents and virtues?

Oriana deeply acknowledged their sway; and Rosilia, oh! how often had she wished in secret that Douglas, to his more polished, fascinating, and brilliant manners and mien, had united the

blameless life of Philimore, and in sentiment, truth, and morals resembled him! Freely then could she have admitted his suit, and have avowed without blushing that partiality with which he had so fervently sought to inspire her; that partiality even then existing, having outlived the hopes which had formerly given it strength—though deprecating her weakness, yet unable to subdue it.

Unfortunately for Rosilia, she was thrown into solitude in that susceptible period when, with a native enthusiasm of character, her heart had first opened to a youthful impression. Secluded from the possibility of ever beholding another who could in the least dispute with Douglas his reign over her fancy, those imperfections, originating in the love of the world and pride of shining, formerly so regretted by her, were then, if not wholly forgotten, at least considerably softened to her view.

No longer present to excite the blush of confusion by his obvious notice of her, she could invest him with a thousand graces, a thousand irresistible qualities; his radiant expression, his frank and open mien, his whole dazzling and manly deportment rendered him to her fancy what ancient historians combined in description to paint their knights of chivalry; effects arising, she was willing

to imagine, from more interior and mental causes than those merely of habit, good-breeding, and an enlarged intercourse with the world.

Thus infatuated, she conceived that the recollection of Douglas would ever oppose her entertaining any attachment for another, while, in fact, this being of her idolatry proceeded from no other cause of existence than imagination, the active and exalted powers of which created a phantom gifted with endowments rare and excellent! She loved in thought, in idea! It was the vision of imagination which she loved, nurtured by retirement, and its soft breathing, inspiring scenes! Where is the being who has ever met with the object formed to bear an affinity to that perfect image which the heart and its affections paint as best calculated to assimilate with all its dearest wishes, tenderest feelings, and nicest sensibilities? Vain is the hope, and rarely in this world of disorder is the picture realized.

Contrary to Philimore's usual custom of passing a portion of each day at The Bower, several had passed without any of the family having seen him. The good Doctor had entirely engrossed his company, which he willingly bestowed upon him as due to his kind partiality. The time they spent

together was in general at a distance from home, in making excursions about the neighbourhood, either in the Doctor's gig or on horseback, when Philimore ever profited by the occasion of soothing, cheering, or exhorting his fellow-pilgrims in their journey through life. The Welsh Curate had drawn from him many controversial discussions, in which, by his mild suavity, he had happily succeeded, if not wholly to convince his antagonist, yet at least to weaken several of his apparently most inveterate prejudices.

After one of these visits, upon meeting the Doctor, and in commenting with him upon the conversation he had held with the Curate, "How very disinclined," said Philimore, "is the human mind, generally speaking, to set the understanding right in points of religion! 'No matter,' said the Curate to me this morning, 'whether I am wrong or otherwise, it is of little importance, and cannot tell against me hereafter; provided I have faith and attend to my conduct, it is all that is required of me to ensure a state of happiness in another life.'"

"Such, unhappily," returned the Doctor, "are the fallacious reasonings of many; supposing the understanding to be sufficiently employed if it enables them to check evil affections, they have no

idea of exalting it, or of raising it from the darkness and superstition in which it may be immersed."

"Such was my argument against my opponent," continued Philimore, "who strongly persisted he had quite as good a chance of being fit for Heaven as those who were ever seeking to form acquaintance with, or gain a knowledge of that Infinite and Eternal Being and his ways, with whom he supposed his principles of Faith and a life of external piety merely, were alone necessary to insure him an introductory passport to His throne."

"Sad perversion of the mental powers," answered the Doctor, "to leave them thus unemployed, unexercised. Why should not every organ of the human mind, receptive of the attributes of Deity, be cleansed of its dross? why, in purifying the more interior regions of the affections, should we not also refine and enlighten our understandings? and why thus willingly turn aside and close the ears, because the system that would enlighten us is not drawn from the source and channel of that fountain at which we have hitherto drunk?"

"Alas! so it is, Doctor; how often have I heard the knell rung in my ears—the generally received opinion shall be mine; that upon which wiser

heads have determined, to that only will I accede! Thus, under a plausible and specious humility, circumscribing the bounds of human reason, neglecting its powers, and leaving it wholly devoid of that sustentation which would lead to its expansion and culture."

"Chaining itself to a system," returned the Doctor, "and limiting its researches, instead of enlarging the sphere of its contemplations, and of ranging into the boundless regions of that eternity for which we are preparing, and to which this world is but as a nursery."

When not thus employed, during moments of leisure, with renewed ardour Philimore hastened to visit those so valued at The Bower; and often while proceeding thither, various reflections took possession of him—at one time in self-reproaches, for having thoughtlessly allowed himself to become the victim of a passion now too violent to suppress; but though unfortunate and disastrous, as he feared it might prove to him, yet he felt himself ennobled by it! It was the adversity of his circumstances only which he deplored, and the restraints it rendered necessary for him to throw upon his conduct.

From various pecuniary losses, his family had become so completely reduced as to be under the

necessity of deriving their chief support from his ministerial labours; “And how,” thought he, in pursuing the train of his reflections, “how withdraw from my father the benefits he receives from me! Should I cease to befriend him, how unnatural would it be for a son on whose education he has so liberally expended his means, and in whom all his hopes centre!”

The General, he conceived, might be more easily led to countenance his attachment to his daughter than his father, who, independently of his fallen fortunes, had a temper naturally covetous of wealth, and who, even in his prosperous days, could never admit the idea of his eldest son uniting himself to any but a woman of fortune; sooner, had he heard him say, would he follow him to the grave! Alas! it was this cruel exception even to the family of De Brooke that had so deeply affected his mind with gloom during the period of Rosilia’s sojourn in London.

Esteemed as might be the General by his father, and however he had acknowledged that Oriana was perfectly desirable in herself, there was nothing, Philimore felt persuaded, his father would be more obstinately bent upon opposing than a union with her.

Alas! the perversity of human things! Oriana

had inspired him with a pure and virtuous attachment;—to be blessed with such a solace and companion, through the chequered scenes of joy and sorrow, had often been represented to his mind when dreams of the future had dawned upon his fancy; and whenever that vision so dear had passed away, leaving but the semblance of an empty shadow, he had been sensible of a chill pervading his system, arising from the dread caused by the uncertainty that such a bliss might ever be his. Exulting, therefore, in the treasure he had found, the fear of losing her, of never seeing Oriana reflect lustre on his parsonage, occupied his inmost thoughts, when, on entering within the boundary of her simple dwelling, he instantly beheld her.

A prey to contending feelings, Philimore hesitated; perplexed and undecided whether to advance, conscious of having drawn upon himself the notice of Oriana, a sudden dizziness overcoming him, his spirits sank within him; he reclined against a tree for support; an ashy paleness overspread his countenance, which Oriana perceiving, sprang forward, betraying in her looks and accents the most tender concern. In such a moment every former suggestion of duty and discretion vanished; his lips faltered, but the sounds, however indistinctly uttered, fell in intelligible accents on the

heart of Oriana: a smile of satisfaction beamed upon her lover; the amiable Philimore had already won upon her confidence, and she was too unreserved to dissemble. Joy, ecstasy taking possession of Philimore, he imagined he had arrived at the summit of his wishes; but in the next moment the whole train of his former reflections and disquietude, respecting the necessity of concealment, rushed upon his mind.

Mrs. De Brooke and Rosilia appeared in view; he essayed to speak, but could not; the dread of meeting displeasure forcibly intimidated him, and he could scarcely venture to pronounce what he felt to be so essential, and upon which he entirely founded his hopes of future success.

“Pardon me, excuse me,” at length he ejaculated: “the unfortunate circumstances under which I am at present placed, render of the utmost importance your compliance with the sacrifice I am about demanding of you; and that you will not reveal to any the disclosure I have just made you, if you have the least regard for my happiness: such an indiscretion would be destruction to it! I should be banished your presence, and an everlasting separation would be the consequence! The mere thought is distraction! In the course of a few months I may have the certainty

of church preferment, and till then I dare not make my pretensions known.”

He had no leisure to explain himself further, nor Oriana, prepossessed as she was in favour of Philimore, to weigh the subject with that maturity it demanded:—fatal inconsideration, unbecoming Oriana! Her lover anxiously waiting her reply, she expressed her full consent, when her mother and sister joined her.

CHAPTER XII.

“ Unequal task! a passion to resign,
For hearts so touch’d, so pierced, so lost as mine.”

POPE.

HOWEVER unfortunately situated as was Philimore in respect to his family circumstances prohibiting him from making an open declaration of his sentiments, yet, unable to resist the stronger passions, or of practising that self-control he had formerly, upon less trying occasions, exerted,—in engaging the daughter of his friend to hold clandestine intercourse with him, and in leading her into the unjustifiable conduct of withholding her confidence from the best of parents, Philimore cast an irretrievable stain over his hitherto unblemished character!—and so effectually did he succeed in blinding the judgment of General and Mrs. De Brooke, that they harboured not the slightest suspicion of any other sentiment prevailing in him for either Oriana or Rosilia than that which old acquaintance authorized.

On this account, Mrs. De Brooke, when employed in her household avocations, left the young people to amuse themselves together. The confidence she placed in Philimore gave her a satisfaction in affording her daughters an intercourse with one so moral and enlightened.

The General, influenced by the same idea, often left them to indulge in a morning's *tête-à-tête* with the Doctor, and often during these occasions Philimore was made the subject of their conversation. The Doctor, describing in animated terms the assistance he had already derived from his labours amongst the parishioners of the neighbourhood, failed not at the same time to extol him for the illumination which he had with so patient and affectionate a perseverance insinuated into the religious but false tenets of the Curate.

“ We read, my dear sir,” said the General, “ that perversions of the truth, such as salvation by faith alone, predestination, and other suchlike awful heresies, have been ever attendant on the Church of Christ.”

“ It is unhappily the case,” answered the Doctor.

“ Your pious and amiable young friend,” rejoined the General, “ in the fair prospect he yields in his future ministerial efforts, conjoined with your own gifted attainments, Doctor, may lead you both

to act as champions in the defence of truth, and in the propagation of the 'righteous cause' you both so warmly and zealously espouse."

"I fear," replied the Doctor, "that such defence or opposition would be of little use at the present. However, I am happy to add, that in contemplating the state of the world, as it now is, we may discover an orderly progression towards the establishment of a more enlightened and purer worship. Our active missionaries and faithful clergy are engaged in removing the rubbish."

"By sweeping away the idols," remarked the General.

"Assuredly, and by laying the foundation of the Redeemer's kingdom, in the extensive circulation of the literal Word."

"By which means, and by a superior administration, you suppose, Doctor, the superstructure of its internal sense will follow in due time."

"The first approaches to the Lord's kingdom," rejoined the Doctor, "are made by appearances of truth, the purity of which would prove at first too dazzling; the kingdom of *fear* must likewise be passed through before we can arrive at the confines of the kingdom of *love*."

"Thus, my dear Doctor, to arrive more speedily at this happy end, it is my opinion we should blend

patience with our activity, and promote the great cause; and while we water the celestial plant, should trust its growth to Divine agency, which alone, in His infinite goodness, can defend it against the blighting minds of the gainsayer and the worldling."

"I am in association with many who profess pure piety and religion in this country, and with all its toleration of such a variety of sects, am afforded hopes very favourable to the rise of a genuine faith; in short, the reports of our missionaries show the extent of similar community existing in almost every country."

"Truly," added the General, "we see kings and emperors are become solicitous for the success of missions."

"They are so, and instead of continuing to act in the support of error, will by degrees take the character of acting in support of truth. The warfare at present reigning, what does it seem to threaten but the extirpation, amongst those who call themselves Christians, of a blind faith and bigoted zeal?"

"And which," replied the General, "will be most assuredly overthrown."

"Let us then," returned the Doctor, "rejoice at this truly delightful prospect; let us fervently

endeavour and devoutly pray that the kingdom of the Lord will be more and more established within us, bringing forth the fruits of righteousness, and establishing the heart and mind in the peace of Heaven."

After an interval of silence, the General resumed the conversation by saying, "The subject we have discussed, Doctor, being that of religion, recalls to my mind the opinions of a young man I once knew who was educating for the ministry, and who, in adopting some exclusive opinion, was quite overjoyed in the agreeable and fascinating conceit of its being his own discovery; thus his faculties and thoughts ever recurring to the favourite idea, he could not exist at length but in the regions of imagination."

"And in those of self-love, with all its train of evils, I fear," replied the Doctor; "this followed as the natural consequence,—the ideas possibly confined but to one article of faith, giving to that one a total precedence, to the exclusion of every other; this is the rock on which they split who do so."

"I doubt it not," continued the General, "and that was the cause which led to the ruin,—that fatal moral ruin in this unhappy young man it was my sorrow to witness."

"God send he has since," devoutly ejaculated

the Doctor, "seen his error before it became too extensive to retreat."

"Alas!" said the General, "no intercessions, no influence, no persuasions of mine have been of avail; those of yourself or Philimore, had you been acquainted with the object, might have been so. As, for example, in the case now before us, the change wrought in that man, the Curate, in so short a time, is astonishing!"

"Perverse, and obstinately bent upon adhering to his own opinions," added the Doctor, "he has now, from having been led to discern his errors, become, in the hands of Philimore, a mild and docile spirit."

"Excellent young man!" exclaimed the General, "had I a fortune to bestow on my daughters, I would willingly give one of them to him; but devoid even of a certain competency, as is also Philimore, if I judge right, he will be too discreet to think of marriage in my family."

"Most undoubtedly," replied the Doctor; "deficient in such pretensions, he could never think of aspiring to a union with one of the Misses De Brooke."

"Affluence, my good friend," returned the General, pleased to find he agreed with him, "may

not be an absolute requisite in the married state, but that a sufficiency is, my own experience has but too well verified.”

Little did he recollect how quickly, in the sensitive period of youth, when the heart of either sex is sensible of a congenial harmony, the judgment becomes entangled by the delusions of love;—thus, in that beautiful solitude, thrown upon each other for society, partaking of the same recreative amusements, rural sports, and intellectual pleasures, Oriana and Philimore yielded to the persuasive force of a mutual affection, and abandoned themselves to its guidance, little conceiving what regret, what contrition, was to follow!—of which the General, with that credulity natural to him, remained in perfect ignorance, and the more so, from the full persuasion he entertained that Philimore was far too honourable to seek to win upon the affections of one of his daughters, unsanctioned by the joint concurrence of their mother and himself.

How widely was he deceived in respect to Philimore as well as Oriana, who, living but in the consciousness of being beloved, suffered the voice of *duty* and of prudence to slumber, falsely seeking to exculpate herself with the notion that, guided by Philimore, she could not err! If he who ever walked in the path religion prescribed, whose

whole life had been but one system of virtue, if he could reconcile and recommend to her the practice of secrecy, why should she hesitate? why cause him to mistrust her affections by opposing his wishes?

Thus Oriana sought to banish from her mind those inward and friendly monitors that might have whispered other thoughts and reflections more to her credit—that however wise and virtuous the man, when professing the attachment of a lover, no concessions whatever are to be made to him inconsistent with the purest morality, and that dignity of conduct to be expected from the pious, sensible, and well-instructed woman! Contrary to which, however, with Oriana it seemed as if no other regret intruded than the difficulty of confining her feelings to the compass of her own bosom, accustomed as she had been to lay them open to her sister, whose sympathy seemed so necessary to her, that, availing herself of an interval of free communication with Philimore, she obtained his consent to make Rosilia the confidant of their secret.

Thus unavoidably was Rosilia called upon to bear a part in the deception practised upon her parents. To betray a confidence reposed in her was very foreign to her disposition; but to use every argument affection could dictate, to bring

Oriana back to a sense of her duty, and the path she had swerved from, she conceived to be incumbent upon her. But still, following the dictates, the guidance, and councils of her lover, Oriana maintained that her principles were correct and her intentions pure ; her attachment for Philimore was solely founded on his virtues, and sooner than relinquish him she would relinquish existence !

“ You will not lose him, my dear Oriana,” replied Rosilia ; “ it will not lessen you in his esteem and approbation, by telling him candidly that you feel much pain from the reserve and dissimulation he has bound you to practise ; on the contrary, if Philimore is so correct and virtuous as we think him, your thus acting will tend to strengthen rather than diminish his affection. He cannot but admire the principles of duty which influence you ; and finding you thus totally averse from any further secrecy, it will doubtless prompt him instantly to come forward and make an open declaration of his sentiments to our parents.”

Admitting the probability of her sister’s remarks, and particularly as with respect to her prevailing desire, that of still strengthening and rendering more secure the attachment of Philimore, after some further persuasion on the part of Rosilia, Oriana decided to conform to her opinion. As a

conference on such a subject might be too painful to sustain, it was agreed upon that the best mode of proceeding would be for Oriana to explain herself to Philimore by letter, which she might find means of delivering to him at their next interview.

Having complied with this arrangement, Oriana waited the decision, her thoughts being constantly occupied with anxious impatience upon the subject. A whole day had elapsed without the appearance of Philimore; a second passed, neither was Dr. Lovesworth visible; the next came, and still neither the guests, nor news of them arrived. The space of these three days seemed to Oriana an age.

The General was about taking a walk to the Hermitage to inquire after his friends, when Mrs. De Brooke proposed accompanying him with her daughters, as she was sometimes in the habit of doing. Nothing could have been more in concurrence with the wishes of Oriana; yet it was with tremulous footsteps she entered with her parents and sister the Doctor's library, where they found him and Philimore together, each occupied in reading.

The first salutation of welcome over, and inquiries made on either side—"I have kept the

house these few days," said the Doctor, "in order to induce my young friend to do the same; because about four days since he took an inclination to ramble during the whole of the meridian sultry heat, and did not return till evening, so exhausted and weary, as to appear to me, by one day's indiscretion, to have entirely lost the benefit he had previously reaped from his sojourn amongst us."

"It was the day," thought Oriana, "that he received my letter!"

Although Philimore summoned up sufficient command to speak with tolerable composure, yet she observed a striking alteration in his countenance.

Leaving the Doctor to support the conversation alone, he rose, and flung himself into a seat immediately behind those whose scrutiny he was so anxious to shun, but which exactly faced the sisters; when, abandoning himself to the utmost despondence, his countenance became like alabaster, his eye fixed in vacuum, and had not one deep suffocating sigh escaped him, it might have been imagined that every sense and pulse was suspended,—that the despair of mind, induced by Oriana's letter, operating upon his physical organs, had chilled the genial current of his veins—"She could no longer suffer herself to hold intercourse with him unsanctioned by her parents!" Could such

be the language of affection? Philimore had asked himself. Surely not; this, with similar sentiments her letter breathed, were widely opposed to those she had hitherto expressed, and which her actions had manifested towards him. "How greatly have I deceived myself," thought he, "in imagining I was beloved!" And what then remained for him but to leave the country, to quit the Hermitage, the rejected lover of her whose image was too deeply engraved on his heart ever to be erased!

Such had been the tenor of his reflections since he had perused the letter of Oriana; no wonder then that, when she with her family entered the Doctor's library, such a visible alteration was perceived; it was then that a crowd of conflicting images suddenly rushed upon his brain: he was the next moment absorbed; the whole chain of idea, thought, and recollection faded, and he exhibited a picture of mental stupor and abstraction, dreadful for Oriana to contemplate! producing in her, as from magnetic attraction, correspondent emotions, which with the utmost difficulty she restrained. In following her natural dictates, she would instantly have revoked every sentence of that cruel letter which, by the advice of Rosilia, she had written.

Roused from that lethargy of intense sadness by

her parents taking their leave of the Doctor, Philimore, hastily striding across the apartment, fled from the possibility of observation or intrusion. Leaving him in quiet possession of the Hermitage, Dr. Lovesworth proposed walking back with his friends to the Bower.

Suffering under the most painful solicitude, no sooner had Oriana arrived at home, than she intimated a wish to prolong with Rosilia her walk, to which her mother readily acquiescing, freed from further restraint or opposition, she yielded herself to those overpowering feelings which with such afflictive efforts she had controlled.

