



ROXBEL

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“LITTLE HENRY AND HIS BEARER,” &c. &c.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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ROXOBEL.

CHAPTER I.

THE LITTLE MAN OF ROXOBEL BECAME A
VERY BUSY PERSONAGE.

IS it possible that I should have allowed so many weeks to pass, without making any addition to my journal? But I am become so strangely busy, I have so many affairs in hand, that I have lately found no leisure for writing. The little man is become quite a person of consequence. I pray that he may not get self-sufficient, and fancy that he can do better than all the world besides.

Let me enumerate my avocations. And

first, the doctor is not satisfied unless I see him every day. Poor man! he lies on his couch in a very helpless state. His spirits seem, as it were, benumbed, and he appears to be unable to rouse himself, though his heart is still warm. I find that he has drawn up a map of the parish; and, in this map, he has inserted a little sketch of every house and cottage, large or small, which is to be found within its boundaries. He has also a list of the members of every family, to which list is appended a concise history of each individual. While reclining on his couch, he spends much of his time in the perusal of the book which contains these biographical sketches; and, when I make my daily visit, he generally commissions me to call on one or another of his humble parishioners, for the purpose of conveying to them some pastoral message of exhortation or comfort. I am often deeply affected by the emotions which he betrays at the recollection of his past intercourse with the people under his charge. Turning over his book, and pointing to some well-known place on the map, he sometimes sighs

deeply, as if he lamented that decay of strength and activity which prevents him from feeding his flock in person. He places great reliance, however, upon me, and feels deeply interested in my reports. And, although he gives me a great deal to do, insomuch that I am sometimes rather fatigued in performing his errands, I think I would rather expire than allow a complaint to escape my lips. Yet I am not left to labour alone; for I have two lovely auxiliaries, Sophia and Lucy, who are continually exerting themselves to assist me. I am also further encouraged by the delight which I take in the work, though I am sometimes oppressed by a painful sense of my incapacity for the important undertaking.

Besides these visits into various parts of the parish, I have had much to do at Torville, in endeavouring to arrange the widow's affairs. I have had the house repaired, whitewashed, and painted; and, having had the old furniture cleaned and mended, I find that things really look better than could have been expected.

The poor woman has an income sufficiently ample to support her comfortably and respectably, and I trust that her estate will very much improve under proper management. She has not yet quitted her chamber; but I hope she will be able to do so in the spring; for her health is amending rapidly. She occupies herself in sitting by her fire, reading and working, with little Snow by her side. She is excessively fond of Sophia, who visits her frequently, and reads to her. Her gratitude to Snow, to Sophia, and to me, is without bounds: yet I trust that the poor woman is enabled to give the glory to Him to whom alone it is due.

I almost envy the new, delightful, and happy feelings, of this poor woman; for she has even a childlike relish for all those comforts of which she has so long been deprived. She speaks of herself as having been a very hard and sordid character during her former life; but she solemnly assures me that she knows nothing whatever of the fate of James Torville: and I

indulge the belief that she is guiltless as it relates to him.

The Rawsons are committed for trial: but I hardly know what can be proved against them. I should be glad to hear of their transportation.

Ellen has occupied much of my attention since the death of her mother. Her step-father married again within six weeks of her mother's decease; and it may be expected that his second wife will requite him for his ill behaviour towards his first. Ellen will not leave the house, however, on account of little Henry, whose pale face and delicate figure but too plainly indicate that her cares for him will be of short duration. Indeed, I cannot wonder at her affection for this sweet babe, for I fancy that I can already read in his gentle eye the character of regenerating grace. Let not the haughty worldling scoff at this expression: for if he be not altogether an infidel, if he do not entirely reject the authority of the Scriptures, he will know that these little ones have assisted and shall assist in augmenting that multitude of the

redeemed whose number shall eventually be as the stars of heaven and the sands of the sea.

The devotedness of affection which Ellen evidently feels towards little Henry renders the young girl very precious in my sight. Her feelings of tenderness for the child seem to absorb all her other emotions; and I believe that she would reject a princely diadem, even if tendered to her by the man she loves best, if the desertion of her baby must be the condition of its bestowment. The attachment of Robert Taylor to this lovely young woman is very evident. He scarcely ever sees me without contriving by some means or other to bring the conversation round to Ellen. Yet he has never explicitly stated his intentions respecting her; though I feel assured that his regard is of the most respectful kind.

Black Tom has looked rather shy upon me since our last conversation. Whether he then confessed more than he afterwards thought it quite prudent to do, or whether some other considerations have arisen to render him distrustful of me, I know not;

but our confidence certainly has not increased. I have not, however, lost all hopes of him: for when I have once conceived a favourable opinion, I do not easily lose it.

I make a rule of spending some time every morning in the library at the Hall, with my dear Lucy. She is not in high spirits. How should she be? But she is calm and composed.

I have questioned her respecting the movements of her relations, but I cannot exactly understand what the good folks are about. It seems likely that Mrs. Winifred is lying in wait, as it were, for the death of her sister, intending to defer the completion of her purposes till that event takes place. This supposition seems to be strengthened by the consideration that it is possible, though not very probable, that Mrs. Grizzy may recover her intellects, and be able to alter her will: in which case, Mrs. Winifred would, no doubt, consider it quite as well that she should not be made acquainted with any outrageous folly on the part of her elder

sister. I therefore consider that Lucy is in some degree safe, as long as Mrs. Grizzy lives. But I have little doubt in my own mind, that, so soon as the fate of Mrs. Grizzy's estate is decided by her death, Mrs. Winifred will declare David Nuttall her heir, and take measures to compel Lucy to marry him. By so doing, if Mrs. Grizzy's will should eventually turn out in her sister's favour, she would once more re-unite the great Helmsley estate in the person of her beloved Taffy. But how comes this Taffy to be so much beloved? Let the wise ones answer this question; for it is far beyond my penetration. And yet it is wholly impossible for me to account for all the manœuvres of Mrs. Winifred, but on the supposition that she means to make Taffy her heir, and Lucy his wife.

As I remarked before, however, there is now a cessation of action at the Hall—a dead calm, which I consider as the forerunner of a storm; and that storm I shall expect to witness as soon as Mrs. Grizzy dies, an event which cannot be far distant.

Mr. David Nuttall, in the mean time, is

established in all the rights of a son of the family; and he makes the old servants run at his bidding, saluting such as dispute his commands with oaths and imprecations, which even the presence of Mrs. Winifred does not always restrain. I wondered, at one time, why some of these veterans, whose purses no doubt are well lined, did not take their departure: but the same cause which keeps Mrs. Winifred within bounds has its influence, most likely, upon them. They, no doubt, anticipate that Mrs. Grizzy's dissolution is approaching, and are detained in their places by the expectation that they shall find some such remembrance in her will, as a suit of mourning and five or ten guineas apiece to all of them.

Thus the presence of this dying lady, like that of a spirit returned from the dead, keeps all parties quiet: though, as I before said, I am well assured that this serenity of affairs is of the same changeful nature as that dead and deceitful calm which precedes an earthquake.

In the mean time, we hear nothing of

Theodore; and little of Eugenius, excepting that he only awaits the breaking up of the frost in order that he may proceed to the northern court to which I have before referred.

Miss Fisher is still at the Hall. I cannot conceive why she remains there, as she must have long given up all thoughts of Eugenius. I was, however, somewhat struck with a conversation which passed yesterday morning in the library, where she honoured us by a visit.

Miss Lovel and I were busily engaged, when she came in and asked if there were not such a thing as a backgammon-board in the bookcases.

After some searching, we discovered one; and Lucy asked her cousin whom she could find to play with her.

She laughed, and replied, "Shall I teach you, Lucy?"

"It will depend on what time I can find," answered Miss Lovel.

"O, as to time," replied Miss Fisher, "I know that you have very little time to give to your relations. I therefore do not ex-

pect to have you as a pupil: but I am going to teach Mr. Nuttall."

"Mr. Nuttall!" exclaimed Lucy, and stopped short.

"And why not, Miss Lovel?" replied Miss Caroline. "Though you treat Mr. Nuttall with so much contempt, I think him a very fine, spirited young man: and though his birth is certainly inferior, yet, as the adopted son of Mrs. Winifred, he is entitled to respect."

Lucy reddened; and she was about to speak, as I feared, unadvisedly, when I gave her a look, and, answering for her, said, that no one despised Mr. Nuttall on account of his birth; and that Miss Lovel was, undoubtedly, too well taught, to see any distinction between human beings but that which is made by manners and education.

"And what objection can you have to Mr. Nuttall's manners, Mr. Airley?" asked the young lady, fixing her large eyes upon me.

"I have made none, Miss Fisher," I replied.

“Nevertheless, I know you do not approve of Mr. Nuttall’s manners,” retorted the young lady.

I bowed.

“Now tell me, Mr. Airley, do you like Mr. Nuttall?” she said.

Miss Fisher is one of those few individuals of the fair sex, calling themselves ladies, to whom I find it very difficult to be civil. The very sight of her puts the little man out of temper; and it was hardly surprising, therefore, that I felt my choler rise at being thus catechised. “Pshaw, Miss Fisher!” I exclaimed. And then, feeling ashamed of myself, I began to cut my pencil, blushed, hesitated, and added, “Don’t fancy me an enemy of the young man: in truth, I love him so well, that when he does wrong it vexes me to the heart. Don’t think me a narrow-minded, illiberal man, who hates every one who is not within the circle of his own particular coterie.”

“Now I have made you angry, Mr. Airley,” observed Miss Caroline.

“Yes, Madam, you have,” I replied, “because you have suspected me of illibe-

rality. I tell you, that if David Nuttall would now come to me, and ask my advice as a friend, he should have the very best I could give him; and I will answer for Miss Lovel that there is not the least rancour in her heart against the young man."

Lucy instantly confirmed my assertion: and Miss Fisher was so confused, that she was glad, as soon as possible, to make her escape from our presence.

As soon as she had shut the door upon us, Lucy said, "Suppose it should all end in a marriage between Taffy and Miss Fisher?"

I could not refrain from smiling at the idea; but I entreated Miss Lucy to be very guarded in expressing her suppositions, as it seemed to be of some importance that she should keep herself quiet.

"But it is so hard, so very hard," she answered, "for a creature like myself to keep herself quiet, and never to speak unadvisedly, my dear Mr. Airley."

"I know it is hard, Miss Lucy," I rejoined, "not only for young giddy creatures, like you, but for older creatures, like me. He,

indeed, is a perfect man who can bridle his own tongue. But let us remember, that *out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh*; and that if our hearts are kept in all holiness and charity by the power of Him who searcheth and trieth them, we shall then be less liable to speak unadvisedly."

Thus terminated our conversation respecting Miss Fisher.

Mr. Jeffry Griffith tells me, however, that Mrs. Winifred does not encourage the intimacy which is growing between Miss Fisher and Taffy;—(for there certainly is an increasing intimacy in that quarter;—)and he says that he was present, one afternoon, when Mrs. Winifred told David Nuttall that Miss Fisher was not a proper wife for him.

"And what," I asked, "was the young man's answer?"

"A saucy one enough," replied Mr. Griffith. "He told Mrs. Helmsley that he did not want her for his wife; he did not like raddled cheeks; and never would have any thing to do with them."

“Did Mrs. Winifred reprove him for this?” I enquired.

“No,” answered the steward; “he is much too precious in her eyes to be supposed capable of doing wrong.”

“Well but, Mr. Griffith,” I said, “how do you account for this strange attachment on the part of the old lady?”

“Mr. Airley,” he replied, “if you wish me to account for all the whims of Mrs. Winifred, you will give me a task which I shall not have finished by doomsday. But time will shew all, Mr. Airley,” he added, with a knowing wink. “Time will shew all: and the less you and I now say on the subject the better. Yet I have my thoughts, and I dare say that you have yours; but *tace*, as they say is Latin for a candle. Yet I am sorry for poor Master Eugenius.”

Since the foregoing was written, Mrs. Grizzy has had a second paralytic stroke. A third, it is generally supposed, will surely take her off; though Mr. Barnaby Semple says that this is a vulgar prejudice.

But I am growing dull. We have had a

long frost, and my spirits are frost-bound. Will the spring restore them? I almost fear that it will not have that power. There is something so chilling in anxiety, that even the zephyrs of May, and the breath of violets, have little efficacy in warming that heart which is held in its invisible chains.

But I must hasten to conclude my chapter, lest I should trespass on the patience of my reader. And yet I cannot terminate it without paying a tribute, humble and poor as it may be, to that glorious revelation of divine mercy which, when duly received through faith, sets the soul entirely free from anxious doubts respecting its everlasting welfare. When this inestimable boon is granted, why should we be unwilling to bear the little burdens of anxiety which are laid upon us in our passage through this varying but transitory scene?

CHAPTER II.

ELLEN AND HENRY.

May, 1756.

THE spring is come with all her perfumes; and yet I am still sad. We hear nothing from our Theodore; and Eugenius is now probably with his friend in the north.

One pleasing circumstance, however, has occurred since I wrote my former memorandums. Young Taylor has obtained permission from his parents to pay his addresses in due form to the black-eyed damsel of the Rock; and he has received from the lovely young creature herself as much encouragement as a modest and saddened heart could give him. But Ellen at present has little affection to bestow on any one but Hen-

ry, and I cannot blame her for this; nay, I love her the more for it: and I have told Robert Taylor, that if he does not feel a warmer attachment towards her, on account of her devotedness to her helpless little brother, he is not worthy of her. But men, till they have children of their own, can seldom sympathize in that sort of enthusiasm which right-minded women commonly feel for infants.

I have often, in my own mind, ranged the female sex under three degrees of comparison. The first comprehends those who dislike children altogether, and cannot bear to be plagued with them: these women I almost hate. Those of the second degree love their own children, and are good mothers to them: to these I owe no thanks. But the ladies of the third and highest degree are such as indulge an affectionate fondness for children in general, and cheerfully devote their best services for the benefit of all within their influence. If ever I choose a wife, I shall certainly take care to ascertain that she belongs to this last class. I will have none of the other two. I love

Lucy, Sophia, and Ellen, because they are precisely the women who love best any thing which is defenceless, poor, helpless, and miserable. And I love Mrs. Strickland and Mrs. Tristram for the same reasons. And poor Mrs. Goodwill was another of this description. I shall never forget how she waited upon me when my arm was broken. But her family shall be the better for it, I promise her.

This morning, which is May-day morning, I met Mr. Barnaby Semple in the street, and he said to me, "That little baby at the Rock will not hold out long, Mr. Airley; and I fear that his sister will suffer severely from her attentions to him, for she looks excessively pale and thin. The child moans, she says, if she leaves him but for an instant: and I have discovered that for several weeks past she has sat up in bed nearly all night holding him in her arms. Such exertions at her age, before she has completed her growth, may be the death of her.

In consequence of this information, I hastened to the Rock immediately after

dinner. I arrived there about four in the afternoon, and went to the house of John Grosvenor; but finding nobody at home, and the door locked, I enquired of a neighbour where I might expect to meet with Ellen. He told me that she had walked out with the baby about half an hour before, and he pointed out the direction in which she had gone. I accordingly commenced a pursuit of them: and I found that their path led me to that side of the Rock which is most remote from Roxobel, and towards a point which I had never before visited. The way lay along a little path cut in the living stone, or rather formed in a natural fissure in the rock; and when I had pursued it awhile, it brought me out upon a sort of ledge, where, at about the distance of ten feet beneath me, I beheld a lovely little valley, covered with a short green turf, and encompassed with low shrubs and tufted trees, forming verdant bowers and vegetable verandahs, festooned with eglantine and wild honeysuckle. Near the ledge of the rock on which I stood, was a little stream dripping

silently from the mossy stone, and falling into a natural basin. At a little distance from this basin was a small fragment of stone, on which I saw Ellen seated; and, though I was within a few yards of her, I was so concealed by the surrounding bushes, that she was not aware of my approach.

The dress and person of this fair creature, though clean, exhibited that kind of disordered air which proceeds from watching and fatigue. She wore no hat; and her dark ringlets had escaped from beneath her cap, which had been thrown more towards the back of her head than she usually wore it. The light kerchief which was upon her neck, as well as her apron, was rumped. She looked thinner than usual, and her cheeks were flushed. On her lap lay her little brother, now about a year and a half old, looking taller than children of that age generally appear, in consequence of the attenuation which had been caused by disease. I could not see the face of the infant, for Ellen, having one arm round him, held his head

against her bosom. She was looking down upon him when I first approached; and there was a sadness in her aspect which might have moved a heart of stone. Immediately opposite to Ellen, and leaning against a tree, stood a person whom I little expected to see there. It was Robert Taylor, wearing a short russet jacket, and a hat in which he had twisted a branch of green ivy. The youth looked disconcerted; but he seemed to strive to conceal his feelings under an air of carelessness.

At this stage of my history, it will not be questioned whether the little man of Roxobel has or has not his due share of curiosity; and if on the present occasion he gave way to this propensity, standing very quietly on the spot from which he had first descried his young acquaintances, I hope that no very bad motive will be imputed to him on that account. But, whatever may be thought of it, the truth must be spoken; and it is certainly a fact that I did stand still and listen to the discourse which I am about to relate.

“And so, Ellen,” said Robert, “you are resolved not to be persuaded?”

“No,” replied Ellen, “I shall never love you again, and that is the truth. So you had best go home, and seek out some one who has a whole heart to give you; for mine is wounded, and you can’t heal it.” And she wiped away a tear with the corner of her apron.

“But I have not wounded your heart, Ellen?” said Robert, advancing a step.

“I did not say you had,” she answered, more angrily, I thought, than tenderly. “It was never in your power to wound my heart: so you had best be going home, for you only lose your time coming here after me.”

“Now, Ellen, now, don’t be cruel,” rejoined the young man.

“Cruel!” repeated Ellen, putting up her lip. “If I was cruel, I should be the fitter for you: but I am not cruel, and therefore you and I shall never agree.”

“Nay, Ellen, nay,” said the young man.

At that instant, the baby moved, looking up, and struggling feebly, as if in pain.

It cried, "Mam! mam!" adding some other half-articulated word.

"My baby! my love! my Henry!" exclaimed Ellen, clasping him to her heart; "my Henry! does any thing pain my Henry?"

The child repeated his lamentations, and entwined his arms around his lovely sister's neck.

"Henry dear! brother dear! does aught pain you, my baby?" cried Ellen. "O that your Ellen could take the pain from you, my Henry! my sweet one! O, my God, give my Henry comfort!" And, putting her arms round him as he hung on her shoulder, she began to sing some rural lullaby, breaking off at intervals for the purpose of changing the posture of the infant in order to give him ease.

"Give him to me, Ellen," said Robert, approaching with timid steps; "mayhap I could soothe and comfort him. Will you come to me, little lad?" These last words were added in the tenderest accents, but were apparently unnoticed by Ellen.

"And cannot your Ellen ease your pains,

my sweet one?" continued the young girl. "Ah, that I could die for you, my baby! my lovely one!"

The child struggled for a little while, and then sinking on his sister's lap, as if the pain had left him, though in an exhausted condition, he murmured some word which Ellen seemed to understand, though I did not. On this, she took up a little cup which stood on the seat beside her, and rising, and supporting the infant with one arm, she dipped the cup in the fountain, and gave him to drink. He swallowed the water with that eagerness which every one must have observed in sick and dying persons, and then Ellen, setting down the cup, took several turns in the shade of the Rock, still holding the baby in her arms, while Robert retreated to his tree, looking half angrily and half sadly at her.

