

CATCH NOVEL READING.



A NOVEL.

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SCOTCH NOVEL READING;

OR,

MODERN QUACKERY

A NOVEL REALLY FOUNDED ON FACTS.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

BY A COCKNEY.

“ Who will laugh at us now ?”

“ Marry, the child unborn !” BEN JOHNSON'S *Widow*.

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SCOTCH NOVEL READING.

CHAPTER I.



A new Character introduced.

AMONG the various acquaintance of Mrs. Howard, was a young lady of a very large independent fortune, who had been left, at an early age, entirely her own mistress. She was not handsome—far from being plain; but her features were so much under the tuition of her natural coquetry, that she thereby defeated her own purpose, and could hardly be called pleasing: often, when not the least inclined to mirth, she would laugh immoderately, because she

saw others laugh, and the subject started might be sufficient to excite risibility. There is nothing perhaps more unbecoming to a countenance wanting in beauty, than a forced smile; for it is mind alone that can give such a countenance the power of fascination.

The only natural propensities that Miss Southgate, the above young lady, indulged in, were what proceeded from her naturally robust constitution; and as a great portion of modern politeness consists in independent ease of manners, and as Miss Southgate always prided herself on being a complete fashionist, she gratified her own inclinations, while she astonished the more delicate of her sex, and evinced her contempt for all the forms attached to the graces of the old school: she would therefore, at table, eat and drink like a man; and at a ball, fatigue all her partners: she played very skilfully at cards, and generally stripped her adversary of his last guinea: she
struck

struck the chords of the harp with more grace than science; disputed with her music-master concerning the perfection attached to the former qualification, and declared herself willing to give him twelve guineas a lesson to teach her the most captivating attitudes, as her fingers should wander over the strings. When she went to the opera, or any public place, or party, that required the assistance of a *friseur*, when she looked in the glass, and found her ringlets had been taught to flow in a style peculiarly *becoming* to her features, she would joyfully pop two sovereigns in the hairdresser's hand; but this prodigal female never bestowed one penny on the poor: the recital of a worthy family reduced to misery, half a street burnt down by a dreadful fire, public calamity, not one of these incidents could possibly move her feelings; yet she pretended to love every one, though never, in reality, did she love one single being, except herself.

She made it a point, however, to go to the theatre when a benefit was performed for a public charity, or for some celebrated performer retiring from the stage: on such occasions the countenance of Miss Southgate would bear on it the semblance of deep melancholy; if any one addressed her, her voice, when she answered, seemed to falter, as if she was weeping; and her very dress was meant to indicate the tenderness of her feelings: her steps, as she entered the theatre, were slow and measured; her fine fair hair was taught to flow in half-dishevelled ringlets; even they seemed to express her inward sorrow: to those who were strangers to her, she appeared adorned with every virtue, as well as with every grace; but her heart had no share whatever in this outward parade.

After giving this sketch, we must inform our readers that this heartless female was the bosom friend and patroness of Mrs. Rivers, a scheming widow, whom

whom we mentioned in our preceding pages. Now, though Miss Southgate affected almost to adore her dear bewitching little Rivers, yet, in spite of the wealthy heiress's large fortune and independence, she was envious to a degree of the sprightly widow, and often made her feel the difference of their situation in life by many a humiliating sarcasm, pretendedly uttered in 'all the frankness of unrestrained friendship; all which Mrs. Rivers good-humouredly and politely endured, thereby adding to the proud insolence, but, at the same time, vexation of Miss Southgate, because she could not disturb the equanimity of her friend's temper; and Miss Southgate, with all the attractions of youth, every studied aid of dress, environed with wealth, and all the outward shew of taste and splendour; yet envied the superior charms of a widow with a small fortune, obliged to be strictly economical, in order to keep up a gen-

teel appearance, and support her credit among those circles in which by birth, family, connexions, and situation of life, Mrs. Rivers had a right to move. Miss Southgate was not quite so well descended as was her friend; but if the family of Miss Southgate was somewhat obscure, it was not mean, and riches, now a passport almost any where, enabled her to purchase éclat and notice at any rate. As far as related to her connexion with Mrs. Rivers, she gave out, that she had taken the dear enchanting widow quite under her protection. Poor thing! how she did feel for a gentlewoman in straightened circumstances! This she whispered amongst half a hundred fashionable friends, who whispered it to their half-hundred dear friends, till half the world became acquainted with Miss Southgate's great benevolence, and Mrs. Rivers's narrow income: this repaid Miss Southgate for the many little valuable presents she lavished on

Mrs.

Mrs. Rivers, such as brooches, bracelets, rings, necklaces, all of fancy jewellery, it is true, of no intrinsic worth, but extremely elegant, and had cost immense sums; and then Miss Southgate was tired of them herself: then she would send her frequent gifts of game, fruit, fish, and wine; which presents kept pace with frequent contributions of those kinds sent her by the kind and feeling-hearted Robert Butler, to an agreeable female, reduced by circumstances from the high situation she once filled in genteel life: but Robert always picked out the best for her; whenever he received baskets of partridges or pheasants, the finest were always selected for Mrs. Rivers. When Miss Southgate sent game to her, it was generally when she knew not what to do with it at home; and if a hare, at the very latter end of *February*, chanced to arrive, dear Mrs. Rivers was sure to have it; if in *March*, it was dispatched to her immediately,

only then there was a string of apologies for sending off so apparently *mad* a creature, but that it was very young indeed. . But Miss Southgate, with an eye always to admiration, and prompted by a love of the fame of being generous, was crafty enough never to let Mrs. Rivers feel any weight of obligation for her bounty; no, when she made her any present, she seemed as if she was the person obliged; she was then too polite, or we may rather say, too artful, to humble her; she was then all love and friendship, and her kindness was as extreme as it was insinuating.

This shew of friendship, however, was only that she might, at all times, have a tool, and a person at her beck and call, on every occasion; but the good sense of Mrs. Rivers taught her not to make herself too cheap. Miss Southgate, nevertheless, though she sometimes felt hurt when her invitations were refused, retained her from habit, and felt that she
could

could not do without her; but, with all her youth and wealth, she was jealous of a middle-aged widow, with a scanty income; yes, she was jealous of attractions which, with all her studied coquetry, she could never attain—jealous of unaffected learning, extensive reading, with the art of always knowing how to suit her conversation to her company—envious of those charming spirits which gave constant hilarity and good-humour to the whole appearance of Mrs. Rivers.

Yet Mrs. Rivers was very far from perfection; and her character, as well as that of Miss Southgate, was deceptive; she loved not her fashionable friend, though she pretended to almost idolize her; and she therefore shewed a degree of meanness in accepting the bounty of one whom, in her heart, she despised. Yet, let us not condemn too rashly; it is a hard task to be able to quit, with true dignity of mind, the gilded scenes

of pleasure for the lonely and obscure first floor, with often nothing but sad thoughts to amuse the tedious hours; to reflect on better times gone by; to call to remembrance departed friends, lost to us for ever; and seeing only in perspective, at the close of life, a cheerless gloom, with no hand but that of a stranger to close our eyelids on the last darkened scene of our existence.

Oh, it is for those alone to tell, who have experienced the heart-chilling anguish of such a state! Industry and talent will not always suffice to fill up the long, long hours of repeated days of seclusion; the often-tearful eye drops on the page of literature; the needle pauses in its accustomed celerity, and the sorrowing heart finds relief by indulging in a flood of tears. Solitude was not made for any member of the human race; and no one, however diligent and busy by nature, can read or work unceasingly.

Mrs. Rivers, therefore, with very little disposition indeed to a solitary life, found some solace in the society of a vain female, who did much in enabling her to continue, by the assistance she gave her, of obliging also, in her turn, a state of life of which she, Mrs. Rivers, was naturally devoted to: unhappily, the ladies were rivals—both were in love with the accomplished Robert Butler, and though neither could bear to own to herself the mortifying truth, both loved in vain.

When the first year of Mrs. Rivers's widowhood was over, being yet in the prime of life, and conscious of her charms, which were of that nature to be more attractive and durable in their effects than regular beauty, she began to cast about for a second marriage; although she sickened at the very idea, for no woman ever wished so much to be her own mistress; and she could not endure the thought of parting with her newly-gained

gained liberty, for she had always, from a child, detested every kind of restraint. She had long been on very intimate terms with all the family of the Butlers, and she thought Mr. Butler, senior, a prize worth angling for; but that cautious gentleman was not such a gadgeon to bite, though she baited the hook with all the fascinations she could heap together; all the return he made to her advances, which he had penetration and vanity enough to discover, was in shunning her society as much as possible; and whenever he did unavoidably meet with her, he was extremely cold and distant to her. Finding her lures thrown out without any prospect of success in that quarter, she began to fancy his estrangement proceeded chiefly from the change that her late husband's death had made in her circumstances, and she cursed him in her heart, for an old money-loving curmudgeon.

• In the midst of this her ill success
with

with the father, Robert Butler returned from a tour he had made on the Continent: her first match had not been a love one, on her side, and now, for the first time in her life, she felt all the power of the hood-winked deity; his conversation, his manners, completely finished the conquest that his fine person had achieved: he was equally attracted by her fascinations; he had never, in his travels, nor in his own country, met a female so capable of banishing the "lubber fiend," *ennui*, or one so suited for the social hour, or for that dedicated to intellectual intercourse; he therefore continued to fan a flame, of which not one spark fell on his susceptible heart; and when he felt real delight in the company of Mrs. Rivers, it was embittered by a knowledge of the difficulty she found to continue a course of life she was so well calculated to adorn, but so little enabled to pursue, from her limited fortune. In the most delicate

delicate and gentlemanlike manner, he contrived to send her many little presents, which greatly assisted her; and through his^o means, the amiable Mrs. Howard contrived to have her a very frequent guest. Sometimes Mrs. Rivers hoped, sometimes she feared; and she never durst say a word when Robert has been^e most kind, and particularly pointed in his attentions to her, such as asking him what he meant by them? or other customary questions, fearful, that by so doing, she might, perhaps, lose him for ever.

His presents, his attentions, were no secret to Miss Southgate; nay, the mischievous widow rather made them more frequent^e and more fervent than they really were; because she saw plainly that Miss Southgate was very jealous of those attentions; for that young lady was as deeply in love^e with the same object as herself. Miss Southgate, however, always artificial and calculating, paid

paid her court to the father; she knew he had the character of one who was very fond of money—that her great fortune being well known, and his son the most dutiful of sons, in appearance, he might perhaps, whether he liked her or not, yield to his father's commands to marry her. But if young Butler could be capable of feeling an aversion to any female, he certainly felt it for Miss Southgate; till at length it became so visible, that the young lady herself began to suspect it; however, she and the mature widow continued to lay every snare for this insensible being—insensible, that is, to the power of their Circean seductions, though a dupe to the illusions of his own imagination.

Finding that Miss Southgate was invited by Mrs. Howard to meet lady Macbane and her daughter on Wednesday, Robert Butler pretended that unavoidable business called him out of town: on that day, though he would have

have been glad to have seen something more of the interesting Margaret; but he did not admire her sufficiently, to make such a sacrifice of his comfort, as the enduring the company of Miss Southgate would have been; for though her excessive vanity would not let her see it, he certainly most cordially despised her.

Mr. Butler, senior, and Mr. Fennel, had no objection to his absence, for they were not yet perfectly easy as to the power of Miss Macbane's attractions; they had seen, with some degree of anxiety, that Robert appeared infinitely pleased with the remarks of Margaret, after he had began to converse with her, and that his eyes wandered over her charming person, with a high degree of interest and admiration.

CHAPTER II.

Love makes a Man.

THERE were little anxieties, too, that each of the old friends felt, and which they kept to themselves. It was a fine moonlight night, and, had it not been, have we not, among what Fennel termed modern *quackeries*, gas sufficient in our streets, to make, in the darkest night, an artificial day? Lady Macbane preferred walking home, because once a-day was quite enough for her crazy equipage to go out, which seemed, every time it did sally forth, ready to fall to pieces. Mr. Howard, after seeing his wife safely escorted home by Mr.

Mr. Butler, politely gave his arm to lady Macbane, while Robert offered the same support to her daughter-in-law; the obedient Sandy following "hard at the heels" of the party.

"Ah, weel," said lady Macbane, "and we maun aw soon depart for puir, auid bonnie Scotland, as I said before."

"Oh," said Howard, "I hope your ladyship will alter your mind, and not be in such a hurry to leave us?"

"Hoot, awa, mon!" said she; "ken ye nae that the word of Alexander Duncan Macbane is a law? eh! he's but an auld cankered carle at best."

Margaret felt much hurt at her mother speaking so disrespectfully of her father, who, though he certainly was not famed for good nature, suffered his wife to do just what she pleased, and had indulged her with a journey to London, though very inconvenient to his narrow finances; he had, however, made it answer two purposes, by getting
his

his lady to transact some business for him, thereby saving himself the fatigue of a long journey, and at the same time a very great expence; she, he knew well, would economize, and live in that humble way which he could not; he must, as an ancient Scotch baronet, make an appearance, being known to all the great men about the court; his lady could live in obscurity, as he was not with her, and take a little pleasure at the same time. Such a woman, he reflected, could never introduce his daughter into high life; but it was a good opportunity for his Margaret to see London, where the plotting baronet thought too her beauty might be discovered, and it might be eagerly inquired into who she was; nay, some wealthy suitor might be glad to ennoble his blood with the rich current that flowed through the veins of the Macbañes; and if he were not too lowly born, he might be wrought on to give his consent.—“ Ah, indeed,” thought

thought the poor baronet, "there is nothing like the *seller*, after all!"

Robert Butler felt for the agitation which visibly discovered itself in poor Margaret, at hearing lady Macbane speak so slightingly of her father; he gracefully turned the subject, and at parting he almost felt himself as sorry as he said he was, that he could not meet them on the following Wednesday at Mr. Howard's.

The party there assembled consisted of lady Macbane and her daughter-in-law, Mr. Butler, Mr. Fennel and his daughter Alice, Miss Southgate, Mrs. Rivers, and Mr. Hartfield. This last-mentioned person was in deep mourning for a near relation, who had left him a handsome property; but the outward gravity of countenance he now wore, was no hypocrisy, for he had always very sincerely loved his uncle; the arranging of his affairs, administering to his effects, and taking possession, without mentioning

ing the frequent, and requisite communication and correspondence with lawyers, together with the law's delay, had drawn him off, for a time, from his pedantic pursuits, and researches into antiquity, &c. &c.

Struck with a beauty like that of Margaret Macbane, so very accordant with his ideas of "that pretty plaything, dear deceit," he seemed transfixed like a statue, on her entering the apartment; for lady Macbane and her daughter having had to mend their stockings, and Margaret to wash and iron her best clear muslin frock, trimmed with old lace, they happened to be the last of the party; and even the fashionable Miss Southgate began to fancy they would not come at all, for *she* was generally the last every where..

Hartfield was not a lover of money, naturally; but as he was not rich before the demise of this wealthy uncle, he was obliged to cast about for money
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with a wife, if he married at all: he was now enabled to please his heart, his fancy, and his eye, without giving one thought towards fortune.—“And surely,” thought he, as he gazed on the blushing Margaret, “there is a treasure in itself that wealth can never buy, and the mind enshrined in such a form must be that of an angel!”

We have read, in the writings of a French enthusiast, of “*Les Affinités Electifs* ;” the truth of which axiom might, perhaps, be exemplified in Margaret. Hartfield was a personable young man, and the young northern beauty did not meet the passionate, though modestly-restrained, glances of his mild blue eyes without some emotion. He was a fair man, and his mourning habit well set off his complexion; while a cessation from severe and poring studies, had again brought a roseate tinge of youth and health back to his generally pallid cheek.

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He was seated by Margaret at table ; and Miss Southgate, who would willingly fasten to her triumphant car every beau in the universe, was mortified to the utmost degree of spite and envy ; while Mrs. Rivers, too, thought he was worth throwing out a net for : both ladies were, however, cruelly disappointed at the absence of the proud and saucy Robert Butler ; while the two old friends, Fennel and his father, were in high spirits at that absence.

Lady Mabane owned herself not quite in such good spirits as she was at Mr. Fennel's.—“ Not,” she said, “ but what the gude chiel *Hoord* did aw he could to mak' her brimfu' o' glee ; but then,” added she, “ I canna bear to think of leaving sic muckle kind friends.”

“ I am about to make the tour of Scotland, my lady,” said Hartfield.

“ Eh, then,” resumed she, “ and shall ye nae be cummin to the Highlands ?”

Hartfield declared, that, next to going purposely

purposely to Scotland, to see and be introduced to the charming writer of the *Lady of the Lake*, the Highlands was the only part of Scotland that he wished to visit.

“Then, lassie,” said lady Macbane to her daughter, “ain ye ha a card in your pouch, gie it to the cannie lad as sits beside ye; and gin our welcome be but puir, it wool be right heartsome.”

Hartfield's eyes sparkled; the ladies were all astonished at his animation; and Miss Southgate eyed her successful rival, whose beauty, her vanity taught her, was far inferior to her own, angelic as was that of Margaret Macbane; yet this fashionable *ape* of beauty dared to give the preference to her own artificial endowments.

Mrs. Rivers felt exceedingly nettled at seeing a man so completely caught, and one whose pedantic conceit had, hitherto, rendered him, in a manner, insensible to female attractions. Mrs. Rivers

was

was a finished coquet, always emulous of being noticed by the opposite sex, though she might despise the individual she was studying to ensnare. But this was not the case in the present instance; she had always rather liked young Hartfield; she always thought him good and sensible, and she admired his sense and goodness yet more, now that he had a large fortune; for though his senior by seven years, yet such things as marriage, she reflected, sometimes took place, even where there was a yet greater disparity on the wrong side; and she felt certain that, whenever Mr. Hartfield married, he would choose judiciously. Oh, the blind attachment to self, that could persuade Mrs. Rivers, that a young man *must* act *judiciously* if he chose *her* for a wife!

But she was, nevertheless, a *good-natured* coquet; Miss Southgate a vain, glorious, plotting, and malicious one. *She* thought no vengeance she could re-

sort to, too deep for any slight put upon her charms; and when the coffee was handed round in the drawing-room, she, with placid brow, and kind infantine caresses, welcomed Mr. Butler, as he, with young Hartfield, were among the first to join the ladies there.

She hung, with affected *naiiveté*,⁴ on his arm, from whence Butler, with all his worldly politeness, would have been very glad to have shaken her off; yet while she affected to be solely taken up with him, she was an attentive listener to all the conversation that was going forward in the apartment. The widow looked very archly on Hartfield, as he, unable to quit the side of the captivating Margaret Machane, was expatiating on the merits of Walter Scott's poetry, and quoting some admirable specimens of its excellence from the "Lady of the Lake," &c., when Margaret, with sweet timidity, said she preferred his novels to every thing else that he had written;

and

and as Alice assented, though she scarce knew why, to the opinion of her new friend, Hartfield declared, with a rapture that heretofore had been foreign to him, that, indeed, he felt assured there were no romantic writings equal to them.

Now this expression might be taken in a twofold sense; and Hartfield was cunning enough to avail himself of flattering Miss Machane, without belying his own opinion; yet he felt so ambitious of pleasing her, that what he might once find unaccordant with his taste, he would persuade himself to admire, if it met with her approbation.

The widow Rivers coughed away a laugh that was just escaping her, which caused Hartfield to look towards her; and he met her laughing eyes directed towards him.—“And what is the pretty Mrs. Rivers laughing at?” said he to her.

“Only, my good fellow,” said she,
c 2 “at

“ at the diversity of one man’s opinion on the same subject.”

“ It is indeed laughable,” said Miss Southgate, with a laugh as affected as it seemed hearty, as she instantly joined them, and quitted Mr. Butler altogether; “ and yet, Miss Macbane, I ought to address myself rather to sir Walter Scott’s most intrepid champion. Miss Fennel?”

“ And I do not fear entering the lists with only one in his defence,” said Anne, endeavouring to imitate, as far as she was able, Margaret’s sweet and chastened Scottish accent.

“ Bless me!” resumed Miss Southgate, with a faint, sarcastic laugh, “ what a reform is here! What is become of your *fashion*, and your *sonsie mon*, and all the rest of your *muckle, bonnie Scotch?*”

“ Hoot awa!” interrupted lady Macbane; “ dinna be a’ter casting your glbes, and spearing o’ sic matters as ye

nae

nae understand; ye mak ten times worse nonsense o' the bonnie Scotch, than e'en the pretty sonsie bairn of the gude and kind-hearted master Fennel. Ye had better hawd your tongue, if you dinna speak that your ain mith'er taught ye."

Poor Alice blushed like crimson; and even the haughty Miss Southgate was lowered, though she affected contempt. She learned to sit down by her content and accommodating friend, Mrs. Rivers.