“Let us hasten back, Rosilia,” she exclaimed; “let us delay not a moment; did you not observe the state of Philimore? ’twas dreadful, ’twas horrid to behold! I must see him! it is agony—in-supportable agony! to know that he is even now suffering under the stings of that barbarous letter which, by your advice alone, I was prevailed upon to write; indignant at which he has already, perhaps, taken his resolution, and will leave us.”

Breathless with the celerity of her pace, unmindful of what her sister uttered, whether meant in soothing, or entreaty to check her precipitancy, she stopped not but to sound the bell which was

to give her admittance into the Hermitage, and to the library she had left.

It was vacant. The empty chairs, so recently occupied, continued in the centre of the apartment. The Doctor's book lay open upon the table. No trace or vestige was seen of Philimore. As if bereaved of intellect, that child of nature and of impulse was still gazing in mute anguish at those objects before her, when the image which had been then present to her fancy only, stood revealed in his material and embodied form. She would have presented him her hand in token of what she meant to utter, but overwhelmed, she sunk trembling into the chair in which Philimore had sat, when exhibiting to her a spectacle of woe and despair. Melted into an excess of tenderness, compassion, and love, tears fast dropping from her eyes, she sought utterance—but in vain.

To the feelings of surprise, which had at first seized upon Philimore on again beholding Oriana, succeeded a sense of bliss, a rapture unbounded! It was impossible for him to misinterpret the silent but expressive language he witnessed; the condescension granted him was eloquence itself, and spoke to his heart a language not to be mistaken, and the forcible appeal to his feelings hur-

ried him into actions of the most extravagant joy! With animated fervour, with arms extended, he ran first to one sister, and then to the other,—so wildly agitated in his movements that an uninformed spectator might not have known which was the object to whom his faith had been plighted.

Abashed, intimidated, Rosilia became sensibly alive to the nice and delicate situation into which sympathy for her sister had thrown her. She advanced towards the door, followed by Oriana, whilst, with the most impassioned energy, Philimore still endeavoured to detain them, till recalled from that state of excitement to which the intensity of his feelings had momentarily abandoned him, urged by their repeated entreaties, with reluctance he suffered them to depart.

Expecting every moment the return of the Doctor, prudence hindered his accompanying the sisters further than to the outward gate, which opening for them to pass, after many adieus to Oriana, and promises of meeting daily, he stood immovable, transfixed to the spot, until those snow-white vestments he gazed after, disappeared from his sight. Then, as if awakening from a trance, he fled to the privacy of his chamber, there to pass in review the powerful and successive changes his

feelings had undergone in the short space of a few hours: that interchange of thought, hope, sentiment, and affection, he had indulged in with Oriana, which during his recent sorrow he had imagined flown for ever, he now saw not only renewed but strengthened, even confirmed, beyond what his most sanguine expectations could have conceived. He had endured a trial the most severe; but the termination of it had assured him, by the most unequivocal testimony, how ardently his affection was returned; the traces of which were not slightly, but deeply and indelibly imprinted on his heart.

In the midst of this happy conviction and enthusiasm of feeling, he was interrupted by the voice of the Doctor, who, as he descended to meet him, took from his pocket a letter, and said, “Philimore, I am the bearer of news to you; and from your father; if I mistake not, this handwriting is his.”

It was as he supposed; and the eye of the son glanced rapidly over the contents of his father’s letter; his fears were verified—it contained a mandate for his immediate return to London. The clergyman who had officiated during his absence, could not possibly, consistent with his other employments, renew his engagement.

Philimore, in order that it might speak for itself, delivered the letter to his friend, who, after its perusal, expressed his regret. "This letter of yours," added he, "conveys a hint to myself which I shall profit by:—the accustomed season is approaching when I renew my parochial duties in London; and, therefore, I shall avail myself of your going hence to enjoy your company on the journey."

There now remained to Philimore but an interval of short duration to pass near the mistress of his affections. He had mutually agreed with the Doctor, it being the last evening of their stay, to spend it at the Bower; impatient to be there, Philimore started on his walk at an earlier hour than his friend; the thoughts which occupied him gave celerity to his motions, and he soon found himself within the precincts of that beautiful cottage, containing all that his soul held most dear. He stopped to contemplate it,—the thought rushed into his mind that perhaps he did so for the last time in his life! His eyes might never again range over that enchanting spot, to which he was soon to bid adieu, perhaps for ever!

Thus impressed, and fearing to meet the eye of some inquisitive or roving stranger who might intrude upon his reflections, he left the open path to

plunge into a thicket, and pursue a narrow, winding alley, which he thought might lead him to the Bower, but which from its frequent breaks and deviations inclosed him in a sort of labyrinth: at last, finding himself in a more open space, as he took his course by the side of a thickset hedge, he fancied he heard on the other side a rustling amidst the branches; looking through a small opening, he indistinctly perceived a female, endeavouring to disentangle her robe, which had been caught by the briars. He feared to speak, under the supposition it might not be Oriana, but with breathless impatience awaited the issue; her efforts having succeeded, she leaped nimbly from her place of confinement; the light and sylph-like form, displayed grace in every motion, when, with a sudden and violent force tearing down the hedge, he exclaimed, for it was she, "Oriana, Oriana! fly me not! 'tis thy Edmund!"

At the sound of those well-known accents, precipitately turning, she flew to meet him, at the same time warning him that her mother and sister were not distant, the accident of her robe being entangled having detained her behind them.

"I leave the hermitage to-morrow," exclaimed Philimore; "I beseech you to grant me one moment's conference ere I depart."

The look of anxiety and suspense accompanying these few words, penetrated the heart of Oriana, and excited in her emotions, nearly equal to his.

“Stay, do not leave me, I conjure you!” he again exclaimed.

Her mother and sister having probably reached home, and finding she had nothing to apprehend from detection, she conducted him to a spot more distant from the cottage; Philimore, in the interval, ejaculating, “Every instant of time is precious! tomorrow,—good heavens!—tomorrow, and I shall be far from you;” here articulation failed him.

They proceeded to the little thicket in which Philimore had found himself previously to seeing Oriana, whose strength, from the tumult of her feelings, failing her, she sunk on a mossy bank, while he, endeavouring to compose himself and to reassure her, dwelt upon the distress in which he was plunged on account of the cruel mandate he had that morning received from his father, and spoke with tender eloquence of the deprivation he was about to sustain in the loss of her society.

Oriana, on her part, confiding and affectionate, sought not to disguise the pain such afflicting tidings created; neither could any notions of discretion, nor policy, nor even that just pride and

dignity which she owed herself, teach her to suppress the utterance of that impelling and predominating sentiment which possessed her—the fear of being forgotten!—the fear lest the spell she then held over her lover might, by absence, be dissolved. It was true he was then before her, breathing nought but love, pouring into her ear the effusions of a soul that seemed to live but for her: and yet, hesitating, her heart palpitating with emotion, nearly unconscious of what she said, she frequently repeated, “You will forget me! absence will cause you to forget me!”

“Forget you!” he replied, in tones impassioned; “you may as easily believe that the operations of nature will be suspended, as to imagine that I shall ever cease to love you! That sacred affection, which I now call Heaven to witness, uniting our souls in one, has become my life, and acts upon me as the sun upon creation.”

Rising from her seat, inexpressibly affected, Oriana moved a few paces forward; but drawing her gently towards him, with eyes and hands uplifted towards the West, where the sun was sinking below the horizon in all its effulgent splendour, with the most emphatic utterance Philimore added, “Were the beams of that glorious orb withdrawn, all nature would instantly languish.” In the next mo-

ment, turning upon her his soul-melting eyes, he rejoined with vehemence, "In like manner, were your affections withdrawn from me, I should cease to live; I should become at once destitute of all that can animate, refresh, or invigorate my existence."

He paused, overpowered by the energy he had thrown into his speech. Oriana, though still troubled, felt sensibly revived; he was about proceeding, but she urged the necessity of returning without delay to the cottage, before her too long absence might occasion somebody to come in quest of her.

Guided by her advice, they strolled gently on; in the mean time, by alternate persuasions, entreaties, and soothings, Philimore gained from Oriana the promise of maintaining a secret correspondence with him. It was from such a resource only, he assured her, that he could derive consolation, by which the pangs of separation could be alleviated. Though she had made some few objections relative to the danger and difficulty of carrying on such, without the hazard of discovery, yet without such an indulgence, Oriana, on her part, had felt how insupportably each day would pass. Yielding herself therefore implicitly to his wishes, finding that having allowed herself

to be carried so far, and that the least practice of resistance was beyond her strength, one error producing another, she determined for the future to be swayed by no other judgment than that of her beloved Philimore.

CHAPTER XIII.

“Go, gentle gales, and bear my sighs along!
The birds shall cease to tune their evening’s song,
The winds to breathe, the waving woods to move,
And streams to murmur, e’er I cease to love!”

POPE.

THE season, though still smiling in beauty, no longer possessed charms for Oriana. The sun’s brilliant rays diffused their vivifying beams—but not for her. And now deserted was the grove, so late her happy resort, while wandering with Philimore beneath the ample shade afforded by the venerable oak, and the majestic beech, or, while seated upon a bank, listening to the feathered choir, and their enchanting notes of love, in unison with their feelings, the sprightly ash fanned them by its light and quivering branches.

Sometimes, indeed, an intimate association of ideas inclined her lonely steps long to linger around her favourite haunts; but alas! no longer each external object reflected back, as formerly, the

congenial harmony of her mind; nature seemed exhausted of her treasures, all seemed changed, all spoke the language of complaint and lamentation.

The flowers, hitherto accustomed to receive culture from her hand, no longer emitted their wonted perfume, but became withered and scattered, as by the blighting blasts of winter. Her harp was but seldom touched, except to indulge her grief with those airs that recalled Philimore to her fancy.

Those sentiments, however, with which Oriana was affected, though they checked her natural gaiety of temper, seemed to incline more to calmness and resignation, than those sad and acute feelings often preying upon her sister's heart. For with Rosilia, to the regret of the past and self-accusation, was added the contemplation of a dark futurity, seldom affording a gleam of hope to cheer and solace her disquietude.

With Oriana it was otherwise. It is true her spirits sunk at times, but she drooped like a fair flower in the interval elapsing between a passing mist, and the sun's renovating heat. She could look forward to brighter days, and indulge in the cheering prospect of seeing her present painful separation terminated by an indissoluble union with its object. Such anticipation of future hap-

piness was sufficient to beguile away her solitude.

But with Rosilia the world and all its pleasures seemed retreating far away, as if she were for ever destined to forego its flattering sweets. In her survey of the future, as through a long perspective, she could see nought but perpetual seclusion; nought that could afford relief or zest, to chequer the passive state of her existence.

It was one day whilst thus affected, and her solitude was felt to be more dreary than ever, that in arranging some books upon a shelf, where had been amassed a heap of old newspapers of the preceding years' date, it chanced that, in removing them, a list of passengers, then about embarking for the East Indies, met her eye. Curiosity having induced her to run over the names, those of Edward Herbert, Major Lewis, and Walter Douglas, appeared amongst them, a cold tremor seized her, and her trembling limbs could scarcely support her.

The former, the beloved son of good Mrs. Herbert, she who had, during her helpless years when affected by illness, fondly cherished her. What must, thought she, be the feelings of that widowed parent, reflecting upon the probable length of time that may intervene before her son's return to

England, the immense Ocean rolling between them? The same squadron, perhaps the same ship, had transported to a foreign clime with that beloved son—him whom she durst not name, she must not think of! In doing so, every pleasing vision or airy dream in which her fancy had indulged, would be withdrawn—hope would become extinct, and life a wilderness!

From that time the unceasing efforts she exerted for the suppression of her affliction, were even the cause of increasing its durability and strength. Reason and conscience were ever struggling to gain the pre-eminence over nature and sentiment; powerful opponents in the breast of Rosilia, for nature maintained its empire, uncontrolled by the suggestions of the one, and sentiment yielded not to the restraints of the other.

Thus disturbed, distracted, and divided, she became a prey to perpetual conflicts too painful to last. She insensibly languished, whilst the immolation of her unfortunate secret, in her own solitary bosom, prevented her from receiving those consolations, a participator in her sufferings might have afforded; and as her mental malady increased, its baneful influence was communicated to her frame. Often did she wish to unburthen her grief, but pride and a native dignity, conjoined with delicacy,

a feeling naturally so sensitive in youth, but seldom existing so powerfully as with Rosilia, still closed her lips and enforced her silence.

It was in vain to persuade herself otherwise; Douglas reigned the idol of her imagination, the invariable associate of her secret thoughts. Ah! why, she would sometimes mentally ejaculate, did I not seek for his reformation? Perhaps his errors might not have taken deep root in his life, but might have sprung from the mere casualties of existing circumstances. Her refusal of him upon such grounds caused her also an apprehension that she might have become responsible for, or rather instrumental to, his future irregularities of conduct; that she ought to have made use of her ascendancy over his affections, to have reclaimed him from the past, was an idea which often sustained and aggravated her affliction; but the most ardent of her feelings was the desire to communicate the sentiments that absorbed her, the only attachment she supposed herself ever likely to feel, to the only object ever likely to call it forth. Yet it was most probable, that had such an occasion offered, she would still have shrunk from the disclosure.

Such was the unhappy result ensuing from the usual even tenor of her life. The silence of retirement, operating upon the sensibilities of her heart,

till nature, no longer able to support such a trial, at last sunk; her whole nervous system became relaxed, a debility of frame ensued, truly alarming, attended at intervals by an abstraction, and as it were, a total suspension of idea and thought.

It was then that Oriana shone in the light of the purest female virtue; vigilant and attentive she would scarcely for a moment forsake her sister's languid couch. There bending over her, with eyes bathed in tears, she watched the progress of her beloved Rosilia's melancholy disorder; she beheld her, pale, exhausted, either in listless inanition, or haunted with the dreadful idea that mental derangement or death would terminate her sufferings!

In this frightful crisis of her disorder, Rosilia clinging to her mother or sister, or supported within their embrace, would utter the most wild and incoherent expressions, sometimes calling upon the name of Douglas, at others upon that of Philimore, unconscious how she pierced her sister's heart, and of the terror she occasioned her, lest she should, in her total forgetfulness and confusion of thought, betray the secret of her attachment; rousing at the same time every sentiment of compassion and alarm in her tender parents!

Six weeks thus elapsed, when, though still sunk,

pallid, and dejected, Rosilia began gradually to revive from that afflicting malady, as also from that melancholy which had given birth to it. Her recovery was slow, and she still was subject to occasional relapses; but as her bodily health more visibly improved, her mind also became subject to a total revolution, to which succeeded a gentle calm, a placid, heavenly composure of soul, such as we can only compare to that which happy spirits feel, when in mutual association and conjunction with the blessed inhabitants of another world. Her past tumultuous feelings, like nocturnal vapours chased by the rising day, were wholly dissipated; her renewed health disposed her to be pleased with all objects around her.

The most lively of her feelings were affection and gratitude for the care and consolation chiefly bestowed by her sister during the most miserable moments of her existence. Her tears flowed at the recollection; but, like the refreshing dew of heaven, brought sweet balm to her soul; her frame had surrendered, but her mind had triumphed! Her unhappy weakness was at length subdued! No longer bound by the magic of an overwhelming fancy, she resigned herself to that destiny she could not alter. Rarely is that joy and peace surpassed

which is perceived by those who have overcome themselves and surmounted affliction.

Oriana rejoiced at her sister's recovery ; the confidence she reposed in her, even from the first commencement of her attachment to Philimore, had heightened the natural claim she held over her affections. Rosilia had ever proved herself her sweet consoler ; she had sympathized in every her least pain or pleasure, and those more lively ones she had experienced whenever she received a letter from her beloved Philimore ; the danger and risk attending detection from the means she made use of to obtain those letters, might seem even to enhance their value.

On account of the inconvenience of going herself to the village post-office, which was at some distance from her residence, at the appointed period, secure in the punctuality of her lover, Oriana practised many little stratagems that might enable her to send a messenger. Sometimes calling off a shepherd's lad from tending his flock, she would offer him a bribe to repair with all diligence to the village with a written paper, demanding the letter, under the feigned name by which it was addressed to her, whilst, during the interval, seated upon the turf, resembling a shepherdess of ancient fable,

she took upon herself the attendance of the flock, and, however laborious the task, in keeping them from straying beyond the prescribed limits, yet the certain reward in view amply reconciled her to it. On these occasions; too, she would often be joined by Rosilia.

On the reception of the welcome letter, breathless with impatience, the seal was broken, the contents perused; that correspondence so cherished could alone console her for the absence of Philimore. His style was at once elegant; amusing, and instructive; at the same time fervent, impassioned, and exalted in sentiment; blameable and culpable only for being clandestine; what credit otherwise would those letters have reflected upon him, as also upon her to whom they were addressed!

The hopes of speedy church preferment began to be less frequently touched upon, and at length evaded altogether; he trusted, however, to advance in his professional career, and that a good Providence would in time crown his wishes and attachment with success. But, notwithstanding this encouraging language, moments often stole over Philimore when his conscience was far from being at rest on the subject of his passion; when he felt

himself levelled, if not with the vile seducer, at least with the most humble of suitors.

Rosilia, during her late illness, had frequently called upon the names of Douglas and Philimore, so as to give rise to some inquiry in the minds of her parents, as to which of the two was the one preferred by her. A mental malady of such an afflictive nature as was her's, certainly must have originated in more than a common cause.

That her soul had been deeply impressed, there remained not a doubt; a more than ordinary seriousness since her refusal of Douglas, and since her residence in the country, had been very perceptible, but which they trusted time might alleviate. As it was not possible for them to discover any fresh subject of disquietude to operate on the mind of Rosilia, some suspicions naturally attached to Philimore as the cause, but which were not sufficiently grounded, as to confirm an idea of his having superseded Douglas so suddenly in her inclinations.

The second winter for passing at the Bower was approaching. Deprived of the society of the good Doctor and his amiable friend, the indulgent parents feared the continuance of such a total seclusion might produce still further distressing effects ;

and not more for Rosilia were these alarms excited than for Oriana, whom they perceived had evidently lost of late a part of her characteristic animation. It was with deep concern they saw each bury her juvenile prime, accomplishments, and merits in continual solitude.

How gladly would they have resigned one, or both alternately, to Mrs. Arden, during the winter months; they had fondly hoped she would have made the offer of having either of her nieces occasionally with her. The General could only suppose that since the demise of Sir Aubrey and Lady De Brooke, having no longer their countenance, she had been obliged to retract her former kindness to his children, in order to yield herself to the implicit guidance of Mr. Arden, who, in espousing her, might insinuate he had not espoused the cause of her family, and was in no way bound to support it.

Thus delicately situated as seemed his sister, the General relinquished the idea of his daughters receiving any advantage from her future beneficence. He, therefore, with Mrs. De Brooke, determined to afford them a change of scene, and to diversify the monotony of their existence by passing the winter in London.

News so unexpected, when communicated to the

sisters, was received by Oriana with the greatest delight; Rosilia experienced pleasure also, but of a nature more calm, deriving its source from sympathy to her sister,—anticipating a residence in London, and consequent proximity to Philimore, might lead to a happy issue,—a final consummation of what was so devoutly to be wished for, the marriage of her beloved Oriana with the object of her choice. For herself she had no great partiality to London; the descriptions given of it by the respected Doctor Lovesworth, had not been flattering; its perpetual hurry and bustle was distasteful to her; and, above all, it was at London that Douglas had given himself to those pursuits and pleasures which had been the cause to her of so much past regret and sorrow.

CHAPTER XIV.

“ These lips are mute, these eyes are dry ;
But in my breast, and in my brain,
Awake the pangs that pass not by,
The thought that ne'er shall sleep again.
My soul nor deigns, nor dares complain,
Though grief and passion there rebel !”

BYRON.

IT may not be uninteresting to follow awhile the fortunes of Douglas, hitherto occupying so great a portion of Rosilia's thoughts.

