

TALES OF TO-DAY.

BY

MRS. ISAACS,

AUTHOR OF

“ARIEL”—“ELLA ST. LAURENCE”—

“WANDERINGS OF FANCY”—

&c. &c. &c.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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CONTAINING

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THE SISTERS.

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JULIET.

A TALE.

CHAP. XIV.

THE TRAVELLER IN THE MOUNTAINS.

IT was about this period, that a young English stranger, in travelling through France, quitted a party, with whom he was making a continental tour, to spend a few days among the romantic scenery of the Pyrenean mountains, and gratify a desire he had long possessed, to wander alone in their recesses, and uninterruptedly to contemplate the wonders of nature in this rocky and secluded region. Attended

only by his servant, he procured accommodation at an inn, or rather hut, at the foot of the mountains, and amused himself, for several days, in strolling over a vast ridge, which overlooked a winding branch of the river, and sketching with his pencil the scenery around.

One part of the landscape he had chosen, particularly delighted him. It presented to the eye a woody glen, almost encircled by rocks, which loftily reared their stupendous heads far above the tops of the tallest trees; and on their summit, the high towers of an ancient building seemed, as the astonished traveller cast up his aching eyes towards it, to nod over the valley below. The walls seemed to arise from the rugged precipice which overhung the glen, rendering it, on that side, wholly inaccessible. This edifice, which, as far as he could judge from the distant view he could procure, appeared to have been formerly very magnificent, was the prominent feature in the first sketch he

drew ; and he began to meditate an excursion to a part of the mountain, where he could more plainly discern its form and situation.

As well as he could understand, by the information he received from the wretched inhabitants of the inn where he had taken up his abode; he found this must be the business of more than one day. Providing himself, therefore, with a bag of provisions, and properly accoutred for his excursion, he left his servant at the cottage, and plunged alone into the woody labyrinths of the Pyrenees, directing his steps according to his own idea of the situation of the building he had remarked, which was but little assisted by the limited knowledge of the poor peasant who inhabited his little inn.

His first day's adventures procured him but small satisfaction: Instead of drawing nearer to the object of his search, it seemed to recede from his view ; and the evening closed in, and left him amidst these awful

solitudes, uncertain where to direct his steps. Chance befriended him at length, and conducted him to a cave, formed by

“ Nature’s cunning hand,”

in the solid rock ; and here, making a bed of a part of his clothes, he determined to pass the night. Unaccustomed to hardships, his slumbers were not wholly uninterrupted, and, at an early hour of the morning, he prepared to renew his wanderings.

The rising sun, though not an object entirely new to him, had never appeared to his eye with such splendour before ; and he contemplated its glories while he partook of some of his provisions, which, though they consisted simply of bread and dried fruits, were to him a delicious repast. When he had finished his frugal meal, he again set forward ; and after a long stroll, during which the day wore fast away, he suddenly descried the clustering towers of the castle he had been so desirous to behold, much nearer to him

than they had yet appeared. Pleased with a prospect of at length attaining the object of his search, he paused a moment, to consider which path he should now pursue, when suddenly the barking of a dog, apparently at some distance, broke on the awful silence around. He listened, and distinctly heard it repeated.

The idea of beholding a human being in this vast solitude, and of procuring shelter for the night, at some hut amid these wilds, was so soothing to his mind, that he seemed at once to forget his fatigue, and, hastening forward, directed his steps, as nearly as he could, the way from which the sound seemed to proceed. It evidently became more distinct, and he could now discover, that it proceeded from behind a vast rock, which arose in tufted declivities at a little distance. To climb this mountainous barrier, seemed now the only alternative; and, naturally active both in mind and body, he hesitated no longer, but with infinite diffi-

culty, and some fatigue, attained the summit. His astonishment, at reaching the height, was beyond all description. A prospect of the mountain-stream was presented to his view, majestically winding its way through the valley below. At some distance, the high spires of the building seemed to raise their lofty heads to the clouds; and below the rock on which he stood, and on the summit of another, which was overgrown with moss and ivy, he saw a rustic seat, placed in a small recess, excavated from the solid rock, and so situated as to command a full view of the beautiful and varied prospect around.

In the act of emerging from this retreat, he beheld a figure which drew all his attention. It was a female, habited in deep mourning; a long veil concealed her face, and she was intent on contemplating the scenes around. Unwilling to lose an opportunity of ascertaining how far he was from the habitations of men, the young

traveller contrived to descend the rock in that part, in which it was the least dangerous; though even there it was nearly perpendicular; and hanging by its jutting crags in his descent, he reached a level part, from whence, by a small circuit, he came within view of the stranger, whom he immediately addressed; and after apologizing for the liberty, informed her, that he was bewildered amidst the wilds of the mountains, and that having spent one night in a cave at some distance, he was anxious to attain a shelter ere another overtook him, and requested she would favour him with directions to the nearest cottage or hamlet.

Gracefully, and in a voice of peculiar sweetness, she answered—"I fear there is no place, within some leagues, where you could, with any prospect of comfort, seek an asylum for the night, if I except the Chateau before you, and my own temporary residence. At the latter, if you

will follow me, I will ensure you a welcome, if not a costly reception."

He accepted her offer with gratitude ; and the stranger, an interesting woman, just past the bloom of early youth, led the way, by a mountain path, intricate and winding, towards a dell, which, from one of the commanding stations he had chosen to view the prospects around, the traveller had particularly noticed. She appeared perfectly acquainted with the spot ; and when he spoke of his good fortune in meeting such a guide, she answered—

“ The chance is really singular. I am, like you, a traveller ; and though reared from earliest infancy in these scenes, I have to-day beheld them, for the first time, after an absence of twelve years.—The sunny eve of life's happiest day, has been brought afresh to my memory, while I gazed on every well-known rock and valley ; and I was indulging in the melancholy luxury of retrospection, when your appearance recalled me from my mental

flight, and brought me back to sober reality."

"To whom does that castellated building, so much resembling a monastery, belong?" asked her companion.

"It is the ancient Chateau of the Brisac family," she answered. "The present representative is past his youth, and, amidst the revolutionary jar which has agitated this unhappy kingdom, has lost great part of his possessions. This remote Chateau seems to have escaped the wreck; and since peace has once more enabled some of the banished nobility to revisit the land of their birth, it appears that he is returned to France; for to-day I heard, that he had recently arrived at his paternal seat."

She sighed deeply as she spoke, and turning back, seemed to gaze steadfastly on the towers of the castle. A light breeze waved the veil from her face, and the traveller saw the traces of tears on her cheek. She clasped her hands almost in agony,

and drawing her veil closer round her, again proceeded on their way.

Between two impending rocks, and on the summit of another, suspended as if it grew on the narrow cliff that supported it, stood a small insulated dwelling, it could not be called a cottage, nor did the Englishman ever recollect to have seen an habitation that resembled it. Like the eiry of the Eagle, it seemed at the first glance to be perched midway between the earth and sky. Wholly independent of the former or its inhabitants, it appeared little calculated for the asylum of any of the human race. Some hardy shrubs of the mountain growth clung to the exterior, and left a very small part of the stone of which the walls were composed visible, and the enormous rock that projected above it formed a ponderous and durable roof.—The Lady walked forward and unclosing the low door ushered the traveller into a small but neat apartment where a

venerable female appeared engaged in some domestic avocation.

“ I bring you a visitor my good nurse,” said the Lady, and then relating her encounter, requested her to bring some refreshments of which the young stranger partook with an appetite which the mountain air had rendered tolerably keen. No other person appeared till the stranger having finished his repast, was conversing with his two hospitable entertainers, who had prepared a bed for him, when suddenly a low knocking was heard at the door, and the nurse hastened to open it, admitted an old man, whose white hair and benignant look forcibly drew the attention of the unknown. He approached the younger female with looks of tender respect.

“ What news do you bring me, good Jaques ;” said she, “ I am anxious to know whether you have made any farther discovery.”

“ I have, dear Lady,” he answered, “ and one that induces me to hope your

benevolent purposes may yet be fulfilled." He then entered into a detail, in which to his great surprise, the young traveller found himself considerably interested, and by which he was led to postpone his intended departure on the morrow, in order to yield his assistance to the plans of his interesting new friend. The mystery of these plans will be shortly unravelled—

* * * * *

A month had elapsed and the Count de Brisac and his friend were still absent from the Chateau. Often were the long tried spirits of Juliet depressed, more than she dared to acknowledge to Lydia, who could not emulate her courage and forbearance, though she never ceased praising both. Accustomed to unrestrained liberty, confinement grew more and more irksome; and it soon became her amusement to elude the vigilance of old Susan, glide past her when she opened the door of the room and after flying about

the long galleries and passages, return again to her cage, as she called it.

Susan had premitted them, occasionally, an hour's walk in the gallery adjoining their chamber; but even this, she said, was infringing on the rules laid down by the Count, for her treatment of her guests.

When Lydia had quite recovered her health, and she became enured to seclusion, her naturally exuberant spirits seemed once more restored, and though not so wild as formerly, she often forced a smile from the pale countenance of Juliet: at the trouble she took to invent entertainment for herself.

The account Susan had given them of the Lady Angela de Busac, had interested them both, and Lydia would ask innumerable questions respecting her; but they could learn little in addition to what they had already heard, except, that she had inhabited a small apartment in one of the towers, which always went by her

name, where she was sitting, when forced to quit the Chateau for the Convent, and since it had remained uninhabited—

“ Oh you must let us see the tower,” said Lydia.

“ No no,” said Susan, “ I never go there, it has hardly been opened since poor Lady Angela left it; and the Count would be very angry if he knew any person visited it.”

“ Well,” said Lydia, “ then I must find it out myself,” and away she flew in spite of Susan’s remonstrances and intreaties; but she had imbibed an aversion to the old woman, and delighted in annoying her, by exploring her way about the Chateau. She returned unsuccessful, though she declared, she had ran up all the staircases she could see, and had been frightened. lest she had quite lost herself more than once. “ Besides,” said she, “ the doors creaked and made such a horrible noise, and the rats made no ceremony of crossing one’s path, in all direc-

tions, so that I dared proceed no farther. Now, another day I'll try if I can succeed better."

Susan was extremely angry at her resistance, to her authority; but when she attempted to remonstrate with her, Lydia always stopped her short—

"Are you not afraid of ghosts Susan," said she, "in this dreadful place?"

"No no," returned Susan, "I have lived here many a year, and never seen any thing worse than myself."

"No fear of that I think." said Lydia, "What do you mean?" asked Susan.

"That you must be a very wicked old being," answered Lydia, "to connive at confining those who have never injured you; and I only wonder that you do not meet ghosts at every turn and corner, in every gallery, passage, corridor, and staircase of this vile place, to punish you for your sins."

Little as Juliet was disposed for mirth, the unceasing endeavours of Lydia, which

were constantly exerted for her amusement; her wild tricks and inventions to tease old Susan, and still untamed vivacity, often drew from her involuntary smiles. Positive as had been the injunctions Susan had received to confine her charges, and well as she was inclined to obey them, she found it utterly impossible to subdue Lydia, or to keep her under control.

In spite of her old guardians, she continually contrived to escape from their apartment, and find entertainment in exploring the Chateau.—One day she pretended to be particularly civil and docile to Susan, who, deceived, by her quietly keeping her seat, and continuing her work when she entered, was not as usual careful to fasten the door after her, which Lydia no sooner perceived, than springing past her she said;

“ I must take a walk, so entertain Miss Montcith till I return, my dear amiable Susan,” and darting out of the room, was down the long passage and out of sight in

“There,” said the old woman, “she is off again, and now shall I have to ramble over the Chateau for an hour before I can find her.”

She disappeared, and had been gone nearly an hour when Lydia returned.

“I cheated the old woman famously,” said she, “and I have made a fine discovery for you, for I have found out Angela’s tower, it is a very curious place, and we will take the first opportunity of locking the old Lady in and visiting it.”

“Indeed my dear Lydia,” said Juliet “I shall not take any such means to procure a sight of it, much as I am interested in the fate of Lady Angela, I cannot think it right to ill-treat, a poor creature who by acting as she has hitherto done, is only fulfilling her duty to her employer.”

“Well, you may be as scrupulous as you please,” said Lydia, “but whenever I can get out, I shall make no ceremony of doing it, and I know you would be delighted with Angela’s tower: it has such a

view, and there are her lute, and her books, and writings, and drawings, and all sorts of things, left just as they were, when she disappeared, for nobody has dared to touch them."

Juliet had certainly felt uncommonly interested in the fate of this poor victim to ambition, and she was really desirous to visit the town; but the necessity of restraining Lydia, and the fear of setting her a wrong example, forbade her indulging her inclinations, till a favourable opportunity occurred.

CHAP. XV.

ANGELA'S TOWER.

LYDIA at length accomplished her wish of taking Juliet to see the tower, which had been the melancholy asylum of the deserted Lady Angela de Brisac. Susan, who, for some latent reason, which was beyond their discovery, seemed suddenly to become less strict, and more indulgent to them, yielded at length to their solicitations, and gave them the keys of a range of apartments, which led immediately to the tower; but these rooms, in one wing of the Chateau, were so completely separated from the rest of the building, and the doors that divided them from the main

body of the edifice were so well secured, that she knew she had nothing to fear from her permission. The tower which contained the apartments dedicated to the use of the Lady Angela, was at the extremity of the western side, and overlooked a beautiful and romantic part of the Pyrenees.

A vale in fine cultivation was surmounted by a bold and rugged mountain, and from the midst of a projecting rock, a rushing cataract, with a loud and monotonous sound, joined its waters with the winding stream that meandered its rocky course through the cliffs, to the right.

The interior of the tower was in itself nothing remarkable, and was probably selected by the Lady Angela, for the scene of her retirement, from its commanding situation, and the picturesque view it presented; but its attractions to Juliet, consisted in the relics, left of its late unfortunate resident. Her lute and books; the latter, some French and Italian authors, were on a table, and the whole appearance of the

apartment declared it to be in the same state in which it was left, at the Lady Angela's departure. A small escritoir excited the curiosity of Lydia, and she proceeded to examine its contents, and while Juliet was admiring the prospect from the windows, her eye rested alternately on the mountains, the cataract, and the stream; but her thoughts swiftly fled beyond them, to the loved shores of Britain, and were hovering over far distant scenes, when she was interrupted by an exclamation from Lydia, who had discovered a parcel of loose papers, written in a female hand, which she was trying to decypher. They promised some amusement, and though chiefly in French or Italian, they were delighted to find some fragments of poetry in English.

Collecting them all, Juliet proposed that they should convey them to their own apartment, where, as the evening proved cold and stormy, Susan indulged them with a comfortable fire; and seated

by its blaze, they beguiled the hours by perusing their new-found treasure.

Throughout those wild and incorrect compositions, there was evidence of a depressed state of mind, very uncommon in the happy season of youth; but the forlorn situation of *Angela*, and the early death of her mother, together, with her dislike to the line of life marked out for her, had created a disposition to reflect, which joined to an active, though uncultivated genius, had led her to seek amusement and occupation in poetic effusions, that beguiled the long solitary hours unenlivened by society, or uncheered by the participation of friendship.

The first paper they opened seemed a fragment of a sort of journal—it contained these words—

“ In the seclusion of these rocks and mountains, where shall the hapless *Angela* seek a friend that will commiserate her destiny, and pour the healing balm of consolation into a wounded mind? Con-

doomed to a life of Monastic retirement, while her heart pants for liberty, to enjoy the numerous blessings which nature, with a bountiful hand, has showered on this beautiful world;—to contemplate unconfin'd, the earth and its fair productions—to listen to the happy sounds of freedom and joy, which heaven gives even irrational beings the power of uttering. Yet all this is denied me, and a short fleeting period is allowed me to prepare for that awful moment, when I am to be severed even from hope, the wretches' last resource. To what distant banishment has fate conducted the only one interested in the doom of the unfortunate Angela.— Ah, De Neville! kind friend! what will be thy feelings, when thou hearest of her sacrifice, when thou art informed that she was dragged to the altar, a living victim to the ambition of her family;—why am I not permitted to seek my own subsistence; cheerfully would I submit to labour might I but be suffered still to enjoy the

blessing of freedom, to breathe the pure air of my native mountains, to inhale the first morning breeze, to watch the glorious sun in its progress, to mark the gradual approach of twilight over the rocks, and more than all, to view the mild orb of night, when it illumines the heavens, and gladdens even the forlorn and deserted Angela, with its soft and lovely beams; Oh, why am I not allowed to enjoy all these, enhanced by liberty; sweetest liberty!

* * * * *

The hour approaches, the dreaded hour. Every amusement has now lost its relish, all but thou sweet lute! dear soother of my lonely hours!"

Within the castle's deep recess,
 Concealed from ev'ry human eye
 The victim of unsought distress,
 Poor Angela is doomed to sigh.

Yet even here the lute's soft tone
 Can sooth the anguish of despair
 And tho' condemn'd to pine alone
 There is an ear that hears her prayer.

There is an eye that notes her tears,
A voice that bids her sorrow cease,
With heav'nly hopes dispels her fears,
And promises eternal peace.

Virtues bright influence shines serene,
E'en where fell sorrow marks the day,
And tho' my thoughts with misery teem,
My soothing lute's the sweet allay.

Sweet soother of my lonely hours !
Thy plaintive notes beguile my woe,
And tho' the darkening prospect lows,
Thy gentle accents still shall flow.

Shall praise that hand, whose mighty power
Can heal the deeply wounded mind,
Can brighten e'en this dreary tower,
And make the wayward heart resign'd.

The next contained some lines, probably suggested in one of her solitary evening rambles, by that fond recollection of her mother, which still pursued her.—Devotedly attached to her insulated parent; in solitude, was her remembrance cherished, and her loss deplored by the

young and enthusiastic Angela. This with many other particulars, they learned from Susan.

When day's fair light fades in the west,
And dewy eve asserts her reign,
Then twilight, in her sable vest,
The moon, and all her glittering train,
Throw o'er the mind that pensive cast
That leads to ponder o'er the past.

Sweet meditation! meek eyed maid!
Her sober power now assumes,
When evening lends her gentle aid,
And starry night her sway resumes.
Then o'er scenes past, in pensive mood,
Faithful memory loves to brood.

With fond delight recalls those days,
A mother's tenderness adorn'd,
Whose virtues, far beyond all praise,
Live in the heart her goodness form'd.
And o'er her loss in pensive mood,
Faithful memory loves to brood.

From her Mother, Lady Angela had early obtained a perfect knowledge of the

Juliet, haunted with alarms she could not repress, felt no inclination for repose.

Susan placed every thing in order, and then, taking a light, carried it into the tower chamber, where she desired it might remain burning. Juliet wondered at this circumstance, but Susan gave no reason for it; and the former noticed, that she went to the small turret window, looked anxiously from it, and then placed the light so, that it might be distinctly seen from the casement; then returning into the other room, she looked at the sleeping Lydia, and then at Juliet.

“ God preserve you, Lady,” said she. “ I wish I dared say more.” And as she left the room, she touched the brass handle of a small door, which appeared like that of a closet; it snapped, as if a spring had given way; but Susan did not notice it, and passed on. She fastened them, as usual, into their chamber, and Juliet listened to her receding steps, till her heart seemed to die within her.

Lydia continued in a profound slumber. No sounds from the inhabited part of the Chateau could reach them, and all was silent, save the occasional roar of the now subsiding tempest, which often shook the mouldering turret; and the old casements, which moved by the blast, seemed almost falling from their feeble support.

Pondering on Susan's singular manner and last words, she attempted to unclose the small door which she had seen her touch, concluding she had fastened it; but, to her surprise, found it opened on the top of a spiral staircase, which seemed to wind down the tower. Susan then had unfastened the spring.

“What could be her motive?” Juliet shuddered, as the thought occurred, that it might have been done to give entrance to midnight visitors. She tried to reclose the spring, but her efforts were ineffectual, and her terrors momentarily increased. Midnight sounded, and yet she could not resolve to retire. The light in the turret,

and the unfastened door of the staircase, were both circumstances to create alarm, sufficient to banish sleep; and she paced, in silent tremor, the boundaries of the chamber, now watching her still sleeping companion, and now pausing to listen, in dread and expectation of, she knew not what.

The wind, which for the last hour had howled mournfully among some mountain trees, that grew on this side of the Chateau, had now ceased, and only the distant rushing of the cataract broke the profound silence, when suddenly she fancied she could distinguish a gentle and cautious step.

She scarcely breathed, so profound was her attention; but the effort soon completely prevented her hearing more. Her head grew giddy, a deafening din rang in her ears, and her heart beat so violently, that respiration was almost suspended. She staggered to the couch, on which Lydia, in unconscious slumbers, still re-

mained; but so entirely was she overcome by the recollection of their forlorn state, and their distance from any chance of succour, that all fortitude seemed at once to forsake her, and she dropped, almost lifeless, by her sleeping charge; but, in a moment, her naturally strong mind regained its powers of exertion, and, blushing at her own weakness, she recalled all her courage to her aid, and determined, with desperate resolution, to encounter the danger, of whatever nature it might be, without suffering herself to be enervated by yielding to the first impulse of fear.

She considered, that strange and destitute as was their situation, still were they under the guardianship of a superintending Providence. Never yet, under the numerous trials to which her youth had been subject, had she applied for consolation, in vain, to those religious principles early inculcated.

“No!” she mentally ejaculated, “never yet has the Power, which formed and has

hitherto preserved me, suffered me to appeal in vain to him for help and comfort!"—and sinking on her knees by the couch, her heart breathed the prayer, which her lips were incapable of uttering.

Revived and strengthened, that deafening sound, which her own terrors had raised, ceased, and enabled her to listen again. At first all was silent, but the next moment she heard, as before, the low sound of cautious steps, evidently still nearer. To awaken Lydia seemed now necessary; she gently touched her hand, and requested her to rise. Lydia complied, but she was still heavy with sleep.

"Awake, dear Lydia," said Juliet, "some person approaches. Perhaps," she added, hesitating, "perhaps it is Susan returned to us."

Lydia opened her eyes, and fixing them on Juliet, saw the deadly paleness which had overspread her countenance. She inquired eagerly what was the matter? and

Juliet hastened to prepare her for the approach, which every moment drew nearer. Suddenly she became assured, that some one was ascending the spiral staircase, and tried, by signs, to make Lydia understand her apprehensions; but the terrified girl only clung, shrieking, to her. The steps drew still nearer, and the staircase door was pushed open! but Lydia's voice was now silent; she was speechless with affright; for a man entered the room, and advanced towards them.

Released from the wild grasp of Lydia, who had sunk motionless on the couch, Juliet arose, and a cry of surprise escaped her at recognizing, in the intruder, the same young stranger, to whom, in their journey to the Chateau, she had so fruitlessly applied for succour.

Whatever was his purpose, still he was not Captain Hardington, and she breathed more freely; but so confused was her perception, that some minutes had elapsed before she understood that he came to pro-

tect them, to guide them from the Chateau, and from the Count de Brisac. Even Lydia could now listen; she heard with wild delight the words of the stranger; but Juliet, more collected, (when he talked of their immediate deliverance,) said—

“ But how? by what means is it to be effected?”

“ Can you resolve,” said the stranger, “ to place in me the confidence, to which I hope soon to prove to you that I am entitled? Time is precious;—I cannot, therefore, wholly explain. Suffice it, that though I lost sight of you by your hasty departure from the inn, where I first beheld you, I did not lose the clue by which I still hoped to discover you. I pursued your traces till the Pyrenees obstructed my farther pursuit; but as it was the spot of my ultimate destination, I still hoped chance might favour my wishes. My hopes were realized, even beyond my expectations; and now, where do you wish to be conducted?”

“Any where,” said Juliet, “from whence we may soonest, and with most convenience, reach England, where we have left friends, whose anxiety for our safety we are most desirous to relieve.”

“And Mrs. Clermont among the number,” said he, smiling.

“Ah! is Mrs. Clermont known to you? Then, indeed, may we place in you the confidence you solicit.”

“Let us hasten,” said he; “the night wears away, and we must immediately commence a journey, which will be your only chance of escaping an encounter with those, who, of course, will commence a pursuit; and though, I trust, we shall be able to protect you, still willingly would I avoid any violence.”

Juliet felt alarmed at the idea, but collecting all her courage and exertion, she prepared to depart as expeditiously as possible. Their arrangements were soon completed, the few clothes they had with them, were quickly packed, and

when the stranger had hastily sketched to them his plans, they followed him down the spiral staircase, which led into some deserted rooms, their conductor was provided with a light, and when at the base of the tower, they issued from the Chateau into a back court, they found another man, whom their deliverer informed them was his servant. It was too dark to discover where they went, but they soon perceived that they had quitted the domain of De Brisac, and had entered some of the mountains.

The storm had ceased but the way was wet and rugged. Insensible to its inconveniences from the exquisite delight of being once more at liberty, the young travellers uttered not a murmur, and Juliet in silent thankfulness, reflected on the singular interposition of Providence in their favour. Their walk terminated at the little dwelling on the cliff mentioned in the last chapter, and here the mystery attending their almost unhop'd for liberation was

fully explained; it had been effected by no miracle, but a combination of events had enabled the young stranger to complete a purpose which had fully possessed a mind naturally enthusiastic, from the time when he had so accidentally beheld them at the inn. He had left his servant to follow him at nearly ten miles distant, and on Juliet's application to him for succour he determined to go back to engage a carriage to be ready, as well as to require the assistance of a friend, who, he had no doubt, would readily afford it.

No sooner had he heard the title of the Count de Brisac, than he became aware of the truth; his family had long been on terms of intimacy with Mrs. Clermont, from whom they had learned the particulars of Captain Hardington's elopement with an heiress, assisted by the Count de Brisac, that they had been traced to Brighton, from whence they had embarked for Dieppe, and she had commissioned them by letter, to make inquiry after the fugitives.

He had accompanied his mother and sisters to France, and had left them to pay a visit to a friend in Normandy, and had determined on gratifying his thirst for information, and research, by a tour in which a ramble amid the Pyrenees was one great object of interest and pursuit. Little did he imagine, that he should actually encounter the English party, whom Mrs. Clermont, in her letters to his mother had so accurately described. The circumstance had almost faded from his memory, so improbable did it seem, that without some clue to direct his inquiries, he should have it in his power to trace them, and that he should casually encounter them, was still less to be expected; but when he learned, at the inn, where he had seen them, that the Count de Brisac was one of the number, he could no longer doubt of whom it consisted.

The interest he now felt in their rescue, could not be repressed. The appeal made to him by Juliet, plainly proved

that they had not voluntarily accompanied the Count and Hardington from England, and he determined to trace their steps if possible, when on his return that evening to the inn, he found the Count had hurried them off in his absence, having no doubt, discovered, probably by means of his servants, who were kept on the watch, the attempt of Juliet to interest the stranger in their cause. His route afterwards, till his encounter with the Lady, who conducted him to the abode on the cliff, has been related. For a few hours only, was it the asylum of Juliet and Lydia. A carriage had been already provided, and attended by their young deliverer, whose name he informed them was Fitz-Arthur, and his friend, the recluse Lady, they commenced a journey which was to terminate in placing them under safe protection, and enable them to return to their native country. It was necessarily lengthened by the first part of it being performed by a circuitous route, in

order to mislead the pursuit of the Count and his friend ; but the way was beguiled by a narrative in which the young travellers soon found themselves too much interested to regret that time was allowed them to listen to it.

CHAP. XVI.

MEMOIR OF THE FAMILY DE BRISAC.

IN the solitude of the ancient Chateau of the Pyrenees, the insulated Countess de Brisac gave birth to a son and daughter ; her Lord, who was immersed in the gaities of Paris, seldom visited it, and in retirement she reared her offspring. Angela was yet a child, when her brother, three years her senior, was taken from them to be educated in the metropolis. Left under the sole care of her mother, she imbibed from her sentiments of the purest virtuc. The only stipulation made by her father, was, that she should profess the Catholic faith, for it was his intention

to devote her to the cloister as soon as she was of an age to take the veil. A monk from the nearest convent, who acted as her spiritual director, had assisted the Countess in her education, but she could not submit to the restraints he would have imposed. Instructed by her father, he would have forbidden her reading on any subject, but religion, but the library of her mother, was open and the best poets of France, Italy, and England, were perused with avidity. Literature in general was her delight, and the Countess, could not find in her heart to deprive her of a resource so well calculated to cheer seclusion.

She was careful to select for her daughter such works as would improve her mind and found a delightful amusement in cultivating her taste for reading.

Till she was sixteen, Angela knew care but by name; like the mountangoat, she ran wild amid the romantic scenery which surrounded their dwelling, nor wished for

happiness beyond it; but at this eventful period she was bereft of a mother's care.

A short and violent illness carried off the Countess, and Angela was left to the sole charge of Susan. With her lamented parent, fled the peace of the now truly insulated Angela. No kind monitor attended to her studies, no partial voice commended her improvement, encouraged her pursuits, or directed her choice, and her youthful mind, overwhelmed with grief, nearly sunk beneath the pressure.

The Count, after two years absence, visited the Chateau; but to enliven its dreariness, brought a party of friends with him. Amongst the number was one, who beheld with surprise, compassion, and afterwards with a warmer sentiment, the Count's neglect of his young and beautiful daughter.

Charles de Neville was the younger son of a good family, but to retrieve the ruined fortunes of his house, he had entered the commercial line; wisely declaring that as

he could not live on the grandeur of his ancestors, he was determined not to spend his youth in idleness, merely because his family had once been noble. By his relations he was thought to have degraded his name by trade, but he was of a different opinion, and was in the high road to opulence by his own exertions. His elder brother, an indignant, but proud man of fashion, was a favourite friend of the Count de Brisac, and had engaged to accompany him to his Pyrenean Chateau, with a party of their chosen associates. Charles happened at this time to be visiting his brother at Paris, where he had gone on business, relative to some mercantile speculations; the Count wished to dispose of some part of his estates, and he felt an inclination to be the purchaser; but there was much to adjust, and as the presence of the Count was required at the Chateau, he persuaded the two De Nevilles to accompany him.

Charles was young and disengaged, and

from pitying the fate of the lovely, neglected Lady Angela, he imbibed an attachment which soon became mutual; but the Count was inflexible in his opposition to such a match; no branch of his family had yet been contaminated by an union with trade, and the Lady Angela was destined to the cloister. Entreaties were of no avail, and De Neville quitted the Chateau in despair.

The death of the Count de Brisac happened very soon afterwards, and Angela received intimation from her brother, that she must prepare for her entrance into the convent; the family estates, he said, had been much impaired by his father's extravagance, and that scarcely sufficient remained to enable him to support his rank properly. It was a cruel blow to poor Lady Angela's hopes, she had flattered herself that her youth, and the strong dislike she had declared to a conventual life, would have pleaded with her brother, though they had failed with her father;

but she found the young Count, alike inexorable, and submission only was left her. Vain were all her supplications, they were imperiously rejected, and while enjoying the solitude of her favourite tower, and the occupations to which her time had been devoted, since the irreparable loss of her mother, she was forced from it by her brother's orders, and conveyed to a remote convent; but the year of her noviciate yet remained, and ere she had entered on it, she was discovered by De Neville, who indignant at her brother's cruelty, persuaded her to quit the Monastery, and by an immediate marriage secure herself from the Count's farther persecution.

At this eventful crisis, the sudden breaking out of the French revolution proved her security. The Count de Brisac took an active part in public affairs, and his sister was forgotten. The wife of an amiable and respectable merchant in private life, residing in a remote province, and devoted to domestic duties, her high

descent was no more remembered, and in *Madame de Neville, Lady Angela de Brisac* was not recognised.

Amidst the turbulence of the revolutionary period, the Count de Brisac experienced many vicissitudes, and compelled, at length, to quit France, wholly in order to preserve his life, he found an asylum in England. Of dissipated habits, and a professed gambler, but capable of the most profound dissimulation, he led a desultory life, associating chiefly with those whose principles best suited his own.

Amongst this number he found an associate in Captain Hardington, to whom he had often been indebted for pecuniary assistance, and whom in return, he initiated into those arts by which he had since the ruin of his fortunes procured a precarious subsistence.

Thus united by interest, De Brisac had been first to propose the plan of carrying off the heiress, whose wealth was to secure independence to both, and if resistance

on her part rendered the enterprise difficult, the remote Chateau in the Pyrenees was to be the resource. How it succeeded has been already related.