"Well, sir," said Miss Southgate, speaking across Mrs. Rivers to Mr. Hartfield, "on what sudden occasion am I to congratulate you on this wonderful change in your opinions? they differ widely from those you professed always to maintain, when, among other literary subjects, the works that have showered on us from the prolific pen of a certain Scotch writer came under investigation!"

Hartfield's opinion had not really al-

tered; yet he did not like to say so before the fair enthusiast, who was seated on his right, fearful he might lose the present degree of approval which, though small, he had penetration and vanity sufficient to discover he had excited; he therefore saved himself by an equivocation and a compliment, saying—"Perhaps I plead guilty to your charge; and if my opinion is altered, it only serves to prove the despotic influence of your charming sex; all the ladies would be against me, if I did not admire the novels of sir Walter Scott."

"But ye heeded not our displeasure," said Alice, "at one time; how is it that ye became sae soon converted?"

Hartfield blushed, and knew not what to answer; but his eyes were eloquent enough, as he encountered the timid, retiring, but half-reproving glances of Margaret.

"Never," continued Alice, as she perceived she was listened to with a degree of
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of interest, "never did any writer of fiction approach so near to what is natural."

"How can you judge of that, Miss Fennel," said Mrs. Rivers, "when I have often heard you declare, that you never read any other novels?"

Mrs. Rivers was applauded by all the party for this apposite remark; but Alice, encouraged by the approving looks of Margaret, and also at finding that Mr. Hartfield was not only silenced at what she had said before, but that he had bestowed no applause whatever on the widow—no, not by even one approving look, because he was never an ill-natured young man, and he discovered mischief in her question—Alice, therefore, went on, but lost herself in her enthusiasm, and vexed her father.—"Oh," said she, "never, never, I am sure, could I endure to read any commonplace novels, after the works of this charming Scotch novel-writer! I am

confident that no one, like him, could transport, and lead captive, our ideas, so as to make one really imagine, that the events and the persons mentioned in his romances did really take place and exist. How often have I wished, while I have pleased myself by the sweet illusion, as I languished to be borne away to the delightful cape called *Sam-burgh Head*, in *Jetland*—(Here there was a general smile). I have been sometimes so enraptured with the idea, that I have fancied my father was * *Magnus Troil*, and Elizabeth and myself, *Minna* and *Brenda*.”

“ Ha, ha, ha !” laughed out, but not too loud to be inelegant, *Miss South-gate* ; adding, sarcastically—“ Ay, like the daughters of *Magnus Troil*, you had lost your mother, and were, like them, no doubt, the delight of your widowed father !”

“ And

* *Vide* “ *Pirate*,” by the Author of *Waverley*.

“ And so they were, Miss Southgate; and so they are still,” said Fennel, somewhat displeas'd with the lady, but very much vexed at the same time with his daughter, of whom he remarked—“ and, would not my youngest girl give herself up so much to following the quackery kind of writing of the present day, I may say there never was a father happier than I am in my daughters. Alice often displeases me; I am sorry to say, by her silly conduct; I hope she will be cured of this folly in time; thank God she has nothing artificial or deceptive in her character!” He then cast a look on the fair satirist, which shewed that the last part of his speech was not without personality.

She perceived it; but she was ever mistress of herself, and she said, with a caressing air, but which, however, was too much studied for one of Fennel's open character and penetration to find so irresistible as she meant it to be.—

“ Ah! you are like Magnus Troil*, a hasty-tempered gentleman; but you are convivial, kind, and hospitable.”

“ And ye need nae tell ony ane here o’ that,” said lady Macbane; “ there be nae ane Scottish laird as be more kind-hearted than the gude Mr. Fennel; and I will gar the lugs o’ sir Alexander Duncan Macbane to ring agen, when I gang hame, wi’ tuiing him aw the gude o’ Mr. Fennel and his bonnie daters, that they ha’ shewn to me and Meg.”

Miss Southgate, with all her deception, could not conceal her contempt of a woman she regarded so vulgar as she did lady Macbane. These two ladies had repaid scorn, for scorn with each other, in looks ever since they had met. Lady Macbane always felt her consequence, and held every one in contempt who did not pay her the respect she thought her due, as a barenet’s lady, and particularly as the wife of sir Alexander

* Vide “ Pirate.”

ander Duncan Macbane, which she always gave at full length, and so she would if he had owned twenty names.

The convenient Mrs. Rivers, always finding it her interest to make Miss Southgate appear as amiable as possible, said—"In my humble opinion, I think a gentleman so fond of real English comfort as Mr. Fennel is, would not be very fond of being doomed to the penance of living in Jetland, notwithstanding the amiability of his charming daughters."

The plotting Miss Southgate seized the idea; she lavished many delicately-turned encomiums on Mrs. Howard, and declared, that the energy of the sweet young enthusiast, her sister, delighted her. Her own vanity, though she inwardly despised the man, made her anxious to draw off Hartfield from his present pursuit of Margaret Macbane, and enchain him to herself, for the sole purpose of sporting with his feel-

ings, while she robbed a girl, so eminently lovely, of the conquest it was visible to every observing eye that she had obtained; she could not forgive, either, the handsome and artless Alice, for drawing off the attention of the males to her superior attractions—superior, in a visible manner, to her own artificial endowments. A few young male friends, of Howard had come in to supper: they very well knew that Miss Southgate had an immense fortune; and they were all interested young men, like those of modern life, all anxious to ask the question of what *has* she? instead of what *is* she? But Miss Fennel had also, they had no doubt, a very good fortune; and how infinitely more charming was her person than that of the conquest-hunting Miss Southgate, whose manners were all studied, and her every feature continually put to school! She, however, was now resolved to put in practice some petty scheme of

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of revenge on the innocent objects that had taken off the attention of these fashionable insects from herself; though she experienced more real vexation to see Hartfield so completely caught by Miss Macbane, and thereby totally lost to her: not that Miss Southgate liked him—she loved no one but herself; yet he was rather handsome than otherwise; he was certainly a very sensible and a very learned man; and he had the reputation of being much more so than he really was; he was also a good man, though not so very exalted a character as common fame, that notorious liar, made him out.

Those who are apt to be guided by the caprice of momentary impulse, can never lay claim to an equality with those excellent and virtuous beings whose good deeds are the result of principle, and the strong and well-regulated feelings of general philanthropy; such as would not injure rising genius, because
unshackled

unshackled by pedantic rules, and inferior perhaps only in the depth and labyrinth of learning to him who has power to foster and assist that genius. Mr. Hartfield would sometimes aid such an one; but, when stern and iron-bound learning reared its saturnine front, and overpowered the feelings of the heart, then, in that moment of caprice, he would, when a well-timed and earnest recommendation might have been of infinite use, both as to the fame and fortune of one so gifted, then would he fail to utter a favourable opinion of such a person's abilities, because conscience—oh, over-much righteousness of pharisaical formality!—would not allow him to breathe a *falsehood*! This was one among his works of supererogation which we hinted at in a preceding chapter: a contrary conduct would have been a pious fraud, from whence the ANGEL OF TRUTH would have averted his head, while he
asked

asked of the SPIRIT OF KINDNESS to supply his place for that moment.

But what was Hartfield's goodness to Miss Southgate? Nothing. But he was a man of discernment; his choosing her then would evince his merit; he was learned, and she would see all his learning subjected to her charming trifling. Nevertheless, she might not perhaps have attempted this glorious conquest, if he had not now been a wealthy man; his family, she well knew, were truly respectable, his connexions ranked high, and he was now likely to become the fashion. At all events, she was resolved to punish those two Scotch novel-reading romantic things, as she called the two young beauties.

Before the party broke up, Miss Southgate had, however, the satisfaction of finding the gentlemen crowd around her: she knew how to adopt her conversation to every one; not a subject could they start but what she could describe.

cant on, for she was thoroughly acquainted with all the fashionable tittle-tattle of the day. Alice could speak only on one subject; at least, she never *would* speak on any other. Miss Southgate, too, was not dismayed by that; she would even affect to speak fluently on the merits and demerits of all the writings that have issued from the fertile brain, and indefatigable pen, of the Northern novelist; though she had taken care never to dim the lustre of her eyes with reading one of his close-printed volumes; but she skimmed over the different Reviews, from whence she was able to get a slight outline of the work in question, and from the copious extracts she could glean a sufficient knowledge of the style and manner, whereby she was enabled to give her own opinion, and quote a few of the most celebrated passages and phrases.

When her carriage was called, at one o'clock in the morning, after Mr. Howard's

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ard's farewell supper to the Macbanes, the gentlemen all pressed forward to assist her with putting on her shawl. No such luxury as a coach or chariot having been announced for Mr. and Miss Fennel, the father was allowed quietly to help his daughter on with her wrapping cloak. Hartfield hallowed the plaid of Margaret, as he placed it over her finely-formed shoulders, with a kiss; while her mother-in-law tossed her head at Miss Southgate, and smiled triumphant. He entreated the favour of escorting the ladies to their lodgings; and Mr. Butler, offering his arm to lady Macbane, who, to the great amusement of Mr. Howard's footman, and also to that of the tittering party-coloured knights belonging to Miss Southgate, vociferated through the spacious hall—"Sandy, where art thou?" while the obedient Scotch lackey, having proved himself, as he said, "hard at her heels," followed immediately close unto them, having
 taken

taken good care, this time, to keep within call, though many were the efforts of the happy servants belonging to, Mr. Howard's kitchen to make him take of that powerful stimulus, liquor, which, like a golden key, is often known to unlock the secret treasures of the incautious heart.

CHAPTER III.

A Visit to the Theatre; and a Plot.

MR. Fennel was remarkably fond of real good acting; but he detested all stage-trick, and innovation of every kind, which he always designated by his usual term of *quackery*: not that he was averse to improvement, for very often an author's text, by some of our most famous actors of former days, was perverted, because not thoroughly understood. No, it belonged to the unmatched powers, and to the classical knowledge of the lamented Kemble, to render the school of Thespis the school of science; and to bestow on the theatre, which he so long and so ably

ably conducted, the high renown of setting forth the beauties of our own immortal Shakespeare in their full, brilliancy, of presenting to the public a faithful picture of the manners of different ages, recorded in the historic page, and giving to every nation and era of time appropriate costume.

Happily he lived to see the stage, of which he was the brightest ornament, crowned with those laurels of well-deserved fame which, under the direction of his skilful and literary brother, promise to be as lasting as the immortal name that he, who as a modern writer has justly termed "the last of the Romans," has left behind him.

Fennel had seen the justly-renowned John Kemble and his lovely sister in all the zenith of their glory. Oh, how he would exclaim against managers for putting such females, as are thrust forward into characters, so transcendantly performed as they were by a Siddons!

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He felt it like a burlesque; and he used to say, they had better totally withdraw such pieces till, this generation has entirely passed away.—“Miss O’Niel,” he would add, “is very well—she is a charming Juliet—she performs some few of Mrs. Siddons’s characters very fairly; but where shall we find a lady Randolph, a Constance, a queen Catharine, even a youthful Belvidera, and an Isabella, equal to those enacted by that angel Siddons?”

He was long before he could endure any of the successors of Kemble or Siddons, though there was no man’s acting he more admired than that of his brother Charles; he indeed loved the very name of the whole family; and had any one of its members performed before him ever so badly, yet he would have found out something that he would say shewed him, or her, to be a Kemble. But his dear fellow Charles, as he always called him, when speaking of him,
was

was chiefly famous in comedy: he declared his *Dón Felix*, in the *Wonder*, was beyond compare; and he often used to exult at the two brothers being both so eminently, yet so differently gifted.

But now Fennel scarce ever went to a tragedy since his favourite *John Kemble* retired from the stage; *his* acting was that of nature, while it embodied, at the same time, the hero, or the crafty tyrant *Richard*. Fennel could not endure a rantèr, that would cover the whole stage with his figure, striding about; and, as we once heard it pertinently remarked of such a one, would make one imagine it would be necessary for the 'servants' of the theatre to go round; when he made his exit, to see if they should not have to pick up a leg or an arm from some part of the stage he had straddled over. When *Young* played *Hamlet*, then Fennel would go to see him, because he always thought him

so much the gentleman, that if he had but been a little young-er, something more of a stripling figure, he could really fancy it was the prince of Denmark himself: but that is not at all to be wondered at; Mr. Young has received a liberal education, has had the advantage of travel; and Fennel, used to say, he had been told that he had been the valued Horatio of an accomplished northern prince. It could very easily, therefore, be accounted for why he was enabled to give all the princely grace and ease so requisite in the representation of so amiable a character as that of Hamlet.

Now, when Young and Macready performed, for he was by no means blind to the excellent acting of the latter, he would see a tragedy with pleasure, though he could not endure the *quackery*, as he called it, of other noted performers, grinning, croaking, half-whispering, innovating quacks, he would say, who imposed
on

on the better judgment of the multitude. Oh, it was monstrous! Where was the bold warlike step of the Scottish monarch, when Kemble trod the stage, as the representative of Macbeth? He wanted not to see the *studied* gait of a *dancing-master* in the ferocious murderer of the good Duncan: he often vowed he would never go to a tragedy again.

But, to use his own expression, he doted on hearing Miss Stephens and Braham sing; but he lamented that it was so seldom he heard them together. However, Fennel's predilection for the singing of Miss Stephens caused him to go to those operas wherein his daughter Alice centered all her delight, because they were taken from the works of her favourite author; and after the departure of the Macbanes, which poor Alice, by losing the society of Margaret, sincerely regretted, her father took her one evening to see Rob Roy, for the
second

second time; but it did not charm her quite so well as the first time she saw it performed: Mrs. Egerton no longer performed the heroic wife of Rob Roy; and though it was well performed, there was that certain energy about Mrs. Egerton in that character, that just personification, as made it appear as if the author and dramatist had written it expressly for her. But Macready's Rob Roy was still the same fine piece of acting, or, if there was any change, it was only that, which proceeded from an increase of attraction. Well has it been remarked, that theatrical performers are endowed with the magic power of exciting strong passions. With what delighted rapture did the enthusiastic Alice Fennel behold him! Scarce could she keep from uttering the wish aloud, but modesty tied her tongue, though she mentally breathed it, with a fervour that almost made her blush at herself—
“Oh grant, ye Powers, that, if I am des-

they knew, that in the country she kept an old post-chariot, that she had had for many years; and though it was strong and solid, not crazy, *à la Macbane*, they yet fancied that both the carriage and the lady were snugly housed at the old family estate in the country.

“Mrs. Jenkins’s carriage,” was again called, and the smile of father and daughter almost amounted to a laugh, when a little lady advanced, with head erect, her auburn wig one mass of ringlets, crowned with a wreath of damask roses and orange blossoms, a celestial blue levantine gown, made in the extreme of fashion, with a scarlet silk shawl trailing after her, with an affectation of heedless expence; diamond necklace and earrings, and diamond bracelets over her gloves: she came forward, and putting on a youthful air, she took the hand of Alice, and said—“My dear, dear girl, how glad I am to see you!—And my good *old* Fennel, how do you do? So you did not

not know me, when I was trying to make you notice me, during the performance?"

"Indeed, madam, I did not," said Fennel, eyeing her from top to toe.

"Ah!" said she, with a girlish titter, "this matrimony does make a strange alteration in young folks. But let me introduce Mr. Jenkins to you."

The young man's naturally ruddy complexion now became one suffusion of crimson, and resembled the flaming pionies he had heretofore nurtured in his mistress's garden, and where, at that moment, though midnight, and the rain falling in torrents, he would gladly have been, sooner than have beheld the smothered laughter that was excited all around him by his ancient rib.

"Mrs. Jenkins's carriage!" was again repeated, while a swearing and hubbub were heard among other coachmen and footmen, because Mrs. Jenkins did not obey the call, and her carriage prevented others
D 3 from

from driving up. She slipped her card into the hand of Mr. Fennel, telling him she expected that he and his daughter would very soon call on her, as her stay in town would be but short.

Fennel nodded assent, but looked rather surly; and the bride, escorted by her young husband, took her departure, to step into a very handsome carriage, for which, only three days before, he had given a *long* price, in Long Acre.

As the fashionable crowd who owned these splendid appendages of luxury dispersed, Aliee met with another incident to excite her astonishment. Mr. Hartfield made up to Mr. Fennel, but regarded his daughter with a kind of aversion and distaste, that the young man seemed to find impossible to conceal: now, though his flattery had been often so gross and far-fetched, as to give to it the appearance of hoaxing; yet he never was rude, or guilty of negligence to any female; and now, though she addressed

addressed some observation to him, he replied not, but regarded her with visible contempt.

The young man employed by Mr. Fennel to procure a coach came up, and told him it was at the door.

Fennel bustled forward, leaving Hartfield to take the hand of Alice, and saying—"Come, come, we will set you down; it is a shocking night."

"I thank you," said Hartfield, "but it will only be taking me out of my way; there are plenty of hacks yet plying here; and if the doors close, I will wait under the portico;" and taking advantage of a pressure at the door, he drew Alice back, and said—"When Miss Fennel wishes to exercise her talent at anonymous letter-writing, I beg she will make use of some other object than myself for her quizzing propensities."

"Sir!" exclaimed Alice—"I know not what you mean; I am not given to such

such impertinence; it is well known I never quiz any one."

"I could not flatter myself," said Hartfield, with the most biting satire, "that you were sincere in your *fond* protestations; if you were, I am indeed sorry, for *my* heart is irrevocably given to another.—Good night, madam," added he, as he assisted her to step into the coach, and was out of sight in an instant, leaving poor Alice thunderstruck at what she had heard.

"Come, come," said Fennel, putting his hand out of the window, "thank Heaven, the rain abates; it will soon be over now. Hartfield is an obstinate prig; he might just as well have let me set him down at the corner of the street he lodges in, for it would have been but a few yards out of our way; and I am afraid he will not get a coach. You are silent, Alice, and that is not like you; you are ever prompt to do any one a kindness, though he may not be a favourite

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vourite with you, and I know you are not very fond of Hartfield."

Alice gave a sigh; she had just been accused by Hartfield himself of having expressed herself *too* fond of him; but her father's temper was hasty, and she was fearful of telling him what she had just heard.

"What is the matter with you, girl?" resumed he, with quickness; "are you struck dumb with admiration of Rob Roy?"

"Ah!" said she, with another sigh, rather more deep drawn than the former one, "I'm unco' weary; my feet ach wi' standing sae lang; mine eyne are blinking, and I wish I was asleep."

"And so do I, with all my soul," said Fennel, "sooner than you should be ringing in my ears such a parcel of nonsense. I was in hopes that the pretty Miss Macbane had cured you of adopting a lingo that does not belong to you, and now you have taken it up again for

my punishment. I suppose you admire the mother more than the daughter?"

"Eh nae, my dear feather," said Alice; "but Miss Macbane sometimes uses the words I am so fond of."

"Recollect," said Fennel, "that it is her native tongue—that till this, her first visit to London, she was never before out of the Highlands of Scotland—but what the plague have you to do with this Scotch jargon? Were not the Scotch characters you saw performed to-night all made to speak good English? and yet the story is true Scotch, not only taken from a romance, but from real historic fact; but if they had, on the English stage, spoken the stuff you utter, the audience, would not go away much edified, for I think they would not understand two words out of three."

Alice only replied by a sigh, which was succeeded by a yawn she could not conquer; and when the coach soon after stopped at the door of her dwelling, she
hastily

hastily jumped out, and after partaking only of a glass of weak negus, she entreated her father to excuse her from supping with him, and retired to her chamber—we cannot say she went to rest.

She little imagined, at one time, that it could ever be in the power of Mr. Hartfield to give such anxiety to her mind, as to prevent sleep from visiting her pillow; it was certainly neither the distance nor the contempt of his manner towards her that caused her agitation; of this she felt as much assured as we do. No; it was his accusation of her having written to him an anonymous letter, a proceeding which the native frankness of her heart would have prevented her from putting in practice against any one, had the idea even entered her head; and if the love of fun had been for a few moments predominant, Mr. Hartfield would have been the very last person against whom she

would have been inclined to play tricks of sportiveness. It would be impossible for her to investigate this strange business, or to do away the unfavourable impression he had received, as he was to set out on his northern tour the next day. She could not support the thought of confiding this affair to her father, as she dreaded the haste of his temper; she therefore instantly crushed that impulse the moment it arose in her bosom. She had been cautious too of late in trusting her sister too much with her secrets; she found the truth of that remark, that it is impossible for two persons to live some years together without assimilating each other's manners and opinions. Elizabeth now, she was sorry to reflect, had grown quite a commonplace character; such were the ideas of Alice just then concerning her sister: she had learned, she went on to reflect, a great deal of *persiflage* from Howard; she told him every nonsense she heard, and then
Howard

Howard told her father. Yet if Hartfield had not been going to quit town, she thought she would have told her sister, because, through her means, and the intimacy of her husband with Hartfield, something might have been found out. Full of these vexatious thoughts, and not knowing what plan to pursue, but at length resolving to keep what she had heard to herself, she fell into a short and disturbed sleep, just as the daylight was beginning to peep through her closed window-shutters.