Ellen had once been remarkable for the neatness of her dress; but her lovely figure, at this time, displayed the effects of fatigue and utter carelessness as to herself. She was clean, indeed, for she never ap-

pears otherwise; but her gown was torn, her kerchief and apron disordered, and her hair, as I before said, had burst from beneath her cap, falling in rich dark ringlets over her neck. Her cheeks were flushed with fever, the consequence of fatigue, and I observed that one or two tears escaped from her eyes, as she walked slowly backwards and forwards, rocking the baby in her arms, and singing Dr. Watts's cradle-hymn, in a low sweet tone, varying the words of the original to suit the situation of her baby. The soft moanings of the little sufferer for a while mingled themselves with her song. But anon these expressions of pain were hushed, and Ellen, ceasing to sing, sat down again on the fragment of rock, her face exhibiting unequivocal symptoms of extreme weariness. She gently dropped the baby from her arm to her lap, and, looking wistfully upon him, the tears, which but just before had escaped in single drops from her eyes, now streamed rapidly down her cheeks, and she took her handkerchief to wipe them away. At this instant, Ro-

bert, again advancing, said, "Now, Ellen dear, why do you weep?"

"Why should I not weep?" she asked. "What have I to do with aught but sorrow in this world?"

"We may yet be happy, Ellen," rejoined Robert, "if you would but forget what I said in my passion."

"I can't forget it," replied Ellen, with a deep sigh. "You would not have said it, if you had not thought it; and I cannot love you again, Robert, though I wish you well. But my heart was ready to break before; and when you said those words it did break: and there is nothing now for me to do but to lie down by poor Henry in his grave; and then we shall both be at peace."

"Nay but, Ellen dear!" exclaimed the young man, coming still nearer to her.

"I can't love you now," replied Ellen, shrinking from him as far as she could do without disturbing the baby; "so it don't signify. I tell you I have no heart to give you. There are many older in years than myself, who have not drunk so deeply of

the cup of sorrow as I have, who would be pleased with your fine speeches and your flatteries. But you can never please me again. You have let me see your heart; and I would not be so cruel ——” and there she stopped.

“So cruel!” repeated Robert. “Go on, Ellen.”

“It does not matter now standing on forms, Robert,” she replied: “I am past all forms. They are nothing to those who are going down to the dust. So I will speak my whole mind. I would not be so cruel to my children as to make such a one as you their father.”

The young man reddened, started, and seemed violently agitated. “Ellen,” he said, “Ellen, you are very severe! But don’t think that you can deceive me. It is not what I said about that child on your lap that has offended you. You don’t love me, I am sure, nor ever did; though I, fool that I was, took all your airs and graces, and coy humours, for nothing but maiden’s modesty, and even liked you the better for them. But I now see how it was.

There are other young men in Roxobel besides me; and there is one, no doubt, who has pleased you better than I have been able to do. And yet, in all these years that we have kept each other's company, I have thought of nobody but you: and I don't remember the time, Ellen, no, that I don't, in which I did not think more of you than of my own father and mother. But, cost me what it will, I will think no more of you; so fare you well, Ellen. You shall be plagued no more by me: and even should young 'Squire Nuttall take a fancy to you, I'd be one of the first to ring the bells, and lead off the dance at the wedding."

"You will sooner toll the bell at my funeral," replied Ellen, with a long deep-drawn sigh. "But farewell, Robert, and farewell, all the world: my Henry, I will go with you." And so saying, she dropped her head upon the baby, like a fair tree, decked in the blossoms of spring, which is suddenly disrooted by the tempest.

As Robert was hastening away, he turned back to look at her; and, at the same

instant, I called to him from my elevated situation. The echoes of the valley repeated my summons; but the young man being, no doubt, inflamed with jealous suspicions, and being unable to sympathize in the feelings of the heart-broken Ellen, not knowing how to conceive that the pure and devoted attachment which she felt for her little brother could make her thus dead for a time to all the endearments of faithful love, yielded to his indignation, and was only urged by my calls to a more speedy flight.

I was sorry that I could not detain him, but hastened down to the side of Ellen, who was still bending over Henry, her whole frame being convulsed with sobs. On hearing my voice, she lifted up her head; and I spoke soothingly to her, asking her if she should be better satisfied if I were to send for a physician from Beckington to see her brother.

“No, dear Sir,” she replied; “I know that all has been done which can be done for my little sweet one, my angel that soon will be. Mr. Semple is very kind, very,

very kind; and so are you, Sir; and Henry will soon be out of the reach of all those who wish him dead: and then, Sir, I shall be happy, for I shall soon go too. But don't, Sir, don't, good Sir, don't be vexed, don't grieve," she continued, perceiving that I was very much affected. "You have done all that you could to save my poor brother; and I know that you would have given any money to have removed his complaint. Ah, Sir, you have indeed been a true friend; but there are not many like you." And she wept again more violently than before. But, after a few minutes, making an effort to restrain herself, she turned to me with a sweet sad smile, and said, "Look at my baby, Sir: is not his sweet pale face like that of an angel? Has not the Holy Spirit set his signet on his brow, as he did on the forehead of Christiana and her sons in the Pilgrim's Progress? Is not he lovely, Sir?"

He did indeed look lovely; and I assured Ellen, that I doubted not that he had been received into the flock of that

Good Shepherd who gathereth the lambs with his arms, and carries them in his bosom.

“He is a gentle lamb, Sir,” said Ellen, “so patient, so tender! Ah, my dear baby!” and she looked down upon him, “how shall I ever part with you!”—and she wept again.

I allowed her to weep some time without interruption; I saw that it did her good: and, taking the cup, I gave her a little water from the dripping rock, upon which she recovered a little, and I said to her, “And now, Ellen, tell me what has caused this disagreement between you and Robert Taylor?”

“Oh, Sir,” she answered, “he came to me just as I had brought Henry to this place, and asked me to leave my sweet baby with some neighbour, and walk with him to see the maypole at Clifton. I at first excused myself in a quiet way, telling him that Henry would not go to any one else. He then said, ‘That is because you indulge him too much.’ And I asked him how I could indulge a dying baby

too much. And then he made free to say that he wished the baby was at rest, and out of every body's way; adding something about my being killed by fatigue; so I felt very angry with him, and bade him go, and tell his kind wishes somewhere else. Indeed, I feel very angry with him still, but I wish him no harm; though I never will have any thing more to say to him, Sir: no, that I never will."

"But he was sorry after he had uttered these rash words?" I said, in a tone of enquiry.

"He was sorry, Sir," replied Ellen, "because he saw me angry; but he does not love my poor baby: he wishes him dead, Sir; and how can I love him? No, I shall never love him again: and, indeed, I don't believe that he cares much for me. But it matters little, Sir: I am disappointed in Robert, and I am disappointed in all earthly things. I have lost my grandmother, my dear grandmother, and my poor mother; and I shall soon lay my little Henry in his last cold cradle-bed; and then, Sir, I shall have nothing to do but to

thank you for all your kindness, and to prepare myself to follow my dear brother. And O, if I can but be with him in the world to come, I shall be happy.”

Our conversation was here interrupted by the cries of the little babe; who started suddenly from his sleep, and struggling and shrieking aloud, drew up his feet as if in great pain, and clung convulsively to his nurse. Ellen hugged him affectionately in her arms, pressed him against her breast, and tried a thousand ways to give him ease. But his agony seemed to be uncontrollable: for, in the violence of his pains, he seized her cap, and dragged it from her head, deranging her hair and handkerchief.

As I beheld this trying scene, I could not but inwardly pray that the poor infant might be speedily relieved; neither could I wonder if Ellen, who daily and hourly witnessed such agonies, felt her heart little attuned to feelings of pleasure. I, however, blamed Robert very seriously, in my own mind, for that thoughtlessness and impetuosity by which he had added grief to grief

in the heart of his Ellen. "And yet," thought I, "he appears to love her so sincerely, and with so jealous an affection, that he cannot even bear to witness the attentions which she pays to her suffering brother!"

There are some men, and women also, so constituted that they cannot endure that those whom they love should be occupied, even for a short period, with any other object than themselves. I trust that Robert Taylor is not one of this sort. Woe be to his wife if he is! But working people seldom have time to indulge such tempers. They are generally found to inhabit the breasts of the rich and the idle.

After a short time, the little baby became more easy, and I walked with Ellen to the cottage, where I hired a kind neighbour to give her assistance. And, as the stepmother was gone to a distance, to enjoy the festivities of the first of May, and had given Ellen some reason to hope that she would be from home for a day or two, I made several desirable arrangements for

the poor girl's relief. When I took leave, I promised to call again early on the following day; and I called on Master Peter, and agreed with him for a dish of eggs and bacon for my next day's dinner.

I spent the busy part of two days at the Rock: but on the third of May, about an hour after I had left the cottage in order to return home, the beloved little baby died in the arms of Ellen. I received a message from her, the next morning, begging me to come and see him; and though I would rather have been spared the sight, yet as Miss Lucy wished to accompany me, I walked with her through the woods to the Rock.

When we entered the cottage, we were led to the very room in which Mrs. Goodwill had died; and here little Henry was laid out. His sister had dressed him in a white frock, with a lace cap, and a white rosette on the side. In each waxen hand was a lily of the valley, an apt emblem of himself, for he was indeed a broken lily, and his ringlets of paly gold still adorned his lovely face and his cold brow. He had ever been a

beautiful child, and he was beautiful even in death.

His tender sister stood by his bed in quiet sadness. I did not like the fixed melancholy of her eye, nor the solemn manner in which she received my attempts at consolation. She shed only one tear, and that was when Miss Lovel stooped to kiss Henry, and to repeat that kiss. Ellen then did shed a tear; but, as it rolled from her eye, it seemed to be instantly dried up by the parching heat of her cheek, in which there was a settled flush which neither Lucy nor I could regard without some painful apprehensions.

I hesitated as to the propriety of dropping a few hints respecting the plan of life which Ellen should lay down for herself after the funeral; but, upon mature reflection, I judged it best to defer all suggestions of the kind till the day succeeding the ceremony. I accordingly devoted my attention exclusively to the arrangement of the necessary ceremonials, inviting the kind neighbours who had accompanied the remains of Mrs. Goodwill and Ellen's

mother to their last home, to attend to Ellen after the funeral. And, having left my orders with Master Peter respecting the approaching obsequies, I returned with Miss Lovel to Roxobel in a very solemn state of mind.

CHAPTER III.

HENRY'S FUNERAL.

May, 1756.

THE sixth of May was fixed for the funeral of the little Henry. We had appointed that the party should be at the church at five o'clock: and about four I walked out, and sat down under a tree not very distant from the churchyard, whence I could watch the approach of the procession. I had not long been seated, when Robert Taylor made his appearance. He was dressed in black, and had a crape hatband, tied with a piece of white love-riband, fastened upon his hat; and, advancing towards me, he seemed desirous of inviting me to engage in conversation with him.

I must own that I did not feel in the best humour with the young man, neither did I attempt to conceal my displeasure. However, being of that kind of temper, which can be sharp, but not cold, when offended, and observing that the young man still lingered about me, I said, somewhat roughly, "Well, Robert, what brings you here this evening? and in a black coat too? Methinks black is not the colour to choose on a joyful occasion!"

"Sir," replied Robert, colouring, "I hope you don't believe, ——" and he hesitated.

"Believe what?" I asked.

"That I really wished the death of that poor child? So far, Sir, to the contrary, that had it pleased God that he should have lived, and I had been so happy as to have married Ellen, I would have taken him into my own house, and been a father to him; and it's what I have said to my mother more than once: and you may ask her, if you doubt me, Sir."

"I don't doubt you, Robert," I replied: "I never found you telling me an untruth, and, therefore, why am I to doubt you?"

But if you really wished well to Henry, and meant so kindly towards him, why did you make so brutal a speech to Ellen as she says you did?"

"Because, Sir, I could not bear to see her so fatigued. And then, when I used to go to see her, she had not a minute to give me: and if she heard the child cry, if by chance she had left him asleep, she would be up and away, in the midst, perhaps, of something I might be saying that ought to have pleased her; and one smile of the poor little boy's, or half a word of his, would give her more pleasure at any time than any thing I could say to her. And, Sir, though it was wrong of me, I confess, it did provoke me so that I said those words you speak of, and I have rued them ever since. And when I heard that the poor baby was dead, I gathered some of our best flowers, and took them to the Rock, and sent them up stairs to Ellen, and they were laid on the little corpse. But Ellen never so much as sent me a single word of thanks, but bade the woman who was waiting on her tell me that more

it might please Ellen? At any rate, it would make my mind easier; for I can't forgive myself for saying what I did." Thus speaking, the young man turned aside to conceal his emotion.

My anger was gone. I shook Robert's hand, and assured him of my services: and as we saw the funeral party advancing into the park from the village, we walked slowly towards the churchyard. The little coffin was carried to the place of sepulture by four young maidens from the Rock, dressed in white, with hoods of lawn, and white caps. Miss Lovel and Miss Beauchamp, habited in a similar manner, joined the procession as it entered the park; and, together with Ellen, and Margery from Mrs. Tristram's, they followed the coffin. Several decent persons from the village also came to witness the ceremony, walking at a little distance in the rear.

When we entered the churchyard, we had to lament the absence of the affectionate pastor; and the irreverent manner of Mr. Aprice only heightened our regret. But even this careless character was

evidently struck with the deep and solemn sadness of Ellen, as she stood by the grave, her eyes intently gazing on the coffin which contained the remains of her darling. She was on the very brink of the open grave, standing motionless, as it were, in despair. Robert Taylor had placed himself immediately opposite to her, but she was unconscious of his presence.

At length, at the moment that the coffin was lowered into the grave, she sank upon her knees, raising her eyes and hands, and moving her lips, as if in prayer, and in this position she remained till the coffin was hid by the earth, and the ceremony was concluded. The young women then raised the poor girl, who seemed half fainting, and took her into Mrs. Tristram's, where presently she recovered herself, spoke more cheerfully than I had expected, and asked Mrs. Tristram to walk part of the way home with her. I was pleased to see her apparently so easy, and, promising to call on her in the morning, I went out from the schoolhouse to young Taylor, who was lin-

gering about the churchyard, and, telling him that I hoped to be at the Rock the next morning, to make some arrangements respecting Ellen, and that I would then plead for him, he walked with me as far as the parsonage, where I went to spend the remainder of the evening. There I was presently joined by Sophia and Lucy.

It was after ten o'clock when I returned towards my home, having left Miss Lovel at the parsonage. It was a night in which the moon was nearly at the full, but there were many heavy clouds in the heavens, and the face of the moon was only occasionally to be seen peeping out from beneath its shadowy mantle. The wind was not loud and boisterous, but sufficiently brisk to move the leaves of the trees, so as to produce a whispering sound, which sometimes seemed to advance towards my ear, and sometimes to die away at a distance. As I stood on a somewhat elevated spot, I thought I could distinguish a dark body moving between me and the church. It became visible for a moment,

as it passed between the schoolhouse and the body of the church ; but its figure was altogether so undefined, that although I was certain that it moved, I could not be assured whether it exercised its locomotive faculties by using two or four legs.

I passed forward, and presently came near the gate of the churchyard. There I hesitated for a moment, considering whether I should call on Mrs. Tristram to ask how she had parted from Ellen ; till, recollecting the hour, I decided that my visit would be ill timed, and was just turning away, when the wind suddenly arose, and every branch began to wave ; a cloud, at the same instant, being rolled from before the disk of the moon. At this crisis, looking back on the churchyard, as I was about to turn away from it, I plainly perceived a veil, or scarf, of white materials, floating in the air amid the grave-stones.

I am not superstitious, but I will confess that I was startled at the apparition, and felt unable to stir from the place on which I was standing when I first observed it. Again the wind died away, and the disk

of the moon became obscured. At the same instant the clock struck from the roof of the Hall, and I found that it was one hour from midnight.

The clouds were moving rapidly in the heavens; and I felt sure that the face of the moon would again be so far revealed as to permit its pale cold light to fall on the churchyard. "I must see this veil again," I thought, "or see what it is that I take for a veil, or I shall ever afterwards live in the persuasion that I have beheld something supernatural."

I therefore stood quite still, and all was quiet around me, save the whispering of the wind among the trees, and the occasional hooting of some solitary owl;—for every hollow tree and every old building in Roxobel is provided with its owl: we are rich in all these appendages of rural life. The clouds, however, remained obstinately in that precise direction which left the churchyard in darkness for another quarter of an hour, though, during this interval, I saw the lights and shadows alternately chasing each other over different portions of the

park as if they had been so many armies of good and evil spirits contending in the air.

At length the Hall clock struck one quarter, and, at the same moment, I was startled by a step near me, and the voice of young Taylor accosting me, and enquiring wherefore I was stationed there.

I replied by another question, "And wherefore are you here?"

"After the funeral, Sir," he replied, "I went to speak to a friend in the village, about that bit of a stone I spoke of, and as I was returning home, about an hour since, I was surprised by something I saw in the churchyard, and I went round, Sir, to find if I could see it again on the other side of the church. And I did see it, Sir: it was quite white, and looked very strange. I was just thinking whether I should venture into the churchyard, and call Mr. Map up, when I saw you; and I was never more glad than when I found it was you, Mr. Airley."

At this instant the wind rose again, the moon was revealed, and the white veil became visible.

“There,” said young Taylor, in a low voice, “do you see it, Mr. Airley? I am thinking ——”

“What are you thinking?” I asked.

“Can it be Ellen, Mr. Airley? Is it possible that she has returned to spend the night at the grave of Henry?”

“Surely not!” I replied. “But what do we stand here for, if such a thing is possible? Come on, come on; not a moment is to be lost. I fear that grief has bereaved the poor girl of her reason.” So saying, the moon still befriending us, we rushed forward to the new-made grave of Henry; and there (O affecting sight!) we found the lovely Ellen seated on a turf close by her baby’s grave, her head resting against a tomb. She was either asleep or fainting, but we could not tell which.

“My Ellen, my dear Ellen!” said Robert, raising her head in his arms; “my own sweet Ellen, do you know me? Speak. Are you alive? Do you sleep?” And he continued to call upon her, while I felt her hand, and found it to be as cold as death.

After a moment she revived a little, or

seemed roused; and to our repeated entreaties that she would speak, she replied, "I am coming; yes, I am coming. I am coming, Henry dear. Ellen is coming, little precious one."

"Ellen! Ellen!" I said, using the voice of authority, which is sometimes useful in such cases, "rouse yourself, and tell us what you are doing here."

"I came——" she answered, looking wildly.

"For what?" I asked.

"To take care of him," she replied. "He called me."

"Who called you, Ellen?" I said.

"He used to call me," she answered; "and I always heard him. He speaks low, very low now: but I can hear him still."

"Does any thing pain you, Ellen?" I enquired.

"Only my head," was her reply. "I can only feel my head."

"She is very ill, Robert," I said; "run to Mrs. Tristram's. But stay, you are stronger than I am; support her head, and I will

call up Mrs. Tristram. She must be put into a warm bed. When I come back, you must call Mr. Barnaby Semple: she may yet be saved."

I immediately ran over to Mrs. Tristram's, roused the old lady and her maid, and in a few minutes they appeared with a light. The noise I made awakened Mr. Map; and a young man came out with him, whom I directed to run to Mr. Semple's. I desired Mrs. Tristram and her maid to make up a fire and warm a bed; and while these preparations were going on, Mr. Map and myself, assisted by Robert, brought Ellen into the house; and, having taken her up stairs, we left her with the women to be undressed and put to bed. She appeared to have sunk again into a state of insensibility.

Mr. Barnaby Semple arrived almost as soon as the good women had got Ellen into bed; and I took upon myself to explain the nature of the case.

"It is only what I expected," he rejoined. "I foresaw that she would be ill: and this illness has been brought to a

crisis by her cold lodgings for the last few hours. But, no doubt, she was not quite herself, when the idea occurred to her that she would come back to the grave to-night. The very action argues delirium, and must be considered as the effect of fever; and, no doubt, this fever will betray itself by a burning fit, when she has been a little while in bed."

Meanwhile, young Taylor was pacing the floor of Mrs. Tristram's kitchen, exhibiting manifest indications of extreme agony.