Unaccustomed to regulate his conduct, or to submit to disappointment in any of its shapes, we left him, at the beginning of our narrative, overwhelmed with excessive grief, a sort of tempest of the soul, caused by Rosilia's refusal ; baffled in the success of his passion, and in his expectations of bliss, the misery to which he was reduced seemed permitted by Divine Providence, in order to effect the commencement of his reformation ; for, all enrapt as he had been by the love of self and the world, still there happily had remained one spark, amidst the fading embers,

which, if timely fanned, gave promise of emitting a light such as, if cherished, would continually gather strength, and, with increasing lustre, diffuse the rays of virtue over his future days.

Saddened and afflicted, overcharged with one prevailing sentiment, he repaired to the capital, and soon after embarked for India.

In the pious and timid fears of Rosilia, how blamable did she conceive herself to be for that involuntary predilection for one, whose character could not stand unimpaired the test of a virtuous scrutiny. Douglas, on the contrary, swayed by feelings widely opposite, by the ideas he entertained of the transcendant merit of the object he loved, far from seeking to abate the fire that consumed him, sought by every effort to keep it alive in all its force.

Temporary difficulties, he reflected, might have opposed him, such as his want of fortune; but what seemed to be the most probable, and, with a compunction amounting to anguish, he felt self-convicted, were the irregularities of his past life, represented, doubtless, to Rosilia, under circumstances of exaggeration. These, combined with her unconquerable timidity, he felt assured had influenced her conduct towards him, and had presented obstacles which he feared no time could

remove. Interminable seas were about separating him from her, and yet, under every discouraging idea, he cherished his present sufferings and memory of the past, as a miser hoards his secret treasure; his, he felt persuaded, was no fugitive passion—it was a noble sentiment, it was love for a virtuous object engrafted on his heart,—such as gave energy to his feelings, and made every degrading or unworthy passion sink before his view.

He had been at one time tempted to urge his point again; he had even communicated his sentiments to a person who might have aided him, one intimately known to Rosilia, but whom he had entreated to no purpose; he had even commenced a letter to Rosilia, but he had neither decision nor resolution to send it, perhaps to meet with suppression, or if not, to bring upon him a second dismissal. How stoop to solicit her compassion, ere the opportunity had been given him to merit her? He would embark with his regiment,—he would exert himself in his country's cause, no matter how remote or foreign the land upon which fate might throw him; all was alike indifferent to him, if unblessed with Rosilia!

It was by one of those strange coincidences in human events, that Douglas and the young Her-

bert, as Rosilia had imagined not unlikely to happen, met together in the same vessel.

Though known to each other, it had been only by report, never having before had a personal interview, when each surveyed the other with looks strongly indicative of emotion. The latter, with surprise and admiration! The former, as an object, for whom he had been led to imagine Rosilia might have entertained some friendship!

The countenance of Douglas wore an aspect of extreme dejection, notwithstanding his eye still retained its lustre, and his cheek was tinged with a hectic flush; in a word, he felt sensible of an oppression, both of mind and body, almost weighing him to the ground.

Impelled by curiosity, Herbert approached that side of the vessel upon which Douglas reclined for support; coming thus together, they entered into conversation, but upon topics of little import, and widely foreign to their feelings.

As accident, however, often brings to pass what we most wish to avoid, it chanced, as Herbert leaned over the side, a small miniature, suspended by a riband, fell from his bosom. It bore a striking resemblance to Rosilia, which Douglas suddenly perceiving, he was filled with emotions too powerful to resist. His thoughts became at once con-

fused and dazzled ; a crowd of ideas pressed upon him with vehemence ; a giddiness ensued, attended by a palpitation of the heart which oppressed his breathing.

Such outward demonstrations of acute feeling, in the continual change his colour underwent, were indeed alone sufficient to elicit the deepest interest, even in the most indifferent spectator. Acquainted with his past pretensions towards Rosilia, Herbert, in restoring the miniature to its usual place of concealment, fixed upon Douglas a look so disturbed and inquisitive, that the colour, in again rushing to the face of Douglas, left it in the next moment completely pallid. His hand pressed his aching temples, he tottered a few steps, and felt himself so exceedingly unwell, that he descended precipitately to his cabin ; where Herbert, naturally compassionate, would have followed, had he not feared his presence might be deemed an intrusion upon his privacy.

The form of Douglas no longer riveted his eye, but it still kept possession of his thoughts ; the striking symmetry of his commanding stature, the melancholy which hung over his manly brow, all pronounced him to be the same,—the Douglas of whom his mother had so often spoken,—the impassioned, enamoured, but rejected suitor of Rosilia.

The miniature, which in youthful pride he carried about him, might seem a highly finished likeness from life itself, and yet it was but a copy of an original taken of Mrs. De Brooke when about the age of Rosilia, and which then bore to the daughter, as it had formerly to the mother, a near resemblance. From the affection she felt for her young friend, Mrs. Herbert had borrowed the picture of Mrs. De Brooke with the view of gratifying herself with a copy of it. A celebrated artist, with whom she was acquainted, had readily conferred upon her this favour.

Delighted with the performance, and the fulfilment of her wishes, upon returning the original to Mrs. De Brooke, she showed the copy to her son, who contrived to make it his own, by getting it set in gold; and from which time, giving way, through the tender recollections of the past, and the ambitious views of his mother, to a presumptuous delusion and ill-founded hope, it had thus become the companion of his bosom.

The extreme agitation betrayed by Douglas at its sudden exposure to his sight, clearly evinced the strong rivalry existing between them; and when Herbert contemplated in Douglas something to his juvenile conceptions surpassing the generality of mortals, he was struck with amazement that a man of such striking elegance, in the ripened flower and

vigour of age, should have sued to her who was also the fair idol of his own awakened fancy, in vain. It appeared to him as if nature had formed them for each other, that inclination on the part of each had united them, but that the contrarieties of human life had opposed to separate them.

In thus reflecting, how slender seemed his pretensions, how arrogant the hope of one day obtaining that hand which had been refused a Douglas! His mother's ambition, and overflowing fondness for him, had buoyed him up with hopes, the fallacy of which now lay exposed before him. In the dispirited state of his mind, he thought Rosilia might be no longer what he once knew her; that in growing to years of maturity, while her personal charms had become more strongly developed, those of her mind might have lost; and she perhaps no longer retained that sweetness, that softness, which in her tender years she lavished upon him as her playmate, when his young heart, throbbing with affection, became bewitched by her endearments.

Since those days, though few had been his opportunities of seeing her, when he did so, he little conceived her mild yet discouraging manners, calculated as they seemed to diminish his expectation of success as a suitor, arose from imperfections en-

tirely his own,—an obvious dearth of mental attainment consequent on a defective education.

With Douglas, how differently would she have felt and acted, could she have been a witness of the misery into which he was plunged, caused by the powerful ascendancy she maintained over his heart ; and, above all, could she have formed an idea of how much that heart had already become refined and elevated by the virtuous and ennobling sentiments with which she had inspired it ; far from combating, as she had done, to subdue her partiality at the expense of peace and health, she would not have hesitated to have thrown herself upon his generous protection, in uniting herself to his destiny, and following his fortunes even to the remote clime to which he was then steering.

The hurry of embarkation, together with the agitated state of his mind, precluded Douglas from taking timely remedies to allay the fever which had attacked him, and which then raged with such violence, bordering on a state of frenzy, and pervading every fibre of his being ; having attained this alarming height doubtless by the fresh excitement he was thrown into at the display of the fatal miniature, the resemblance of the beautiful Rosilia, in the possession of Herbert.

Subdued by the languor and lassitude of his

frame, while his mind was the prey of a thousand torturing conjectures, none possibly bearing much affinity to the truth, Douglas reappeared not on the deck ; and thus several hours elapsed, until the time at length came which summoned the officers to their repast. All were assembled at the convivial board, Douglas alone excepted ; all called upon his name, when Herbert, who till then had not been heard to speak, informed them that Major Douglas had, in the morning, shown symptoms of illness, which might be the cause of his not appearing. Upon hearing this, the Surgeon was sent by the Colonel to inquire into the truth of the case.

Apparently suffering under bodily and mental anguish, his throbbing head reclining on his feverish hand, Douglas, as a mighty branch hewn down, exhibited a spectacle of the utmost interest : his quick pulsation and strong breathing indicated that he was under the subjugating power of illness.

Equally humane as he was skilful, the Surgeon assisted him to rise ; then supporting him to his hammock, there, pale and extended, he became an object of universal concern. Turning to those whom curiosity or compassion had gathered around, the Surgeon begged of them to leave him, their presence occasioning an obstruction to the free admittance of air, which, together with rest and

quiet, was indispensable towards the amendment of his patient.

Alas! he little thought how useless was such a precaution; for, though all was still without, had he the power of allaying those violent commotions within—those perturbations of the heart, wanderings of imagination, and deep workings of thought, totally baffling his endeavours, as beyond the powers of his art to calm?

The chill succeeding to intervals of burning heat, soon announced that Douglas was seized by a fever of the most acute kind, a disease always attended by extreme danger:

“ Where now, ye lying vanities of life,
Ye ever tempting, ever cheating train,
Where are ye now? And what is your amount?
Vexation, disappointment, and remorse!”

But who is she, who with looks of tender anxiety, bends sometimes over that couch of sickness; who, upon those visits to the suffering invalid, is accompanied by another, a female friend as charitable as herself; and who shares in her attention to one insensible to all passing around him?

Miss Airey, then about nineteen years of age, had early lost her parents, she was destitute of fortune, and every tie in life, with the exception of that derived from the friendship of Mrs. Melbourne, the

former intimate companion of her deceased mother; from which cause, united to the sympathy her forlorn situation inspired, the daughter shared in her regard. Mrs. Melbourne was the wife of the Lieutenant-Colonel, then in command of the regiment on its passage to the East Indies, and to which Douglas had been recently appointed Major.

Fond of change and novelty, and rather than be deprived of that gaiety of life induced by associating with the military, and devoting herself to a less animated circle at home, Mrs. Melbourne had preferred accompanying her husband abroad; an occurrence of which she readily availed herself to select for her companion on the voyage the young Ellina, who, by so favourable an occasion, she conceived might form for herself in India a matrimonial settlement, which might raise her from that adverse destiny which had hitherto attended her. If, from her partiality to the world and its pleasures, Mrs. Melbourne might be accused of thoughtlessness, her benevolence and generosity might secure to her respect and esteem,—as witnessed in the humane attentions bestowed on the interesting orphan, whom she considered in a manner committed to her charge.

The fever affecting the unfortunate Douglas,

far from abating, seemed rather to increase its violence. In a complete state of inanition he lay stretched on his hammock, to all appearance as insensible to pain as to existence, and perfectly unconscious of the distress and alarm he caused his fair attendants. The eleventh day had passed, and the physician pronounced the disorder at its crisis; every moment might terminate the life of his patient, unless some more favourable symptoms were immediately perceptible.

Herbert, being informed of Douglas's danger, no longer felt the spirit of rivalry or competition. "Unhappy fatality!" exclaimed he, "if he perish, 'tis a victim to Rosilia's cruelty!" The miniature, which in boyish pride he had suspended from his neck, was withdrawn, carefully enfolded, and deposited in a place of safety.

In such near proximity with the invalid, though all had been emulous of showing him attention, perhaps none were more truly affected by the critical situation of the unhappy Douglas than Miss Airey. She stood motionless, scarcely breathing, her eyes fixed upon his pallid countenance, his almost lifeless features still strikingly exhibiting the contour of manly beauty, mingled with an expression of patient woe, most touching to a mind of sensibility. The stern hand of death, she doubted

not, was about to rob the world of one of its brightest ornaments.

Lofty and commanding as the proud cedar, had Douglas been uplifted in his own esteem; but as the winds sometimes rage among and prostrate its spreading branches, so had keen sorrow's pang upon the heart of Douglas laid low its towering haughtiness! Had'st thou been there, Rosilia, occupying the place of Ellina, no longer could'st thou have traced the healthful hue, the sparkling eloquence of eye, the boasting air, the imperious display! Alas! thou would'st have seen a change, to have called forth every tender and compassionate feeling of which thy nature was capable!

The feelings of Ellina were strained to their utmost: she heaved an involuntary sigh; but what was her astonishment upon hearing that sigh re-echoed,—she started,—Douglas turned towards her, opened his long closed eyes, and fixed upon her a look of deep inquiry. Her whole frame trembled; while the exclamation burst from her, “My God! he will then live!”

Douglas endeavoured to raise himself, but fell back upon his pillow. Ellina had vanished, but the traces of her countenance were still visible to his mental sight. Was it a seraph sent as a messenger of pardon for his past transgressions, and to

conduct his soul to the blessed mansions of Elysium? Like one awaking from a deep sleep, confused images haunted his fancy.

Ellina having reported the pleasing intelligence to the Surgeon, he immediately left them to attend his patient, absolutely refusing to answer the many questions she seemed disposed to make him. The quickness of his pulse had abated, and he respired with more facility; still it was essential that his mind should be kept as easy and tranquil as possible; the slightest relapse was to be dreaded, as likely to produce the most fatal consequences.

Thus prohibited from speaking, it occurred to him that if it was no dream, nor the effects of an excited imagination, certainly the fair creature, whom he could scarcely believe to be a delusive shadow, would again present herself; nevertheless, hours, and even days, passed, and she no more appeared; now that he was recovering, natural delicacy forbade her to approach his cabin.

As by degrees his convalescence became more confirmed, one or other of his brother officers took a seat by his side. All in their turn felt desirous of being admitted to him, Herbert excepted; who saw the propriety of keeping himself at a distance, lest his presence might revive impressions in their nature most painful to each.

Herbert also, though not excessively diffident of himself, could not but be sensible of his inferiority when comparing himself with Douglas, preventing his feeling that equality which might otherwise have led him to seek his company ; partaking, as he had done, of that general deep interest excited upon beholding the settled melancholy of a countenance exhibiting traces of a lofty soul, of nobleness, and grandeur ! Such being the splendid qualities which Herbert, in common with his comrades, ever in his mind associated with Douglas.

CHAPTER XV.

“ What lofty thoughts these elements above,
What tow’ring hopes, what sallies from the sun !
What grand surveys of destiny divine,
And pompous presage of unfathom’d fate
Should roll in bosoms, where a spirit burns,
Bound for eternity !”

YOUNG.

STILL traversing the seas, had it been possible for Douglas to have set himself free from the control of winds and waves, and once again to have found himself surrounded by the fascinations of pleasure, pomp, and luxury, he no longer possessed the ability of rendering himself a willing victim to his *inclinations* ! For where was now that ruddy glow, that vigour of constitution, which had hitherto combated every trial, and which he seemed to imagine would continue even to the latest period of his life ? Such proud boasts and vain expectations were at an end ! Sad and oppressed, he was inclined to think the ravages made by his late illness might never be repaired.

Thus he who, in the giddy hours of prosperity, mocked at adversity, was now reduced to a state,

sensible of its utmost rigour—to drink, to its dregs, the bitter chalice of disappointment.

It was then, when totally removed from every scene of pleasure, and incapacitated to employ himself in any pursuit whatever,—it was then that he brooded over his errors, that he numbered his evils, and traced them to their real source ; that he saw, with a deep contrition of mind, his vain-glorious pomp, his high-minded nothingness—in what consisting? In those exterior embellishments only, those temporary advantages, those attainments and accomplishments, superficial in themselves when leading to nought beyond them,—ornaments which Providence had bestowed for occasions and uses which his thoughtlessness had perverted ; every unworthy desire, every trifling pursuit, every false reasoning, all were presented to his view in their degraded forms and destructive tendencies ; whilst virtue, in the exercise of rationality, seemed alone of consequence.

Thus Douglas, while involuntarily adverting to every circumstance of his past life, and also to the cause of his then lamentable situation, became deeply moved ; the fruits of his meditation enabling him clearly to discern that those misfortunes he bewailed wholly originated in his deficiency of moral courage,—from error, folly, irregularity,—

with their demoralising effects existing in him : and from a conviction so salutary, his mental sight was at last led to behold the ineffable beauty of morality and virtue,—in short, the understanding of truth, united to the pure affections of the heart for the practice of it.

In proportion as the charms of sense and the things of time began to lose their predominating influence over him, with that train of fluctuating thought thence engendered, the intellectual principle assumed the ascendancy. Opening, as it were, the window of his soul, and casting a contemplative gaze around,—as the first dawn is seen to chase the obscure atmosphere of night, announcing the coming of a day serene and beautiful, so the first ray of truth shone in upon Douglas, preceding a reception infinitely more enlarged, bright, and exalted ! He began to feel the real value of true wisdom ; for as much as he deplored the time he had lost, his mind became elevated. His affliction for the loss of Rosilia (though he felt conscious he should never love but her) became softened when he reflected that it was thence he had been led to the review of himself, and might also date the first stage of his reformation. This idea, though enhancing to him her perfections, yet brought with it a degree of consolation, to which,

during the course of his former despondency, he imagined he should never attain.

In pursuing the train of his awakened meditation, and passing from thought to thought, Douglas took a wider range, entering into a nice definition, in which he distinctly separated the natural propensities and blind instinct which rule the animal creation, from that high prerogative of reason and of liberty with which man is so eminently and nobly gifted. These ideas, happily, prepared his mind to acknowledge and bless the infinite mercy of an overruling Providence.

Thus, in progression, as from shade to light, his understanding became more illumined, for it had risen to the reception and comprehension of themes such as manifested that he was restored to that order in the link of being from which he had unhappily deviated, and that his change of principles was as complete as it was sincere. By the frequent recurrence of such contemplations, Douglas gradually raised himself from the depth of grief, and vowed a solemn protestation against every criminal indulgence.

Such were the first fruits of his awakened conscience. His mortal part was a prey to the languor of a long convalescence; but by the exercise of his mental powers the virtues which, in after

times, dignified the man, then acquired their first strength, their first activity.

When sufficiently recovered to go on deck, Douglas felt very desirous to behold the fair object who had presented herself to him in his cabin; and, in consequence, seeing a party of ladies assembled together, he looked anxiously towards them, hesitating whether to advance, when Colonel Melbourne, giving him the support of his arm, led him directly amidst the pleasing circle, in order to introduce him to his lady, who, after the usual compliments, and a few words of congratulation on his improved health, presented him to her young *protégée*, Miss Airey, seated beside her.

Sensible of the discovery he had made, so agreeable and gratifying to the curiosity which had impelled his approach, Douglas involuntarily fixed upon Miss Airey a look of apparent recognition. Could it be her? she who, he was informed, had so frequently watched by his side, during the most alarming stages of his insensibility and fever? The heightened colouring of her cheek, the tender but confused glances which ere averted met his penetrating eyes, the soft sighs which escaped her were so eloquently descriptive of her feelings, that he could no longer doubt but that Miss Airey

was that object : and though not beautiful, though not answering to the painting an exalted fancy had drawn of her, he nevertheless felt a conviction that she was the guardian spirit who had beamed upon his soul like some bright vision whilst just awakening from his lethargic slumber. The deepest impressions of gratitude seizing him, he would instantly have expressed them had not a delicate respect suppressed his speech.

Upon witnessing in Miss Airey the force of her emotions, the words he had essayed to utter died in faint murmurs upon his lips, and judiciously, to relieve her embarrassment, he turned to address himself to Mrs. Melbourne.

From their peculiar situation, companions in the same vessel ploughing the watery deep, Herbert and Douglas often accidentally met ; and notwithstanding the admiration of the former for the latter daily strengthened, he would still have been sensible of reserve and distance, had not Douglas, by his usual ease and urbanity of address, endeavoured to dispel it.

The superiority of age, and other circumstances, were sufficient to preclude a near association ; yet on account of some affinity in their mutual fate, Douglas was desirous to draw upon himself the regard of Herbert, and, after occasional conversations, so

far won upon his confidence as to extract from him the way in which the miniature he had seen him wear had fallen into his possession, as also the cause of his wearing it,—springing, as he was informed, from the juvenile partiality he had indulged in for Rosilia, as also the childish promise he had extorted from her never to unite herself to any one but himself. Though conceiving, such a promise, innocently made during her unreflective years, not in any sense obligatory, yet he had felt flattered by it; her words of consent had ever left their impression on his heart; and his mother, devoted to his interests, had bound herself to do all in her power towards procuring him a successful issue to his hopes.