The cause of this misunderstanding on the part of Mr. Hartfield, was as follows:

When Mrs. Rivers was seated beside Miss Southgate in her carriage, as they drove from Mr. Howard's door, the evening they had there met the Macbanes—for the widow was come to stay a few days with her opulent and fashionable friend—Miss Southgate said—
“Well, Rivers, what do you think of that shabby young Scotch thing that we were”

were sentenced to meet this evening, with her vulgar mother, at Howard's?"

"Think!" said Mrs. Rivers, fearful of giving her opinion; "what do you think of her?"

"If I had thought proper to have given *my* opinion," said Miss Southgate, with haughty ill-humour, "I should: I ask you, what is yours?"

"Why, then, my dear friend," said the widow; with the most fascinating freedom and equanimity of temper, "I will give it you with my usual frankness: I do really think her pretty; but, at the same time, I am sure she is only a *woman's* beauty; and we never are judges of beauty in our own sex."

"And so you may think to please me," said Miss Southgate—"and indeed I really believe, my love, you always wish to do so—by telling me what you have said just now; only, my dear, you cannot deceive me, who have seen so much of the world; and I know
that

that Peg Macbane is as lovely as she is pretty; and that most abominably-named pickled-salmon girl, that Miss *Fennel*, she, now that she has left off her great forty-second regimental cap, with its hearse-like plumes tumbling over her face, she too is handsome; and, what is worse, the young slut has money! Thank God, Peg Macbané is as poor as Job! Oh, Rivers, Rivers! of what are modern men made of?"

“Not of hopes and fears,
And sighs and tears,”

sang the lively Mrs. Rivers.

“No, faith,” said Miss Southgate, “but of filthy lucre; they think—they dream, I am sure, of nothing else. Did you see how the wretches all flocked round that Miss Fennel—that romance-reading slut, while I—I who have enjoyed the sole notice of every surrounding beau—I was neglected?”

“Ah, but then, think,” said Mrs. Rivers,

vers, "my dear lady, how very soon they found out their error! Did not it render your triumph the more complete, when they all quitted the poor kitchen-herb, *Fennel*, to regale themselves with hovering round the more superb rose?"

"Oh, Rivers, what a flatterer you are! However, it really must be confessed that you are a clever creature."

Mrs. Rivers, encouraged by the returning good-humour of Miss Southgate, went on—"I declare I cannot help laughing now, when I think of Miss Fennel presenting her broad shoulders (for though they are well-made, they *are* broad) to her poor matter-of-fact father, having nobody else to put on her cloak—how I did enjoy it! And, then there was that milky-eyed, pale-faced swain, the learned Mr Hartfield, that thinks every woman is a fool, and envies her abilities if he finds she is not—oh, how I do love to see a wise one caught!—how he did fiddle, and tiddle, and twiddle

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dle over the poor little Scotch beauty! I am really very dull—my powers of comparison are all congealed, for I cannot find any thing to liken him unto; however, of this I am certain, it would, at that moment of his ill-expressed tenderness, have been no sin to have worshipped him, for he was like nothing upon earth, nor in the waters under the earth, much less to answer any idea of things in heaven.”

“Silly trifler!” said Miss Southgate, as she jumped out of the coach, on her arrival at home, “you put me quite in a rage.”

After the footman left the apartment, on setting down some glasses for wine and water—“I am resolved,” resumed Miss Southgate, “before I go to bed this night, to be revenged on those two young hussies who got Hartfield between them all this evening. I care not which falls a victim to my fury; but one.”

one, or both, shall, that I am determined on."

"Merciful Heaven!" exclaimed Mrs. Rivers, "are you really in earnest? What! Hartfield, that half-well-born, half-plebeian fellow! can such an one as he ever excite a moment's uneasiness in your breast?"

"Yes, madam, he can; and I do not ask your assistance in what I am about to undertake—I am quite capable of acting myself."

Mrs. Rivers, who found that when Miss Southgate took on her this high tone, and called her *madam*, then the only way to deal with her, a way that generally must be resorted to with all little minds, was "to be consequential also in her turn, coolly, but somewhat sarcastically, said—"Oh, nobody doubts your capability, Miss Southgate; and as I never choose to affront, or in any way injure those who have never offended me, I am much pleased that

that you undertake this business yourself, for I had rather be excused at all times from participating in revenge; I will, therefore, with your permission, bid you good night."

"Stay, stay," said Miss Southgate—"you must not go yet;" and pouring out another glass of Madeira, she forced Mrs. Rivers to take it, adding, with an air of confidence—"I will tell you something, for you know, I never have any concealments from you—Hartfield is become a very rich man; he is worth trying for, at any rate: his family is quite as good as my own; nay, I believe, between you and I, it is somewhat higher;" and then, with an air of still greater confidence, she went on to impart what Mrs. Rivers knew before, saying—"Only think, my dear, I am turfed of seven-and-twenty, and those two wretches, Miss Peggy Macbane and that mackerel herb Fennel, are only seventeen. Now, if a woman of my celebrity and
and

and eclat was to marry the primitive Hartfield, I know I should be able to do just what I please with him: if he were to offer the least resistance to my will, I would lead him a pretty dance. I know he durst not but be a kind husband, else farewell to that high character for goodness his puritanic conduct has gained him among his friends.—“What, you will go then,” added she, seeing Mrs. Rivers take up the silver chamber candlestick. “Well, God bless you, my love! I shall not go to sleep till I have written a letter will cause some precious mischief to one or the other, or perhaps to both, of those presumptuous wenches.” So saying, she rang the bell with violence.—“Thomas, give me my writing-box, and tell Norris to wait in my dressing-room till I come up; I have a letter of consequence to write.”

The good-natured Mrs. Rivers would have been very happy if she could, in any wise consistent with her own interest,

rest, have turned Miss Southgate from her malevolent project; but as the heart of that lady was never open to any generous movement, she knew that all her persuasions would not only be thrown away, but might very materially tend to injure herself; she therefore could only congratulate herself on not having any hand in the ill-natured business; and Miss Southgate penned the letter, which will be found in the following chapter.

CHAPTER IV.

*An anonymous Letter ; and a bridal
Visit.*

THE letter penned by Miss Southgate, and sent by her to Mr. Hartfield, she meant to seem as if coming from Margaret Macbane, and by this method she hoped to prevent his intended journey to Scotland, which she felt assured in her own mind was to be taken solely on Margaret's account; and in that conjecture she was partly right, for though the former limited state of Hartfield's finances had prevented him from being a very extensive traveller, yet he delighted in visiting different countries, and generally

generally spent his leisure time and his small overplus of money that way: he could now perform his excursions at his ease, and render them comfortable, by the little dread he felt of any additional or heavy expence; and though he had intended to have gone quite another way that spring, yet he was so completely fascinated by the lovely Margaret, that he resolved Scotland should form the first part of his peregrinations.

Miss Southgate had not listened much to Miss Macbane's conversation; she had discovered a slight Scotch pronunciation, but it was soft and sweet as the gentlest breeze that can play from the north; here and there, to be sure, a few words, used only in Scottish dialect, struck the ears of the town fashionist, and Miss Southgate tried to persuade herself, that the general speech of the daughter was little better than that of the vulgar mother-in-law.

Miss Southgate scarce knew how to
make

make use of the few peculiar Scotch phrases and words that her memory supplied her with; and these, by her want of discrimination, and the plentiful manner in which she had scattered them, easily deceived Hartfield in his firm belief that the letter could only come from Alice Fennel; and he felt equally disgusted as offended, though he felt rather more of the latter, as there was every probability that it was meant as an impertinent hoax: however, without any farther preface, we present this curious epistle *verbatim* to our readers.

“ LADDIE,

“ I loo ye weel, would be saying too leetle, for I adore ye. Eh! ye ken not how my puir heart warmed i' my bosom, when mine ain lugs drew in the hartsome soond o' yere gude way o' t'ninking, and hoo ye admire, wi' me, the right bonnie, Walter Scote, that bra'
mon

man at whom ye were wont to speer. Ah, laddie! an ye wish to be mine ain gudemon, as I would wish to be your gude and lawful wife, haud not yer nona, but be blithe and gamesome as mysell; and ask my feyther to gi' his consent for the priest to mak' us ane; for I ken weel that he wishes to see me wed to a lassie as good so weel as I loo you. Lose therefore nae time, and believe me your ain lassie for ever.

"I need not put my name to this, for it is neither Scotch lassie as mysell your one ne'er glowered upon; and Scotche or nae Scotche, I am yours ever, by my lane."

Miss Southgate knew the fastidiousness of Hartfield's ideas, in regard to the modesty and retired delicacy of women; and she felt certain, that if he had the smallest notion that Margaret Macbane could write a letter in any way expres-

sive of her love for him, all his former predilection for her, though ever so strong, would vanish into air: but Margaret never uttered such stuff as was contained in this scroll; Alice Fennel did; and frequently have the ears of Hartfield been grated at her nonsense. His distaste, therefore, all fell upon the innocent Alice, and Miss Southgate detected her own purpose; for, charmed with the reflection of how different a being was the delicate-minded and gentle Margaret, he hastened his journey to Scotland, made the old ruinous mansion of sir Alexander Macbane the first place he visited, and was received with the most cordial welcome by the baronet, who thought he could not too hastily snatch at such a golden prize: but we will not anticipate; we shall merely inform our readers, that in the confidential conversation that often passes between lovers, Hartfield shewed Margaret the anonymous letter he had received.

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She felt not a doubt, in her own mind, but that it had been penned by Alice; not with any love motive, and yet, such is the power of the blind god, *she* should not have wondered if Alice really *had* loved him; but she saw in her manners and behaviour towards Hartfield rather a distaste, not to say strong marks of aversion; she therefore fancied her to be swayed by the more disagreeable propensity of malice, which had no other means of shewing itself than in burlesque and ridicule. This very much cooled the friendship that Margaret had first imbibed to the kind-hearted and truly in-offensive Alice.

Two or three mornings after Mr. Fennel and his daughter had visited the theatre, the former said to her—"I did not like to be in too great a hurry; but as Mrs. Jenkins said, that her stay in town would be but short, I think we had better go this morning, and give her a call."

“ Oh, you do then mean to pay her a visit ?” inquired Alice.

“ Most assuredly,” replied her father. “ Would it not appear like self-interested resentment if we did not ? Her follies are nothing to us ; she is her own mistress ; and though it was always understood that she would make you her heir, what does it signify that she does not ? I can give you enough, my girl.”

“ Ah !” said Alice. “ I ken right weel that my tocher’s gude ; but I care nae for the siller.”

“ You have done your breakfast, have you not, you foolish hussy ?” said Fennel, in a rage. “ Get up stairs, then, and make yourself smart, fit to visit a bride. Hang me if I know which is the greatest fool of the two—you or her !”

Alice did as she was told, in silence : she looked out all her best and most favourite dresses ; she was not afraid of
the

the broad ridicule of lady Macbane—she was far enough off; and therefore the Scotch cap she was resolved to put on. She turned over the pretty tartan costume of Anot Lyle, but it was only fit for an evening visit; and that she was now about making, to a bride, ought certainly to be white. She then picked out one dress of fine muslin, which her own hands had beautifully embroidered with Scotch thistles; and tying on a broad sash of plaid ribbon, and folding a tartan scarf in drapery around her, in a manner by no means devoid of taste, she completed her dress by hanging a St. Andrew's cross to a gold chain, thrown over her neck, while she placed a nosegay of mountain-heath in her bosom.

Thus attired, she joined her father, who was waiting for her in the parlour; he was too much struck by her handsome appearance, to find any fault in her dress, for really Alice increased in beauty almost daily. Hartfield's unmerited

accusation had given a pensiveness to her countenance, which served to soften the fire of her eyes; and her father's anger, which always sensibly affected her, had given a deeper glow to a cheek ever blooming with health and youth.

Fennel could not be angry as he beheld, in the chastened expression of her fine eyes, a mildness that reminded him of those of her mother; and drawing her arm through his own, they proceeded in silence to the elegant lodgings of Mrs. Jenkins and her young husband.

They found the tender pair at breakfast: Mrs. Jenkins, in a studied dishabille, of the most elegant make, and rich materials—fine India muslin, profusely trimmed with the most costly lace

“It is natural,” thought the good-natured Fennel to himself, “for man to seek to better his situation; and though this young fellow has taken rather a preposterous, and almost unjustifiable method of becoming rich, yet I am sure

he

he has a good heart, and will make the poor old girl happy her own way."

Alice, however, felt inwardly to despise him; and she could not help blushing, as she witnessed his lover-like attentions to a woman, who actually, in spite of every aid of youthful and expensive dress, appeared old enough to be his grandmother; the old lady's morning-dress was, however, made in that voluptuous style, that a *Lais* might have been glad to copy.

The unremitted attentions lavished on her by Jenkins, were nothing in comparison to the ardour wherewith she received them; and the looks that passed between them would have caused the couple to serve as most admirable models for the pencil of a *Cruikshanks* or a *Rowlandson*.

Fennel would not, for worlds, have mortified the feelings of either—though it was with extreme difficulty he could suppress his laughter; but very soon the

looks the young man gave, *à la derobée*, to his handsome daughter, made Fennel look, as he felt, very serious; and he sighed, as he reflected, that his poor old female friend might, perhaps but too soon, find herself the dupe and victim to her own weakness and the infidelity of man.

“ Ah !” said Mrs. Jenkins, “ you sigh; are you too in love? My Jenkins tells me, he is more and more in love with me every day.”

“ Yes, yes;” said Jenkins, in rather a vulgar manner, while he gave another meaning sigh, “ I am indeed in love now.” And he darted, from the corner of his black eye, another expressive leer at Alice.

“ Ah !” said the doating Mrs. Jenkins, “ this is the way, Mr. Fennel, we go on, from morning to night, just like two silly lovers.—Come, come, Jenkins, we are old married folks now you know.”

Jenkins looked vexed with her folly,
and

and continued to leer at Alice; who, as well as her father, felt so indignant at his too palpable meaning, that they determined to make their visit as short as possible.

Mrs. Jenkins, on their felicitations, declared herself the happiest of women; and turning to Alice, with a girlish air, she said—"You and I were always two such romantic things! But I find that romance comes far short of the happy reality of being united to the object of one's love."

"Time enough, time enough," said Fennel, rather surlily, "to talk on such subjects to Alice; she is but a child, my dear madam; and you yourself took a long time to consider about the reality of wedded felicity, before you ventured to try it."

The husband and wife both looked somewhat abashed at this remark; and Mrs. Jenkins very sensibly said—"It is not, my good Mr. Fennel, so much con-

cerning what is called love, of which I speak: but it is the happiness of being united to a sincere friend, who, on every occasion, shews an earnest solicitude, not only to fulfil one's wishes, but to prevent them."

"I should be an ungrateful monster," said Jenkins, and he spoke with a warmth that did him honour, "if I did not."

"I have," said Fennel, "great confidence in the heart and principles of the young man you have made choice of: and I trust he will do every thing in his power to render the residue of your life happy."

Mrs. Jenkins tossed her head, and twisted with her fingers the ringlets of her wig.—"Oh, as to *my* choice," said she, "I really believe that I should have died in 'single blessedness,' as it is called, had not poor Jenkins been so desperately in love with *me*; and love, you know, begets love; so I was fairly caught,
and.

and, I am sure, I shall never repent my marriage.”

“I hope I never shall give you cause,” said Jenkins, and he looked no longer at Alice.

The young man's heart and principles were really good, by nature; yet he was but a man, his education none of the best, and he was in his heyday of youth; he could not, therefore, at first, behold before him the glaring contrast of his old wife, and the handsome, striking looking girl, who was her goddaughter, without being for a moment thrown off his guard. He now, however, beheld only the woman to whom he owed all the comforts, as well as the luxuries of life; and as he stood with her before the altar, he inwardly made a solemn vow, that never, in any one instance, should she be made sensible, by his means, of the great disparity of their years, or the absurdity of the step she had taken; but that he would literally.

“ love, honour, and cherish her, in sickness and in health, till death should them part.”

The whole country had been charmed and astonished at his great disinterestedness, and it had caused him to respect himself, and to endeavour to obtain the *lasting* title of a worthy man. He had settled more than the half of his wife's fortune on herself, totally independent of him, to bequeath to whom she should think proper; for the silly woman had bestowed on him, the week previous to that wherein she gave him her hand, every shilling of her immense wealth. Mrs. Jenkins, however, in spite of her folly, having met with a man who was really good-hearted, might be classed amongst the most fortunate of her sex.

This visit, however, seemed dreadfully tedious to Alice and her father; and they were not sorry to hear, on Mr. and Mrs. Jenkins returning it, the next morning, that

that the happy pair were about to quit town that evening.

The bride's equipage and appearance were most splendid; and the former was one among the many proofs of Mr. Jenkins's gratitude and good nature; for he had bespoke the barouche before they came to town, and presented it to her, with a pair of beautiful dapple greys, on her arrival. She was not backward in rewarding his generosity, in making him a magnificent present, in return: and the greatest harmony and good will seemed likely long to preside over this preposterous union.

CHAPTER V.



One Folly productive of another. °

THE foolish action committed by her godmother, with her truly ridiculous behaviour, had imparted so much distaste to the mind of Alice, that she began to make a resolution, in her own mind, never to marry; always, however, excepting a Scottish hero of her own fancy's creation, and such an one, as, she feared, was not to be found in these degenerate days.

In spite of her own personal attractions, of which, like all other young girls, she could not be supposed to be ignorant, yet she had found few young
men

men but what seemed to laugh at her, and to hold her opinions in contempt; friendship, too, she feared, had played her false; for Margaret Macbane now seldom wrote to her, and the style of her letters was cold and constrained.

Alice had hitherto merely skimmed over the works of her enchanting writer, as she always denominated him, the author of "Waverley." She had read only those romantic parts, that had, though blended with much fiction, some truth for their basis, but which, nevertheless, served only to delude her imagination, and give her a fallacious kind of knowledge of historic annals. All the former works of this rapid novel writer, for she thought but little of "Quentin Durward," were narrowly confined to Scottish lore; and while she would weep with the truly interesting "Bride of Lammermoor," she delighted in the laughable characters, that uttered only their thoughts in broad Scotch: by the bye, we must say, it is some,

somewhat ridiculous to make James the First, who was really a learned prince, speak a dialect like a Scotch mountaineer; he was too worthy a man, and too good and pacific a monarch, to be held up to ridicule, especially by one of his own countrymen: the English yet revere his memory. It may be well supposed, too, that James had obtained more of the English manner of expressing himself, not only from his early associates, but from his long sojournment among us, at the time Nigel was supposed to have arrived in London; and French was much more interlarded with our language than Scotch at that time. The French progenitors, and near connexions of James, must have taught him, in his infancy, to lisp their native tongue; and such would have, assuredly, given to his speech more of a *foreign* pronunciation than the broad Scotch so very bountifully bestowed upon him by the author of the "Fortunes of Nigel."

But

But Alice made no use of any reasoning or reflections of this kind; nor, indeed, was it to be expected she should: she was no critic, but a most partial admirer of every thing Scotch; for when she could not get hold of a Scotch novel, then the works of the Etrick Shepherd, old Allan Ramsay, and Burns's poems—the beauties and merits of which she did not well understand—these were the solace of all her leisure hours; and though her father enjoined, and required of her, good housewifery and diligent application to her needle, without a laborious and constant devotion to it, he yet allowed a certain portion of her time to reading; and her hours of relaxation from household affairs might be said to be many; because she understood that method which gave dispatch to her business; and Mr. Fennel had three excellent female servants, while he kept but little company, to interfere with his domestic economy

He

He became, however, now seriously vexed—nay, almost afflicted, at seeing the propensity of his daughter taking deeper root than ever in her mind; he found her mania after “Scottish bards” increase in so alarming a manner, that, to use his own professional phrase, he thought best to call a consultation upon it; and many, indeed, he had with his son-in-law Howard, and his amiable Elizabeth: she only laughed, and said—“Depend upon it, my dear father, this malady will heal of itself.”

“Ay, ay,” said Howard, jocosely, “feed it well—it will then turn to a surfeit. The GREAT UNKNOWN is beginning to get rather stale; and I am much deceived in my observations, if he is not, in spite of puffs and dramatizing, going out of fashion.”

“Ah! but you know not my Alice so well as I do,” said Fennel, “nor the generosity of her nature: if she finds the world is forsaking him, he is her favourite
ite

ite in the day of glory and prosperity; and should such an event be possible, that he should sink in public estimation, she will be more his champion than ever. Would to Heaven any thing could make a rational kind of being of a girl that really does not want sense, nor is totally devoid of judgment, for so young a creature! but, in regard to Scotch novel reading, she gets worse and worse. Since the departure of our new acquaintance for the Highlands, scarce a word of sense comes out of her mouth; and as to her pronunciation, hang me if I am not puzzled sometimes, to know what the deuce it is she is talking about! Her language is, however, I am sorry to say, very much, I think, like that of lady Macbane; if she only copied from the sweet northern accent of her pretty daughter, I would not say a word—though I hate all imitations; give me nature.”