The temporary termination of hostilities in the year 1801, inspired Madam de Neville with an anxious desire once more to undertake a journey to view the scenes of her infancy and youth. She longed to know the fate of her brother, whether the Chateau was inhabited, and what was become of Jaques and Susan, the two old faithful domestics of her mother; but more than all her nurse, to whom she had been fondly attached, and who she well knew had suffered much anxiety for her. Mons. de Neville and her two children accompanied her as far as a town a few leagues from the Chateau, where the former had some business to transact, for she was desirous to explore alone the spot where her childhood had glided serenely away, particularly when Mons. de Neville, who first made inquiries as to the present

situation of the affairs of the Chateau, learned that Magdelinc, the good nurse of the Lady Angela, had long since taken up her abode in the cabin on the cliff.

Thither Madame de Neville proceeded, and presented herself to the eyes of the astonished Magdeline, who received her as one risen from the dead. From the worthy old nurse, she learned, that after an absence of many years, during which Jaques and Susan had continued to inhabit the Chateau, which was fast falling to decay; the Count had recently returned to it; that he had arrived privately in a carriage, which contained himself and two females, who had been only seen by Susan, and were kept secluded in one of the most remote apartments. That they had received intimation of the Count's approach by a messenger a few days before, and afterwards by the friend who had preceded him.

Too well Madame was aware of the real character of the Count; though separated

from all association, she had never ceased to feel interested for him, and she had heard of his successive vicissitudes of fate with grief and anxiety.

The mystery attending his return to his native mansion rendered her apprehensive of some motives which would not bear investigation, and her suspicions were confirmed by old Jaques, who, when he visited his beloved Lady at Magdeline's cabin, related more than one conversation, which he had overheard between the Count and his friend, respecting the young Ladies who had accompanied them to the Chateau.

“ Depend upon it Lady,” said Jaques, “ all is not right, and those two poor young creatures have been brought from their own country for some bad design, else why all this mystery and concealment, why all this locking up? Ah; Susan was always too fond of her young Lord—She spoiled him when he was a child; I loved him too then, but I can't see him do wrong, and forget his good Lady mother's pre-

cepts, and love him as I once did. I have tried to get the truth out of Susan, but she is so silent and cautious, that I can discover but little, and yet I am certain from her looks, that she is not satisfied with the part she is acting."

Madame de Neville was shocked at the idea of what might be intended; she had often heard that her brother's associates were far from select, even before he quitted Paris; and since his fortunes had become desperate, she knew not what company he might have frequented. Ever active and benevolent, she felt greatly interested for the young strangers, and she concerted with Jaques that he should get all the information he could from Susan, and that they should try if no assistance could be afforded.

Wrought on at length by her own compunction, and the representations of Jaques, Susan had disclosed to him all she knew concerning Juliet and Lydia, and the worthy old man had hastened with the in-

telligence to his Lady. He had arrived just after Madame de Neville had encountered the traveller on the rocks, and had conveyed him to the cabin. In the recital, which old Jaques now gave, Fitz-Arthur most unexpectedly discovered the objects of his search ; his narrative determined Madame to give all the aid in her power towards delivering the unfortunate captives from their confinement ; but it was necessary to engage old Susan in the cause, and Madame requested an interview with her at the cabin.

Delighted once more to behold her young Lady, she readily complied ; and so successfully did Madame plead the cause of the young English women, and so forcible did she represent to her the crime she was guilty of, in abetting the unjustifiable plans of the Count and Captain Hardington, that she brought her to consent to be at least passive in the affair.

Well did Lady Angela know every entrance to the Chateau ; and that which

communicated by a concealed staircase with her own tower, she thought furnished amply the means of escape. It was agreed that Susan should, under some plausible pretence, remove her charges to the turret chamber adjoining Lady Angela's tower. Fitz-Arthur undertook to procure a carriage, and as the period of Madame de Neville's stay was nearly expired, and she wished to rejoin her family, it was decided that she should take the young strangers under her immediate protection, and that Fitz-Arthur should be their escort till they were in a place of safety.

Mons. de Neville had just purchased an estate in Normandy, and Fitz-Arthur heard with much pleasure that it was situated within a few leagues of the spot where he had left his mother and sisters, with whom their *Protegée* might, if they chose it, return to England.

All was now arranged, and they only waited for Susan to find an opportunity of

removing the captives, when the sudden return of the Count and his friend compelled them to hasten their operations. Jaques was immediately dispatched to the cabin; Susan said that she understood they did not intend to visit their captives that night, and that under pretence of making room for their guests, she would convey her charges to Lady Angela's apartments.

A light was to be placed in the tower, for which Fitz-Arthur, having previously summoned the carriage, was to watch; and guided by Madame de Neville, and attended by his own servants, he was through the private entrance to gain the concealed staircase. All succeeded as has been related, and Juliet, with fervent gratitude to her deliverers, listened to the means by which their liberation had been effected—She, as well as Lydia, was surprised to find the share Susan had taken in it, and could now account for her strange behaviour on

the night she had conducted them to the tower.

The longer they were in the society of Madame d. Neville, the more were they pleased with her. The beauty she had once possessed was considerably diminished, but the graceful softness of her manner, and the mild benevolence of her countenance, time had no power over, and Juliet thought her the most interesting woman she had ever seen. Mons. de Neville and her children, she said, would meet her, she hoped, at their residence in Normandy ; which should prove an asylum to her young friends as long as they thought proper to make it their home.

It was now Juliet's turn to narrate, and she readily gratified the curiosity which she knew her deliverers must feel, to hear the particulars of those circumstances, which had made them unwilling aliens from their native land. With intense earnestness and proportionate indignation did the fervent and excellent Fitz-Arthur hear the recital, and Madame was shocked

to discover the share her brother had taken in the unjustifiable designs of Hardington.

So well had Fitz-Arthur arranged their route, that they completely evaded all pursuit, and the dread of it gradually faded from their minds, as each passing day seemed to confirm their safety. Their young escort proved a most entertaining companion, as well as an able protector; he had been well educated and well informed, and he had received from nature a taste for study, which had been cultivated with care, and rendered his conversation a never failing source of amusement. He was highly entertained with the wild vivacity of Lydia, and seemed to take pleasure in giving her information. He had some volumes of books in his travelling portmanteau, and occasionally he read aloud, or recited to them. His genius and his enthusiasm on any favourite subject charmed the whole party, and afforded them so much gratification, that the length of their journey

was forgotten. No part of it appeared tedious, for all were equally pleased, and Lydia repeatedly declared that she had never been so happy in her life before.

They reached Normandy in safety, and at the neat retired residence of Mons. de Neville, received a cordial welcome; it was beautifully situated on a fine eminence surrounded by cornfields and vineyards, and presenting to the eye a great extent of a finely cultivated country. Mons. de Neville, like his Lady, had much benevolence in his general manner, and a peculiarly interesting turn of countenance. They had two sweet children; a boy and girl; the little *Ermine* was educated by her mother, who, though her life had been chiefly spent in retirement, was a proficient in every necessary accomplishment.

Fitz-Arthur only remained with them one night—he hastened to join his mother and sisters, and to claim their protection for his *Proteges*, while Juliet instantly

dispatched letters to England, to warn their friends of their safety, and to relate the narrative of their dangers, and of their escapes.

CHAP. XVII.

NEWS FROM ENGLAND,
AND THE MYSTERIOUS STRANGER.

ONCE more, in safety, the heart of Juliet fondly turned towards her native country; but what changes might not there await her? Harvey was probably married, and she could fervently have wished no more to visit the vicinity of Harvey Lodge; Lady Ellinor as implacable as ever; her uncle's heart closed against her, and affording her a bare subsistence; with no Harvey to enter into her feelings, and to converse with her as a friend, she feared that she should again feel insulated and forlorn. Yet she had done her duty; she had preserved the niece of her bene-

factor from being a victim to the sordid views of an interested man ; and she felt the internal comfort which such a retrospection was calculated to afford.

Fitz-Arthur soon accomplished his purpose of securing for his young friends the protection of his mother, and brought her and his sisters to the house of Mons. de Neville.

Mrs. Fitz-Arthur was an elegant interesting woman ; but there was a shade of melancholy on her fine countenance, which even the vivacity of her son could not always dispel. The young ladies resembled their mother in person, and the elder was like her in disposition ; but the younger, Ellen, had, like her brother, much more animation ; she was uncommonly lively and droll, but her sallies did not worry nor disgust, because her humour was natural and original. Fitz-Arthur was devotedly attached to his sisters, and his mother he thought a superior being. There was, indeed, something pe-

cularly attractive in Mrs. Fitz-Arthur; her manners were refined and graceful, and betokened an intimate acquaintance with the higher ranks of society; yet Juliet undertood, from the conversation of the young ladies, that they lived almost wholly in retirement, and that they had a father living, but they seldom mentioned him, and when they did, a deeper gloom seemed to gather on the fair brow of Mrs. Fitz-Arthur.

In the society of this amiable family, and that of the De Neville's, the time of Juliet and Lydia fled rapidly, while they waited for answers to the letters they had addressed to England. In another month, the Fitz-Arthurs intended to return thither, and Juliet had named this circumstance, together with their intention of availing themselves of Mrs. Fitz-Arthur's offered protection.

At length they were gratified by the arrival of letters from England. They were from Mr. Hobbleton, Mrs. Clermont, and

one from Rosa Wilmot, but none from any of the Harvey family. Juliet sighed.—

“ I ought not to have expected it,” thought she; “ though after my late dangers and escape, it would have been some consolation to know, that I had relations interested for me.”

Mr. Hobbleton’s letter was perfectly characteristic of the writer, and contained the following words:—

“ To Miss Monteith.

‘ Dear Miss,

“ I am very glad to hear that you and Liddy are safe and well which is a comfort I never expected to hear of no more in this world—being as how I long ago fancied some great misfortin had caus’d both your deaths—and I assure you I have been so unhappy and fretted so much about it that I quite lost my appetite for a long while, but thank God I am now better again, for I thought to myself that tho’ it was sad and mollancholy-like to die so

young, yet that you was so good you was sure to go to hevan for sartin ever since I knowd you I thought you was the best young person in the world, which makes me very glad to hear you are alive and abel to lerne Liddy to be good too. I am glad to hear she is more stiddier than she was, and hope you and her misfortins together have learnd her more sense—I shall be glad to see you back again and to hear you tingle the music once more, for I am rather dullish or so, and Hannah is more stupider than ever, which I look upon is, because when you was here and managed her, you made her more cleverer which is what I can't purtend to, being no great hand at cleverness myself—If you want money, only tell me how to send as much on't as you like—and give my love to Liddy and I shall be monstrous glad to see her, and her donky is fat and in rare order, and tho it has been a monstrous plagucing toad to me I kept it for her sake—so Miss the sooner you come back

the better for I am so dull and unked for want of you both, you can't think.

That fine Lady I cant think of her name says you know all about your 'unkel and the doings at Harvey Lodge, so I have no more to say but my love to you both only that I sent to Henwood to tell Mrs. Welden you was found and I called at Wilmots and at freind Mordens to tell them too, and they all was happy to hear of you for somehow you made every body like you which I dont say to flatter and please but because it is true and hoping soon to see you with my love to you both

I am dear Miss

Your freind and well wisher

Amos Hobbleton.

Juliet could not forbear smiling, as she perused the well-meant effusions of her good-hearted friend, and proceeded to unclosethe other letters. That from Mrs. Clermont, after congratulating them on their safety, expressing her abhorrence of

Hardington's unwarrantable conduct, and the real anxiety she had felt for their fate, continued thus:—

“ If you have not met with any English papers during your exile, you are probably ignorant that your cousin, Mr. Harvey, has been married about two months. They have not visited the Lodge since, and are now in town. Sir Edmund has more than once written to me, to make inquiries concerning you, and your friend Harvey is as much interested for you as ever. He has accomplished his purpose of making his father provide properly for you; and all you will have to do, on your return to England, will be to form your own establishment, and settle yourself wherever you please. If you do not hasten hither, I rather think that, before your arrival, still farther alterations will have taken place, and a new Baronet be in possession of the Lodge.

Sir Edmund's health has, for some time, been in a very precarious state, and now, I

understand, he is considered in danger.— His frequent inquiries after you induce me to think, that he feels at length some compunction for his long neglect of his sister, and wishes to see you; it is therefore my advice, that you lose no time in returning to England; an interview may be satisfactory to both parties.”

The whole tenor of this letter was such as to interest most forcibly the feelings of Juliet. On Harvey's marriage she did not suffer herself to reflect, but she felt anxious to give her uncle an opportunity of seeing her, if he should wish it. A very few days only were to intervene before they were to accompany the Fitz-Arthur family to the shores of Britain, and it became decidedly Juliet's wish to hasten their departure.

The evident partiality which Fitz-Arthur evinced for Lydia, and the pleasure with which she received his attentions, caused Juliet some anxiety. She was apprehensive of giving encouragement, un-

sanctioned by Mr. Hobbleton's permission, and she was unwilling to depress hope, on a subject which really met her own approbation. Mrs. Fitz-Arthur mentioned it to Juliet.

“ Alfred,” said she, “ has a father, and, without his permission, must not, of course, enter into any engagement. Till we reach England, I have conjured him to suspend any declaration. Individually, to a pupil of your's, my dear Miss Monteth, I think I could not object; and this young lady certainly betrays much goodness of heart and sweetness of temper, amidst the various eccentricities caused by early neglect.

“ With regard to my own family, I wish I could fully explain to you all the difficulties in our way, but you will readily conceive with whom they originate. Mr. Fitz-Arthur, I believe, loves his son, and I have reason to think will not, unless compelled by circumstances, raise any barrier to his wishes; and yet I dare not rely

on my own hopes, till our arrival in England.”

Fitz-Arthur complied with the earnest solicitations of his mother, to avoid an *eclaircissement* with Lydia, till they attained their native country. The De Nevilles felt great reluctance in parting with their interesting English friends; but if, as appeared probable, peace should be again estranged from France, they had resolved to quit it for a permanent residence in England, and promised to seek an abode in some part of it, where they might occasionally enjoy the society of their present inmates.

With what mixed emotions did Juliet once more embark on the ocean, which was to re-convey her to Britain. She was piously thankful for her own safety, and that Providence had made her the instrument of saving Lydia from a man of bad principles, and interested character; but she was depressed at the recollection of finding, in the land that gave her birth,

so few friends to welcome her deliverance from danger and confinement, so few really attached to her by those ties of affection, so necessary to constitute the happiness of a being, formed with feelings such as she possessed. From this cause alone, and from the reflection that no loved mother now awaited her return to freedom, would she suffer herself to believe her internal sadness originated. So pure, so free from guile was every thought, that not for an instant did she permit herself to think it possible, that she could harbour one regret, which the strictest rectitude could condemn. If once, in the depths of her own heart, she had cherished a secret and warmer admiration of one favoured individual than she would have chosen to acknowledge, to the privacy of the same pure region was it now consigned for ever; and in those hours of seclusion, when no human eye could behold, no ear listen to her prayer, did she humble herself in meek contrition for the involuntary

offence, and supplicate grace from on high, to enable her to bury in oblivion every recollection that might prove inimical to peace and virtue. Strengthened and revived by the only means she had ever found efficacious in removing mental disquietude, she would mix again in society, with no trace of a disordered or depressed mind, but with the same sweet calmness, the same meekness and cheerful resignation of manner, which, in all dangers and difficulties, had distinguished her.

Unmarked by any event, the short voyage terminated in landing them in safety on the shores of England. At Brighton they expected to meet Mr. Fitz-Arthur; and when his family mentioned it, Juliet observed that a sort of gloomy anxiety clouded the generally serene countenance of his lady; but, on reaching Brighton, they were disappointed to find a letter from him, excusing himself from meeting them, on a plea of recent illness, and re-

questing that they would hasten to join him at their own seat in ——shire.

“ This, on the whole, my dear Miss Monteith, is fortunate,” said Mrs. Fitz-Arthur. “ Our family seat is forty miles nearer the place of your destination. By accompanying us, therefore, you will protract our separation, and enable us to forward your return to your friends. As you must rest one night on your journey, Mortlake will be preferable to an inn. You will be pleased with the situation, but you must not judge of our hospitality from Mr. Fitz-Arthur’s retired habits. Ill health, and habitual depression, render him unfit for society the greatest part of his time, but his heart is warmer than his manner, and, on my report, you must give him credit for greater cordiality than he betrays.”

Juliet assured her, that she had long since learned, by experience, to be cautious of judging from appearances ; though in reality she could not, from all she

heard, judge very favourably of Mr. Fitz-Arthur. It struck her as singular, that suffering under a mental, as well as a bodily malady, he should send his wife and children from him, and choose to live alone, which she understood was generally the case; but it appeared still more wonderful, that his family should consent to leave him under such circumstances. He was seldom mentioned, except by Ellen, who spoke of him as if all pleasure were banished where he appeared, and seemed to dread the rejoining him; but her elder sister, more prudent, was silent, and always tried to restrain Ellen from speaking on the subject.

Late in the evening they reached Mortlake, the seat of Mr. Fitz Arthur. It was situated on the declivity of a fine eminence, at the base of which a beautiful river wound its way through thick woody plantations, and between groups of lofty trees. The country around was fertile, and the domain itself was richly cultivated.

Juliet looked around her, and when she contemplated the natural beauties with which it abounded, and then turned her eyes on the yet elegant form of Mrs. Fitz-Arthur, and listened to her conversation when she viewed her amidst her fine and flourishing family, she would have wondered how it was possible for the possessor of so many blessings to be otherwise than happy; yet such is the lot of mortality, and so many and various are the secret evils to which human nature is liable, that, with every external requisite, yet may the internal thorn goad, unperceived by the mass of mankind, who weakly imagine peace must be the concomitant of wealth.

In an apartment so superbly furnished, that it spoke at once the opulence of the possessor, Mr. Fitz-Arthur awaited their arrival. It was spacious and lofty, and opened, by a glass door at one end, to a beautiful veranda, in which the most odoriferous plants exhaled their fine perfumes, and overlooked a large and verdant lawn,

planted with groups of the choicest shrubs, now in fine flower. Leaning, in a thoughtful attitude, on an ottoman, in a kind of recess, they perceived the master of the mansion. He arose to welcome them, saluted his lady and daughters, and, when the former in a few words introduced their guests, the large eyes of Mr. Fitz-Arthur, hitherto cast on her, were now directed to Juliet, and in the look which accompanied the electric start he gave, as his lady mentioned the name of Monteith, to her infinite dismay and astonishment, she once more recognized the wild and fierce glance of the mysterious traveller in the stage-coach. That the recollection was mutual, was instantly discernible; but Mr. Fitz-Arthur seemed first to recover his surprise; he bowed confusedly, made some incoherent answer, and then retreated to where he had been seated previous to their entrance. Happily Juliet possessed no small share of presence of mind: it was summoned to her aid; and only the unusual

paleness of her cheeks and lips bespoke her feelings ; for she recollected herself sufficiently to preserve her wonted gracefulness of manners, and to avoid betraying aloud her wonder and alarm.

In showing the house and grounds to their guests, the young Fitz-Arthurs tried to make the evening pass, untinged by the gloom which the presence of their father seemed to shed around him, but Juliet could not forget the involuntary dread he inspired. If he were indeed the proprietor of the estate called *The Hermitage*, near Mr. Hobbleton, there seemed an inexplicable mystery in his being called by another appellation. She feared too, that the discovery of this circumstance would raise some obstacle to the wishes of his son, on the part of Mr. Hobbleton, from the prejudice he had appeared to have imbibed against his ambiguous neighbour.

Perplexed and uneasy, she was glad when the chaise arrived on the following

morning, which was to convey them on their road home; for she could not feel quite tranquil, till she had explained every thing relating to the affair to Mr. Hobbleton. She had an aversion to all unnecessary secrecy, and she determined to recount to him every particular, and trusted that the obligation Fitz-Arthur's exertions, in their deliverance from the power of Captain Hardington, had conferred, would operate in his favour. He accompanied them on horseback within ten miles of the termination of their journey; but she thought it extraordinary, that neither he nor the ladies of the family appeared to be acquainted with their estate in that part of the country. Though the situation of Mr. Hobbleton's residence was known to them, and had often been mentioned in conversation, no allusion had been made to any possessions of their own contiguous; and the same mystery which seemed to pervade Mr. Fitz-Arthur, and all belonging to him, had induced Juliet to maintain a

profound silence on the subject. At parting, Fitz-Arthur declared his expectation of speedily joining them, sanctioned by his father, to whom his mother had undertaken to represent the hopes and wishes of his son; and fervently did Juliet join in anticipating a favourable result.

CHAP. XVIII.

A DEATH AND A MARRIAGE.

THE arrival of the fugitives at the mansion of Mr. Hobbleton, was hailed with shouts of joy by old Hannah and Tim; and Mr. Hobbleton, who was aroused from his nap by the clamour, was so overjoyed to see them, that he even pardoned the disturbance.

Nothing could exceed his astonishment and delight at the alteration he observed in Lydia. The change was as great in her person as her deportment. Though not less handsome, she was much taller and more womanly; and her manners had acquired a grace and steadiness, in which, before she came under Juliet's tuition, they were wholly deficient.

“ Why Liddy, child, I am quite sur-

prised," said he. " You are another sort of a person from what you was when I see you last."

" If the alteration be an improvement, my dear uncle, you must thank Miss Montcith for it," she answered. " She has all the merit of the reformation. She is the original; I shall never be more than an humble copy."

" Well, I declare," said he, " I never was better pleased in my life. It is so much more agreeable to see you a genteel young lady, than a mere savage like, that I shall be quite proud of you, never forgetting that it is all Miss's doing, which I hope we shall always remember, and behave to her accordingly."

Juliet, however, would not wholly arrogate to herself a claim to all the praise they bestowed on her. In this respect, Lydia's own endeavours had certainly been anxiously exerted since Fitz-Arthur's declared attachment made her emulous for improvement, and had given her a strong

motive for wishing to appear to advantage. Still she was the same candid Lydia, refined indeed, but wholly void of affectation; strikingly handsome in her person, and a careless vivacity of manners, perhaps more attractive than a studied elegance.

He declared, that he had never felt so happy since their departure; but he lamented that they must so soon part again from Miss Monteith,—

“ For Sir Edmund Harvey, said he, “ has sent every day, and sometimes twice, for some time past, to enquire about you. He is laying very ill at the Lodge; and when he heard, that I expected you every day, he desired that Miss Monteith might be informed, that he requested to see her as soon as possible after her arrival.”

Juliet would not lose a moment; she scarcely permitted herself to think of the disagreeables attending a meeting with Lady Ellinor, so anxious was she to be present at what she foresaw was likely to

prove the death-bed of her uncle. Nor needed she have entertained any apprehensions on the subject. Lady Ellinor was not so partial to melancholy scenes, as to accompany a man, for whom she felt a decided indifférence, to the country to die. Sir Edmund was therefore left, in the last stage of a dangerous illness, to the care of an interested nurse and careless servants; and when Juliet beheld him, pale and emaciated, supported in his bed by pillows, and traced, in every attenuated feature, the resemblance of her beloved mother, her feelings became too violent for suppression; and dropping on her knees by the bed-side, she could only press the hand extended to her, while the tear of sad remembrance burst from her eye.

Sir Edmund thanked her for so readily complying with his request, and inquired if she had any objection to continue an inmate of the Lodge for the present. She answered in the negative, provided she could be of any use or comfort to him.

“ I have much to say to you,” said he, “ and I can seldom converse for any length of time; but if you remain here, opportunities may occur. Lady Ellinor is in town, my son and Lady Clara are gone to her estate in the North, and I am left to die alone. Edmund is not aware of my situation, or he would fly to me; but I wish not to disturb his happiness, till it cannot be avoided.—Send, therefore, for any thing you may wish for, from Mr. Hobbleton’s, and stay here till I no longer need your presence.”

Juliet complied instantly; she saw that her uncle was miserable at being left alone, and from his youth, accustomed to every indulgence, and to an unbounded compliance from others, he scrupled not to require from her the sacrifice of her time and attention, little as was his claim on either, from the neglect he had hitherto shown towards her; but Juliet had been reared in habits of humility, and self denial, and the path of duty was to her

that of peace. She knew how her mother would have wished her to act, under the circumstances in which she was now placed, and that recollection was her law. Without suffering herself to reflect on Sir Edmund's former behaviour, she determined steadily to adhere to what she conceived to be right. With unremitting attention, she devoted herself to the study of his case and comfort; she administered his medicines, presided in his apartment, read to him when he was unable to converse, and brought her work when he was disposed for conversation. She related to him every particular of Captain Hardington's unwarrantable outrage, and he earnestly wished, he said, that he could live to see him legally punished for his conduct. Juliet was sorry that her uncle's illness had prevented her from discussing the affair of Lydia and Fitz-Arthur, with Mr. Hebbleton, as much as she could wish; but she had mentioned it to him, explained his interference in rescu-

ing them from Captain Hardington, and had loudly extolled his manners and appearance, as well as those of his family. She had also mentioned her surprise at discovering in his father the mysterious stranger; but Mr. Hobbleton had not raised the objections she had expected from this circumstance; he listened with attention to her commendations of Fitz-Arthur, and said that—

“Though Liddy was full young to marry, he should not object to her making a proper match.”

A note from Lydia, in about a week, informed her friend, that Fitz-Arthur had arrived with an application in his father's name to her uncle, who had given his consent without farther question.—

“Because,” he said, “Miss Monteith had spoken so well of him and his family, that he could have no doubts respecting them—notwithstanding he had reason to think his father was an *oddish kind of a person.*”

The approaching happiness of her young friends, was a subject of real gratification to Juliet, and that all her anxiety for Lydia should terminate so well, was a satisfaction almost un hoped for. She was visited at the lodge, by her pupil and Fitz-Arthur, and she saw them happy in their prospects, and grateful to her for the share she had taken in promoting their felicity.

A tedious and anxious interval succeeded. Sir Edmund grew daily worse, and Juliet was compelled to exert all her talents, as a nurse and companion. It was however satisfactory to her, to perceive, that her uncle was sensible of her attentions, and never appeared so tranquil, as when she was present.

Lady Ellinor at length arrived, and obliged now to meet Juliet, and to suppress her rancour, before Sir Edmund, she treated her with cold and distant civility ; but Juliet expected no more, and was too indifferent to her Ladyship to feel much hurt at her conduct.

The last hour of Sir Edmund approached, and Juliet never quitted him for a moment; she took her meals by his bed side, and slept on a sofa in his chamber, that she might be at hand. His son reached the lodge on the evening before his death, and Juliet retired for the first time for many days from the apartment, while he visited his father.

Lady Clara was not with him; her health was delicate, and Harvey had left her in the north. When she knew he had quitted the chamber, she returned to it and found her uncle deeply affected by the sight of his son.

Sir Edmund had in his youth been quite a man of the world. With much mental and bodily indolence, his own ease had been his principal study.

Habitual apathy had increased with advancing years. The endurance of pain was new to him, and till Juliet came, his mind was in a state of the most distressing perturbation. In the hope of soothing

him, she proposed reading aloud, and she was careful to select such books as had under her own trials assisted to support and comfort her.

Sir Edmund had seemed aware of her intention, and encouraged her to persevere, by the profound attention he bestowed, and the consolation he seemed to derive from religious exercises. Under that depression which sometimes, notwithstanding the strong efforts of a well regulated mind, she could not wholly dispel, it was a real satisfaction to her, to find, that she had the power of being useful, and she was thankful, that while Lady Ellinor fled from the bed of death, and the scene of her duty, she was enabled to support its terrors, and to give the necessary attention to the last hours of her nearest relation.

Personally, she could feel little attachment to Sir Edmund; neither his general character nor his conduct towards her mother, were calculated to inspire it in a heart that, like her's, was governed by

the strict rules of rectitude and religion, but the dictates of each actuated her in her behaviour towards him, and her cares were amply rewarded by the consciousness of doing right.

The awful hour of dissolution was rendered less terrific by her assiduous endeavours to prepare her uncle for its approach. She persuaded him to send for Mr. Wilmot, and she found the happiest effects from his visits and conversation. She never saw Harvey, till they were joined in the sad office of witnessing the last melancholy scene, and then both were too much absorbed by attention to the sufferer to converse. The senses of Sir Edmund were perfect, he took the hand of Juliet, and looking at his son, said,—

“To your friendship I confide her; she has acted towards me on the true christian principle, and to you I leave a strict injunction, to watch over her welfare with the affection I would have manifested, had it pleased heaven to prolong my life.”

These were the last words he uttered ; he put the hand of Juliet into that of his son, and in a few minutes afterwards breathed his last.

In the solitude of her own apartment, his niece had leisure to collect her thoughts ; to return thanks to God for having enabled her to act the part assigned her with fortune and satisfaction, and to meditate on her future conduct.

The ample independence bequeathed her by her uncle, empowered her to fix on her mode of life, and place of residence, according to her own inclinations ; and as soon as Lydia was married, it was her intention to quit Mr. Hobbleton, and in some quiet retirement to pursue the peaceful occupations which best suited her taste. In a letter to her cousin, she stated her wishes on this subject, and leaving it for him, she quitted the lodge, that she might not intrude on Lady Ellinor, or be subject to treatment which she could not patiently endure.

Mr. Hobbleton and his niece received her with their wonted kindness. The marriage of Lydia and Fitz-Arthur was already arranged, and her presence could not be dispensed with. Mr. Fitz-Arthur senior, had written to Mr. Hobbleton, and stated the fortune and expectations of his son; he had declined any personal meeting, urging his retired habits and reclusive way of living; but his Lady and daughter were to meet them in town, at the house of Mrs. Clermont, who also greeted Juliet with real affection. She had hastened into the country purposely, to hail the restoration of her young friends, and urgently solicited Juliet to take up her abode with her in future; really sensible of her kindness and friendship, the invitation was for the present accepted.—To Lydia's solicitations to reside with her she had given a decided refusal, though she had promised to be a frequent guest.

Young as she was, Juliet was aware that she would have excellent friends and

advisers in Mrs. Fitz-Arthur and her family, and as her presence would not be necessary to her pupil, she preferred being mistress of her own time and employments.

The protection of Mrs. Clermont would certainly have been desirable, but that Lady lived a life of gaiety. Numerous connexions and an extensive acquaintance kept her in a constant crowd of company, and retirement had long since been the determined choice of Juliet.

The marriage of Lydia took place under the happiest auspices. Mr. Wilmot performed the ceremony at the parish church, and Mr. Hobbleton gave his niece away, besides whom, only Mrs. Clermont and Juliet were present. Immediately afterwards they commenced their journey to town. As they were stepping into the carriage a letter was delivered to Miss Monteith, from Sir Edmund Harvey, and was committed to her pocket, till an hour of seclusion enabled her to peruse it un-

noticed. Repeated messages and inquiries after her health had reached her from him ; but no interview had taken place, and it was observable that Juliet as much as possible forbore mentioning him or his family. She had not visited her old friend Mrs. Weldon from motives which her own heart approved, and the tranquil state of her mind, however hardly earned, repaid every mental exertion.

At Mrs. Clermont's elegant mansion in town, all was gaiety and splendour ; Mrs. Fitz-Arthur and her daughters met them there, and the bridal party entered with animation into the amusements of the metropolis. To Juliet, her altered mode of life as a temporary change was salutary ; her spirits revived, and she mixed with cheerfulness in the diversions to which she was introduced. The letter of Harvey which she read in the retirement of her chamber contained these words.

“ In obedience to the commands of my late father, my dear cousin, I have expe-

dited as much as possible, the completion of those writings which put you in possession of an independance, if not equal to your merits, at least I hope sufficient to enable you to act as you please; and should it be in my power to make any addition to your happiness or comfort, you have only to point it out.—My father's will is mine, and to promote your felicity in any way, will largely contribute towards my own— Merely to say that I am grateful to you for your attention to my poor father, will faintly indeed express my feelings on the subject; but the mind which suppressing all recollection of former injustice, could devote itself to the painful task of a death-bed attendance, on a principal of christian duty, must be its own reward, and needs not the poor meed of human praise.— When your future plans are arranged you will not I am sure leave me in ignorance of your destination. Let me have the inexpressible satisfaction of knowing that you are well and happy, and remember

that your claims on me are those of real friendship, and as such will be received and answered with pleasure, and alacrity, by
E. HARVEY."