Such was the short, simple, and ingenuous tale of Herbert; and which, in some degree, removed from Douglas much restless and impatient curiosity.

However the plans of the mother might tend to advance her son's interest, he felt assured they could not but be attended with failure. Douglas also felt an inward gratification upon finding that Herbert had laid aside the picture of which at one time he had so ardently coveted the possession—but now no longer, since he discovered it was but a mere resemblance, and not an original

likeness of her whose every lineament was so deeply engraved upon his memory.

Douglas availed himself frequently of the leisure he possessed, to read such books as he was enabled to draw from his own little stock, as also those of the other passengers, which were chiefly the most approved works amongst the classics, fitted to enlarge the mind and afford it a solid and lasting basis of information; while the poets, and a few beautiful French and German novels, served as a relaxation in his lighter moments.

In such employment passed away the morning, whilst the company of the ladies engaged him in the evening, affording him frequent occasions of conversing with Miss Airey, whose first appearance had burst upon his notice in a light so interesting, and so calculated to fix upon her his deep regard; nevertheless, generally engrossed in other contemplations, and the never-fading recollection of Rosilia, he was far from desirous of disputing or in the least contending with his brother officers, in the preference each seemed so emulous to obtain in the favourable estimation of her who was the only young and unmarried lady of the party.

Meanwhile, the vessel steered its course through of the wide expanse of ocean, and at length the cry

“land” was heard. It was the custom of Douglas, when not better employed, to walk the quarter deck with his telescope in hand; it appeared to him the horizon displayed a speck, bearing to the sight an indistinct appearance of land. Upon continuing his survey, he observed it gradually increase and darken. He turned to consult the captain, who, as himself, was then employed in a similar investigation, and who, in catching the inquiring eyes of Douglas, confirmed the tidings already made known, by saying, “It is the place of our destination—it is Madras.”

“The news is gratifying,” replied Douglas; “but the wind which chafes my cheek becomes bleak and keen; do you not think, before we reach it, we stand some hazard of being overtaken by a squall?”

The captain required not the warning, his vigilant eye had already marked the gathering clouds; one moment had scarcely elapsed, when, in the next, the sky became completely overshadowed, the winds furiously raged amongst the shrouds, whilst the busy mariners became active in slackening the cordage, and reefing the sails.

Douglas nevertheless stood on the side of the reeling deck, impressed with awe, not from a sense

of danger, but from being in a situation to witness one of the grandest, most magnificent, and most solemn scenes in creation—a storm at sea!

The vessel pitched with violence upon the black tumultuous waves, which, returning with a resistless force, curled and foamed upon the deck: after which, receding, they seemed to gather themselves together, opening to the view a tremendous abyss! The thunder roared, the lightning flashed! its pale beams gleamed around, and rendered still more awful the intermediate gloom. Most horrid was the tumult, the contention, of the infuriated elements!

Upon an occasion so momentous, it was necessary that all hands should be employed: the officers, with one accord, lent their assistance with the agility of experienced seamen. Douglas might also, and with some skill, have exerted himself, but his once athletic frame seemed nerveless, his once muscular arm refused its office, shrinking relaxed beneath the ropes; but, in proportion to this outward diminution of strength, the soul had assumed new energies; unappalled, he surveyed a scene of the most stupendous magnitude, instilling high and vast conceptions of the majesty, sublimity, and immensity of the Sovereign Disposer of all things. Douglas had never felt sensible of

danger, nor strove to shun it, yet he then sometimes felt his heart sink within him, when, redoubling at intervals, the agonizing cries and shrieks of the ladies met his ear.

The sound of hope at last is heard: "Danger is past! the danger is past!" re-echoes every voice. The thunder's terrific roar is hushed to peace; the lightning ceases to flash; the tempest's formidable rage abates; wild confusion no longer reigns; the fears of timid passengers subside, and the destructive effects they anticipated are scarcely to be traced! The wind veered to the south, and the freshening gale brought peace and security on its wings.

Swift over the seas the vessel drives; Madras appears in sight. The first object catching the eye, upon the anchor being cast, was an Indian upon his catamarân, who, making a sudden motion, sprung to the side of the ship, grappled there for a moment, and the next was on the deck. In a short time after a budgerow* lay beside the vessel, and notice was given that it came to convey about fifteen passengers on shore.

In compliance with the message, the officers prepared to conduct the ladies to the boat, the curious structure of which, the deep sides, covered

* A large covered boat.

top, and encircling curtains, exciting their general inspection. It moved off, and Douglas beheld the vessel they had quitted, so late in danger of being lost, ride prosperously on the main : when the Indians broke into a religious song in Hindostanee ; “ Protect us from the dangers of the deep, and forgive us our sins,” echoed forth in responses long and deep. Those tones, at first low, plaintive, wild, by degrees increased, as they drew near the surf, to sounds of louder depth ; by the mingled howl and clamour of their voices, the Indians tried to exceed the roaring of the waves, redoubling as the waves redoubled in tumult.

The uproar of the sea, the yell of the Indians, the rapidity with which the boat at intervals was driven, threatening at every moment to be engulfed, might have infused terror into the most undaunted ; the senses were nearly astounded, when, by the most violent motion, the boat, encompassed by the tremendous wave, was at last pitched high and dry on shore ; the glittering spray receded, the Indians sprang to land, and the passengers were at length landed on the shores of India.

CHAPTER XVI.

“ Virtue shares the sigh,
By straining up the steep of excellence,
By battles fought, and from temptations won.”

YOUNG.

CALCUTTA being the final destination of the regiment, after remaining a short time at Madras, the passengers were again summoned to embark.

When arrived at Calcutta, Douglas found himself again an inhabitant of that country which he had quitted on leave of absence, solicited by him chiefly for the purpose of affording himself an opportunity of returning with a partner. Frustrated, however, in his views, nothing remained for him, as he supposed, but to continue his journey through life single; not, however, as formerly, to waste his time in luxurious indulgences, but to use it in a manner the most productive of advantage. “ Here,” said he to himself, in the words of the poet,

“ Here let me learn the use of life,
When best enjoy’d—when most improved.”

To afford diversity to his leisure hours, he was

sometimes led to investigate Indian manners and customs, and to examine the original doctrines of the Gentoos, before they had degenerated into their present gross superstition, exhibiting in many respects traces of sublimity. His aim was to examine truth at its native fountain, unsullied by speculative and erroneous theories; not to float on the surface, but to dive deep, even to the gathering of its inmost treasures. It was thus that Douglas employed the dawn of his reformation.

In emerging from that twilight which preceded the survey he then took of the rising morn, much, he felt assured, was to be done, reflected on, endured, and even conquered, before his advancement to a state of more permanent and genuine virtue. A new creation had opened upon him, or rather a new life; and he was well aware that as is the rise of infancy to youth and manhood, so comparatively is the progress of the light of intelligence and the love of goodness in the human soul.

It was true he had burst the trammels of his captivity, and that the path of virtue was before him, no longer veiled and bewildered by the mists of evil and mazes of error, with all their vain and false delusions. Nevertheless, however delightful seemed the change,—the brilliant prospect before him

chasing those intervals of sorrow and remorse for the ill-spent past,—yet so weak and frail is man, and difficult to reform, that Douglas often detected himself straying from the way he had proposed to tread. In the new fund of attainments he acquired, he found, by the force of his reasonings and convincing propositions, he was enabled to bear away the palm, and become the victor in almost every dispute or point of controversy, whether in philosophy, metaphysics, or theology, even with those professedly learned, and much his seniors,—receiving the suffrages bestowed upon him as due to his superior abilities.

He had yet to learn the salutary lesson, that none can arrogate aught to themselves, since man of himself is wholly destitute of intelligence. Thus self-love, with all its concomitant dangers, was yet, by further trials, mortifications, and sorrows, to be subdued, ere he could arrive to that capacity and state, fit to approach and view more closely the splendour and glory of the perfect day!

The constitution of Douglas had been already seasoned to the climate, and as he carefully avoided the least excess, his improved morals leading his choice to temperance, he became so sensible of recovery, as to feel but little diminution of his former vigour. In his desire for meditation, and

the practice of self-introspection, his greatest delight was to escape from the invitations of his comrades, many of whom kept open houses for the purpose of dissipating ennui by gambling, dice and cards being their chief recreation besides attending the festival nights given by the most wealthy of the European settlers holding civil appointments in the country; those, also, held at the residence of their Colonel, formed for them a convenient lounge.

Fond of indulging in that *eclât* attendant upon the reception of company, the entertainments of Mrs. Melbourne were nothing inferior to any that then took place in Calcutta, and in which her *protégée*, Miss Airey, shone as the centre star of attraction amongst the officers, who vied in their homage to her; she never appeared in public but with a train of military, consisting chiefly of those who in their attentions seemed desirous but of amusement; more serious aspirants were therefore restrained from approaching her.

Without other advantages in life beyond the short-lived attractions of youth, dependant upon the bounty of Mrs. Melbourne, who, though a generous protectress, allowed her a too great latitude in the indulgence of pleasure, her situation was peculiarly interesting, and at the same

time defenceless,—incitement sufficient for the thoughtless and unreflecting to flutter around her. Time was when Douglas, like his comrades, might also have poured into her ear the language of flattery,—when his vanity, inflated, might have built his triumphs on the weakness of her heart; now, on the contrary, such conduct was viewed by him under an aspect totally different.

To rob a young, unsuspecting, confiding creature of her peace; to sport with her nicest, tenderest, and most susceptible feelings, carried so far until even her claims upon the respect and esteem of the world might be lessened, lost, perhaps never to be recalled; or, to plunge still further into the arts of seduction, to take a greater advantage of her sensibilities, to impair her morals, and, finally, communicate to her once unsullied affections that taint, never in this life, nor perhaps even beyond the grave, to be repaired; endangering thus the happiness of an immortal soul! How solemn the reflection! And yet how many, thought Douglas, betray, forsake, abandon those of the weaker sex, upon whom their arts and insinuations have unhappily succeeded, rather than follow those obligations and duties they should feel themselves as men of honour bound to perform!

Ideas such as these often suggested themselves

to Douglas in his observations upon Miss Airey, who, in the exaltation of his sentiments, appeared to him sometimes as a fair deluded victim, building upon expectations eventually to be frustrated. Thus commiserating her situation, how much did he desire that he had it in his power to ward off the evils which menaced her.

Amongst the officers surrounding her, he whose flatteries seemed to gain the most upon her attention was one of all the regiment most likely to deceive her, to lead her unwarily into the supposition that the apparent devotion he paid her would be followed by an offer of his hand; when, in reality, his aim was merely to divert himself at her expense, to chase apathy, and pass away the flying minutes by the pleasures of gallantry. How remain an indifferent spectator, thought the generous Douglas, and not lend an assistant hand to save her from the impending sorrow, ere she will find herself suddenly neglected, deserted, and that perhaps at a time when her heart will have become entangled too deeply to admit of redress!

But how proceed, thought he; what steps should he take? What right had he to interfere in a point so nice and delicate, and one in which he had no concern, excepting what interest in Miss

Airey, and humanity regarding her fate, dictated? Would Miss Airey receive his warning, however cautiously insinuated? It was uncertain whether she would or would not; or could it be expected that he, who was thus discreditably influenced in the pursuit of her, would listen to his expostulations, or to the most cogent argument he might adduce against his conduct? How cope with the passions of a headstrong opponent, with whom he had already acquired the character of a moralist; whose principles had been rendered severe by disappointment and melancholy; whose heart had become seared against future impressions from love, and rendered inaccessible to the charms of female sprightliness and raillery?

Thus weighing the subject, he dismissed it for the time, to be renewed in the future, under a point of view leading to greater energy and decision, worthy of one whose virtuous change of life, above the mere speculations of theory, was yet, by the practice, to give proofs of its unfeigned existence.

Disgusted with the insipid boastings of him who continued his unceasing assiduities to Miss Airey, without any advancement towards that issue doubtless anticipated by herself and friends—flirting with that young girl, until reports highly injurious

to her future interests had arisen, her hand having been long since given to him; from the general principles adopted by Douglas on the subject, the only means left open to him for rescuing her from such a situation, was, he conceived, to have a conversation of a private nature with Mrs. Melbourne.

His discrimination led him to the assurance that Miss Airey, under some youthful levities, concealed solid qualities. Whenever he had been led accidentally to approach her and to address her, the gaiety of the moment instantly dispersed, whilst a shade, as of regret or reflection, passed her brow: but sentiments such as these, by the life of perpetual dissipation she led, were, he imagined, in danger of tarnish, if not of becoming entirely obscured. Nevertheless, she seemed to him so new to life, so truly a child—a reason, doubtless, more urgent to uphold and lend her his protection: the ray of humanity irradiating her features—the exclamation that burst from her, upon his first arousing from the torpor of insensibility, whilst extended in his narrow hammock on ship-board, had ever since left impressions of gratitude on his memory.

Miss Airey had often observed Douglas mingling with the crowd, an inattentive observer, she supposed, to all that was passing. Mistaken, how-

ever, in her opinion respecting herself, he had been ever far from being so : and it was on one of those gala nights given by Mrs. Melbourne, that Douglas had formed the decided resolution of saving her from the perilous situation in which he imagined he beheld her, arising from the danger of her so openly giving countenance to him whose vanity was already but too much excited—leading him, in consequence, so perseveringly to engross her.

His lofty mien, and bright blue eye,
The hero marks, in spirit high ;
But still his open front and smile
Betray a gen'rous soul the while—
To succour innocence from woe,
And to forgive a vanquish'd foe.

Turning her looks unconsciously to that part of the assembly where Douglas leaned, engaged in serious contemplation, Ellina chanced to encounter his eye intently fixed upon her ; the expression of which bespeaking at once pity and benevolence, her heart, mortified, reproached her for her lightness. How vain, how giddy he thinks me ! it whispered. Her mirth vanished—no longer had she the power of shining in the little hemisphere of her glory.

Douglas changed his station, to withdraw himself, as the night advanced, from the crowd which

began to throng the apartment. Ellina saw him no longer; then, as ever, how short seemed his notice of her! Fate seemed always to oppose an obstacle to his addressing her.

Captain Sutton still fluttered near her; his gay and sprightly sallies, he flattered himself, might still amuse and draw her from herself, even from prudence and discretion; but he was little aware that, had Douglas been within her circle, and had spoken but one word to her, it would have been more prized than whole volumes he himself might utter.

How much, therefore, was he surprised, the morning after he had thus engaged the fair Ellina, and was in the full gratification of his vanity, to find himself led into a particular dialogue with Douglas, respecting his intentions towards that young lady, on the insinuation, that after a courtship so warm and protracted, the nuptial ceremony would doubtless be the result.

“The nuptial ceremony!” replied he, bursting into a laugh. “No, truly, ‘old birds are not to be caught by chaff,’ as the proverb has it. I love myself and liberty too well, and am not to be thus entrapped; unless, indeed——why——perhaps—I might allow myself to be so, did I meet with a pretty girl who could bring me something: even

if it were £10,000, I might yield. But who the devil would put themselves into chains for nothing? This Miss Airey is, to be sure, a nice little sparkling girl, but pennyles—in want of every thing that might lead me even for a moment to think of popping the question.”

Having had the patience to hear him thus express himself, Douglas, not deigning further conversation, arose from his seat with self-possession and calm dignity, and went immediately from the spot to the residence of his Colonel, where he was conducted to the apartment of Mrs. Melbourne, by whom he had been at all times held in the most favourable estimation.

Entering, therefore, at once with her upon the topic which had of late engrossed so much of his thoughts, he hinted, with the nicest circumspection, that after a courtship so perseveringly maintained by the gallant Captain Sutton with Miss Airey, her fair *protégée*, report had finally given them to each other.

“Never,” hastily replied Mrs. Melbourne, “never has Ellina ever conceived the idea of giving herself to Captain Sutton, or disposing of herself to one so light and unthinking.”

The looks of Douglas expressed the greatest surprise, as if he almost doubted the veracity of her

words; and he proceeded to make some allusions to the vain boastings of that officer in his monopoly of Miss Airey, giving the public to suppose that some understanding had taken place.

“None whatever; of which I can confidently assure you,” rejoined Mrs. Melbourne, whilst her countenance assumed an unusual seriousness. “Believe me, Ellina regards him but as a light, insignificant flatterer. She has been unguarded, I grant you: her total indifference to all those who have gathered around her has made her, imprudently and indiscriminately, appear pleased with the attentions of all successively, and perhaps more so with this last trifler, Captain Sutton, arising from his continued efforts to attract her notice.” Regret and concern still predominated over the expression of Douglas’s countenance; which Mrs. Melbourne perceiving, added, “Ah, Major, you but little know Ellina, who is not what she appears to be. Perhaps I am wrong in saying so, but Ellina is not without her trials, giddy as she may seem, poor thing!”

“So young!” exclaimed Douglas, “and to taste of the cup of sorrow! I should not have thought it, her general appearance indicating a life of sunshine.”

“You estimate her but as she is seen in public:

when engaged in the dance, as light and gay as any: but how willingly would she forego such pleasures for more solid ones, renounce all flattery and adulation, could she secure to herself the affections of one. It is to dispel her cares, and dissipate thought, that she flies into company, heedless even of the public estimation; absorbed by one ruling and prevailing sentiment, while seeming to laugh away time, her heart is lacerated. It is in secret only that her real feelings are made manifest: knowing which, I cannot bring myself to throw a check upon her moments of apparent recreation, to involve her in melancholy at home."

Douglas was too well acquainted with grief not to feel moved by Mrs. Melbourne's description of it in her *protégée*. "What sorrow can she have," thought he, "unless she laments her fate as an orphan? the loss of parents? But these she lost so young, and Mrs. Melbourne so fully supplies the place of a mother. Is it love which has penetrated her young heart?" For whom, he durst not venture to inquire; an inquisitiveness on such a point might be thought presumptuous.

After a pause, during which Mrs. Melbourne had seemed struggling for utterance, she said, "You are evidently, Major Douglas, much interested in the fate of Ellina."

“ I am truly so,” he replied ; “ and should rejoice were it in my power to serve her, or promote her happiness.”

Mrs. Melbourne sighed deeply, and in a low and deep tone continued : “ Since we have gone so far, I cannot forbear telling you, that it is in *your* power to promote her happiness.”

Douglas started ; the colour heightened and faded on his cheek. Her looks—the equivocal expressions she had made use of—what did they mean to convey ?

“ Forgive my indiscretion,” said Mrs. Melbourne, in her turn deeply reddening, “ my great inadvertency, in having thus betrayed Ellina’s secret, her long and unrequited attachment, of which all have been ignorant, myself excepted. She would be still more unhappy, the most miserable of human creatures, did she know what I have done ! and Colonel Melbourne would be extremely displeased. I forcibly see my error. I have pained your feelings beyond redress : you have no affections to offer Ellina. I pray you to forgive me, and bury this unpremeditated disclosure in eternal secrecy. As a man of honour, I know you will.”

The door at this moment opening, Ellina herself made her appearance. Blushing, and confused, she would have retired, but Douglas in-

stantly presenting her a seat, detained her. In his effort to command himself, the fulness of his soul seemed contained in his eyes; and those of Miss Airey, not less eloquent in their glances, after meeting his, sunk timidly to the ground. The deep crimson of her cheeks, and her hesitating accents, as she expressed her fears of intruding, rendered it quite unnecessary for her thoughts to have been verbally expressed to betray the sentiments which oppressed her.

Desirous of relieving her embarrassment, as also his own distressed situation, Douglas withdrew, and precipitately hurried to his apartment.

CHAPTER XVII.

“ His words are bonds, his oaths are oracles,
 his thoughts immaculate ;
His tears pure messengers sent from his heart ;
His heart as far from fraud as heav'n from earth.’