“Well,” said Mrs. Howard, with an arch

arch smile, "what do you think now of a match between Alice and Mr. Robert Butler?"

"Do not vex me, do not vex me, Elizabeth," said Fennel; "that event, I am now well convinced, never will take place: he shuns her as he would a contagious fever; and she seems as much averse to him as he can possibly be to her."

"Indeed, of late," said Howard, "I have remarked that she is become quite inveterate against him; for the more she is devoted to her favourite Scotch writer, the more Robert does all he can to turn his works into ridicule: but he will soon be out of her way, for he talks of setting off with a friend to pass a few months on the Continent."

"No, no," said Fennel, "his father has put his veto on that—Robert is not going, I can assure you: the young man to whom my friend's son is rather too much devoted, is dissipated; and, what

is worse, he is given to gambling. Ah, Howard, I must own I am cruelly disappointed! I should so much have liked to have seen my friend's only child united to mine! Never, never, I believe, was friendship so firm between man and man; never did two hearts so well understand each other, as Butler's and mine."

This the worthy Howard and his wife knew to be strictly true: and they both valued their father's friend almost equally as himself: they felt, however, that a marriage between Alice and Butler, junior, was not ever likely now to be brought about; and they seriously entreated Mr. Fennel to banish the idea of its taking place totally from his bosom.

Robert Butler was, with all his gaiety, of a domestic turn of mind; he felt, at this time, a void in his breast, an undefinable longing after that happiness of a well-regulated home; but to which he
would

would never assent, had his father mentioned his wishes to him, of his entering the matrimonial pale with Alice Fennel—such an union never could be brought about, between a young man of his peculiar character, and a female who, however he might, at times, admire her person, seemed in herself directly repugnant to every idea he had formed of female excellence.

He was very desirous of quitting the monotony of his present life; and he regarded his father's denial of his request, to accompany his friend on the Continent, as a cruel privilege of parental authority; but he submitted with seeming patience, because he dearly loved his generally most indulgent father, and was always dutiful towards him; his friend, therefore, departed alone.

Where can there be more sameness than in modern life? Fashion, and fashions continually moving, though not chargeful scenes, with what is called
pleasure

pleasure or amusement, were all alike: the theatres presented; as his father's friend, Fennel, very justly observed, only one grand picture of *quackery*—glaring and gaudy splendour—feats of human agility, approaching to distortion—twirling round on one leg, as if that goose-like effort comprehended the whole grace of dancing. If he went to see the admirable productions of our immortal and matchless bard performed, he found young female tragedians, with but talents of the most *médiocre* kind, absolutely crammed down the throats of the public—operas manufactured by the hour, from Scotch romances—and genuine comedy, replete with sterling wit, thrust out of doors; while, for grand musical melo-dramas, a species of dramatic spectacle, of parade, and horrors, lately palmed upon us, the same roaring and terrific expression of music marked out the overture's commencement, and the curtain drew up to represent

present a tissue of improbabilities, and fell over a fragment-kind of *dénoûement*, because the scene happened to be interesting. We are told, in defence of the producing these puerilities, that the taste of the public is become vitiated; that cannot be: there are two minor theatres, that never deviate from sterling drama—we are wrong to call them minor, for they both have the majority of good acting; one is the Haymarket Theatre, the other the English Opera House; the former is justly famed for the superiority of its performers, they being selected for eminence in the histrionic art, from our two great national theatres: the English Opera House reflects the highest honour on its founder, Mr. Arnold, for the encouragement of native talent; there are to be found the most pleasing and entertaining operas, well supported by vocal ability; and there, to sum up all, is the matchless MISS KELLY.

But

But Robert Butler wanted a more varied, a more delightful existence, than what routs, balls, and public amusements could afford. The intellectual pleasures of a charming domestic establishment, such as he had chalked out, swam before his fancy: often did he repeat his visits to his friend, the artist; and there he would stand for hours contemplating the lovely countenance, that haunted all his waking dreams.—“Oh, to live with such a female,” he would say to himself —“to watch over the slumbers of that lovely creature, who, in her sleep, appears so captivating; to behold her too, watching over me and my offspring, with that cherub smile and tender care, as is depicted on that beautiful face, that peeps through yon azure sky! Yet, in all my wanderings through the scenes of gay and social life, I never yet could find the dear original represented in these charming paintings. I must, however, quit my pursuits; they present the

same dull unwearied round from day to day—strings of carriages and equestrians in Hyde Park every day in the week; Sundays, Kensington Gardens, where every Miss and ape of quality are set off in their best out-door attire; and as I pass their numerous forms and faces, and scrutinize into every carriage in the Park, when I mount my horse, yet I cannot find a countenance at all resembling this, that has captivated and subdued me, amongst all the motley throng: painted dowagers, and husband-hunting daughters, arrayed in all the colours of the rainbow, alone present themselves to my wearied gaze. No, no, Robert, it is not there, nor among crowds of fashionable pedestrians, you will find her.

Robert, in high dudgeon at his father's mandate against his travelling on the Continent with his friend, continued, *malgré lui*, to tread the same dull round, except that, at times, he made short excursions into the country, for about ten

or twelve miles round; to Richmond he went frequently, to pay his court to the coquettish widow who resided there: at the dwelling of this *ci-devant* fair one, he looked in vain, among the various beauties of fashion that often flocked there, for the lovely original of the painting that had so enraptured him; but there too he might search in vain—the original was not one who had the honour of being ranked among her ladyship's acquaintance.

Alice had never, with all her romantic ideas, either in fancy or reality, been in love: towards Robert Butler she felt rather an aversion, for she abhorred that contempt which, at all times, he seemed purposely to display in her presence, against the imposition, as he called it, of all romantic trash, absolutely now thrust, he would say, on the public; while he laughed sarcastically at that public, and declared he despised it, for being so easily, and so grossly duped. What

ever novelty, he would contend, might have been found in the pages of "Waverley," and "The Tales of my Landlord," how soon, how very soon did that novelty wear away! and a wretched sameness hung heavily over every page of "The Pirate," "The Abbot," "The Fortunes of Nigel," and many others.

Recollect, dear reader—for all *my* readers are *very dear* to me—that we are not to be supposed as giving our own individual opinion, but only committing to the press the opinion of Mr. Robert Butler; and we should not take the trouble of making it public, only as it serves to shew of how different a way of thinking he was to Miss Alice Fennel. Not but that we must say, we find nothing in his ideas or remarks on the above celebrated works at all absurd, nor in anywise approaching to the ridiculous; we wish we could say as much for the enthusiastic adoration expressed
by

by the sublime admirers of this most *sublime* northern bard.

One evening, Robert being at Mr. Howard's, and not finding it possible to get away, without palpable rudeness—though he would have been glad to have made his escape, because Alice was there, who came in unexpectedly with her father—he said, in reply to a gentleman telling him he saw him at the theatre the evening before—“ Yes, I was condemned to sit out the hearing of that foolish rhodomontade, ‘ Guy Mannering.’ Certainly, I must confess, that Braham and Miss Stephens will make any trash to go glibly down.”

“ Trash! trash!” almost screamed out Alice, unable to keep silence any longer: “ I maun say, I am unco fashed to hear your lack o’ gude taste.”

“ Will you speak, Miss Fennel,” said Robert, looking at her contemptuously, “ so that I can possibly understand you?”

“Nonsense!” said Mrs. Howard, who saw the opposite parties getting rather acrimonious; “I am sure you understand my sister as well as I do; let her do as she pleases, if she thinks proper to talk in such an unpleasant manner.”

“Eh, sister,” said Alice, “an ye were nae sic a female ere ye became a wife; what wi’ my godmither’s marriage, and thou becoming sic a domestic gudewife as are nae seen to tak’ a buike i’ your hoond——”

“Hold — hold there, Alice!” interrupted Howard; “you are mistaken—your sister does read, I assure you; but her books are well chosen.”

“Yes, I ken right weel,” retorted Alice; “I saw o’ her toilet a buike, that had for its tectle, ‘*Domestic Cookery*.’”

This remark caused a general laugh.

“Yes, you may all laugh,” said Howard. “Elizabeth is right to study what every lady ought to know; but she reads
other

other works, I assure you; and several of those she peruses are by the best and most approved writers of fiction, and other light reading; but, my dear saucy sister, she does not make herself a slave to novel-reading: nor does she neglect other authors of ingenious works, to give herself up merely to the study of those produced by one. Neither, my good girl, does she spoil her own native language, to talk a jargon that no one can understand, because she might chance greatly to admire a Scotch writer."

"No," said Robert Butler, "I will venture to say, that what Miss Fennel attempts to speak—or rather, what she *affects*, I ought to have said, to put together—would puzzle a Scotchman himself to understand;—but, as I," added he, with a quizzing kind of smile, "would wish to comprehend all that a pretty mouth pleases to utter, I should be very much obliged to the young lady

to render herself intelligible, when she does me the honour of addressing me."

"As I tauld you ance before, gude sir," said Alice, "it will nae fash me whither ye understond my speecch or nae."

"Exactly so," said Robert, "yet you must pardon me for expressing my surprise at the language you assume; it is part of it Scotch, part old English, part Yorkshire, another part old French, with here and there a word or two of modern London dialect, sparingly enough thrown in, just to give it a zest."

Alice curled her red-ripe lip in contempt, which expression very ill became her features; and Robert gave a deep sigh, as he thought on the certain truth, that the ridiculous enthusiast before him, and the original of the charming paintings he had fallen in love with, were still of the same species.

Even that idea, crossing his mind, is sufficient to shew that Robert Butler

was

was not much behindhand in enthusiasm with the romantic Alice.

Mr. Fennel was a most indulgent father; his word was his law with his daughter, but not so much from his own determined disposition, as from the sincere affection she bore towards him, and which made her dread doing any thing that would really offend him: he certainly was much vexed at her present folly, and his mind was, at times, seriously hurt by it; yet these serious reflections occurred but seldom: her mania was an innocent and inoffensive one, which, he yet trusted, would bring with it its own remedy. When in business, he had been always a soothing, mild practitioner — never a severe one, denying his patients, as many do, every thing they most desire. Fennel knew, that, in many cases, it is requisite to indulge a vitiated appetite, till it is brought back to the relish of that plain, simple, but nutritive food, which is best calculated

for our nature; and the mind and body are so closely paired, that one requires a physician almost as much as the other.

“ I know,” thought he, “ that neither of my daughters care a straw about money; Alice is vexed with her god-mother, for her foolish marriage, but not on account of her being thereby deprived of an addition to her fortune. I must begin to look out for some worthy husband for my girl: as to that flighty fashionable, Mr. Robert Butler, whom I had set my heart upon for a son-in-law, he will never have her, that is positive. I am sorry to see that Alice is of that determined temper, that rather borders upon obstinacy: she has very lately, to my great surprise, declared she would lead a single life. Sure it is not possible that she can have taken a fancy to that young pedant, Hartfield! She has been very pensive ever since his departure for Scotland; and she blushed deeply last night, and seemed rather agitated, when

when I mentioned his name. I recollect now, that they had a great deal of conversation together that evening, when he was seated between Miss Macbane and her; and all on a sudden, just like a man in love, he seemed to come into her way of thinking about this plaguy Scotch novel-writer, that has half turned her brain."

Such were the reflections of the honest-hearted Fennel, as he anxiously employed his thoughts on his child's welfare; he then, with that pious resignation which had ever been his reigning principle, recommended her most fervently to the care and protection of that all-wise and powerful Providence which, in its good time, would, he trusted, guide her aright, and lead her from those errors, which were but trivial foibles, that time, and increasing good sense, might correct, and at length finally destroy.

CHAPTER VI.

A Course of Reading begun.

WITH a height approaching to the majestic, well-rounded limbs, a countenance of much sweetness, but to which an eye full of fire gave great dignity, Alice Fennel would often reflect on the great similarity of her surname to that of Fenella, the elfin dwarf, in "Peveril of the Peak;" but never giving proper coincidence to her nonsensical propensity of aping the characters in the different Scotch novels, she would try to utter broad Scotch, while she half personated a dumb girl. Now there certainly is less of the same Scotch feature to be found in "Peveril,"

veril," than in any of the former novels from this indefatigable pen; but Alice had resolved to think all Scotch that issued from it: she did, however, find out, that "Quentin Durward" was an old French story, raked up, and manufactured into a romance. She was vexed at this—and so are many more; for the author of all these piles of novels is so much a Scotchman, that he certainly writes better when he lays his scenes in Scotland.

Having *read through*, as she, like several others, called her skipping and skimming over all his *enchanting* works—most *charming* to himself, for they have *charmed* much into his pocket—she turned her perusal to the broadest Scotch novels she could lay her hands on; and yet she had sense enough, in some degree, to laugh at his imitators.

The "Entail, or the Lairds of Grippy," she, however, found delightful, on account of its being so profusely besprinkled with her darling dialect, which help-
ed

ed to fill up many of its pages, to the great edification of us poor cocknies, who, like the gaping ploughman, unable to understand the mountebank's dog-latin, said, how *larned* he must be, for he could not tell the meaning of one hard word out of twenty that he spoke!

Alice was delighted with all this trash of prejudice and nationality, which has lately been palmed upon us. Poor Betty, her father's under-housemaid, soon got the name of *Betty Boodle*, which very much offended her, particularly because her name was Clarke; and the young man who was still her true *lover*, ever since she came from the country, was named Clarke also. It was very strange, she said, that Miss would go on with such a pack of nonsense, giving nicknames to all the *sarvants*; it was a shame, so it was; and if her master was not such a good man, and she wished to stay till she had saved up a bit of money, she would give warning, sooner than stay

stay to be called Betty Boodle, to please Miss Fennel's nonsense.

To the "Entail" succeeded "Sir Andrew Wylie of that Ilk." It is wonderful—at least, it appears so to me, who am a poor matter-of-fact cockney—how any bookseller would publish a work that bore so heterogeneous a title, or that any mere London novel-reader could think of looking into its pages.

Alice, however, like ourselves, could not class her dear *Etrick Shepherd* as an imitator; and she read, over and over again, the, to her, *delightful* border romance of "War, Women, and Witchcraft." of which, I am sure, it is scarce possible for any unfortunate cockney, like Alice and myself, to understand twenty pages; but Miss Fennel read through the three volumes with avidity, every one of which we were obliged to close before we got half through, because they were as incomprehensible to our London capacities, as the Greek
idiom

idiom is to a French dancing-master. Alice, however, did them more honour than she could, at present, possibly find in her power to bestow on the GREAT UNKNOWN; for she read them althrough, every word, as we said above, more than once, strange and incomprehensible as was the dialect to her understanding; it was, nevertheless, Caledonian, and must be delightful.

Her gentle sister Elizabeth, while the fit was on her, was styled lady *Jane Howard*; and the princess Margaret's bridal-dress, she would have given worlds, if she had had them, to have read a description of.

We cannot, however, any longer weary our readers with this inundation of Scotch imitative tales, which have burst upon us in such an incessant, heavy, and alarming manner. We profess no hostility against the author of "*Waverley*," yet, we will be bold enough to say, that *he* is lost when he gets out
of

of Scotland; though he wisely sees that there may be too much of a good thing; and, though his style is too palpably the same, yet, “Peveril of the Peak,” and “Quentin Durward,” though they have all the *thee* and *thou* feature of former works, with an affected knowledge of the manner of speaking in the *olden time*, either in Scotland, France, or England, have only the difference of place to recommend them; for as to any thing else—oh, what a falling off! This is very visible to us, though our talents at criticism may be somewhat humble and bounded, because we do not write for the “Edinburgh Review,” nor for “Blackwood’s Magazine.”

“No, I wonder who would suffer you to do so,” says a Scotch reviewer. Believe me, good sir, I do not seek such employment; I have observation and extent of reading sufficient to see what is visible to every mind capable of judging at all.—And now, as a sincere well-wisher

wisher to the author, authors, or authoresses of this rich *twelfth-cake*, or superb *bunch of grapes*, we know not precisely which, but the hunters-up, and lovers of anecdote, will understand 'tis—we request these ingenious manufacturers, and vampers-up of old stuff, to rest a little from their wearisome task of patch-work; for we are assured they have well feathered their nests, under the coverlid of different shreds and spare pieces; and for that we felicitate them, without one spark of envy; for if *they* had not gotten some *thousands*, we are well assured *we* should not; and we confess their merits, in many instances, not only superior to our own, but infinite; we have also a self-interest'ed opinion in declaring, that we always think the “labourer worthy of his hire.”

Alicé, after wading through “War, Women, and Witchcraft,” and “Sir Andrew Wylie of that Ilk,” thought she would take courage, and really now
 “venture

venture on the prolix task of reading quite through the close-printed, thick, ay, some, *octavo* volumes of the novels of the most wonderful of all wonderful writers, the author of "Waverley;" and we must be pardoned by all his enthusiastic admirers for calling them prolix; for to a young mind they must be particularly tedious, when even those of riper years, indefatigable readers too, have yawned over many of the above-mentioned close-printed pages, and declared they found them very dry and heavy.

The first of the works of the GREAT UNKNOWN that fell into the hands of Alice, of which she resolved to go through a second and more attentive reading, was "The Fortunes of Nigel." She often fell asleep over the tedious caricature which was given of the good-humoured James the First; but she was delighted with the language, however absurd, that he was made to speak, but which we venture to believe, and could almost be presumptuous

sumptuous enough to assert, the monarch never uttered. Over the fate of lady Hermione she dropped many a tear of mistaken sensibility; and Margaret Ramsay she fancied was the very resemblance of Margaret Macbanc.

Mr. Fennel subscribed to one of the very best circulating libraries in Bond-street; but as the novels his daughter was now reading were generally out, (by the bye, we have seen *lately* a great number covered with dust, encumbering the shelves,) she could not obtain them in that way as to enable her to go through them again in regular gradation. When she returned "The Fortunes of Nigel," she took home with her "The Pirate:" this she had read before, in a very careless manner, and was determined now to make the author and herself amends. She found it worth the pains; it was so every-way written like Walter Scott; and she declared she felt assured that he had penned every line of it—the incidents

dents were so romantic—it was full of legendary superstition—and the scene was laid in that *sweet enchanting* spot, the *island of Zetland*.

What a charming name! It must have been one of the most delicious places under the sun! She felt a momentary wish that she could meet with a Mordant; but she soon checked the idea, convinced, in her own mind, that there were no such men to be found now, and particularly out of Scotland. She applied herself then closely to the study of her books, and resolved to lead a single life.

Sometimes she would fancy herself Minna, at others Brenda; but then Minna had “raven” hair—that she had not; but the eyes of Alice were dark, and her eyebrows finely pencilled by the hand of nature; she therefore purchased some raven ringlets, tucked her own fine brown locks under them, and by the overshadowing false tint which they

they gave to her complexion, they diminished the glow on her rosy cheek, and gave to it the tinge of the pale bloom bestowed by the wonder-working bard on Minna. Then, as she looked in the glass, Alice thought herself Minna indeed; but her own beauty was not only disguised, it was fairly obscured by her dark locks; this she at length found out, for nature had bestowed so much on her, that art was sure to disfigure her work.

Alice found out too, that she had nothing of a being, in her appearance, belonging “* naturally to some higher and better sphere;” she would, therefore, she thought, assume the character of Brenda. Here her hair was again at fault; for it had none of that “tinge of gold,” which we have ever found bordering on what is vulgarly called *carrotty*, and very prevalent among the natives of Scotland and Ireland: but Alice had a fine eye, good mouth and teeth; and she was fair
and

* Vide “Pirate.”

and fresh; Brenda's person, she then thought, best suited to her: but "the fairy form and agile step" did not accord quite so well with the imposing figure of Alice, notwithstanding her youth and her natural activity; nor was she so volatile as Brenda: she had become, especially since the false accusation of Hartfield, and the intense reading she had lately laboured in, pensive, like Minna; and, like her, "** endured* mirth, rather than *enjoyed* it." But Magnus Tröil was so like her dear, worthy father, that she must adopt the character of one of the daughters. She thought the countenance of Brenda best suited to her: but the character and pursuits of Minna were more like her own. She durst not buy any artificial *golden* locks, for her father had been very angry with her for putting on black ringlets, and had actually snatched them off one day, when they were sitting together,

gether, insisting on never seeing her appear with false hair again; for the hair of Alice was remarkably beautiful, luxuriant, and exactly the colour of her mother's, and Fennel took great pride in it: he was not very well pleased when she covered so much of it so often with her Highland cap; but then her ringlets sported on her cheeks, and discovered that her hair was fine, and of a charming colour; she looked also very pretty in her Scotch cap, so, in that respect, let her do as she pleased.