"It is all my fault, entirely my fault," he exclaimed. "Had I been kind, as I ought to have been, I might have prevented this."

But it was of no avail to stand still and bewail the unfortunate circumstances of the patient. We therefore went up stairs as soon as we were apprized that all was ready for our reception; and if Robert stole up behind us, either no one observed his intrusion at the moment, or every one resolved not to oppose it.

We found Ellen quite insensible, and incapable of being roused. . Mrs. Tristram

informed us that when first laid in bed she had shivered violently, but she was now become burning hot. Some one proposed forcing her to swallow some ardent spirits : but Mr. Semple forbade this expedient, unless, as he said, we wished to kill her; and, on the contrary, he used a far different remedy, by applying his lancet, after which she opened her eyes, and seemed much relieved.

Mr. Semple then went to prepare some medicines, insisting that I should accompany him as far as my lodgings, as he said that I could be of no further use to the invalid, Mrs. Tristram being an experienced and faithful nurse, and young Taylor having demanded permission to sit up all night in the kitchen. I accordingly yielded to persuasion, and returned home.

Early the next morning I went to Mrs. Tristram's, and found Ellen in a high fever. I accordingly advised the good school-mistress to receive none of her pupils into the house that day, but to send them all home again : for I told her that it is impossible to say how far fevers are infectious,

and how far they are not so. Mr. Semple arrived about eight o'clock, and applied some strong remedies. However, he told me that the fever was so far established that he believed it would take its course, and that he feared the struggle would be very violent.

Here again we had need of that patience which, in its perfect exercise, is one of the distinguishing marks of the true Christian: for none other of the sons of Adam, is able, in the furnace of affliction to say, "Thy will, O God, be done."

Poor Robert Taylor was, at first, almost unable to endure the trial, and murmured loudly at the unexpected affliction: but I took him aside and reasoned with him, endeavouring to impress upon his mind a proper sense of the duty of submission; and I was pleased to perceive that he strove to correct his failings in this particular, and that his efforts were not in vain.

Mrs. Tristram informed me that she had gathered from Ellen, during an interval of cessation from delirium and stupor;—(for the poor girl is almost always in one or

other of these extremes;)—that after they had parted in the park the night before, she had fancied that she had heard a low voice calling her, and, as it were, summoning her back again; and that she had consequently turned and followed this voice, till it brought her to her brother's grave. She added, that she had felt at the same time a violent beating on the temples. But this was all that she could remember.

If it please God to restore poor Ellen, I have resolved that she shall remain at Mrs. Tristram's; and I have accordingly sent for all her little possessions from the Rock, desiring Peter the hermit, whom I made my messenger on the occasion, to inform the stepdame, that if she gave them up in a handsome way, I should make her a present of some value when Ellen should be able to inform me that nothing was deficient.

My promises had their desired effect: and the boxes are now lodged at Mrs. Tristram's.

Mrs. Helmsley approved of my desiring that the children should not be admitted

into Mrs. Tristram's house, and has provided a school-room among the offices at the Hall, taking care also to appoint a substitute for Mrs. Tristram for the time being. That matter being thus arranged, we have full leisure to nurse Ellen through her illness.

As the fever is now decided, and Mr. Semple will not say that it is not contagious, Mrs. Tristram will not admit young Taylor into the house; though she has many colloquies with him from her upper window which looks into the churchyard, where he comes three or four times every day, and finds a kind of employment in watching the progress of the little monument which he is raising for Henry.

I have drawn out an inscription for him. Would my reader like to know the words of this humble epitaph? They are scarcely worth recording: though, perhaps, they are not altogether unsuitable to the annals in which they are found, which are simple and unpresuming. The inscription is as follows.—“*Sacred to the memory of Henry Grosvenor, who departed this life, May 3rd,*

1756, *in the second year of his age.*” Beneath are these words from the seventeenth and twenty-second Psalms.—“*As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness.—Thou art he that took me out of the womb: thou didst make me hope when I was upon my mother’s breasts.*”

I must not forget to say that Mr. Pen Map has been very kind during Ellen’s illness, and has kept his boys as quiet as possible. But he does not like the epitaph; for he has told young Taylor that there is no taste for poetry now remaining upon earth, and has hinted, that if he had been so fortunate as to have lived in another age he should not have been left to sigh away a dull life in the obscurity of Roxobel.

Here I close my chapter; and I only wish that I could add one word of comfort in its last page.

CHAPTER IV.

THEODORE.

THE blow is struck. O, unhappy Roxobel! O, my Theodore! Passed as a dream are our happy days. My Lucy's smiles are gone, never, never to return. Our Theodore—our beautiful, our brave, our beloved Theodore, is no more. Mrs. Winifred has triumphed. She planned, and she has executed. O, Theodore! The unhappy doctor! what remains for him, but to die and join his departed son?

A month is passed since a letter was delivered into the hands of Mrs. Beauchamp. It was an official communication from India; and was directed to the doctor. She opened it; but she dared not give it to him. It was short, and contained a statement of the death of the gallant Theo-

dore Beauchamp under the walls of Buzbuzia, on the shores of the Hoogly. The event seems to have taken place soon after the landing of the troops. Mrs. Beauchamp had shut herself up in her closet to read the letter, and was found by Sophia immediately afterwards extended on the floor in a fainting fit, the letter lying open by her side. Sophia snatched up the letter and read it; and, being unable to command herself, she shrieked aloud. The servants came running in; and the alarm reached the doctor. The footman lost no time in running down for me, and, not finding me at home, he hastened to the Hall, and sent up a message by Richard into the library, where I was sitting with Lucy. Richard entered, and told me that I was wanted immediately at the parsonage, bad news having arrived from India.

“O my Theodore!” exclaimed Lucy; “O my Theodore!” And the next minute she would have fallen from her chair, had we not run forward and prevented her.

It is impossible, quite impossible, to describe the various scenes of woe which

ensued;—the agonies of Lucy when she revived—the silent and subdued anguish of the father—the bitter grief of the tenderest of stepmothers—the deep, deep depression of Sophia—the universal sorrow shed over every countenance. And our Eugenio, too, who is far away, how will he bear this dreadful news?

The images of woe which presented themselves during the first few weeks after the letter had arrived would baffle all description. What a variety there is in human suffering! The public papers too have confirmed our misery: they allude to the affair of Buzbuzia, and to the loss of Lieutenant Beauchamp.

My sweet Lucy has been dangerously ill. She was carried from the library to her chamber; and grief seemed, for a while, to have produced nearly the same effect upon her which it had upon Ellen. She is now, however, somewhat recovered, and is very much indebted, as Mr. Semple informs me, to the tender attentions of Mrs. Susan, poor Mrs. Judy's old servant, who left the Hall after her mistress's decease, but,

hearing of our afflictions, came in all haste to render her services to the young lady.

The poor doctor is silent and quiet under his afflictions. I could wish that he would give more utterance to his feelings: for though I respect that grief which is silent and retiring, I have more hope of its speedy removal when it unburdens itself in the clamorous outcries of unrestrained emotion. Kind, good Mrs. Beauchamp seems broken-hearted: even the cares of her household are no longer attended to.

I was about to say, "Happy are they who have reared no children!"—but I have no children, and am I happy? O that I could annihilate the recollection of the seven first years spent at Roxobel;—those seven happy, happy years, in which I made one with the family at the parsonage, and partook of all their domestic joys and rural festivities! O period of calm delights, when our children were around us, and every valley re-echoed with the songs of praise, which were poured from hearts enraptured with delight! Where now are our happy

assemblies? where our meetings in the woods? our rural galas? our evening walks? our fireside parties? Where are the sounds of innocent merriment, and undissembled laughter? Oh, bereaved Roxobel! I almost wish that I had never known thee; that I had never entered thy charming bowers, never paced thy breezy lawns.

Knowing each other's thoughts, we almost dread to meet; for we are scarcely able to direct our conversation into any channel which does not at length bring us to the shores of the Hoogly. At the same time, we have little delight in the society of those who do not appear to participate in our melancholy emotions: so that we are all become solitary; and, as to myself, I wander about from morning to eventide, cherishing my sadness amid those lovely scenes where I have been accustomed to associate with the once happy young people who are now separated to meet no more.

Yesterday I walked over the very ground which I had traced on my first coming to Roxobel with Eugenius and Theodore, when they were sent by their tender father

to shew me the yet unexplored regions of the park. I remembered every word which had passed on that occasion. I lingered in the steep path where these noble boys had dragged me up. I sat down in the place of the echo, and listened to the song of the birds and the rushing of the waters. Earthly hope, or rather all hope connected with earthly enjoyments, seemed to have passed entirely away. Nothing was to be seen in the future but the gloomy mists of sorrow. "But I will live with Lucy, my widowed Lucy," I said; "and I will try to console her: and we will prepare together for that great change which will set all things right."

I then tried to reason with myself on the folly of indulging any thing like a sanguine expectation of obtaining perfect happiness in this world of changes and chances. "Unchangeableness," thought I, "is absolutely necessary to the perfection of bliss. Not, indeed, the unchangeableness which might be found in a never varying round of duties or delights: for beings constituted as we are cannot conceive

of happiness unmingled with variety; and the more elevated the intellect, the more eager will be its aspirings after the acquirements of knowledge, and the more strenuous its exertions for the advancement of its powers and capabilities.

My mind then adverted, in delightful anticipation, to that glorious period when all the dealings of Divine Providence will be revealed in their tenderness and benevolence; and when the heaviest temporal calamities which have befallen the children of the Holy One will be made to appear as so many dispensations of fatherly kindness, designed to work out for them a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. "All will be right," thought I, "in that blessed day in which we shall awaken in thy likeness, O our God! And then, for a day of short-lived happiness in this present life, will be given a year, yea, ten thousand years, of perfect bliss! If our short moment of mortality be somewhat clouded, should we then murmur? Rather ought we to feel and exclaim with the prophet, 'Although the fig-tree shall not blossom,

neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation.' ”

I looked round about me, above and below, on the blue vault of heaven, chequered with soft white clouds;—on the deep shade of the opposite banks, where many a little pathway wound its course among the trees;—on the sparkling bosom of the waters, closely fringed with many tufted trees;—and on the birds winging their flight in mid air;—and I tried to imagine what even this present world might be, if human passions did not interfere to mar this glorious creation.

When I had dwelt some time on these and similar subjects, I was at length led to consider what the Almighty requires of us when depriving us of an object of tender affection. “Under such circumstances,” I said, “he is, undoubtedly, calling upon us for an act of *submission*. O, then, that

he would now enable us to say, 'O God, thy will be done,' and, 'We know that thou dost not afflict us willingly.'"

This morning I saw my lovely Lucy. She has left her bed, and is in her dressing-room. We met in tears. She looks very, very pale; but there is a tenderness in her deep sorrow which betokens a heart rightly impressed with the duty of submission. It may be good for my Lucy to be made to feel deeply. Shortsighted as I am, I would gladly have died to have saved her this affliction: but the Almighty knows best. Can the Judge of all the earth do wrong? Yet mankind are ever longing to discover the reasons of things: and, according to this rule, I have come to the conclusion, that as there is in Miss Lovel so much natural buoyancy of spirits, so much gaiety of heart, it was probably necessary that she should suffer acutely, in order to be brought to regard religious subjects with a sufficient degree of attention to render them beneficial to her. The bee that rests not on the flower can gather little honey, however busy she may appear to be. How know we but that

Lucy's character may come forth refined from the furnace of affliction? But, O my Theodore, must I give thee up? must I renounce the often anticipated delight of witnessing thy marriage with thy Lucy? Is there nothing now to be done but to endeavour to reconcile our minds to thy loss? Must the places that have seen thee, see thee no more? Is that sparkling eye for ever quenched? Will those lips smile no more? Shall we never hear thy voice again? Was it with expectations like these that we anxiously watched thy boyhood? Was it with fears like these that we repressed the ardour of thy spirits? And Oh, how dreadful is our uncertainty respecting thy last hours! Was there not one friend to close thy dying eyes? But, O son of many tears and many prayers, I will not doubt thine everlasting happiness.

In our interview this morning, Lucy and I avoided the mention of our Theodore's name. Indeed, we said but little to each other: we could not say much. Lucy, however, enquired after Ellen, and was

sorry that I had nothing pleasant to relate respecting her : for poor Ellen was getting better, when an indiscreet neighbour came in, and told Mrs. Tristram, in her presence, of the death of Theodore, on which she had a fearful relapse, becoming again delirious. And now, though she is somewhat recovered, she continues to be so deeply dejected, that she says she never shall be happy again, but will live with her dear Miss Lovel, and spend her life in weeping with her.

I could not repeat all this to Lucy; and I therefore replied very briefly with respect to Ellen, and endeavoured to lead the discourse to religious subjects.

“Ah,” said Lucy, “had I delighted more in my God in the days of my prosperity, I should have found greater consolation in the time of affliction. But I will try, Mr. Airley, indeed I will endeavour, to take pleasure in religion. I have always had bright and agreeable views of my God, but my heart has been cold towards him; I have always felt it cold and distant.” And a tear dropped from her eye.

When we feel most, we can often speak least; and this was my case this morning. I had not a word of comfort to offer: and I was therefore very glad when Mrs. Susan came in to bring her young lady some refreshment; and I took the opportunity of asking the old servant after the health of Mrs. Grizzy.

“She is going fast, Sir,” she replied. “I saw her this morning: she is changing rapidly.”

“Ah!” remarked Lucy, “every one is going. The world is passing away.”

“Well, dear Miss, there is another and a better world,” observed the servant. “Still there are some who think Mrs. Grizzy has lived too long already: but I trust that they will be disappointed, and Mr. Lovel will be remembered.”

This, as I expected, brought a flood of tears from the eyes of Lucy. “And can they be thinking,” said she, “of such poor things as land and money, when death is dealing with us on all sides? Oh, would I not give all I have on earth to be as we were two summers ago? Oh, ambi-

tion! ambition! what has it done for us?" And then sobbing aloud, "Oh, my Theodore! my Theodore!" she exclaimed: "cruel Mrs. Winifred!" And then checking herself, she continued to weep in silence.

"Eugenius will soon be here, dear Lucy," I said, "to comfort you."

"Eugenius!" she repeated. "But they were like twin brothers. Eugenius is but half himself without his Theodore."

"But Sophia may yet be happy."

"But Sophia is his sister. No, she can't be happy!" And she sobbed and wept again.

The servant said something with a view to comfort her, but I could not speak.

Mrs. Nuttall at that moment knocked at the door, to prepare Lucy for a visit from Mrs. Winifred. I had never seen the old lady since we had received the dreadful news, although she had, as I understood, visited her niece daily. At the sound of Mrs. Nuttall's voice I sprang from my seat, and ran to the window; but Miss Lovel sat still.

The next moment the old lady entered,

leaning on her golden-headed cane. Miss Lovel looked up, and returned her salutation with an expression of countenance which betokened more of fear and horror than of affection. Mrs. Winifred has, in general, much dignity of manner, and much presence of mind. She accordingly took no notice of her niece's manner, but congratulated her upon being out of her room; and she addressed me as I stood in the window, asking me how it had happened that she had not seen me for so long a time. And then, without waiting for my answer, she ordered Mrs. Nuttall to send up some chocolate, and enquired of her niece if an airing in the carriage might not now be useful to her.

To this question Lucy replied that she did not feel herself as yet fit to go out. And Mrs. Winifred then, dexterously changing the subject, began to give an account of her sister's state of health, spinning out her tale till the chocolate arrived, and with it Mr. Barnaby Semple.

The old lady now found an auxiliary in the conversation: and all the sick and ail-

ing persons in Roxobel were enquired after and talked about, with the exception of Dr. Beauchamp, whose name was not once mentioned.

Seeing the old lady determined to sit me out, I at length took my leave, and returned to my lodgings, where the restlessness of my feelings would not allow me to remain any time. O the irritation, the feverish irritation, of a wounded heart! Alas! that I have not more resignation!

I had thought of concluding my chapter in this place. But I had scarcely dined, and taken up my hat to go to the parsonage, when Mrs. Strickland, hurrying into my room, said, "Mr. Airley, two servants from the Hall, one after another, have come down in haste to Mr. Semple's, and he is not at home. They have run back to the Hall to saddle a horse, and go after him to Beckington. I hope Miss Lovel is not worse."

It cannot be doubted that, on this suggestion, I hastened to the Hall: and, not finding a servant at hand, I went directly to Mrs. Nuttall's room, into which, hearing

voices within, I entered. I there found a party seated at a table, on which were jugs and bottles; but I recognised no person with whom I was acquainted, excepting young Nuttall, Mr. Tolly, and Mr. Aprice. On my appearance there was a shout or rather burst of laughter, and Mr. Nuttall said, not without an oath, "What wind blows Mr. Airley here?"

"Who is ill, Mr. Nuttall?" I asked; "not Miss Lovel, I hope?"

"No," replied David, laughing, "the young one will do well enough by and by; but the old one is going to tip the bucket, and that may account, perhaps, for the bustle you talk of."

To this extraordinary speech I made no answer; yet I thought it extraordinary though it proceeded from the lips of Taffy. I saw, however, that the young man had been making unusually free with the bottle.

Retreating from this den of thieves and wine-swillers, I turned to the butler's room, feeling assured that I should meet with better manners in the precincts of Mr.

Porter. I there found the old butler, who informed me that Mrs. Grizzly had been taken worse within the last hour, and that, unless she could be speedily relieved, she would not endure long. I asked if I might go up to the library, which was near Mrs. Grizzly's room; and, having received permission, I walked up stairs, and entered that apartment unperceived. Standing just within the door, I had an opportunity of noticing what occurred in the passage, and observed several persons running backwards and forwards, with marks of great agitation in their countenances. In this feeling I myself also partook; for the knowledge that a fellow-creature is dying close at hand, must certainly be affecting to every thinking being. I heard many enquiries made respecting Mr. Barnaby Semple, and went many times to the window to see if I could discover any signs of his approach.

At length, having caught a glance of Mrs. Susan hastening along the gallery, I ventured to address her, asking after Miss Lovel.

“O Sir,” replied the worthy woman, “this is a very distressed house! My young lady would go to her aunt, and when she saw her, she almost fainted; and I have just got her back to her dressing-room, and Miss Fisher is with her: and I will ask her if she will see you, if you please.”

“Pray do so,” I said. And the good woman left me, but soon came back to conduct me to Miss Lovel’s dressing-room.

I found her looking pale, but she seemed to be more composed than I had expected to see her. She expressed pleasure at my coming, and asked anxiously if Mr. Semple were arrived. Miss Fisher was sitting by Lucy; and, as soon as she saw me, she began to pour out a multitude of unmeaning phrases about death, and afflictions, and other horrors, to which no one made any reply. I wish I did not dislike this woman so much. It is one of my worst propensities to hate some people even more cordially, I fear, than I love others. But I hope that I am not permitted to give way to these feelings of aversion: for I

know that they are wrong. Yet, when a family is suffering under severe distress, it is certainly revolting to see a member of the household endeavouring to play the amiable, and to shew off her supposed sensibilities. A person who cannot be drawn off from affectation by any thing less than an earthquake, a shipwreck, or a house on fire, is so incorrigibly selfish that it is impossible to love such a one.

“Poor Mrs. Grizzy!” exclaimed the young lady, “you can’t think what I suffered, when the alarm was first given of her sudden attack! We were in the dining-room, waiting for Mrs. Winifred;—Mr. Aprice, Mr. Nuttall, and myself;—and Mr. Porter came in and said, ‘Mrs. Grizzy is dying.’ Was not that shocking, Mr. Airley? And I turned quite pale. Mr. Aprice said I looked like a sheet of white paper. And I was just falling off my chair, when Mr. Nuttall saved me: and he and Richard brought me up here; and I frightened my cousin so much, that she forgot her weakness, and ran into her aunt’s room, and was brought out in as bad a condition as I was. O

dear, Mr. Airley, you have no notion what I suffered!"