The appearance of Juliet was such as to excite general attention and admiration, in that sphere for which nature designed her. Her elegant form and graceful manners were spoken of in the circles of fashion, to which she was now introduced as uncommonly attractive, and more than one candidate for her favour appeared.— Amongst these Sir Henry Colville was distinguished, by the ardour with which he persevered, even when Juliet, who could never lose the recollection of his former conduct towards her, had positively declined his suit. Tired of his persecution, and longing anxiously for leisure and retirement, she began to think of some plan which would enable her to enjoy them. To live alone was scarcely consistent with propriety at her age, and while deliberating on

the subject she received intimation of her arrival of Madame de Neville in England. She had since her separation from her English friends sustained an irreparable loss in her excellent husband, and was amongst the number of those who sought safety and protection in England.—Her son had been adopted by some of his father's relations, but the little Ermine, a sweet girl of five years old, accompanied her. Madame had contrived to save property sufficient for the support of herself and child, and sought some quiet residence where she might rear and educate her.

Juliet and Lydia together visited her, on hearing of her arrival in town, and persuaded her to accompany them to the house Fitz-Arthur had just taken, whither Juliet had removed with them from Mrs. Clermont a few days preceding.

The yet unformed plans of Juliet, were matured by the renewal of her acquaintance with Madame de Neville. The still interesting Angela was exactly the compa-

mon she would have chosen, and to assist in rearing and educating the young Ermine, was an amusement adapted to her talents and inclination—With joy Madame listened to the proposal, and all that now remained was to fix on a spot for their purpose.

In consequence of hearing her intention from Mrs. Clermont, a second letter from Sir Edmund Harvey removed at once this obstacle. He mentioned a beautiful building in the park surrounding Harvey lodge, which had been begun before his father's death, and was now completed; he insisted on her accepting it, for her permanent residence. Juliet remembered well the neat appearance of the cottage—its situation, so contiguous to Harvey lodge, was her only objection, but Sir Edmund and his Lady, report said, were seldom there, and Mrs. Fitz-Arthur was so urgent for long and frequent visits from her, that on consideration, she thought she might manage it so

as to be seldom compelled to associate with her relations.

The residence itself was precisely the asylum she would have chosen, and to ornament and fit it up would be an amusement for her leisure hours, well suited to her taste and inclinations. The neighbourhood of the Mordens and the Wil-mots was particularly desirable; in Anna and Rosa she had long ago found kindred minds, and now, when harassed by many months of anxiety and distress, she sought the aid of friendship to enable her to regain tranquility, in the sympathizing bosom of Anna Morden and the gentle Rosa, she thought she should find the treasure she so fondly anticipated. All was soon arranged, but she would only consent to being admitted as a tenant; and taking leave of her friends in town, she attended Madame de Neville and Ermine to their future dwelling.

CHAP. XIX.

HARVEY COTTAGE.

IN the seclusion of Harvey Cottage, Juliet felt herself more settled at home than she had ever been since the death of her parents. Within the enclosure of the Park, and screened at the back by a fine wood, and in the front open to an extensive view, the situation was precisely what a lover of the picturesque would have preferred. The garden in which it stood was enclosed by a light, low green railing, and an awning round two sides of the building was overgrown by a luxuriant vine. The jessamine and China-rose were trained to peep in at the little latticed casements, and a small ornamented porch was overgrown with the wild rose and acacia. The inte-

rior was constructed for the comfort as well as the convenience of its inhabitants. Two good parlours, a small hall, and an excellent kitchen, were all the apartments on the ground floor; the back parlour was fitted up by Juliet as a library, and stored with the best authors; glass doors, opening upon a small lawn; planted with groups of shrubs; three good bed-chambers and a neat drawing-room comprised the first floor, and attics for the servants completed the house. Their establishment consisted of two female servants.

The time of Madame and Juliet was at first fully occupied in regulating their small household, and arranging their dwelling. They were visited by all the friends of the former. The Wilmots and the Mordens hastened to congratulate her and themselves on her return to them, and Mrs. and Miss Malcolm were pleased to renew the acquaintance, and to solicit her friendship.

Mr. Hobbleton lost no time in repairing

to the cottage, where he became a frequent visitor; but though happy to revive and support former friendships, Juliet devoted far the greatest part of her time to those occupations which better suited her taste and disposition than mere visiting. To inform, to strengthen, and cultivate her mind by that highest, noblest source of amusement, reading, she dedicated a regular portion of every day; she was an early riser, and her garden and plants were a delightful employment. Her music was a resource in which Madame could share, and they both instructed Ermine. She allotted a certain part of her income for charitable purposes, and to distribute it usefully and judiciously, it was necessary to make herself acquainted with the objects who required it. Her visits to the poor were paid alone and unostentatiously. No parade marked her donations, but the most unwearied exertions for their good, declared her anxiety to promote their welfare.

Books and advice were not omitted, and

notwithstanding her wish of avoiding publicity, her good deeds became known, and the name of Miss Monteith was at once loved and respected. Madame de Neville grew every day more truly attached to her, and the little Ermine seemed to feel equal affection for both. Tranquil and contented, the days of Juliet now glided on in the most perfect security. Anna Morden was her chosen associate, and joined in all her pursuits with avidity and interest. At the Vicarage they found select parties, where in reading, conversation, and rational society, the time passed unheeded; and Juliet hoped that the amiable Anna was rapidly banishing her own image from the heart of Henry Wilnot, who, though still at College, returned eagerly at every opportunity to join the dear circle at home.

While the hours of Juliet were devoted to retirement and friendship, the rich possessors of Harvey Lodge were not unmindful of their fair secluded relation. She

received from Lady Clara the most affectionate acknowledgment of their relationship, with repeated pressing invitations to visit them in town, or at her seat in the North.

“ Fain, my dear cousin,” she added, “ would I greet you at Harvey Lodge, but you know the strong affection my beloved Harvey bore his father, and that spot recalls too many painful recollections to render it agreeable to him, at least no otherwise can I account for the repugnance he manifests in visiting it.”

Whatever were Harvey’s real motives for his estrangement from the Lodge, Juliet could not feel the regret Lady Clara kindly avowed. The society to which they would have introduced her, would have drawn her from the retreat to which she grew daily more attached, and she felt that the small select circle in which she now moved, was better suited to her frame of mind than more lofty and extensive connexions. The pleasures of intellect, the

delights of literature, she could enjoy in their fullest extent, for the few admitted to her association were persons of sense and information, capable of enlightening and strengthening her mind by their converse, and participating in her favourite pursuits, and she was unwilling to hazard an interruption to her tranquillity by mixing in company where the forms of the world excluded friendly intercourse, and substituted the ceremonies of polite life.

Whatever the actual motives of Harvey were for refraining from visiting the Lodge, by his lady they were sure to be approved. She lived but for him, her existence was entwined in his, and it was impossible that an affection so fervent from a being so lovely and amiable should not in some degree meet a return. It *was* returned by the truest esteem and regard, but the violence of fond attachment was Lady Clara's alone, and it was believed by the generality of the world that Harvey was of too stoical a nature to be in love.

Little did that misjudging world give him credit for struggles, which from a character of gaiety and animation had changed him into a young philosopher. As a sister he could have loved and protected Lady Clara, but to return her partiality with equal warmth he had long since discovered was not in his power. So firmly, however, did he conceive himself bound in honour to fulfil his engagement, that not for an instant did he hesitate as to the sacrifice being at last made; and when she who alone possessed sufficient influence to induce him to pause on the subject was placed above the evils of dependence, he felt that he ought no longer to defer the ceremony which was to unite him to Lady Clara.

His anguish on hearing that Juliet had accompanied Hardington and Lydia in their elopement, may be easier conceived than described. No longer at liberty personally to aid in the search, for he was on the point of concluding his mar-

riage, and detained by the various reports that prevailed, some stating that the plan was concerted between Captain Hardington and Miss Monteith, in order to divide the heiress's fortune between them; others, that the Count de Brisac was the favoured lover of Juliet, and that the excursion was voluntary on all sides; while few seemed to hit on the exact state of the case; he awaited, in all the misery of suspense, intelligence of the fugitives, but conceiving, from his affinity to Juliet, that he ought to make some exertions to ascertain her safety, and unable wholly to refrain from the pursuit, he it was, who suggested to Mrs. Clermont the writing to the Fitz-Arthurs, after having with indefatigable perseverance discovered that Captain Hardington had certainly intercepted them in their excursion to Windsor, in a carriage which he had prepared for the purpose, exactly resembling that of Mrs. Clermont, and driven by a servant who had recently quitted her service for his. With great

difficulty and trouble he traced them to Brighton, and discovered that they had actually embarked for the Continent.

In constant inquiry, in writing to, and consulting Mrs. Clermont, and in tracing each particular circumstance relating to the affair, he seemed at once to have regained a portion of his wonted animation; and Lady Clara, in whose mind the most distant suspicion of any repugnance on the part of Harvey had never intruded, was delighted to see that the singular gravity and reserve which had of late pervaded his countenance and manner, had given way to his natural warmth on any subject that excited his interest. While yet in doubt and uncertainty as to the fate of Juliet, his marriage was concluded, and not till he reached with Lady Clara her estate in the North, did the letters of Fitz-Arthur announce his discovery of the fugitives. With regard to her his apprehensions were relieved, and when the death of his father secured to her the comforts of af-

fluence, and that she was situated amidst friends who loved her, and in a retirement peculiarly adapted to her taste and pursuits, he resolved on applying steadily to his own affairs, and dismissing from his mind the harrassing ideas which had lately oppressed him, devote his attention to her, whose affection for him seemed if possible to have acquired strength since their union; but the effort brought with it the same gloom and reserve which had before obscured his native cheerfulness, and the lively, gay Harvey, was not to be recognized in the grave, melancholy Sir Edmund.

Lady Ellinor, with an ample jointure, had established herself in town: she was conscious of not being beloved at Harvey Lodge, and she was informed that Juliet's residence was contiguous; she therefore declined her son's offer of any one of his seats, and divided her time between London and the fashionable watering-places.

Captain Hardington had resigned his

commission in the army, and was still on the Continent, where it is probable he deemed it most prudent to remain.

A twelvemonth passed in the retirement of her cottage fled rapidly with Juliet. In this space of time little of the eventful occurred. Sir Henry Colville, anxious still to obtain her hand, and charmed by her character and her virtues, again sought her, and even entreated Sir Edmund Harvey to intercede for him with her. The Baronet so far acquiesced as to write to Juliet on the subject; but her answer so candidly declared her sentiments, and so earnestly requested that she might be spared all farther solicitation, that Sir Henry was compelled to be content with an absolute rejection.

At this period she was summoned to attend Mrs. Fitz-Arthur on the birth of a son. She found Lydia happy in her new character, and supporting it with a degree of propriety of which Juliet once thought her incapable. Retaining her original

bluntness and sincerity, but otherwise a different being, she had secured the attachment of her husband by her sweetness of temper and goodness of heart, which, amidst all the ill effects of a neglected education, had first attracted the regard of Juliet. Though refined and improved by good society, Lydia had still the same artlessness of manner, the same exuberant vivacity, as when she ran wild at Hobbleton Hall. She was the life of the family, and the delight of Fitz-Arthur, to whom she often repeated—

“What do you not owe to Miss Monteth, to our beloved Juliet! I was a savage till she tamed me, and by teaching me to love elegance and goodness in herself, made me ambitious to become something better than the mere romp she found me.”

The ingenuousness of the confession charmed him—he loved Lydia better for it, and he admired and venerated Juliet as a superior being. It was a delightful sa-

tisfaction to the latter to behold her late pupil thus happy and respected, and she quitted them once more to return to her dear, peaceful cottage, with renewed thankfulness for having been the instrument of good to the innocent, the neglected Lydia.

Mr. Hobbleton, who paid his niece a visit at the same time, conducted Juliet back to her home, and as they drove from Mr. Fitz-Arthur's door, and saw Lydia, with her infant Juliet in her arms, wave her hand to them from the window, he exclaimed—

“ Well, who would ever have thought that I should have lived to see Liddy turn out a lady, and cured of all her *vulgarness*; but it is all your doing, Miss, you have been the making of her, and if she don't love you all her life, she will be the most ungratefulest person in the world, to a certainty.

CHAP. XX.

THE MYSTERIOUS STRANGER.

THE village bells rang merrily, and proclaimed to its inhabitants the birth of a son to Sir Edmund Harvey. All was joy and congratulation. Mrs. Weldon, as usual, was foremost in promoting festivity on the occasion. Bonfires blazed—the peasantry dined in the park—the young danced on the turf—and the old reposed on seats beneath the high trees. Every face wore a smile, and all was hilarity around.

Juliet, with benevolent gladness, beheld the mirth of the tenantry, and ardently prayed that its cause might be productive of happiness to his family; but her

prayers were fruitless; a very few days, and the bells, which had hailed its birth, tolled the funeral knell; and the infant form of the young heir was consigned to the tomb of his ancestors. Juliet attended the interment.

A kind but melancholy letter from Sir Edmund, spoke his parental grief, and his alarm lest the tender frame of Lady Clara should be unable to support the agitation, caused by the loss of her child. Nor were his apprehensions vain. Always delicate, her ladyship's health, after the death of her babe, grew daily more alarming to her friends; and Harvey, in whom her virtues and her attachment to him had created the tenderest esteem, was unremitting in his attentions. He accompanied her to Bristol, in the hope of benefit; and, for a time, there appeared a prospect of her recovery, but soon again she drooped, and ere Juliet could answer Sir Edmund's letter, in which he described the flattering symptoms that had deluded them, the in-

telligence of her death reached the Lodge. It found Juliet on the point of obeying a summons from Mrs. Fitz-Arthur, who had requested her to hasten on business which she mentioned, as of particular import, to Mortlake, where she at present was.

The elder Fitz-Arthur had been seized with a dangerous illness, and had, greatly to the surprise of his family, enquired for Miss Montcith, and expressed an earnest wish to see her. At first they had conceived it to be the effects of delirium, but, on its being repeated, and urgently enforced, Mrs. Fitz-Arthur had intreated Lydia to write immediately to Juliet, and solicit her to be expeditious. Rapidly she obeyed, and quitted the cottage on the same morning that she received intelligence of the premature decease of the amiable Lady Clara.

At Mortlake she found all confusion and dismay. Mr. Fitz-Arthur was considerably worse; but, except in the one instance of his unceasing importunity to see

Miss Monteith, his senses appeared to be perfect, and she was led by his lady to his bed-side.

Though emaciated by illness, the same wild stare was fixed on Juliet as she entered; and after desiring her to approach, he waved his hand for every other person to quit the room. A short pause ensued; he raised his heavy eyes to her face, and at length said,—

“ I know that I am dying, and it will be a satisfaction to me to account for some parts of my conduct which you have witnessed, and, to an observant mind, must have appeared mysterious. Did you,” he added, looking steadfastly at her, “ ever hear of any person of the name of *Aveling* ?”

“ Oh, yes,” answered Juliet, with an involuntary shudder, for all her father’s injuries and sorrows were instantly brought to her recollection, and well she anticipated what would follow.

“ You have heard of him,” resumed

Mr. Fitz-Arthur, "as the enemy of your father, and, in him, of your mother; and such I acknowledge I was. Have patience, and listen to my narrative; nor feel too indignant while you hear it. Forgiveness is a duty you must often be called on to practise through life; let it be extended to me in the name of your parents! Would that they were here to bestow it themselves."

"They did bestow it," said Juliet, tears streaming from her eyes; "for they were incapable of malice. Freed now from all earthly frailties, their pure spirits would rejoice to give you peace."

A faint smile seemed to beam over the features of the dying man, as he continued—

"Born with strong passions and uncontrollable ambition, I sought for wealth and honours as the first blessings of life; and, spoiled by the indulgence of a tender father, I fancied all the world ought to be subservient to my wishes. Till I knew

the beautiful Emmeline Harvey, no desire was ungratified, nor had any female possessed the power to please me. Montcith, the natural son of my father, was a frequent visitor at the house of Lord Oglethorpe, where I first beheld him; he was a youth of superior talents and fascinating manners. These I envied not; but I saw that he had obtained the heart of Emmeline, and for that I hated him. The little regard my father had ever expressed for him, I alienated from him, and left no means untried to divide him from Emmeline; but in vain. In the height of my passion she eloped with him, and you know, I conclude, the lengths to which my desire of revenge carried me; but its gratification brought no relief. In the grave of my rival was buried my peace; I was married. Deprived of my early idol, riches and high descent had guided my choice, and Emmeline and her child received into the family of General Marsden, were safe from my attacks.

JULIET.

A long and dreadful illness, the combined effects probably of remorse and despair, first brought to my mind, a conviction of the atrocity of my own conduct, and a total revolution was effected. A large property in right of my wife devolved to me on condition of a change of name, and I returned to England; but society had lost all charms for me. To solitude and reflection have I devoted my time, except when the calls of charity have claimed my attention. The remote seat called the Hermitage, which came into my possession unexpectedly, by the death of the same relation, whose name I adopted, whenever I visited it, was a residence, which from its lonely situation was well adapted for privacy, and suited the gloomy temper of my mind. There, undisturbed I could indulge thought, and brood over my own offence; there, I could unseen perform those acts of penance which I enjoined myself, and there, as well as any where else, I could find ob-

jects of my bounty. To relieve distress was the only satisfaction this world could now yield me ; but in secret was it practised, and discarding all appearance of opulence, whenever I visited my family, the journey was performed in stages or any accidental conveyance. In returning to the Hermitage, after a longer absence than usual, I encountered you ; your countenance was the first on which my eyes rested after I entered the coach. In the imperfect glance I caught of it, I beheld the mingled lineaments of the injured Monteith and the never forgotten Emmeline. Your mourning habit, your dejection, all spoke to my wounded feelings ; but anxious to obtain a view of your features, unobscured by your veil, I quietly entered the chamber where I was informed you were asleep, and there received a full confirmation of my suspicions. I afterwards traced your wanderings, and had I not objected to discover myself to Sir Edmund Harvey, should have interfered

when you were so inhumanly refused his protection ; but I did not lose sight of you till your disappearance with the niece of your benefactor, for I had resolved by some means or other to afford you assistance, had not Mr. Hobbleton received you into his house."

Exhausted by speaking, Mr. Fitz-Arthur was compelled from weakness to cease. He lingered for several days, and Juliet shared with his own family the melancholy task of attending him. He evinced true penitence for the part he had acted towards Monteith, and lamented that he could not personally testify it. Surrounded by his lady, his children, and Juliet, he terminated an existence which the violence of his own passions had embittered.

Juliet remained at Mortlake till after the funeral, when once more she returned to her beloved home ; it seemed to become more endeared to her every time she quitted it. Mrs. Clermont, who visited the

Mortlake family in their affliction, before she left them, would fain have persuaded her to return with them to town ; but she found it impossible, and railled her on her increased partiality for retirement.

“ What potent spell binds you to this fascinating cottage ; my dear Juliet,” said she, “ whatever it be, I hope some valorous knight will try to break it, and set you free from the enchantment for I cannot endure that you should be buried all your life in seclusion.”

“ The spell,” said Juliet, “ is formed by friendship and domestic comfort.”

“ But you may find both those requisites, I presume, in the mansions of your friends, as well as at Harvey Cottage.”

“ In some mansions I grant,” said Juliet, “ but in general, a gay life is incompatible with the tranquility I wish for.”

“ Well we shall see,” said Mrs. Clermont, laughing, “ whether you do not one of these days try to reconcile all these seeming inconsistencies to your own ro-

mantic notions, for observe my prophecy Juliet, I shall yet live to see you seeking your favourite friend domestic comfort amidst opulence and splendour."

"Impossible!" thought Juliet; but she only smiled and waved her hand as she bade adieu to her friends at Mortlake.

The chaise waited to convey her home were she hoped she should now be suffered to remain quietly. Alone during her journey, her thoughts naturally reverted to Harvey Lodge—Where now was Sir Edmund? and how did he support the loss of his lady. Their early engagement had always led her to believe that it was a match of attachment on both sides, and she sighed deeply when she reflected on the blight which the happiness of Sir Edmund had received. It was now nearly two years since she had seen him, and she had heard that since the death of his lady he had led a wandering life, travelling about, and seldom resident at any place long.

It was some time since his household at the Lodge had expected him; but still he did not arrive, and the whole summer elapsed and yet he came not.

A magnificent monument had been erected by his order to the memory of his lady; but he forbore visiting it; and Juliet thought that he would perhaps feel too greatly affected by her loss, to behold with fortitude, the spot where her remains were deposited. The summer passed as usual at the Cottage: Ermine grew a tall girl, and required more attention than formerly. Juliet taught her music, and was indeed her general instructress. Madame de Neville's health was not strong, and Juliet was glad to relieve her from all mental fatigue.

She heard nothing of Sir Edmund Harvey, except from Mrs. Clermont, who in her letters frequently mentioned seeing him, but nothing was heard of his coming to the Lodge. Juliet on the whole, did not regret his absence, though she secret-

ly wondered what could be his motive for never visiting the seat of his ancestors, the favourite residence of his father.

She felt a strong inclination to view the monument, which she understood was erected to the memory of Lady Clara, in the chapel adjoining Harvey Lodge, where all the family were interred; but unwilling, that the emotions it excited should have any witness; she walked thither alone on a fine calm evening in autumn, at that sober hour, best suited for the meditations such a scene naturally inspires. She had previously procured a key which admitted her into the interior of the chapel, and she approached it with faltering steps. The tomb was of plain white marble, with a fine recumbent figure, bending over it, and this inscription in the centre.

SACRED TO THE MEMORY OF

Lady Clara Harvey.

If innocence, if virtue claim a tear,
Then, stranger, pay the tender tribute here.

Meekness, and truth, and piety of mind,
Were all, within an angel's form enshrin'd,
Her spotless soul to Heaven wing'd its flight,
By angels welcom'd to eternal light.

Juliet perused the lines with awe and emotion. She remembered the benevolence of character Lady Clara had displayed, when she herself first visited Harvey Lodge as a forlorn wanderer. Even now, she retraced her mild features as they had appeared to her, when, like an angel of pity, she had attended her bed-side during the night. The most tender gratitude swelled her bursting heart, and the tears involuntarily streamed from her eyes. She had always believed Harvey strongly attached to his lady, and she felt keenly for the grief her early death must have caused him—kneeling beside the monument, at the moment of retracing her steps homewards, she pressed her lips to the marble, and exclaimed—

“ Sweet Saint! may no selfish regrets interfere, to obliterate from this heart, the

recollection of thy kindness, thy humanity ; and may he, who laments thine irreparable loss, find peace from reflecting on thine early excellence"—

“ Oh ! aid him then in the sacred task !” cried a well known voice ; and the pale, but still interesting form of Sir Edmund Harvey stood before her. No affectations mingled with the surprize, Juliet discovered at his appearance, which was easily accounted for—He was just arrived at Harvey Lodge, and his first visit was to the monument of his wife,—of her, whose devoted attachment to himself had demanded all his tenderness, and claimed his eternal gratitude. With joy he reflected, that his irreproachable conduct had never for an instant given her cause to believe that her faithful affection was not returned with equal warmth ; and anxious to behold the monument, he had ordered to be erected, he had hastened to view it alone and to contemplate unseen the cold mar-

ble which enshrined the lovely form of Lady Clara.

Little did he imagine whom he should there find. The unexpected appearance of Juliet, in any other situation might have thrown him off his guard, but to meet him in a spot sacred to the memory of the wife who had claimed and possessed his tenderest esteem, to behold her paying the tribute of respect and gratitude over the tomb of her unconscious rival, seemed to impose silence, and cast a degree of awe over the scene, which threw at an immeasurable distance every idea connected with the sanctity of the place.—

Juliet saw how deeply he was affected, and rising, she slowly retired, leaving Harvey leaning over the monument. He rejoined her in the park, and when the first emotions had subsided, he anxiously enquired after her health, expressed a desire to see her residence, and said he should now remain some time at the Lodge—

“ To morrow,” said he, “ you must allow me to visit you at the Cottage, and introduce me to your friends. To night I will forbear to intrude. Yon sad memorial has unfitted me for society, and solitude may be my best friend—Adieu, dear Juliet, I live in the hope of your sympathy and friendship.”

He quitted her, and Juliet hastened home. The late scene had discomposed her, and she retired to her apartment. In the school of affliction she had been early taught the difficult lesson of regulating her mind, and she had laboured hard to attain the fortitude which had supported her, through the trials she had been doomed to encounter.

A firm trust in a superintending providence with constant religious exercises had given her a degree of mental strength beyond her years, and she now humbly sought from the same divine source, the aid she felt she needed. Ardently she prayed that her conduct might be guided

by those unerring rules which it had hitherto been her earnest endeavour to observe and in the solitude of her chamber she regained the composure which her late interview, had for the time interrupted.

CHAP. XXI.

“With such unshaken temper of the soul
To bear the swelling tide of prosp'rous fortune,
Is to deserve that Fortune.”

ROWE.

IN the society of his cousin, Sir Edmund Harvey found the consolation he sought, and the consequences may be easily foreseen. The attachment he had early conceived, and resolutely repressed, from a sense of honour, which would not suffer him to forfeit his engagement with Lady Clara, was no longer prohibited by duty. In Juliet, he found that sympathy of disposition and taste, which had never existed between him and Lady Clara. The talents and genius of the former, when unobscured by the veil cast over them by ti-

midity and affliction, were of a very superior order, and promised him a companion capable of joining in his favourite pursuits. The excellence of her understanding, and uncommon sweetness of temper, ensured him an able adviser, and an affectionate friend.

When he had once discovered the interest he had excited in the heart of Juliet, and a proper time had elapsed since the dissolution of his Lady, he suffered no unnecessary delays to defer his happiness.

The certain disapprobation of Lady Ellinor, seemed in Juliet's estimation, to be the great obstacle; but Harvey soon convinced her of the injustice of suffering such an apprehension to influence her. The objections of Lady Ellinor, as being founded in prejudice, ought not to be any barrier, and Juliet was well disposed to listen to reasoning which accorded with her own opinion.

The compliment of informing her Ladyship of her sons intended marriage was

not omitted, but it remained unnoticed; and they heard that Lady Ellinor had immediately set out for Bath, there to conceal her rage and mortification. Nor need Juliet, had she possessed her Ladyship's own malevolence, have wished her a severer punishment, than the knowledge of her marriage with her son, inflicted.

That the rejected niece of Sir Edmund; the daughter of Montcith; the child of the hated Fanneline; should supplant her in Harvey Lodge, and succeed to all her honours, in the bloom of youth and beauty, while yet the story of her having been discarded by her Ladyship was fresh in the memory of the neighbourhood; all combined to mortify the proud spirit of the yet unsubdued Lady Ellinor; and no entreaties on the part of her son, could prevail with her to listen to any terms of reconciliation.

At Juliets earnest request, the ceremony which united her to Harvey, was privately performed. Mrs. Clermont only

being present; nor till they returned to Harvey Lodge, was it publicly known. Then was it merrily proclaimed and joyfully hailed by their united friends, amongst whom, Mr. Hobbleton was the first to offer his congratulations—

“Being,” said he, “that nothing never pleased me no better than this here match—I always thought Miss was born to be a lady, and if she was a Duchess it is no more than she deserves.”

Harvey was delighted with the honesty and openness of his attorney, and assured him, that gratitude for his conduct to Lady Harvey, would ever ensure him a welcome reception at the lodge.

The Fitz-Arthurs were charmed at the *denouement* of their young friend's history, and Lydia was half wild with joy: through life she preserved the most enthusiastic attachment to Juliet; gratefully acknowledging her obligations, and anxious to testify her sense of them. Frequent communication united the two families by

the firmest ties of friendship; and Harvey Lodge and Mortlake, were alternately, for some weeks, the annual scene of their association. Mrs. Clermont was always of these family parties, and her love and admiration of Juliet terminated but with her existence.

Madame de Neville and Ermine remained inmates of the Cottage, and Henry Wilmot learned to forget his first disappointment in an union with the amiable Anna Morden.

Captain Hardington returned no more to England, he met his fate in a duel at Paris, while his friend the Count de Brisac, immediately on a renewal of the war, having entered the French army, in the first campaign finished his career.

In less than a year after the marriage of Harvey and Juliet, during an occasional visit to town, they were informed of the sudden and violent illness of Lady Ellinor. It was caused by a cold, caught during her journey from Brighton, and, settling in her limbs, deprived her of the use of them,

Softened by pain and affliction, she consented to see Juliet, and at length yielded to their solicitations of trying a change of air at Harvey Lodge. Here, the unremitting attentions of her daughter-in-law accomplished what sickness and sorrow had begun, and she became as complete a convert to the virtues of our heroine, as any of her most partial friends. To her duty and humanity she was indebted for comforts, which considerably tended to ameliorate the anguish of a lingering disorder, and rendered even a death-bed less terrific. Her conduct to his mother still more endeared Juliet to her husband, her character continually rose in his estimation, and they became celebrated as models of conjugal happiness.

Every person who had shown kindness and attention to Juliet at that memorable period, when, as a forlorn orphan, she sought Harvey Lodge, and was driven from it by the malevolence of Lady Ellinor, was noticed and respected by the enthusiastic Sir Edmund.

Mrs. Weldon had ample reason to recollect her excursion to Rushdale with Tom and his donkey, and her humane exertions in protecting the wanderer.

The benevolent Morden was ever a welcome guest to the Baronet; and the open-hearted Mr. Hobbleton was treated by him and his lady with the most grateful and friendly respect; and, with his usual way of speaking his mind, he was wont to say, that—

“ If no grand folks had never no more pride than Sir Edmund and Lady Harvey, and was as apt to remember the kindness shown them, he should have no objection to living amongst them himself.”

One of those events which gave real pleasure to Juliet, at an early period after her marriage, was an engagement formed between her *ci-devant* admirer, Sir Henry Colville, and Ellen Fitz-Arthur. It met the entire approbation of their friends; and Sir Henry, now a reformed character, proved a real acquisition to the family.

The happiness of Sir Edmund and Lady Harvey, founded on their domestic virtues, was as permanent and as perfect as mortality can dare to hope or expect.— Pious and rational, they sought it in the discharge of their public and private duties; maintaining the wise medium between dissipation and seclusion. In their mode of life, they presented an admirable example to their friends, children, and dependents.

Not one of her numerous friends more sincerely rejoiced in the felicity of Juliet, than her worthy benefactor, Mr. Hobbleton. It was always a subject of peculiar exultation to him; and as he, one day, beheld her from the dining-room window at the Lodge, where he was ever received with the truest welcome, amusing little Ermine on the lawn in the fine gardens, in revived health and spirits, sporting with the child with all the innocent gaiety that marked her natural character, addressing the good Mr. Wilmot, who was often included in their family parties, he said—

“ Well, I must say, it was one of the happiest days of my life, when I saw that sweet young creature rewarded for all her goodness and all her patientness. Under her troubles she was always quiet and contented; and when she was ill used, she was silent, and seemed to think more of making other people happy, than in talking of herself. She saved my niece from misery, and she made me quite a different sort of a man; and yet she had never no pride, nor no conceitedness, but was as humble with all her cleverness, as if she was as ignorant as any of us.”

“ You say right, my good friend,” answered Mr. Wilmot. “ Lady Harvey is, indeed, an excellent example of that true humility, without meanness or servility, which reconciles us to earthly trials, and, by teaching us ‘ not to think too highly of ourselves, but to think soberly,’ saves us innumerable mortifications. Her fortitude, resolution, and meekness, were the consequences of her strict adherence to those

religious principles which she early imbibed ; and though their observance is not always rewarded, as in this instance, by temporal prosperity, had adversity been her lot, still would her patient perseverance have been recompensed by conscientious integrity, and by ‘ that peace which the world’ alone ‘ cannot give.’ ”

FINIS.

THE SISTERS.



CHAP. I.

IN the solitude of her paternal mansion, the gothic seat of her ancestors, the youngest branch of the family of De Courcy had, from earliest infancy, been reared. Her father, who (herself, her governess, and the servants excepted) was the only inhabitant of the Abbey, was in manners and appearance a misanthrope. Never within the recollection of his daughter had he associated with more than a select few. Amongst these, the clergyman of the ad-

jacent village had been one of the most intimate; and in childhood she remembered that a young Baronet, who possessed an estate contiguous, had been a frequent and welcome guest to her father, and a favourite playfellow of her own, though some years her senior; but a lapse of time had passed since that period, and memory only pointed to it as one of those sunny eras in childhood's happy day, on which it delighted to linger.—

“Where is Horace Lascelles now?” asked Helen, while yet a child.

“Sir Horace Lascelles is abroad,” answered her father.

“And when will he return?” inquired she.