Alice reconciled herself to appearing as much like Brenda as she could, because Brenda's hair "darkened in the shade;" the colour then might be something like her own, and she took care always to keep in the shade as much as possible. Her father was delighted with her vivacity, and his matter-of-fact character did not allow him to see that it was all forced and unnatural. She certainly strove, as much as in her power, to

to cure herself of the pensive weight that hung on her spirits, 'increased' by the *benign* kind of reading she was toiling through, and the astonishment at what Hartfield could possibly mean by excusing her of having written to him, and that in an amatory style.

Amongst the jumble of dreams, it sometimes happens that we really do dream what, in a great measure, comes to pass. Alice dreamed one night that Miss Southgate was dead; and she heard the next day that she was dangerously ill. She now entertained, amidst her beliefs, visions and prophecies, the highest veneration for "Norna of the Fitful Head." Her language was delightful, sublime, the very essence of romance; indeed, nothing in nature, we are well assured, was ever like it. Alice durst not dress herself like Norna; but she, like many other handsome girls, who are endowed with taste, had made the aids of the toilet her study; and she

knew that she could form a very becoming dress from the description of that of the poor maniac-kind of being, who is described as wearing a costume, not very likely, we believe, to have ever been seen on a poor mad woman, wandering about the island of Zetland.

Alice had soon an opportunity of setting her fancy to work: Mrs Howard was to take her to an elegant fancy ball, the following week after this extraordinary dream. Mrs. Howard knew her sister had taste; but she fully expected her dress to be Scotch; however fanciful or wild, it would not be remarked as singular amidst such a motley group; and it was from Norna's dress, as described in the "Pirate," that Alice caused one to be made, in which she really looked extremely handsome.

She wore a "short jacket of dark blue *figured* velvet." Norna's was stamped with figures; but that of Alice was of a beautiful *mogui* velvet. "Over this
was

was a vest of crimson, embroidered with silver;" that of Alice was not *tarnished* silver, like Norna's. Alice wore a girdle, with the ornaments made of that fashionable article: *polished steel*. (We hope our fair countrywomen will be careful of lightning, now *polished steel* is one of their manias.) These ornaments of Miss Farnel's, however, were classical to her text; for, like Norna's, they exhibited "planetary signs." "Her apron (that of Alice was French, and of *gros de Naples*) was of blue, embroidered," also like Norna's, with planetary devices: her petticoat was of fine scarlet cloth. Roman buskins enlaced her well-formed ankle; and though she durst not put on scarlet stockings, she had her silk ones dyed as refulgent a pink as possible.

She was troubled about her head-dress; Norna wore a cap, it was evident, but of what kind the minute historian of fictitious legend was silent: however, Alice adopted a light Scotch cap,

taking out some of the umbrageous plumes, and appeared like a handsome Amazon amidst the gay assembly.

Mr. Butler, senior, admired her exceedingly, and felt the more distressed at his son's absence, as he felt almost sure that he must have been, in a great measure, led captive by her charming appearance, for she really seemed to excite general admiration; but an Amazonian-looking fair one, however beautiful, would never win the heart of Robert Butler.

Mr. Fennel had embraced his dear daughter at parting, been pleased at the taste, fancy, and splendour of her dress, little imagining from whence she had stolen the idea; and he consigned her to the care of her sister, as his dancing days were over, and to sit at a ball, as a spectator only, he declared the greatest bore in the world.

CHAPTER VII.

*Variety.*

Mrs. Howard kept her sister with her the next day, as the ball had been kept up to a very late hour with much spirit. Alice danced neither quadrilles nor country dances; but in Scotch reels and strathspeys she was indefatigable. We are sorry to say that her mind was so often wandering, and so full was she of her own prophetic character, that she was several times out in the simple figure of a reel—and she put others out likewise; but she was so handsome! she was rich too—that was still better; therefore her little blunders were only laughed

at. Oh, what different ways of *laughing* at there are ! A *poor* awkward girl, plain too, unfortunately, in person, would have been *laughed at* with that insolent sneer as would have made her ready to sink with shame—nay, even to weep, and, thereby, render herself yet more ugly : but the sweet laugh bestowed by the gentlemen on the wild and thoughtless Miss Fennel, was that of pleasure and approbation ; so that, at last, she began almost to think that it was very pretty to make mistakes : but then, suddenly reflecting that it took from the dignity of her prophetic character, to be a trifler, she became more attentive, took care not to make any fresh blunders ; and her Scotch steps were pronounced admirable, though many, in the room performed them much better.

Mrs. Howard sent, the next morning, as soon as she came down to a late breakfast, to inquire after the health of Miss Southgate.

Word was brought back, that she was in danger, and that unless this proved to be a crisis in her disorder, she could not possibly live through that night.

The tears came into the eyes of the sisters at this intelligence; they neither of them loved Miss Southgate, but they thought only of her sufferings; and Alice was now actuated only by those warm feelings she possessed from nature: and could she even then have known that Miss Southgate had injured her, while she was seeking to hurt her gentle friend, Margaret, she would not have felt for her the less commiseration.

“Dear, kind-hearted Mrs. Rivers!” said Mrs. Howard; “she never, I am told, quits the pillow of Miss Southgate.”

“I always,” said Alice, “loved Mrs. Rivers, for her great good-nature.”

“That is more than I dare say,” said Howard; “if I was to say I loved Mrs. Rivers, my wife would be jealous. How-

ever, jesting apart, I hope Miss Southgate, when she dies, will be found to have left the poor widow something handsome.' But 'I do not think Miss Southgate will die of this complaint; I have much hopes from her youth.'

"When she gets better," said Mrs. Howard, "we must have Mrs. Rivers to stay with us a little while."

"Oh, then," said Howard, jocosely, "you are not jealous! But perhaps you mean to send me out of town while she remains here?"

"Jealous!" said the innocent Alice, "what! of Mrs. Rivers? Such a woman as my sister! Mrs. Rivers is far from being handsome; and I should imagine her to be near forty years of age.

"Thirty-five, I believe, is the utmost," said Mrs. Howard; "and what could make you guess her to be near forty? I am sure she does not look as if she was thirty. She is certainly not handsome.

but

but she is witty, sprightly, and good-natured, and a very great favourite with the gentlemen. I know what Howard means about my jealousy — because I once told him he really wearied me, after he had gone on for, I am sure, a full hour, in expatiating upon the attractions of Mrs. Rivers, which, to my relief, he at last finished, by declaring her to be the most charming woman, and one of the most bewitching manners he ever conversed with.”

“And so she is,” said Howard, “at times; but she is, like all other captivating ladies, not always the same. Mr. Robert Butler, I believe, finds her always attractive.”

Mrs. Howard looked at her sister, and saw a blush kindling on her cheek; it was that of indignation against Robert — but not for his admiration of Mrs. Rivers; her blush, however, was misapprehended both by Howard and his wife, who, on a signal from her husband, said

—“ In spite of the opinion Robert maintains in public, I believe he does it merely to appear singular; and that he has almost as high an opinion of Walter Scott as you, Alice, can possibly have.”

“ I ha’ mine ain,” said Alice, with an indifference so visibly bordering on profound contempt, that her sister soon found that they were both mistaken; “ ycs, I ha’ mine ain,” continued she; “ and as for that o’ the chiel, Robert Butler, its nae concern o’ mine; he can nae change my thoughts, and it wad fash me sore, were I to read and judge of buikes as he does.”

Mrs. Rivers entered just at that moment, as the French say, *tout essoufflée*. Miss Southgate had fallen into a heavy sleep, without the aid of opiates; and Mrs. Rivers, in a manner that Alice thought rather unfeeling, particularly towards one for whom she professed so warm a friendship, said—“ Thank Heaven!

ven! I have escaped from my wearisome confinement for an hour or two; Miss Southgate is in a profound sleep, and the physician says, that when she wakes she must not converse, or be in the least agitated; the doctor says this fine sound sleep, accompanied as it is by gentle transpiration, will certainly restore her; and he advised me to quit the laborious task I have taken upon me, and for which Miss Southgate has never so much as thanked me, and to take a little air."

"I am very glad you walked here, my dear," said Mrs. Howard; "and I hope you will stay and dine with us."

"Oh no, my dear, that is impossible; should she, on awaking, find I have quitted the house, I suppose she will never forgive me; I will venture, however, to sit and chat a little with you."

"But we shall dine earlier than usual," said Mrs. Howard, "my father is coming to dinner, and he is not fond of late hours."

Mrs. Rivers, however, declared her inability to stay: she had walked to Mr Howard's rather in dudgeon; for Miss Southgate, either living or dying, would be no benefit to Mrs. Rivers; nor would she receive the least reward for all the sleepless nights she had passed, in continual watchfulness by the sick couch of one, who, for her own purpose only, affected to be unable to exist without her dear Rivers.

Miss Southgate had been terrified, during that awful state which touches on the threshold of another world, by confused ideas, that there might be a future state of punishment, which she had always tried to persuade herself she gave no credence to; she found this "flattering unction" that she had administered to her conscience would not heal its reproaches in the hour of danger; in case of her death therefore by this visitation, she was resolved to try another balsam from the same source of spiritual empiricism

empiricism; she thought she might make ample atonement for her late principles of infidelity, selfishness, pride, and want of kindness, if she left all her large fortune to public charities, thus fancying she should ensure to herself, by these means, a state of future happiness. In case her life was spared, which youth and a good constitution gave her some hopes of, she meant to repair immediately to the South of France; and when her health and strength were restored in that delicious climate, she would visit the French capital in the winter, and pass her days among a people she admired—whose maxims she had embraced—whose native gaiety always exhilarated her, while the public amusements of Paris enchanted her by their diversity. Among many of the French she had found congenial minds; their sentiments were like her own, deep; and the warmest professions of friendship never created surprise, or indeed censure, if

never fulfilled. In France her wealth would cause her to be constantly cherished, while her taste, fashion, and *agrémens* of person, would render her a subject of general admiration.

But to this world of pleasure, which she created during the seemingly-convalescent fluctuations of her disorder, and that she sketched out before her friend, who had never quitted the pillow of sickness, but had most anxiously watched every change for the better, and patiently endured every caprice of her wayward temper, she was never invited to go and participate in; on the contrary, Miss Southgate took care to let her know that she had no idea of taking her with her; but said to her one morning, when her health and spirits seemed somewhat better—" Ah, I shall be glad to quit this stupid country, where I have endured some mortifications lately, not to be forgotten, in spite of my fashion, breeding, and wealth, and the
display

display of attraction they have enabled me to make. All I shall regret, my love, will be leaving you. You must marry some rich old man, my dear, and then coax him to take a trip to Paris: then perhaps we shall meet, and be merry again together."

This scheme, however, had not been spoken of for many days: Miss Southgate was in extreme danger; she knew it, and caused to be panned, during her terror, the *charitable* will we before mentioned.

Alice, moved by compassion at the seemingly impending fate of a female so young and gay, asked, in her own sweet tone of voice and native language, after the real state of Miss Southgate's health, with the most tender and anxious solicitude.

"Ah, Miss Fennel," said the widow, with a degree of malevolence that rather surprised Mrs. Howard and her sister, "you have a sweet disposition; nevertheless,

theless, I think I could ruffle it, were I to tell you how little Miss Southgate is *your* friend."

"In regard to *friendship*," said Alice with dignity, "I never wish to hackney the sacred term; Miss Southgate is to me merely an indifferent acquaintance. But I feel for her now, as I should for any other suffering fellow-creature. As to friendship or enmity, I neither seek the one from her; nor fear the other."

"Ah," said Mrs. Rivers, "but 'the enmity of the envious is always to be feared; it may do us a great deal of harm: the malicious have it always in their power to give the world an ill opinion of us, which we cannot prevent, nor, in a hurry, destroy.'"

Mrs. Rivers then redoubled her kind and insinuating attentions towards Alice, to whose mind the anonymous letter never once occurred. Mrs. Rivers, however, taking advantage of the conversation which was taking place between

Mr. and Mrs. Howard, concerning some trifling circumstance, drew her seat nearer to Alice, and said—"I have a curious piece of intelligence to impart to you, in which you are, I think, very materially concerned; though the fine stroke of art given by Miss Southgate was meant to wound another."

Alice was all astonishment; but just as Mrs. Rivers, in a half-whisper, was beginning her tale, the servant entered in haste, saying that Miss Southgate's maid was waiting for her in the hall; that her mistress had waked extremely weak, but evidently better, and was eagerly inquiring for her dear friend; the nurse therefore had thought it better to send for her.

Mrs. Rivers then, after giving a shrug of vexation, made the best of her way back again, and left Alice in mute astonishment at what she could possibly have to tell her, that concerned her so nearly. If the anonymous letter had
crossed

crossed her mind, which it did not, she would never have believed that any female, with whom she was in the frequent habits of social intercourse—whom she had never injured in the smallest degree, even in thought, could serve her such a trick. Often she had reflected, when alone, that whoever had written this letter must have been well acquainted with her handwriting; but Mr. Hartfield was not, and therefore whoever had penned the letter he accused her of, must certainly also have had the hardihood to affix her name to it: but as none of these reflections now passed over her mind, she sat, after the departure of Mrs. Rivers, in a kind of stupor, from whence she was roused by her father laying his hand on her shoulder, and saying—“What, my girl, did you dance all your senses away last night? I was told by my friend Butler, that there was not a girl in the room danced with
with

with more spirit. Had you a *Scotch* partner?"

"Yes," answered Howard, for her: "a most indefatigable dancer, belonging to the forty-second. Oh, how Alice and the captain did go through the strathspeys and reels: I really believe he danced her heart away; she has behaved just like a girl in love all the morning."

Alice was vexed—"Howard," said she, "you absolutely grow quite foolish.—No, my dear father, it would never be in the power of captain Macdougall to dance *my* heart away."

"Why?" said Howard. "Pray what is the matter with him? He is young, well made, and a capital dancer."

"Such may be your idea of capital dancing," said Alice; "but, my dear father; the man's dancing, which my worthy brother-in-law praises so much, seems to be as if he was performing the most laborious task in the world; he takes such pains with his steps, and
works

works so hard with his feet, legs, and arms, not to mention the continual snapping of his fingers, that it is fatiguing to see him."

"Why, you are a saucy young baggage," said Fennel, delighted to hear that she not only forbore to speak a word of her usual jargon, but also that she did not appear to admire her partner merely because he was Scotch. But Fennel had no cause of self-congratulation; Alice sometimes forgot herself, and spoke as good English as any one, especially if she was carried away by her subject. She had, like all other romance readers, formed a hero from her own ideas, and had not yet met with him in real life, because he must be Scotch; and they are indeed real heroes, and not the creation of a romantic female Prometheus.

Alice did not like to own, even to herself, the reason she could not much admire captain Macdougall; his face was ruefully

usefully plain, his features coarse, and though a young man, he had, from having been in the service from his infancy, and seen many severe rubs, the hard face of an experienced veteran: he was disfigured also by a wound through the lower part of his nose and upper lip, and the same shot had carried away four of his front teeth. He was, however, uncommonly well made, an excellent dancer, but in manners and conversation a mere soldier; what alone gave him any consideration in the opinions of Alice was, that he spoke the true Highland broad Scotch, which few Londoners, any more than herself, could well understand.

But she comforted herself, that she had resolved on living single; not but that she still fancied that there might be yet the Scotch Adonis her fancy had formed, fresh and fair from the "*caller* air," with sunny ringlets sporting over his smooth, rosy cheek—an eye of blue, brightened by the fire of genius, yet gentle

gentle as the dove's. In *reality*, she had seen nothing of the kind; she was hurt by the disappointment she had experienced, in beholding some pictures of modern "eminent Scotchmen," said, by those who had seen the originals, to be faithful likenesses. Like all other young girls, she was enamoured of beauty, whether real or ideal; and her Scotch hero must be tall and martial in his appearance, but he must have a face smooth and satin-like as her own skin, blooming with youth and loveliness.

After some trifling *badinage* had passed between Alice and her brother-in-law, she relapsed into her former *soi-disant* Scotch mode of expressing herself; but her sister reminded her, that the hour was late, and that it was time to retire, in order to make some slight alteration in their toilet before dinner.

In the evening Mrs. Howard sent to inquire after the health of Miss Southgate; and was informed that she continued

nued

med extremely ill; but, if great care was taken, she might, it was hoped, soon be pronounced out of danger.

“Poor young creature!” said the kind-hearted Fennel; while Mrs. Howard half whispered her sister—“I wonder, Alice, what Mrs. Rivers could possibly mean, by telling you that Miss Southgate was no friend of yours!”

“I ken not,” said Alice, “nor does it fash me, as I said before, an she be my friend or foe; as the auld sang says, ‘*It’s a’ ane to me.*’”

“Do not say so, Alice,” said Mrs. Howard; “a young girl like you should not be so indifferent to the world’s opinion; you should seek to gain the applause of every one, and not be so careless of their censure.”

“And what are my actions,” said Alice, haughtily, “that I should tak ony care for the censure of sic a heartless lass as Miss Southgate?”

“I acknowledge she is merely an automaton,

tomaton, that is moved only by the springs of fashion," said Mrs. Howard, "but do you not treat the accomplished and handsome Mr. Robert Butler in the same contemptuous manner?"

"Accomplished!" repeated Alice.

"Yes, accomplished," said her sister, "as he is handsome; and what is better, he is possessed of a most generous and feeling heart."

"You ha' left oot ane quality o' his heart," said Alice—"and that is envy."

"He envious!" said Mrs. Howard; "Butler—Robert Butler envious! He is, as I said before, as worthy and as sensible as he is handsome."

"Oh," said Alice, "as to the last quality, the chiel's fair enow to see; but he's nae the kind o' beauty that mine eyne could e'er be pleased wi'; his locks are nae sunny enow, and his hazel eyne are too dark and piercing."

"I am weary of hearing you talk such nonsense, Alice," said Mrs. Howard;
 "why

“ why will you not speak and act like other people?”

As most of the family party had been up late the night before, or rather the ball had been protracted till daylight that morning, they separated at an early hour; the good Fennel, happy in his children, and at seeing the domestic harmony of his Elizabeth and her Howard, took home his blooming, romantic girl, imprinted a kiss on her heavy eyelids, which, with difficulty, she kept from closing during their ride home, and consigned her to the happy reality of a good night's repose, under the protecting care of her Heavenly Guardian.

CHAPTER VIII

A decided Step.

WE must now révert to a character that we introduced to our readers in a former volume, a young lady, of the name of Underwood. Whatever there might be unpleasant in the composition of this young lady, yet she was very far, notwithstanding her pride, manœuvring, love of scandal, and boast of independence, from bearing any kind of resemblance to Miss Southgate: they were always, however; regarded as female competitors for the prize of general attention and admiration; and they were indeed most persevering competitors; but
it

it was always separately that they made their attacks—they were scarce ever seen on the same parties together.

Miss Southgate had no feeling; and her principles were those of a modern female philosopher; bad, in a manner, by nature, and her disposition crafty, selfish, and malignant. Though Miss Underwood was haughty, she was frank—though she was fond of a little fashionable tittle-tattle, she was never herself the *inventor* of a scandalous tale—she only repeated what was generally known to be notorious facts in the private history of many families of high rank; and though her temper was not the best in the world, yet the wish never entered into her mind to do any one an injury.

Mr. Hartfield had begun, as we recorded in our first volume, a kind of flirtation with Miss Underwood, which she, however, at that time, never meant to encourage, because the limited state of his finances then put it out of his

power to cut the figure in fashionable life that she had always aspired to, and eagerly sought after. When Hartfield became master of a splendid fortune, he gradually withdrew his attentions from Miss Underwood, and she became then as willing as possible to bestow on him her hand, whenever he should be disposed to ask it seriously. Like Miss Southgate, she felt convinced in her own mind, that Hartfield was of that pliant and milky kind of disposition, that a woman of spirit and fashion might literally wind him round her finger, and do just what she pleased, especially as she believed him to be extremely in-dolent, which, in fact, he was much inclined to be, and therefore he would always be found most complying to the caprices of a wife, if only for the sake of peace and quietness. But herein both ladies judged amiss, for he had an invincible stubbornness about him, which all those friends who had talked him and themselves into
a belief

a belief that he was a miracle of goodness, dignified by the name of *uncommon firmness of character*—a quackery that even the honest-hearted Fenel could not detect.

Miss Underwood knew nothing of this obstinacy: however, after the most assiduous attentions to her on his part, she found a visible falling off, and the gentle and kind demeanour she had at first observed towards him, received only with coldness and distance. Had Hartfield never seen Margaret Machane, he would, on his accession to fortune, which came most unexpectedly to him, with “both hands full,” have quitted his pursuit of Miss Underwood, whose independence he, like the rest of the world, had more than doubled the amount of in his opinion; and his own limited income, at the time he began to pay his devoirs to the lady, made him regard her as a treasure worth looking after: but not devoid of craft, like many other

quiet characters, he took care, though his attentions could not be misconceived, especially by the fair object of them, not to say or hint any thing like matrimony.