I could almost have said, "I neither know nor care:" but I was anxious to know if Mr. Semple were come, and going out to enquire, I encountered him in the gallery, having galloped from the place where the servant had met him. I returned to tell Miss Lovel that the doctor had arrived, and was requested by her to discover his opinion of her aunt.

I came back in a few minutes to inform Miss Lovel that Mr. Semple was gone into the chamber; but, as the door was closed, I could not hear any thing that passed within. I then sat down for a short time; and Miss Fisher filled up the interval with the remaining description of her own fine feelings in the dining-room.

At length, however, finding perhaps that I did not pay her much attention, and hearing some steps in the gallery, she went to the door, and, addressing some person without, "How is she now?" she asked. "How does Mr. Semple find her? Are there any hopes?"

“Hopes of what?” rejoined the person addressed. The voice was David Nuttall’s.

“Hopes of her recovery, Mr. Nuttall?” enquired Caroline.

“Fears of her recovery!” returned the other, laughing. “For what in the world should we wish her to live? What good could life do to her now?”

“For shame, Mr. Nuttall,” said the young lady. “What a naughty boy you are! Well, but do us the favour to go and ask how she is.”

“To oblige you, Miss Caroline,” said David.

“And Miss Lovel, too,” rejoined Miss Fisher.

“Miss Lovel so seldom asks me a favour, that I can’t refuse her,” returned the young man. And off he marched, Miss Fisher returning into the room.

I was nearer the door than Lucy, and, though I had heard what had passed, I do not think that she had.

Miss Fisher had scarcely re-seated herself, before a knock was again made, and she called out, “Come in.”

Mr. Nuttall entered. Lucy started and coloured at the sight of him, and I myself was astonished at his audacity. He advanced into the room, and addressing Miss Lovel with more respect certainly than he had used to Miss Fisher, he said that he was glad to find her better, adding, that Mr. Semple had not yet ascertained whether there were any hopes for Mrs. Grizzly.

Lucy thanked him for his information; but did not ask him to sit down. He bowed to me, and said, "You are highly favoured, Mr. Airley, in being permitted to visit young ladies in their rooms."

"I am an old man, Sir," I replied; "and an old friend—a sort of paternal friend. But this privilege is to be no further extended." And I looked at the door.

"I have a great mind," proceeded the young man, "now I have got into the fortress, to keep my position. May I venture, Miss Fisher?" he added. "Will you invite me to sit down?"

"I dare not, Mr. Nuttall," remarked Miss Fisher, looking at Lucy.

Lucy reddened. Weak as she was, she arose from her seat. "Mr. Airley," she said, "I will go to my aunt's room: I should like to see her once again. Will you give me your arm?"

"Mine will be a better support," said David, laughing, and looking down at me, while at the same time he advanced towards Miss Lovel.

"Act as you please, Mr. Nuttall," said Lucy; "but on your behaviour at this moment depends my resolution. If you do not leave this room this instant, or if you ever return to it again, I leave this house, and go to that place where I am sure of love and protection;—to the house of my father and my friend, my dear and ever dear Dr. Beauchamp." Here she burst into tears, and sunk back on the sofa from which she had just arisen.

The young man had grace enough to be ashamed, and walked out of the room muttering some sort of apology; and Lucy, turning to her cousin, said, "Surely, Caroline, you must be mad to encourage this young man as you do. Unless you mean to

take him for life, you are injuring him in the most cruel manner."

I know not what answer Miss Fisher would have made; but we were interrupted here by a long mourning cry running along the gallery; and, hastening to the door, we saw some persons leading away Mrs. Badger, poor Mrs. Grizzy's maid, who was lamenting herself aloud.

"What is the matter?" I enquired.

"She is gone," they replied. "She expired a minute since. She went off quite easily."

"Does Mrs. Winifred know it?" I asked.

"She was present," they answered.

"Poor aunt Grizzy!" cried Lucy, weeping. "There is another friend of my childhood gone. Alas! fair Roxobel, it will soon be a wilderness for me."

"Why surely, Lucy," observed Miss Fisher, "you must feel that it is a happy release for the old lady, to be set free from all her pains and all her troubles."

"I know it, Caroline," replied Miss Lovel, "but I don't feel it." And she wept again.

At that instant appeared the sweet Sophia, who, having heard of Mrs. Grizzly's attack, was come, like a ministering angel, to comfort her friend. The young ladies ran into each other's arms; and, as Sophia proposed staying with Lucy, I offered my services to spend the evening at the parsonage with Dr. Beauchamp; a proposal which was thankfully accepted.

CHAPTER V.

MRS. GRIZZY'S LAST TESTAMENT.

MY heart sickens at the description of mourning and funeral scenes. Yet what can I do? I have no others to describe. I did indeed indulge hopes of brighter prospects; but hope so long deferred has made my heart sick.

I shall not be very particular in my description of Mrs. Grizzy's obsequies. They were magnificent, but not otherwise remarkable, excepting that, as the old lady had always entertained a strange dread of being buried alive, her coffin was not to be closed upon her for ten days, namely, till the morning of her funeral;—a long interval for those who were anxiously waiting the opening of the will.

During this time I did not visit the Hall,

as Lucy had been removed to the parsonage the day after her aunt's death, for change of air; though Mrs. Winifred did not suffer her to depart without obtaining a promise that she would return to the mansion-house as soon as the funeral was over.

After the first interview with Dr. Beauchamp, Lucy seemed easier at the parsonage than she had appeared to be at the Hall; and, it may be supposed, was not often absent from the beloved society of her dear friends. Our only pleasure seemed to be, to meet together, and look at each other, and weep in concert. Cheerful we could not be: our Theodore was still too fresh in every one's remembrance;—too intimately connected with every inanimate object around us;—too closely united with every pursuit. With him we had read, we had sung, we had prayed, we had walked, we had conversed. Where could we go where the image of Theodore would not present itself? and who could think of him, as we had seen him, comparing his past with his present situation, buried among

heathen's in a foreign and far-distant land, without experiencing a degree of sorrow which was wholly overpowering?

I was invited to Mrs. Grizzly's funeral, and thought it right to attend; and, to my great surprise, I was also summoned to be present at the reading of the will, which was to take place the next morning. Mr. Griffith said that my presence was required as executor to Mrs. Judy's will; it being necessary, on that account, that I should be made acquainted with the affairs of the family.

And now I make no question that my reader is somewhat anxious to know how the old lady had disposed of her property, and that he will not be sorry to be introduced by me into the steward's room, where the will was read. On a similar occasion, formerly, I had myself been very anxious respecting Mrs. Judy's will, and had dreamed of parchments and red tape: but, at this time, I could not so far divest myself of painful impressions, as to feel the lively interest in these matters which I had then experienced. I was per-

suaded of the utter inefficiency of money or lands to restore our happiness, and would have given more for one remembrance of my Theodore, one fragment of his sash or solitaire, than for all the jewels in Mrs. Grizzly's cabinet.

At the hour which had been fixed, I repaired to the Hall, and was introduced by Mr. Porter into the steward's room, the worthy and important usher having informed me, in an under-tone, that his lady had directed that the meeting should be held there.

Being arrived in the steward's room, I there found Mr. Watson, Mrs. Grizzly's solicitor, together with Mr. Griffith, and Mr. Barnaby Semple. They were conferring together, in a window which looks into one of the back courts of the mansion. In the centre of the room was a table covered with a green cloth, around which sundry high-backed walnut chairs were arranged, in much order; and on the table was a tin case, which I supposed to contain the will.

I was accosted very politely by the gen-

tlements, and was offered refreshments, which I declined. Mr. Griffith then said, "I believe that all is ready now, Mr. Watson: shall we apprize the ladies that we only wait for them? Mrs. Winifred desired to be informed when Mr. Airley arrived."

The bell was then rung, and a message forwarded to Mrs. Winifred; soon after which, we heard the knocking of high heels, and the rustling of silks, in the passage. Mr. Griffith ran to open the door; Mr. Watson flew to his place; I stood at the back of the state-chair set for Mrs. Winifred; and we were all in precise order, when, the door being opened wide, Mrs. Nuttall entered. Mr. Griffith started back, and left the duenna to shut the door herself; I quietly slunk from the back of the chair; and Mr. Watson looked over his spectacles at the dame, scarcely complimenting her with a nod.

Mrs. Nuttall could not but observe the effect which her appearance had produced. She, however, advanced to the chair which had been placed for her lady, and informed

Mr. Watson, with much ceremony, that as Mrs. Helmsley did not feel her spirits equal to the task of hearing the will read, she had requested that she would attend in her stead, as the representative of the family; "not one of whose members," she added, with a sort of long-drawn breath, which she wished to be considered as a sigh, "can now be present."

But I am becoming sour. Circumstances which would formerly have amused me, now only serve to make me irritable. Grief ought not to produce acrimony; but it is too much my case at present.

Mr. Griffith suggested that Miss Fisher, being the only relative of the family who could possibly attend, should be invited to be present: and this motion being approved, Mr. Watson sent to beg the favour of her company. While waiting for the young lady, Mrs. Nuttall, having seated herself in Mrs. Winifred's chair, pursed up her mouth, dropped her eyelids, and drew up her person into the most erect attitude.

Miss Fisher soon appeared, in compliance with Mr. Watson's request, and

took her place by Mrs. Nuttall. The solicitor then re-arranged his spectacles, opened his tin box, and produced the parchment. We were all silent; but my feelings were very different from those which I had experienced on a former occasion. "No money, no lands," I thought, "can make us happy now. Our sun is set: our Theodore, alas! is lost to us. And what wealth can ever compensate for that loss? No golden balm can heal the wounds of his bereaved friends."

Such were the reflections which suggested themselves to my mind; and I was so engaged by them, that I did not hear one syllable of the preamble, till the words, "To my beloved and only remaining sister, whom I mention first, as being the head and present representative of my family," awakened my attention; and, being thus roused from my melancholy meditations, I was made aware that my feelings were not altogether so dead to the purport of the will as I had fancied them.

Mr. Watson then proceeded—"Winifred Helmsley, spinster, I bequeath ——" Here

Mr. Watson coughed, and we all looked intently upon him, with the exception of Mrs. Nuttall, who moved not a muscle. Mr. Watson quickly recovered his breath, or rather his command of countenance, (for I perceived that he had had recourse to this cough for the purpose of concealing some smiles which were improperly intruding themselves,) and, going back to the name of "Winifred Helmsley, spinster," he thus continued:—"I bequeath my diamond pins, earrings, and shoe-buckles; also my Brussels lace head, and pinner, and ruffles; with my scarlet satin gold-flowered *négligé*, and my brocaded petticoat, which was my ever honoured mother's, and my gold watch and equipage, and all the necklaces, earrings, and other jewels, which are in my *etui*, to be the property of my dear sister for life, and to be worn by her, either singly, or all together, at her pleasure; but, after her death, to pass to the wife of my beloved nephew, Eugenius Lovel, the son of my father's daughter, Emily Lovel." Here Mr. Watson stopped to wipe his spectacles, and Mrs. Nuttall remarked,

that as Mrs. Winifred had so many jewels of her own, it was a mere mockery in Mrs. Grizzly to lend hers to her sister merely for life as it were, and not to leave her the power of bequeathing them after death to whom she would. "But proceed, Mr. Watson," she added, her colour being considerably heightened by her impatience.

Mr. Watson then went on to this effect. "I also bequeath to this my sole surviving sister, (Mrs. Nuttall in this place forgot to settle her countenance, and to look down as before, and I felt my own little heart in a kind of a flutter,) all my plate and linen, and my cabinet of curiosities, and the furniture of my apartments, to be held by her, and used by her at her pleasure, until the day of her death; at which time, I will that they pass into the possession of my beloved niece, Lucy Lovel, the daughter of my sister Emily Lovel. And here I take my last solemn leave of my sister Winifred, praying that the Almighty may guide her through life, and comfort her in death."

“What does she mean by taking leave of her sister in this place?” exclaimed Mrs. Nuttall, entirely thrown off her guard. “Surely she does not think that Mrs. Winifred will thank her for mere words, when her last act and deed was to bestow on her only a parcel of rubbish, of which she has too much already? Mrs. Grizzly’s cabinet of curiosities, in truth! What does it contain but stuffed lap-dogs and parrots, and other such trumpery? But go on, Mr. Watson, go on. You are trifling with us. I verily believe that this fine farewell that you have read is of your own invention. What a heap of stuff is here about pinner, and ruffles, and shoe-buckles! Whoever began their last solemn testament with such nonsense as this? Go on, I beg of you.”

Mr. Watson proceeded, and we all sat in breathless attention, to hear the fate of all the lands, tenements, freeholds, and copyholds, which had been held by Mrs. Griselda Helmsley, spinster, during the last five-and-twenty years, and upwards. These, having been first duly and accurately

enumerated, *secundum artem*, were all assigned to Eugenius Lovel, without condition.

● On hearing this, I could not constrain myself, but warmly expressed my satisfaction: and I saw that there were only two persons in the room who did not sympathize with me; namely, the two ladies, Miss Fisher and the duenna.

On my exclaiming, "Well, I much approve of this, this is as it should be!" Mrs. Nuttall turned sharply round to me, saying, "And pray, Sir, why are you so right glad? It is such as you who come into families to sow discord between father and son, aunt and nephew, putting it into the young people's minds that their elders don't know what's good for them better than themselves. It was an evil day, Mr. Airley, let me tell you, when you first crossed this threshold: and I have said it a thousand and a thousand times."

To this compliment I bowed: and Mrs. Nuttall, turning to the man of the law, observed, "I see you have done your best to confuse every thing, Mr Watson, in draw-

ing out that will, as you did the former one of Mrs. Judy's; but we shall be even with you yet. Mr. Lovel inherits as the heir of the Helmsleys, the first male heir. His mother, you know, had no title whatever to inherit, the estates coming through the first Mrs. Helmsley, and not through Mrs. Lovel's mother: therefore, as the children of Emily Lovel, neither Mr. nor Miss Lovel can have the least title."

"Mr. Lovel," remarked the steward, (for Mr. Watson seemed resolved not to favour us with his opinion,) "is the lawful heir, through his father, to the Helmsleys; and, had the old ladies died without a will, the estates would all have gone to him."

"What was the use of their making a will at all then?" asked Mrs. Nuttall. "I wish to heaven that nobody had put them up to such folly."

Mr. Barnaby Semple stared and looked puzzled, and so did Miss Fisher: but the steward drew up his lips, and looked unutterable things. An idea of a very extraordinary nature, occurred at that instant

to my mind; I will not say that it then presented itself for the first time, though it certainly came at that moment with an almost convincing power. I looked at Mr. Watson. I thought I could read his thoughts: and I imagined that they coincided with my own. He was, perhaps, more *au fait* than any other person in the room: but he, nevertheless, preserved his silence. The steward however, said, (and I thought, by his manner, that he said it in the spirit of mischief,) "What is it that disconcerts you, Mrs. Nuttall? I imagined just now that you were not pleased at the idea of Mr. Lovel having Mrs. Grizzly's estate; and now you say that you wished she had died without a will, which, I suppose, would have come to the same thing, would it not, Mr. Watson?"

Mr. Watson bowed a kind of acquiescence, but added, that Mrs. Grizzly had full power to leave her estates as she thought proper.

"I don't understand that, Mr. Watson," remarked Mrs. Nuttall. "All estates must go to the heir male, in the course of law."

“What!” exclaimed Mr. Griffith, “if they are not entailed? The Helmsley estates are not entailed!”

“That shall be seen to,” returned Mrs. Nuttall.

“And what are you to gain by that?” asked Miss Fisher, angrily. “Can’t you be quiet, Mrs. Nuttall?”

“I will see justice done, if no one else will, Miss Fisher,” retorted the angry duenna. “The heir shall have his rights.”

“And has he not his rights in this instance?” asked Mr. Barnaby Semple, “unless you suppose that he is hurt because Miss Lovel has a share? But Mr. and Miss Lovel will never disagree about the lands. Miss Lovel has resolved to give up her portion of the estate to her brother, as soon as ever she is of age.”

Lucy, who can scarcely conceal a thought, had, it seems, mentioned this her scheme to Mr. Semple, during her illness, and in her distress. I was rather sorry that she had done so, though it was now of little consequence: but Mrs. Nuttall

flamed out, and said, "Can she be such a fool?"

"Why, Mrs. Nuttall," I remarked, "what would you have? (I spoke in mischief.) You are anxious, very properly, that Mr. Lovel should unite all the Helmsley estates in his person; you see every thing tending to this point; and yet you are not satisfied: what is it you would have? We cannot wish Mrs. Winifred's portion to fall into her nephew's possession, for many many years to come; and the other two shares may be said to be his already. As a faithful friend therefore of the heir of the Helmsleys, you have nothing to do but rejoice."

The duenna bit her lips with passion. "You little ——" she said; and then stopping, she drew herself up, arose from her chair, raised her figure to its utmost altitude, and muttered something about the heir of the Helmsleys and justice. Then adding, that she supposed there was nothing more in the will worth listening to, she swam out of the room, banging the door after her in the very face of Miss Fisher, who had followed her.

Mr. Semple and I flew to open the door again for the young lady, and to make up, as much as possible, for the rudeness of the duenna : but the young lady seemed almost as much offended as the old lady herself, and would not listen to our entreaties that she would stay to hear the remainder of the will.

As soon as the door was shut upon these ladies, and Mr. Semple and I had returned to our seats, Mr. Griffith said, "What are we to understand by all this? What would Dame Nuttall be at?"

"We shall see," replied Mr. Watson, "in a very short time, unless I am greatly mistaken." And he looked significantly at me and Mr. Griffith.

"Now," said I, "let me propose that we keep our conjectures to ourselves. But I will promise to tell you, in a short time, whether my suppositions agree with the facts which will surely be revealed before many revolutions of the sun have gone by. Mrs. Judy and Mrs. Grizzly are now out of the way, and their last testaments do them honour: and there can be

no motive that I see for any further concealments."

"Concealments!" repeated Mr. Semple.

"Of what? of what?" asked Mr. Watson, laughing.

"Ay, that's the question," said I. "But you will know in a very little time. Mrs. Nuttall is like a volcano at work: and there will soon be an eruption. But let us finish this testament: let us hear what more is to be done."

Mr. Watson then concluded the lecture. It seemed that Mrs. Grizzy, having a large sum in the stocks, had left the bulk of it to be divided between Mr. and Miss Lovel, and had appropriated the rest in legacies. Mr. Barnaby Semple and Mr. Griffith were handsomely remembered. Dr. Beauchamp was not forgotten. There were fifty pounds bequeathed to Mrs. Tristram, and the same sum to the poet. Every servant at the Hall was remembered: and two hundred pounds were to be applied to the use of the poor. Twenty guineas too were set apart for the purpose of purchasing a ring for myself, a remembrance which I did not

expect, and certainly did not deserve; for I felt that I had not esteemed the poor old lady according to her merits. I must not forget to mention, that Mrs. Badger was well provided for, and Mr. Watson was not forgotten.

When the reading of this important document was concluded, we all expressed our pleasure at its contents, giving Mr. Watson much credit, as Mrs. Grizzy's adviser. Then taking leave, I hastened home to write to Eugenius: after which, I walked to the parsonage, to tell the news there. As I drew near its lovely bowers, however, sadness again stole over my heart; and I stepped aside to weep, before I could persuade myself to enter the house.

CHAPTER VI.

THE ECLAIRCISSEMENT.

OUR attention at Roxobel is forced away from ourselves: for, although we could wish to be devoted entirely to meditation on our sorrows, we are compelled, as it were, to rouse ourselves, and to pay some regard to the curious scenes which are acting around us.