“Perhaps never,” was the reply of Sir Everard, while a paroxysm of mental anguish seemed to contract his features, and rendered his countenance so terrific, that Helen, who often shrunk from him in terror, sought an asylum from his anger in the nursery apartments, and in the society of the amiable being who presided there,

and who had implanted the first rudiments of education in her juvenile mind. *Miss*, or (as she often assured them she preferred being called) *Mrs.* Ormsby, had resided in the family of Sir Everard de Courcy from the period at which he lost his wife. She was sister to the clergyman before-mentioned, and had been recommended by him to his patron, to superintend the education of his daughters, on the loss of their mother. Mild, amiable, and accomplished, endowed with strong sense, and firm principles, *Mrs.* Ormsby had executed her task with scrupulous exactness, and the children of her care had promised to be all the fondest parent could wish.

Ellina, the eldest, was six years older than her sister. Well did Helen remember her, and often during the first year of her sister's removal from the Abbey, had she said to *Mrs.* Ormsby—

“Where is Ellina now? When will she come back to me? Why did she cry so before she left me?”

Some evasive answers to these numerous questions had, for some years, satisfied the youthful inquirer; but as she grew in age, her curiosity, respecting her sister, became more insatiate; still it was a subject she never dared to enter upon with her father; once only she had attempted it, when the terrors of his brow, the trembling agitation of his manner, and the solemn injunction he gave her, never again to name the detested subject to him, had so effectually prevented her recurring to it, except in thought, that not even to Mrs. Ormsby had she afterwards been so importunate; but in her own expanding mind, the remembrance of a beloved sister was not so easily effaced, and fondly was it cherished by the enthusiastic Helen.

In infancy and childhood, Helen had been remarkably delicate and sickly, while her sister Ellina was one of the most beautiful healthy children ever beheld. At ten years old, the period at which she had lost her lovely sister, the form of Helen

was beginning to improve, and from that time till she was eighteen, it rapidly grew more attractive. She now strikingly resembled her sister, but the same difference was visible in their persons as their minds. Helen possessed Ellina's dazzling complexion, elegant form, and fine features, but with much more expression of countenance; and to the same sweetness of temper and amiable disposition, she joined a far superior understanding, and talents the most brilliant. Even the misanthropical Sir Everard could not fail to discern the evident superiority of his youngest daughter, and gradually he began to contemplate, and listen with the same delight, as he had once felt in his idolized Ellina.

In tranquil retirement, and in such studies as Mrs. Ormsby deemed requisite, which included every elegant accomplishment, and a competent knowledge of literature in general, the days of Helen had passed till her eighteenth year, unmarked

by any event of importance, save the mysterious estrangement of her sister, whose name was now never mentioned, and whose very existence seemed, except by Helen, forgotten.

Sir Everard appeared to grow daily more attached to his remaining daughter, and would at last seldom permit her to be long absent from him.

As she was one day walking with him on the confines of his own domain, and Helen, with her usual animation, was pointing out to his observation the fine effect of the sun's rays on an old ruin, that crowned an opposite eminence on the Llangville estate, which adjoined that of De Courcy:—her father suddenly paused, and turning from her, said—

“ Ah, that tower Helen, was the scene of a plan which deprived your father of his dearest hopes; it is baneful to my sight.”

He ceased, then sudden'y exclaiming--
“ Dear, injured Horace! never can I

forget your mild resignation, your unequalled fortitude, never cease to deplore your loss!"—Helen looked at Sir Everard with an air of anxious inquiry, and after another pause—

“Yes, Helen,” said he, “I would fain endeavour to talk to you of our friend, our inestimable Lascelles, but at the sound of his name my hardly-earned composure forsakes me. You remember how I loved him, you must recollect the delight with which I ever received him here. His father was my earliest friend, and on his death-bed he deputed me to be sole guardian of his son, till he should attain his twenty-first year. ‘It is my earnest hope,’ said my expiring friend, ‘that you will be more than a nominal parent to my boy, and that one of your own daughters may be his early choice. Educate them with this view, and let us still in our children be united.’ The idea was eagerly adopted, and Horace had scarcely attained his

eighteenth year, ere he declared his strong attachment to my then idolized Ellina.

“From an infant she was one of the most lovely of created beings: with what rapture did I contemplate her beauty, and anticipate a union between my heart’s darling and the son of my dearest friend!—Reared in the knowledge of her destiny, indulged in every wish she formed, could I have conceived it possible she would deceive me! Horace adored her—he is by nature an enthusiast, and Ellina was formed to be loved. But what avails it what she was!” he added with one of those fierce starts of anguish, which had before often terrified Helen; “to me she is lost.”

“Oh no, not lost,” said Helen, “for sure my sister yet lives.”

“She lives,” he answered wildly, “to bear a name I abhor; but ask no more. Go, child,” he added, “go now, and leave me. Mrs. Ormsby shall tell you the rest.”

Helen pensively obeyed him, and the

same evening, by Sir Everard's request, Mrs. Ormsby imparted the sequel of Ellina's tale.

Indulged by her fond father in every wish, she had obtained permission to visit town with her aunt, the Honourable Mrs. Murray, a sister of her late mother, a widow, and a woman of high fashion. Here she became acquainted with the younger branch of a noble family, then an officer in the Guards. Heedless of danger, and awake only to gaiety and happiness, Ellina discouraged not his attentions, though too well she knew, that between his family and her own an hereditary feud subsisted, too violent to hope it would be overcome.

The castle of Llangville overlooked the domain of De Courcy, and in ruinous pride, on the summit of a craggy rock, remained a memento of the fallen greatness of its possessors. The enmity of the families of Llangville and De Courcy, combined with other reasons, had long since induced the former to forsake wholly their

ruined inheritance in Wales, and seek a more cheerful abode; so that for many years they had run no risk of communication.

On Ellina's return home, she was followed thither by her lover, who, taking up his abode in the ruins of his father's castle, contrived to have frequent interviews with her, and at length persuaded her to elope with him, exactly a month previous to the period fixed on for her marriage with Sir Horace Lascelles. The grief and disappointment of Sir Everard exceeded all description. He refused to receive comfort from his friends, forbade the name of Ellina being mentioned in his presence, declined society, and devoted himself to solitude. Though many letters from his offending daughter reached him, none were ever opened, and all hope of reconciliation was denied.

The young Baronet, not less disappointed, at first gave way to his anguish, in the lonely shades of his own domain; but

soon he seemed to reassume the courage and energy which from a boy had distinguished his character, and in a letter to Sir Everard, he announced his intention to travel for a few years, during which, he proposed to visit some of the principal courts of Europe. No interview took place before his departure; both were alike distressed at the thought of meeting, and each was anxious to decline it.

Eight years had elapsed; the wheel of time had transformed the secluded Horace Lascelles into a man of fashion, he had visited different courts and countries, and his letters were always a source of the highest interest and delight to Sir Everard, who, after he had once taken a resolution of conversing with Helen on the subject, that had so long been a cause of silent anguish, regularly read to her the epistles of this favourite son of his adoption. Specimens, certainly, by no means unfavourable, of the genius, talents, and heart of the writer; and to Helen ren-

dered particularly interesting, by her early recollection of the author, and by the still strong attachment of Sir Everard to the son of his friend.

CHAP. II.

WHEN Helen had once heard the tale of her sister's estrangement, it became the first wish of her heart to see Ellina restored to her father's favour. By nature gentle and affectionate, she longed once more to behold her. Though almost unknown, she loved and pitied her, for the misery that she thought must be her portion, in being banished from her only parent, and the paternal mansion where she had been reared. She began to take a singular pleasure in frequenting those spots on her father's estate, which commanded a view of the domain of Llangville.

The vast mansion belonging to that fa-

mily was now almost wholly in ruins ; it was only inhabited by an old man and his wife, ancient servants of the late Sir Owen Llangville ; but she dared not prolong her walks within any enclosure belonging to the castle, for even by the servants it was avoided, so extensive were the effects of the feuds that had long subsisted. All around Llangville wore an air of desolation ; the park, containing a few scattered deer that fed on the neglected herbage, had the appearance of being wholly deserted, and was overgrown with weeds and briars ; the trees were all decaying, and the paths overgrown.

As Helen was one morning walking in an avenue of elms, in her father's park, which ran parallel with the road that divided it from the wind domain of Llangville, her ear was struck with the sound of voices. In a female tone she heard the words—

“ Indeed, Miss Emily. I shall be very angry with you, if you do not come down

from that gate ;” and at the same moment through the branches of the trees, a little cherub face, with curling flaxen hair, met her eye ; it was evidently a child, who had climbed the wicket that separated the park from the road. Helen approached, and saw a respectable-looking female servant, who was vainly expostulating with the little rambler, a beautiful blooming girl of five years old, who, holding by the rail of the gate, on which she stood, was gratifying her infantine curiosity with a survey of the avenue. A pale, sickly, but handsome boy, in a child’s chaise which the servant drew, was amused by his sister’s rebellious vivacity, and another woman, who had the appearance of a nurse, with a fine infant in her arms, stood at a little distance.

“ I may look, nurse,” said the little girl, “ besides, I want to see that butterfly,” pointing to one, which at the same moment perched on Helen’s veil.

“ You shall see it, dear little creature !”

said Helen, and taking the gaudy insect in her hand, she held it towards her.

“Mamma says I must not kill it,” said the little prattler, extending her fat dimpled hand; “I will only look at it. Oh, how pretty! all blue and yellow. See, Morton, see,” and leaping from the gate she ran with it to her sick brother.

“Oh, pretty ‘thing! Give it back to the lady, Emily,” said the boy, “you will squeeze it to death, and then Mamma will be so angry.”

The pliable little Emily returned with it to Helen, and putting it through the rails of the wicket.

“There, I have not killed it,” said she.

“You are a sweet good child,” said Helen, taking her in her arms over the gate, “and now tell me your name, and who is this good Mamma that teaches you not to kill butterflies?”

As she spoke she looked at the servants, and was surprized to see great confusion in the countenances of both. The child

looked at her without speaking, and the woman attempted to take her from Helen, saying—

“Come, Miss Emily, we must go home, Master Morton is tired.”

Helen fancied she saw an unwillingness on the part of the servants to answer her inquiries, and therefore forbore to repeat her question, but she silently wondered to whom the children could belong, for she could recollect no family of the name of *Morton* in the vicinity, and she was certain that was the appellation by which the little girl, as well as the servant, had addressed the sick boy. Embracing again the sweet cherub, she gave her to the arms of the servant, and bade them good morning.

Mrs. Ormsby met her on her return, and listened with surprise to her adventure, as Helen termed it; she looked unusually thoughtful, made many minute inquiries respecting the children, wondered who they could be, and said she could not

help suspecting that some of the Llangville family were either coming to, or arrived at the castle; for that she had noticed persons walking on the old platform before it, through a telescope, which she had accidentally turned in that direction from the window of her apartment, the only one which commanded a view of Llangville.

“ But do not mention the circumstance to your father,” said she, “ it will only tend to disturb the tranquillity, which he has with difficulty at length attained.”

When they joined Sir Everard at dinner, his wonted taciturnity was greatly increased; he eat little, and spoke less, and Helen and her friend concluded, that the unusual appearance of inhabitants at Llangville had come to his knowledge. With her usual attention, Helen asked if she should sing or play to him, but he declined both, and retired to his library, where, for the first few years after the loss of his favourite daughter, he had always passed his time, till Helen had in some degree

filled the vacancy Ellina had left in his heart; and then he had become so fond of her society, that he seldom quitted them after dinner, but on this evening his old melancholy habits seemed at once to have returned.

Helen knew that he had not for some time heard from Sarah de La Celle, and his remembrance was so closely connected with that of Langville, that if any intelligence respecting the latter had reached him, she was aware that it would not fail to open afresh the wound that Ellina's desertion had inflicted.

She saw her father no more that evening, and for several successive days he only joined them at dinner, taking his other meals in his own apartment. Helen grew very uneasy, and one extreme warm morning in particular, was rendered so anxious by his apparently increasing disquietude, that a nervous headach induced her to try a walk, and while strolling through the park, reflecting on the subject that most

interested her, a loud shriek attracted her attention—she paused to listen,—it was repeated, and fancying the sound proceeded from the road, she directed her steps that way. The screams, that now loudly struck on her affrighted ear, impelled her forward; they proceeded from the road, and she had no sooner attained the wicket leading to it, than she descried the same groupe of children and their attendants, whom she had encountered a few days preceding.

The poor sick child, oppressed probably by the rays of a burning sun, in his weak state of health had fainted, and the sounds which had reached Helen were the shrieks of his terrified sister, who, from the ghastly appearance of his countenance, believed him to be dead. One of the maids carried the baby, and the other was employed in supporting and chafing the hands of the poor little invalid. Helen sprang over the gate, and offered her assistance; she helped the woman to lift him out of the chaise, and

lay him at length in the shade. Fortunately she had salts in her pocket, which she applied, and succeeded in restoring him to animation.

He smiled sweetly on Helen, who, scattering herself on the grass, had taken him in her lap, and resting his head on her shoulder, he seemed to recollect her. The maid had been employed in quieting the frightened little girl.

“ I hope you have not far to take this dear boy,” said she to the servant, “ for he seems very incapable of enduring the fatigue of riding in this warm sun.”

“ No, not far, Ma'am,” answered the woman.

“ Had you not better suffer him to stop and rest at the Abbey ?” said she ; “ I shall return home immediately, and you can all accompany me ; his parents will not, I think, wish him to be exposed to this heat—he is still very faint.”

“ Oh no, Ma'am,” said the servant, “ I must take him home ; indeed he cannot go to the Abbey.”

“Who, then, are his parents?” asked Helen, and she looked steadfastly in the woman’s face.

She hesitated a moment, and then said—
“Sir Morton Llangville is his father, Ma’am.”

“Sir Morton Llangville!” exclaimed Helen; “and his mother, Oh, his mother is my sister, my dear regretted Ellina. Ah! how like is this sweet girl to the beautiful face I so well remember!”

“Miss Emily, Ma’am,” said the woman, “is not so much like my lady as you are. I knew you, the other day, by the likeness.”

Helen, while the servant spoke, was fondly caressing her new-found little relations. She told them she was their aunt; and the little sickly sensible Morton, charmed by her affectionate attention to him, said—

“Then, if you are our aunt, go home with us, or let us go home with you. I hate that dark old castle; but I should not mind if you were there too.”

The merry little Emily, too, clung to her, and said—"Me go too."

"Oh, if I dared!" said Helen, with the big tear standing in her eye, "dear children, how readily, how delightedly would I convey you to my home and your's."

Scarcely had she spoken, while still bending over the poor little Morton, and pressing him to her bosom, the voice of her father broke on her ear. Never till now had she feared the sound; but too well knowing his sensibility to the subject, she started up, delivered Morton to the attendants, charged them to meet her on the same spot the next morning, and then hastily re-entering the park, joined her father in the avenue. He remarked that she looked hurried and confused, and questioned her as to where she had been; and she fancied, that the eager eye with which he surveyed her, betrayed suspicion.

To Mrs. Ormsby she resolved to relate

her recent discovery, but, till she had consulted her, she dared not mention it to Sir Everard. He had just received a letter from his still-loved Horace, and had walked out to meet Helen, to impart to her its contents.

“ He will return to us soon, Helen,” said he ; “ he is, even now, perhaps, actually on his journey. His letter is dated, *Nice* ; and, in one part, he says—

‘ Ycs, my dear Sir, after ten years’ absence, I shall revisit my native land ; and though the arms which I once fondly thought would expand to receive me, are closed against me for ever ! your’s are still open ; and though you will doubtless find me greatly altered, my respect, my affection for you, is unchanged, unabated ; and to an interview with you do I look forward, as to one of the highest gratifications England can afford me. My friends have long earnestly solicited my return, a place in the senate is offered me, and fame and honours, I am told, await me. Once

I would have sacrificed all for domestic comfort ; but that time is past, and henceforward I must live for the world. In my travels, I have found much to admire, to entertain, to improve, and to instruct ; but still my heart turns to my country, and there only I feel I can find peace.— Think not that I ever again intend, even for a time, to indulge a romantic inclination for seclusion. The great world will henceforward be my sphere of action, except when the strong attractions of friendship draw me to that part of Great-Britain, where my earliest affections expanded, till the blight of disappointment over-clouded the prospect, and drove me an alien from all I loved. The wound is healed, and has had at least the salutary effect of rendering me, I think, invulnerable to any similar impression.’

The remainder of the letter contained nothing remarkable. It was the first of Sir Horace Lascelles’ epistles that Helen had ever heard with indifference ; and

though it contained intelligence so interesting, as that of his projected return, still she scarcely listened to it, so anxious was she to reach home, to impart to Miss Ormsby her meeting with her sister's children. That excellent woman heard it with more emotion than surprise, for she had suspected to whom the little ones belonged, from the time of Helen's first meeting them. Her affection for Ellina had been as great, in proportion, as that felt by Sir Everard, and she had been cruelly hurt by her desertion and subsequent neglect; but Miss Ormsby's well-regulated mind was incapable of nourishing malignity, and, though her feelings had been severely wounded by the conduct of her pupil, she had long since freely forgiven her.

“ I must see these little unconscious representatives of poor Ellina,” said she to Helen, “ and I will accompany you, tomorrow morning, to meet them. I fear your anxious countenance, my dear Helen,

would betray that we have a secret, if Sir Everard were not fortunately too much occupied in thinking on the near approaching return of his favourite, to notice us."

And this was precisely the case. The idea of once more beholding the son of his friend, and some almost undefined hope attached to it, rendered the Baronet so thoughtful, that he could dwell on no other subject, and retired, still earlier than he had lately done, to his library, to meditate in seclusion; leaving his daughter and her friend at liberty to talk over the recent discovery, and to anticipate its consequences, which, they fondly flattered themselves, might lead to the long wished-for reconciliation with the erring Ellina.

CHAP. III.

With anxious steps Helen and Mrs. Ormsby on the following morning hastened to their appointment; but they were too early, and they walked in the avenue till the voices of the servants and the children reached them from the road; the poor sick boy was again in his little chaise, but he was supported by a pillow, and looked much worse than on the preceding day. The moment he saw Helen, he held out his hand to her and exclaimed—

“Oh here is the pretty Lady! that said she was our aunt.”

Helen and Mrs. Ormsby both fondly embraced them, and when the former re-

marked, that poor Morton looked worse, the nurse said—

“He has been so very ill Ma’am since yesterday, that I should not have thought of bringing him out to day, if he had not begged and prayed me to to let him see you again, and the physicians have always desired that he may be as little contradicted as possible: he was very feverish all night, and kept talking wildly of the pretty lady his aunt; he is very fond of his Mamma, Ma’am, and you are so much like her, that I thought if he could see you to day, he would be easier.”

Helen took him in her arms—

“Dear boy!” said she, “what can I do for you.”

“Oh take me home with you,” said he, “I hate that nasty dark castle”—And he fastened his little thin arms round her neck.

Much affected by the sight of Ellina’s children, Mrs. Ormsby could not refrain from alluding to their mother.

“I almost wonder,” said she, “that

Lady Llangville should choose to part from her son, while he is in such a delicate state of health. Was change of air prescribed for him by the faculty?"

"Oh yes, Ma'am," said the woman, "they said he could not possibly live long in town; but my lady seldom sees much of her children, she had no notion how bad Master Morton was, till the physician told her, so we were all sent off to Wales in a hurry."

The words, '*my lady seldom sees much of her children,*' sounded harshly in the ears of Mrs. Ormsby and Helen.

"Is Lady Llangville in town now?" asked the former.

"Oh yes, Ma'am," she answered, "my Lady never leaves it till July, and then she generally goes to Brighton, for a month or two, and in either place she is so much engaged that she has very little time to see much of Master Morton; I have nursed him from his birth, and I was miserable till I got him out of town, to a place where we could try the goat's

milk that Dr. H.—— recommended, but I am afraid it will be of no use, for he has taken such a dislike to the castle, that I am sure he is worse instead of being better.”

A return of the same faintness that had so much alarmed the attendants in the little invalid the day before, here interrupted her. Helen seated herself on the grass, and supported him in her lap, and when a little recovered he clung to her, and said. “ Oh let me go home with you, I hate the castle.”

“ Oh if I dared!” again ejaculated Helen, and at the sight of the child’s pallid countenance, and the recollection that he was the offspring of Ellina, the tears sprang to her eyes, and dropped on the pale face of her little nephew.

At this moment, an exclamation, uttered near them, discovered Sir Everard to the terror struck Helen; he had reached the wicket unperceived, so much had they

been occupied, and now unclosing it, he advanced.

“Helen,” he cried, “what are you doing? who are these children?”

Helen tried to speak, but she was too greatly agitated, and Mrs. Ormsby was on the point of leading to an explanation, when Sir Everard caught a view of the little Emily’s face. He started, stared at her wildly, and then in a hollow voice, cried—

“Who is she?” for her’s were the infant features of Ellina. In a supplicating attitude, Helen sought to deprecate his displeasure.

“Oh pardon me,” she cried, “my dear father, and pardon *them*, for their mother’s sake, your once dear Ellina.”

Sir Everard could hear no more; he gazed alternately at each of the children, and then, with unbending countenance moved away; but Helen would not now be repulsed, she followed him, she implor-ed, she told the tale of the poor little in-

valid, with tears she pleaded, and finally she conquered. Sir Owen Llangville, he, who had uniformly opposed Sir Everard, who had retained all the hereditary animosity of his family, against that of De Courcy; was dead, and his son had lately succeeded his title and estates.

Of him Sir Everard had heard a very different character, and as the husband of Ellina, perhaps he wished to think well of him. In pathetic terms, Helen, emboldened by his softened countenance, represented the dangerous state of the little Morton, and finally she obtained a complete victory, with permission to bring him to De Courcy.

The servants obeyed her orders, and her nephew was soon settled in her own apartment, under the joint care of his attentive aunt, and Mrs. Ormsby; but Helen did not stop here, she interceded with her father, till he consented she should write, to her sister; she told her of the meeting with the little ones, who had so

powerfully pleaded her cause, that Sir Everard had received them at the abbey ; Llangville castle being so gloomy and ancient, as to render it a very improper abode, for the sickly Morton ; he had been extremely ill, but was now daily improving in health. She expressed her own strong desire, to know the sister from whom she had been so early separated, and hinted, that she was assured any advances she chose to make, towards a reconciliation with her father, would, in his present frame of mind, be accepted ; so greatly was he softened by the interest her little representative had awakened."

Some insight may be gained into the character of Lady Llangville, by the following answer to her sister's letter, which Helen had anticipated with inexpressible anxiety—

My dear Helen.

" I am exceedingly obliged to you for

your letter, and for your friendly expressions of sisterly regard, as well as for your care and attention to my poor sick boy. I inclose a letter to my father, to whom it is needless to add, I shall be truly rejoiced to be reconciled, on his account, as well as on that of poor Morton. I wish Llangville Castle was a little nearer London; but my engagements, at present are such as to wholly prevent me from leaving town at this season. Another winter I hope my father will spare you to us, for I assure you, my dear Helen, I wish very much to see you; and if De Courcy Abbey be not very much altered, I think you will have no objection to exchange it for the metropolis. Sir Morton talks of visiting Llangville soon; if so, you will see him; he is very anxious about our boy, who, I tell him, will, with goat's milk, and the help of your good nursing return to us, I doubt not, quite well. I wish you would accompany Sir Morton back from Wales; try to obtain

my father's permission, and believe me you will be received with real delight by

Your affectionate,

Though almost unknown sister,

ELLINA LLANGVILLE.

Thoughtless as Helen had concluded her sister must be, she could not have formed any idea of such fashionable indifference, as this epistle displayed. That she would not instantly have flown, on the first hint; to a parent, from whom she had been so long estranged; a child in a state of health, the most alarming; and a sister, whom, since an infant she had not beheld, she could not, without such proof as the letter before her, have credited.

“Oh, Ellina!” thought she, “How different, I hope, would have been my conduct under similar circumstances!”

She almost feared to deliver to Sir Everard, the address of her sister, lest

the same lightness and indifference should appear in it, and unclose the yet scarcely healed wound on the sensitive feelings of her father: but fortunately, she had nothing to apprehend on this subject; the letter was short, and expressed Ellina's earnest wish to regain his favour.

The deficiency in feeling was supplied by the partiality, which had been accustomed to magnify every perfection, and excuse every defect in this darling child; and Helen had the satisfaction to perceive, that the faults in her sister's character, were as yet visible to no eye but her own.

An opening once made, the reconciliation was soon completed with Sir Everard, by the fascinating mediation of his grandchildren, to whom, he grew every day more fondly attached.

The little interesting Morton, a child of the most promising talents, soon, by the care and unremitting attention of Helen, began to recover his health, and a few weeks wrought such a change in

his appearance, that he could scarcely be recognised, for the little sickly object Helen had first beheld him.

The greatest difficulty attending the reconciliation of Sir Everard and his daughter, was the necessity of an introduction to her husband; but as he was, by the death of his father, become the head of his family, even the Baroner's objections to him, were considerably diminished.

Sir Owen Llangville, proud, arrogant, high-spirited, and possessing all the family prejudices of his fore-fathers, had always been decidedly Sir Everard's aversion; but his son, who, though he did not know him, he had heard was open, generous, candid, and free from pride, he was inclined to regard with more lenity; and when a note arrived from Llangville Castle, announcing that Sir Morton was there, and requesting to know when he might be permitted to wait on Sir Everard, and to see his children, Helen was enchanted to hear an imme-

diate and cordial invitation returned by the messenger.

Sir Morton readily obeyed the summons, and at his first introduction greatly prepossessed Sir Everard in his favour.—His fine manly open countenance, exactly declared his real temper and disposition; the former was remarkably easy, and the latter candid, liberal, and benevolent. His fondness for his children, his anxiety for little Morton in particular, and the affection with which he spoke of his wife, all greatly pleased his new friends at the abbey; and even, though he had supplanted Horace Lascelles, Sir Everard was compelled to acknowledge him to be in himself, unexceptionable.

Helen was much pleased with him, and began to think she had been too hasty in her judgment of her sister; her choice certainly reflected no dishonour on her taste. Sir Morton had been accustomed to the society of persons of superior rank and fashion, yet he appeared to be fond

of domestic comfort. He declared a strong partiality for the country, yet it appeared that he lived almost the whole year round in town.

Helen could not understand all this; but Sir Morton evaded giving his reasons for a constant town residence, and it was not till he had been their guest more than a week, that, as he was one day walking alone with her, he acknowledged, that it was Lady Langville's dislike to the country, which induced him to sacrifice his own inclinations in that respect.

“But the truth is, my dear Miss de Courcy,” said he, “that Ellina has always been a spoiled child. Sir Everard began, and I am afraid I have trodden the same path. She is a lovely creature still, though late hours and a fashionable life have injured her complexion, she is still beautiful; but I own, if she would become rather more domestic, it would be a source of infinite satisfaction to me. I wish Sir Everard could be prevailed on to

spare you to us, for a short time. I certainly flatter myself your society would"—he paused a moment, and then added with a smile, "it is hard to say what it would *not* do. Ellina has an excellent heart and a sweet temper; she would, she must, love you, and in short Helen you must join your endeavours with mine, to prevail on Sir Everard to suffer you to visit town."

"I should like much to see London," she answered, "and oh! how much more I should rejoice to behold Ellina, I need not, I think say, but I cannot leave my father. After having for many years seen him suffer in silence, without being permitted to afford him consolation, I have at last the satisfaction of finding I am useful and I flattered myself a comfort to him. How then Sir Morton, can I think of leaving him?"

Sir Morton acknowledged the justice of her observations; but it was very evident he was anxious for her introduction to her

sister, and Helen's natural perspicuity soon discovered, that the conduct of Ellina was not exactly what he approved, though the subject was too delicate to discuss openly.

CHAP. IV.

THE strong desire of Helen to see and know her sister, was destined to be gratified. Sir Everard was easily prevailed on to consent to her visiting town, particularly as a second letter from Sir Horace Lascelles spoke of the period of his return as uncertain, and probably more distant than he had thought of.

“ You must, my dear Helen,” said Sir Everard, “ be at home to welcome your old friend ; but as he will not probably be here before the summer or autumn, you may pass the early part of the spring with your sister, and restore to me my two treasures at once. Ormsby has kindly promised to forsake the parsonage; and

take up his abode here in your absence. My usual avocations will engage the mornings, and chess, reading, and conversation, will fill up our evenings till your return."

This intelligence was truly gratifying to Helen. She knew her father had a real value for Mr. Ormsby, whose excellent character, strict piety, and mild benevolence, had early won his affection, and she was aware that he was the only person who could, in any degree, supply her place.

Mrs. Ormsby had an early friend married in town, from whom she had been many years separated, and proposed availing herself of Helen's intended excursion to pay her a visit. This was particularly desirable, as it would secure her protection and society during the journey. It was a great event in the life of Helen, to quit the abode of her youth, and emerge at once into the world, under the auspices of a sister yet unknown; and Helen was

exactly at that period of life, when novelty gilds every object with the glowing tints of happiness, and throws a charm around, which time and experience can alone destroy.

“ Happy season of juvenility! How does the sober reason of maturity contemplate, with wonder, thy buoyant spirit! unbroken by the trials of the world, in which all seems joy; hope, and peace, to thy unsophisticated feelings!”

Such was the exclamation of Sir Everard de Courcy, as he watched Helen spring into the carriage which was to convey her to town, and smile through the tears which the separation from her father had brought to her eyes. Sir Morton had taken the children and their attendants with him, when he had quitted the abbey, a short time before.

The journey was performed in safety, and Helen entered London all hope, expectation, and delight. Early in March the season was mild and remarkably fine;

it was a clear star-light night; and the cheerful bustle that saluted her eyes and ears; the lamps, carriages, and company, all was novelty and pleasure. In Portland-place, Sir Morton was ready to receive them.

“ You are late, my dear Helen,” said he; “ Lady Llangville had a very particular engagement, and deferred leaving home till the last moment, in the hope of seeing you before she went.”

“ Is not Ellina at home, then ?” asked Helen, in a voice of disappointment.

Sir Morton, with an air of chagrin, answered in the negative; but said, she had promised to return early—“ though, as you are doubtless fatigued,” he added, “ I fear there is little chance of your meeting to-night.

Helen felt far more than she wished Sir Morton to believe, and retired to her chamber, not so well pleased with her reception as she had hoped to be. The unusual fatigue of travelling soon lulled

her to repose, and she awoke with revived hopes and cheerfulness; but she had long to wait, ere the effect of her nocturnal vigils allowed Lady Llangville to rise to a one o'clock breakfast in her dressing room.

Sir Morton was, however, ready to join Helen at nine, and to their comparatively early repast, little Morton and Emily were admitted; after which a visit to the nursery, and a walk with the children occupied the time, till a summons to Lady Llangville's dressing room informed her, that her sister was risen, and thither she accompanied Sir Morton, whose kindness of heart rendered him anxious as herself for the interview.

In an elegant undress, reclining on a superb ottoman, with her breakfast equipage before her, they found Lady Llangville. Eagerly did the eyes of Helen survey the faintly remembered person of her sister; she beheld a form for grace and elegance that equalled her own, and a

countenance so similar, that but for the paleness which dissipation had produced, and the artificial roses, substituted, to conceal the effects of unseasonable hours, high play, and destructive passions, she would have appeared another Helen.

With surprise and pleasure, Lady Llangville gazed on the unfaded charms of her young and lovely sister, and unpromising as had been her first reception, Helen felt her hopes revive, from the affection and cordially her sister manifested.—

“I perceive, my dear,” said Lady Llangville, looking earnestly and archly at her sister, “that I have acted in a very impolitic manner in bringing you forward in the world. You are so strikingly like me, when I first came out, that every body, I have no doubt, will exclaim, ‘How exactly Miss De Courcy is like what Lady Llangville *was*.’ Oh, that unfortunate *was*—it sounds a terrible knell in the ear of decaying beauty.”

“But that epithet cannot yet be applied

to you, my dear sister," said Helen. "The foggy atmosphere of town will always, I have heard, affect the looks; the pure air of your native mountains only is wanting to render your countenance healthy as mine."

"Yes, my dear," answered Lady Llangville, "there is a great deal more wanted than 'the pure air of my native mountains,' for there is a mind at ease required to enable me to enjoy that air," and her Ladyship arose, and with a disordered step paced the apartment. She turned her face away, and Helen did not, till she returned towards her, see that it was as pale as rouge would suffer it to appear, that her lips were white, and that suppressed tears stood in her eyes. But soon recovering, and before Helen had time to utter any of the friendship or affection she felt, she suddenly turned towards the glass, began to re-adjust her hair, added to the tint on her cheek, and then re-approaching Helen she said—

"Well, my sweet sister, and how is our

excellent A B C friend, Mrs. Ormsby? Has she, in the depths of her heart, forgiven my desertion of her idol, Horace Lascelles? who, to punish me for my sins, is, I hear, coming home, in all the splendour of natural and acquired talents, to astonish the great world by his virtues and graces."