Miss Underwood was not *very* intimate with Mrs. Howard, and she was not invited to the friendly party to meet the Macbanes; but Mrs. Howard, ever kindly attentive to Mrs. Rivers, invited her, which she could not do without asking Miss Southgate, whose guest Mrs. Rivers was for a few days. Miss Underwood therefore knew nothing of Hartfield's sudden predilection for Margaret, which, though it had vexed her, she would never, like the mischievous Miss Southgate, have endeavoured to destroy. Miss Underwood knew how fond Hartfield was of travelling: she was a sensible, well-gifted, and well-accomplished woman, had herself made the tour of England, and Hartfield really, before he saw Margaret Macbane, began to think, though he felt not a
spark

spark of love, which he certainly thought very requisite to feel, for his future conjugal happiness, towards the female with whom he was to pass all the future hours of his existence; yet, *necessitas non habet leges*; as he knew he must look out for fortune, he found, or rather, if he wedded Miss Underwood, he *would* find, that he would not be an unlucky being, but might pass a married life of some comfort with a woman so mentally endowed as the lady he had chosen; for, in time, he reflected, her good sense would cause her to turn with distaste from the frivolous pursuits and gossip of fashionable life, and she would fulfil her domestic duties with honour to herself, and satisfaction to her husband.

Able and ingenious architects are the builders of airy castles; these vapoury edifices raised by Hartfield were all at once overthrown; not by the common destroyer, Disappointment, but by the hand of Plutus, in a heavy shower of

gold. These golden instruments enabled him to loosen those chains, which his own mediocrity of fortune had assisted Miss Underwood in forging for him. He cast them off, for ever, when he beheld the mild and bright beams of the northern star, that was to guide him to future felicity: here he built again the airy structure; but here he had every prospect of finding it as stable as adamant; for the abode of wedded happiness was built, not solely on the soft blue eye, and alabaster skin, but was founded on that rock of permanent delight, gentleness, unassuming good sense, and all the milder virtues that can adorn the female character.

Miss Underwood knew nothing of this; indeed, there were few who suspected that he had really any serious thoughts of Margaret Macbane; and, had Miss Underwood even had the most distant idea of it, her own vanity would have suggested to her, that he would not be

so very suddenly caught, as to heedlessly think of taking a girl for his wife, without a shilling for her fortune; and, therefore, she never would have imagined, that it was her who was the cause of his making the tour of Scotland. She accordingly resolved to follow him thither for not one offer, not even one dangler had she found, since his departure.

She began her manoeuvres with her father and mother, who, like many other fond parents, were disposed to think their accomplished first-born a model very nearly touching on perfection, and were always eager to listen to her remarks; her independence, too, had given her a consequence in the family unenjoyed by her sisters; and she was ushered into every polite circle; while the mild, and unobtruding charms of her pretty second sister, Augusta, were concealed in the nursery, with the more infantine offspring of Mr. Underwood, and still kept under the tuition and rule of a governess;

for Augusta was not to be brought out till her sister was married—a period that the anxious parents had now, for some years, awaited in vain.

The manœuvring of Miss Underwood was not, for some time, understood by her parents. She set the old gentleman yawning, by the description she gave of the different watering-places; their wearisome monotony, and the detestable company, as she denominated it, generally assembled at them, in the autumnal months. She made her mother, who was a beauty, and still appeared young, laugh very heartily, at her wit and humour, in her mimicry, and ridicule of the citizens' wives and daughters; while she declared, she could tell to a certainty, what trade every shopkeeper and handicraft man was of; that she could distinguish the kind of business he followed by his walk, his conversation, and the particular phrases he made use of; all smelling as strongly of the shop.

shop, as the *butter-d-bacon* dresses of the female part of his family; their bonnets with flowers upon feathers, and feathers upon flowers; and their gowns flounced up to their knees. She then touched another powerful string, which never ceased to vibrate on the feelings of her virtuous mother, who was a woman remarkably correct in her moral conduct; this was, when she spoke of the immorality and licentiousness of manners in those females, whom they could alone associate with, from their birth and toleration in society; and there were few who frequented these summer recesses, Miss Underwood further remarked, but what *some glare* was discoverable in their conduct; or so much smoke, that a little fire certainly must have been concealed underneath, to have caused the exhaling and noisome vapour to which calumny and foul whispering have been justly compared.

While her parents assented to her observations,

servations, her father said, after a pause, that she well knew he could not afford to keep up an establishment in the country, in a mansion fit for a gentleman of birth, with a large family, to dwell in.

They still had no idea of what their daughter was striving to accomplish; and she felt some hesitation in speaking out her wishes plainly, for she knew her father was, in some things, as obstinate as a mule.—“ Dear papa,” resumed she, in as whining a tone as possible, “ why confine ourselves always to Brighton, Worthing, and all the other stupid watering-places on the Kent and Sussex coast? Cheltenham is rather more bearable, on account of its society, but to that place I am always compelled to go alone, because you say you cannot stand the expence of travelling in any kind of style, with your large family, so long a journey. I am really sick of stupid Brighton, that you are so fond of.”

“ No, my dear, it is not stupid,” said her
her

her father; “*you* oncè thought it very much the contrary, and have declared it lively, whatever were its defects.”

“Yes, when there were plenty of the military there; but now there is not a redcoat worth looking at.”

“Well, never mind,” said Mr. Underwood. “those watering-places amuse me; we can do just what we please at them: live as we like, and see whom we like.”

“Oh, papa, papa!” said Miss Underwood, taking courage, “do let us change the scene, and make the tour of Scotland.”

“Where? where?” said old Underwood in a passion. “Are you mad? Why travelling with my family through that country would be enough to ruin me!”

“Ah! but we shall live so cheap when we get there.”

“On what? On oatmeal, haggis, and whiskey?”

“Dear

“ Dear papa, no; there is good living in Scotland; and I have always been told, cheaper to be had than in England; and as to travelling, I will be at half the expence of that.”

“ Keep your fortune for better uses,” growled out old Underwood; “ bestow it on some worthy man, who will make you a good husband, and enable you to live in the style of a gentlewoman, as you have always been accustomed to live; but if your mother and I had not attended to the strictest economy, how do you think I could have brought up, and have well educated such a family?”

“ And I am sure,” said Miss Underwood, “ the scheme I have proposed would be a most economical one; we can, in the first place, all go by sea—by steam.”

“ And so you would risk your parents’, your brothers’ and sisters’, and your own life, just to satisfy a foolish whim that happens to come into your head! You know

know

know very well that I never will go on the water."

"Dear papa, why put yourself in a passion? Will the steam-packet blow up because your family happen to be on board? How many are continually going that speedy way in perfect safety! Why should we regard ourselves as the condemned of Heaven?"

"Sensible girl!" said her fond father. "your observation is not only a just one, but shews your trust in a protecting Providence. But, my dear, you know how lately I was obliged to part with my horses, and that it is as much as I can do to keep the old coach in proper repair, while I am compelled to practise the strictest economy to keep up an appearance any way genteel, and to enable me to give my other daughters portions, that will indeed be but scanty; for, my good girl, though we hold up the contrary to the world, your own independence is but trifling, for a lady

lady of fashion ; and were not your mother, 'in spite of her high birth and noble connexions, one of the most extraordinary women in the world, for cleverness and economy, who can make five guineas go as far as some women can five-and-twenty, we could not cut the figure we do, but must, perhaps, be obliged to go and vegetate, bereft of all English comforts, abroad : "where is now, through her care and perseverance, there is not a family, during the winter months, that are more respected, or make a better appearance in town, than ourselves."

"Papa," said Miss Underwood, kissing the forehead of her father, "I always feel most happy when you praise my dear mother ; (and this was a truth—Mrs. Underwood, and this, her eldest daughter, not only looked, but were always like sisters.) Perhaps my journey to Scotland may terminate in a manner that may very agreeably surprise you both.

both.

both; for if you will not go, I am determined *I* will."

"You know, my love," said Mr. Underwood, "that I never have objected to your taking your maid, and going without either your mother or me, to join your acquaintance at Brighton, Worthing, or the Isle of Wight; but to go such an immense distance, where you know not a living creature, with only your maid, I do not think it proper for a young woman of your attractions and fashion."

Miss Underwood tossed up her head, and her dignified nose seemed to acquire yet more of that Roman majesty in which all the large-nosed community take so much pride, always thinking that it is utterly impossible for any face to be handsome, that is not conspicuous for a protuberant aquiline proboscis. Alas! many of us poor cocknies, who are really unmixed Londoners, for many generations, can lay no claim to this charm,

charm, and must, consequently, be deemed, at any rate, but a degree above ugly, being, for the greatest part of us, mostly seen with insignificant snub noses, that certainly give an air of *mesquinerie* to our countenances.

Miss Underwood had an occasion of a private conference with mamma; and what she told her we cannot pretend to say, though we profess to know many things, which, I acknowledge, are enough to make our readers exclaim—"How came the writer of this history to know all this?" But thus much we *do* know, that, if Miss Underwood did not tell all her plans to her mother, she gave her such broad hints, as caused the good lady to put in practice, coaxing, remonstrances, and arts of persuasion with her husband, in order to gain his consent, to allow her to accompany her daughter on this excursion, that she had so set her heart upon.—“You know, my love,” added the good lady, “you know, as well
well

well as myself, her independence, both of spirit and fortune; the latter, while she lives with us, her filial affection makes us find of great assistance in our income, which, though handsome, is straitened, through our having so numerous a family. Now, my dear Mr. Underwood, if she does not have that indulgence which she has ever experienced from us—and, indeed, we must say, she truly merits it—she might, in spite of her affection and excellent heart, withdraw herself from her home, and, as she is of age, and independent, live just where she pleased: she is prudent, I know; but she is handsome, and, though not in her teens, yet too young, I think, to quit the watchful eye of a mother, and be left wholly to herself.”

“What you say, my dear Mrs. Underwood, is all very true,” said the old gentleman; “but you know, my dear, we cannot deceive ourselves, as to her age; and she has prudence and dignity of
of

of manners sufficient to keep every one at a proper distance. However, go with her to Scotland, if such is your wish; my sister can accompany me and the rest of the family, and we will go to Margate this season, instead of to Brighton. It is cheaper, and my sister, who is still a more rigid economist than yourself, will be glad of a jaunt that will cost her nothing, but which her stinginess would never let her take at her own expence.

“True, my dear; but I think Margate, in the season, rather vulgar, for a man of your rank. Suppose you go where we meant to go last summer, to Hastings, in Sussex? there you can be either retired, or mix in society, just as you find yourself inclined; and if Matilda should be tired of her northern tour, which, I dare say, she soon will be, we can immediately join you, and all repair to Brighton together.”

Matters being thus finally adjusted, and to the satisfaction of all parties,

Mrs.

Mrs. Underwood and her daughter, with a waiting-maid and footboy; set off in the steam-packet for the Land of Cakes.

CHAPTER IX.

*More Reading.*

WHEN Alice had eagerly inquired for the new publication of "Quentin Duward," and was much mortified at finding that every set was out, and promised immediately when returned to other subscribers, she asked, with a degree of ill-humour, if the story was Scotch?

The librarian told her no, it was an old French story; she was, therefore, very indifferent concerning it, till her father, a few days after, desirous of affording her pleasure, took care to procure it for her; but, as we remarked before; she had very lightly looked it over, and
 finding

finding its *interest* chiefly confined to France, *she* took *none* in it.

Hearing, however, in the course of some desultory conversation among her friends, a part of which had turned on some of the newest publications, she listened attentively, while some one remarked that, when the *immortal novelist* drew a Scotch character, then he was indeed quite at home; and the description of the Scottish chief, in "Quentin Durward," and his nephew, were worth the whole of the work put together. Alice, therefore, went home that evening, in the firm resolution of giving Quentin Durward a *fair* reading. Oh, how she became interested! "A young North Briton seeking his fortune in France!" How sweetly romantic!—My dear Miss Fennel, there is nothing romantic in that—a North Briton will *seek* his fortune every where; and by dint of perseverance, and *booming* and *booming*—and why should we leave
out,

out, by laudable industry also?—he generally succeeds in *making* one.

But, though she read of the impression made on Quentin Durward by Jacqueline, it made but little on her: not but that she would certainly have adopted the character of Jacqueline, had she not been French; and even when she found out who she was, she was discovered to be a Burgundian: and was not that as bad? She was not Scotch. she was not like her lovely friend, Margaret Macbane, who equalled, or even surpassed, all she had ever read of Scotch heroines.

Alice was also somewhat disappointed at finding that Quentin spoke such good English; indeed, when we read the “Fortunes of Nigel,” and therein find a learned sovereign speaking such broad Scotch that few could understand, we are astonished to find a young northern adventurer, called a *North Briton* too, speaking such refined *English*; we Londoners,

doners could not have done it better; yet we are poor ignorant cocknies. However, I do believe, and have been told so, that the *Scotch* were not called *North Britons* till after the union between Scotland and England, long after the reign of Louis the Eleventh.

Though Alice was almost horror-struck at the description of *Ludovic Leslie* (the Christian name *French*, by the bye), the uncle of *Quentin Durward*, yet his dress and arms were so splendid *, it was quite delightful to read of them. She resolved to alter her Scotch cap; take out the overshadowing plumes, and adorn it with a tuft of feathers, like that of *Ludovic Leslie's*. She looked all the prettier for this alteration, so her father said nothing about it; but she did not know how to get a "Virgin † *Mary of silver*" for a brooch: our ancestors were

* *Vide* "Quentin Durward"

† *Ibid.*—The superstitious *LOUIS* the Eleventh was content with a *leaden* *Virgin Mary* in his hat.

more *au fait* in procuring these curiosities than we are, in spite of all our quackeries, in palming *modern* antiques on fashionable gulls, whose every room is littered with china and trash, in order to shew, what *they* call, their *distinguish-ed* taste in all the articles of *virtu*.

“What brought sir Visto’s *ill-got* wealth to waste? Some demon whisper’d—‘Visto, have a taste.’”

“Alice dragged her sister about to all the silversmiths and jewellers in London; she prevailed on her to devote several hours to the parading over the magnificent repository belonging to Howel and James, in Waterloo-place; her searching eye took in all the curious *bijouterie* there displayed, all the numerous *colifichets* to be found in that emporium of taste, fashion, and exorbitant expence; but nothing could she find of the kind. She once kept Mr. and Mrs. Howard a whole morning at the bazaar in Soho-square, from three to six—Mr. Howard’s

Howard's dinner-hour "was five; so the fowls were roasted to a chip, the fish broke to pieces, and the fish-sauce as thick as a pudding; and then, how cruelly was she disappointed! She comforted herself, at length, with thinking, that had she procured this charming brooch, her father perhaps would never have suffered her to have worn it, as he had, though possessed of the most liberal mind, in regard to religious opinions a most decided aversion to any thing bordering on popery. Alice, however well she put up with the privation of the silver idolatrous brooch, never, after reading "Quentin Durward," gave any other name to an officer's sabre, regulation sword, or dirk, but that of "*The mercy of God* *."

But what a delight of all other delights did she experience in finding Jacqueline was the countess of Croye in disguise! but yet she had rather the

author had made a Scotch lass of her. She turned, as she read on with indefatigable attention, from the horrible description of 'de la Marek; and it being then one in the morning, she extinguished her light, and crept softly to bed, fearing that her father might hear her keeping such late hours. In vain she sought repose; her heavy eyes the next morning, and her complaining of a pain across her chest, convinced her father that she had been fatiguing her mind and body by sitting too close over her favourite study; he therefore hid the volumes of "Quentin Durward," and took her to see a friend, a few miles distant from London.

The lady to whom Mr. Fennel and his daughter made this friendly and unceremonious visit, was an old maiden gentlewoman, who was, nevertheless, kindness, good-nature, and liberality personified. Many years before Mr. Fennel had quitted business, he had
 "cured

cured her of a slow undermining fever, that nearly threatened her existence; his skill and perseverance brought her back to life, when all the faculty had pronounced her case hopeless: she had, since the constant and careful attendance of her medical friend, enjoyed uninterrupted health and spirits; she grew fat in her declining years, robust and hearty; she was ever cheerful and good-humoured, and Alice and Mrs. Howard were always fond of her society: the old lady was only vexed that they did not come to see her often enough, for she herself seldom went out, having a few select friends among her neighbours who greatly enjoyed her society, and by whom she was seldom left to feel the irksomeness of long solitude, through any neglect of theirs.

“ Ah, my worthy friend, Fennel,” said she, “ you are come then at last, to punish yourself by passing a day or two with an old humdrum woman.”

“ You know,” said Fennel, “ that not only myself, but my young daughter, has ever found your company delightful; I am no flatterer; I pay no unmeaning compliments.”

“ I am willing to believe the friend,” replied she, in the most graceful manner, “ that restored me to life and health to that happy and quiet enjoyment of a ‘ green old age,’ which is preferable to all the anxious and romantic pleasures of eighteen. But I had a great mind never to have given you another invitation, you have stayed away so long; only, if I should make such a declaration, this paper would shew, in black and white, against me.”

So saying, she took a note, just written, from her *secretaire*, which contained an invitation for Mr. Fennel and his daughter to meet Mr. and Mrs. Howard, Mr. Butler and his son, and Mrs. Rivers, to celebrate her sixty-fourth birthday,

birthday, which fell out in about a fortnight from that day.

“ I got a frank,” resumed she, “ yesterday, and dispatched my letter to Mrs. Rivers. It is a stupid scene for such a gay lady as she is, to come alone to see an old maid, or I should invite her oftener; where a person has a limited income, it is difficult for the possessor to keep up a genteel appearance; and I feel much for a decayed gentlewoman; but Mrs. Rivers is a very lively woman—she is used to gay life, and I am sure it costs her much to be serious.”

“ She is of a sweet temper,” Alice timidly remarked.

“ Indeed, my dear madam,” said Fœnel, “ she is also a clever sensible woman, and, I am sure, can make herself happy any where. Poor thing! I believe she has been rather disappointed lately: she has been very kindly attending a sick friend, who is going to France without her, and who, though she is

very rich, has not had, I believe, the consideration to make the poor widow the least recompence for all her trouble and fatigue.”

“That is very probable,” said Mrs. Hannah, “when it is a heartless being, like Miss Southgate, that she has been attending. And give me leave to tell you, my good friend, it is one of the most difficult things in the world, to make a present to a gentlewoman, and such Mrs. Rivers certainly is, that may be useful to her, without wounding her feelings—a delicacy, I am sure, that Miss Southgate never knew.”

Here Mrs. Hannah paused; but soon resuming her usual vivacity, she turned the subject, and said—“We shall be a cheerful set, next month, when we are all together; I can make up beds enough for the ladies, and for Howard and his wife; and I know you single men will have no objection to sleep at the Green Man, for there you are always sure of
good

good and well-aired beds. I got a frank to write to Mrs. Rivers by; and now I think you may as well save the Butlers and Howards their postage, as you tell me, to my sorrow, that you must leave me after dinner to-morrow. I know you and Howard see one another every day; and, as to Butler, I fancy one of you could not exist without the other., I really believe you are now as inseparable as when you were two young students, full of all the romantic enthusiasm of early friendship."

Mrs. Hannah Meredith was one of those exceptions to the state of old maidism, as rendered it not only respectable, but almost enviable, from the uncontrolled happiness, she seemed, exclusively, to enjoy, and the pleasure she felt in hearing, of, and in witnessing the prosperous situation of happy wedlock, when two young hearts were bound together, yet closer, by its indissoluble bands. Her sweet and placid countenance, generally
 1 5 embel-

embellished by a lovely smile, bore such fine remains of beauty, as to prove she had once been most irresistibly handsome. Of fortune the most easy, tolerably well accomplished, and fascinating in her manners, it may easily be judged, that when she was young, it must have been her own fault that she never had been married: but she used to laugh, and declare it was not; she said nobody would have her; at least, no man had ever made her a serious offer. We, however, know something in the private history of Mrs. Hannah Meredith, that was known but to a few: she had loved, truly loved—and with that devotedness which a mind, truly delicate and refined, can never feel but towards one object.

However faulty the conduct of this object towards her, he was, nevertheless, in some degree, to be pitied: his love for her was a first love, and equal to her own; but her nature was frank and sincere,

cere, while his adoration of her taught him to deceive. He had been, when just turned of one-and-twenty, sacrificed, by an avaricious father, to a woman old enough to be his mother—but her fortune was immense. Her jealousy and irascible temper rendered it impossible for the young man to live with her, though she was agreeable in her person, and elegant in her manners; and he might have been tolerably *happy*, we were going to say, but the term will not suit; but had she been any way amiable, he might have, at least, experienced with her a few years of calm content. They separated, at length, by mutual agreement, he allowing her a handsome separate maintenance, and she retired to pass the remainder of her days among her relations, in a remote part of Yorkshire.