SHAKSPEARE.

TIME, the sovereign softener of human sorrow, had, in its flight, in some degree freed and disengaged Douglas from that intolerable load of affliction and despondency he had formerly endured ; yet with a heart desolated, blighted of its cherished hopes and fairest prospects, how, with a memory faithful to an object he could never behold again, every sense throbbing with the painful though pleasing retrospection of departed bliss, and every tie that might have rendered life attractive, and strewed his path with flowers—how could he resolve to link his future destiny to another ? None, in all the multitude of his acquaintance, had he ever dared to compare with Rosilia, in mind and person ; how infinitely short did they fall of the excellence she possessed ! Never, he felt assured,

could he love another. She was doubtless lost to him for ever!

A year had already elapsed since he had parted from her; and how many more might in the same manner revolve? No term could be affixed to his residence abroad, destined as was his regiment for foreign service. Much as he had cherished his love for Rosilia—dreading nothing so much as that it should ever sink into apathy or indifference; yet to keep alive the hope of ever henceforward becoming a successful suitor, appeared to him as a delusive dream. He had not the remotest supposition of the sequestered life she led; and naturally concluding she would continue to move in those circles in which he had met her, he could not doubt but that another would rival him in her estimation, and obtain the hand he had vainly sought for.

Notwithstanding the justness of such reflections, to renounce voluntarily the possibility of ever being united to Rosilia caused Douglas many a trying moment, in weighing with himself the late conversation he had held with Mrs. Melbourne, and whether he could bring himself, on that account, to enter into an engagement with Miss Airey.

The regrets of his friends, he felt well persuaded, would follow his thus disposing of himself; besides

which, he had nothing but sentiments of friendship and esteem to offer, the heart expanding with the warmth and fervour of a devoted love being no longer in his power to bestow ; yet, far from being a loser, Miss Airey, he was convinced, would be infinitely a gainer ; his mind was now mellowed into more reflective ideas of domestic life, such as rendered him more adapted to contribute to its happiness than he possibly could have been ; had he remained perfectly unaffected with such considerations.

Since his knowledge of Rosilia, he had been insensibly led to attach to the matrimonial union a tie much stronger than he had before formed a conception of ; and would it be to disparage her memory, to share his days with another ? Was he, on that account, for ever to renounce the consolations of a companion in his sojourn here below ? Whence had arisen his solace hitherto ? from nought but the satisfaction derived from a well-spent life, social habits, literary pursuits, and military duties, together with the desire of enlarging his general sphere of utility, and of crowding into his short span of existence as many acts of philanthropy as were in his power.

Such were the motives which could alone influence him to pay his addresses to Miss Airey, under

the delicate circumstances in which he found himself placed, arising from what had been revealed to him by Mrs. Melbourne, and his own interference respecting Captain Sutton.

After a period of due deliberation given to the subject, Douglas made his proposals to Miss Airey, in the presence of Colonel Melbourne and his lady, by whom they were accepted with every mark of the most perfect approbation. The happy girl had, in a moment the most auspicious and unexpected, met with the full accomplishment of her secret wishes. He who had appeared rather assiduously to shun her, whose good opinion she had valued, notwithstanding his seeming indifference to her, had now declared himself, and given proofs of a regard the most unequivocal.

Colonel Melbourne, far from expecting such overtures in favour of his wife's *protégée* from one of Douglas's high consideration and advantages of birth, as well as personal and mental endowments, was greatly surprised that one so distinguished should honourably and generously come forward as a suitor to the young Ellina; for which reason, drawing Douglas apart, he thought it incumbent to have some farther discussion with him upon the subject.

“ My dear Douglas,” said he, “ having the ho-

nour to command the regiment of which you are second major, I hope you will not take amiss my friendly advice to you. Sincerely as I wish well to Miss Airey, and sincerely happy as I shall be, as well as Mrs. Melbourne, to see her advantageously settled in life, it might appear that I acted a very self-interested part, if I gave my immediate sanction, or proceeded to make advances in this affair, without at the same time remarking, that I fear you have been led to act with some precipitation; the benefits derived from such a match being entirely on the lady's side, and none whatever upon your own. Think also, on the score of fortune: few, in such expectations, may boast higher than yourself. That they are distant, and even more precarious, you have ever been the first to admit: supposing, therefore, the regiment to be shortly disbanded, in case of peace, and put upon half-pay,—a large family the result of your union;—my dear Douglas, weigh again the subject, for really it appears to me, by the sudden manner of your address, that you have been too hasty in your decision."

"You mistake, Colonel. The subject has been duly considered by me. I am but doing justice to the merits of Miss Airey; and what Captain Sutton ought long since to have done, had he the spi-

rit of true gallantry, or any idea of what was due to the honour and character of the lady he has courted with such unremitting attention. If I have anticipated his views in these my proposals; if what I have done should call him to reflection; should he, in consulting his affections, wish to regain his prize, and assert over mine his prior claims;—in such a case only, on no other grounds could I bring myself to retract: but if Captain Sutton still maintains the character of the man who flatters merely, and if Miss Airey can honour me with her regard, I shall hope to prove by my efforts towards promoting her happiness, that her confidence has not been misplaced.”

“It is nobly and magnanimously spoken,” replied the Colonel, “and worthy of Major Douglas; steady to the resolve you have taken, and sentiments you have professed, I can have nothing more to advance, than most heartily to concur with such laudable views.”

In withdrawing from this conference with his Colonel, Douglas felt truly, that in many respects his union with Miss Airey would be attended with a sacrifice to his feelings; but in the present state of his mind, subjugated and brought under his control, what was he not capable of performing? A conquest so easily made he would formerly have

spurned. Now, on the contrary, it seemed as if he had been engaged by Providence to the match; that it was in the true order of every just and equitable notion of right that he should become the husband of Miss Airey; possessing her affections, it was but due to her, as the only return he had it in his power to make was that of becoming her future protector: and, with regard to her being of inferior rank to himself, it was the husband who ennobled the wife, and not the wife her husband; he did not sink himself to her level, but he raised her to his.

Colonel Melbourne was not the only one whose advice might have had some influence in dissuading Douglas from the engagement he had formed with Miss Airey. He had acquired a greater intimacy with the Governor-General than with any of the officers; and having received a special invitation to wait upon his Lordship, Douglas accordingly repaired to his residence. "I have been desirous, my dear Major," said the Earl, in his usual mild and courteous manner, "to seize a short interval from business, to converse with you upon a topic wholly personal to yourself; one in which I am not in the least concerned, otherwise than that I feel myself deeply interested in your welfare. Perhaps it might not be unnecessary to make some little pre-

face, by saying that if we differ in what I am going to suggest, it may arise from our not standing upon equal grounds,—you no doubt seeing the matter in a light heightened by the brilliant colouring of a vivid fancy; I, on the contrary, a cold and impartial observer, viewing it in its simple and unadorned dress. It is a delicate subject to touch upon, your projected marriage with Miss Airey, and one upon which I should have remained silent, was it that which I do not consider it to be, *une affaire de cœur*.”

Douglas here attempted to reply, but was prevented by his Lordship.

“Colonel Melbourne,” continued he, “has explained to me the circumstances in a point of view reflecting upon you the highest credit. This, as all other transactions of Major Douglas, bears upon it the stamp of true nobility, and of the most generous sentiment; yet, in a point so important as marriage, might not something be allowed to the considerations of self, and that without any sacrifice of, or deviation from, the most elevated principles? Without desiring to say aught that might reflect upon the lady in question, I must confess that I felt considerably vexed and disappointed, when I heard that my friend Major Douglas was about forming so unequal a union.

For the moment I judged unjustly of your Colonel's lady, of whom Miss Airey is the *protégée*, and thought that through some skill on her part the match was formed. Report had long since given her to Captain Sutton, and I wish with all my heart, for your sake, report had told the truth. Excuse me, dear Douglas, if I say too much; my personal regard for you extorts it; and I have only to hope it is not yet too late for you to give some reflection to my counsel."

Having, whilst the Earl spoke, fixed upon him a serious yet ingenuous look, Douglas marked the due force of every expression he had uttered; who, from his high station and rank, the eminent goodness of his character, and the warm and confiding frankness of his aspect, certainly demanded the most serious and undivided attention.

Availing himself of the pause which followed, the thoughts of Douglas took a rapid survey of the situation in which he found himself placed. The marriage he held in view would doubtless tend much to depress his worldly interests; even the motives which had led him to form it, partly unknown, on which, from a point of honour, he felt bound to secrecy—how few there were who could rightly appreciate them! Living in a world where every event that springs from a cause dif-

fering from those common ones whence arise the routine of human action, is censured as romance or eccentricity,—the appellation of enthusiast might be given to him, in seeking, as might be supposed, to soar and exalt himself above the rest of humanity; but surely not, he hoped, by his Lordship, or others whose esteem alone was of real value to him: and wherefore desire the commendations of the multitude?

His life was for the future to be spent in a manner wholly different from the past; he must therefore renounce the general applause of the world, and live only for the silent approval of his own conscience. His Lordship might indeed seek to raise his vanity by allusions to the disproportioned marriage he was about forming; but, with no heart to bestow on any of the sex, his affections entombed, how could he come forward, and feel himself entitled to make proposals to any, under other circumstances than those which connected him with Miss Airey? Self-love had received in Douglas one of its greatest and most mortifying wounds; and it was under a sense of the deserved humiliation inflicted upon him, that he now reflected. In opposition to the indulgences of sense he had given into, he possessed a mind formed to make sacrifices; and it was the effect of such meditations,

as also subsequent observations on the conduct of Miss Airey, which, having so strongly disposed him to address her, equally operated, notwithstanding all the persuasions of his Lordship, against a change of resolution.

“My dear and highly respected Lord,” said he, “sensibly grateful as I am for the advice you have thought proper to give me, be assured I feel the deepest regret from the total impracticability of my following it. I have pledged my irrevocable faith to Miss Airey, to become the future partner and protector of her youth; circumstances have also occurred, of which my honour forbids the mention, but which are convincing to me that Providence has assigned to me the part I am acting.”

His Lordship essayed to speak; he would still further have dissuaded Douglas, but admiration so mingled with his sentiments, as to control for awhile his speech; after which, before he closed the subject, he hinted merely at the probable pecuniary embarrassments such a marriage might involve.

“I retain a fervent hope,” replied Douglas, “that Heaven will avert such evils, and crown with blessing a union formed upon the most just and honourable views.”

As soon as the original bent of Douglas's great mind developed itself, it seemed to him as if no self-denial or subjugation of his inclinations was beyond his ability to perform.

Feeling himself entirely defeated, his Lordship remained silent ; nevertheless, he could not forbear regretting that Douglas was on the point of making so great a sacrifice of himself ;—one who, he conceived, might justly have aspired to an alliance even amongst the daughters of peers ;—himself a son of one of those Scottish noblemen tracing their genealogies even to the famed chieftains of former times ;—and one, also, whose destiny it might become to hold the title, from the improbability of issue descending to supersede him, from his elder brother. To continue his interference, however, his Lordship deemed unnecessary ; he therefore desisted from further observation than that of sincerely wishing him that happiness of which his merits rendered him so highly deserving.

With the warmest expressions Douglas renewed his thanks, adding, with a smile on which sat the consciousness of having acted according to *duty* : “ A man, my dear Lord, never takes advice in such affairs, nor ever thinks of asking it, until he has made up his mind to follow nothing but the bent of his own will. For my own part, I have proved one

of those obstinate beings; others besides yourself have sought to persuade me to relinquish my engagements to Miss Airey, and was it in the power of mortal to succeed in so doing, it would have been your Lordship; that I have seemed incorrigible in pursuing my point, forgive me," added he, at the same time rising and approaching an open window, his whole deportment assuming that grandeur which a sense of rectitude alone can fully give, whilst with his hand extended, he pointed to where the river Hooghly flowed calmly and steadily along: "Sooner than turn my plighted faith from Miss Airey, might those waters be diverted from pursuing their perpetual course, or from joining their recipient stream the Ganges."

"My dear Douglas," ejaculated the Earl, advancing towards him and taking his hand affectionately, "be assured you have convinced me that you cannot act otherwise than you are doing; and far be it from me to seek to depreciate those high conceptions of honour you entertain. May you prosper in them!—may happiness attend you! And if it should ever be in my power to be serviceable to you, command me."

Douglas bowed, expressive of his sense of gratitude, and departed.

A few weeks after the happy Ellina became his wife.

CHAPTER XVIII.

“ But you, ere love misled your wandering eye,
Were sure the chief and best of human race,
Formed in the very pride and boast of nature.”

DRYDEN.

To return again to the family of De Brooke. We left them making preparations for passing the advancing winter in London.

There is a degree of sadness in bidding even a temporary adieu to scenes that are familiar; a feeling which the General more forcibly experienced than his wife or daughters, for as the carriage conveyed them from their tranquil Bower, as it rolled along the winding-road, and as, by intervening objects, the lovely cottage became lost to their sight, it seemed to him as if he were again about plunging himself into the disastrous trials of his past life, from which that spot, so congenial to his feelings, had lately sheltered him.

Our travellers soon lost sight of Wales, and at the same time of those magnificent scenes which had passed in successive review before them.

A few days after they arrived at Hyde Park Corner; and driving through the dense and dusky fogs of London, beyond Portman Square, where the atmosphere became clearer, they stopped at the door of a neat and comfortable house, the residence of Mrs. Herbert, who had previously by letter undertaken to afford them accommodation and private board. Charmed by the prospect their society offered, she had not hesitated to relinquish the whole of her apartments, with the exception of a back parlour and sleeping-room for herself.

Her slender finances laying her under the necessity of taking in lodgers, she rejoiced that upon this occasion her good fortune had fallen upon General De Brooke and his amiable family. With all the affectionate garrulity of age, she a thousand times expressed her pleasure at beholding the sisters; but more to Rosilia, lavishing upon her the fondest greetings, by the appellation of her child, her dear, dear child!

It may be well supposed that Philimore and Oriana, inhabiting the same place and not greatly removed from each other, found frequent occasions for meeting; seldom, indeed, but in the presence of others, when caution and restraint were necessarily observed; but those feelings, mutually so painful and oppressive, were compensated by the

numerous occasions that offered for meeting in private. In addition to which, the very friendly intimacy, the long and old acquaintance existing between the General and Mr. Philimore, and between their wives, induced a continual interchange of evening visiting; when, naturally thrown together, the young lovers had opportunity for much unreserved and free communication.

It was during these intervals that they laid plans for the enjoyment of meeting alone, unobserved, and free from the fear of drawing upon themselves parental attention, and usually before any part of their respective families were stirring from their morning's repose; when, resorting to St. James's or the Green-park, they held that communion on which alone their existence seemed to depend, and which to indulge, they braved the severest hardships. Delicate as was the constitution of Oriana, she willingly hazarded exposure even to the most severe weather during the worst months of winter, in order to keep the morning's appointment with her lover; and thus, as weeks and months passed away, Philimore became less sensible of those compunctions arising from the secret of his passion.

Oriana was his affianced bride; so convinced was he of his power over her affections, that he

was even often tempted to put them to a stronger trial than he had hitherto done—that of urging her no longer to delay their perfect union, but immediately unite her destiny to his by a private marriage; but the idea of this was again banished by the thought of plunging the woman he loved into the poverty and ruin of sharing with him his adverse circumstances, and thus so ill repaying her generous confidence.

Notwithstanding this constraint, to which he felt bound to submit, a sentiment of sweet delight stole over him when he contemplated the pure, the virtuous affection which his Oriana, with that unreserve so natural to her, had invariably expressed for him. He blessed Providence for having bestowed upon him this great felicity, this great reward for every evil inclination he had conquered, this great stimulus to every good and laudable action he hoped still in humility to perform.

Oriana, on her part, whenever Philimore was the theme of her encomiums, often said to Rosilia that she would be contented to remain most part of her life in the single state, provided she could indulge in the happy certainty of being in the end united to Philimore. What a comfort was it to Oriana, to find in her sister that dear and tender confidant, in whom she could thus repose her

every fear, hope, and joy : whenever they were alone, free, and undisturbed from intrusion, their conversation was of Philimore.

It was then that Rosilia used to think, “ surely it will never fall to my lot to meet a human being in whom I could place such an unbounded confidence, as does my happy sister in Philimore. No ! I shall never be so fortunate as to meet with one of such real excellence of character.” Her thoughts wandered still farther—rebellious thoughts—they brought again Douglas to her view ; endeavouring to dismiss the image, she inwardly exclaimed, “ No ! I shall never love like my sister ; my fancy roving after endless attainments beyond the lot of mortals to possess, can meet with nought but disappointment. Oh ! never ! never !” still she silently ejaculated ; “ my heart may throb with joy, it may dissolve in compassion towards others griefs, but never will another share in its feelings.”

Her whole countenance glowing with a warm suffusion, from the ardour in which she thought—on looking upwards she perceived Mrs. Herbert, who stood before her holding in her hand a packet.

“ ’Tis from my son, from India,” said she, with a look expressive of the utmost gratification. “ ’Tis from Edward Herbert, my own dear boy ! my beloved son !”

Scarcely allowing an interval for respiration, with a volubility natural to her, but always more when she touched upon any favourite topic, she began by giving Rosilia a circumstantial detail of almost every event that had happened to her son since his quitting England; and as many occurrences relating to him were connected with Douglas, having had the lot to pursue their voyage in the same vessel, the name of each was frequently coupled with the other; and, in continuing her recital, she exclaimed with warmth: “Truly, my dear Rosilia, Edward adores you; here are more than two or three passages in his letter where he styles you his beloved Rosilia! ‘Do not forget to speak of me—to recall me to the memory of my beloved Rosilia!’—such are his words.”

The silence with which she was listened to was far from throwing any check upon the loquacious vivacity of Mrs. Herbert, considering it but as an effect arising from maiden diffidence.

“How rejoiced I shall be,” she therefore added, “to see my dear boy home again—but that will not be until he obtains superior rank. In the meanwhile he is tolerably well off where he is; Calcutta is a fine station, provided he can escape the complaint so prevalent there, and which I believe, or some other malady, for he does not

properly explain himself, has affected Major Douglas with such great severity as to have reduced him nearly to the gates of death. But mercy on me! what ails you, my dear?"

"Nothing! nothing!" replied Rosilia.

"To go on with my story then—he recovered, but no sooner did so than he paid his addresses to a young lady;—my dear Rosilia, you are really not well—how pale you look!"

Rosilia indeed felt faint,—her limbs tottered, and she sunk upon the chair offered by Mrs. Herbert; "repose yourself awhile," said she, "while I call Mrs. De Brooke."

"No! no! I beg you will not," returned Rosilia, catching hold of her to detain her; "alarm her not, I am well now—quite well; it was a sudden sickness—but 'tis past."

The tones of her voice assumed firmness, and as her colour revived, it was accompanied by an expression from the eye, proudly eloquent; the dignity investing her whole person was such as at once to show the temporary trial was over. While she, alas! had breathed so many vain sighs upon him, he had forgotten her! proving, but too truly, the inconstancy of man! so thought Rosilia.

Determined, however, not to allow herself to be swayed by any sentiment contrary to social feel-

ing and benevolence, she offered up a silent prayer for the happiness of Douglas and his future partner.

Mrs. Herbert was rejoiced to find that Rosilia was herself again. She had been made perfectly well acquainted with the attachment and pretensions of Douglas to Rosilia, but as he had embarked for India her rejected suitor, she had drawn the inference that his pretensions were altogether indifferent to her. But whether right or wrong in her conjectures, she had with much eagerness and pleasure delivered the account of his intended marriage,—hoping also to insinuate by degrees the merits and claims of her son; that favourite wish, so long cherished, having acquired a renewal of strength from Rosilia then being an inmate of her house.