Helen could only answer—

"Indeed, I believe she has sincerely forgiven you long since; but you cannot wonder if she have not wholly forgotten, what her deeply wounded feelings have contributed to impress on her mind."

"Well, she is a good creature," said Lady Llangville, "with all her *old maidism*, and I have been thinking, Helen, that she and my father ought, in conscience, to forgive me, now that there is a fair prospect of all being made up to them; for, of course, Horace can do neither more nor less than marry you."

"Marry me!" exclaimed Helen, "indeed I believe my father has never enter-

tained any such idea, and if he have, he will assuredly be disappointed, for Sir Horace, in his very last letter, seems to hint the improbability of his ever forming any second attachment." A loud laugh from Lady Llangville interrupted her.

"Pardon me, my dear Helen," said she, "but I cannot help being amused by your — *unconsciousness*, I think, we will call it. I admire the wise resolution of this young philosopher, and I have still so much regard for him, as to hope he will retain it unbroken, till he has seen you, for I am greatly mistaken if you are not destined to sign and seal my pardon." Before Lady Llangville's *déjunié* was completed, the Marchioness of Valcourt was announced.

"Now, Helen," said her Ladyship, "you shall see my intimate friend, and one of the most admired beauties in the fashionable world."

Nor was the description exaggerated; the Marchioness was indeed beautiful, and had an air of high fashion. She surveyed

the person of Helen with scrutinising attention, exclaimed with surprise at her resemblance to her sister, and then cried—

“My dear Miss De Courcy, I foresee you will be the wonder of this winter.—Heavens! Ellina, what a *sensation* she will create when she is introduced. Why this will complete our triumph over that odious Mrs. Luxmore, who is driving her two *constellations*, as she calls them, over the town every morning, and to all public places in the evening; but what are either Lady Gertrude or Isabella, compared to our sweet rose of Cambria.”

“Delightful!” cried Lady Llangville, “you have exactly met my ideas, and beneath our auspices she will, I hope, come out at least with equal *eclat*.”

But unfortunately for the wishes and intentions of the fashionable friends, Helen was not anxious to second their endeavours for attaining the *eclat* they expected. The truth, which she soon discovered, was that Mrs. Luxmore, a veteran woman of fa-

shion, had long been a rival of Lady Llangville, in all those essentials which constitute that character ; but Lady Llangville was younger, and far more fascinating in her general manners. This season, however, Mrs. Luxmore had opened with a decided advantage, for she had just brought out the Ladies Gertrude and Isabella Delaval, the orphan daughters and co-heiresses of the Earl of that title, her near relation, both left under her guardianship. Very pretty, very young, very rich, and quite new, they were universally followed, talked of, and admired, and Mrs. Luxmore's parties were more crowded than they had ever before been.

Lady Llangville, and her friend the Marchioness, had marked this unexpected celebrity of their rival with jealous fear ; but the arrival of Helen, her extraordinary beauty, and striking appearance, had revived their hopes ; and to introduce her, and crush the expectations of Mrs. Lux-

more in their bud, was an object of no small importance.

With a degree of regret that no reasoning could entirely suppress, Helen beheld her sister's mode of life, and the love of dissipation which she evinced in every word and action. She felt that she could, in this respect, never resemble her, and in spite of the late hours she was now obliged to keep, she persisted in breakfasting every morning at nine with Sir Morton, in his library, where the children were admitted, and she generally accompanied them and their nursery attendants afterwards in a walk, in one of the parks.

Nor were her general studies neglected; her music, drawing, and reading, were still regularly pursued, during some of those hours Lady Llangville passed in bed, or at the toilet; her Ladyship laughed, remonstrated, called her a little incorrigible, and finally left her to follow her own inclinations in the morning, so that she would be

her companion in her nocturnal parties. But there was one day in the week, when she found it impossible to influence her. Helen persisted in attending divine service, and in spending the Sunday quietly. An animated debate was the consequence, but Helen, on this subject, was immovable; her principles were immutably fixed, and she had a firmness and decision of character, which Ellina had never possessed.

During the time she was to be the guest of her sister, it was her wish and intention to yield her own inclinations, whenever her heart told her she might do it, without an infringement of the rules which had hitherto guided her conduct, but no further; and Lady Llangville, soon discovering that her persuasions were vain where Helen believed herself right, desisted from persecution, and quietly gave up the point.

The introduction of the young novice to the circles of fashion, was attended with all the *eclat* that Lady Llangville or her

friend could desire, and the gay Mrs. Luxmore, and her titled *protégées*, were completely eclipsed by the unassuming beauty and elegance of Miss De Courcy. At a rout, where all the *haut ton* were assembled, Helen first beheld her young rivals.

Lady Gertrude Delaval was tall, well formed, and handsome, but she had a look of pride, almost amounting to sullenness, in her countenance, which rendered the less striking form of Lady Isabella infinitely more attractive. The accomplishments of Lady Gertrude were, however, reported to be far superior, and the readiness with which she displayed them, betrayed her consciousness of excellence; while Lady Isabel, lively, animated, and original, attracted attention by her *naïveté*, and the careless indifference of her general manners.

Helen often met them in company, but as no intimacy subsisted between Mrs. Luxmore and Lady Llangville, no more could be known of them, and the compari-

sons, that continually reached her ear, only annoyed and distressed her. All publicity she wished to avoid; yet she was unavoidably brought forward to notice. To Mrs. Ormsby, whom she visited at the house of her friend in Bedford Place, she confided all her embarrassments.

Lady Llangville, with the good nature and openness peculiar to her, visited her old friend also, and persuaded Mrs. Ormsby, not only to seal their reconciliation, but to come to Portland Place; an invitation, which, for Helen's sake, was not declined. Not that Mrs. Ormsby harboured any fears of the example of Lady Llangville, on the mind of Helen; she knew the latter to be far different from the thoughtless Ellina, and was assured that her good sense, and prudence might be trusted amidst all the scenes of pleasure, without danger from their allurements.

The friend Mrs. Ormsby was visiting was a widow of large fortune; she did not precisely move in the high circle Lady

Llangville frequented, but her connections were good, and Helen had more than once accepted invitations to Mrs. Alstone's parties, which, if not so splendidly attended as those of Lady Llangville, the Marchioness of Valcourt, or Mrs. Luxmore, were more select and not less elegant.

A very few weeks had elapsed ere, amidst the numerous candidates for her attention, one appeared who decidedly declared himself her admirer, and openly solicited her favour. Major Danby was the son of a Baronet of good fortune, and greater interest; which had procured his son his present rank in the army; the latter was a young man of good abilities, and a fine person; his warm admiration of Helen, had been manifested from her first appearance in town; and as he was a great favourite with Lady Llangville, he was their constant attendant in public.

“But we must not too decidedly encourage his attentions Helen,” said her

Ladyship, "for though he is a very useful escort, and certainly very pleasant, a more brilliant establishment may probably offer; besides, one would not wish poor Danby to have to fight Sir Horace Lascelles, if the philosopher should choose to fall in love with you, when he comes to England; though, on recollection, I am afraid your great resemblance to me will be against you in that quarter."

Helen, though she scarcely knew why, disliked jesting on this subject. She had from childhood been taught to consider Sir Horace Lascelles, as of a better order of beings, than the generality of the world; but the idea of an union with herself had never occurred to her, till it was suggested by Lady Langville. To say that she felt curiosity to behold him would ill indeed describe the sentiment which filled her mind with a desire the most intense, to see him whom her father had declared to be, he believed, an exception to all the young men of the present age. She remembered

him as a beautiful, sweet tempered boy, but memory failed now to delineate accurately, features, which she was still well assured, would be recognized as soon as beheld; and though on any other subject, she suffered the exuberant vivacity of Ellina, to have full scope; on this, she always felt peculiarly tenacious, and gravely requested that she would not again recur to it.

As to Major Danby, with the candour and good sense which distinguished her general deportment, she uniformly discouraged any particular attentions, but to him as to every other person, her conduct evinced a mind and temper, superior to the frivolous indulgence of self gratification or idle vanity.

CHAP. V.

A very short time sufficed to discover fully to Lady Llangville, the striking superiority of Helen to the common herd of fashionable young ladies; yet with all the prudence and propriety of Mrs. Ormsby herself, in her manners and conduct, not even Ellina could enjoy with more spirit and vivacity the various scenes of public amusement to which she was introduced, than did her hitherto secluded sister. Novelty gave a zest to all she saw and heard; she loved dancing and music, and not being anxious to exhibit her own person or accomplishments, she partook of them with pleasure, undiminished by those petty jealousies or anxieties

known to those who pant for fashionable fame.

At the theatre she was all eye and ear, for, great as had been the enjoyment she had experienced in reading the works of our immortal Bard, many as were the hours they had beguiled, she fancied she had never understood them before, never conceived the exquisite delight they could impart; nor when Lady Longville raillied her on her exclusive devotion to the stage, had it any other effect, than leading her to wonder that people, (as she now understood was the case) should go to the theatre for any other purpose than to hear and enjoy the play. Even in her amusements, Helen was reasonable and judicious, nor was she less so, in the ruling propensity of her disposition, real benevolence.

In one of those early walks, which she made a practice of taking for exercise, long before the hours of fashion suffered its votaries to venture abroad, she crossed

St. James's Park, to come out by Spring Gardens, where she promised to indulge little Morton with some buns. As she walked leisurely on, viewing with the eye of observation, every object that met her view, and holding Emily and her brother by the hand, while the nurse and baby followed, attended by the footman; Helen noticed on one of the benches, a very young emaciated female: she leaned her head on the arm of the seat, and one sickly looking hand without a glove, rested on the tattered remains of what had once been a black silk dress; but her appearance betokened a melancholly union of illness and poverty.

Just as they reached the seat on which she rather reclined than sat, Helen observed that the head of the stranger dropped from her arm, and fell back; and that the attenuated hand seemed to fall motionless by her side. Struck by the sight, she sprang towards her followed by the children and servants, and found she was

indeed insensible. Every passer-by stopped, and a crowd began to assemble. The *vinaigrette* of Helen, soon recalled the senses of the young stranger, but she looked pale and bewildered, and seemed too weak to move without assistance.

Among the throng that gathered, and by whom Helen and her little party were now surrounded, there appeared two or three females, whose dress and manners too plainly declared a state of human degradation that made her shudder; but how much more, when they addressed the invalid familiarly, calling her by name, and appearing to ridicule and insult her. The nurse, on discovering what she thought a mistake, from Miss De Courcy's ignorance of town, tried to explain it to her. The by-standers shrugged up their shoulders; and those who had only stopped to insult and deride the sick stranger, had walked on; but Helen had, in a moment, seen the real situation of the poor creature, who seemed to her hovering between life.

and death ; and the instant she appeared able to speak, she addressed her.

“ Shall the servant call you a coach ?” she said ; “ you appear very unable to walk.”

“ A coach ! Oh, no ; I must walk,” said the stranger.

Immediately conceiving that inability to defray the expense was her objection, she said—

“ Yes, you must have a coach. My servant shall call it, and attend you home.” And, calling to Thomas, she gave her orders, saw the poor young woman under his protection, and then proceeded, with the children and nurse, on their way home. The latter no sooner saw that they were clear from the crowd, than she ventured to remonstrate, and to assure Miss De Courcy, that the person she had been so kind to, was certainly a bad woman, adding,—

“ I’m sure I hope that gentleman, who stood to the last looking at us so, did not take us for some of her acquaintance.”

“ I fear, indeed,” said Helen, “ that your conjectures, as to the poor creature herself, are too just; but she is undoubtedly ill, and apparently very poor. I cannot, therefore, be sorry for what I have done, particularly as I have no intention to cultivate an acquaintance with her; and as to what any mere stranger may imagine, Mrs. Barton, it is very indifferent to me, when my conscience tells me I am acting right.”

On her return home, she summoned her own woman, the attendant, who had lived with her from infancy. Several years her senior, she had been always accustomed to consult her good Elton on all her little emergencies, and to her she now confided her recent encounter in the park, and her desire, that, on the return of the footman, she would learn the poor young creature’s direction, that she would visit her, inquire into her actual situation, and offer her any requisite assistance. All this Mrs. Elton readily promised to do, blessing her young lady’s benevolence.

“ And who knows, my good Elton,” said Helen, “ but that we may, by affording her timely relief, enable her to procure advice that may be of service. I am sure she is dying ; her countenance has the consumptive hue of death ; but, if she be guilty, should we not endeavour to secure time for penitence, and such small comforts as a sick bed needs ? Go then, dear Elton, be as secret as circumstances will allow, and hasten back, that I may decide on what I ought to do for her before the business of pleasure for the evening commences.”

A message from her sister now required Helen's attendance. She found Lady Llangville more than usually listless and languid, the combined effects of her dissipated life. The Marchioness of Valcourt was with her, and they desisted from a whispering conversation at her entrance.

“ What is this I hear of your quixotism, my dear Helen ?” said Lady Langville. “ La Tour has been making a long story

of your adventures in the park, which she has heard from Burton. I fear you have made yourself rather conspicuous in this affair; and, after all, you have probably been imposed upon."

"Are illness and poverty so easily feigned?" said Helen. "But, admitting it is as you conjecture, an imposition, it is surely better that I should suffer the effects of credulity, than that real distress should go unrelieved."

"Well, my dear, answered her ladyship, "you are certainly to do as you please; and, doubtless, it would be an herculean labour to eradicate the many *Ormsby* opinions you have imbibed. Besides, your quixotism becomes you so well, that when I wish you to appear to advantage, I will certainly find out some of the poor objects that abound in this town, to affect your feelings, and make you look just as animated and interesting as you now do. What a fine bloom she has, Cecilia!

Did you ever see any thing so exquisite?"

"Yes, indeed," said the Marchioness.

"It is beauty truly blent,
Whose red and white, nature's own sweet
And cunning hand laid on."

"Aye, there's the rub," said her ladyship. "Now my red and white is laid on by a hand as cunning as that of nature herself, though not quite so durable; for La Tour will yield to no one in the practice of art of any kind; but then, see how I look in a morning! Oh, it is dreadful! A life of pleasure is, after all, a life of slavery; I had like to have said, of misery; but it is not quite come to that yet."

"Nor never will, I trust, my dear sister," said Helen. "You will visit Llangville Abbey; Sir Morton says he will have it repaired; you will take the children there; you will see my father again, and the pure air of your native mountains will restore health to your frame, peace to your mind, and the bloom to your cheeks."

“ Yes, my dear, all this is very pretty,” said Lady Llangville, “ and I know I perform *Lady Townly* very well, and that you enact *Lady Grace* to perfection, and give your lectures very prettily. It all does well enough in a play, but, in real life, it is quite a different thing. I have plunged into the stream of pleasure, and a desperate effort alone can extricate me.— I cannot summon resolution to make it yet; I must struggle a little longer, ere I make my courtesy to the great world, and retire to Llangville and domestic privacy.”

“ Oh, for heaven’s sake, forbear!” exclaimed the Marchioness. “ If you come to domestic privacy, I must be off in earnest. My dear Miss de Courcy, do you know, that you have introduced subjects, that have certainly never been thought of, in this family, till your entrance into it? If you remain here, we shall doubtless all grow as wise and as grave as you are; but come, let us dismiss all these *dismalities*, and pray prepare to be very brilliant to-

night; for I shall take you, under my especial protection, to Lady Emma Martindale's party, after peeping in at the opera."

"Excuse me—not to-night," said Helen. "I have promised Mrs. Alstone to accompany her to a ball at the house of a lady, whom I met the other evening."

"Ob, you will be quite time enough for Lady Emma's at one o'clock," said Lady Llangville.

"Pardon me," said Helen, laughing; "I shall be very unfit for any party at that time; and to more than one, on the same evening, my inclination will seldom lead me."

"Well, then, my dear, you must pursue your own way," said the Marchioness, "and Mrs. Luxmore must triumph, which she is in a fair way of doing; for Lady Isabella, I hear, has actually received proposals from Lord Ornton, only, I am convinced, because you were not in the world to eclipse her."

“ And is Lord Ornton such a nonpareil then,” said Helen, “ as to be regretted ?”

“ He is remarkable for nothing but a sort of quiet stupidity,” said Lady Llangville ; “ but then, he has a noble fortune, and is of an ancient family and title ; in short, it is the brilliancy of the thing that one is led to regret, for he is unquestionably one of the best matches in London.”

“ But my dear sister,” said Helen, “ is there such a necessity for my making *any* match ? I assure you, I came to town to visit you, and not in search of a husband.”

“ Oh doubtless,” said Lady Llangville ; “ but if you should happen to stumble upon a good one in your way ; and by a good one, I mean rank, fortune, and fashion united, I presume you could not reject him.”

“ Certainly not if he were a man to whom I could feel attached, and who I can be assured possesses those qualities which are calculated to render the mar-

riage state happy ; but without these essentials, believe me, the rank of a prince, the wealth of the whole world, and the fashion of all the Lord Orntons in it, would not avail."

" And pray," said the Marchioness, " if it be not an impertinent question, what are the qualities you think so essential to that end ? I am quite anxious to know,"

" They may all be included in a few words," she answered, " a good understanding, a good heart, a good temper, a well informed mind, and lastly, he must have a proper sense of religion."

The Marchioness bit her lip, as if in ridicule, and Lady Llangville said—

" Take my advice, Helen, and wait till Horace Lascelles returns; he is the only man in the world to suit you, for I assure you, he is the only one I ever knew, who promised fair for possessing all the requisites you mention : he was far too perfect for me even then, young as he was, so I

kindly set him at liberty, for which I have no doubt he is long before this time very much obliged to me."

Helen was impatient to fly from this subject, and soon contrived to get liberated.

Elton had been on her charitable mission, and had witnessed a scene of real poverty and distress; the unfortunate object of her visit was, she said, no doubt, in a lingering consumption, to which a life of vice and misery had conducted her: she appeared, however, Elton added, truly penitent; and in answer to Helen's inquiry of what she could do to serve her most essentially, had said, that all she wished was once more to see a mother she had early deserted, and to whom she would have ere now returned, had she possessed the means.

With the judicious assistance of Elton, all was arranged to the comfort of the poor unfortunate. Helen herself wrote to the mother, who was in an humble line of life,

defrayed all necessary expenses, and had the comfort of restoring to the unhappy parent her erring child.—She saw them, and, uninfluenced by Lady Llangville's ridicule, concluded the whole to the satisfaction of her own mind, and as she believed unknown to all, but those immediately concerned; but there she was mistaken; the gentleman, whom Burton had remarked in the morning when they first met the young woman in the park, had observed the whole transaction, had visited the house which contained the poor invalid, and had traced to its source, the assistance received by the hand of Elton.

Happy in the sweet consciousness of benevolence, and in reflecting that her time in London, was not wholly spent in vain and frivolous pursuits; Helen attended Mrs. Alstone to her engagement at night, in health and spirits undiminished. Major Danby, who was by marriage related to Mrs. Alstone, was of the party. Helen as usual, was gay and animated, and the party was

as delightful as such parties generally are. The charm of novelty was not yet dissolved, and gave a zest to the enjoyment ; she was never tired of looking and listening, and she danced with a gaiety so enchanting, spirits so exhilarated, that she was the wonder and admiration of the beholders.

The fascinated Danby was her partner ; he gazed at her till he thought her beauty more than mortal, and he listened to the sallies of her vivacity with looks that betrayed all he felt. In the pauses of the dance, Helen had more than once remarked a gentleman, who seemed intently to observe her. His person was elegant, and his countenance pale and interesting : after having several times noticed his singular attention, she saw him turn to another gentleman, and speak as if making some inquiry ; it obviously related to her, for both looked full at her ; but the handsome stranger immediately afterwards disappeared. She saw him no more till sup-

per, when in the crowd who assembled round the supper tables, she again discerned him.

The attentive Danby was exerting all his interest, to secure her a good place, and himself one as near her as possible, and this he fancied he had accomplished, and Helen had already taken possession of her's, when *that*, Danby had appropriated to his own use, was unceremoniously seized by the stranger, and Danby was obliged to content himself with being stationed behind her chair; for, as she, in the whole assembly, was the only object that interested him, he would not seek accommodation at a distance from her.

Helen at first found herself by no means agreeably situated; she was surrounded by strangers, and her nearest neighbour, far from offering her any little attention, seemed not to know that she was in his vicinity; he addressed himself only to a gentleman on the other side of him on public topics: but, however little

inclined to be pleased with him for his total want of gallantry, she could not avoid noticing the peculiarly sweet tone of his voice, the fluency of his language, and the general knowledge which his remarks betrayed. She saw, too, that, whenever he spake, he was universally listened to, and that a groupe soon gathered round that part of the table, evidently attracted by his conversation.

The renewal of dancing after supper, obliged her to quit his vicinity, and return to the ball room, which she did not again leave till the company separated; but long ere that time the pale stranger had disappeared. Danby did not know him, and Helen, in vain, tried to learn his name.

She reached home long before Lady Llangville; Sir Morton was alone in the library, and Helen looked in, merely to say good night, in her way to her chamber; but the unusually serious expression of his countenance, induced her to enter:

he was leaning his head on his hand, and seemed in deep thought. She ventured to ask if he were well? he sighed deeply, and answered.—

“ In body perfectly so.”

“ Surely, then,” said Helen, “ something has happened.”

“ Do not ask me Helen,” said he, “ lest you hear what, on such a heart as yours, must inflict pain such as I feel.”

“ If I can be of any use,” said she, “ I shall not shrink from whatever the communication may inflict on myself alone.”

“ Kind, good Helen?” he exclaimed, “ I ought not to be so selfish, and yet perhaps your counsel, your advice.—But no—she is impenetrable.”

“ It is my sister,” cried Helen, “ Oh let me, Sir Morton, know what new cause of uneasiness she has given, for well I know her present mode of life you must disapprove,”

It was a subject she had often wished to enter on with him, in the hope that

she should urge him to some exertion, which might restrain Lady Llangville's boundless love of pleasure.

“The cause is not new, Helen,” said he mournfully, “it is only increased; she is destroying her own health, totally neglecting her children, and ruining my limited fortune. Bills daily pour in upon me, which I have no means of discharging, and expostulation or reprimand are now utterly disregarded. I called in, two hours since, at Lady Valcourt's, and found her surrounded by a set of gamblers, playing with as much eagerness as those most initiated: that Colonel Hanbury was her close attendant too; you have seen him, but you do not know, perhaps, that he is an unprincipled gambler, and notorious for his gallantry; yet she suffers his attentions, and allows him to think them acceptable.”

“Here at least,” said the greatly shocked Helen, “I must think your anxiety has misled you. Ellina, I feel assured, is incapable of real ill.”

“ But she is not incapable of levity that degrades her in the eye of the world,” said Sir Morton, “ and how easy is the gradation. Retire now, my dear Helen, and we will consider what must be done to save my fortune, my peace, my honour, from the wreck, with which all are threatened by her imprudence.”

Helen could not leave him till she saw him more composed. She had observed, and deeply deplored, the thoughtless gaiety with which her sister treated Colonel Hanbury, a man, whom from the first time she beheld him, she had utterly disliked; his manners were bold and assuming, and he was on far too good terms with himself, to be admired by her; but she had imagined the devotion he shewed to her sister, was merely authorised by fashion, and not by any decided encouragement on Ellina's part: she resolved, however, to take an early opportunity for a serious remonstrance, and with a heavier heart than she had felt since she left De Courcy

Abbey, she went to her chamber.—She had undressed, and was just retiring, when her sister's voice, at her door, requesting admittance, reached her ear.

“ Though half dead with fatigue,” said her Ladyship, “ I could not go to bed till I had told you the news. Horace Lascelles is returned, but he has not yet appeared in public, he is secluding himself in his magnificent mansion with a little Italian *protégée* and an old governante:—but Heaven's, child! what is the matter? you look pale, and in tears, Helen! what is all this?”

“ I am tired,” said Helen, “ tired of the gay world I believe.”

“ You tired,” said Lady Llangville, “ you who yet are a novice; what then must I be?”

“ Ah, would you were tired too,” said Helen.

“ And so I am, miserably,” said Lady Llangville, with a deep drawn sigh, “ I have behaved very ill to night, Helen,

and I am afraid even sleep will not relieve me, for I shall awake with the consciousness of owing that wretch Hanbury more than I can pay."

"God forbid!" exclaimed Helen involuntarily.

"It is too true," said her Ladyship. "I have lost an hundred guineas, and I have not fifty in the world, and really I do not know that I dare apply to Sir Morton again so soon, for he has looked woefully grave lately, whenever I have asked him for a supply."

"Only promise him that you will never again require more for the same purpose," said Helen, "and steadily adhere to that promise, and I will insure that it shall be granted readily."

Lady Llangville paused, and Helen, late as was the hour, proceeded in her interceded expostulation. With tenderness and delicacy, she set before her the ruinous consequences, that awaited a perseverance in her present pursuits; she applied to her

best feelings, as a wife, and a mother : she conjured her by all her hopes of happiness to reflect seriously on the subject.

Lady Llangville listened with the most profound attention, and when she had finished, thanked her with an affectionate embrace, saying as she bid her good night,

“ You are almost too good for the world you live in, my sweet Helen, and if you have banished sleep from my pillow, you have at least given me a substitute in reflection.”

CHAP. VI.

FROM Helen and her affairs we must now adjourn to the breakfast table of Sir Horace Lascelles. In an apartment of a superb mansion in Portman Square, in the furnishing and ornamenting of which, it should seem, that art and genius had exhausted their treasures, reclining on a sofa, before which the tea equipage was placed, with the newspapers and pamphlets of the day scattered around him, we find the favourite adopted son of Sir Everard de Courcy. Near him, and busily engaged in making tea, pouring out coffee, &c. sat a middle aged female, plainly habited, but of genteel appearance; and opposite them, practising different steps,

with a pair of Spanish castanets in her hands, and a countenance all animation, skipped a youthful Hebe, on whose light figure, as it moved to the tones of her own voice, the eye of Sir Horace was often fixed.

Though passed childhood, her form and countenance had an appearance so juvenile, that it was difficult to guess her exact age: the most dazzling beauty marked every feature: her complexion was delicate in the extreme, and her motions were grace itself.

Such was the *protégée* of Sir Horace Lascelles. Under the care of a lady denominated her maternal aunt, she had accompanied him to England from Italy, her native country—so said report.

The conjectures, surmises, and insinuations, which it kindly adted, it were vain to repeat. Many reached the ear of Sir Horace, and he despised them all. Perhaps some of these suggestions occurred to him as he watched the light movements

of his little volatile ward. He sighed—

“Go to your own apartment, Florenza,” said the elder lady, “you fatigue the Chevalier with your unceasing playfulness; and pray confine your castanets to your dressing room in future.”

“No confinement in England,” said Florenza, “Happy land of freedom! Sir Horace always said, that even *I* should be at liberty here; I, who for fifteen years have fluttered my wings, and peeped through the gilded wires of my cage, and longed to change situations with the lark, as she soared to heaven.”

“You have quite spoiled her, Sir Horace,” said the aunt.

“Spoiled me!” exclaimed Florenza, “Oh, if to make me gay, thankful, and happy, be to spoil me—If to teach me to enjoy life, and to admire all I see and hear, and to feel more, Oh, how much more than I can express! if this be to spoil me, then indeed Sir Horace has it to answer for.”

“Go to your room, Florenza,” said the Signora Martini, “See, Sir Horace is really fatigued by your rattle.”

But Sir Horace was not fatigued; some melancholy recollections were apt to recur in the presence of his Italian friends, and he was always much affected by that artless gratitude, which glowed in every look and word of the unsophisticated Florenza.

The Signora Martini, one of that good sort of well-meaning characters, who see no farther than the surface, took her niece with her from the breakfast-room; and Sir Horace was aroused from the attitude of meditation, in which they had left him, by the entrance of a friend of his juvenile days, one who had, with real pleasure, greeted his return to England. Sir Clement Irby was lively, sensible, and well informed, and possessed sufficient of the young Baronet's regard, to induce the latter to see him enter without regret. A desultory conversation ensued. At length, Sir Clement enquired when he meant to

visit Sir Everard de Courcy? Sir Horace looked annoyed.

“ I really cannot decide; I do not know when I can leave town,” he answered in a voice of hesitation. Then pausing a moment—

“ In short,” said he, “ my dear Clement, I am much embarrassed on the subject. You know that I have even an enthusiastic veneration for Sir Everard, which, so far from being diminished, I think has increased by absence. You know,” he added, in a faltering voice, “ that I once loved his daughter; you know all I have suffered.”

“ I do certainly know all this,” said Sir Clement, gaily; “ but I also know, that it is past; that you are now a different being; and, lastly, that you may, with perfect safety, pay a visit to your old friend, Sir Everard de Courcy, without any chance of encountering his daughter, who resides with her husband wholly in town.”

“ But Sir Everard has another daughter,” said Sir Horace.

“ Well, but does it necessarily follow, that you should fall in love with her too ?” said Sir Clement, laughing.

“ Oh, you quite mistake my meaning,” said Sir Horace. “ Rely on it, I shall never again be subject to the weakness to which you allude. But Sir Everard regards me, I know, with even parental partiality ; and I fear lest, in his anxiety for my happiness, he should form plans to which I can never accede. No, the sister of Ellina de Courey can never find a way to my heart ; but I would not wish to disappoint Sir Everard by direct opposition. I would, therefore, avoid seeing her.”

“ Then, my dear fellow, set off for Wales immediately,” said Sir Clement ; “ for Miss de Courey is in town now, on a visit to your old flame, her sister ; and you must be obliged to meet her, if you go at all into the fashionable circles. I shall not tell you any thing of her ; it will be best that you should see and judge for yourself.”

And Sir Horace did see and judge for himself. But not to anticipate, we must again accompany the novice, Helen, to the scenes of pleasure, which she prepared for with more satisfaction, as she thought she saw that her remonstrance had had some effect on her too volatile sister.

Extreme indecision of character, a want of confidence in herself, and a pliability of temper, which gave the designing and the artful every advantage they could wish, had, without any bad propensities, combined to lead Lady Llangville into perpetual errors. Fortunately, the man she had so precipitately married, though then young, and thoughtless as herself, had a mind formed for domestic comfort, and an excellent heart; but a neglected education had rendered him imprudent; and the habits in which he had been reared, by an arrogant, ostentatious father, had cured him to a life of pleasure and expense. Added years, however, gave greater stability to his character, and an increasing

family warned him of the ruin that must ensue from the life of dissipation pursued by his lady. The first ebullition of passion had subsided, and his eyes were now open to the faults in her conduct. Still was he fondly attached to her ; yet so upright was he in principle, that often had a pang of remorse embittered his happiness, when he thought of Sir Horace Lascelles, and heard the effects which his elopement with Ellina had produced, on the peace of a man so highly estimated by all who had known him.

A long and serious remonstrance with Lady Llangville, on the morning succeeding Helen's expostulation, (in which he informed her of the diminution his fortune had sustained from her extravagance,) had alarmed her ladyship, and depressed her to tears, when Helen, unsuspecting in what state she should find her sister, entered the room. She would immediately have retreated, but Sir Morton called her back.

“ From you, Helen,” said he, we can

have no secrets, for you know my uneasiness and its source ;” and he repeated great part of what he had just urged to Lady Llangville.

In the countenance of her sister, Helen saw the misery she felt, at the recollection of the added debt she had incurred the preceding evening, and her dread of disclosing it ; but, assured of Sir Morton’s goodness of heart and affection, she determined at once to urge her to perfect candour with him ; and while Ellina, agitated and trembling, hid her tearful eyes on the arm of the sofa, she kindly took her hand, saying—

“ Be not intimidated, my dear sister ; Sir Morton is too good, too kind, to feel displeasure longer than the cause exists. Be at once nobly candid ; suffer him to know all ; and, believe me, your mind will be relieved from its present oppression. Once convinced of error, never again, I feel assured, shall we have reason to lament it in your conduct.”

“ Oh, what more is there for me to know ?” said the half frantic Sir Morton.—
“ Tell me at once, Ellina ; that if it be aught that can still farther harrass and distress me, I may decide on my future measures.”

Helen was almost glad to perceive, that his fear exceeded the reality ; and, supported by her sister, a candid confession, in some degree, relieved the horrid apprehensions which Helen’s words had raised in the mind of the Baronet.”

“ And now that Sir Morton knows all that we have to acknowledge,” said Helen, “ suffer me to lend my aid towards extricating you from this embarrassment. My father’s allowance is so liberal, and he leaves me so few wants, that I can, without inconvenience, adjust your debt with Colonel Hanbury, your last debt I trust to him, or any other person on the same account.”