It was in Northumberland that they had both resided when the inauspicious union had been formed; and the young

man, kept secluded by his father, was little known in London or its vicinity. He lost his father when in his twenty-eighth year, and found himself possessed of almost a princely fortune; he generously doubled his wife's maintenance, who would fain have destroyed the strongly-written articles of separation, but he was freed from her vexatious society, and resolved so to remain. He immediately repaired to London, where he passed himself off for a young widower; and indeed he expected daily to become so; for by the time he entered his thirtieth year, his wife was near seventy, and her age, as well as her infirmities and continual ailments, made him look forward with hope to being soon at liberty. He had been introduced to the beautiful Miss Meredith, while on an excursion to the Lakes, and it was her alone that made him think of calling himself a widower.

Many were the baits laid out to ensnare

snares the rich and handsome Northumbrian: but he was insensible to all their attacks; he loved only Miss Meredith, and his approaching union with her was spoken of as an event likely very soon to take place. Some busy people, however, but friendly, as it proved, to Miss Meredith, warned her of her danger—they had discovered that the gentleman was already married.

In the most cruel agony of mind at this fatal intelligence, she roundly taxed him with it; he strenuously denied the charge, and was about to take a solemn asseveration to the truth of what he uttered.—“Beware,” said she, “of a false oath; you know not what you are about to do. I shall take proper steps to find out whether you are married or no; if you are not, you will not only wish, but aid me to make the investigation. If you are really disengaged, my hand is yours immediately, as my heart has long been; if you have deceived me, I shall

shall despise you for your falsehood and deception, and we never meet again.”

She then wrote to the gentleman who she was informed, conducted all the business of her lover's wife, and received from him such ample and indisputable proofs of the marriage, and of the wife being yet alive, that after writing to him a letter, somewhat severe, but which had its proper effect, she bade him an eternal farewell, commanding him never more to approach her dwelling.

He retired to his paternal estate in Northumberland, where he soon fell into a languishing state of health, which terminated in a rapid consumption; and his old wife survived him some years; such is retributive justice.

The untimely death of her lover, at three-and-thirty years of age, affected Miss Meredith much more than his falsehood; and for several years she was a prey to that lingering and insidious foe, slow, undermining fever, till gradually
restored

restored to her usual charming state of health, by the skill of Mr. Fennel.

Time, with Fortune's and Hygeia's blessings, banished the fatal remembrance of early sorrows; and cheerful hilarity succeeded, in her latter years, to the cares and anxieties of her youth.

We were tempted to give this sketch in the life and character of an old acquaintance and friend of the Fennel family, not only because such characters should not be buried in oblivion, but as it rescues old maidism from the sneers and stigma too frequently cast upon that state, which often, we may be assured, is owing to circumstances, if not the same, at least very nearly resembling those that prevented the marriage of Hannah Meredith with the object of her affections.

Mrs. Hannah Meredith, though she lived alone, was not a great reader; but she was always busily employed in doing much good; and then what she did read

read she made her own. Alice was generally an early riser, and the sun, this morning, gilding the room she slept in at Harlow with its brilliant rays, caused her to leave her pillow at six, thinking it had been later. She had observed, in the parlour where they had supped the evening before, a neat bookcase, with glass doors, through which some well-arranged, handsomely-bound books shewed their backs, gilded and lettered; and she saw also that the key was in the glass door; she therefore, as soon as she was dressed, stole softly down stairs, and having heard the old-fashioned clock in the hall chime only half-past six, fearful of disturbing the good lady of the house, she crept on tiptoe to the library, not doubting but that she should find a novel of sir Walter Scott's. She read the titles of all the books, but not one of his romances, could she find, though there was Marmion, The Lady of the Lake, The Lay of the Last Minstrel, Rokeby,

by, &c. &c. Oh! she had read them all—she knew them almost by heart; it was his *dear* novels (yes, they *are* dear), for she would have them to be *his*, that she alone delighted in; and, Heaven knows, she might have ample delight, for they were wröte, and published, and puffed, and dramatized, quicker than she could read them.

While Alice was thus busily employed at the gilded backs of the books, she heard some one behind her; and turning round, she beield Mrs. Hannah, with her smiling countenance, blooming with health; and did she dress like some old ladies of our acquaintance, perhaps she would not have appeared so young as she did in her neat and simple attire; certain it is, that the rose of nature on her well-turned cheek would have made the rouge pale that these modern antiques spread over their withered faces.

“I congratulate you,” my dear Miss Fennel,” said the good dame, “on your being

being such an early riser. I have almost doubled my long life by the healthful habit, while those older than myself have buried more than the half of theirs in the deathlike state of sleep. After six I find I cannot close my eyes. Cannot you find a book there to amuse you? there are some very excellent *morceaux*, though the collection is but small."

"I was looking," said Alice, "for a novel of Walter Scott's, but I cannot find *one*."

"No, there is not one of them there, if they *are* his; but of that I have my doubts. I hope he did not write them; he is too charming a poet, too excellent a writer, to waste his own time, and other people's money, to pen so many novels, all full of improbabilities, and some not without historical errors. Historical novels and romances are bad things; the man of strong literary powers should abjure them altogether; they are sure to give a false notion of history,

history, that leads the mind astray, and makes the young and undiscerning eagerly search after the marvellous, while they are careless of the truths of history. I have all sir Walter Scott's poems; I think them admirable. Here is Halidon Hill; have you read it?"

"But slightly, madam," said Alice, with a deep blush, fearful that Mrs. Hannah might question her about what she had scarce looked at.

"Slightly will not do," said Mrs. Hannah, "for that work, nor indeed for any of his works; they must be read with profound attention, or not at all. Well, you see I am equipped for a walk; I have not far to go, but it is an indispensable visit, that I pay every morning, after taking one cup of chocolate; I shall be ready for another breakfast at nine, which, I, think, is your good father's usual hour. There, sit down, and read Halidon Hill; and when I come back to breakfast, tell me what you think of it.

it. If you wish for a little new milk, my dear, or any other refreshment, for it is a good while to wait till nine, ring the bell."

Alice gratefully expressed her thanks; but, oh, what a task had she to perform! She had before attempted to read through this work in vain; she could not endure it; and now she must sit down, and study it diligently, in order to be able to tell what she thought of some parts of it.—“So I would,” thought she, “and so I easily could; but if I do not read it through, Mrs. Hannah will find me out, I know, by popping some question unexpectedly upon me, such as, how I like one passage, and how I like another? *Saint Andrew* defend me! she absolutely called this a *transcendant* work!”

Alice Fennei had suffered all the finer qualities of her mind to be absorbed in mere Scotch novel reading; she was endowed by nature with an excellent capacity,

pacity, and a memory the most retentive, with unusual quickness of intellect; but she was young, romantic, enthusiastic, and consequently fond of the inarvellous. She now sat yawning over Halidon Hill, and was ready to drop asleep. She would not take Mrs. Hapaah's opinion of the merit of it; she would judge for herself: and herein she was right; for she was no contemptible judge, especially of poetry; with a nice ear, and lofty ideas—a sweet, though far from a scientific harmonist, how could she feel enraptured at the *plain sailing* like poetry of Halidon Hill? She declared of it, in her own mind, as she had once, in no very refined language, we must confess, when speaking to her sister of *The Lady of the Lake*, that she could make neither *head nor tail* of it, a true cockney girl's expression; and as she was but a girl, we hope our fastidious readers, who are great admirers of the GREAT, WONDER-WORKING UNKNOWN, will forgive

give

give this sacrilegious observation; though we have often been as much puzzled as herself with the different songs introduced in the *Lady of the Lake*, seemingly often without rhyme or reason, and which prompted a wicked wag to write, in derision we suppose, “*The Greyc Catte’s Songe.*”

Alice, as she sat fretting over *Hali-dor Hill*, turned back in vexation to the prefixed advertisement, and there she read that the subject was to be found in Scottish history. Very fortunately for herself, she found written, in a neat small hand—“*Vide Pinkerton’s History of Scotland.*”

She had recourse to the library; she found the work, and, by good luck, there was a paper in the passage she was in search of; she therefore found out what was the story of the drama, and she again set close to the laborious task that *Mrs. Hannah* had assigned her.

The unpoetical language put in the
mouth

mouth of Swinton vexed her; oh, how beneath such a writer as Walter Scott did she find it! When Mrs. Hannah Meredith had styled this a *transcendant* work, she must surely, Alice thought, have felt and judged like a mere block of wood, without one poetical feeling. Gordon did not speak in much better language than Swinton; king Edward had nothing royal given him in the numbers he had to utter; as to Chandos, his blank verse was very little superior, she thought, to that of Whiskerando's, in Puff's tragedy, as follows:—

“ Well! if we must, we must;
And so, the less that's said, the better.”

Chandos is not much superior, when he says,

“ Here lies the giant—*say* his name *you* knight.”

And when informed, he replies,

“ I question'd thee, in sport: I do not need
Thy information, youth,” &c. &c.

Alice

Alice gave a tolerable account to Mrs. Hannah, at the breakfast-table, of what she had been reading; indeed, it was more than' tolerable, when we consider how very little she was interested in the work before her, and how often she had been in danger of falling asleep over its narcotic pages: we really think ourselves, that a perusal of Halidon Hill would succeed, where many a composing draught has been known to fail in its somniferous effects.

“Is not it an excellent work?” asked Mrs. Hannah.

“But,” said Alice, “the poetry is very inharmonious—very common language.”

“Better suited to the times of old, my dear,” said Mrs. Hannah; “at that era our ancestors spoke plain, and to the purpose. In the mouths of hardy warriors, would you have the poet to put the elegant language of a Moore, when he sings of Angels' Loves—of a Campbell,

bell, in the Pleasures of Hope, and of other refined writers? you are all for the romantic; you look not for the solid and intrinsic merit of an author."

"My dear madam," said Alice, though with much modest sweetness, "I hope you will pardon me for opposing my opinion to yours, but good poetry is always allowable, even when describing the manners of ages the most remote. How delightful is that of the Lady of the Lake! she must have lived in a rude age. What enchanting numbers run through the Lay of the Last Minstrel! Every line in Marmion is music."

Mrs. Hannah bestowed on the young enthusiast one of her most benevolent smiles.—"I will say," remarked she to Fennel, as she saw the fond partiality with which he regarded his daughter, "that you have as clever a little lassie of your own as ever Walter Scott drew."

"Oh, madam! you flatter," said Alice;

“but I love to be called lassie; do you not admire the Scotch language?”

“I do not,” replied Mrs. Hannah, “know one word of the real *Scotch language*; but if you mean, as I suppose you do, the manner in which some of the Scotch pronounce English, I must say I do not like it at all; it has, to my ear, as much vulgarity as the coarsest Irish brogue.”

“Yet,” said Alice, “do not you think, madam, that a little accent, both of the Scotch and Irish, extremely interesting?”

“Very much so, my dear, in the natives of those countries; those who have always been accustomed to the first company, and who try all they can to correct their faulty pronunciation; we therefore feel interested, because their endeavour to speak like ourselves flatters our self-love; but an English person trying to imitate them, is a kind of insulting mimicry;” and though such mimicry may proceed from admiration, it only
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makes the imitator laughed at, and justly. I was told, that you were so partial to the *Scotch language*, as you call it, that you actually mingled it in your conversation; I am happy it is not true. I had rather my friends would be guilty of a little exaggeration, to make an old woman laugh, than that you should be guilty of such an absurdity."

This reproof crimsoned the cheek of Alice, and she was silent; her father blushed also, and spake not a word; while Mrs. Hannah, respecting the feelings of the father, and unwilling to hurt those of the child, suddenly, and adroitly, changed the subject.

On the return of Mr. Fennel and his daughter to town, he again laid Quentin Durward in her way. The lectures of Mrs. Hannah Meredith had done her no good; for as she proceeded in this work, she found a great deal too many of the *truths* of history; and they took up so much room, though blended with

the romance, as to render it not at all accordant with her taste. She was not singular in this objection: we really found it so ourselves. Write novels, good fabricators of fiction, or write history, as you please: but let your volumes contain one thing or the other.

Alice, however, dragged through the work to the conclusion, disappointed and vexed at the coarse sketch of some weddings, wherein the author seems to be extremely witty in his own way; but she gave not one smile, whereas she seems to expect the exciting of general laughter at his *sprightly imagination*. She was heartily glad, however, when she closed the volumes at the last page of *Quentin Durward*. Oh! breathe a little, ye Scotch novellists, and let us breathe; you will write better, and we shall be better pleased with, at present, your *too indefatigable* pens; we cannot help calling them so, highly as we respect and admire your extraordinary talents.

CHAPTER X.

A Father's Anxiety.

THOUGH Mr. Butler was, like many other parents, situated in the same way as himself, a father of one only son, and that son accomplished, handsome, and, though gay and fashionable, untainted with any of the glaring vices of the present age—though he felt for such a son a partiality almost bordering on injustice towards the merits of other young men—yet there were some parts of Robert's conduct that gave his father extreme uneasiness; a constant obstinacy in refusing to listen to any kind of advice, a hasty friendship, at least he

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thought

thought it hasty; that his son had formed with a young and expensive libertine, and his refusal to consent to lend an ear to any matrimonial propositions, however advantageous and flattering; all these were sources of great anxiety to his affectionate parent.

Mr. Butler, with constant cheerfulness, of equal spirits, without scarce ever being confined, by indisposition, to his chamber, which happened but very seldom for more than two days, and who never, for a cold or common malady, kept himself shut up at home, deceived the world into a belief of his excellent health—but he could not deceive himself; as, however, he never complained, though his old friend Fennel knew he was rather of a delicate temperament when a young man, and that his spirits then were always beyond his strength, never doubted but that in his maturer and declining age, as is often the case, when people have passed the Rubicon of unhealthy

unhealthy youth, he was in the full enjoyment of the best of all earthly blessings.

Firm in his principles of religious belief as his valued friend Mr. Fennel, like that friend he had never been guilty but of those errors and frailties which he felt a humble and fervent hope would obtain pardon from that great and beneficent Being, whose chief attribute is mercy; and he looked forward to the awful change which we must all undergo, without terror or dismay. His son bound him closely to life; but that firm yet fine cord he would not so much heed the being loosed, if he could but first see him enchained by the silky ones of happy wedlock. He was a great advocate for matrimony, and regarded it as the best security of a virtuous life, when engaged in by a young man of good and honourable principles; but whenever he broached the subject to his son, Robert turned a deaf ear, or scoffed

at his father's haste to deprive him of his darling liberty; while if he chanced to touch upon marriage, after Robert's visits to the painter, a deep blush, a marked agitation, or a smothered sigh, seemed convincing proofs to Mr. Butler, that his son had some object of concealed affection, whom he was fearful of avowing openly. His anxious desire, therefore, of seeing him become the husband of his friend's daughter, daily increased. —“The girl is both rich and handsome,” thought he; “and she is so well brought up, as to household affairs, that though she has taste in dress, and will never discredit my son by her outward appearance, yet, by her good management, she will save his fortune, and be a real treasure to him. Her romantic nonsense, to be sure, just now makes her seem ridiculous; but she is very young, and all that will go off; she never, even now, neglects her duty for her reading; and she is one of the most affectionate of daughters—

daughters—consequently she will prove a kind and tender wife. I wonder if she likes Robert; there is no finding women out; but that is not their fault; they are taught disguise from their very cradles, under the name of modesty. There is some bluntness and sincerity too about the girl; and if one may judge by appearances, she does not like him at all. As to my obstinate boy, he seems absolutely to hate her; he shuns her as much as possible, and will go nowhere if he thinks she will be of the party. She is a fine young creature too; and if he would have gone to the fancy ball the other night with me, I am sure he would have admired her; even her fantastic dress became her; and she danced, if not scientifically, yet with charming spirit, and some grace.”

Mr. Butler was just in this train of thought when his son entered. Never was Robert so cheerful nor so amiable since his father had crossed his scheme

of travelling over the Continent; but Robert had a point to carry, and he came prepared to hear with patience and good humour all the arguments held out by his father in favour of hymeneal happiness.

The old gentleman, full of the subject then nearest his heart, was resolved, at once, to speak his wishes, and know the worst; it being near the hour of dinner, he said—"You dine at home, Bob, I hope?"

"Oh yes, my dear sir; and I will pass the afternoon with you also, if you are not better engaged."

"Do," said Mr. Butler, with affected indifference; "I have some champaign, highly spoken of, just come in, and I waited for your opinion before I would draw a cork of it."

"I shall be happy to give it to you on so exhilarating a subject," said Robert, laughing; as the father thought within himself, as he breathed a faint sigh—

sigh—" I fear that countenance, now so sprightly, will be clouded with seriousness, and perhaps displeasure, when your opinion is asked on, perhaps a less gay, but assuredly a happier subject."

Indeed both father and son required some stimulus; and the champagne, that well-known elevator of the spirits, was as much desired by one as the other; for, as Ovid justly says—" Wine whets the wit."

" If," Butler asked himself, " he has always been so averse to hear only the word matrimony mentioned, how will he be when I propose to him a help-mate who, I am sure, he dislikes?"

Sometimes, as that thought darted across his mind over a good dinner, to which the liveliness and urbanity of his son gave additional relish, he thought—" Why should I destroy his mirth— why damp those charming spirits, and make him, perhaps, hate his home, while I thereby deprive myself of his sensible

and sprightly conversation? Oh, I will let him be at peace with me, and happy in himself! I feel pleasure only when he is pleased; and at this moment, I think I could not deny him any thing."

Robert too, on his part, felt so delighted to see his father in such excellent spirits, that he dreaded the idea of making him angry, and therefore he thought he would not urge the request he had before determined to speak. Yet the open kindness of his father's manner, his cheerfulness and familiarity, made him hope every thing; and before he took a second glass of the super-excellent champagne, and his father was clearing his pipes by two or three hems, to commence the subject he now felt courage and resolution to speak upon, Robert abruptly introduced his, to the displeasure of his father; and proved, after a third glass, by his obstinacy and volubility, that *sometimes*, "When the wine is in, the wit is out." His friend was
not

not well; his friend was sick in a foreign land; would he treat *his* friend, Mr. Feniel, so?

“It is a very different case,” said Mr. Butler, heated, like his son, by the champagne, but not rendered convivial or good-humoured; “it is a very different case, puppy—the friendship of Mr. Feniel and myself was founded on virtue; we were neither libertines nor gamblers.”

“And who, sir,” said Robert, insolently, “is a gambler, or a libertine?”

• “Your friend, sir; and you ought to be ashamed to call such an one friend.”

“Sir, you are my father,” said Robert; “you are licensed to say what you please; if any other man had dared to utter but half as much against Mr. Lovemore, I would have made him bitterly repent it. If the young man has been guilty of some errors, he has the best heart in the world.”

“Can you not defend his love of gaming also?” said Mr. Butler.

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“ In some way I can,” said Robert, “ because he played deep, at the commencement, from the most laudable motives; his good luck at first, though now the goddess of chance most bitterly frowns upon him, has, unhappily, made the love of gaming his ruling passion.”

“ Well,” said Butler, sarcastically, “ I never heard of a *laudable* motive for gaming before.”

“ Will you then, sir, choose to hear me, before you repeat my words, in a manner I should not have expected from one of your usual politeness?”

“ Certainly, my good fellow,” said Butler, “ and we will put *politeness* out of the question, when a *father* remonstrates with a *son* !”

Robert felt the reproof, and bowed his head with filial veneration, as he tenderly pressed the hand his father held out to him.

“ Depend upon it I will hear you,” resumed Butler, “ for I think you never
found

found me unjust." And now a cork bounced from another bottle of the sparkling champaign. Ay! they are small long-necked bottles; and we do not believe they yet had drank more than half a pint apiece; but whatever quantity they *had* drank is no matter—it certainly had done them no good; for its effects were only tetchiness, and a disposition extremely querulous. It is wonderful what an effect the second glass of the second bottle produced, which Mr. Butler raised to his lips, with the toast of Miss Fennel; and Robert burst into a very indecorous laugh, as he drank her health, and the speedy recovery of the poor creature's reason.

"Well, come, but what have you to say concerning the praiseworthy conduct of your friend, in regard to gaming?" asked Mr. Butler.