As I had expected, the news of Eugenius's good fortune rather augmented than diminished the sorrows of Sophia and Lucy. It seemed to make them feel more acutely the loss of their Theodore, and the entire needlessness of his removal from Roxobel. "O that we had waited a little," said Sophia, "a very few months, and then it would have been shewn to us what we ought to have done! But we can-

not be happy now, Mr. Airley." And the young ladies both wept; and Mrs. Beauchamp joined her tears with theirs.

Lucy had promised to return to the Hall after the reading of the will. She felt very unwilling to take this step; but she considered it to be her duty to endeavour at least to live with her only remaining aunt; though she began to think, with me, that the influence of the Nuttalls would now preponderate to such a degree as to render it impossible for her to remain at the Hall. She was willing, however, to try; and accordingly, when I was about to walk back, she proposed to accompany me: and embracing Sophia and Mrs. Beauchamp, "My beloved mother and sister," she said, "I feel that I shall soon, very soon, return to this house to make it entirely my home. A very few days at the Hall will shew me what I have to expect." So saying, she embraced them again, and then drawing her veil over her face to conceal her tears, she walked with me towards the mansion-house.

On our way we called at Mrs. Tris-

tram's to tell her of her good fortune, and she received the happy tidings with a meek and holy gratitude. We went up to Ellen's room, for she has not yet left her chamber. She still looks very ill; and, as Mrs. Tristram says, her spirits are very low. She has spoken once or twice from her window to Robert Taylor. She was much affected by the sight of the stone which he has placed over little Henry. She saw it from her chamber. She thanked Robert for it, and assured him that she had forgotten all his unkindness; but when he would have persuaded her to receive him again on his former terms of affection, she began to weep, and replied, "Ah, no; not now:" and she mentioned the name of Miss Lovel.

Lucy and Ellen were extremely affected when they met, and wept and sobbed so violently, that we were obliged to part them. I then brought Miss Lovel to the Hall, and delivered her to the care of Susan: after which, returning to my lodgings, I endeavoured, by reading and meditation, to obtain a degree of composure.

As soon as I had breakfasted in the morning, I went to the Hall. Richard opened the door for me, and accompanied me to the library; but, instead of retreating immediately, as was his custom, he shut himself in with me; and, speaking low, "Mr. Airley," he said, "what a house there is here! The servants don't know what to think of it. I wish Miss Lovel would choose to go to her estate, and build a house, or fit up the gamekeeper's house, and let me be her footman. And there are several more who would like to go with her: for, as to staying here, (saving your presence, Sir,) we might as well be in the infernal regions. I suppose there was something in the will that did not please them, for Mrs. Winifred was in fits all the evening afterwards, or something like fits, crying, and sobbing, and shrieking; and yet they would not send for the doctor: and Mrs. Nuttall looked like a she-dragon with her tail on fire. O, how she did scold at the maids! and she threw a cup of water in the face of one of them. And Mr. David and Mr.

Aprice were at the mill, and men and horses were sent for them. And when they came in, they were had up to my lady's room, for Mr. Aprice to talk Welsh to her. And then my lady cried again, (for Dolly stood at the door, and heard some of it.) And Mrs. Nuttall talked about justice; and Mr. Aprice sputtered his strange tongue. And after a while down comes Mr. Nuttall. It was just tea-time, and I was carrying in tea for Miss Fisher: and he comes into the Brown Parlour where Miss was, and he calls for brandy, though the lady was by; and because I stood doubting whether I heard him right, he marched up to me, and would have struck me if I had not slipped to one side. He was quite fresh then, Sir; but the lady spoke soothingly like to him, and he threw himself all along on the couch which we had had put there for poor Mrs. Grizzy, who is dead and gone. And then, while I was going out of the room, he said something about making us all fly (that is, all us servants I took it) for a pack of knaves. And so I shut the door; but I thought that

if he was to be master, we should be apt to fly fast enough, without any wings of his providing.

“So I went in again with the brandy, and a tumbler and water: and there he was, lying on the couch, and talking to the lady, and she smiling and shewing her teeth, and encouraging him like. And I am sure there is no need of that. And I was so angry that I did not know what I was doing, and set down the bottle in the tea-tray; which, I suppose, offended Miss, for she drew up, and looked quite fierce. And then my gentleman, that is Master Tally, up he gets from the couch, and set his arms a kimbo, and bids me take out the brandy, and send the butler in with it, for he was not going to be waited on by the like of me. So says I, ‘Perhaps not;’ and out of the room I came, not knowing whether he had heard me or no. And I went straight to the butler’s room, and told him that he was wanted in the Brown Parlour: but I did not tell him what for, for I had a mind to see how my gentleman would behave to him; Mr. David’s father,

Timothy Nuttall, having been in a manner brought up by Mr. Porter, in the butler's room.

“So Mr. Porter, he went into the Brown Parlour, thinking nothing, and I followed quietly, and stood at the door to hear what passed. And Mr. Nuttall asked him first and foremost (without so much as saying with your leave or by your leave) what he took himself for.

“‘Why, for Mrs. Helmsley's butler,’ says Mr. Porter.

“‘Well then,’ said Mr. Nuttall, ‘when I want a bottle of wine or brandy, I expect that you should bring it me with your own hands.’

“‘Do you, Sir?’ said Mr. Porter: and he turned to come out of the room. But Mr. Nuttall called after him, and said, ‘Who do you take me for, Mr. Butler?’

“‘For Timothy Nuttall's son,’ replied Mr. Porter; ‘and I don't think I am mistaken neither.’

“I should tell you, Sir, that Mr. Porter had been taking his drop too, with Mr. Watson's man, who had driven his master

over from Beckington: and he is a sort of a gentleman, you know, Sir; so that Mr. Porter was bound to be civil to him; and so you see, he was not just in the humour to put up with Mr. Nuttall's impertinence.

“Well, Sir, upon Mr. Porter's saying the words ‘Timothy Nuttall,’ up gets young master, and takes the couch-cushion, and sends it flying across the room, and against the head of Mr. Porter, and off flew his wig. But I neither saw nor heard any more, for I took to my heels along the gallery, and out into the garden, where I stood and laughed till ——”

“Till what?” I asked; for he hesitated and coloured.

“Till I thought of some other things, Sir,” replied the worthy young man; “and then I could laugh no longer. So I went back to the butler's room, and found Mr. Porter in a violent passion, and Mr. Aprice telling him, in his curious gibberish, that he had better keep himself quiet, if he meant to stay at the Hall. And then, Mrs. Nuttall came in, and she put in her word; and Mr. Aprice held with her, and the

other servants with the butler, and there was such a noise as I never before heard in this house. And all this time, Sir, Mr. Nuttall was talking in the parlour with Miss Fisher."

"And how are things this morning?" I asked.

"We are a little quieter, Sir," answered Richard; "but there is such a muttering between the housekeeper and Mr. Porter, that I am certain sure the storm will break again before we are many hours older. And Mr. Nuttall switched Sam the stable-boy this morning, before he went out, and sent him off roaring like a calf."

"Well, Richard," I replied, "take a little advice from an old friend: keep yourself quiet; a short time will explain all, and we shall see who is to be uppermost."

"If it is to be Mr. David," replied the young man, "I shall take my leave, Sir: and if you could speak a word for me with Miss Lovel, why then, Sir, I should be happy."

I smiled and said, "Do you suppose that Miss Lovel will leave the Hall, Richard?"

“I reckon, Sir,” he replied, “that the same wind which blows me away will make her take flight too; for I am sure my young lady will never stay in a house where Mr. Nuttall is to be my lord paramount.”

The accustomed ears of the footman at that moment caught the sound of a bell in some distant part of the house. He was off in an instant, and soon afterwards returned with a note of invitation requesting my company to take tea the same evening with Mrs. Winifred. I instantly sat down to my writing-desk, and accepted the invitation in due form, having private reasons for returning an answer in the affirmative.

As my evening hours were thus bespoken, I was obliged to leave the Hall immediately, in order that I might dispatch some business at Torville, which could not be conveniently deferred. On my return, I dined at the parsonage, and called at Mrs. Tristram's, taking care to arrive at the Hall at the appointed hour, which was six o'clock.

I found Mr. Aprice, Mr. Griffith, and

Mr. Barnaby Semple, in the Brown Parlour: and we were soon afterwards joined by Miss Fisher and Miss Lovel; the former looking all anxiety, and the other appearing as if nothing in this world could ever interest her again. But, though Lucy is sorrowful, there is no asperity in her grief: it is deep and silent; and her spirit is not embittered by it. She sometimes smiles, but in this expression of her countenance there is such an admixture of sadness and sorrow, that it is painful to witness it.

“What are we all met here for?” asked Mr. Griffith, whisperingly, addressing himself to me. “The parson knows, I am sure, if he could bring his Welsh tongue to tell us.”

Before I could reply, the door was opened by Mr. Porter, who had put his wig in order again, though he looked excessively sullen, as well he might; and Mrs. Winifred entered the room, attired in the deepest mourning, and leaning on Mrs. Nuttall, who was dressed in equally deep and handsome sables. We all bowed low to Mrs. Winifred, as she advanced to the sofa and

seated herself; Mrs. Nuttall at the same time taking her station at the tea-table.

This was the first occasion on which we had seen the housekeeper seated in the presence of her mistress; but I must confess that I, for one, did not feel much astonished. The steward, however, looked *queer*: (I cannot think of any other equally suitable word.) Mr. Semple reddened to the very ears. Miss Fisher seemed to have expected this new arrangement. And my Lucy appeared as if it did not concern her in the least.

Mrs. Winifred was as much herself as I ever saw her, while the servants were in the room waiting at the tea-table; and she evinced a mind prepared for all contingencies.

Mrs. Nuttall's endeavours to seem at home in her new situation were not quite so easy as those of her mistress; and the company were so much embarrassed, that our meeting, I fear, would have been a very silent one, had it not been for Miss Fisher and the Welshman.

At length, the tea-equipage being re-

moved, and the last steps of the retiring servants having ceased to sound through the long passages, a very painful silence ensued, which had continued for more than a minute, when Mrs. Winifred drew our eyes towards herself, by several short nervous coughs and hems, which she attributed to a tickling in her throat.

I have no doubt that the old lady's throat, and her heart too, were uneasy enough.

"Shall I fetch you your drops?" asked Mrs. Nuttall.

Mrs. Winifred assented by a nod: and, while the duenna was absent, we had another interval of suspense; from which, however, we were presently relieved by the re-appearance of Mrs. Nuttall, bringing in a silver cup, which she presented to Mrs. Winifred. The old lady drank of the contents, and, returning the cup, addressed a few complimentary words to Mr. Semple, on the efficacy of his cough-drops. And then, as if to allow herself no longer time for reflection, she proceeded nearly to the following purpose.—"Gentlemen, I have requested your attention this even-

ing to a very important subject. I consider you all as my best and most sincere friends; and I feel that I shall not be mistaken in the choice which I have made of you as my advisers. (In this place there was a little hesitation, after which she went on with more composure.)

“I have acted,” continued the lady, “in one affair, one important concern of my life, with too much weakness; I confess it: but while my poor sisters were living, knowing the sort of prejudices they cherished respecting the dignity of their family, and some other matters, I could not bring my mind to do that justice to myself (and here she hesitated) which I now feel that I ought to have done many years ago.

“In short, gentlemen,” she added, (for it was evident that her courage failed her, notwithstanding the exhilarating contents of the silver cup,) “the important secret which I called upon you to hear, and which I have hitherto concealed in indulgence to the weakness of my sisters, is — is — that I am — a widow —, and that David Nuttall — is my son.”

The old lady then rose, and, looking at Mrs. Nuttall, she said, "I can add no more: to you, and to Mr. Aprice, I leave the rest. Lucy, give me your arm."

Miss Lovel ran to her. The eyes of the lovely young lady were filled with tears. There was not the least abatement in her respect for her aunt: on the contrary, she seemed to participate in the shame which she must feel in being obliged to make such a confession. She took the hand which the old lady extended to her, raised it to her lips, kissed it respectfully, and then, placing it on her arm, led her out of the room.

"What an angel that is!" said I, in a low voice, to Mr. Griffith. "Did you observe her conduct?"

"I did," replied the steward, with feeling.

The door being shut after Mrs. Winifred and Miss Lovel, we all remained attentive to the explanation which we were left to expect from Mr. Aprice and Mrs. Nuttall.

The duenna spoke first. "Gentlemen," she said, "you are, no doubt, somewhat astonished at the confession which has but

just now proceeded from Mrs. Winifred's lips. I am only sorry that it was not made years ago, and that my nephew was not brought up as he was entitled to be."

"I am equally sorry, Mrs. Nuttall," I replied: "it would have been at once better for Mr. Nuttall, and more honourable as it relates to Mr. Lovel, to have had it known that the young man is, as no doubt you can prove him to be, the son of Mrs. Winifred. Neither do I quite comprehend your motives for concealing the affair so long."

"We were afraid of giving pain to the younger Mrs. Helmsleys," replied Mrs. Nuttall.

"No doubt," I answered, "it might have given them pain to have discovered that their sister had deceived them in an affair so important to herself. But the inconveniences which might have arisen from revealing the transaction, would have been trifling in comparison with those which you have incurred by concealing it. Your nephew, allowing that you can prove his birth and his mother's marriage, will not

now appear with half the dignity which would have been granted him, had he been always acknowledged as the son of Mrs. Winifred. And, moreover, he might then have received an education suitable to his mother's rank."

"As to proving Mrs. Winifred's marriage, and Mr. David's birth and baptism, I am here to do both," replied Mr. Aprice. "I united Mrs. Winifred with Mr. Nuttall in my own church, in Caerbrock, and I also baptized the child: and my wife, her sister, and my father-in-law, and some few others, were witnesses to both these transactions. But," addressing the duenna, "cousin Penelope, do you begin your story, and tell these gentlemen all about it."

"To be sure I will," said the duenna: "it is what my lady wishes. It was," said the abigail, "just about the time that Mr. Lovel first came to Roxobel, that I and my brother arrived at the Hall: it may be now five or six and twenty years since. My brother might be then nineteen or twenty, and I was older. We had lost our parents, and were well recommended, for

we are not without genteel relations. And so I was put to wait on Miss Helmsley, being very skilful with my needle, and a nice hand in getting up laces, and my brother was put to learn his business under Mr. Porter. Now, though I say it, that should not say it, there was not in all the country a finer man than brother Tim then was."

"Ay! is it so?" I exclaimed. "Can it be so? Where have I been all this time? Brother Tim!—hum!—ay!—well!—stupid!—hum!"

The duenna was silenced by these incoherent exclamations. All the company looked at me. And the steward said, in a low voice, "Why, Mr. Airley, what now? But, Mrs. Nuttall, please to proceed: we are all attention."

Mrs. Nuttall eyed me keenly, bridled, and went on.

"My brother, as I was saying, was as fine a man as ever was beheld: he stood six feet without his shoes; he was as ruddy as a rose; and he had the very same bright sandy hair as his son, though, of the two, I think that Timothy's was of a

deeper gold. Then he had such a pair of eyes, as blue and as big! O! he was quite a picture! Well, he first waited in the butler's room; and then, when Ezekiel Barns, Mrs. Winifred's own old footman, died, just after the 'squire's death, why then I spoke a word for my brother, and Mrs. Winifred made Timothy her own particular servant: and he stood behind her chair, and rode out with her; for she used to ride on a pillion behind her footman, being rather timorsome on a single horse, and the roads about the park not then suiting for a wheel-carriage. And so, gentlemen, somehow or other, for I never could understand how it was, she became very fond of Timothy; for he was not over forward in the matter neither, having given his heart to a foolish girl, the dairy-maid. Well, but when Mr. Lovel behaved as he did, and turned away from Mrs. Helmsley (or Miss Helmsley, as she was then called) to Miss Emily, why, then she took on and fretted herself: and then it was that Timothy took some pains to please her. And so it was planned by them, for I had no

hand in it, neither did I by any means approve the scheme, that Mrs. Winifred should set off to London with her sisters, and so leave them in London, that she might travel, as it were; and then she came down into Wales, to my cousin, Mr. Aprice, and there she was married."

"Yes," said Mr. Aprice, "the happy couple were tied together by me, my wife being witness, with others of my relations. They were married by bans, and cousin Penelope there was the bride's maid. So they dined at my house, and went off on their travels; and were about the country, in one place and another, for more than a year."

"And never," interrupted Mrs. Nuttall, with a deep sigh, "never was a more loving tender husband than Timothy: and my lady was as happy as a queen; for she used to say that she had a jewel of a husband. But afflictions will come in every situation: there is no rank, however high, which is beyond the reach of evil fortune; nor none so low neither,—” and the duenna tried to look pathetic.

“ At the end of a year, my lady returned to Mr. Aprice, in expectation of the birth of her son ; and there, before David was two months old, her husband died, cut off in the very flower and prime of his life, and my lady was left a widow with one poor infant. So we talked the matter over, and left the poor child with Mrs. Aprice, (who got a nurse for him,) and came back to Roxobel: and so we never let out a word of what had passed, out of tenderness to Mrs. Grizzly and Mrs. Judy, who might not have approved of what their sister’s affection to my brother had induced her to do.”

The duenna ceased to speak; and Mr. Aprice drew from his pocket a little case, from which he extracted certain papers, and handed them to the company. The documents thus produced did undoubtedly contain very clear proofs of the marriage of Winifred Helmsley, spinster, to Timothy Nuttall, gentleman, and of the baptism of David, son of the said Winifred and Timothy, about one year afterwards. To corroborate these testimonials, which, indeed, needed little to support them, Mr. Aprice

stated that he was ready to bring forward as many witnesses as could either legally or rationally be required for the confirmation of these facts, and for the purpose of proving the identity of the child. But, even if the evidences had been less strong, there would have been no use in disputing the point, as the Helmsley estates are not entailed: for Eugenius would be no nearer to Mrs. Winifred's portion, even if we could succeed in disproving the parentage of David Nuttall.

Having examined the papers, we returned them to Mr. Aprice without comment upon them; yet I ventured to speak my mind pretty plainly. "In the first place, Mrs. Nuttall," I said, "your lady must, I think, have forgotten herself strangely, to fall in love with a very young man, her servant, in her forty-second or forty-third year. But this folly having been committed, why did she neglect her son? Why did she not avow him at once, and give him a gentlemanly education? What motive could she have had for this second imprudence? The not doing this is a worse fault,

in my opinion, than the first; and I cannot so easily forgive her for it. If the young man is ruined, I shall certainly consider it as the fault of his mother."

It must be here observed, that although I had put this query to Mrs. Nuttall, I fully understood Mrs. Winifred's motive for not acknowledging the child; and this appeared to me to be the worst part of the story.

What I had said served to silence the housekeeper for a moment. But Mr. Aprice answered me, and said, "And why should the young man be ruined, Mr. Airley? He will have a very good fortune; and Mrs. Winifred intends to have his name changed by act of parliament: and, if some of these pretty young ladies will but take pity on him, (and he bowed smilingly to Miss Fisher,) he will be a very happy man indeed."

"And no doubt," I said, "he will make a jewel of a husband, as his father did!"

I ought not to have used this expression: (I felt that it was wrong, as soon as the words were out of my mouth:) and Mrs.

Nuttall flamed out upon it, and said, "Mr. Airley, I don't understand you. Do you mean any offence?"

"None at all, Madam," I replied.

"You never saw my brother, Sir?" proceeded the duenna, interrogatively.

"Only once, Madam," I answered; "but I was not aware that I had had that privilege till this evening."

"And where did you see him?" she asked.

"At a small inn near Snowdon, where I also saw you, and your lady," I replied.

Mrs. Nuttall started and coloured. "You must be mistaken, Sir," she answered. "You were not in that house when we were there."

"Yes, I was, Madam," I returned, "and saw your brother, yourself, and Mrs. Winifred. But I never, till this evening, suspected who you were. I saw your face, but not Mrs. Winifred's."

"You must be mistaken; Mr. Airley," retorted the duenna, reddening, while her lips trembled exceedingly; "I am sure of this, (and she drew herself up,) that if I

had once seen you, were it only for a moment, I could not have forgotten you." And she looked at Mr. Aprice, and forced a laugh.