“ Generous, amiable Helen !” said Sir Morton, “ But not for us shall you suffer

such deprivation ; a few days will, I hope, enable me to discharge it myself."

" But no time should be lost," said Helen ; " it would indeed be better to settle this business immediatly."

Sir Morton threw himself on the chair from which he had risen, and his own suspicions of Colonel Hanbury recurring to his mind, with the necessity for totally discouraging his attentions, a deep sigh escaped him as he exclaimed—

" I believe indeed you are right, and shocked as I feel on all accounts, at thus involving you in our difficulties, I must, I believe, consent to owe to you the means of rescuing your sister's fame from censure."

The deeply humbled Ellina had not once raised her head during this conversation : she sat the image of distress ; but the warm embrace of Helen, with the intreaty that she would revive to hope and to a consciousness of what was due to herself and family, she answered by a violent

burst of tears ; and Helen, seeing in the softened countenance of Sir Morton signs of peace and reconciliation, glided from the room, and with the firmness and despatch natural to her, wrote a short billet to Colonel Hanbury, enclosing the amount of Lady Llangville's debts. No ostentatious wish to display the contrast her own conduct formed to that of her sister's, had actuated Helen in this affair ; her whole aim was to reclaim Ellina, and to restore happiness to her and Sir Morton : she forbore therefore all officious condolences or congratulations, and prepared for a party in the evening at the house of Lord Courtland, to which she had been sometime engaged, as if nothing had occurred.

Sir Morton she knew would be at home, and when she heard Lady Llangville declare her intention of not going out, she rejoiced in the hope that a quiet *tete a tete* would confirm all her good resolutions.

Lady Valcourt called for Helen at the

appointed time, and with a mind relieved from great anxiety by the happy conclusion of the incidents of the morning, she attended her to Lord Courtland's. A brilliant assemblage of the *beau monde* was present: the dancing began, and Helen was led to the top of the set by Lord Mortlake, the eldest son of the Earl of Courtland, when, just at the moment she was beginning the dance, a buzz met her ear, and all eyes seemed directed to one person, who was entering the room; but till she had reached the bottom, and was disengaged, she had not leisure to observe this object of general attention.

Lord Mortlake had left her to greet the new comer, and directing her eyes towards this highly-distinguished personage, she was astonished at recognizing the countenance, which had excited so much attention from her the preceding evening. It was certainly the pale interesting stranger she beheld, but he was metamorphosed, as if by the hand of an enchanter, into the

lively, elegant man of fashion. His mourning dress was discarded; he was gaily habited, and though still pale, his eyes were all animation, and his whole countenance expressive and intelligent.

Gay, and generally attentive, his manners and appearance were more fascinating than those of any person Helen had ever before seen: his wit and vivacity acted like electricity on the party, all seemed inspired by his presence, and all flocked to the spot where, surrounded by every one who could crowd to hear him, he stood the wonder and admiration of the company.

Helen happened to be so near, that she lost not a word; the voice which had before charmed her by its sweetness, again met her ear; the language was worthy the tone in which it was uttered. Fluent, rich and elegant, yet void of all studied phrases, it was evidently that of a mind amply stored with natural and acquired resources. She was charmed, she could have listened for ever, and so absorbed was she

by attention, that she forgot every thing around her, save the object who had thus wonderfully fascinated her senses and imagination.

If she had been surprised and delighted by the eloquence and knowledge displayed by the elegant stranger, how much greater was her amazement, when Major Danby, accosting her, enquired if she too had been one of the gazers at this new meteor? She answered in the affirmative, adding—

“ But I have not heard what is the name of this phenomenon yet.”

“ Is it possible,” he replied, “ that you have not heard the very walls re-echo the name of Sir Horace Lascelles ?”

Helen was petrified; unknowing and unknown, she had then been an object of scrutiny, of neglect, to this beloved, adopted child of her father. She had seen him, who, from her earliest dawn of recollection, had been an object of interest greater than she had ever felt for any human being, unconscious that he was more than a

stranger. Intuitively she had listened with wonder and delight to that fine flow of language, which in his letters to her father had so often charmed her, nor knew that it was the same mind which had dictated both.

The sudden change of her countenance, the electrical start she gave as his name reached her ear, astonished Danby.

“Why are you surprised?” said he.

“Sir Horace Lascelles!” she repeated; “my father’s dearest friend!”

“Indeed!” said Danby, “and he does not know you?”

“No,” replied Helen, “nor would I wish him to recognise me now. I have not seen him since I was a child, and the sight of me would perhaps cause him more pain than pleasure.”

“Impossible, under any circumstances,” said the fervent Danby. Helen would not wait to hear what she feared would follow, but hastily sought her party, and was

glad to return home, to meditate on Sir Horace Lascelles, and his unexpected appearance.

CHAP. VII.

AMONGST the occasional visitors in Portland Place, was the Honourable Mrs. Darlington, an elderly maiden lady of good fortune and refined manners. She was a great favourite with Sir Morton, but Lady Llangville seemed to pay her little attention, and whenever she heard her commended, only said, "she was a prim old maid, and much too precise to please her."

Helen thought differently ; from the little she had seen of her, she judged, that though of the old school in manners, she was liberal and well-informed, of good understanding, though rather formal in her deportment ; but Lady Llangville's conduct

was so different, that it was impossible they should assimilate.

To Helen, Mrs. Darlington was distantly polite; she had been on terms of friendship with Sir Everard and his lady in early life, and for their sakes noticed and visited their daughter, though it was evident that she strongly disapproved the fashionable follies of Lady Llangville, and had expected in Helen to behold her counterpart. Thus prejudiced, she first met her, and to the open, candid Helen, it was matter of surprise that this lady should view her with scrutinising eyes, and an aspect forbidding, rather than conciliatory; but as she was unconscious of any reason for fear, she felt no annoyance from the watchful looks and severity of countenance assumed by Mrs. Darlington, when she casually addressed her.

Though Lady Llangville had for the time been considerably affected by the late incident, and though every day her attachment to Helen seemed to increase,

she was not at once to be so easily weaned from those rooted habits of dissipation, in which she had so long indulged. She however no longer encouraged the attentions of Colonel Hanbury, who, astonished at Helen's note and the hasty discharge of his debt, refrained from that marked notice which he perceived was, from some sudden change in the sentiments and manners of her Ladyship, not so acceptable as formerly : whether his designs were wholly frustrated, or only suspended, time will discover.

The return of Sir Horace Lascelles was now a popular subject of conversation, and his splendid talents and highly polished manners were general themes of admiration ; it was a topic seldom discussed in presence of the Llangville family, except in whispers.

Lady Llangville was celebrated for her morning parties ; they generally consisted of the fashionable loungers of both sexes, whose time, unoccupied but by pleasure, was at the service of all those who, like

themselves, were the votaries of fashion and idleness.

The circle was one day enlivened by Lady Emmeline Montrose, a gay young widow, related to Lady Llangville, the daughter-in-law of Mrs. Murray, sister to Sir Everard, who, after Lady Llangville's elopement, had accepted the proposals of an almost superannuated Earl; his only child had then just made an imprudent marriage with an officer, whose early death left her a widow at five and twenty, with a large fortune independent of her father. Family connection made her a visitor at Sir Morton Llangville's, though she was an intimate friend of Mrs. Luxmore; she was, indeed, the intimate friend of all the gay world. With talents rather brilliant than substantial, Lady Emmeline aimed at originality of character, and professed a determination to act as she pleased, in defiance of the strictures of the world. Lively, handsome, and witty, her company was universally courted; she was just returned to town from Bath,

and now came in consequence of Lady Llangville and Helen having left their cards at her door, purposely, she said, to see her beautiful cousin, of whom all the world was talking—

“I must positively run away with her for a week or two, very soon,” said she, to Lady Llangville, “so make up your mind Ellina, to resign her to me when I go to Clermont, where I intend to take a formidable party.”

To Helen’s surprise, Lady Llangville readily acquiesced, and after the departure of their visitors, told Helen, it was her wish that she should accept Lady Emmeline’s invitation.

“She is the daughter-in-law of our nearest relation,” said her Ladyship, “besides being one of those whose countenance in the world is of great advantage. I fancy too, Mrs. Luxmore and her *protégées* will be of the party, and I should really wish you very much to brave the comparison.”

Helen smiled—

“I must inevitably suffer by the competition, my dear sister,” said she, “how can such a rustic as I am, enter the lists with these fashionable *belles*! No, believe me, I shall quietly resign the contest, and leave them to conquer all the Lord Ornton’s in London, unmolested by any endeavours of mine to outshine them.”

“We shall see,” said Lady Llangville, at all events, I would have you accept the invitation. It will only be for a short time, and my father, I am sure, will wish you to cultivate an intimacy with my aunt’s family.”

“Lady Llangville had more than one motive, which she forbore to name, for urging Helen to this excursion; one was, that she knew Sir Horace Lascelles was on terms of friendly intercourse with Lady Emmeline, and she wished to give him an opportunity of seeing Helen, unembarrassed by her own presence. Though she had preferred Sir Morton, she was far from being insensible to the real merit of

Sir Horace ; she thought, indeed, so highly of him, as to believe him one of the very few worthy of Helen.

In a large party, where Mrs. Luxmore and her wards appeared with unusual brilliancy, Lady Llangville first beheld the Baronet ; but she quitted it early for a rout at Lady Valcourt's, (with whom Helen was sorry to perceive her intimacy was renewed,) leaving her sister to return home with Lady Emmeline ; the latter was accosted by Sir Horace, whose eyes immediately wandered to her young companion—

“ My cousin, Miss de Courcy,” said Lady Emmeline. “ I believe, my dear Helen, though an old friend of your family, on recollecting ages and dates, Sir Horace must be unknown to you.”

The Baronet bowed, but spoke not, and afterwards addressed his conversation wholly to Lady Emmeline ; though often his gaze seemed involuntarily to turn on Helen. At length, on Lady Emmeline reminding

him of his promised engagement to her at Clermont he said—

“ I shall certainly perform it, if it be only for a day, but precisely that period I had fixed for visiting Wales.”

“ Oh, Wales may be visited at any time,” cried Lady Emmeline. “ Its rocks, mountains, and fine scenery, are all stationary, and will await your arrival, if you defer it for an age; but such objects as I shall select, are not to be met every day. I intend that each star of magnitude, in the hemisphere of fashion, shall grace my orbit. I need not add, that the Delaval constellations will form a part of the circle.”

“ Be not so unmerciful,” said Sir Horace. “ Consider, I am now no frozen Englishman. My heart has been softened in southern climes, till it needs not such a host of attractions.”

“ Apropos of attractions,” said she, “ Which do you intend to present your pretty Italian *protegee* to the world? I am told she is beautiful as an angel; and

I understand all our young *belles* are in an agony of apprehension, lest you should blight all their hopes at once by bringing her forward."

Sir Horace smiled. "Florenza," said he, "is too young to encounter a London world, and, as yet, too innocent to wish for other pleasures than those her nursery affords. She is just emancipated from the regions of a convent, of the strictest order; and to her, therefore, every thing beyond its walls is liberty."

"It is whispered," said her ladyship, with an arch smile, "that you have only released her from one religious tie, to impose another more permanent."

"To whispers and whisperers," answered Sir Horace, "I am decidedly averse, and only answer by my actions. Lady Emmeline Montrose has never been classed among the tattlers of the day, and will not, therefore, credit every idle murmur that may reach her ear. You shall see and know Florenza; her appearance

will interest you ; her future fate time will disclose."

" I am silenced on the subject at least," she answered, laughing ; " and now, my dear Helen, suppose we move towards the dancers, for Major Danby has been looking for you, this half-hour, in all directions."

Helen complied, almost against her inclination. Involuntarily her eye pursued Sir Horace. She saw him generally courted ; but he did not dance, nor did his attentions distinguish any lady in particular. Mrs. Luxmore actually attacked, and would fain have monopolized him ; but even the attractions of Lady Gertrude seemed to fail, till she was solicited to play and sing. Then suddenly Sir Horace seemed spell-bound. It was evident that he was an enthusiast in music, and Lady Gertrude's fine voice, and skill in the science, seemed at once to charm and attract him. Helen knew her own powers to be at least equal, but she had not been

accustomed to perform in public, and she felt that she could never display them to equal advantage. From this time she often met Sir Horace. At the opera, in private parties, at the theatre, he was every where to be seen; but, towards her, he maintained the same distance and coldness as had marked their first interview. On a sudden he disappeared, and she saw him no more, either at public places or in select companies.

At this period, as she was one morning taking her accustomed walk with the children, at the entrance of the park from Spring-garden, they found themselves surrounded by an immense mob, just collected on the apprehension of a culprit, whom they were forcing along to justice. The children were alarmed, and Helen was deliberating how to extricate them with the greatest expedition, when her arm was seized by a very fair beautiful girl, who seemed pursued by two men. The young stranger, first in French, then in Italian, implored her protection.

“ I have lost my way, I have lost my friend, and the servant,” she exclaimed, “ and I am terrified to death.”

Helen saw she was a foreigner, and her extreme youth and distress interested her.

“ Pray,” said she, to the two men who were evidently enjoying and increasing the young person’s affright, “ have the humanity to desist from thus alarming her.”

Then in French, she assured her, that her servant should seek her friends, or attend her home in a coach, and still holding by her arm the trembling foreigner, accompanied her, as with her usual courage and coolness, Helen quietly retreated from the crowd and sought refuge with her *protégée*, the children and attendants, in the pastry-cook’s shop. Here, while she persuaded the stranger to take a jelly, and gave the young ones some cakes, she sent the footman for a coach, and in the mean time explained to her new acquaintance her intention ; assuring her, that the

servant should attend her home, and see her in safety.

In a manner the most artless, the young lady reiterated her thanks and gratitude. There was a peculiar *naïvété* in her whole deportment, which, with the striking beauty of her person, irresistibly excited the most forcible interest.

She told Helen that her name was *Roselli*, and that she had been a very short time arrived in England, from the Continent, where she was born and reared; that she had been walking in the park with her aunt Carlo, a foreigner, and a servant, when the sudden gathering of the crowd had alarmed them. The servant had lingered, probably to discover the cause, and the pressure of the mob had separated her from her friend; when the two men she had seen pursuing her, had taken advantage of her apparent ignorance and terror, to insult her, and had compelled her to ask protection from a stranger.

The man returned with a coach, and

Helen, giving the young stranger to his care, saw her placed in it. Where it was to be driven? was the next question.

“To Sir Horace Lascelles’s, in Portman Square,” was the answer, and the door closed.

“To Sir Horace Lascelles’s,” repeated Helen to herself. “It is then his Italian *protégée* whom I have thus encountered, and protected from insult?”

A glow of pleasure was diffused over her mind, as she thought again and again on the subject, in her way home.

“And yet,” thought she, “I am perhaps the last person to whom Sir Horace would wish to be obliged.—Oh, Ellina! how cruelly have you deprived us all of an invaluable friend!”

The recollection of the kind Sir Morton, however, seemed to compel her to hush all repining, and she tried to persuade herself, that it was right it should be so.

The time now approached when Lady Emmeline Montrose was to claim the per-

formance of Lady Llangville's promise, that Helen should accompany her to Clermont.

A few mornings preceding, while attending her sister's breakfast table, the following note was delivered to her:—

“ To Miss De Courcy.

“ Sir Horace Lascelles is anxious to offer his grateful acknowledgments to Miss De Courcy, for the humane protection afforded in a moment of alarm, to his ward, the Signora Roselli. For obvious reasons, Sir Horace is prevented returning his thanks in person; but trusts an opportunity *may* occur, for personally assuring Miss De Courcy that he sensibly feels the obligation.

“ Sir Horace quitted Wales two days since, and had the satisfaction of leaving his revered friend, Sir Everard, in good health and spirits.”

Helen read these lines with a beating heart, and such a heightened glow, that

her sister could not forbear an exclamation of curiosity, to know the subject. Helen answered by giving her the note to read.

“It is really mortifying, Helen,” said her Ladyship when she had read it, “that it should be my ill fate to prevent you, from captivating this comet; but, I believe he is afraid even to look at *you*, lest you should resemble *me*.”

“It is far more wounding to me,” said Sir Morton, “to reflect, that I have deeply injured the peace of a man, whose high character for moral worth, inflexible integrity, and brilliant abilities, must render his friendship invaluable.”

“Well,” said Lady Llangville, “like most other sins it carried its punishment with it.”

“Not its *punishment*, but its *excuse*, Ellina, I hope in some degree,” he answered gravely, “and yet great as was the temptation, I know, I ought not to have yielded. But the unbounded indulgence,

of early neglect, was not calculated to form such a character as Sir Horace Lascelles, and he inevitably must hate, and despise me."

"If he be what my father's partiality describes him," said Helen, "he would do neither, if he knew you. Your offence against him was not the dictates of an unprincipled heart; but the thoughtless imprudence of early youth, and if Sir Horace cannot make allowance for human frailty, he is far different from the character I have always heard him represented,"

The conversation was here interrupted by the entrance of Lady Emmeline Montrose; she came to tell Helen that all was arranged for their excursion, on the day but one succeeding; and to desire that she would accompany her that night into her box at the Opera.

Lady Llangville was more intimate than ever with the Marchioness of Valcourt, and seldom now went into public, unaccompanied by her friend. Helen could

never feel cordial towards Lady Valcourt, for she could never help fancying that her Ladyship had encouraged Colonel Hanbury's attentions to her sister, and she was well pleased to have Lady Emmeline in her stead, as a chaperon, who, though equally fashionable, was far more agreeable.

CHAP. VIII.

LADY Emmeline and Helen, with no male attendant, were set down at the Opera House, and in the lobby, encountered Sir Horace Lascelles, conversing with a young nobleman, a friend of her Ladyship, who, offering himself as her escort to her box, was immediately accepted, and turning quickly to Helen.

“Perhaps,” said she; “Sir Horace Lascelles will have the goodness to undertake the same kind office for Miss de Courcy, — but to the surprise of the whole party, Sir Horace only said.—

“Excuse me, I am not going into the house to night,” and coolly bowing, disappeared.

“ Perfect *nonchalance* ! on my word,” said her Ladyship, “ but never mind Helen, take Lord Frederic’s other arm, and we will contrive to get on without the aid of that stoic.”

Helen wished she had not felt the slight tincture of mortification, which Sir Horace’s manner, more than his words, had inflicted.

“ But I am only paying the penalty of my sister’s errors,” thought she, and trying to discard the incident from her mind, she entered the house with revived spirits, and her whole soul alive to the powers of harmony which there awaited her ;— soon Sir Horace and his slights were forgotten, in attention to the performance.

Lady Emmeline seemed, however, more tenacious for Helen, than Helen was for herself ; particularly, when at the end of the first act, of the Opera, they beheld Mrs. Luxmore and the Ladies Delaval enter the opposite box, attended by Lord Ornton ; and to the dismay of Helen—Sir Horace

Lascelles!—She felt, as was natural, a slight return of the former feeling; but she resolutely suppressed it, and devoted her whole attention to the stage.—Sir Horace was leaning over Lady Gertrude's chair, and reading with her the book of the Opera. Helen rejoiced that her sister was ignorant of the events of this evening.

“For worlds,” thought she, “I would not have her know what I now feel. Never may it be my fate so bitterly to increase her remorse.”

Major Danby joined them, and Helen exerted herself so successfully to converse with him; and to appear unembarrassed, that she deceived Lady Emmeline into believing that Sir Horace's entrance had been unobserved.

Her Ladyship reserved the declaration of her own sentiments, till they quitted the Opera House; but in their previous lounge in the coffee room, they were again destined to meet the Luxmore party, and

to see Lady Gertrude leaning on the arm of Sir Horace Lascelles.

“ Pray,” said Lady Emmeline to Lord Frederic Alwyn, has your Lordship heard of the new code of politeness, lately imported from the continent; if you have not, pray apply to Sir Horace Lascelles, who will initiate you into its mysteries, for I acknowledge, they far exceed the bounds of my comprehension.”

Lord Frederic laughed, having heard Sir Horace’s excuse, and seen his re-appearance, he knew to what she alluded.

“ You must,” said he, “ make some allowance for him. Look at the party by whom he is monopolised, and do not wonder that he is enthralled. *We* are all aware of Mrs. Luxmore, because we are accustomed to her manœuvres, and are guarded against them, but *Sir Horace* is a novice to her attacks.”

Helen, however, was more inclined to do justice to the motives of Sir Horace; she could not conceive it possible that he

would voluntarily insult her, and she believed some unexpected circumstances had occurred to induce him to return to the Opera, after he had declared his intention of not attending it. That he should not think it necessary to make some slight apology, was certainly extraordinary ; but if he could thus neglect Lady Emmeline, could she wonder at any omission towards herself ?

The course of her reflexions was interrupted by the object of them, who, suddenly approaching Lady Emmeline, appeared to have made some satisfactory excuse, for she smiled and looked towards Helen, whom Sir Horace now approached.

“ And what is the apology I must offer to Miss de Courcy ?” said he, “ or shall I trust her countenance, and believe that unheard, she will accord my pardon, and give me credit for unintentional disrespect ?”

“ I cannot pardon,” said Helen, “ when I have never been offended. With your motives I am certainly unacquainted, but

that you did not intend to offend me I am assured."

"And why are you so confident of my innocence in that respect?" asked Sir Horace, gazing earnestly at her.

"Because," she answered, "as a *gentleman* you *could* not, and as *my father's friend* you *would* not, give me unmerited cause of offence."

Sir Horace was for a moment silent, but a smile of meaning beamed over his fine countenance, and taking her hand he said—

"Miss de Courcy, you do me justice, and I have at least the satisfaction to find one person who has discernment and liberality enough to understand me, and to be just to me and to herself. And now, are we not friends?"

"I am not aware that we have ever been otherwise," said Helen. Sir Horace again smiled, he retained her hand, and for the first time led her to the carriage; but he spoke not once as they proceeded down

stairs, and when he parted from her a sigh burst from him. Helen, as it reached her ear, mentally ejaculated—"Ah! that sigh was to the remembrance of Ellina, my dear, infatuated, misguided sister!"

The time for Helen's departure for Clermont arrived, but she could not feel quite satisfied to leave her sister. Her increasing intimacy with Lady Valcourt, and the renewed attendance of Colonel Hanbury, which Helen accidentally discovered, had alarmed her fears; but she did not hesitate to remonstrate, and to remind Lady Llangville of Sir Morton's kind forgiveness of past errors. Her Ladyship smilingly assured her she would remember the lecture, and would not hear any wish of her sister to decline the invitation.

Sir Morton, too, added his persuasions: both were aware that she must inevitably meet Sir Horace Lascelles, and though they forbore urging that motive, they were anxious for any plan that would promote a meeting. Helen bade the dear

children adieu with regret, and promising to return to them as soon as possible, entered the splendid equipage of Lady Emmeline, which called in Portland-place for her.

Besides its owner, it contained Miss Hammond, her Ladyship's companion, a simple unaffected girl, the orphan daughter of a clergyman, who had been adopted from charitable motives by Lady Emmeline, and was treated with as much consideration as dependents generally are. She read to her Ladyship when she required amusement, presided at the tea-table, made up a party at cards, or performed any part assigned her by her protectress, with the same unassuming gentleness and obedience that marked her whole deportment. The fourth seat was occupied by a little Creole niece of Lady Emmeline's late Lord, now on a visit to her Ladyship.

Miss Bertrand was about eighteen; a superabundant share of vivacity, and much originality of character, rendered her by

far the most interesting and entertaining of the whole party, as Helen afterwards proved. They were joined on the road by Mrs. Luxmore, the Ladies Delaval, Lord Ornton and his two sisters, Colonel O'Brien, the 'Irish giant, as Lady Emmeline termed him, with his friend the Honourable Horatio Oakland, and another gentleman. Sir Horace Lascelles was not expected till the following day.

“What an excessively droll set we shall have assembled at Clermont,” said Miss Bertrand to Helen during a pause in their journey. “I am extremely glad to see the Irish giant and his friend the Honourable Horatio with him, for you must know, Miss de Courcy, that this said Honourable Horatio is one of those accommodating personages, who make a point of rendering themselves ridiculous *pro bono publico*, and if you have the least particle of risibility in your composition, it cannot fail of being excited wherever the Honourable Horatio presents himself.”

“ Restrain this severity, Eliza, I beg,” said Lady Emmeline.

“ I am saying all this out of pure kindness to Miss de Courcy,” answered the young lady. “ How is it possible she can perform her part well in the drama if she be unacquainted with the dramatis personæ? and believe me, I am serious in considering the Honourable Horatio a great acquisition, for what with Lady Gertrude and her accomplishments, (which certainly excite her own admiration more than that of any other person,) Mrs. Luxmore and her anxiety to push her wards forward, and that petrification Lord Ornton ogling Lady Isabel; if the Irish giant and his friend did not afford some relief to the picture it would be all one dull scene.”

Clermont was a noble seat, situated in a spacious park, beautified by a fine river, and the grounds laid out in groves, plantations, and shrubberies, in the most elegant variety. The sight of the country was de-

lightful to the unvitiated taste of Helen, and she felt that there only could she really enjoy the blessing of liberty.

To the surprise of Helen, the Ladies Delaval were now almost sociable, Lady Isabel, in particular, was anxious to cultivate her friendship, and even Lady Gertrude relaxed the usual hauteur of her manners, and seemed to seek her society.

Beneath the same roof, and associating daily and hourly, the characters of the fair rivals were now conspicuously portrayed. The unassuming Helen was ill calculated to contend the prize of fashionable fame with the titled sisters; great as were her natural talents, they sought no display. Retiring and unobtrusive in her manners, she would never

“ Unsought be won ;”

and was content to hide her native brilliancy in the shade, which Lady Gertrude's dazzling accomplishments threw on all around. With Lady Isabel she

soon became extremely intimate. Animated, amiable, and original, the younger Lady Delaval aimed at no rivalship, affected no superiority.

From her first introduction to Helen, the most unequivocal admiration seemed to supercede every wish for competition, and very soon tended to establish an intimacy, that afforded each real satisfaction; but the deportment of Lady Gertrude was different. Notwithstanding an affectation of appearing sociable with Helen, it was evident that her Ladyship regarded her with eyes of alarm and envy. She saw her personal advantages were great as her own, and the calm dignity of her manners, which afforded no room for censure, no scope for malignity, defeated every attempt to inflict the mortification which her Ladyship would have been well contented to see her endure. She knew from Mrs. Luxmore the circumstances relating to Lady Llangville's early engagement to Sir Horace Lascelles, and she flattered herself

that they had raised an insuperable barrier to Helen's attainment of an object which was her own secret aim, the heart of the young Baronet.

With latent satisfaction she beheld the apparent total indifference of Sir Horace towards Miss de Courcy; and with surprise the intire backwardness of Helen, in eliciting attention from him.

In their evening concerts, she generally declined playing, addressed her conversation in preference to any other person, and never manœuvred for a seat in his vicinity, but always employed, seemed to trust to her own resources for amusement. She appeared almost even to avoid him, for if by chance she entered the room, and most of the company were gathered round the harp, or piano forte, where Lady Gertrude, in studied attitudes, presided, the genius of minstrelsy, Helen preferred joining the little work table, at which Miss Hammond, neglected by all save Miss de Courcy, unobtrusively maintained her station.

One evening, when, as usual, her Ladyship had been delighting her auditors, and Sir Horace, leaning over her chair, had paid his meed of adulation to her vanity, by his unequivocal admiration of her performance, Major Danby entered. He was an unexpected addition to the party; his regiment had reached a town six miles distant, where it was now quartered, only that day; and knowing that Helen was at Clermout, he had hastened to join the party there: he was received as a valuable acquisition, for his vivacity and good nature were general recommendations.

After listening to Lady Gertrude's singing with listlessness, he eagerly solicited Helen to take her place at the instrument, but she declined, and would have persisted, if Lady Gertrude, and even Mrs. Luxmore, who both, from her perseverance in refusing, inferred her want of power to excel, had not so fervently solicited her, that fearing to incur the censure of affectation she at length acceded to their entreaties.

The harp was her favourite instrument, and one air, which she accompanied with her voice, was sufficient to deter Lady Gertrude from urging her again on this subject, for it convinced all her auditors that, in taste and science, she far excelled every competitor present. Lady Gertrude actually sunk appalled on a sofa, almost execrating her own urgency, and anxiously watching the effect of her unconscious rival's melody on Sir Horace. It has before been said, that he was an enthusiast in music, but far from leaning over the instrument, and devoting to it his whole attention, as when touched by the hand of her Ladyship, he now reclined over the back of a chair, at some distance, and at first took up a book; but gradually, as his ear received the unexpected sounds, his eyes wandered from the page, his book was thrown by, and he leaned his head on his hand, but his face was so concealed as to elude all examination.

When Helen had concluded, and the

delighted Danby, with the other gentlemen who surrounded her, overwhelmed her with compliments, Sir Horace was the only exception; he alone was profoundly silent; nor did he move from his seat, or change his attitude, till Mrs. Luxmore, who had narrowly watched him, and began to have her fears awakened by this new trait of excellence in Miss de Courcy, suddenly approached, and begged he would join his influence with hers to prevent Lady Gertrude from singing again. The truth was, that Mrs. Luxmore feared her Ladyship would only more clearly display her inferiority by the contrast, and she thought it better policy to suffer the first irritation, which the discovery of Helen's talents had excited to subside, before her ward again exhibited. Lady Gertrude, however, was obstinately bent on rivalling Helen, and though she so far yielded to Mrs. Luxmore's remonstrances as to avoid the harp, she seated herself triumphantly at the piano, and selecting one of the most

difficult pieces, prepared to efface completely all recollection of Helen's performance from the minds of her auditors.

Sir Horace handed her to the instrument, and, no longer absent or inattentive, stationed herself by her chair. Helen listened with undivided attention, and, when the piece was concluded, joined, with sincerity, in the general applause; then returning to Miss Hammond's work-table, resumed her netting, when Mrs. Luxmore, who had seldom noticed Miss de Courcy, advanced, and seated herself opposite, with that peculiar stare, so well calculated to intimidate those she wished to awe; but on Helen it had no effect; she did not even discontinue the conversation, in which she was engaged with Miss Hammond before her approach, but calmly finished what she was saying, without appearing to notice her.

By degrees Mrs. Luxmore moved her seat, till she had drawn close to the table, on which Helen's folio of drawings was

placed. It had been brought to show Miss Hammond a landscape, which Helen had taken in Wales, on a spot with which the former was well acquainted. Some loose drawings were apparent, and taking up one, saying, with her usual *nonchalance*, "May I be permitted?" she began to toss them over. A cool bow from Helen was all the answer she had received. A head in chalks, which Helen had taken of Lady Llangville, soon attracted her eye, and Sir Horace having, at that moment, left his place by Lady Gertrude, advanced. With a look of mischief, Mrs. Luxmore held up the drawing to him—

"What a charming head!" said she, adding, with affected ignorance, "A likeness of Miss de Courcy, I conclude."

Sir Horace saw the real resemblance, as well as Mrs. Luxmore's ill-dissembled malignity, and, for one instant, was embarrassed; but quickly resuming his self-possession, though his natural paleness was increased, said, "A likeness of Miss de

Courcy, certainly, but a much greater of her sister."

Helen, who had, with breathless indignation, listened to Mrs. Luxmore's attack, was infinitely relieved by the calm tone in which he answered; but she could not raise her eyes, for she felt the allusion was cruel, both to Sir Horace and herself.—Mrs. Luxmore, too, was surprised at his coolness, and, for the moment, was disconcerted. Sir Horace stood, for some minutes, with his eyes fixed on Helen, which Mrs. Luxmore no sooner observed than suddenly looking at Lady Gertrude she exclaimed—

"My dear, I am sure you are ill; you have fatigued yourself with singing."

Whether Lady Gertrude took the hint, or whether vexation had the effect, is uncertain; but she immediately complained of faintness, and, instantly, the services of every person in the room were put in requisition. Sir Horace, perhaps deeming the office of attendant on a fainting lady

more befitting a female, gravely walked away, and her ladyship was carried out in hysterics.

This was going farther than Mrs. Luxmore intended ; but, as she was compelled to attend her charge, she followed to her dressing-room.

Helen detested all artifice, and she saw and suspected so much in Lady Gertrude's manner, that, after a slight tender of her assistance, which was pettishly rejected, she returned to the work-table.