The entrance of Oriana, proposing a walk, put an end to Mrs. Herbert's further communication. Philimore was in waiting to attend them, in company with an acquaintance, Miss Morris, who was a maiden lady of about forty years of age, of great respectability; she was one in whose society Mrs. De Brooke supposed she could entrust her daughters. Mistaken confidence! Alas! she little conceived that, though without any apparent levity or disregard to the world's censure, yet from an

obsequiousness and acquiescence to the will and pleasure of others, into what thoughtless indiscretion and want of due punctilio she might be led; rendering her, in the case of Philimore and Oriana, by favouring them in their secret union, a most dangerous intimate!

From the care and attention Mrs. De Brooke had bestowed upon the education of her daughters, and more particularly on their morals, as also from the great purity of her own, she never entertained the slightest thought of either of them deviating from the strictest care and circumspection. Rosilia, in her conduct to Douglas, had afforded her a convincing proof that her confidence had not been misplaced in her; and, under similar circumstances, she naturally concluded Oriana would have acted the same part. Happily, however, for Oriana, she was never destined to be placed under situations of great trial; for, with feeble powers of resistance, she would have been irrecoverably abandoned to the mortifying and endless stings of penitence and self-reproach.

Miss Morris resided next door to Philimore's family, in a house which, from having been the property of a widowed and deceased mother, devolved to her. Profiting by the friendship offered from their being such near neighbours, she had

become on the most cordial terms with the Philimores, whence had arisen her acquaintance with the De Brookes.

With the usual quick-sightedness ascribed to the advanced spinster in the manœuvres and stratagems of love, she soon discovered that a more than common partiality existed between Edmund Philimore and the eldest daughter of General De Brooke. Of affable manners, and not envious of the privileges granted to the younger of her sex, she often availed herself of her intimacy with the respective families of the lovers, to rally each upon the subject nearest their heart; upon which, consulting together, in the fear her pleasantries might prove injurious to them, they thought better to ensure her discretion, by entrusting her with their mutual secret; and, agreeably to the result anticipated, secured to themselves her steady friendship.

Having herself at one time experienced a strong partiality, under adverse circumstances, Miss Morris unfortunately felt too much sympathy for those who were in the same predicament; on which account a more than common good understanding arising between her and the lovers, her house became for them a convenient rendezvous. Oriana, under the pretence of enjoying the society of her friend, frequently, with her mother's permission, absented

herself to spend the day with Miss Morris; while Philimore, calling in as if by chance, gave rise to no suspicion on his side.

Thus availing themselves of their friend's good-natured, but imprudent sanction, they spent many delightful hours in each other's company. Alas! they little conceived, during those moments of indulgence, what injury they were doing themselves, and what repentance was to follow!

In the fear of being conceived an intruder by the lovers, Miss Morris often withdrew to employ herself in her household occupations, leaving them long intervals together; when, with no prying witness near, giving way to the force of passion, where was Philimore's once boasted self-denial, his strength of virtue, or his honour? and Oriana, yielding to his importunities, often trembled while she had to fly his presence,—for what might be the result of her over-condescension? Happily for her, she had not to encounter in Philimore the systematic hypocrite and seducer of innocence; and, fortunately for her, contrition was awakened in him ere it was too late! To what lengths might not opportunity have driven him, even to tread on the brink of an abyss, which, had he fallen into, would have entombed honour, character—all that is held most sacred in his profession!

Such ideas, whilst deprecating his weakness, not unmingled with some secret reproaches against Oriana, for giving too great latitude to his flame, often spread sharp thorns upon his silent pillow; showing him the necessity, since there was no longer any possibility of breaking off his engagement and escaping from the dangerous fetters in which he had bound himself, of procuring speedy church preferment, in order that he might be enabled to make some certain provision, not for himself and Oriana only, but for his family, then deriving their chief support at his hands. Could he but retire to some small village as its humble curate,—Oriana his companion, his affectionate help-mate,—he might still be happy!

Time however elapsed, and no prospect was presented for the realization of such wishes; still Philimore felt himself under the necessity of dissembling—of practising towards his family a constant evasion, and of instructing Oriana to do the same. Had the probable results of his clandestine intercourse been duly considered ere his passion had reached its intensity; had he come forward with an honest candour, and have built his hopes on the General's frankness and kindness of disposition, Providence might have operated in his favour; but had he failed, and been entirely frus-

trated in his heart's dearest wishes, tranquillity of conscience would have been his! he would not have broken through the rules of decorum and propriety, but he would have acted laudably, and even nobly, in contending with his feelings, and of continuing, as he had hitherto done, the command and government of himself.

In contrasting the conduct of Douglas with that of Philimore, we see the former originally giving way to his *inclinations*, eventually controlling them; while we find the latter, on the contrary, invariably good, and firmly adhering to his *duty*, until, tossed upon the waves of trial, trouble, and temptation, his courage fails him—he braves not the storm, but runs the risk of becoming a mournful and piteous wreck.

CHAPTER XIX.

How sweet the incense breath'd around
By purest virtue shed;
The world where tainted vice is found,
For her no snares can spread.

ANONYMOUS.

MEANWHILE, affairs were thus proceeding with Philimore and Oriana, when Mr. and Mrs. Arden, who had recently established themselves in a large and splendid mansion in the county of Kent, gave an invitation to the sisters to pass a few weeks with them. Mrs. Arden sent her carriage on purpose to convey them to her residence, which was but a few miles distant from town. She received them with apparent kindness, as much as might be expected from one not habituated to associate in family union. Mr. Arden, as they arrived, left his study to give them his hand, and welcome them to his house, as the common rules of politeness required.

Though Oriana might be disposed to regret this temporary absence from Philimore, yet, in

another point of view, she considered it advantageous to the interests of her attachment, and therefore resolved to avail herself, if possible, by it. Four months had already elapsed since she had left the Bower; and at the expiration of but two more she was to return,—a thought which preyed heavily upon her; and she knew not how she could avoid being transported so far from her Philimore.

Miss Morris professed so much friendship for her,—so much pleasure in her society,—and was besides so generous and hospitable, that she might readily solicit her parents to leave her behind on a visit to her. But would they consent? Oriana justly feared they would not accept of any invitation for her excepting one offered by Mrs. Arden. Could she happily effect her wishes in this particular, but the space of a few miles only would intervene between herself and the object of her tenderest affections. Many occurrences might give rise to her seeing him. His letters also could be conveyed to her with more facility than at the Bower. From such considerations, Oriana endeavoured to render her manners as obliging and as agreeable as possible to Mr. and Mrs. Arden.

Their elegant barouche-and-four, with outriders, was generally in requisition, affording them the

means of diversion and of visiting during the morning, while the evening was devoted to receiving company at home. Mr. Arden could not exist without his party at cards, but since Oriana had become his visitor, his attention had been constantly engrossed by the charms of her music, which never failed to afford him a recreation of the most pleasing kind,—often tempting him to wish, notwithstanding some private feelings militated against it, that Oriana might be a perpetual inmate in his house.

Rosilia frequently amused herself by contemplating the beautiful paintings and portraits in the saloon, which had belonged to her grandfather, but which since the demise of Lady De Brooke had been removed to the house of Mr. Arden. The idea that her father might have been considered as the rightful owner of them, drew a sigh from her heart. Her thoughts, however, were diverted from such reflections when solicited by Oriana to ramble with her through the spacious park and gardens; where they could each indulge in expatiating upon those topics the most interesting to them.

Thus time passed until the period arrived that was to recall them to London.

Desirous of retaining Oriana in his family, that

he might benefit from her musical talents, Mr. Arden, notwithstanding his princely fortune, two-thirds of which were constantly accumulating at interest, was yet so illiberal as to calculate the additional expense which such an inmate would necessarily occasion to his expenditure. "It is true," thought he, "with regard to dress, she may be conceived independent, being now of age, and in possession of the interest of the small legacy left her by Sir Aubrey."

In thus talking over the point with Mrs. Arden, it was accordingly decided to make the proposal to Oriana; and that after accompanying Rosilia home, she should return to the Park as soon as her parents could conveniently spare her. The invitation was accepted by Oriana with the utmost delight, and was extremely flattering to the self-love of her aunt.

Having attained her wishes, Oriana returned to London with a heart much lighter than when she had left it. Nevertheless, it was that one exclusive sentiment,—her attachment to Philimore alone,—that could have reconciled her to such a change as was about to take place in her destiny. The society of her beloved sister and the rustic simplicity of the cottage, she would have preferred to those etiquettes and ceremonies attendant on the

splendid mansion she was about to inhabit, of which the luxury and affluence, she was well assured, would add nothing to her happiness. And so she expressed herself to her fond parents when about to depart.

“My dear child,” said her father, “It is for your benefit only, that your mother and myself consent to make the sacrifice of your company; to bestow your accomplishments and valuable attainments upon my sister and Mr. Arden, who are for the future to reap the advantage of them—the fruit of that instruction,—that excellent education,—I have given you. What will not parents forego under the hope of a prosperous result to their children? But Rosilia is still ours!” continued he, endeavouring to cheer her, dispirited by the near separation from her sister.

The conscience of Oriana whispered in rebuke, that Rosilia alone was truly worthy of the tenderness and approbation of her parents. Alas! she was about leaving her home to reside in future with her aunt; and under what false colours! how greatly were they deceived in her! That morning her marriage-bans had been, for the third time, published in a remote parish church, in the certainty that the secret could not possibly transpire in the quarter of the town they inhabited, or

come to the knowledge of the circumscribed few with whom they were acquainted.

Without much reluctance on the part of Oriana, Philimore had resorted to this measure under the apprehension of discovery, and that in a case of necessity, the usual forms being observed, no impediment could exist towards the fulfilment of an immediate secret union.

Oriana, bound to Rosilia by the most affectionate and endearing ties, the dear sharer of her joys and sorrows, in possession of her entire confidence, to whom she had ever opened her heart by the most unreserved communications—how poignantly did these sisters feel this first separation that had ever taken place between them! Folded in each other's arms, they mingled their tears together; until at length, gently disengaging themselves, after bidding a tender adieu to her parents, Oriana entered the carriage that was to convey her from them.

While in the company of others, Rosilia had been enabled to subdue her sorrow, but not so when the hour of rest summoned her to her solitary room;—her loved companion was gone! There, where she had been wont to indulge in entertaining converse, listen to the sprightly sally, and laugh away the flying minutes,—the vacant stillness then reigning pressed heavily upon the

heart of Rosilia ; her respiration seemed impeded, and she sat for a time absorbed and motionless ; till at last tear after tear chased each other down her cheeks, not tears such as contrition sheds,—no self-accusation mingled amidst the feelings that produced them, but tears, such as the pious shed when the soul, from a state of inquietude, subsides into a sweet calm,—when it awakes to consoling ideas, when, no longer disturbed by sublunary things, it looks up with hope, gratitude, and devotion to its Maker ! Under the influence of such a benign resignation, Rosilia sunk to rest, unconscious of the midnight storm which raged around her.

At the first dawn of morning, Rosilia arose from her peaceful couch. All nature seemed to smile ; the sun spread its enlivening beams over her chamber ; the gushing waters without, and broken fragments that met her eye, evidently announced a recent storm. Delighted with the aspect of the morning, she pencilled the following effusion :

“ Hail ! beauteous morn ! thy cheering light
Has chased the dark, tempestuous night ;
The dim o’ershadowing gloom is gone ;
The blasts have ceased their dismal moan ;
Hush’d is the storm ; the winds have ceased ;
The sun breaks forth, from clouds released,

To gild the sweet enchanting scene,
And gaily wanton o'er the green.
Soft and refreshing moves the gale ;
And fragrant is the balmy vale ;
The sun's refulgent, sportive beam
Plays o'er each winding, rippling stream,
Peeping through trees with dazzling gleam."

The General and Mrs. De Brooke, from motives of prudence, thought proper not to delay the departure of Oriana for the Park ; which, had they consulted their private wishes, they would certainly have done, until the time allotted for their quitting London. Their tastes not leading to public amusements, they lived with Mrs. Herbert in comparative seclusion.

The ball, the opera, and theatre were every night resorted to by the admired belle of fashion ; while Rosilia, supremely lovely in mind as in person,—she who in every circle, even the most distinguished, might have elicited attention as the grand-daughter of the late renowned Sir Aubrey De Brooke, continued unheard of and unknown ; not that it was any subject of mortification to her that she never joined those brilliant circles of pomp and pleasure, where, she well knew, it was the adventitious circumstances of wealth or elevated rank which alone claimed superiority. It was

the dearth of reciprocal friendship,—the pleasures of intelligence; it was the privation of those infinite sweetnesss of life; the void, the vacuum of her breast, which caused her to languish, and often transformed the populous city she inhabited into the solitude of a desert: above restraint, her vivid imagination wandered to the future, and fed on hopes, such as in this delusive world are rarely realized.

It was now the latter end of February; the season was unusually advanced; the country already assumed a verdure, which failed not to call many to dispel the vapours gathered in the midnight assembly, by a walk in Kensington Gardens, where the gay throng presented to the eye of an indifferent spectator contributed equally to the gratification of curiosity as of entertainment.

Amongst the beaux of fortune and of distinction joining in the fashionable promenade, was Harcourt, of a handsome person and elegant address: rival beauties, emulous of his notice, sought him with avidity, dwelt upon his words, were flattered by his smiles, and felt their light hearts flutter with all the consciousness of triumph, if haply they caught one glance of admiration from his animated eye.

He had been for some time engaged in frivolous

chat with the young Lady Laura Leslie, till at length, weary of the common-place topics he had discussed, he added a few more complimentary speeches, and gracefully withdrew. Passing into a retired walk, contrary to the flippant coxcombs of the day, he became involved in thought ; for Harcourt, notwithstanding he could trifle away time with ease and pleasantry, was of a temper given to reflection. Absorbed in contemplation, he continued his ramble, until he found himself suddenly interrupted by the voice of an acquaintance.

“Harcourt,” said he, “tell me, do you know who that divine creature is?”

“Who do you mean?” returned Harcourt.

“Who but the young lady that has just passed us?” replied the other.

They turned to follow. A light and airy figure, of perfect symmetry, somewhat above the middle size, moved with slow and graceful steps before them. Another lady walked by her side, whose larger stature, equally well proportioned, aspired to the majestic ; retaining, however, but those evanescent charms of youth so peculiarly engaging and attractive in her companion.

Objects so interesting could not fail to excite the deep attention of the warm, impassioned Harcourt. The younger lady in particular was formed

to detain his silent and enraptured gaze; she stopped to admire some choice plant, when he caught a view of her *tout ensemble*, the roseate lips, the brilliancy of her eyes, the high and polished front, ornamented by dark pencilled brows, as if formed by the archer god himself! The simple negligence of her air, her whole person, her whole attire, gave to creative fancy all that it could picture to itself of loveliness in woman!

But it was not this sweet assemblage of graces surrounding her, that had operated so powerfully to awaken the imagination of Harcourt; it was a something he scarcely knew how to define; it was, indeed, the sanctity of virtue, which cast the magic spell around her; it was innocence, delicacy, a something indescribably touching,—illuminating her countenance, characterizing her whole deportment, giving birth to immediate respect, mingled with admiration, while she rivetted with increased ardour, the fond regard of her beholder. Had she displayed aught of consciousness, of confidence in her beauty and attraction, or levity, in seeking the gratification of their display, the charm entrancing Harcourt would in one moment have dissolved.

“Who is she?” said the gentleman who had

first noticed her; "perhaps a plant of foreign growth."

"That I am persuaded she is not!" ejaculated Harcourt, in tones of energy; "such unaffected modesty, such retired elegance, Britannia's daughters alone can boast! Who can she be?"

"Why, that is precisely the question I wish to have answered," rejoined the other. "I have no doubt she is some new star about to appear in the hemisphere of fashion; she will take, for she has succeeded admirably in person, and novelty will make her all the rage. Moderate your impatience awhile, Harcourt, and you will surely see this little magnet at some of the parties, balls, or routs you frequent: depend upon it, she is to appear this spring, and will very soon be initiated into all the fashionable gay meetings and public resorts of the Town."

Too much absorbed by attention, these airy nothings passed unheard by Harcourt, who, suddenly withdrawing his arm, hastened to follow the incomparable fair one. Admiration and rapture had been so commixed, so intensely excited, that those restraints existing in polished life, the punctilios practised, the etiquette preserved,—all, in the tumultuous thoughts of Harcourt, were banished, accounted but as cold reserve and useless forms.

It was the most buoyant wish of his heart to throw himself instantly at the feet of that fair object,—that sudden idol of his soul! offer her his homage—acknowledge and confess to her the supreme empire she had usurped over him.

Thus impressed, he was hurrying on, when the companion he had just parted from called after him, from a sudden recollection crossing his mind, feeling perfectly assured of having seen the younger lady before. But this he chose, from reasons best known to himself, not to reveal.

“Harcourt! Harcourt!” exclaimed he; “where are you driving to so fast? If it is after the fair enchantress, she has left the gardens; I saw her this moment, with the lady who is with her, pass the gates;—return then. What madness has taken possession of you?”

“Another time,—another time,” said Harcourt peevishly.

Curiosity not allowing further reply, they left the gardens together. Soon overtaking the objects of their pursuit, they saw them at Hyde Park Corner enter a carriage in readiness to receive them; which Harcourt resolved to follow, by keeping quick pace with it along the pavement, still pursuing its many windings and turnings; his companion by his side, who felt himself urged

to keep pace with the speed of Harcourt, as much from feelings of rivalry as from inquisitiveness to prove what might be the result.

At last the carriage stops in Portland Place; Rosilia—for it was she—alights, followed by her mother; the door closes upon them, and the carriage drives away.

Transfixed to the spot, Harcourt lost the opportunity of making his inquiries of the coachman. Spell-bound, motionless, and silent, he stood gazing at the door which had concealed the lovely Rosilia from his sight, until roused by his companion. “Well,” exclaimed the latter, “we have at least gained one point; we have discovered her residence: and it is certain that here for the present the affair must rest. Come, Harcourt; come with me to St. James’s.”

Harcourt made no reply, but having taken a few turns before the house, and, through the closed blinds of the parlour windows, having again beheld, though indistinctly, that form to him so surpassing fair, he suffered himself to be led away, with a downcast air, indifferent as to where he went.

He who had thus intruded upon Harcourt, had recognised in Rosilia one with whom he had been struck at the *fête champêtre* of Sir Charles and Lady Valpée; it being no other than Sir Howard

Sinclair. Never having seen Mrs. De Brooke, he could only suppose, by the prevailing likeness, that she might be the mother of Rosilia. Had he not been in company with Harcourt, in claiming the privilege of former acquaintance with Rosilia, he would have accosted her, and gained an introduction to her mother; but knowing it would be the means of gratifying Harcourt, he thought it better to defer so doing to a more favourable opportunity.

Recollecting how formidable a rival he had met with in Captain Douglas, he feared to run the risk of encountering the same in Harcourt. The secret malice he had borne against the former, led him to hope that his views respecting Rosilia were frustrated; and which he suspected was truly the case, as no news of his marriage had transpired since he embarked for India.

Though still covetous of wealth, and his ideas of marriage unchanged, yet his rencounter with Rosilia in the Gardens, set free, as he imagined, from the pursuit of Douglas, conferred upon him no small degree of pleasure.

Finding in his walk with Harcourt that all attempt to extract a word from him was fruitless, he left him.

CHAPTER XX.

“ Who that have felt that passion’s power,
 Or paused, or feared, in such an hour ?
 Or thought how brief such moments last !
 But yet—they are already past !
 Alas ! we must awake before
 We know such vision comes no more.”

BYRON.

WITH a form uniting at once grace, dignity, and ease, Harcourt had neither escaped the attention of Mrs. De Brooke nor her daughter. The former might have entertained, from the hasty and precipitate manner in which he had followed them, some slight suspicion as to the real cause ; particularly when, with a parent’s pride, she had contemplated the perfect loveliness of her child : but in this instance, it was with a feeling of regret, supposing that, viewed superficially, the sensation she had inspired was that only which the light and trifling are susceptible of,—looking but to the surface, as wanton children to their toys, regardless of their intrinsic value.