"But do you not know," remarked Mr. Aprice, "that this Mr. Airley is a cunning man, a sort of will-o'-the-wisp, or hob-goblin, and is here and there and every where? But we are spending our time upon trifles, when the occasion is a serious one. If Mr. Airley saw poor Mr. Nuttall, he saw one of the finest young men in the three kingdoms; and if he did not know you again, cousin, it was because he saw you before you had suffered from the smallpox, and you must be aware that you were very different before that period, from what you have since been: the fairest faces are marred, you know, by that dreadful disease."

Mrs. Nuttall looked complacently at the Welshman, in return for this inferred compliment: and Mr. Griffith then said, "Mrs. Nuttall, we have heard your story, but we do not understand precisely what we are to do in this affair."

“To do!” she repeated; “why, to acknowledge my nephew, the son of my sister Nuttall, as the heir of the Helmsleys, and the future possessor of the Hall.”

“It will make little difference to me,” replied the steward, “who may be the future possessor of the Hall, as I now consider myself the servant of Mr. and Miss Lovel, and, no doubt, shall find some little cottage on their estates, in which I may spend the remainder of my days in comfort. I am willing to remain at the Hall till Mrs. Helmsley, alias Mrs. Nuttall, shall have found a substitute, who, I trust, will be an honest man: but no longer will I stay.”

“And wherefore, Sir?” asked the duenna.

“Your nephew has already shewn what he will be,” replied the steward: “and, though I don’t wear a wig, yet I have no mind to subject my head to be assailed by pillows and bolsters.”

“Well, do as you please,” returned Mrs. Penelope, as we must now call her. “There is a brother of Mr. Aprice’s, a very clever and a very upright man, who might, per-

haps, be prevailed upon to take your place in the steward's room. Such offices have no need to go very far a begging; and he is a very *honest* man, Mr. Griffith." And she laid a stress on the word *honest*.

Mr. Griffith coloured, as well he might, and replied, "Mrs. Penelope, you speak in heat. I would have you understand me. I owe duty to your sister-in-law, and, through her, to her son. I will be faithful to both. I have always been faithful to the family. I will stay to arrange every thing as it ought to be. I will not act from passion: but I do expect to be treated with respect while here. I shall not interfere with you or your nephew, while I remain, provided he lets me alone: and therefore I think the best we can do is to sign an amnesty for the present, till things can be arranged; for, let me tell you, I could hurt him more than he could hurt me. However, if he insults me, the only revenge I will take is to deliver up my accounts, and take my leave."

"Well, Sir," answered Mrs. Penelope, "there is no intention to be rude to you:

but I don't see why you should refuse to pay due respect to your lady's son."

"I don't refuse to pay him all the respect which is due to him. Let him behave like a gentleman, and he shall be treated as such," replied the steward. "But if he swears and bullies in the offices, as he did last night and this morning, he must send to the Indies for the negroes to wait on him; for no free man will ever abide his service."

"Well," said Mrs. Penelope, "this is no business of mine. My sister must settle these matters."

We all started at the word "sister," so speedily adopted after the explanation: but no one made any remark upon it. For my part, however, I felt so violently irritated by the injustice done to Eugenius, and the cunning which Mrs. Winifred had displayed through the whole of the business, that I was unable to remain any longer in the room; and I accordingly rose, took my leave, and walked to my lodgings, determined that the story I had heard that evening should never get abroad through my means.

Indeed, I almost resolved that I would never set my foot in the Hall again: yet how could I do this, while uncertain respecting the steps which Miss Lovel might think it right to take?

- Mrs. Strickland perceived that something had disturbed me, and she looked anxiously at me several times.

“You will know too soon what has hurt me, Mrs. Strickland,” I said: “report will soon inform you. Don’t speak to me now.” And I shut myself up in my room, and really wept. I could not help it, to think how that foolish and wicked woman, Mrs. Winifred, had blasted the happiness of four lovely young people, and ruined her own son, for the purpose of promoting her covetous and selfish plans.

And was our Theodore, our beloved Theodore, to be thrust into danger, and doomed even to death, in order that Miss Lovel should become the wife of her son? and the happiness of the lovely Sophia to be irremediably destroyed, in order that she might quiet her conscience, by giving her disinherited nephew the rich dowry of Caroline

Fisher? And was her son, her own son, to be deprived of a gentleman's education, in order that he might stand a chance, through her means, of inheriting the portions of her two sisters? "Wretched, foolish woman," I exclaimed, "how wide is the misery diffused which thy wickedness has occasioned!"

I was in a strange humour. I shed tears. I stamped about my room. I even used loud and violent invectives against the silly and depraved author of our numerous perplexities. But gentler and more tender feelings were at length vouchsafed me, and I found myself able to pray, or rather to lift up my heart unto God; for I was scarcely composed enough for a connected petition: and, at length, I went to bed, quite exhausted.

CHAPTER VII.

A SCHEME.

WHAT confusion there is at the Hall, and, indeed, throughout the parish! As I opened my window this morning, I saw persons standing here and there, in groups of three or four, earnestly engaged in conversation; and I observed many sorrowful and portentous shakes of the head.

Mrs. Strickland knocked at my door while I was at breakfast, and, being invited in, "Oh, Sir! Oh, Mr. Airley!" she exclaimed, "there will be no living now in Roxobel. Ah, poor Roxobel! how happy those are who live at the Rock, and on the other side of the parish! Black Tom was this way this morning, and came here straight from the Hall; and he was complimenting me on our new master. I could not tell, at

first, whether he was in jest or earnest. And then he said something about his own luck, as much as to say that he was at one of the lucky ends of the parish, being, as it were, so far off; and he grinned till he shewed all his teeth. And it was as much as I could do, good Sir, saving your presence, to hinder myself from throwing the cream-bowl at his head: for I am so thoroughly vexed, to think that Mrs. Helmsley (though I must not call her Helmsley now) should so have forgotten herself, when she was above forty years old at the time, to go to marry her own footman. It would never have been done, Sir, that it would not, however, if it had not been for that sly hussy, Mrs. Penelope: for Timothy Nuttall would never have thought of it; and he was very fond of Cicely Granger, the dairy-maid, and she was a pretty girl too. But only to think of it! And we are all to bow the head to David Nuttall, and not one of us to venture to say 'Nay,' when he says 'Yes.' And then to think that, after all, Mr. Lovel won't have that fine seat, nor the park! and that it's

all to go to those Nuttalls, and no help for it! Oh, Sir, my husband is at his wit's ends. But Mrs. Semple, she is quite pleased, and so is Miss Finchley. Miss Finchley was down at Mr. Semple's before breakfast; and, I dare say, Mrs. Claypole will be here before noon."

"And why are they so much pleased?" I asked.

"Don't you remember, Sir," she replied, "that the Finchleys are third cousins to Mrs. Penelope? and third cousins, once removed, to Mr. David? Oh, Sir, it is altogether not to be put up with. We shall have such flaunting and ranting! And, I will be bound for it, there will be another wing to Mr. Semple's house; for Mrs. Semple says that the parlour is not big enough to swing a cat in, though it has served her betters, and may do so again."

"Why, Mrs. Strickland," I said, "you are getting quite irritable."

"I am, Sir, I am," returned the good woman. And she then began to lament herself. "Oh, poor Master Theodore, you will never see it, and never know it; and so

far well. But they who sent you abroad knew what they were about, and I only hope they may be disappointed: for this I know, that Miss Lovel would die before she would marry young Nuttall.”

I was rather surprised to find that other persons, as well as myself, were aware of this scheme of Mrs. Winifred's; and, in consequence of increased apprehensions on this account, I became so uneasy, that I determined to see Miss Lovel as soon as possible, and to consult seriously with her respecting what she ought to do.

With this view I went to the Hall; and, finding the door open, I crept up to the library as quietly as possible, waiting till I should hear a step without, and see some one whom I might trust with a note to Miss Lovel. I sat down near the door of the apartment, and tried to divert myself with a book; though, for some weeks past, I have found little pleasure in reading.

At length, I heard voices in the gallery.—“And why should not we?” was the first sentence which reached my ear.

“Consider the recent death of your aunt,”

was the reply: and, the next minute, Miss Fisher and Mr. Nuttall entered the library.

I rose and bowed, and Mr. Nuttall, returning my bow with a nod, said, "What, always at the books, Mr. Airley? How can you plague your head with such stuff? Well, but what say you, Mr. Airley, at finding the trick my wise mother has played you all? Who would have thought it? What will Master Eugenius say, to find another bird in his nest? But I always knew that I was born for great things; and so my sage aunt used to tell me. But they kept it close; I did not know it till the day the will was read: and then my mother and aunt could hold it no longer. And I heartily wish that they had not kept it to themselves so long, that I do."

"What reason could they have had for so doing?" I asked.

"They had their reasons," replied the young man. "They never act without reasons, though they have not always very good ones to give. But I say, Miss Fisher, cousin Caroline, why don't you go and get Miss Lovel to come out? Tell her that

Mr. Airley is waiting here for her. She will come to him: he knows how to please the ladies."

"Don't oblige her to come on my account, Miss Fisher," I said: "I am going immediately." And I accordingly arose, and took my leave, resolving to write to Miss Lovel, and request her to meet me at the parsonage.

As I went out at the door of the library, Mr. Nuttall asked me when I expected the young 'squire.

I did not immediately conceive whom he meant: on which he added, "Mr. Lovel."

"In a very short time," I answered; "perhaps a week:" for it occurred to me that it might be as well, for Lucy's sake, to give Mr. David the idea that Eugenius would soon be at home.

Mr. Nuttall expressed some surprise, and uttered a round oath; on which I observed, "Don't suppose, Mr. Nuttall, that you have any enemy in your cousin Lovel. Think of him as of a friend; behave like a gentleman; endeavour to deserve his favourable opinion: and he will be the last

man in the world to envy you your good fortune. I shall be grieved, if you do not see in him, in this case of trial, what a Christian and a gentleman ought to be."

"Well," rejoined Mr. Nuttall, "I hope it will be so; but, I know, he always hated me: yet I bear him no grudge. So, good morning, Mr. Airley."

I went home, wrote my note, sent it by Mrs. Strickland, and then proceeded to the parsonage.

I found the doctor and Mrs. Beauchamp only half informed with regard to the transactions at the mansion-house, and they seemed to be excessively uneasy respecting Lucy. "She had better come to us at once," they said: "she cannot stay at the Hall now with any propriety."

We sat in the parlour the whole of the morning, looking in the direction of the Hall, and anxiously watching for the approach of our Lucy. At length, Mrs. Susan arrived, bringing some packages. She was introduced into the parlour, and, seeming fatigued, we obliged her to sit down.

“Oh, Mrs. Beauchamp,” exclaimed the good woman, “what a world of sorrow this is! I am almost distracted. My dear young lady asked me this morning to pack up her things, so that we might be off at a short warning; for to stay at the Hall will not do. She was called to Mrs. Helmsley (Mrs. Nuttall I should say, but, dear me, how it sounds!) just after breakfast, and she stayed in her aunt’s room more than two hours, and Miss Fisher came back with her: and Miss Lovel had been crying, and Miss Fisher looked very red. And Miss Lovel said, ‘It does not signify, Caroline; I never will have him, nor any other man on earth: not if he were a king’s son, I would not have him.’ And Miss Fisher encouraged her in it, and said she did right. And Miss Fisher went out: and then she broke out, (that is, poor Miss Lovel;) and she said, ‘Oh, Susan! dear Susan! they want me to marry David Nuttall; and I will die first. But I will not stay in this house. Will you come with me to the parsonage? we shall have a home there.’ And then she got up,

and wrung her hands, and called upon Mr. Beauchamp, and promised him, (as if he was living and was present, poor young gentleman!) that she would never think of any one but him. It was quite pitiful to hear her. So she kept on crying, and I could not help shedding tears too. And she directed me to make haste and put up her clothes, and asked me if I could not get Richard to send them out of the house privately. And while we were busy about this, there came another message for Miss Lovel to go to Mrs. Winifred. And then she bade me to make up some of the things that she might be most likely to want, and bring them here, and afterwards to come back again for her."

On hearing this account, we pressed Mrs. Susan to return immediately; and I walked down the park, on the road towards the Hall, waiting to see Lucy, and to conduct her to her friends. When I had lingered for some time near the church, she at length joined me, being followed by Susan.

She was in tears. "Mr. Airley," she

said, " I now take my leave of the Hall, never to return to it as an inmate. I used to look at it, and think that I might visit Eugenius and Sophia there. But this dream has passed away, together with many other fair visions of my childhood. All, however, is right, I know: and I have prayed, and will pray, for submission to the divine will. Yet what can my aunt mean at this time, when death is so busy with us, to be pressing this hateful marriage upon me, and to be making me by this haste, if possible, more determined in declining it? Oh, Mr. Airley, I have had such a scene this morning! Poor aunt Winifred almost kneeling to me to take her son: and the young man himself, in the presence of his elders, defying me to get rid of him if I could. But I have left them, and I intend to return to them no more."

I encouraged Miss Lovel's resolution: and we hastened forward to the parsonage, where Lucy was received as the dearest of dear children, by the affectionate pastor and his beloved wife. And although Dr. Beauchamp cannot leave his couch, yet he

certainly derives great consolation from the presence of his Lucy.

I am easier now that Miss Lovel is at the parsonage ; and, having brought all my little articles from the Hall,—a removal which I could not accomplish without much pain and many bitter reflections,—I am little acquainted with what passes at the mansion-house, excepting from common hearsay.

It seems, that several of the old servants have given warning to quit. Mr. Porter, being obliged to stay out his month, has taken to his bed with a fit of rheumatism, the validity of which is much doubted by Mr. Semple, on account of the good state of the old gentleman's pulse ; the weather too being very hot, for it is now the middle of June. The old solemn Brown Parlour is turned into a sort of bear-garden, being filled with the lowest company ; and young Nuttall scarcely ever goes to bed sober. Mrs. Penelope sits at the head of her nephew's table, and takes much state upon herself ; while poor Mrs. Winifred (for I shall persist in using the name of Mrs. Wini-

fred) hides her diminished consequence in her own apartments: but what is the nature of her meditations in her retirements I cannot pretend to say.

Religion is actively at work at the parsonage, moderating and ameliorating the influence of grief, and taking off its most bitter and painful effects. "All we now aspire to, Mr. Airley," said Dr. Beauchamp one day, "is to be able to say with cheerfulness, 'O Lord, thy will be done!' We cannot expect more in this life; but we do earnestly covet and pray for this." The good man could say no more; and the young ladies could not even bring themselves to confirm these words by speech: but they looked so resigned, so meek, so gentle, that it could not be doubted for a moment that they desired to be entirely conformed to the divine will.

Lucy has had a visit from Esther Stephens, who desired to be alone with her. The subject of their conversation was curious. Esther opened the discussion with tears, informing Miss Lovel that Mr. Nuttall had promised her marriage in the most

solemn manner, and that, in consequence of this engagement, she had often given him her company without her parents' knowledge. "And now," she added, "Miss Lovel, if you take Mr. David, you will break my heart, and I shall lose my character for ever."

Miss Lovel assured her that she had nothing to fear from herself as it respected Mr. Nuttall; and Lucy then gave her some good counsel, pointing out the certain consequences of clandestine meetings of the nature of those at which she had hinted.

Esther received this advice very patiently. But the poor girl was troubled, it seems, with the loss of what she had not possessed for a long time, namely, a good name. I am sorry for her, and so is Miss Lovel. She, however, left the parsonage in better spirits.

I am daily more and more astonished that Miss Fisher should remain at the Hall; and I sometimes fancy that she must be lingering there in order to make another attempt on the heart of Eugenius.

Oh, poor Roxobel! how complicated are

the miseries entailed on thee by the vicious passions of thy children! The sounds of lamentation, or of drunken riot, are now to be heard through all thy lovely borders. Thy Maker made thee a paradise; thine inhabitants have made thee a place of graves. Again I say, "Oh, poor Roxobel!" And with these words I finish my memorandums for this day, hardly knowing when I may be in the disposition to re-commence them.

Several days have passed since the foregoing was written, and such days!—Surely the spirit of confusion has now done its worst! Yet, did I not long ago think thus? But I will refrain from comments, and proceed to facts.

It is now a week since it was rumoured that Mr. Nuttall found it necessary to go to Town on business of very great importance; and, for a whole day beforehand, there was a vast bustle at the Hall in consequence of the preparations for his journey. At length he was seen to depart in a chaise and four, which passed through Beckington; and we casually heard of his hav-

ing reached the next post-town on the road to London. On the very day of his departure, Mrs. Winifred either was, or pretended to be taken very ill, and sent a most pathetic message to the parsonage, entreating her dear niece to favour her with her company, at the same time assuring her that Mr. David Nuttall would not be seen at the Hall, being far away.

I was at the parsonage when the letter arrived: and Dr. Beauchamp, who is one of the most tenderhearted of human beings, expressed his opinion that Lucy should obey the summons. Miss Lovel has as much warmth of feeling as Dr. Beauchamp, and is as incapable of bearing malice: accordingly she went to her aunt, intending to remain with her for two or three days. On the second day of Lucy's visit, Mrs. Winifred found herself so much better, that she proposed an airing in her little garden-chair, and took Miss Lovel with her: and, after a short turn in the park in the cool of the evening, the old lady declared that she felt herself to be much stronger and heartier than she had been

for a long time. The same evening a letter was received from Mr. Nuttall, stating that he should be detained in London for at least a week longer.

The following morning I called on Miss Lucy at the Hall, and found that she was on very agreeable terms with Mrs. Winifred, the name of Mr. Nuttall having been scarcely mentioned in her presence. "And I am going out again with my aunt," said Miss Lovel. "We hear that Mrs. Stephens is ill; and my aunt says that she will go as far as the gamekeeper's to see the sick woman, if I will accompany her."

Till I returned home, it did not occur to me that there could be any harm in the proposed excursion; but, reflecting upon it a little more, I resolved to ride my pony in the same direction; or, perhaps, to go as far as Torville; and, leaving my horse there, to walk through the woods to the high grounds which overlook the gamekeeper's. Having formed this plan, I sent a little boy to the Fall Farm, to request young Taylor to meet me at Torville at five o'clock. "It is better," thought I, "to prevent

than repent; and Mrs. Winifred has already played me such a variety of tricks, that I am become quite suspicious.”

I was at Torville at the appointed hour, and found my young friend Robert equally punctual. I then informed him of my reasons for desiring his company. “Mrs. Winifred and Miss Lovel are to take an airing to the gamekeeper’s this evening, Robert,” I said, “and I have an inclination to observe the motions of the old lady: though, as Mr. David is safe in Town, there is the less to fear. But, if you do not regard the trouble, we will play the part of spies. We will fix ourselves on some high point of the park, and thence watch the motions of the carriage, noticing what route it really takes, and who drives it and accompanies it.”

“With all my heart, Sir,” replied Robert. “But you had better not leave your horse here. You cannot keep up with me on foot, Sir; and if, by and by, we want to get rid of him, I can fasten him to some tree, or under some shed, where he will be quite safe.”

I approved this scheme: and, putting myself under the direction of the young man, he led me to a point of the park, whence we had a view of the Hall, and of the gates at the end of the village; and Robert soon announced the entrance of the carriage into the park through these gates.

“And what road does it take?” I asked.

“Straight for the gamekeeper’s,” he replied. “And now, Sir, suppose we proceed towards the Pools, and we will fasten the horse in the wood, and then go to a spot above the Lower Pool, from which we shall be able to see the carriage again, as it comes up to the house.”

I was “very agreeable,” as the old ladies say; and Robert switching the pony, the creature set out at a round trot. The young man ran by my side, till we arrived at the woods above the Pools, the deer flying from us in all directions as we disturbed them in our progress through the quiet glades. I dismounted in the woods, and having got Robert to fasten my horse in a

very retired place, we proceeded to an eminence, from which we had a full view of the Lower Pool, and of the gamekeeper's house beyond it. .