Miss Hammond had been obliged to accompany the invalid, and the gentlemen were surrounding a chess-table, at which Lady Emmeline played with Colonel O'Brien ; and Lord Ornton and Lady Isabel were engaged in conversation apart.— With her head bent over the likeness of her sister, which yet lay on the table, and musing on the incident to which it had given rise, the approach of Sir Horace was unheeded, till raising her eyes, she beheld him standing opposite her. She was

not aware of his vicinity. A deep glow coloured her cheek, as her eyes met his from a consciousness of the object she was contemplating. Involuntarily she removed the drawing—

“Do not let me interrupt you, Miss de Courcy,” said he, “I think Mrs. Luxmore said that head was drawn by yourself,” and he took the drawing in his hand.

Helen faintly answered in the affirmative.

“It is very like what I remember *Elli*—Lady Llangville.”

Compelled to say something, in a low voice she replied—

“It would scarcely have done her justice then I think—she is much altered now.”

Her varying countenance and faltering voice told her thoughts, and Sir Horace laying the drawing down, came round to the side of the table next her.

“Miss de Courcy,” said he, “I feel that the incident of this evening has dis-

tressed you, and allow me to add, I honour the sensibility which prompts you to this regard for the feelings of others. Had the original of this portrait possessed it—but it is passed, and believe me, the only sentiment I retain on the subject, is a sincere wish for the happiness of every one dear to my best friend Sir Everard de Courcy. And now let us dismiss it for ever, and let me seize this opportunity to mention the name of one who will never forget Miss de Courcy. I have this day received a letter from my amiable little ward Florenza Roselli, in which I am charged with many kind messages to you, whom she emphatically terms ‘her beautiful protectress,’ and expresses her fears, that I have not been sufficiently diffuse, in expressing her gratitude for the timely exertion of courage and prudence, which saved her from farther insult, and returned her in safety to her friends.”

“I am afraid,” said Helen smiling, “she

greatly overrates any little merit I may have had, in any action, which common sense and humanity must have prompted."

"Common sense and humanity often prompt actions, which we want courage and exertion to perform," answered he, "happily for Florenza, she found them all united."

Grateful and surprising to Helen, was the altered manner of Sir Horace, and after he had ceased speaking, she dwelt with delight on the satisfaction, her sister and Sir Morton would have felt, could they have witnessed the conversation and incidents of the evening. A gratification so unexpected, so un hoped for, was interrupted by a call from the company to witness the exhibition of the Honourable Horatio, who was imitating *Grimaldi*.

"Now is it possible," said Miss Bertrand, in a whisper to Helen, "that that poor man can fancy he appears to advantage, while he distorts the human face divine, with those horrid grimaces, and by

the most laboured action produces a bad imitation of natural humour."

"It is impossible for us to judge what his own opinions may be on the subject," said Helen, smiling.

"Oh not at all," she replied, "he has so much happy self conceit, that it is easy to see he considers himself a paragon of perfection, and that all we have to do, is to behold and admire."

"The Honorable Horatio was, indeed, as Miss Bertrand described him, happy in his own good opinion, and seemed to imagine that of others would follow of course. Lady Emmeline found him a very useful auxiliary, when conversation flagged, or weather confined the party from seeking variety in their amusements. The buffoonery of the Honourable Horatio was a never failing resource, and it was a maxim of Lady Emmeline by any means to banish ennui from Clermont.

CHAP. IX.

It appeared singular to Helen, whose natural candour disdained every species of artifice, that after the incidents recorded in the foregoing chapter, Lady Gertrude should suddenly seek her society, and even aim at intimacy. Whether her Ladyship had been tutored by Mrs. Luxmore, to cultivate the friendship of Miss de Courcy, in order to obviate any suspicion of a dread of rivalry, or whether her change of conduct owed its origin to her own caprice of temper, it was impossible to discover, nor did Helen puzzle herself on the subject. Her own deportment was always the same; firm, consistent, and dignified, she met

the advances of Lady Gertrude with good humoured politeness, but as she could not stoop to dissimulation, she heard all her overstrained professions of friendship, with silent civility.

After the evening of Mrs. Luxmore's attack, Sir Horace relapsed into the same distance of manner. Grave, and generally reserved, he seldom showed toward Helen the commonest attentions, but invariably preferred addressing his conversation to any other female present. His manifest superiority, not only to every man in their party, but to any one she had ever known, together with the strong attachment, which she knew her father felt for him, led Helen to feel an interest in all he said and did, greater than she could ever know for another person, but the idea of any preference that could affect her peace, never once entered her mind. That Lady Gertrude was extremely partial to him, was very visible to every eye, and in her, rank, fashion, and fortune, seemed to unite, to

render her a desirable match; but Sir Horace apparently, remained insensible to all her attractions. His manners were generally polite and respectful, but his attentions were shown to none in particular; his arm, when they walked, was at the service of the married or unmarried, and if he drove Lady Gertrude out in his curricule, which he was sometimes compelled to do, by a request of Mrs. Luxmore, he commonly resigned the reins to Major Danby, or some other gentleman of the party, before his return.

Thus passed the first fortnight of Helen's abode at Clermont; her health, which had been somewhat impaired by the dissipated life she had led in town, was much improved, but not re-established, when the unexpected arrival of Major Danby gave her cause to apprehend a renewal of his suit, and she was pondering alone in the library, on the means of avoiding his assiduities, now (though she was far from suspecting why,) become more than ever

disagreeable to her, when she was surprised by the entrance of Sir Horace: he did not at first observe her, but walked thoughtfully towards the window. She had a book in her hand, which though it did not occupy her attention, was her apparent employment, and she thought it better to remain quietly in her seat, than to appear as if she wished to avoid him by retiring. —A slight movement which she made by turning over the leaves of the book, reached his ear, he turned and saw her, for once he seemed for a moment embarrassed, but instantly recovering his self possession, he hesitated an instant, and then advancing, said, to the amazement of Helen.

“Miss de Courcy, I am glad to meet you alone; I have just received a letter from your father, who has delegated to me a task, which is at once difficult and embarrassing. I perceive he is not aware of the few opportunities that occur in the great world, of cultivating that sort of intimacy, even with the daughter of an old

friend, which would entitle me to her confidence.—The commands of Sir Everard, however, are, with me, sacred, and as the path of candour is on most occasions the best to pursue, I shall be better satisfied, if you will yourself peruse this letter, and act as you think proper upon it.”

So saying, he drew it from his pocket, presented it to her, and immediately retired, disappearing at one door, as Lady Gertrude suddenly entered at the other.

“Was that Sir Horace?” in a tone of voice almost breathless with eagerness.

“It was,” said Helen.

“And you have been here alone with him,” said she, “and he has given you that letter,” she added, looking indignantly, and suspiciously at Helen.

“You are right in both respects,” she answered calmly.

Lady Gertrude could not speak, but dropping on a chair, a convulsive burst of tears preceded the bitterest invectives

against the artfulness and treachery of her she had been so weak as to call friend.

“ Though I should be perfectly justified in leaving your Ladyship without answering words so unworthy of *you*, and so insulting to *me*,” said Helen, “ yet as I consider you solely under the dominion of passion, I will wait till you are more reasonable, and then give any explanation that is consistent with my own ideas of right; and this I do, not on your own account, but merely that Sir Horace may not be injured by your suspicions.”

“ Oh, no doubt,” answered Lady Gertrude, “ you have no regard for *my* feelings, but indeed how can I expect it? knowing as you well do, my attachment, now, just at the moment when there appears a probability of its being returned, you contrive clandestine meetings, and actually, procure private interviews with him. Oh Miss de Courcy! could I have believed this of you.”

“ Believe what you please, Lady Ger-

trude," answered Helen, who saw that in her present frame of mind all reasoning and expostulation would be vain. "I shall now disdain even to answer such degrading suspicions, which in your cooler moments I am sure you will repent having ever uttered."

And now not all Lady Gertrude's entreaties could induce her to stay. She persisted in retiring to her apartment, where she seriously began to examine her own feelings, and for the first time felt alarmed.—She thought it impossible, that knowing, as she did, the early attachment and disappointment, which had steeled the heart of Sir Horace against any future impressions, she could have been so unpardonably unguarded, as to admit sentiments of him to gain entrance into her mind, which might injure her happiness; and she shuddered at finding that she was not so secure as she had imagined. So engrossed was she by the scene which had just passed, that she totally forgot her fa-

ther's letter, and sat with it in her hand unconscious of the purpose for which she had received it.

The unworthy suspicions of Lady Gertrude, shocked and surprised her not more than the feelings of her own heart, as she pursued her self-examination; she was taking it severely to task, and forming, as is usual on such occasions, various good resolutions, when Lady Isabel rushed into her apartment.

“What, for Heaven's sake, my dear Miss De Courcy, is the matter with Gertrude? She was found alone in violent hysterics in the library, and when asked what had caused her indisposition, she answered, ‘Miss de Courcy could explain.’”

“I certainly can,” answered Helen, “if I choose to expose Lady Gertrude to censure, and ridicule; but as I can feel for *her*, though she appears to have so little regard to what is due to *herself*, I shall certainly not disclose what has passed.”

“ I know well,” said Lady Isabel, “ that she is desperately in love with Sir Horace Lascelles, and that he does not care a fig for her ; but how *you* can have any concern in that affair, I cannot imagine. She cannot be jealous of *you*, I think, for Sir Horace certainly treats all us juniors, with just as much neglect as any love-sick sister could wish, and bestows what little attention he does vouchsafe to bestow on females, on all the old maids, wives, and widows he can pick out. It appears indeed, that in order to suit him, a woman may be any thing, except young and handsome.—Well, commend me to such nonpareils ; before his arrival I heard of nothing but his wit, sense, elegance, and a thousand fine qualities, which I have not discernment enough to discover in him ; and lo ! I can see nothing particular, but an uncommon share of pride.”

“ Oh, do not say you see nothing particular in him,” cried Helen.

“ Why my dear !” said Isabel, archly,

“*you* are not in love with this paragon of perfection too, are you? Nay then, poor Gertrude’s case is hopeless indeed; for he must inevitably prefer you to her.”

“No indeed,” said Helen, “that does not necessarily follow; even if your first supposition be true.—Believe me, however, you will never find me ready to bestow my affections, where there is not the smallest chance of their being returned. To our family, Sir Horace Lascelles can never be more than a friend; the injury early inflicted on his peace by my sister, which I should not allude to, but that you must have often heard it, has raised an insuperable barrier to any nearer connection than at present subsists, and the knowledge of this, has I trust effectually guarded me, from the danger of an unreturned attachment.”

“I do believe all you say my dear Miss de Courcy,” said the candid Isabel, “and much more, for I believe you to be all that is amiable and wise; too amiable, and too wise

for such a world as this, which abounds far more with *Gertrudes* than *Helens*. Adieu, I go to plead your cause, to oppose a whole host of female prejudices."

So saying she pressed the extended hand of Helen, and gaily skipped out of the room.

The yet unopened letter of her father, now once more caught the eye of Helen, and she resolutely opened it, not without a degree of curiosity (which the late extraordinary scene with Lady Gertrude had for the time suppressed) to know why Sir Everard should write respecting her to Sir Horace Lascelles.

The first part was an answer to one Sir Horace had written to him, on business relative to his own estate in Wales, contiguous to that of Sir Everard. After which was the following paragraph—

"And now my dear friend, that I have executed your commissions, as I hope to your own satisfaction, permit me to consult you on an affair of my own; it re-

lates to the one being, most dear to my affections, my Helen, she, who to the beauty and grace of her lovely sister, joins a heart and understanding, which that sister never possessed. You have, ere this, had frequent opportunities, of course, of seeing and knowing her: and you will guess my anxiety, that with attractions so numerous, and with every requisite for happiness, either in the married or single state, she should form a suitable establishment, and that when she quits the paternal protection, her choice may be such as I shall approve, and worthy of her merits. If you have had time to discover all the excellencies of her character you will not wonder at my solicitude on the subject. The cause, of my present application, arises from offers, I have received for her, from a gentleman of the name of *Dunby*; his proposals are noble and liberal in the extreme, and his language is that of a gentleman. He tells me he is well known to you, and from you I would wish to hear

of him. The strong reliance I have on your judgment, induces me to ask for your opinion, and to solicit your unbiassed observation.—Is he worthy of Helen? and are his attentions apparently acceptable to her?—I shall address her myself, and leave it wholly to her.—Not for worlds would I influence her decision; I have no wish but for her happiness, and to contribute to it as far as in my power; but your judicious remarks would assist me, in judging of the pretensions of this young man; and whether he is one, with whom I may unfearely intrust my dearest treasure.”

Such was the paragraph relative to Helen, which had appeared so greatly to embarrass Sir Horace. Helen read it more than once attentively. Every hour she might expect letters to herself on the same subject, she wished that they were arrived that she might at once terminate her father's suspense, and assure him, that Panby had no share, in her heart.—The first

opportunity that occurred, she determined to return her father's letter to Sir Horace.

The same evening, all assembled as usual in the drawing room, and Lady Gertrude, somewhat recovered from the agitation of the morning, at the urgent entreaty of Mrs. Luxmore consented to appear, and in an elegant undress, reclined on a sofa in a studied attitude. Helen took her accustomed station at the work table, and Miss Bertrand, joining her said—

“ I have made the tour of the apartment, and find at last the greatest magnet in this corner of it: and now like other *tourists* I will try to amuse you, and myself, with what I have picked up in my travels.”

With quickness and accuracy, she immediately sketched with her pencil, a caricature of the scene before her. The chess table, the Honourable Horatio, in the act of ranting Lotario in imitation of the amateur of fashion; Lady Gertrude,

languid and pensive ; Mrs. Luxmore, bustling from one party to the other, and endeavouring to detain Sir Horace near the sofa that supported the fair invalid : Lord Ornton and Lady Isabel in tender converse, Helen and Miss Hammond at the work table : all were delineated by the ready pencil of animated Eliza. Helen smiled at the rapidity of her genius.

“ Are you not apprehensive of incurring general displeasure ? ”

“ Not in the least,” answered she, “ all, with the exception of yourself, possess an antidote to satire in their own hearts—My dear aunt, and the Irish giant and Co. are too much interested in the fate of hundreds depending on their play, to care for my ridicule ; Lord Ornton’s thoughts are too truly devoted to Lady Isabel, to bestow one on me.—Mrs. Luxmore thinks too much of Sir Horace Lascelles : Sir Horace too much of his own mysterious affairs : and Lady Gertrude and the gay Lothario of themselves ; doubt not there-

fore, that I am perfectly well guarded from their resentment by their own self-love, the only love, you know, that, some author says, is proof against inconstancy."

Sir Horace approached as Miss Bertrand spoke.

"May I ask the subject of Miss Bertrand's oratory?" said he.

"Oh yes," she answered, "we were merely discanting on the advantages of self-love in general, and in particular as a defence against ridicule."

"Its aid you think may be required, I presume," said he, smiling as he surveyed the caricature before her.

"A dance, a dance," was suddenly called for by Major Danby, who, tired of witnessing the Honourable Horatio's exhibitions, and anxious to secure Helen's hand, advanced.

Miss Hammond was stationed at the piano, and the whole room in a moment was in motion. Helen could not refuse

the request of Danby, without appearing particular: yet she wished anxiously to avoid giving him the slightest encouragement. She saw Sir Horace observed them, and she felt her desire for an opportunity to return her father's letter increase; it occurred at the end of a dance. Sir Horace did not join in it, he leaned over the back of a sofa on which she was seated, and Danby being called from her, they were left alone at one end of the spacious saloon. She drew the letter from her pocket, and presented it saying in some confusion.

“Your own observations will best suggest your answer to this; whenever my father applies to me on the subject, I shall lose no time, in convincing him, that his kind anxiety, for my happiness, has only caused *you* unavailing trouble and *me* needless embarrassment.” Danby returned as she spoke, accompanied by Mrs. Luxmore, who had narrowly observed the whole scene, but Helen disdained all concealments

where no cause for it existed, and her unconstrained air and manner assured Mrs. Luxmore, and convinced her, that whatever might be the danger from such attractions, as yet all was safe.

Sir Horace had only bowed gravely, as he received the letter from the hand of Helen, and no time for farther conversation was allowed them, but the incidents of that day had greatly disturbed the wonted calmness of her mind, and she began to wish she had not been thus thrown into the society of a man, whose striking superiority awakened an interest, greater than she wished to feel for one, in whose breast she was convinced, her sisters conduct had created an insurmountable prejudice against her.

CHAP. X.

Lady Gertrude's indisposition disappeared as rapidly as it came on. Towards Helen she observed a gloomy distance in her manner, and watched suspiciously the most trifling attentions paid to her by Sir Horace: the latter announced his intention of leaving Clermont, being compelled to return to town on business.

The evening before he left them was remarkably warm, and the party agreed on going on a fine Lake, about half a mile from the mansion, in a boat, constructed to row the company to a small Island in the centre, tastefully planted with evergreens. Above their high tops towered a picturesque ruin, covered with moss and

ivy, and commanding a fine view. Here they amused themselves till a late hour. Lady Emmeline, with the Ladies Ornton, returned home early, and the remainder of the company, in listening to the fine voices of Lady Gertrude and Helen, and witnessing the burlesque exhibitions of Mr. Oaklands, dancing to their own music, fishing on the Lake, &c. continued so engaged, that they observed not the gradual approach of a tremendous black cloud, which seemed to portend a tempest.

Sir Horace first remarked it, and suggested the expediency of immediately quitting the Island, particularly as it was uncertain whether the party was not too large for the boat to contain all at once. What was to be done? the servant who had rowed Lady Emmeline and her friends over had attended them to the house, and was not returned with the boat. The ladies began, audibly, to express their fears; and every female voice, that of Helen excepted, was heard at once.

Loud thunder roared at a distance, and the big rain drops began to fall. The place they were in could scarcely be called a shelter, for the chasms in the roof rendered it but an insecure asylum. The sky now was completely overcast, the darkened air, with the deep shade of the evergreens, almost involved the Island in a profound gloom. At times, partially illumined by the vivid lightning, the scene became really awful; and the increasing thunder, every peal growing more loud and violent, momentarily added to its terrors, when they were in some measure relieved by hearing the dashing of oars, and the boat appeared in sight. All, in a moment, rushed to the bank, imploring the servant to hasten; and the increasing storm, the screams of the females, and the dashing of the water, rendered the clamour and confusion so great, that even Sir Horace's natural calmness was shaken. Lady Gertrude's terrors were so great, that she declared herself incapable of moving, but

Sir Horace, who, from the number of trees that shaded the spot; apprehended danger in remaining where they were, resolutely lifted her from the bank, and placed her in the boat, which was small, and constructed for the accommodation of little more than half the number of persons who now crowded into it.

“If one more enters, the boat must sink!” exclaimed one of the gentlemen:

“Oh, we are all in,” cried Mrs. Luxmore, but her voice was nearly drowned by the increasing thunder. Sir Horace, who, with the assistance of the servant, at the hazard of instant destruction, had undertaken to guide them across, intreated them to be less clamorous, but the hysterical shrieks of Lady Gertrude, with the unceasing screams and cries of the rest, continued in spite of all his remonstrances, till he had, with some difficulty, and still greater courage and prudence, conducted them to the opposite shore, from whence they soon reached the mansion, Lady Ger-

trude clinging to the arm of Sir Horace, and Lord Ornton actually carrying Lady Isabel.

Dry clothes, with every other necessary attention, awaited them on their arrival; but no sooner had they assembled, and the numerous inquiries as to the sufferings of each had gone round, than Lady Emmeline exclaimed—

“ But where is Miss de Courcy ?” All stared, for in the general confusion her absence had remained undiscovered. Every one, except Sir Horace, intent on self-preservation, had found no time to bestow on others, and he had seen Helen descend from the ruin, and stand preparing to enter the boat with the rest. Where, then, could she be? Fears the most horrid and alarming were suggested by her non-appearance, and, without staying to hear more, he snatched up his hat, darted down stairs, and once more braved the pitiless tempest, which raged with more fury than ever.

The boat remained as they had left it; springing into it, and dragging with him one of the footman's great coats, which he had seized in the hall, Sir Horace was again, in a few minutes, at the foot of the eminence on which the ruin stood. The name of Miss de Courcy, loudly reiterated, brought Helen forward in a moment.

“ Thank heaven you are safe,” he exclaimed, “ But why, why did you remain here ?”

“ Because,” she answered calmly, “ I must have endangered the general safety, by adding one more to the number in the boat; and surely it was better to stay here alone, than to run the risque of drowning the whole party.”

“ Is it possible that at such a moment you could be so considerate ?” said Sir Horace.

“ Have the goodness to recollect it was self-preservation made me so,” answered Helen, half laughing, “ I had no inclina-

tion for a watery grave, and I was convinced that here I was perfectly safe."

"You are quite right," he answered, "And I see, indeed, that you are as much above all puerile fears, as you are superior to the weaknesses of your sex in general." Such a compliment from the grave, dignified, stoical Sir Horace, astonished Helen, and for a moment silenced her; but soon resuming, she said—

"And now that you have been so humane as to brave this dreadful storm to rescue an imprisoned damsel, I must not persevere in my selfish system, by suffering you to remain in your wet clothes. I see you have provided a covering for me, in that great coat, and I am quite ready, if you think proper to encounter the water again."

"The tempest seems beginning to abate, but it may be renewed," said Sir Horace; "We had better avail ourselves of the present cessation;" so saying, he threw the coat over her, handed her into the boat, and in a few minutes they were once more on dry

land. Sir Horace gave her his arm, and they proceeded towards the house.

“ Oh, let us hasten,” said Helen, “ You are wet and cold, Sir Horace, how shall I reproach myself should you sustain any serious injury !”

“ Have no apprehensions of that kind,” said he; “ I am tolerably well secured to the weather; but even if I should, the daughter of Sir Everard de Courcy may surely claim some sacrifice from her father’s friend.”

“ But how should I answer to my father for having endangered the life of that friend ?” she asked.

“ Tell him,” said Sir Horace, “ that it has only been resigned to save one, which will, I trust, present a model to the world; a rare model, in a female, of courage, prudence, and self-denial.”

“ With a little drawback, in the shape of vanity,” said Helen, with an arch laugh, “ if I could appropriate such a compliment, at the expense of my whole sex ;

but, thank heaven! we are arrived; and now for a warm bed and dry clothes without delay;" and she sprang forward to meet Lady Emmeline, who, all anxiety, was awaiting their arrival.

The rage of Lady Gertrude, when she understood that Helen had remained alone on the Island, and that Sir Horace had gone in search of her, may be better conceived than described. Her recent terror, cold—all were forgotten in her anger; and scarcely could Mrs. Luxmore prevent, by her admonitions, a public display of her mortification.

Sir Horace departed at an early hour the following morning, and Helen was surprised to find, how different the party appeared in his absence. Immediately after breakfast, the following letter was delivered to her from the post:—

“ Miss de Courcy is advised to return to Portland-place, if it be only to admonish Lady *L*—— to be more guarded in

her conduct. Colonel H—— and Lady V—— are dangerous companions, and more dangerous advisers.”

It was anonymous, and Helen felt a chill pervade her whole frame, at the idea that some glaring imprudence in her sister, during her absence, had caused this friendly warning. It would be easy to hasten her return a few days sooner than she had intended.

Early in the following week, the party was to have separated, and Lady Emmeline was to have conveyed her back to town; but now, every hour lost, seemed teeming with danger to Ellina.

“ Oh, I must go,” thought Helen; “ the peace, the honour of Sir Morton and his family may depend on it.”

She hesitated; for it occurred to her, that Mrs. Luxmore and Lady Gertrude would certainly conclude her departure to have been hastened by that of Sir Horace. The repugnance felt, by every virtuous

mind, to incur unjust censure, made her pause; but, in a moment, she reproached herself, for suffering any selfish fears to counterbalance, for an instant, the dreadful apprehension of a sister's deviation from rectitude, and she immediately sought Lady Emmeline; and telling her that she was compelled, by the letter she had just received, to hasten to town, entreated her excuse and permission to depart on the following morning. Lady Emmeline smiled—

“And pray, my dear cousin,” said she, “have you no qualms of conscience, in leaving us all to the mercy of a certain young lady, whose nerves, I fear, will ill bear the idea of your departure, so soon after that of her chief attraction to Clermont?”

“I have reasons, which I cannot well explain, my dear madam, even to you,” said Helen, “which compel me to wave all considerations that relate merely to myself and my own feelings. Conscious of

the propriety of my motives, I must not suffer the censure or the opinions of others to influence me, in an affair where I alone can judge. To you I leave my justification, or rather to time; and, with your leave, will quit Clermont to-morrow at an early hour."

"I am so strongly inclined, my dear Helen," said Lady Emmeline, "to think every thing you do,

'Wisest, virtuousest, discretest, best,'

that even, if you should hereafter be Lady Lascelles, I shall be really tempted to forgive you, and congratulate Sir Horace."

"Oh, never mention such a suggestion," said Helen. "Like me, you must be aware of its impossibility."

"Well," said Lady Emmeline, laughing, "more extraordinary events have happened; but time, which generally discovers secrets, will one day disclose the mysteries of that impenetrable region, Sir

Horace Lascelle's heart ; and, till then, I am content to be silent on the subject."

At dinner, Helen's intended return to town was mentioned and lamented by Lady Emmeline. Whatever Lady Gertrude felt, she dared not express. The firmness of Helen seemed to have awed her into silence ; and even Mrs. Luxmore did not venture one satirical remark ; such influence has real good sense and propriety over the illiberal and weak-minded.

Early on the following morning, Helen was on her way to town. Impatient, indeed, was she to arrive. She dreaded lest she should find her sister again immersed in dissipation ; and had not her fortitude resisted depression, her spirits would gradually have declined as she approached Portland-place. She arrived in time for dinner, and was received with the same cordiality as ever by Lady Llangville ; neither in her department, nor that of Sir Morton, did she observe any thing to alarm her ; and hope once more arose, that the

anonymous address had been dictated by an enemy, rather than a friend. It had, however, the effect of keeping alive her suspicions, and rendering her watchful. Lady Llangville prepared to go out in the evening, and told Helen, that, in a few days, she was engaged to accompany a party of friends to Brighton for a week, but, in enumerating them, the name of Lady Valcourt was not mentioned, and Helen silently hoped she did not form one of the number.

CHAP. XI.

AN early walk before breakfast, through Hyde-park, had led Sir Morton Llangville to a greater distance than he intended, and he was meditating his return, when, in the Kensington road, he observed a gentleman on horseback, without a servant. The horse seemed to have taken fright, and was become restive. Sir Morton sprang forward to his assistance; the horse darted across the road; a tremendous precipice, forming the descent to a gravel-pit, was before him; and his unfortunate rider must have been precipitated headlong down it, if Sir Morton, with incredible agility, and admirable presence of mind, had not intercepted his path, seized the

bridle, and, at the hazard of his own life, preserved that of the stranger. Sir Morton's arm was slightly strained by the exertion; his humane interference was loudly extolled, and warmly thanked by the person whom he had saved from a violent death, a young man of decidedly superior manners and interesting countenance.

“Suffer me,” said the stranger, “to know my preserver, that, by name, I may reiterate my thanks and gratitude.”

Sir Morton presented his card, which no sooner met the eye of the stranger, than, with an electrical start, he retreated. “Sir Morton Llangville!” he repeated, in accents that seemed to imply more than mere surprise. For a moment he remained silent; then, extending his hand,—

“Once,” said he, “I should have beheld that name with far different sentiments; and, strange as it may appear, Sir Morton Llangville was the last man in the world to whom I would have owed my

life; but with the age of romance, romance itself has disappeared, and even to Sir Morton Llangville I now willingly acknowledge my obligations, and extend the hand of friendship."

Sir Morton needed not the card now presented to him, to discover, that the man whose existence he had preserved, was he whom he had once deeply injured, seizing, with avidity, the hand held out to him, he exclaimed—

"The friendship of Sir Horace Lascelles is one of my dearest wishes; and may I live to convince him of the sincerity with which I have deplored the injury inflicted on his peace, by youthful rashness and the heat of passion."

The open, amiable manners of Sir Morton was an irresistible passport to the affections. Sir Horace, acute and discriminating, soon read his character, and was desirous of improving the acquaintance; while the delighted Sir Morton returned home in extacies, to relate to Lady Llang-

ville and Helen his morning's encounter, and its happy termination.

All wonder and joy, Helen was devoutly thankful that the *eclaircissement* had been thus amicable. She could now meet him in public without alarm, when her sister and Sir Morton were of the party: and she felt assured, that the more he knew of the character of the latter, the less would his self-love be wounded, by having been supplanted by one, who possessed qualities so estimable and so attractive.

Sir Clement Irby, the intimate friend of Sir Horace, often visited in Portland-place, he spoke of him as one of those rare characters formed to adorn human nature, and Helen fancied, that whenever he was the subject of conversation Sir Clement regarded her with peculiar attention. A few evenings after the encounter between Sir Horace and his former rival, the Llangville family met him at the house of a mutual friend; Sir Morton greeted him cordially, and his advances were met with warmth

by Sir Horace, who gracefully bowing to Lady Llangville, approached Helen.

“ You are, I believe, already acquainted with our dear Helen,” said the well-meaning Baronet.

“ Lady Emmeline Montrose was so kind as to present me to the daughter of my earliest friend,” said Sir Horace, “ a title by which I am proud and grateful to acknowledge Sir Everard de Courcy.— Soon, I trust, shall I be restored to his valued society, for a short period, and convey to him the intelligence, that the existence of the being so highly favoured by him, has been preserved by the courage and activity of Sir Morton Llangville.”

“ Name it not,” said Sir Morton, “ it was the most fortunate day of my life, and so Sir Everard will think, I am sure.”

Lady Llangville had avoided conversing with Sir Horace, and on looking round for her, Helen discovered she had left the room; but she knew her sister had a second engagement for the evening, and

therefore thought it nothing remarkable. Lady Emmeline, who had arrived in town the preceding day, promised to convey her home.

In their way a mob in the street caused a momentary detention of the carriage. A chariot with blazing lamps, it appeared, had also been detained, and one of the horses being unruly, the inmates had alighted. Helen started, for she thought she discovered her sister, and another instant sufficed to discover, in the gentleman who was re-seating her in the carriage, Colonel Hanbury. A deadly chill crept over her:—Lady Valcourt was also of the party, and she saw them all drive off, while benumbed with horror and distress, every faculty for the moment felt suspended.

Lady Emmeline was so much occupied by the crowd, that she was inattentive to her companion, and did not observe her agitation. Arrived in Portland-place, she found Sir Morton already returned, and she resolved not to retire to rest till she

had seen and conversed with her sister.—Lady Llangville did not reach home till a very late hour, but Helen was waiting for her, and delayed not a moment in relating to her the discovery she had that evening made, and her amazement that she would suffer on any occasion the renewed attentions of a man, avowedly disagreeable to Sir Morton.

“My dear Helen,” her Ladyship answered rather pettishly, “Sir Morton is very fidgetty, and so are you. Colonel Hanbury, I have no doubt, is innocent of any ill designs, and really if I am to be debarred the common attentions of politeness, I had better be shut up in Llangville Castle for life.”

“Would to God,” cried Helen, “that you were really there; recollect yourself, my dearest Ellina, and be more considerate than to treat thus lightly a subject, the most serious and important. A married woman ought to receive no particular attentions, but from her husband. What

are those of other men to her, whose happiness depends on him alone?... How degrading to the female character is that trifling vanity, which can feel pleasure or gratification in aught that can for an instant wound a husband's feelings!"

"You are quite indignant on the subject, my dear," said her Ladyship, "but really I have no intentions in the world to hurt Sir Morton's feelings; and I assure you I should repel any improper behaviour in Colonel Hanbury, or any other man, with as much spirit as yourself. And as you so much dislike his attending me, though I see no very great harm in it myself, rely on me I will not suffer it; and now, my good Helen, be satisfied that you have nothing to fear on that head."

"Put in your excursion to Brighton," said Helen—"Oh Ellina, for the sake of your beloved children, for your own present and future peace, be guarded I conjure you."

"I give you my honour," said Lady

Llangville, "that Colonel Hanbury is not to be of the party."

This assertion was an inexpressible satisfaction to Helen, and she retired to rest, on the whole, more easy in mind than she had felt before the conversation with her sister, though far from convinced that implicit reliance might be placed on the prudence of her Ladyship. Early on the following morning, the family were alarmed by the sudden illness of the principal nursery attendant. Helen visited her immediately on being informed of the circumstance, and was shocked to find that the symptoms were those of a violent fever: she instantly removed the children to her own apartment, and as it was long before Lady Llangville's hour of rising, sought Sir Morton, to consult him as to what ought to be done.