Impressed with these ideas, she was glad to find

that the object of her fears no longer rendered himself visible. But Rosilia herself, however, remained perfectly unconscious of those powerful emotions, stamping her image upon his soul, and still leading him to the pursuit of her; for no sooner had he dismissed his troublesome companion, and found himself at freedom, than he retraced his footsteps to Portland Place.

Again, in passing the windows, he beholds that form, or rather but the shade of that form, so imperfectly developed, yet entrancing his soul, as by some magical enchantment. She moves, he follows her motions; she passes to and fro, and fancy pictures the exquisite graces attending her. She draws towards the door of the apartment, she leaves it, she has vanished; enrapt in contemplation, he gazes as if that lovely form still filled his vision. A confused tumult of thought seizes him, and he is at a loss upon what to determine. His existence seems to depend upon an introduction, and that immediately; but how obtain it? and by whom?

In the perplexity of his ideas, unable to endure so torturing a suspense, a sudden revolution seizes him. He advances towards the door,—he raises the knocker—his hand trembles, but it has performed his office; a female servant presents herself; her

attire announced her above the common class of her order. He was at a loss for speech to address her. Her looks became bashful, and he thence assumed courage. He asked her various questions, none of which might be deemed discreet; but no matter, the simple candour of her replies emboldened him, and at the same time gave encouragement and satisfaction to his hopes and views. Presenting her his card, he desired her to deliver it to her mistress, with the message that he would call again in half an hour.

Upon the servant's entering the parlour, Mrs. De Brooke, with a look half curious, and half displeased, asked the purport of the conversation the gentleman had held with her: "for you have been sometime engaged with him, Mary."

"He asked me," replied she, "who resided in this house, and who were the ladies he had seen alight from a carriage, and—" here she paused, looked down, and simpered: "He asked me if I could tell him whether the young lady was disengaged; 'that is,' said he, 'whether she has any suitors, who demand her hand in marriage?'"

"Is it possible he could ask such a question!" exclaimed Rosilia, deeply blushing. "Of what importance could it be to him, a total stranger to me?"

“And what was your reply?” continued Mrs. De Brooke, with some asperity of accent.

“I hope you are not angry with me, ma’am; I did not say anything else, than that I did not know.”

At this interval another knock came; Rosilia was about flying from the apartment, but as the door opened, the voice of Mrs. Philimore without relieved her confusion.

“My dear Rosilia,” said she, after making her salutation, “how flurried you are; what has happened to alarm you?”

Scarcely was she seated, and Mrs. De Brooke had taken upon herself to explain the circumstance, than a third knock announced the return of their singular visitor. Rosilia, in trembling accents, besought her mother not to admit him; Mrs. Philimore joined in the same persuasion, recommending her friend to speak to him without.

Thus acting, Harcourt, upon seeing her, politely bowed, and stammered out some unintelligible words. In the overwhelming hurry of his thoughts he found it impossible to make himself understood; but naturally supposed the circumstance of the case and situation in which he was placed, might sufficiently explain his conduct.

He felt his consequence ; he was a man of condition and of fortune ; his pretensions he felt to be just, his views honourable. Yet to advance one step from the spot on which he stood, he could not,—awaiting Mrs. De Brooke's invitation to follow her.

Never having heard of a parallel instance, she was at a total loss how to act ; from the predominating feeling, however, which influenced her, assuming an air of dignity, she said, “ Sir, I presume you are mistaken in the house at which you have called, and have no doubt your presence here has been perfectly unintentional.”

Intimidated, confounded, Harcourt remained silent ; the manner of Mrs. De Brooke's address clearly bespoke that he had wounded both her pride and delicacy. To proceed might be deemed insolence. He must pursue other steps, or perhaps close the avenue to the good graces and favourable estimation of the daughter for ever ; bowing respectfully, therefore, he withdrew.

A heavy shower of rain, lasting above an hour, precluded Mrs. Philimore from returning home ; at her request, after a still longer interval, Rosilia opened the blinds to ascertain the state of the weather. But what was her surprise, not in the least doubting but that he had departed, when, spring-

ing from his place of concealment, the enamoured Harcourt was before her. Once again he beheld her fascinating figure; he beheld her countenance covered with the sweet blush of innocence; and she, ere she had time to retire, caught his looks of fire issuing from that fervent flame which then pervaded his being.

“O fie, Rosilia!” exclaimed Mrs. Philimore, who, after still further rallying her young friend upon the conquest she had made, departed.

Mrs. Herbert, and the General also, had been absent from home since an early hour in the morning; the former, on her return, remarked that, as she approached the dwelling, she observed a gentleman keeping his station at the corner of the street, at the side of the house; “a tall, handsome, elegant-looking man, beating his switch upon the iron railings; and as I ascended the steps, he seemed perplexed and hesitating whether or not to accost me.”

Mrs. De Brooke, glancing her eye at Rosilia, smiling said, “a persevering lover, truly;” and related to Mrs. Herbert the morning’s adventure.

“Why, bless me! he must be extremely smitten to stand at his post so long: you little witch,” continued she, addressing Rosilia, “did I not tell

you when you passed me this morning in going to the gardens, that Cupid looked in those arch looks of yours ; pretty doings, indeed, to set the men beside themselves. But here comes your papa ; what will he say to all this ?”

The General entered, and ere he could be seated, Mrs. Herbert, with the utmost volubility of speech, began relating the story she had heard, but which, as she could but explain in part, Mrs. De Brooke was called upon for a more minute detail ; when, ever liking to promote good humour, the General joined Mrs. Herbert in her raillery of Rosilia.

“ If we do not soon escape to the Bower,” exclaimed he, “ I shall lose my dear girl ; she will be run away with by some of these smart London bucks.”

“ You may depend upon it,” added Mrs. Herbert, “ the affair will not end here ; this Mr. Harcourt is too deeply smitten to allow the affair to drop ; he will make further efforts, take my word for it.”

“ To preserve my pre-eminence over him,” said Rosilia gaily, “ it would be better never to become further known to him ; he is, perhaps, of a bold and sanguine character, and fond of novelty, which has, doubtless, deluded him to act as he has done :

but as such an attraction would inevitably fade, some other object would proportionably rise in his estimation."

"It is well argued, my child," said the General, who, still inclining to be jocose, continued; "but what could the poor fellow do, when he found a pair of fine eyes in his pocket, but pursue the fair object who had so generously bestowed them."

The General was aware that a Colonel Harcourt resided in the neighbourhood, a man distinguished for his manners, birth, and fortune. It was from such pretensions he conceived that he had been led to take a step so bold and extraordinary.

Mrs. Herbert felt for Rosilia an affection nearly amounting to the maternal; next to her Edward, there was no object more tenderly beloved by her. Far from being disinterested, however, her wishes for the happiness of Rosilia tended only as connected with her long cherished and favourite scheme; often anticipating the comfort it would afford her declining years, to spend them with her son, united to such a woman as Rosilia: those dear children would be the prop of her widowhood! Such an idea, from the frequency of its recurrence, had become too familiar to be relinquished. Her son might soon return from abroad; he might

haply attain the rank of Major; and with such expectations, so long nurtured, should she, even at the very period when, as she supposed, she might reasonably look forward to their consummation, suffer them to dissolve and fly from her as an empty dream, upon the appearance of a Harcourt? Certainly not.

Thus fixed in her resolution, the following morning, when breakfast was over, she sallied from her house. She had seen from an upper window, the warm, enraptured, persevering Harcourt at his station as on the day before; and, as she expected, immediately on seeing her, he advanced to meet her.

The air of fashion and nobility with which he introduced himself to her notice, might have spoke in his favour: pretensions, rank, and fortune alone, it might have been conceived, authorized the step.

“You are, madam,” said he, bowing as he spoke, “doubtless the owner of that house.”

“I am, sir,” was the laconic answer. He added, “I was very rash, very precipitate in my conduct yesterday; I am painfully aware, that even the vehemence of feeling by which I was actuated cannot justify it.” After a moment’s pause, he continued; “I possess an independent fortune, entirely at my own disposal; my friends and

family have been long persuading me to marry. But never did I indulge in such an inclination, for never did I see the female who could fix my roving thoughts. Yesterday I saw her! yes, I have now seen her! It is the young lady who resides in your house, who, from the first moment I beheld her, showed me the object, the only object my soul can ever pant after, to crown its wishes and desires with success. Can you, will you, be so obliging as to— as to speak in my behalf to herself and family, for which I shall be your debtor to all eternity?”

“Sir,” replied Mrs. Herbert, proudly drawing herself up, “that young lady has a mind above being caught by sudden impressions; her favourable estimation is not to be gained but by a long intimacy with, and knowledge of, the character who addresses her. Moreover, her parents would not consent to part with her to any who could not bestow on her a handsome settlement.”

Harcourt, who was as liberal in temper, as he was nice in discrimination, felt for a moment piqued at the remark; but as it proceeded from one whose ideas of delicacy and of good breeding he might suppose circumscribed, he rejoined: “On such a score I have nothing to dread; my resources are ample, and more than abundant to

answer the expectations of her friends ; be assured I should otherwise never have had the audacity and presumption to act in this manner. Will you pardon my curiosity if I ask who are her connexions ?”

Mrs. Herbert first spoke of the deceased Sir Aubrey, extolling his high renown and popularity ; she then mentioned the General, dwelling upon his amiable character, as also that of his lady ; after which, of Mr. and Mrs. Arden, of their respectability and fortune.

“ It is sufficient,” rejoined Harcourt ; “ it was not to gratify any personal ambition, that I solicited this information ; it was with the view to judge how far my own desires would act in harmony with the wishes of my family. Such an alliance cannot fail of meeting with their most flattering approbation.”

As the inmates of her house, and reflecting credit upon herself, Mrs. Herbert had launched into encomiums upon the De Brookes ; and as it was but from mere curiosity she had listened to Harcourt’s account of himself, now that he had said all that was necessary in his recommendation, and that her inquisitiveness was fully gratified, her own self-interested feelings assumed complete ascendancy. This Harcourt might prove a formidable rival to

her son. Birth, fortune, in the prime of manhood, of a pleasing and polished exterior; what though her son had scarcely emerged from adolescence, and might boast of a more florid and fresh countenance; would such, with Rosilia, preponderate in the balance? How in an affair of such moment to the future happiness of her son, was it to be supposed she could take part with and favour a stranger? act in direct contradiction to, and throw a final destruction upon, the hopes and views of her son, cherished since his years of childhood,—a being so beloved, so idolized. After thus reflecting, she resumed the discourse with precipitation. “Sir,” said she, “I am very sorry to have kept you so long in suspense, since your frank address to me demanded a like return; I ought ere this to have informed you that Miss Rosilia De Brooke is no longer at her own disposal, having from an early period of her youth engaged herself; and hopes, by the kind indulgence of her parents, to obtain at last their consent to a union with—with my son.”

The countenance of Harcourt, recently flushed by the ardour of hope, suddenly exhibited the palid and melancholy hues of death. His knees tottered, his whole frame shook with convulsive agony. He inarticulately muttered, “pursuing a shadow, a phantom has deluded me!

In this state he was fortunately seen by his servant, who, having been appointed to attend him in Portland Place, at that moment drew up with his curricle. Scarcely conscious of what he did, he ascended the vehicle, seized the reins, and giving his horses free action, brandishing his whip in air, he drove through the streets with the most furious rapidity, till at last coming in contact with another vehicle, the carriage was overturned, and shattered in its fall.

Receiving, himself, but slight injury, the accident might be esteemed more fortunate than otherwise; for, in changing the impetuous current of his thoughts, he became comparatively himself again.

CHAPTER XXI.

“ Frail man, how various is thy lot below !
 To-day though gales propitious blow,
 And peace, soft gliding down the sky,
 Lead love along and harmony ;
 To-morrow the gay scene deforms ;
 Then all around
 The thunder’s sound
 Rolls rattling on through heaven’s profound,
 And down rush all the storms.”

BEATTIE.

UPON contemplating Harcourt, and the despondency to which she had reduced him, Mrs. Herbert was sensible of compassion, of the reprovings even of her conscience ; but these subsided upon the reflection that she had acted only in concert with that destiny which, according to her conceptions, ordained Rosilia for the spouse of her son.

But after thus taking upon herself to dismiss the unhappy Harcourt, to what plan or stratagem could she resort to give plausibility to her account ? Of his continued perseverance in hovering near the house, the parents of Rosilia had been equally witness with herself ; thus compro-

mised, how could she allow the affair to drop? "Mrs. Herbert," said the General to her, on her leaving the house, "I rely upon your discretion; should Mr. Harcourt think proper to address you, and you judge from his manners and language that he is really what his appearance and what report bespeak him—a perfect gentleman, you have my full consent to give him an invitation to the house. But of this let me caution you, to maintain a strict silence upon the subject to Rosilia."

Why not, thought she, after deliberating, relate the whole conference I have held with Mr. Harcourt, reserving to myself that part only which had relation to my son; and, with respect to the invitation I was desired to give him, it will be easy to let it be supposed I have done so."

Such was the insincerity of Mrs. Herbert, that in telling her tale, all she said appeared so truly plausible, friendly, and cordial to the family interest of the De Brooke's, that she was commended and thanked by them with the utmost complacency and satisfaction, little supposing how greatly they were her dupes. If Mr. Harcourt, thought the unsuspecting General, unites character, that is good morals, to the acquisitions he boasts of, this would be an alliance for my daughter such as the most aspiring parent might wish to promote.

They conceived it not impossible, from the account given by Mrs. Herbert, that Harcourt might call in that evening; but this anticipation, to save Rosilia from embarrassment, was carefully concealed from her. No lover, however, arriving, either that evening, or the ensuing one, nor yet the third, nothing could be supposed, but that leisure and reflection, by lessening the energy of his resolves, had also tended to abate his flame.

Mrs. Herbert alone was sensible of the truth, and felt a secret pleasure in the consciousness that her scheme had so well succeeded. Yet one troublesome idea haunted her—some unforeseen accident might throw Rosilia and Harcourt into each other's company; to prevent this, as far as lay in her power, she determined, by depreciating the latter in the estimation of the former, to excite her to shun him; and an occasion was not long in presenting itself.

Having wished the usual good night, Rosilia would have retired with her parents had not Mrs. Herbert solicited her longer stay, and placing her by her side, said—"My dear girl, I love you as much as it is possible for one human being to love another; and if I saw any imperfection in your conduct, if you possessed any fault or failing, I would tell you

of it. I am not given to flattery, nor do I mean to praise you, but to say that only which is your due. You behave yourself with a circumspection so proper, that I think you are a pattern to your sex."

Taking Rosilia's hand, and pressing it fervently within hers, her tears fast flowing as she spoke, she proceeded, "Could I, my dear girl, see my son lead you to the altar, it would be one of the happiest days I have seen for many a long year. It is the wish most dear and nearest to my heart. My son, my own dear Edward, as I told you before, idolizes you."

Overpowered by maternal recollections, she again paused. To promote the happiness of that son, so much beloved by her, to what mean artifices she was descending! with what deep self-love, with what fraudulent inventions, did she spread mists over the path of Rosilia, the gloomy hue of darkness over that glowing light which had opened upon her destiny, never to be re-illuminated! Into what bitter invectives did she launch against the injured Harcourt!

"His calling," said she, "at the house, what an insult was it! One of the grossest that could be offered to a woman of virtue. Ah, my dear child! I hope he will never cross your path again. The

best and most effectual way that I can advise to avoid the chance of meeting him, will be to walk out as little as possible—insolent and daring as he has proved himself.”

In the perfect purity of Rosilia's thought, it had not entered her imagination to conceive that Mr. Harcourt had sought to offer her insult; that his conduct had been most indiscreet, and thence reprehensible, she had strongly felt. Her father she conceived, as possessing the nicest feelings, and at the same time impetuosity of character, instead of the raillery with which he had treated the subject, would most undoubtedly, had insult been intended her, have instantly felt it, and severely chastised the offender. Making all due allowance for Mrs. Herbert's different way of thinking, and perfectly under the fatal persuasion that such counsel was dictated by affection only, and real interest for her welfare, and having very far from her thoughts even a wish to be in the presence of Harcourt again, the privation of an occasional walk was easy to be complied with.

In pursuing the conversation, Mrs. Herbert added, “How nobly, my dear child, you acted with regard to that giddy, gay young man, Captain Douglas! but with all his levity he really loved

you excessively! He was well acquainted with a lady, a friend of mine, in this neighbourhood, at whose house he frequently visited: and on account of her husband being a brother officer, the intimacy existing caused him often to speak to her of you: when she told him, that if he would hear your praises, he must come to me, for that I adored you. He did so, his friend introduced him to me, and in this very parlour he has gone upon his knees to implore me to write to you. You start, Rosilia, but it is true; in this very parlour he has begged of me to use my influence with you, and to tell you that you could do with him what you pleased, that he would renounce the world for you, if you wished it, and live in a desert for your sake. He was sadly pushed to it, for he had then come to London previous to his embarkation, and you had given him his refusal. He could not make up his mind to address you, in the fear that his letter might meet with suppression; or if not, with disregard or indifference; which would have added still further to his mortification and sorrow. But I can assure you, without exaggeration, he has with tears dropping from his eyes, begged, urged, solicited me, by all that was sacred, if I valued his

repose—his everlasting repose,—to write to you in his behalf, and allow him to enclose a line or two from himself.

With a pained and fixed attention, unable to offer a remark, Rosilia had listened to this new and extraordinary information. “’Tis true, my Rosilia, I pledge my faith and honour it is true; do you blame me for not having interfered?”

“The time is now past,” replied Rosilia; “now that I have been previously informed of his inconstancy; but, if—”

The blood rushed to her heart, she could not finish or express by language what she felt;—all was confused before her. This Mrs. Herbert might have acted for the best, and according perhaps to her notions of propriety; nevertheless her conduct appeared to have been as an evil fate or destiny, flinging an impenetrable veil upon her future happiness!

“I peremptorily refused to do as he wished me,” continued she. “I told him that I could not compromise myself, or make myself a party in any secret transaction whatever.” She paused. Her conscience might have whispered otherwise—’twas self-love and its infatuation which had prevailed; and she made appear as meritorious, a conduct pursued to favour her own private and secret

wishes! the same in respect to Douglas, as she had recently acted by Harcourt.

A profound sigh from Rosilia, caused Mrs. Herbert to turn a searching eye upon her, as if meant to pierce the secret recesses of her bosom; after which she emphatically exclaimed, "He has now married! he has consoled himself with another!"

The design of Mrs. Herbert in thus exposing to Rosilia the past communications she had held with Douglas on the subject of his passion, was with the intent of drawing off her least thoughts or reflection from Harcourt, in order, that in the end, she might better succeed in fixing them wholly upon her son.

"If such is the inconstancy of man," said Rosilia, in reply to Mrs. Herbert's last observation; "If thus so suddenly they can change, and breathe their vows of eternal truth first to one and then to another, I am happier single! How unfortunate are my sex to hearken to or to heed them."

Her voice became energetic, her colour vivid, and nought betrayed, that she had ever been overcome by the weakness she was deploring.

The hour being advanced, she ascended to her apartment; where, left to herself and her own silent communions, sad and depressed, she sunk upon her pillow; a deep sleep succeeded, but her

fancy was still disturbed; she was haunted by a fearful dream.

She dreamed that she was persecuted, and cruelly pursued by one whom she had never seen. It was not Harcourt, neither was it Herbert; of that she felt assured. The vision presented to her had an aspect pale, the brows lowered; they scowled upon her, and yet he made an attempt to smile; but oh! what malignancy did that smile betray—cunning, deceit, hypocrisy, sat lurking there. He stretched forth his arms, he sought to enfold her in his grasp. “Save! save me! Infinite powers of mercy,” she cried; trembling, unable to support herself, she fell prostrate on the earth. The phantom upon this appeal to Omnipotence, in an instant fled. She raised herself upon her knees, but still dreaded to look upwards, when she found herself assisted to rise by an aged man of venerable mien; his countenance exhibiting the serenity of virtue, that blessed calm! derived as an effect of a heavenly conscience.