This house is entirely surrounded with woods, excepting in front, where a green and lovely lawn slopes down to the water. On the right of this lawn is the commencement of a succession of dingles, opening one into another, till they terminate in those so often spoken of behind the parsonage. The same brook which supplies the Pools, in leaving them pours itself through the dingles, forming various lovely cascades, and composing, together with trees, rocks, underwood, mossy banks, undulating slopes, little pools, and secret recesses, such a variety of combinations as the eye of taste could never be weary of contemplating.

Through a part of these glens is a rude cart-way, which in winter is impassable; but which in summer is sometimes traced by a dray or a hay-waggon, though even then with great labour to the horses.

I sat down on the point before men-

tioned, which overlooks the gamekeeper's grange, (for this house is sometimes called the Grange,) and Robert sat down by me, in order that his taller figure might be less liable to be noticed. We had not sat here long before we heard the wheels of the carriage, and the next minute we saw the vehicle drive up to the door of the house. There was no footman accompanying it, and I asked young Taylor if he could distinguish the driver.

"I think that it is not the old coachman," he answered.

I took out a little spy-glass, which I generally carry in my pocket, and gave it to him.

He exclaimed with delight at the effect of the glass. "I see them all now, as if they were only ten yards off," he said. "It is not the coachman who drives; it is one of the grooms, the one who used to ride out with Mr. Nuttall."

"Indeed!" I exclaimed.

"And there," continued Robert, "Mrs. Stephens is come to the door, and the ladies are getting out."

“I thought I had heard that Mrs. Stephens was very ill,” I remarked.

“The ladies are now gone in,” said Robert.

“Have you seen Esther?” I asked.

“No,” replied Robert; “you will not see her to-day, Sir. She is at the Hall, drinking tea with Mrs. Penelope, by special invitation. As I was coming to find you, I met her in high spirits: for Mrs. Nuttall, I should say Mrs. Penelope, has not invited her till now, since she became a great lady.”

Robert and I then began to talk of the strange changes and chances which had lately taken place, and we conversed on one subject or another connected with these, still keeping our eyes on the carriage at the door of the Grange, till, being surprised at the length of time which appeared to have elapsed, I looked at my watch, and found that it was nearly seven o'clock.

“Mrs. Stephens has tempted them to stay and drink tea with her,” remarked Robert.

“It must be so,” I replied; “but we will not move from this place till we see them off. I hope Mrs. Winifred has no device in hand; but I am not yet satisfied.”

Robert now renewed his discourse with me, speaking more particularly of Ellen, Sophia, and Eugenius; and he likewise mentioned Theodore, tenderly regretting his loss as an event which had cast a shade on Roxobel, which would not be removed while the present generation continued to exist.

I felt that I had not lost my labour with this young man, and it was a sweet thought, and one, which at that time, proved particularly consolatory to me.

But the carriage still remained stationary, although it was eight o'clock by my watch.

“There is a stir among them now,” said Robert, applying the glass to his eyes; “but it is nothing: the girl is bringing some drink to the coachman.”

We sat another quarter of an hour, and were then startled by the report of fire-arms in the wood to our left.

“Eh!” cried Robert, “what’s that?”

A smoke rose from the wood, but presently passed away.

“I dare say it is James Stephens,” rejoined Robert; “but I wonder the ladies don’t come out: it is well it is so soft an evening.”

Having sat another ten minutes, Robert said, “They are stirring now: please to look at your watch, Mr. Airley.”

“Twenty-five minutes past eight,” I replied. “I am resolved that I will sit here till the carriage moves; and if it does not stir before dark, we will go nearer the house.”

“What do you suspect, Mr. Airley?” asked Robert, with animation.

“I can hardly tell you, Robert,” I replied: “but I am certainly uneasy.”

Another quarter passed, and another report was heard.

“Did you hear that?” enquired Robert: “but I think the carriage is moving. No, it is not so: but there is such a glare now from the setting sun, that I do not see so clearly as I did.” In effect, a golden light

was at that instant shed over the landscape, and long beams of glory, distinctly marked, were shot across the woods.

During the following few minutes, the disk of the sun had sunk beneath the horizon, and the breeze at the same moment began to freshen. The landscape then became rapidly more obscure; and, as I looked again at my watch, and found that it was almost nine o'clock, a third report met our ears from the woods.

A moment afterwards, young Taylor informed me that the carriage was in motion.

“Which way does it move?” I asked. “Back to the Hall, I trust?”

“No, Sir. No,” replied Robert, eagerly. “No, not at all—quite the other way. What can they be about? Are they mad? Did ever any thing but a hay-cart go that road before? The horse’s head is towards the east. Perhaps they are turning the carriage. No!—there they go!—straight onward. Surely it can’t be! Why, Mr. Airley, they have turned into the dingle woods. They are gone down the cart-way, the way our

people call the Red Lane, where nothing with wheels but a dray ever went since Noah's flood. Is Mrs. Winifred tired of her life? Come, Mr. Airley, Sir, are you for following them? or will you go back, and leave me to the adventure?"

I started up. "Not for the world would I go back," I exclaimed; "come on, Robert: we must cross the brook, I suppose, at the mouth of the Pool. Let us hasten. Yet I fear it is still so light that we shall be seen from the Grange."

"No," replied Robert, "you need not cross the brook at the Pool-Bridge, I can lead you a nearer way. There is a little bridge in the first dingle, and I know the path to it. We must keep on this side the Pool and the brook, till we come to the bridge. But it is a rough way we have to go."

"Lead on," I said, and grasped my staff, "I will keep up with you. But, are you quite sure that the carriage turned into the dingle?"

"I am," answered Robert; "I can't be mistaken: so pray come on, Sir. We shall

either hear or see the carriage as soon as we are in the first dingle." So saying, he pushed forward, and I hastened after him as rapidly as my short limbs would carry me.

CHAPTER VIII.

WITCHCRAFT.

BY the time that young Taylor and I had descended from the higher grounds, and entered the skirts of the dingle, the shades of evening were thickening fast around us, and a damp exhalation arose from the deep and swampy grounds into which we were descending.

“Here, Sir, here,” cried young Taylor, pushing his way through an exceedingly narrow and intertangled path, “follow me close, Sir, and I will hinder the boughs from flapping in your face. Hold your hat, Sir, guard your eyes, mind your feet; it’s no smooth walking here, and not so much as a glowworm to light our path.”

We proceeded as well as we could, though with more haste than speed; and, as we

descended, the darkness increased, being deepened not only by the rapid approach of night, but by the foliage of the overhanging trees, whose branches met above our heads, like the arches of a cloister.

At length, the path widened a little, and a faint light appeared at the end of it. "Do you see the waterfall, Sir?" asked young Taylor: "the light from the sky just shews it; the bridge is a little way below it."

"Yes, I see the waterfall," I replied; "but don't let us walk right into it."

The young man laughed, and we went rapidly forward, till presently we reached a more open path, within the first dingle, and saw the bridge before us. Robert then directed me to keep my hand upon the rail which runs along one side of the bridge, the other side being utterly unprotected: and though I felt myself almost stunned by the rush and the roar of the waterfall, my tremulous feelings being further excited by the spattering of the spray on my face, yet I summoned resolution enough to follow the guidance of the young

man; and we soon found ourselves safely landed on the opposite side of the brook.

“We must go on a little further through the brushwood,” said Robert, “and then we shall gain the cart-way, and all will be straight before us.”

I followed my conductor; and when we had reached the deep way called the Red Lane, we had just light enough to know where we were. We now found our path exceedingly rough, but nevertheless hastened onwards nearly in a line with the brook, till we arrived at the place where the first dingle draws to a very narrow point, adjoining the entrance of the second dingle: and we here became aware of a considerable declivity in our road; together with a corresponding fall of the brook.

“Can the carriage be before us, Robert?” I asked.

“It must be, Sir,” he replied, “unless it has met with an accident by the way; for I am sure that it entered this lane, and it could not have found room to turn any where: and there is no passage out of the lane, excepting into the hay-fields.”

“Well, let us go on,” I said; “we will pursue the adventure as far as it will take us, come what will of it.”

“You had better take my arm, Sir,” said Robert: “you are not so accustomed to this rough country as I am.”

Accordingly, being thus assisted in my progress, I descended towards the second dingle, the path reminding me of what I had read of the sides of the pyramids, namely, that they seem to consist of very long steps. So difficult, indeed, did I find it, that I said to Robert, “I am persuaded that no wheel-carriage could have weathered this road.”

“Hush, Sir,” whispered Robert: “do you not hear voices?”

We stood still and listened. The sounds, though remote, were distinctly audible. We accordingly proceeded as gently as the road would permit, and, taking a sudden turn, we perceived a light flickering among the trees.

“Do you see that light, Sir?” asked Robert.

“I do,” I replied.

“Tread softly, Sir,” added the young man.

We were now past the opening of the second dingle; and the light became quite visible glimmering athwart the underwood.

“Stand a moment, Sir,” said Robert, in a very low voice. “Look to your right.”

I did so, and perceived the dark outline of a figure passing between ourselves and the light.

“What is that?” asked Robert.

“I know not,” I replied: “but these woods are haunted to-night: there is no doubt of it. You have guided me to the place of action, however; I cannot question it.”

We went on slowly and softly, and came to a spot where a sort of glade opened in the wood; and we there distinguished before us, though still at some distance, and partly concealed by the underwood, a fire blazing high, and casting its red glare in various directions among the trees. A few more steps brought us to a place, where, being ourselves concealed by the bushes, we could plainly discern the extraordinary

and strangely assorted figures which were gathered round this fire. We also saw a kettle suspended on transverse sticks hanging over the blazing wood ; an object which conveyed to my mind the notion of witchcraft, a notion which I have habitually connected with the figure of a kettle boiling in some solitary place, the greater part of the surrounding country being lost in darkness. Near and around this fire were several female figures, clad in rags, and wearing dark mantles, without hats or any other head-gear than ragged caps. These persons were busied round the caldron, passing to and fro between us and the blaze ; and beyond them, on the contrary side of the fire, were two superior personages habited in deep mourning, who were indeed no other than the ladies we were seeking ; namely, Mrs. Winifred and Lucy Lovel. Beyond the immediate blaze of the fire, I could distinguish nothing further : but the younger eyes of Robert Taylor detected the wheels of Mrs. Winifred's carriage.

Robert and I, on first observing this

motley scene, stood perfectly petrified with amazement.

“Mr. Airley,” exclaimed Robert, “could you have believed it? what can they be about?”

“Inconceivable!” I replied. “But cannot we creep round through the bushes so as to hear what they say? We might, perhaps, gather something from their discourse.”

On hands and knees, then, slowly and cautiously, we made our way through the brushwood, till we arrived directly in the line of the fire; being so near to it, that we could see and hear distinctly all that was passing: and never did I behold a more striking scene.

Directly before us was a lawn, covered with turf, and illuminated from the fire which blazed brightly under the kettle; and in the back-ground, the high trees and the rising bank appeared partially enlightened, while the remoter recesses of the wood were enveloped in shade. The figures round the fire were Nelly, her mother, and her daughter;—these three females all

clothed in a variety of patchwork and rags, and exhibiting singularly fine specimens of the dark Egyptian countenance in its three stages of life, namely, buxom youth, maturity, and old age. Mrs. Winifred was attired in a sort of widow's weeds, with a deep-bordered cap or hood which concealed nearly her whole face; and Lucy Lovel was also dressed in the deepest sables, her features being partly hid under a veil of white lawn.

The old lady was seated on the stump or trunk of a tree, while her niece stood by her side: and at the instant that I first looked up from my concealment, the three gipsies were addressing Miss Lovel.

“There is no use, fair lady,” said the eldest of these wild women, “in fighting against fate. Ye have acted fearfully in so doing already, and have brought evil down where ye least intended it. It was known, when ye were yet in your leading-strings, it was known by me what was decreed for ye: and did not my daughter tell ye months ago, that the hair of him who was

to call you wife, was of the colour of the yellow gold?"

"Was it that I might hear these women talk that you brought me here this evening, aunt Winifred?" enquired Miss Lovel.

"And if I did, Lucy, was I to blame?" returned Mrs. Winifred. "You know, my dear Lucy, how deeply my heart is engaged in this affair; only hear what they have to say." And we saw the old lady lay her hand on Miss Lovel's arm, as if to prevent her from quitting her side.

"Well, let them speak; let them say all they choose," replied Miss Lovel; "their predictions cannot now affect me one way or another. They can neither give me pain nor pleasure, joy nor sorrow. There are no letters now which they can promise me; no grievous disappointments which they can foretel." And so saying, the young lady raised her head as if looking upwards, and clasped her hands together, but she immediately dropped them by her side, casting her eyes on the ground, as if in a deep muse.

The younger gipsy then approached, and

spoke low, looking hard in Lucy's face; the eldest, at the same time, beginning to stir the caldron, and pouring something into it from time to time which, burning or blazing up, cast a lurid glare on the whole scene, and gave to every surrounding figure the ghastly appearance of death.

“What now?” exclaimed young Taylor. “Where are we? Are we in the infernal regions?” And the young man trembled excessively as he stood by my side.

In the mean time the middle-aged gipsy walked round and round the fire, muttering several strange words, and then standing before Mrs. Winifred, “I see them, I see them,” she exclaimed. “I see the house of Helmsley raised to higher glory than it ever yet attained. I see a long race of fair sons and daughters, rising to call you and this lady parents, and to bless the moment when a second love compelled the mourner to forget the first. I see! yes, I see! My eyes are charmed. My eyeballs are strained. What do I hear? Music, music. Hist, a marriage song—a strain of joy. Ah, yes!”—and she seemed to

strain her eyes, stretching out her uplifted hands, and assuming all the airs of a Pythoness on the tripod.

“What does she see? what does she see?” asked young Taylor.

Again the blue light flashed from the fire, and at the same moment the three witches began a slow and solemn chant; and as the blue colour passed away, and gave place to a more natural and agreeable one, they changed their notes to a lively and pleasant strain, the words of which I could not distinguish, though I felt assured it was a kind of bridal song.

The voices of these women, though untaught, were melodious, and well suited the scene; and, had my heart been at ease, I could have enjoyed what was passing before me: but I was not prepared for joyful impressions, and indeed, had I been merely an unconcerned spectator, the deeply melancholy figure of Miss Lovel would have chased all pleasurable ideas from my mind.

While the last notes of the gipsy's song yet resounded through the woods, Robert

whispered, "There, Sir, there it is again;" and he pointed out to me a shadowy figure, garbed in the deepest black, gliding behind us, along the woods. "What can that be?" asked the young man. "Look, Sir, it passes behind Mrs. Winitred. There it is lost beyond that tree. What can it be? It is a female figure, but no gipsy neither. Is it a living person do you think, Sir?"

"Hush, hush," I replied: "the gipsies look this way; they will hear you."

We were again quiet and motionless: and the women began another song, lengthening out some of the notes to a kind of yell, while at the same time they danced round the caldron, and fed the fire with something which occasioned flames of divers colours to ascend from it.

This incantation had continued little more than a minute, when reports, as if of fire-arms, were heard in various directions; and something appeared to fly from the midst of the trees, falling into the caldron, where it fizzed for a moment, and then arose like a fiery serpent in the air. At the same instant, the wood resounded with

shouts, and, by the blaze of the fiery serpent, we saw many figures clothed in white, having their heads decorated with branches of trees, who sprang out in various directions from the shades.

“Treason! treason!” I exclaimed. “Taylor, rush forward, seize Miss Lovel, hold her fast, and fight for your life. Let the fiends take the old lady if they will.”*

The young man dashed forward like a lion;—the little man followed him;—and they both added their voices to the general uproar, the noise by this time having become perfectly astounding. And whereas, but a moment ago, we had seen one fiery serpent issuing from the wood, the whole air was now full of them, together with rockets, dragons, wheels on fire, blazing stars, and other figures, whose movements were attended with such spittings, bouncings, and burstings of combustible matter, such a smoke and smother, such a smell of gunpowder and sulphur, that it was only at intervals that I could see the ladies; though it appeared to me that

they remained where they had first stood, as if they were spell-bound.

Young Taylor and I both pressed forward to seize Miss Lovel, shouting aloud, repeating her name, and crying, "Treason!" and "Murder!" and I thought once, when the light so favoured me that I could see her, that young Taylor, who was foremost, had got hold of her: and I even heard him say, "It is me, Miss, a friend, don't fear. It is me, Robert Taylor, don't be afraid."

The uproar still went on, and I distinguished the voice of Black Tom above all the rest, calling out, "Here—this way, that way,—make sure of the lady. There, there—away with you. Success to you. Good speed to you. There, away with you. Good luck to you."

Then followed a shout of triumph from the same wild man, and a laugh which made the woods ring again, and which, in my ears, sounded almost demoniacal.

In the mean time the confusion increased. I struggled, and struggled, and endeavoured to press forward; but I seemed to gain no ground, nor to approach one inch

nearer the object at which I was aiming, namely, Lucy. The figures around me seemed to become more and more numerous, and the smoke and darkness more dense; while the mingled uproar of shouts and shrieks, wild laughter, blasts of horns, hissings, cracklings, and bouncings, composed a medley of sounds which were truly astounding. Notwithstanding these obstacles, however, I struggled and strove to proceed, till, after encountering various heavy blows from unknown hands, a fiery snake struck me across the legs, and I fell prostrate on the ground, in a state of partial insensibility. I say partial insensibility, because I have some recollection of having heard dreadful shrieks and noises after my fall, accompanied with the same loud laughter which had disturbed me before; and I also remember the subsiding of the tumult, and the cessation of these discordant sounds.

At length, though I know not exactly after what interval, I recovered myself so far as to be able to sit up and look about me. But for some minutes I could not call

to mind where I was, or what had brought me there. My head had fallen against the stump of a tree, and I felt considerably hurt. This circumstance, no doubt, added to my confusion; and, as I before hinted, I for some minutes felt like a person waking from a frightful dream. It was pitch dark, excepting where a few faint rays gleamed from the expiring fire of the gipsies: and a silence so dead reigned around me, that I could distinctly hear the rippling of the brook as it rolled down the glen, although it was many feet distant. I still smelt sulphur; but all the fiery phenomena which had seemed to set the very heavens in a blaze had totally disappeared, having yielded, as I before remarked, to the deepest obscurity. I made an effort to rise, but immediately sunk down again, uttering a deep groan.

“Who is there?” said a voice close by me.

I recognised the voice to be that of young Taylor, and I answered, “A friend—Henry Airley.”

“O, Mr. Airley, are you here? Are you

alive?" asked the youth, in a sorrowful voice.

"I believe so," I replied.

"Are you able to get up, Sir, and set me free?" asked the young man: "for the hobgoblins have tied me to a tree; that is, I am either tied or bewitched, though I don't rightly know which, for I can neither stir hand nor foot. But if I once get my liberty again, if I don't pay them and rescue Miss Lovel, I will never sleep any more."

"Make no rash vows, Robert," I said. "Vengeance is not of man. But is not Lucy safe? Is my sweet child lost?" And I forthwith sprang up, the bare idea giving me strength, and groped my way to my companion, guided by his voice.

By the young man's direction, I took a clasp-knife from his pocket, and cut the cords by which he was bound hand and foot to the tree: on which, when he had stretched and shaken every limb to ascertain whether he was bewitched or not, he helped me out of the bushes; and bringing me to the dying embers, he presently contrived to excite such a blaze as enabled

him to see to bind up my brow, which had been deeply cut, and which had bled profusely. This being done, we began to concert measures for the rescue of my dear Lucy, on whose present situation I could not think without horror.