Medical advice was sent for, it being requisite to call in a physician, and she awaited the result before she attended her sister's rising. The consultation had not

terminated when she was summoned to Lady Llangville's dressing-room, and while relating to her the incidents of the morning, Sir Morton entered to announce the opinion of the faculty, that the servant's disease was an infectious fever, of the most malignant kind.

The whole house was thrown into confusion on the declaration of the physician, and an immediate removal of the family became necessary. Lady Llangville declared her determination to fulfil her engagement to Brighton, and thereby secure her own safety. Sir Morton intended to avail himself of the opportunity to go to Llangville Castle, on business with his steward:—but what was to be done with Helen and the children? In the midst of the consultation and debates that ensued, a visitor was announced, and the “Honourable Mrs. Darlington” was named by the footman.

“Good heavens!” exclaimed Lady Llangville, “think of that poor old

maid making her appearance just now, when I have a thousand things to attend to."

The prosing old maid, however, proved a very useful personage, for she no sooner heard the difficulty and dilemma in which they were involved, than she offered her own house and protection to Miss De Courcy and the children, during the time it was unsafe to continue in Portland-place, and Helen was infinitely relieved by an arrangement, which secured her an asylum and a protectress so respectable.

Orders were instantly issued; Helen, ever active and prudent, exerted herself in preparation, and before night the mansion in Portland-place was deserted, by all but the necessary attendants on the poor invalid. In the hurry of leaving the house, attending to her little charges, with the numberless little occupations requisite to their comfort and safety, Helen had no time to reflect on the strange and distant manner in which she had hitherto been

treated by Mrs. Darlington: but when settled for the night at her house in Grosvenor-place, and left to a *tete a tete* supper with her, she had leisure to observe a manifest difference in her deportment.

In her own mansion, Mrs. Darlington had the manners of a woman accustomed to high life. Easy, well-bred, and hospitable, her attentions were kind and agreeable, without ostentation; the apartments were constructed for the comfort and accommodation of those who inhabited them. The children were delighted with their new habitation, and charmed to be under the sole care of their dear aunt Helen, to see her every day, and to listen to the tales and instruction, with which she amused them in their walks in Hyde Park, and in her evening visits to the nursery.

Insensibly the reserve in Mrs. Darlington wore off, she seemed to watch Helen minutely, and to converse with her as if to learn her sentiments on different subjects. She never scrupled openly to avow

her disapprobation of Lady Llangville's general conduct, and seemed to note with satisfaction the contrary disposition of her sister. Helen possessed the peculiar talent of reading well aloud ; it had been studiously cultivated by her father, and to him she had been in the constant habit of practising it.

Mrs. Darlington had a natural defect in her sight, which, increased by age, rendered her almost incapable of adding to the resources of a mind highly cultivated, by much reading.

“ I so seldom meet with any one, who reads aloud to my taste,” said she, “ that I am almost lost to the delights of literature.”

Helen offered her services, which were gratefully accepted, and the acquisition of was properly appreciated by Mrs. Darlington, particularly when, after Helen had been three days beneath her roof, she was seized with a fit of the gout, which confined her to her great chair ; then did

the society of her young friend prove indeed a treasure. Without being officious or adulatory, Helen paid the exact attention, most agreeable to an invalid. She read or played whenever, it seemed to soothe pain, or cheer depression, and rode or walked out with the children and servants, nor gave a sigh to the gaieties she had so suddenly and unexpectedly relinquished.

One evening, that Mrs. Darlington's pain had been more than usually severe, and had left her exhausted and low; she solicited Helen to read a new poem. The latter was pleased with the task, she loved poetry to enthusiasm, her voice was well calculated for its expression, and told plainly, every word she read, she felt. Mrs. Darlington was cautious by nature and habit, she knew the human heart, well, and she was careful to repress the admiration which the talents of her young guest, and her apparent intire unconsciousness of possessing them irresistably ex-

ited. Beauty, wit, and sense, it had often been her lot to meet with, but never till now, had she found them attended by modesty and diffidence so retiring, yet so void of awkwardness, or rusticity.

With animation Helen commenced the task assigned her ; she had bid her young charges adieu for the night, and in the dressing room of Mrs. Darlington, took her seat by the sofa, on which, wrapped in flannels, and supported by pillows, the invalid reclined. Helen sat between Mrs. Darlington and the light, she was wholly absorbed by the beauties of the poem, one of those strong efforts of genius with which Lord——has enriched modern literature, and adapting her tones to the subject, varied by her taste and feelings only, she had so completely enrapt the senses of her auditor, that even the acuteness of pain was forgotten, and the low and occasional murmurs, which suppressed anguish would sometimes cause, had ceased so intirely, that suspecting she had read her

hearer to sleep, Helen turned towards the sofa, to discover not only Mrs. Darlington in all the eagerness of attention, but a male auditor also, a gentleman, who had entered unperceived by Helen, in her attention to her book.

A motion from Mrs. Darlington, had enjoined silence, which he had rigidly observed, and seating himself at her feet, had remained an attentive listener, till Helen had discovered him.

Perceiving her surprise, Mrs. Darlington quietly said—

“ Go on, my dear, it is only my nephew.”

And without seeing the face of the stranger, she obeyed. A few lines only remained, Mrs. Darlington thanked her fervently, and Helen, as she raised her eyes with diffidence and curiosity, to see who had been her other hearer, fixed them in astonishment indescribable, on the countenance of Sir Horace Lascelles. An involuntary glow overspread her face,

while, after apologising for his intrusion, Sir Horace added—

“How little did I imagine, when I hastened from a dinner engagement to inquire after my good relation, of whose indisposition I only heard this morning, that I should find she had a fair mental physician, so well calculated to soothe the hours of illness, and prevent the mind from participating the body’s weakness.”

“Miss de Courcy,” said Mrs. Darlington, “is exactly to an invalid what you describe; for however she may feel, the change from a life of gaiety to the lonely apartment of sickness, she has the happy art of appearing as cheerful and satisfied, as if enlivened by the most pleasurable party. How it happens that example has had so little effect upon her I know not.”

“Example, I hope,” said Helen, “has had much effect on me. The excellent woman, by whom I was reared and educated, is in herself the most perfect model of propriety. Ill indeed would her cares

have been bestowed, had I so widely err'd from her precepts, as to be incapable of feeling cheerful and satisfied, wherever duty or necessity may happen to place me."

"The eulogium is truly merited," said Sir Horace, "and sincerely do I join in the tribute, to the excellences of one of my first and best friends, Mrs. Ormsby."

The conversation continued animated and interesting to all, till Mrs. Darlington was obliged to retire, and Sir Horace took his leave, but on the following morning he was at their breakfast table.

"How singular!" thought Helen, "again I am thrown into his society!"

It was a circumstance she certainly could not regret, particularly as much of that distance of manner, with which he had at first treated her, was abated, and every interview added to the friendly familiarity established between them.

CHAP. XII.

Mrs. DARLINGTON's former prejudices respecting Helen, seemed now wholly removed; she treated her with the most distinguished attention; to the children she was affectionate, and often lamented that the time must arrive for a separation. That period rapidly approached, not a little to the regret of Helen, who, in the select friends admitted to the house of Mrs. Darlington, found society far better suited to her taste, than the indiscriminate mixture that assembled at her sister's splendid dwelling. Rational, elegant, and well informed, all sought to improve and entertain. She was harrassed by no idle professions, no waste of time or unmeaning

dissipation. Sir Horace, the maternal nephew of Mrs. Darlington, was a frequent and welcome guest ; he had related to his aunt the incident which placed Florenza under the protection of Miss de Courcy in the street, and given her the first favourable impression of Helen's character.

“ You shall see this little *protégée* again,” said Mrs. Darlington ; “ I will desire Horace to permit her to dine with us to-morrow ; she has more than once visited me, and needs, I think, some associate like yourself, to render her more English in her manners.”

The invitation was readily accepted, and Florenza, who had not been informed whom she was to meet, no sooner recognized Helen, than she flew into her arms with all her characteristic animation, reiterating her delight at beholding her again. In the course of the day Helen had ample opportunity to hear the praises of Sir Horace, both from Florenza and her relation, the Signora Martini, who accompanied

her. After their departure, when Mrs. Daflington and Helen were left alone, the former said—

“ This little Italian and her aunt form one of the many instances of my nephew’s singular benevolence of heart, a benevolence so philanthropic, I had almost said so chivalric, that the opinion of the world is as nothing in the balance. The parents of Florenza were of the highest order of the Italian nobility. To enrich an only son, according to the customs of the country, this poor thing was destined to a cloister, after having been occasionally a witness of the splendour and happiness of her paternal dwelling; but Providence saw fit to punish such injustice.

“ Amidst the many scenes of horror, which have of late years desolated the Continent, the possessions of the Roselli family were torn from them; the son, for whom Florenza was sacrificed, fell a victim to war, and the parents were literally divested of home and children. Sir Horace,

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during his travels, had often been a guest at the Roselli palace, and had always been received with distinguished hospitality, by its then happy and opulent possessors.— What a contrast was presented on his return through Italy—their estates lost, their son no more, the father a wretched maniac, and the mother in a dying state: the two latter sought shelter with their relation, the Signora Martini, who, reduced in circumstances from the same calamitous causes, supported them all on her own pittance. Poor little Florenza had petitioned to quit her convent, to console her unhappy relations, and Sir Horace, who on hearing the melancholy tale, with anxiety sought for, and discovered them in this situation.

“ He witnessed the death of the parents, brought by grief to an untimely grave, and afforded protection to the two hapless survivors. They had no relatives left, and were almost destitute of subsistence; to afford them permanent aid, he was obliged

to bring them to his native country, where an ample fortune would enable him to provide for them properly, without injury to himself: he witnessed the extatic delight of the youthful Florenza, at being emancipated from monastic rigour, and he resolved to complete her deliverance by making her an inhabitant of his native island."

This narrative afforded to Helen the conviction she had long wished for, of Sir Horace's correctness of principle, and she felt more than ever delighted, that the adopted son of her father should thus fulfil his early promise of excellence, in all that was great and good. After a peaceful residence of near three weeks beneath the roof of Mrs. Darlington, the tranquillity of Helen was interrupted by receiving the following letter, by the post, written in the same hand as that which had reached her at Clermont:—

"It is hoped, for the sake of the future peace and honour of Sir M—— L——'s

family, that Miss de Courcy will not be much longer estranged from it. Colonel H—— has been a constant attendant on Lady L—— at Brighton. Will not the interference of a sister be essayed to prevent the dreadful consequences that may ensue from a perseverance in the path of indiscretion ?”

Again was poor Helen destined to feel apprehensions the most acute ; she scarcely gave herself time to reflect ere she was on her way to Portman-square, from whence she had lately received the most favourable accounts of the recovery of the servant. The fever, by care and judicious treatment, had extended no farther ; the woman was well enough to be removed, and the faculty had declared that the house would in a few days be sufficiently free from all infection, to admit of the return of the family.

Sir Morton arrived in town the same day, and took up his abode with Helen.

and his children at Mrs. Darlington's, till the return of his lady : he brought a good account of Sir Everard, with an invitation to Lady Llangville and the children to accompany Helen on her return home, and to spend the summer in Wales. Helen grew extremely impatient for the return of her sister, and as soon as she found that she might with safety remove her young charges to Portman-square, she delayed not a moment.

Lady Llangville arrived in high health, and apparently in equal spirits, but Helen fancied they were forced, and that in spite of all her efforts, she looked at times even depressed. Sir Morton, having no suspicions, happily partook not of her apprehensions, which certainly rather increased than diminished. Lady Llangville went out more than ever ; the time she was at home was chiefly spent in her apartment, from whence even Helen was excluded ; she seemed careful to avoid all private interviews with her sister, and more than

once Helen had witnessed the delivery of notes, the contents of which were carefully concealed. Determined at length on some explanation, Helen in vain sought an opportunity; any excuse was resorted to by Lady Llangville to avoid it, and sad and dispirited, Helen began to think that now, indeed, her worst fears must be realized.

“ Oh! that I had some friend, some adviser to teach me how, in such emergency, I ought to act!” was her constant mental ejaculation; but to whom could she apply? Mrs. Ormsby had long since left town, and her sister’s reputation was too precious, to be hazarded by communicating her alarms to any other person. To Mrs. Darlington, indeed, she might apply, but she already disliked Ellina, and would, she knew, be severe in her reprehension, without the power to remedy the evil.

An anxious fortnight thus elapsed, at the end of that period, Sir Morton was obliged to leave town for a few days, and Helen hoped, that during his absence, she

should find time for an *eclaircissement* with her sister ; but it appeared more distant than ever. Little Morton was taken ill, and Helen could not leave him ; Lady Llangville visited him in the morning, and again before she went out in the evening, but she returned at a very late hour, and told Helen she had an engagement for the whole of the following day.

“ I fear poor Morton is no better,” said Helen in a reproachful tone.

“ I rather think,” said her Ladyship, “ you alarm yourself unnecessarily. Dr. H—— said he had certainly less fever this morning ; however, my staying at home could do him no good, at all events, particularly as I leave him so well attended ; but pray take care of yourself, my dear Helen, Burton tells me you were not in bed all night. I entreat you not to fatigue yourself, and I intend to be home in good time.”

So saying, she left her ; the various emotions which filled the heart of Helen

prevented all utterance, yet she thought she would speak to her sister again, before she went out; she would endeavour to awaken her maternal feelings, from the deadly slumber in which they seemed entranced. With this intention she entered her dressing-room, but not finding her there, she passed on to the bed-chamber, where she beheld her sister busied in examining several masquerade dresses, which were extended on the bed. A pink domino, conspicuous from its colour, was displayed by her woman, and she heard Lady Llangville say—

“ I like that by far the best, and shall certainly recommend it to Lady Valcourt. If I had gone myself, I would have had it without hesitation.”

Helen retreated, for though glad to hear Ellina disavow any intention of being present, at such a season, at an entertainment of the kind; yet it shocked her to discover, that she was capable of bestowing

her attention on such a subject, when the sick bed of her child demanded it.

Sad and dispirited all day, Helen remained in the chamber of her little nephew. Sir Morton was not expected to return till the end of the week, and she felt, as she contemplated the pallid countenance of her patient, and heard his moans, that an awful responsibility rested upon her. "Oh never," thought she, "may I be induced, by the temptations of pleasure, like the thoughtless Ellina, to forsake the post of duty."

As the day declined, her alarms became hourly greater; the physician declared it as his opinion, that if no favourable alteration took place within a few hours, the most fatal consequences might be apprehended. Night approached, and still she watched by the bed, in hope of discerning some appearance of the wished-for symptoms, but all in vain. Little Morton grew evidently worse, his fever considerably increased, and the physician, who again vi-

sited him in the evening, pronounced that he was in imminent danger.

Poor Helen was now indeed called on to exert all her fortitude and resolution, to supply to the little invalid the place of the parent who deserted him. While tears of anguish yet streamed from her eyes, and her hand grasped the feverish pulse of her nephew, she was informed that Sir Horace Lascelles desired a few moment's conference. Great as was the interest such a message would at any other time have excited, she could not now quit her post, and she sent her own maid to acquaint Sir Horace with her situation, and to beg he would excuse her appearing. Elton returned, and delivered to Helen a scrap of paper, on which these words were written with a pencil.

“ I must see you for five minutes ; it is no time for ceremony ; hasten, I conjure you.”

Desiring Elton to supply her place, and in extreme confusion of mind, which she

in vain endeavoured to tranquilize, Helen hesitated no longer, she found Sir Horace pacing the drawing-room quickly; he advanced towards her—

“ I grieve to distress you,” said he, “ but my business admits of no delay. When I avow myself the author of letters you have lately received, you will guess its motive.”

Helen was almost suffocated with emotion; the truth flashed on her mind, and she could only exclaim—

“ My sister! Oh, speak!”—and sunk into a chair.

“ We must not lose time,” said he; “ I have good authority for asserting, that designs, the most nefarious, are in agitation against *your* peace, and the honour of your sister. She is now at a masquerade at the opera-house, with Colonel Hanbury; Lady Valcourt is of the party, and her house is the scene of *rendezvous* afterwards. To *you* only could I apply. My interference may be not only useless, but improper;

but Sir Morton's absence favours any exertion you may choose to make. I am aware to whom I speak. With *you*, Miss de Courcy, no weak terrors will intervene to deter you from acting right."

"I will pray for resolution," said she; "but Oh! how hard, on such a subject, to attain it!" Then, resting her head on her hand, she endeavoured to collect her thoughts, and to arrange some plan of proceeding.

After a few minutes' deliberation—"I am not much accustomed," she said, with some embarrassment, "to request favours, but my present distress must plead my excuse. Will you, Sir Horace, give me your protection to the opera-house?"

"Most willingly," he answered; "but have you courage to venture into the house alone? and, when there, what do you propose?"

"To save my sister!" she answered, with energy. "Oh, Sir Horace! if ever you loved Ellina—if you now love my fa-

ther—if you have any pity for me—lend your aid to rescue her from destruction!—Every thing conspires to convince me, that her fate is at a crisis, and to-night she must be saved, or consigned to irretrievable ruin! No time is to be lost; and may heaven grant me the power to complete my purposes!”

With silence Helen prepared for her excursion; and Sir Horace marked, with astonishment, the resolution she evinced. To Elton she committed the care of little Morton, with a charge not, for one moment, to leave him; and that no suspicion might be excited in the servants, she exerted herself to appear unconcerned, and, attended by the Baronet, commenced her expedition.

They first proceeded to a masquerade warehouse, where Helen selected a plain brown domino, and from thence continued their way to the opera-house.

The wounded feelings of Helen forbade all conversation. To Sir Horace she ap-

peared a new character. Hitherto the calm dignity of her manner had led him to believe her a stranger to that extreme acuteness of feeling, which she now betrayed. The anxious glances she darted from the coach-window, as they approached the Haymarket, and the wild energy with which she threw the domino over her elegant form, and exclaimed—"Oh, may a merciful Providence render the disguise propitious!"—still were before his eyes, still rang in his ears; when, having handed her out of the coach, and led her into the house, he saw her depart, with breathless energy, through the door-way, which at once conveyed her to the theatre of pleasure, and shut her from his sight, after having agreed that he should await her return in the lobby.

Arrived in the scene of action, how did the heart of Helen throb, as the company, the lights, the masks, burst upon her sight. The judicious plainness of her habit rendered her little conspicuous, and

enabled her to prosecute her anxious search without molestation. At length it was attended with success. The well-known pink domino met her eye, and she felt assured it was her sister who wore it. She was dancing with spirit. A sigh burst from the bosom of Helen, as she recognized the figure of Hanbury in her partner. They soon ceased dancing, and adjourned to a sofa. Helen followed, and placed herself near. She heard Hanbury propose their quitting the house.

“ Let us go and await the return of the Marchioness,” he said ; “ she will speedily follow : and you, I am sure, are fatigued.”

Lady Llangville seemed to make some faint objections, which appeared to be soon over-ruled, and the Colonel, saying he would enquire for the carriage, arose and left her.

Now was the critical moment. Hastily Helen advanced, and seated herself on the sofa, by her sister. As she contemplated

the person of Ellina, she fancied she beheld her agitated and trembling. No time was to be lost, and the word "Ellina" had escaped her lips ere she was sensible she had uttered it. Lady Langville started—"Who are you?" said she.

"One," answered Helen, disguising her voice, "deputed by your friends to save you from ruin; to convey you from this scene of temptation to the sick bed of your child. Your son is dangerously ill, perhaps dying, and his mother neglects him—for whom?"

Lady Langville hid her face with her hand, forgetting that her countenance was concealed by her mask, and arose from her seat. Helen seized her hand. They were near the door.

"We must hasten," said she, "or you may never behold him more."

Her Ladyship seemed to recollect herself, and resisted.

"I cannot go," said she; "it is some imposition;" but Helen had opened the

door, and drawn her beyond the immediate scene of bustle.

“ Let me go,” exclaimed Lady Llangville, “ I cannot go, I know not with whom.”

“ Behold, then !” said Helen, removing her mask. “ Am I an imposition, Ellina ? Your child is perhaps on his death-bed, and his mother is plunging into irremediable destruction.”

“ Helen ! Great God !”—exclaimed she, and she suffered herself to be led forward.

Helen hurried her on ; but again Lady Llangville paused—

“ I have promised to go first to Lady Valcourt’s,” said she ; “ Colonel Hanbury is gone for my carriage.”

“ With me only you go from hence, Ellina,” answered Helen ; “ and wherever you go, I shall accompany you. If you choose your child to die unattended, thank heaven, the guilt is not mine. His mother shall at least be saved, if my efforts can avail.”

Sir Horace appeared, and Helen sprang towards him. "Lady Llangville's carriage is this moment announced," said he; but, in a whisper, added, "Colonel Hanbury is waiting."

"Leave all to me," said Helen, in the same tone; "but, Oh! do not leave us unassisted by your unseen protection."

"Rely on me," he replied; and Helen, hurrying her sister forward, reached the door. "Lady Llangville's carriage!" resounded in her ear. She darted towards it, and Colonel Hanbury appeared. Astonishment was in his countenance.

"Lady Llangville!" cried he; and, taking her hand, he looked at Helen, whose mask, now removed, discovered her features.

"My sister will accompany me home," said she; "her presence is immediately required;" and, springing past him, without relinquishing Ellina's arm, she advanced to the carriage. He would have followed, but, when she had seen Lady

Llangville seated, she turned towards him—

“ We require no attendant, Colonel Hanbury,” said she ; “ Sir Morton Llangville’s servants are sufficient protection to his lady ;” and, ordering the servant to close the door, they drove off, leaving the discomfited Hanbury to his reflections. From the window, Helen still saw Sir Horace, and perceived that a hackney-coach which she had no doubt contained him, closely followed them. Lady Llangville did not speak, but, throwing herself back in the coach, maintained a gloomy silence.

CHAP. XIII.

HELEN would not attempt any conversation ;—she could not deem her sister safe, till she saw her once more beneath her own roof. How did her heart palpitate with joy, as they alighted ; she took her sister's arm, and leading her forward, hastened to the sick chamber ; Lady **Llangville** seemed to shrink back, as she approached the door ; but Helen would not suffer her to retreat, she forced her to the foot of the bed, where, torpid and motionless, she beheld the child she had left. The paleness of death seemed spread over his once animated features, and the conscience-struck mother, as she

saw Helen drop on her knees by the bedside, fell fainting into the arms of the attendants.

Nothing now seemed likely to disturb poor Morton; but Helen, ever ætively and collected, ordered Lady Llangville's removal to her chamber, and advised her to lay down and try to compose her spirits. Not a word of reproach escaped her, for she saw that Ellina was already severely humbled by self-reproach, and after seeing her quietly in bed, she returned to take her station in the sick room.

All night Morton continued in the same torpid state, from which he sunk into a deep sleep. The physician hailed this omen as favourable, and the scarcely breathing Helen, in intense anxiety, watched his almost death-like slumber, till soon after the dawn had beamed over the horizon, the eyes of the little sufferer unclosed, to recognise his kind nurse, and to cheer her affectionate heart by certain symptoms of amendment.

Breathless with delight, she flew to the

chamber of her sister, and to her amazement found her arisen, and in her dressing gown; but she appeared pale and haggard, and when Helen entered, she looked wildly at her, without speaking, and as if she apprehended some dreadful tidings.

“He lives my dear sister,” said Helen, “he lives, and will I trust recover. The crisis is past, and Doctor H—— says he may yet do well.”

Lady Llangville did not answer, nor did she shed a tear, and the wildness of her glances alarmed the kind Helen, more than the most violent emotion.

“Be composed, dear Ellina,” said she, “you are safe. Morton will be restored to us, and we shall all again be happy.”

Still Lady Llangville made no reply, but her head sunk on the shoulder of her sister, who summoned immediate assistance, and conveyed her to bed, from whence, unable to rest from the perturbation of her mind, she found she had long

since arisen. And now was the anxiety and fortitude of Helen again to be tried. A fever brought on by mental agitation and the pangs of self-reproach, to which Helen's active remonstrances had awakened her, reduced Lady Llangville to the brink of the grave; but it was salutary to her mind. In her sister she had an indefatigable nurse, she only quitted her to pay the necessary attentions to little Morton, who, now in a state of convalescence, improved daily in strength and spirits.

Sir Morton's arrival was another trial to his Lady; but his entire ignorance of all that had passed, and the caution with which Helen had acted, rendered the meeting less painful than she expected. He loudly repeated his acknowledgements to Helen, to whom, the physician assured him, he believed he owed the lives of his wife and child.

During Lady Llangville's gradual recovery, she evinced the most sincere penitence, and in private, to Helen, candidly

acknowledged the dangers to which imprudence had exposed her, and her perfect conviction, that by her, she had been rescued from irretrievable ruin. Led, during her excursion to Brighton, to the gaming table, (where, in Lady Valcourt's suite, she met Colonel Hanbury, though as they did not go in her party, she was ignorant that she should meet them there,) —another large debt, to the Colonel had given him advantages, of which he did not fail to avail himself; her insidious friend, Lady Valcourt, had laughed at her scruples, and encouraged Hanbury to persevere.

On the day of the masquerade, Lady Llangville had declared her intention to decline being present; but Lady Valcourt had overruled her objections, by various artifices, and at length said, that Hanbury had suggested a mode of settling her debt to him, without discovering it either to Sir Morton or her sister, and would

impart it, if she would sup at her house after the masquerade.

Whatever the designs of her enemies were, they were happily counteracted, by the interference of Sir Horace, and the courage and resolution of Helen.

It was now resolved, that in order to complete the restoration of Lady Llangville, and Morton, they should try the salubrious air of her native country, and with inexpressible satisfaction, Helen commenced preparations for their journey to Wales.

Lady Valcourt called during Lady Llangville's illness, but was refused admittance, and only a select circle now appeared in Portman-square. Mrs. Darlington and Lady Emmeline were not excluded, and the former brought Florenza to see her beautiful protectress, as she still persisted in terming Helen. Though not a word escaped Mrs. Darlington that could discover her knowledge of Helen's late conduct, relative to her sister, her increased

attention, and the attachment she evinced in her manner towards her, might have shown that Sir Horace had not withheld it.

When she took leave of her, the day preceding that fixed on for the commencement of the journey to Wales, she embraced her affectionately, saying—

“ Adieu, my dear Miss de Courcy, something seems to tell me, that the Abbey of De Courcy will not long detain you from us, I am a little skilled in the art of divination, and I foretel, that some powerful enchanter will transport you once more into a world, that needs the benefit of your example.”

“ What can she mean ?” thought Helen—

The question was in some measure answered, and the enigma solved, the same evening, by the following letter, which was delivered to Helen, as she was superintending the last preparations for their departure from town, in her own chamber.

“ To Miss de Courcy.

“ You have saved your sister, and I congratulate you on the feelings which must be your’s on the retrospect; but ere you leave a scene in which you have exercised the noblest virtues, you must hear the confessions of one, in whose opinion your conduct has rescued your sex from imputations, which threatened me with a life of total estrangement from domestic comfort.

“ With my early disappointment you are well acquainted; its effects on my mind were long and severe, and induced a resolution, never again to suffer myself to be won, unless I could meet a second *Ellina* in person, joined to a mind exempt from *Ellina’s faults*.—Such a being, I believed existed not; and consequently I concluded I was destined to a life of celibacy.

“ The opinion was maintained, till *Ellina’s* sister became known to me, and to her, I beheld a second *Ellina* in person, free from *Ellina’s* deficiencies, and en-

dowed with a mind and understanding, that threw every woman with whom I saw her associated, at an immeasurable distance.— Still was I unwilling to acknowledge all I felt even to myself; though I can now trace my admiration as far back as the day after my arrival in town, when, happening to pass through St. James's Park, I was a witness of your conduct to a poor sick frail being, whom you restored to peace and comfort. The several situations in which I have since met you, have tended invariably to increase the sentiment which I fancied was excluded from my heart for ever; till it has risen to a height which can no longer be controlled.

“ My fate is now in your hands; I believe you formed to create my happiness, but I shudder when I think it possible, that my manner towards you may have forbidden all reciprocity of affection.

—“ I have seen sufficient of your character, to be assured that you will not inflict the pain of unnecessary suspense; I wish to

visit Sir Everard soon. Your permission to follow you to the Abbey, will be received as all the encouragement I shall presume to hope for, till a father's sanction shall embolden me to aspire to your future favour. Then shall my heart be laid open to your view, and the most perfect confidence give evidence of the sincerity of

“HORACE LASCELLES.”

Various were the emotions of Helen, as she perused this transcript of the sentiments of a man, in her eyes, how far superior to the rest of the world! Perhaps joy and thankfulness were the predominant feelings of her mind. Above all affectation, she answered the letter of Sir Horace, in these words—

“To morrow we depart for the Abbey of De Courcy; Sir Horace Lascelles may be assured, that he will not fail to meet there such reception, as may be accepted by the favoured friend of my father, and the early companion of

“HELEN DE COURCY.”

The permission the foregoing note implied was accepted with avidity; and scarcely had Helen, with delight inexpressible, seen Lady Llangville restored to her father's favour, and herself settled again in her paternal mansion, before the arrival of Sir Horace Lascelles gave to Sir Everard the satisfaction of having beneath his roof all those to whom he was most fondly attached. Many hours had not elapsed, ere he was farther gratified by the completion of his fondest hopes. In a private interview, Sir Horace declared his wishes and his intentions in visiting the Abbey of De Courcy, and once more solicited his concurrence to address his daughter; but not as before, with apprehensions and dread of some unseen evil. The character of Helen was so different to that of her sister, and so nearly resembled his own, that the fairest prospect of happiness opened to his view. With joy Sir Everard granted the boon he asked, and soon was every member of the family a partaker

of his satisfaction. Lady Llangville heard the intelligence with thankfulness, and felt that it was one of the few events which would best tend to reconcile her to herself; and to obliterate the recollection of her former errors. She regarded Helen not merely with the affection of a sister—it was almost adoration. Her superior sense and judgment, her amiable temper, her benevolent heart; her unassuming manners, rendered her, in the opinion of Lady Llangville, a being so far surpassing every one she had ever known, that excellent as she acknowledged Sir Horace to be, she yet declared it was impossible that the utmost perfection of humanity could be more than her sister merited.

Mrs. Ormsby, who immediately on their arrival had joined her friends, in Helen's happiness found her own wishes accomplished. She hailed with joy the happy restoration of Lady Llangville to domestic peace, and witnessed with

pleasure the felicity that reigned in a family long estranged from the comforts of unanimity.

The marriage of Sir Horace and Helen, delayed by no unnecessary scruples, was solemnized before the Llangville family quitted the castle, and Sir Everard and Mrs. Ormsby were prevailed upon to accompany them to town, where Sir Horace was compelled by parliamentary duty to reside part of every year; but the happiest portion of it was spent in the retirement of their native mountains.

It only remains to add, that Lady Llangville, impulsed by the example of her sister, became a domesticated wife; she broke off all dissipated connexions, and for the remainder of her life, found her peace and satisfaction in the bosom of her own family. The kind hearted Sir Morton wished for no greater happiness, and the firmest ties of friendship continued to attach him to Sir Horace Lascelles, whose conduct became as much his model as Helen's was that of his Lady.

On Helen's return to town, she found Lady Isabel had just given her hand to Lord Ornton. Lady Gertrude was at first grievously annoyed by the intelligence of Sir Horace's marriage, and in the height of her despair and indignation, eloped to Gretna Green with the Honourable Horatio Oakland, to the utter mortification and dismay of Mrs. Luxmore.

The interesting Florenza rapidly improved, under the judicious management and tuition of Lady Lascelles, in whom the animated Italian had, with joy, recognized her beautiful protectress; and in a year after she had been permanently consigned to her guardianship, her hand was asked, of Sir Horace, by his friend Sir Clement Irby, to whom it was unhesitatingly granted. The Signora Martini resided with her niece, which the extreme youth of Florenza rendered desirable; and Sir Horace had the satisfaction of seeing the objects of his philanthropy happily settled in ease and affluence.

THE SISTERS.

Mrs. Darlington and Lady Emmeline Montrose received Helen, in her new character, with real pleasure, but in situation only was she altered; the same unobtrusive mildness, the same unaffected dignity, the same active benevolence distinguished her through life, and in the approving plaudits of a mind at peace with itself, she found the reward of every anxiety an ample recompense for every exertion.

Added years only gave to the happy Sir Horace additional proofs of the excellence of her character, and afforded ample conviction of the advantages of religious principles of mind, firmness, consistency, and domestic habits, which, early imbibed, and cherished by sound judgment and a good heart, had secured her own happiness, and restored that of her sister.

FINIS.