Rosilia, as her dream continued, suddenly found herself transplanted amidst fields of a verdant green. All was solitude around her: no sound was heard, except the murmuring of rills and the songs of birds. Her benign protector stood by

her side ; rays of celestial tenderness and compassion illumined his looks.

“Rosilia,” said he, “I have heard your sighs ; I have heard the complaints that your soul has breathed from time to time. You are dissatisfied with the limit assigned you by Providence ; your thoughts, wishes, imagination, range uncontrolled beyond it. The narrow boundary in which you move is irksome, and you would seek a wider range. But, alas ! hapless child, mistaken child, you wish for that which, could you obtain it, would involve you in a long and dismal train of evils ; for never, never expect to find peace or happiness in the world ! It is in the shade, ’tis in scenes like these, where all is calm, peaceful, tranquil,—where iniquity of soul, where boisterous passions never reign ; ’tis in scenes such as these alone that happiness will be yours,—in the haunts of the world never ; there misery but awaits you. Remember him, from whose grasp our awful summons rescued you. Beware ! Beware of mankind !”

The venerable apparition vanished ; but the last words he uttered still vibrated on Rosilia’s ear. They appeared before her wondering sight in hues of burnished gold. Every letter was distinct, and brilliant rays diffused from each. She awoke re-

peating the prophetic warning. She again sought repose, but in vain ; desiring the approach of morning, she availed herself of its earliest dawn to rise.

She recollected that her sister was to accompany her aunt to town, and had promised to come as soon as she arrived to see them. The absence of a few weeks had appeared long, and each sister rejoiced at being afforded an opportunity of meeting.

It was upon a day that some indispensable church duties had called Philimore into the city to the parish in which he officiated, and Oriana had promised by letter to give him the interview at the house of their mutual friend, Miss Morris, where, attended by Rosilia, she repaired ; after which but a short interval ensued, when the rain began to fall in torrents, accompanied by vivid flashes of lightning and peels of thunder, and continued with very little intermission.

“ Will Philimore come ? ” exclaimed Oriana : “ surely he will not brave such tempestuous weather as this to see me ? Were I however in his place no power on earth would detain me . ”

Such was the rambling of her thoughts, refusing comfort either from her friend or her sister, fearing every moment to be summoned by the arrival

of her aunt's carriage to convey her back to the park.

At length her strained sight in watching caught a distant object, wrapped in a large coat, and walking with a hurried step.

“’Tis he, ’tis he !” she cried ; “ he comes ! Ah, wherefore has he ventured to expose himself !”

Breathless with agitation she paced the apartment ; he entered, and she flew to meet him. To her first emotions of joy, an exclamation of dismay escaped her upon beholding his altered looks.

Borne down by the force of contending feelings, Philimore's health had languished since the period of her absence, and this he had not communicated to her in his letters, fearing to disturb her mind by exciting painful feelings of anxiety for him. In the meeting now afforded him, though he sought to quiet her apprehensions, yet he could not conceal from himself that the germ of consumption had already taken root in his frame. Giving himself to the delight and satisfaction of seeing one so long and tenderly beloved, he forgot, in hastening his coming, how much he had been exposed to the inclemency of the weather.

His home being but next door, he might conveniently have disencumbered himself of his wet apparel ; but yet, one moment lost so precious to

him—when might he enjoy again the company of her who had been ever ready to sacrifice for him all earthly considerations whatever! Even though the ardour of passion might abate, friendship, gratitude, or recollection of the past, would bind him to her for ever!

Rosilia, in a low voice, intimated to Miss Morris, that the weather having greatly brightened, her mother doubtless was expecting them at home, and they ought to avail themselves of the occasion to depart. Philimore's attentive ear caught the sound, an overpowering sadness seized him, and a cold shivering, of which he was the more sensible, succeeding to that feverish heat before pervading his system.

A servant entered; she had been sent from Portland Place to conduct the sisters home. Philimore would have accompanied them, but felt it would be imprudent to do so; an aching pain throbbled at his temples, a sort of prophetic fear stole over him, something whispered, Thy Oriana leaves thee for ever! He tried to dissipate so gloomy a foreboding, but it still pursued him. He raised her hand to his beating heart, and to his fervent lips, which seemed to seal a last adieu! Oriana also, on her part mournfully impressed, re-echoed his parting tones of sadness; impelled to

leave him, she disappeared; and with her vanished every sense to Philimore of former happiness.

Miserable and desponding he returned to his home; while Oriana, in again taking leave of her family, was borne back in her aunt's equipage to the splendours of the Park.

CHAPTER XXII.

“..... Can it be,
That modesty may more betray our sense,
Than woman’s lightness?”

SHAKSPEARE.

BEFORE we proceed in the course of our narrative we will digress awhile to give some account of Harcourt, who, though still young, had arrived to the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel. His property was considerable, and his family of high extraction.

Heartily tired of his profession, in the career of which he had met with various hardships, he had gladly dropped the military title, awaiting but an opportunity of resigning his commission and the profession of arms altogether; having been led to embrace it merely by the desire of his friends, who had supposed that the business, gaiety, and change of scene attendant upon a military life, might conduce to dissipate that thoughtful abstraction of mind to which they were inclined to think he was constitutionally subject. He had become weary of a pursuit which gave him little

leisure for contemplation, and which often involved much languor, regret, and disappointment, and resolved to devote the rest of his days to the pursuits of literature; for to his intervals of melancholy, possessing genius, he was equally subject to the high and lofty flights of a vigorous fancy.

It was at this period that, of sketching plans for the future occupation of his time, upon his having withdrawn to a retired walk in Kensington Gardens, he beheld Rosilia. How warmly he became captivated we have already seen. Had his passion been crowned with success, he might possibly have arrived at that enviable summit of happiness his imagination had often pictured, but which, in his hours of depression, he had fatally foreboded never would be his.

After the accident his curriole had met with, leaving it in the hands of his servant to get repaired, the one sole idea preponderating over his mind was to fly the spot, to fly immediately from a place, where, did he remain, he might feel impelled to force himself a second time into the presence of her whom his prolific fancy had endowed with such transcendant and eminent attraction. To fly, where the sound could never reach his ears that Rosilia De Brooke had become the

wife of another. "And can it be possible," thought he, "that the son of her to whom I spoke can be destined to become so happy a man. Can he be worthy of her? I much doubt it, for who on earth can be worthy of such an angel!"

In this untoward event that had occurred to him, his reigning, strong disposition to melancholy returned with increased force, so as to cause him to suppose his earthly happiness blasted for ever. All future events were alike indifferent to him: "Fate," he exclaimed, "do with me what you please; dispose of me and my fortunes, for indeed I seem marked out to be thy sport and victim!"

Thus, ever in the extremes of happiness or grief, he sunk into one of his habitual fits of gloom and despair: when an order was issued, stating that all officers absent from such and such regiments were immediately to repair to head quarters, there to hold themselves in readiness to embark for foreign service. Not having yet sold out, Harcourt could not think of leaving the army at such a critical juncture; voluntarily therefore, and without hesitation, he submitted to the necessity of rejoining his regiment. Time might heal the recent wound his heart had received; but whether or not, he left England frustrated in his pursuits

and plans, little suspecting that he had been made the dupe of an artful and designing woman.

While Harcourt had been thus unsuccessful in gaining access to Rosilia, it happened that Sir Howard Sinclair did so without difficulty. In combining his schemes for this purpose, his first object was to obtain an introduction to the General, which, from his extensive acquaintance, he found no difficulty in accomplishing. An exchange of cards being the result, the next step of Sir Howard, on a better acquaintance, was to prevail on the General to form one amongst a small party of gentlemen he had invited to dine with him; but which the General, though sensible of the attention paid him, politely declined, under the plea of not wishing to break through the rules he had established of not accepting invitations unaccompanied by his wife and daughter.

Rather than be discomforted by this failure of ready invention, Sir Howard turned it to his profit, by resolving to form amongst his more particular friends a party, in which he could, with all seeming propriety, invite Mrs. De Brooke and Rosilia to accompany the General, whose objection to leaving home being thus obviated, might yield a willing assent. Not long recovered from an attack of indisposition Sir Howard had brought

upon himself by irregular hours and the over-indulgences of fashionable life, being still convalescent, for the benefit of living quiet and of breathing purer air than the centre of the town could afford, he had taken lodgings in the vicinity of Portland Place.

Pleased with the ease, suavity, and facetious humour of the Baronet, the General failed not to call at his lodgings, when Sir Howard seizing an occasion remarked, that he had once the honour of an introduction to his daughter—it was at Sir Charles and Lady Valpée's—and should esteem himself happy upon an occasion of renewing it, and, at the same time, of becoming known to his Lady, adding, “I am engaged to-morrow on a water excursion up the Thames; will you do me, General, the favour of accompanying me? and perhaps—but I can scarcely allow myself to hope that Mrs. and Miss De Brooke will join our party, but if—they—and you can be prevailed upon to favour us, General, your company will be a great acquisition to the party.”

Whilst uttering these scattered words, concealing by an outward complacency the strong interest he felt in the General's acquiescence, he awaited with impatience his reply.

“My dear Sir Howard,” the General said,

pleased with such a mark of politeness, "I am always gratified, as an old family man, to partake of pleasures in which my wife and daughter share, and therefore willingly, in behalf of myself and them, accept the invitation," promising, at the same time, to be with him at the place and hour appointed the following morning.

In concurrence with the advice of Mrs. Herbert, ever since the affair of Mr. Harcourt, and the fear of again meeting him, Rosilia had confined herself to the house, except, indeed, when the necessity of air and exercise induced her to walk with either, or both her parents, in some adjacent nursery-gardens. This extreme seclusion, voluntarily imposed upon herself, caused her parents to rejoice that the excursion proposed by Sir Howard would open to her some recreation—aware how much the taste of Rosilia inclined to such diversions, in preference to those more splendid the town afforded.

Formed to indulge in the most exquisite sensations of delight, she was ever quickly alive to those of which youth, health and innocence allowed her to partake. Accustomed to an invariable monotony of existence, unlike those satiated by continual indulgence, the most simple pleasures gave zest to Rosilia, and she then, when her father announced the engagement he had made, looked

forward to the coming of the morning with joyful expectation.

Scarcely had the morning dawned, than Rosilia, awaking from sleep, beheld a cloudless sky—the welcome signal of a day of amusement. Simply arrayed, let us behold her at the water's side—the company assembled—the various barges just in readiness to launch down the smooth and glassy river. Of all the party, Sir Howard alone is missing; the boatmen give the summons—the tide admits not of delay; the gentlemen hand the ladies to their seats; General De Brooke is requested to do the same, but he declines: he feels himself embarrassed; he is a stranger, and depended on Sir Howard for introduction, who does not appear.

Giving an arm to Mrs. De Brooke and his daughter, they turn towards home. The gay group have departed. The boats are floating upon the water,—the splashing of the oars are drowned by the full and lively peal, the concord of harmonious tones resounding from the band of musicians which form the rear; the sun's rays play upon the rippled surface. Rosilia no longer views the jocund scene; like everything else that ever promised pleasure, it has vanished; calm, dejected and silent, she continues with her parents to move towards home.

When on a sudden, driving his curricule in full

speed, Sir Howard appears ; reining in his horses, he stops, upon reaching and recognizing the General. He begs a thousand pardons ; he has been detained on account of a friend, upon whom he had been appointed to call, in the previous promise given of his joining the party, but who, from some unexpected occurrence, has been prevented fulfilling his engagement. Giving the reins to his servant, Sir Howard leaped with agility from his seat, and, in the next instant, the General introduced Mrs. De Brooke and Rosilia.

A veil partly concealed the features of Rosilia ; nevertheless, he fixed upon her a look of intense scrutiny, and, in a sort of under voice, he said something of having before had that honour ; when the scene between Captain Douglas and himself, at Sir Charles's Lodge, rushed rapidly over her memory. Rosilia had never known to what degree Sir Howard had been implicated in that affair ; some confused ideas, however, crossing her recollection, as to the cause of her having fainted, she sought to shun his gaze,—when casting his eyes downwards, and after an interval of silence, equally expressive on the part of either, turning himself suddenly about, he proposed to the General immediately following the party, to which the General consenting, Sir Howard stepped forward to lend

his assistance to Mrs. De Brooke, while the General took charge of his daughter.

Seated in a small boat, the tide favourable, in the space of half an hour they found themselves within sight of the party, which as they hailed and the signal was returned, they rested leisurely on their oars until they drew near, and one of the barges received them. Cordial greetings were given by most of the party upon the arrival of Sir Howard, as also rejoicings on account of the agreeable addition he had brought with him. They again continued their course, and the sound of music again exhilarates Rosilia.

Sir Howard, by the side of Mrs. De Brooke, paid her (according to the finesse of worldly men, who often court the mother for the sake of the daughter) his exclusive attention; which leaving Rosilia at liberty, her thoughts could take that range such as the various pleasing objects of nature blooming around her might excite; the sweet effects of early spring, the verdant fields that lined the river, the young hedge-rows and early blossoms. Though unperceived by her, the eye of Sir Howard often wandered towards her. He was anxious to converse with her. He thought of the charm he had experienced in doing so, even when her mind might have been supposed less

cultivated than at the present ; and from which he had received a summons so abrupt as that given by the jealous, furious, and enraged Douglas ! His thoughts, from a natural coincidence, reverted to Harcourt,—another flighty and impetuous spirit, thought he ; for himself he was cool and determined, intrepid and daring ; and, whilst he drew the comparison in his own favour at the expense of the others, he thought, at the same time, how enviable was his situation, how rejoiced would each have been to have found himself placed in so near proximity to an object affecting him so powerfully !

Thus musing, he instinctively approached her. Modulating, as was usual to him, the tones of his voice into a perfect softness, he addressed her several questions ; he exerted himself to please her, passing lightly, with infinite address, from subject to subject. Sir Howard was by nature volatile, but in his intercourse with life, he had acquired sophistry and the art of moulding his words and actions to whatever shape he chose ; and could at pleasure, in assimilating with the taste of those he conversed with, become either gay, winning, and seductive, or serious, rational, and reflective. The latter qualities he was aware would best recommend him to Rosilia.

“How delightful,” said she, “is nature in this sweet season of spring, when every object looks so fresh and green!”

“They seem truly to smile upon us,” returned Sir Howard, “and are enchanting to the eye of taste. We have every reason to congratulate ourselves when no longer bending under the sway of hoary-headed winter—chilled as we are by his presence, trembling and shaking with his cold. I rejoice to bask in the genial ray of beauty,” his eye, with expression, resting on Rosilia; “and never did I enjoy such happy sunshine more than now.”

“The horizon is glowing,” added she; “Phœbus never seemed to shine more brightly; nevertheless, the lawns, the valleys, the soft foliage of the trees, the cows and sheep as they peaceably graze in the rich meadow—even the humble primroses and violets which bloom along the banks as we pass them by—more particularly charm my attention, because all things of every kind, animate and inanimate, seem to be rejoicing in the early spring.”

“To the refined and contemplative mind,” said Sir Howard, “every observation is attended with delight and pleasure. Folly and ignorance stalk abroad, as if blindfold, unheeding the beauties scattered in profusion around them.”

“It is much to be lamented,” replied Rosilia,

“that there are any so thoughtless as to explore the country, without, at the same time, exploring or discerning the wonders of nature. Creation, at every step we tread, seems ever varied and new; the grass which springs up under our feet, flowers mingling their infinite diversity of tints, the dew-drops which refresh them and sparkle amongst them like diamonds, the reviving perfumes we breathe, the millions on millions of trees, shrubs, and flowers,—and none of these, not even a blade of grass, or herb, or leaf, atoms as they appear, could be useful, or please, unless created by Infinite Wisdom, from whom they receive form, verdure, and life.”

Rosilia paused; and charmed as was the attention of Sir Howard, he preserved silence, hoping she would be led to renew her remarks; but not doing so, he continued the subject: “How gratified,” said he, “will be the owners of these lands that lie before us, when the fruits of their toils ripen, and when their senses are not only regaled, but with glad hands they reap their treasures!”

“The branches of their luxuriant orchards are laden with buds and blossoms,” added Rosilia, “and it will not be many months before these will expand into fruit. A tree thus adorned, I have been instructed, has been not unaptly compared

by the ancients to man, and thus we are taught a lesson of wisdom, leading even to subjects divine."

"Allow me to catechize you," said Sir Howard, fixing on her a doubting yet penetrating eye, "that I may see fully illustrated this emblematical knowledge, novel I must confess in the present age, yet not so possibly in a former one; and if your comparison is plausible, I may for the future adopt you for my fair and tutelar angel: and first, with respect to the trees having their roots fixed in the earth—what is thence implied?"

"That man dwells below from his birth," answered Rosilia, "and that by nature his views have an earthly tendency."

"And what by the branches aspiring upwards?" again asked Sir Howard.

"That man looks up to a higher world."

"Then the branches which extend around?" continued he.

"So man, in his utility to the human race, extends his power of doing good to his neighbour—no matter whether friend or foe."

"Then the leaves," added Sir Howard, "how numberless are they to be found!"

"They may bring home to our view," returned she, "the numberless truths and sciences which by degrees we may cultivate if we choose."

"Let us come to the fruits of autumn bearing

down the boughs," exclaimed Sir Howard with vivacity; "and here finish my queries."

"May they not expressively mean," said Rosilia, with equal animation, "the virtues,—such the delightful, the resplendent fruit mankind may bear, shining bright in the autumn of life?"

"Excellent, admirable moralist!" again exclaimed Sir Howard.

"Say rather," returned she, smiling, "I have said my catechism well. Perhaps you are not aware that my maternal grandfather was in the Church, and that some of his lessons of wisdom have descended to me in right of inheritance; and also that I have a learned friend of the same profession and opinions, a neighbour in the country."

The insinuating mildness of Sir Howard's accents, the sensible topics he discussed in the course of the conversation which followed, were undoubtedly calculated, for the time, to flatter, please, and win upon Rosilia's attention, who, in her turn, expressed herself with unaffected ease, combined with an effusion of intelligence, a glow of imagery, a fervour of sentiment—not only breathed in language, but transmitted from eyes so full of alternately pensive interest, brilliancy, and charm, that Sir Howard, had he been even less infatuated, might have still acknowledged that, notwithstanding her comparatively juvenile understanding, few

of her sex could enter into the lists of conversation with her, or like her exhibit the exhaustless treasures of refinement and culture, in association with such lovely and truly feminine graces.

It was his custom to carry, as a pocket companion, a small edition of some favourite author, which he seldom looked into, excepting when desirous of shining as a man gifted with taste and intellectual endowment. Thomson's Seasons happened to be the volume on this occasion, and which, as applicable in some of its parts to the remarks that had passed, he opened; and with apt quotations, delivered with the precision of one who had made oratory his study, occupied the time until the barge arrived at its destination.

Sir Howard sprang to shore with the view of assisting Rosilia, who, not perceiving his design, was in the act of precipitating her light and agile person from the barge. Bending one knee to the earth, Sir Howard extended his arms; too late to avoid it, she was caught within them, but instantly disentangled herself. " 'Twas dangerous, upon my life!" exclaimed Sir Howard; "'pon my soul, such a leap was venturesome in the extreme."

As the gentle but affrighted dove no sooner is set free than it adjusts its silken plumage and wings its flight—so Rosilia, with perturbed bosom, was no sooner disengaged than she drew her flow-

ing scarf more closely around her, and screening herself from observation by the gathered folds of her veil, mixed amongst the ladies, and sought the support of her father's arm.

Sir Howard felt the silent rebuke, and attempted not to follow, but gazed after her with a sentiment of surprise and rapture !

It was but a short walk to the house where the company assembled, usually frequented by such parties. An elegant collation was soon in readiness, of which they partook with that festivity attendant upon meetings so little ceremonious.

The latter part of the day past as agreeably as the former, until the General, as the elder of the party, proposed returning.

Rosilia, for the remainder of the evening, apparently claimed no further attention from Sir Howard, who seemed to prefer chatting away the interval with the married ladies, but more especially with Mrs. De Brooke.

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.