"Sir, he was distressed for cash; his tailor's bill was enormous; and the poor fellow had a large family of children,
and

and was on the eve of bankruptcy. Lovemore, noble fellow! was resolved to discharge his debt, if any means could be found: he repaired to one of those modern hells, where a set of sharks suffered him to win more than his tailor's bill amounted to: they pressed him to let them take their revenge; Lovemore told them he could stay no longer, but he would devote the next night to them, and forfeit all he had in reversion, if they did not find his conduct honourable. He almost flew to his tailor—discharged his account; returned the next night, and as he played well, he was a match for his adversaries, for fortune again befriended him; he paid all his trifling debts, and resolving to behave in every respect like a gentleman, as he always does, he sold the reversion of some handsome property attached to his estate, (already heavily mortgaged) for half its value, and, after giving a great part of it to succour misery and indigence,

gence, he repaired again to the fatal arena, where so many fall a sacrifice: he lost nearly all he then possessed—betted desperately, sometimes won, sometimes lost, and finished by becoming *minus* two thousand pounds. Debts of honour must be paid; generous friends, who loved him, and who had been obliged by him, lent him money. An uncle died, and left him some thousands; he paid his friends, but he was obliged to quit the country, and that in debt to his different tradespeople: he is now on a sickbed in a foreign land. Oh, sir! suffer me to go and alleviate his pain by my society, and by assisting him as far as I am able.”

“ You have made out a very pretty tale,” said Butler, laughing, “ that would serve to swell the pages of a modern French novel: a young spendthrift going to the gaming-table to defray his tailor’s bill! How did he know he should win? He had better have gone on the road at once,

once, been brought to execution, as he deserved, and been reprieved through the tailor's petition. This would have made quite as pathetic a story as the other."

"Sir," said Robert, "you shock me to hear you thus sporting with the misery of a fellow-creature. I hope, however, as I have been candid enough to tell you the whole of his errors, you will no longer refuse giving your consent to my taking a tour on the Continent, in order to join him at Paris. I may be the means of saving him from the harpies whereby he is surrounded; I may restore him to himself, by arousing him to a proper sense of his own misconduct."

"I hope such would be your motive," said Butler, gravely; "but, as I am truly sorry that you should form such a friendship, so I, by no means, wish it to continue. He is not a fit companion for you: his fortune was once large—
his

his family one of the first in the kingdom; but his actions ignoble: his conduct is that of a hardened libertine, and he is become a gambler almost by profession. How different was the friendship that I formed in early youth! every virtue, every excellent principle that can adorn and dignify the human heart, are concentrated in that of the truly good and sincere Fennel; generous to excess, but never prodigal. It is in your power yet stronger to cement the union between this worthy man and me."

"Sir!" said Robert, with an air of wonder, "I cannot comprehend you."

"You will, I hope, before we part," said Butler.

"My dear father," said Robert, "you speak to me in riddles; "as to any one adding strength to the mutual friendship of Mr. Fennel and yourself, that is impossible; you are already the Achilles and Patroclus of the present day."

"Indeed we are," resumed Butler,
"and

“and we may each say with Achilles, when he mourned over Patroclus—

‘If in the melancholy realms below,
The flames of friends and lovers cease to glow,
Yet mine shall sacred last; mine, undecay’d,
Burn on through death, and animate my shade.’

Yes, my dear Robert, such is our long-tryed and mutual friendship: difference of opinion in some trivial points, of situation in after-life, nothing could ever destroy the sacred bond, founded in our youth on virtue and pure esteem; it has been rivetted closer by years; and you must aid me in rendering it yet *more* firm, for that is a *possibility* in your power to achieve; and such is the mutual wish of Fennel and myself; for we have talked this over more than once; and, now I tell you, if you will accede to our desires, I will not only permit you to visit your sick friend, but I will make you a handsome present, not only to bear your travelling expences,

expences, but also sufficient to administer to his necessities."

"Sir," said Robert, brightening up, "I value your friend, the good Mr. Fennel, almost as much as you can do: tell me, sir, how I can serve you? If it is by money, the half, ay, the whole of the independence my mother left me, shall be given up to him and you."

"Fair and softly," said Butler, as the charms of money shot across his mind, "I wish you knew the value of what you possess, better than you do. Fennel wants nothing of any one: he can give his daughter a portion beyond that of many a rich noble's daughter."

"Heaven knows," interrupted Robert, "she has need of something to get her off! and some sordid fool or other will, no doubt, take her for the sake of her fortune; hate her; as he would the sight of an old rubbishing volume of legendary tales, that he could not understand; and use her worse than a dog."

"Well,

“ Well, sir, I mean this female to be your wife,” said Butler, resolutely.

“ My wife, sir! never—never, on any conditions, will I be brought to marry Miss Fennel!”

“ Why, I am sure,” resumed the father, endeavouring to conciliate the rising anger of his son, “ you cannot deny but what the girl is very handsome.”

“ Ah, sir, in a wife, I look for more than beauty or riches.”

“ Why, what the devil would you have? She is an excellent manager—not graced, to be sure, with those ornamental modern acquirements, which a wife is quite as well without, especially if she is, like Miss Fennel, by no means untaught, or even unaccomplished: she sings prettily, draws well, and if she is not mistress of music, she plays on the piano quite well enough for a gentlewoman; and she is far from a bad dancer. What can you wish for more in a wife?”

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“As to her being an excellent manager, sir,” said Robert, “I am not so particularly fond of these bustling housewives; my fortune is sufficient to dispense with such a homely endowment, even though the woman of my choice should come to me unportioned, except in that dowry I most require—virtue, good sense, and amiability.”

“And, I am sure,” replied Butler, hastily, “that Miss Fennel has no vice—she is of a sweet temper, and is quite sensible enough for any female. But I have found you out; you speak of *the woman of your choice*; yes, yes, sir, there is, I am well convinced, some powerful reason for your refusing the wife I had provided for you—your heart is engaged elsewhere.”

Robert’s face became crimsoned; but he saved himself from being detected, by an equivocation.—“I declare to you, sir,” said he, “I have never yet seen the female who has gained my heart. But why

why should you wish me to contract a marriage which I should detest? *forced* into such an union I will not be; in this respect, which is to mark my future happiness or misery in life, I will be my own master, and choose for myself. Miss Fennel is' my aversion; as to her beauty, I scarce know whether she is handsome or ugly; the volume may be very well bound, but it is too full of old black letter rubbish; I would sooner take an old folio of useful learning to my arms than her, for that I could get rid of as soon as I pleased. I remember once looking at her, and thinking her pretty enough; but I have quite forgot now how she looked; for I turned from her with so much distaste, when she began her wah, wah, linge, that I felt myself in fetters till I could get away from where she was; and, now I tell you, once for all, wheth' f' you pardon me or not, I never will marry Miss Fennel!"

"Then, sir," said Butler, rising, "you
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for ever forfeit my favour; and now, if you do go to join your libertine companion on the Continent, I will never suffer you to come again into my presence."

"Then, sir, you have torn off the visor; and from affecting to be one of the most indulgent fathers, you discover yourself to be at once cruel, arbitrary, and unjust."

"Be it so," said Butler; and ringing the bell—"Bring coffee directly," said he to the servant.

"I wish you good evening, sir," said Robert, and rushed out of the house, flushed with champaign, and ripe for rebellion against his parent.

The strong cup of Turkey coffee dissipated the fumes of the wine, as old Butler sipped it in solitary silence.—"I have been too rash," thought he; "I hope he will not be so. I was wrong to breathe the mandate, even if the idea crossed my mind, of '*never come again*

into my presence?' Oh, how could I support the thought of never more beholding my darling boy!"

He rose from the tea-table, and his foot struck against a paper; it was a letter, crumpled up, and directed to Mr. Robert Butler: it bore on it the Paris post-mark, and being open, Mr. Butler, senior; thought himself fully authorized to read it. The following were the contents of this curious epistle:—

“ DEAR BOB,

“ What the devil are you about? Are you not, at the age of six and twenty, yet out of your leading-strings? You must come to me, or I am a lost man. The deuce is in these French gamesters; they beat us all hollow; and even *rouge-et-noir*, that simple concern, they know how to turn to the complete ruin of such guls as we Englishmen. Oh, Bob, had I but a friend like yourself!

self! such society as yours would make me forswear play, and we would travel over the Continent together, thereby gratifying your excellent taste, while you would fortify me in good principles: for it is chiefly for your virtues I love you, though, I fear, I shall never be able to imitate so bright an example. Women, cards, dress, and public amusements, are my delight; and where shall we find them in greater perfection than in Paris? they assail me with their several fascinations, and I am completely their slave. You well know that drinking had never any charms for me; and the French are the most sober sinners in the world. I know you will hold out a parcel of musty stuff about your duty to the best of fathers, and all that. I lost mine when too young to tell whether I loved him or no; and all my plans, during the whole of my short busy life, have been to cheat my guardians. Now, as you have always expressed

pressed yourself averse to give a moment's pain to your old dad, I beseech you, by that friendship you have long professed for so worthless a rascal as myself, that you will, for my sake, (and, who knows, perhaps it may be for my soul's sake) condescend for once to deceive old Squaretoes, and tell him a good round lie, so that I may be enabled to put our new scheme into execution, while I *have* three or four hundred left, out of the thousands poor nunky bequeathed me. Tell the old boy, your father, that I am languishing or a sick-bed, and at the point of death: only once get here, no matter how, and then you can write home, that I am so ill the air of Italy is recommended to me, and that you cannot leave me, in such an enfeebled state, to travel alone; then, my boy, hie! we are off; and jovial travellers we will be. Give me credit now for this scheme, and aid it all in your power. In about a year and a half I shall

shall be master of my estate, which, Heaven knows, I have rendered in a fine shattered condition. Deuce take the old hunks, my father, for not making me of age till twenty-five! because he remarks in his will, I shall then certainly have attained the 'years of' discretion. What do you think of me, Bob? I must be d—n—ly altered, if I become ~~direct~~ in so short a time. But come along, give the old one the go-by, if he does not choose to let you come to me, after your pitiable tale about my health, which never was better; and lets you and I, if he believes you, laugh in our sleeves to think how nicely we've done him. Now, Bob, I expect no scruples of conscience; by my honour, you are doing an action, the most meritorious! for if any thing can save me, and make me a worthy man, it is you: God bless you, my dear future Mentor!

“Yours, &c”

“GEORGE LOVEMORE.”

“And you, my son,” thought Butler, as tears involuntarily filled his eyes, “you have consented thus to deceive your father, who has been your friend and companion, and never denied you in his whole life, one request that was reasonable. Oh, Robert, because I would snatch you from the fatal vortex into which improper connexions will, soon or later, plunge the unsuspecting—unwary, you can offend your Maker by a falsehood, brave a parent’s anger, and forfeit for ever, on conviction of your duplicity, his good opinion! How painful to the feelings of a fond father is the proof that a son, whom he always thought sincere and candid, almost to a fault, should aid the deceptions of a wicked profligate, and tell a lie, with an unblushing countenance, to him to whom his heart ought at all times to be most open!”

Full of these anxious reflections, Butler sought, in vain, repose: he desired the

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the father sent his son to sit up for him ; and he felt a gleam of hope that Robert would not quit his home, in the impulse of emotion, as he never travelled without his faithful valet.

CHAPTER XI.

*George Lovemore, Esq.*

GEORGE Lovemore, the friend of Robert Butler, was the son of a gentleman of very libertine and depraved conduct, and amongst his vices, in his latter years, drunkenness stood pre-eminent; to which stupifying vice, having thereby almost lost the use of his limbs, he fell a martyr, at the time that his only son had attained his ninth year.

The mother of the present George Lovemore was a beauty—a woman of good family, but small fortune: her manners were most attractive; her wit poignant, and she seemed to unite all
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the advantages of "variety in one;" but she was cold-hearted, and a miser. She, however, was the best wife in the world for old Lovemore, who was of a very expensive turn, where only self-gratification was concerned; for he gave nothing away, though he squandered much on his pleasures. This hideous fault of covetousness she encouraged; but she improved his estate; and, after her husband's death, judiciously selected for her son one of the best of tutors, in the person of a liberal-minded and truly pious clergyman. He it was who instilled into the heart of his pupil those good principles, and virtuous feelings which, in spite of the disadvantages of his birth, in having such parents, often burst forth amidst his wildest excesses, and gained him the unshaken friendship of the excellent-minded Robert Butler.

Unfortunately Mrs. Lovemore, who had always kept the young heir very scanty in funds, died before he had attained

tained the age of twenty-one. At her instigation, the father had made a will, signifying that his son should not be put in possession of the family estate till he had attained the *discreet* age of twenty-five. Alas! his father was very *indiscreet* at that age. At twenty-one, however, many restrictions on George Love-more's majority were taken off, and he had, by the advice of his prudent mother, who was, generally, his besotted father's oracle, two excellent guardians appointed to watch over him—men of tried integrity, as were the trustees, who carefully attended to the concerns of a fine estate, that, however, the heir found means to load with mortgages, while he sold all the reversions he could—for there are always unprincipled men to be found ready to oblige a young heir of good expectations, to lend him money at exorbitant interest, and to buy up reversions for a mere song.

The most serious and important loss
that

that young Lovemore sustained, indeed much greater than that of either of his parents was that of his reverend Mentor just as the stripling entered his seventeenth year. He was then judged too old to have another governor; and Mrs. Lovemore thought, too, it was an expence that might well be spared. He was about twenty when he saw his mother's anxious cares put a stop to, by the hand of death. She had loved him, as much as a heart so much warmed by any of the social affections, could love. Her marriage with his father had been one of interest solely: she let him have as much wine and brandy as he chose to drink, happy when he had discontinued to give her the most glaring proofs of his infidelity, and not sorry, when she found herself a rich widow, with a handsome jointure, over and above, immense sums she had saved and hoarded, and which she had destined to her poor relations.

George was inclined to love his pretty mother; but she kept him so bare, and so restrained him in his little requisite expences, that he took a rooted hatred against stinginess; and, with all the ardour of youth, and a disposition naturally generous, he rushed into the contrary extreme, and became a confirmed spendthrift. His mother's name was hated through the village; she gave away, as we recorded above, nothing.

Resolving to act directly opposite to his parents, George gave indiscriminately to all; he found his father and mother were disliked—he endeavoured all he could to be loved. The pleasure of seeing his generosity appreciated, the sweet sounds from the blessings of the poor, that followed him, wherever he went, the consciousness that he deserved their praises, were, at first, sufficient rewards, and encouraged him in the continuance of the glorious task he had set himself to perform. At length, he found

vanity making such bold inroads into his mind, that he felt ashamed of himself, as he was one day perusing a letter from his deceased tutor, in which one passage struck him forcibly—"Never do good for the sake of man's applause; let your acts of beneficence be for the approbation of your own heart: seek out humble and modest poverty, and heed not the praise of the multitude, who will forget all your former benefits, when their own misconduct may render it prudent for you to withdraw your bounty. Never be in large arrears with the tradesman who has a numerous family; for the time that may elapse before you can defray your debt, may, perhaps, reduce him and that family to the verge of beggary."

Lovemore pressed the letter to his lips, and dropped a tear over it; it was like a farewell warning; the good clergyman had written it when he was obliged, from severe indisposition, to seek

seek change of air, and his pupil never beheld him more.

George now penetrated into the dwellings of concealed misery, and he soon began to do good for its own sake alone. he felt the applause of his own heart; the drunken and the idle, from whom only he withdrew his former bounty, till they should reform their ways, failed not to say he was a chip of the old block, and nothing else could be expected from the son of a selfish profligate and an avaricious mother. He had suffered so much himself from the brutality of drunkenness, when he was a little boy, at which time his father, when in a state of senseless intoxication, would pull his hair, pinch, kick, and otherwise maltreat him, that young George took a rooted aversion to the degrading vice. To this conduct in his father, or to the avarice of his mother, however, the young man never reverted, even to his dearest friend; and though he felt no particular

particular reverence for the ties of parentage, yet he held their ashes sacred, and spared their memory.

But it is not to be expected that the seion from such a stock should be perfect: George owed all his good qualities to his excellent tutor, and much also to the constant contemplation of vice under its hideous form, which gave him distaste and hatred towards it; but more perhaps because he was a sufferer from those vices, which served to render them still more odious in his eyes.

There are, however, other vices that wear a more engaging aspect. Love more could easily avoid those monsters, Avarice and Drunkenness; they therefore could find no place in his bosom; but when his mourning for his mother was over, he became the victim to all the attacks of prodigality: in her most seductive forms, meretricious beauty spread her snares to entice; public amusements presented not only a scene
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to inflame the passions, but rivalled all the enchantments he had read of in Fairyland; and his warm temperament and love of pleasure, rendered him one of the most notorious of libertines in the world of fashion.

It was among the haunts of her votaries that Robert Butler first became acquainted with him. Robert was charmed with his good breeding, his general information, constant cheerfulness, and always gentleman-like conduct, when in elegant society; but Lovemore, among his fellow-rakes, could break windows, knock down watchmen, and conclude many of his evenings at the finishing houses. Amongst all this dissipation, however, a thousand instances of goodness of heart, of unbounded beneficence, would burst forth. Robert and he were impelled towards each other, by much similarity of disposition in this respect; but then Robert, though gay and lively, was always correct; he often checked
the

the exuberant sallies of his new acquaintance, and often admonished, while he could not forbear sometimes laughing at his follies. Never could Lovemore be offended with any thing Butler said; and this accidental acquaintance was soon ripened into the firmest friendship.

We gave a brief account in our last chapter, of the embarrassments of George Lovemore, which sent him on the Continent, and the first cause of his first frequenting the gaming-table, till he imbibed a fatal love of play. His father's younger brother had acquired a small fortune in India, and, dying a bachelor, he bequeathed it to his nephew. George had found all his summer friends forsake him in the hour of adversity, except Robert Butler; they now came around him like sharks; but he gave them, as he called it, the slip, and told no one but Robert where he was going. One old faithful servant, who had grown grey in his father's establishment, was the

the constant companion of his fortunes, and swore never to leave him, living or dying.

Timothy Rawlins was one of those rare beings often to be met with, unlearned, simple, and credulous, but possessed of a heart of the most sterling value; he had loved the young heir, whom he had seen born, from his earliest infancy—almost wept for the privations he often saw him endure, and could not help wishing for his emancipation. He judged better of his young master than he deserved; but yet he remained faithfully attached to him; though, simple and educated in the country, he could never have believed there had been such scenes in the whole world as those to which his master led him in this metropolis; and he was on his knees, every morning and night, in fervent prayers for poor Mr. Lovemore's reformation, who, though in another guess way, he would

would often say to himself, was as wicked as his own master.

“ I shall want a French servant,” said Lovemore to him, as he put an hundred pound note into his hand—“ so, God bless you, old boy! I am sorry to part with you; but you are too old to accompany me in my travels.”

“ Please, sir, to take back your bit of paper,” said Timothy; “ I want nothing of you; I have twelve pounds a-year of my own to live on, and I want nothing more; suffer me only to live with you, and do for you, and be all the sarvice I can to you, as long as *I* live.”

“ Timothy,” said Lovemore, “ I am almost as poor as yourself.”

“ Ah, but that will all be put to rights in a year-and-a-half, or the like o’ that’n.”

“ You mistake, Tim; my estate will be scarce worth a rush to me, I have so loaded it with mortgages; and whatsoever *I* could, I have sold the reversions of. Where the devil, then, am I to get money

money to buy off these heavy demands?"

"Why, to be sure, not at the cursed gaming-table, sir, begging your pardon, with which you are so *fateeated*."

"Well," said Lovemore, with a shrug of affected indifference, "so it is, Tim; and I must look to the *board of green cloth* to save me from poverty."

"I am main sorry," said Timothy, not comprehending the wit of his master, "to hear George Lovemore, esquire, of Lovemore Hall, make mention o' the word poverty; but you know best what the board o' green cloth can do for you; you shouldn't then, sir, I think, if I might be so bold as to advise, leave Lunnon till you know; for that board sits, doesn't it, sir, at Spring-gardens, or there away?"

Lovemore burst into a hearty laugh at honest Timothy's simplicity.—"Why, Tim, my old lad," said he, "the board
of

of green cloth that I mean, is that whereon we play at cards and dice."

"God forgive you, sir, for jesting on such a place of destruction! that is the way to bring any one to poverty, instead of keeping un from it. However, sir, that makes no odds to me. Oh, sir! I would work for you, while I *has* arms and strength left; and I'll take upon me to say, that, through my *egsurtions* you sha'l never want."

"Oh, I hope," said Lovemore, "honest Tim, that we shall never be reduced to that."

"Ah, sir, forgive me," said Timothy, "but if you will go on to nail yourself every night to that cursed gaming-table——"

"You are impertinent, sir!" said Lovemore; "I shall do what I please; so begone, and let me know what is owing to you for wages."

"Nothing, sir," said the faithful servant;

vant; “you owe me nothing but your love.”

Lovemore was affected.—“Timothy,” said he, “you know well that I regard you, for your constant fidelity towards me; but my income is now very limited, and I cannot afford to keep two men-servants; I must have a French valet.”

“Ah, sir, and so you would turn me away for a French *parly woo*, that mayhap will rob and cheat you? while I—Oh, sir! let me follow you through the world! I never will be any expence to you.”

“Pack up my clothes,” said Lovemore, wiping the back of his hand across his eyes, “and let us be off as soon as we can.”

“I may go with you then?”

“Oh, yes, yes—I will not part with you; be as quick as you can.”

END OF VOL. II.

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