Young Taylor undertook to lead me safely out of the wood, notwithstanding the thick darkness; for I felt that it was of the greatest consequence to give notice of what had happened as soon as possible. Robert proved a good guide; and we were not long before we reached the place where we had left the horse.

As we hurried along, we did not spare Mrs. Winifred; and though young Taylor used no very mild nor polite epithets in speaking of her, yet I could not find in my heart to reprove him. Wretched, hateful old woman! it almost made me mad to think that she should so far have succeeded: and we had no hopes of doing any thing in time to prevent a forced marriage between Mrs. Winifred's son and her niece, which, it could not be doubted, was the object of this strange and wicked plan.

And, alas! there was a clergyman close at hand, who, we knew, would be ready to perform the hateful ceremony: and Lucy, we feared, would not have resolution to resist.

“But how was it?” I asked: “did I not see you take hold of Miss Lovel, Robert?”

“I did, Sir,” replied the young man; “but I could not make her understand that I was a friend.”

“Unfortunate, most unfortunate!” I exclaimed. “But make haste, all our hope rests on being quick. Why did you let her go?”

“She was forced from me by two men,” he answered. “Two against one, you know, Mr. Airley, is not fair. These men were disguised, but I know I could swear to one, the villain. O, but I’ll pay him.”

“Whom do you suspect?” I enquired.

“Whom, Sir,” replied Robert, “but Black Tom! It was he that forced the lady away, I could swear to it: though the uproar was such that it might have puzzled any one. He dragged her away, and then I lost sight of her.”

“ Ah, sweet Lucy !” I exclaimed ; “ my lovely and beloved one. My Lucy, whom I have loved and cherished from infancy ! affianced bride of the noble Theodore ! and is such the fate of my Lucy ? Is she doomed to be the wretched wife of David Nuttall ?”

I could not restrain my grief, but gave way to it for a time with showers of tears.

“ And what became of that wretch Mrs. Winifred ?” I asked.

“ I forgot to look after her ; I don’t know when or how she disappeared,” he replied.

I had forgotten my wound and my weakness ; and I made the utmost possible haste to the place where we had left the horse ; and mounting it, I put it almost to a gallop, while young Taylor ran by my side. Thus urging our way homewards, we arrived in the village as the Hall clock struck two, and knocked violently at my lodgings.

I had so seldom been from home at this hour, that Mr. and Mrs. Strickland had

felt alarmed, and had sat up for me. Mr. Strickland therefore opened the door, with a candle in his hand, and, seeing my condition—my head tied up, and my face covered with blood—he was terrified, and called his wife. I was not aware of my great exhaustion till I was brought into the house, when I immediately fainted. Mrs. Strickland instantly called her servant, and sent over the way to Mr. Barnaby Semple; but it was some time before I recovered my recollection.

In the mean while Robert explained what had happened, and went out with Mr. Strickland, who desired his wife to inform me that he should lose no time in calling up some of his friends, and proceeding to the Warrener's Tower, where he felt assured that the young lady had been taken.

When I recovered my senses, it was daylight; I was lying on a couch in the parlour, and Mrs. Strickland and her maid were sitting by my side. My head was no longer bound up; but part of my hair had been cut off, and a black patch had

been placed over the wound. The moment I recollected myself, I sprang up, and insisted on going directly to the Hall, and on seeing Lucy.

Mrs. Strickland in vain entreated me to be calm, assuring me that young Taylor and her husband would do every thing in their power to discover the young lady, and to prevent any further violence. I would not be satisfied. All she could prevail on me to do was to swallow a dish of coffee: after which, I made all possible haste to the Hall, though the great clock had not yet struck six.

CHAPTER IX.

THE BRIDAL.

As I approached the great door of the mansion, I perceived that it was already open, and a housemaid was in the portico, with a broom in her hand. She was surprised to see me at so early an hour and in such a condition; for I had waited only to change my coat and waistcoat, and some other parts of my dress which were stained with blood, the rest of my apparel being still in much disorder.

The first person for whom I asked was Richard.

The servant replied, that he had been out all night.

“On what errand?” I asked, fiercely.

“I don’t know, Sir,” she answered.

“And your lady? Did Miss Lovel

return with her last night?" I enquired.

"I cannot say, Sir," was her reply. "My lady did not return till we were all in bed excepting Mrs. Penelope."

"Where is Mrs. Susan?" was my next question.

"She was sent yesterday evening to the parsonage," was the reply.

"For what purpose?" I asked.

"I don't know, Sir," said the servant.

"Where is Miss Fisher?" I said.

"I can't tell," she answered. "I think she is in bed. She never rises till late, Sir."

"Can I see your lady?" I rejoined.

"Not yet, Sir," returned the young woman; "she is not risen."

"I must see her," I said.

"You might, perhaps, see Mrs. Penelope," she replied; "she is in the Brown Parlour, Sir. She has ordered breakfast early."

A step behind me at that moment made me turn round, and I saw Esther Stephens ascending the portico. The young woman

looked all flushed and wild; her eyes flashing fire, her cheeks of a carnation hue, her hair disordered, and her whole dress in confusion. She took no notice of me, but asked to see Mrs. Nuttall.

“My lady?” asked Dolly.

“No,” replied Esther; “I desire to see Mrs. Penelope.” And she rushed forward.

“Where are you going, Miss?” said the housemaid, following, and attempting to detain her.

“I will see her,” repeated Esther. “I know where she is. Stand out of my way. I will see her this moment.” And she broke from the servant, and rushed across the Hall, and along the matted gallery.

“What now?” exclaimed Dolly. “What is the matter now? Oh, Mr. Airley, what a house this is!” And she threw down her broom, and followed me, as I hastened after Esther.

I was not so quick but that Esther had reached the parlour some time before me. She had entered, leaving the door open behind her, and advanced to the table in the centre of the room, where a breakfast

was set out, and Mrs. Penelope was busied with the tea-things.

Mrs. Penelope was dressed in a sort of muslin wrapper, with a white knot on her cap: and, on Esther's appearance, she had risen, and stood looking at her.

“Vilest, and most false of human beings!” began Esther; for the poor girl seemed to be beside herself: “and is this the end of all your flattering speeches? Was it in order that I might not suspect you—that I might be out of the way—that you got me here last night, and wheedled me with your fine discourse and your Judas's kisses? But I will make it appear, I will soon make it appear, that I, and only I, have a right to the plighted faith of that most deceitful of men. The bride shall not long enjoy her triumph; I will tell a tale that shall bleach the roses on her cheeks.” And she tore her hat from her head, and threw it wildly on the floor.

“Young woman,” returned Mrs. Penelope, “are you deranged? What is it you would say? Go home, and ply your needle, and don't come here ranting and raving like a

mad thing. Surely you never expected that a young man with my nephew's pretensions should marry such as you?" And she drew up her lip, with an expression of consummate scorn.

"Oh, was ever woman's heart so cold! so base!" exclaimed Esther. "Was not it last night that you called me your own child, your daughter, your pretty Esther? But, alas! I weep not alone. Sweet Miss Lovel! Oh, Mr. Airley, cannot this match be broken?—is it too late?"

"Heaven forbid!" I replied; "and for this reason am I come. Mrs. Penelope, I am here to demand Miss Lovel at your hands; and I charge you, at your peril, to tell me, this moment, where Lucy is. Dr. Beauchamp is her guardian by law. In his name and authority I act: and, if you do not this moment inform me where the young lady is, I shall have instant recourse to such force as shall compel you. I demand to see Miss Lovel, or I will seek the aid of the law to oblige you to produce her. Is she in this house?"

"And pray, Sir," rejoined the duenna,

“ what have I to do with Miss Lovel? How am I to know where she is? Is she under my authority? Have I the charge of her?”

“ Is she, or is she not, in this house, vilest of women?” I said.

“ Vilest of women, indeed!” replied Mrs. Penelope. “ To whom are you speaking, Sir? I tell you that I have no concern in Miss Lovel’s affairs.”

“ I will tell you,” said Esther, “ where she is, Mr. Airley, since Mrs. Penelope does not choose to confess. She is at the Warrener’s Tower. She was taken there last night; and Mr. Aprice is there too: and by this time, no doubt, the fatal knot is tied. They have laid their plans deeply, and so far they have succeeded. But their triumph shall not last.” And she broke out into such violent exclamations, that even Mrs. Penelope was awed into silence. And for my part, I was like one stupefied, not being able to decide on what was best to be done under the present circumstances: for if, as I feared, Lucy was actually married, I saw no remedy

but submission to our wretched fate; and in our Lucy's suffering, her adopted parents, brother, and friend, must all suffer together. And the Tower too was a strong hold, and was not to be forced but by a higher authority and stronger power than I could immediately command. But to remain where I was could be of no avail: and I was rushing out at the door, when I met Mrs. Winifred, who was just entering.

The appearance of Mrs. Winifred, whom Esther had been taught to respect from infancy, silenced at once the unhappy young woman; and my heart aches, even at this distance of time, when I call to mind the sorrowful and dejected manner in which the poor creature took up her hat and walked out of the room. Oh, what have persons in exalted situations to answer for, when they deviate from the path of rectitude! How widely spread are the effects of Mrs. Winifred's unprincipled conduct!

But if poor Esther was abashed by the appearance of Mrs. Winifred, not so was the little man. I flamed out upon her the

instant she entered, demanding her niece at her hands. I know not what names I called her, for I could not command myself; but I know that I peremptorily insisted upon seeing Lucy immediately.

She answered with calmness, "You shall, Sir; I expect her this minute. I am come down to receive her as my daughter."

"You have heard then?" asked Mrs. Penelope, not heeding my ravings.

"I have, sister," replied Mrs. Winifred.

"And what have you heard? Is all right?" enquired the duenna, impatiently.

"It has taken place," replied Mrs. Winifred.

"What! the marriage, vile woman?" I exclaimed.

"Yes, the marriage, Mr. Airley," answered Mrs. Winifred, with dignity. "I certainly did not approve of the measures my son took to secure his bride; they could only be justified on the plea of violent affection: but as all has ended well, I must excuse him."

"It is no marriage," I returned; "it can be none."

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“It is a marriage, if the bride is satisfied,” replied Mrs. Winifred.

“And is she satisfied?” eagerly enquired Mrs. Penelope.

“Perfectly so,” rejoined Mrs. Winifred. “A messenger from the Tower waits without.”

“Who? what messenger?” was the next enquiry.

“The warrener himself,” replied Mrs. Winifred; “he is in the hall.”

“What, Black Tom!” I exclaimed; “he is a villain and a liar, if he says that Lucy is contented with such a bridegroom as your son.” I was in a fearful passion, and did not wait to select my words.

“Sir, Mr. Airley, your servant,” said a voice at that moment issuing from the doorway. It was Black Tom himself, and he stepped a few paces into the room, bowing to me and to the ladies.

“You villain! you hypocrite! you vilest of men!” were the uncourteous expressions with which I returned his salutations.

“Your humble servant, Mr. Airley,” continued the wild man, stepping still fur-

ther into the room, and bowing again, with a sort of triumphant smile on his countenance, for which I could have knocked him down with all my heart.

“Was it me, Sir,” he said, “you was calling a liar, just as I came up to the door? Well, Sir, I am sorry you thinks so ill of me; but I am no liar. I speaks the truth, and sometimes too much of it: that’s my chief fault. But in this present matter, I have said no more nor no less than the downright honest truth. We have had a brave wedding and a merry house up at the Tower; and the old walls, I dare say, have been wondering at all the bustle: and the bride is bravely, and sends her love to her mother, and she will be here anon with her spouse, to ask a blessing.”

“And you will swear to all this?” I said.

“Not afore you, Mr. Airley,” retorted Tom. “Have not you told me, many’s the time, not to swear? But you may believe my plain downright word, Sir: and I tell you that the lady is quite content, and seems as pleased as ever I seed her in all my life.”

Mrs. Winifred and Mrs. Penelope looked triumphantly at each other: and I am sorry to say, though it can hardly be wondered at when my love and deep attachment to Lucy is considered, that I gave way to violent indignation on the occasion. Indeed, I felt almost out of my wits: and the cool impudence of Black Tom seemed to me to merit a halter or a stake. I gave him the lie direct. I even clenched my fists; and I uttered all the rash words I could think of, strutting up to the big man in a menacing attitude, as if I had been another David, and he another Goliath; while he stepped back with unmoved coolness, every time I advanced towards him, saying, "Come, Mr. Airley; come now, good Mr. Airley; come now, don't you be putting yourself into such a quandary. Do please to command yourself a little: we shall have the bride here anon; and you'll be putting her out of sorts. Now don't you be going to put her in mind of her first love. Don't you know that ladies sometimes changes their minds? It's the way of them all; and it's what some of her kin have done afore, Sir. And she,

that is the bride, this here noble lady's son's wife, looks as serene and as pleasant this morning, as the moon in harvest. Now don't you, Mr. Airley, be going for to put her out, poor thing."

"You are intoxicated, Tom, or mad, or a fool," I answered; "I did think better of you. Is this a subject to jest about, when the happiness of a lovely young woman is at stake?"

"Shall I swear that I am not jesting, Mr. Airley?" replied Black Tom. "Bring me the book: and though you are present, I will swear; and that is a great deal to say. But hark, I hear wheels, and as the old saying goes, 'seeing's believing;' and if you don't believe when you see the bride, why then the fault must be in your eyes, and not in my tongue. So good morning to you, Mr. Airley; and when I see you next, may you be in a better temper!" The wild man then bowed to the ladies, and, thanking me for my compliments, disappeared in a moment; and, at the same instant, the bridal party drove before the window.

What I felt at that instant cannot be described: the apartment seemed to turn round with me; and I stood where the war-rener had left me, like one in a dream.

I heard the steps of the carriage let down, and voices in the hall. Being placed just opposite the door, I could see the whole length of the matted gallery; and I presently distinguished several figures in the door-way, dressed in black. "A bridal party in deep mourning!" I thought; "all is consistent: the heart and the exterior of the bride are both in unison."

The figures approached; the bridegroom walking first, while the lady was drawn a little behind him. I did not see her face, I dreaded to see it.

"Ah, Lucy! Lucy!" I said, speaking aloud. "Ah, Lucy! no longer Lovel!" And I took out my handkerchief to wipe away my tears. *

The bridegroom fell back a little in the door-way, to take his lady's hand; her head was turned from me, and she was shaded by the door. Mrs. Nuttall and Mrs. Penelope advanced to meet the party.

The young couple entered ; and the face of the lady was fully revealed to us : but O, amazing, wonderful sight ! it was not the lovely face of Lucy Lovel which presented itself, but that of Caroline, no longer Fisher, but Nuttall.

Mrs. Penelope started ; Mrs. Winifred shrieked, turned deadly pale, and sunk on the nearest seat. I cannot say what I felt, but I moved not a limb.

The happy pair advanced, they knelt to Mrs. Winifred, and asked her blessing.

“ My blessing ! ” repeated the miserable woman, with a look of horror ; “ where is Lucy Lovel ? David, what have you done ? ”

“ Pardon us, Madam, if we have been disobedient, and grant your blessing, ” said the bride.

“ Oh, spare me ! spare me a moment ! ” exclaimed the unhappy mother. “ Spare me a moment ! Oh, David, what have you done ? ”

“ I don't rightly know, ” replied the young man ; “ you must ask the lady how they managed it. ”

“But did you not know how my heart was fixed, and bound, and wrapped up in my Lucy?”

“Well, but I could not help it,” returned David, springing from his knees; “if one was not in the mind, and the other was, what could I do? And then the parson and all being ready, why, what a fool I should have looked, after all that hubbub in the wood, to have come home as I went!”

“But where is Lucy?” asked Mrs. Winifred.

“The imps have run away with her, I believe,” replied David; “for I have never set my eyes upon her since she was standing by you in the wood. But come, mother, make the best of a bad job; it might have been worse. Caroline and I shall agree very well, I dare say; though to be sure, I had rather——” And he had grace enough to stop short.

I saw that Mrs. Winifred could not recover herself; and I even pitied her, wretch as she is, for I can sympathize with any one who loves Lucy. But what could have

been more dreadfully mortifying, than to find that she had been actually sinning, as it were, with a cart-rope, and all for nothing? The old lady, however, uttered a sort of faint blessing; while Mrs. Penelope, who was, perhaps, quite as well pleased that things were as they were, (for Caroline is considerably richer than Miss Lovel,) embraced her new niece cordially. For my own part, finding that I had nothing more to do where I was, I walked off in all haste, though not before I had discovered in the bridegroom indications of his having attempted to solace himself for his disappointment, by certain potations sufficiently powerful to make him more than usually brutal. My heart, however, was lightened of a heavy load; and, as my first object was to discover Lucy, and I did not doubt that I should find her at Dr. Beauchamp's, I hurried in the direction of the parsonage. But I had hardly reached the church, when such a peal was struck up from the steeple as almost knocked me backwards, and at the same moment Black Tom and Richard came

chuckling out of the belfry, and they joined me at a little distance from the church.

“Your most obedient humble servant, Mr. Airley,” said Black Tom. “Will ye call me a liar, and a fool, and a drunkard now, Mr. Airley? Ha’n’t I and Richard outwitted them all, and cheated the very imps themselves? Though I have a strong notion that Miss Fisher had put the parson up to her scheme, for he was so ready, and had every thing so prepared like. O, Mr. Airley, I could have cracked my sides with laughter, when you were bullying me there in the Brown Parlour. Why, Richard, had Mr. Airley been but a thought taller, I should have been afraid for my life. How he did swagger and strut about the room! You must excuse me, Mr. Airley, but I must have my laugh out, or it will be the death of me: and the best is, that they don’t suspect us; not one of them, but those whose business it is to hold their tongues.”

“But tell me, Mr. Thomas, where is Miss Lucy? and when I know that, I shall be ready to hear you laugh.”

“Where should she be,” replied the

wild man, "but in the best hiding-place in the parish, where you might look a good while and not find her? And there I would have her lie still a bit, that is, if I might give my humble opinion."

"Indeed, Sir, she is safe," said Richard.

"I understand your meaning," I replied; "but I must get you to explain to me the whole of this affair. Do let me hear it from the beginning, and tell me all about it."

"With all my heart," rejoined Black Tom; "and while we walk, if you please, (for I will take you to see Miss Lovel where she is in her hiding-place,) I will let you into the whole of the matter. But you, Richard, must be off to the Hall, to help to wait at the wedding; and I will take care to tell Mr. Airley what a good lad you have been."

The warrener then began his story, which I shall record in his own language.

"Now, Sir, you must know," said he, "that Master David, he has always been mighty fond of our lady, that is, of Miss Lovel; and that he has had it in his mind a long time to make her his wife: and when

he found she was not willing, (being that she did not like him,) he consults Mr. Tolly, the miller. So Mr. Tolly he beats his head, which is not a stupid one, and they makes out their plan among them, and gets Mrs. Winifred into it; and then they consults me, and asks me for the use of my Tower. So, Sir, I pretends to be all on their side, just for the fun of the thing; and Mr. David, he collects his people: there was Tolly the miller, and young Watchum, and two or three gipsy lads, and several more. And we were to dress ourselves in white frocks, with boughs on our heads, to disguise us like, and so to seize the lady, and carry her to the Tower. But in the mean time Richard makes me acquainted that Miss Fisher was desperate fond of Mr. Nuttall, (the more fool she, but that's no business of mine :) so then it comes into my head to put her up to this scheme of my running away with Miss Lovel, and to ask her if she would be in the wood, and be ready, so that I might make a change between the ladies, and send Miss Lovel off with Richard, and

carry t'other Miss to the Tower: and she was very agreeable, and played her part very well, though you and young Taylor were like to have spoiled all. But Richard and I we soon tied Robert to the tree, and I sent a snapdragon after you, Sir. Then we put Miss Lovel in safety, and brought Miss Caroline out; and Richard was off in a trice with Miss Lovel to Torville, for she ran like a deer, he says: and I went off with the rest and Miss Fisher to the Tower. And there was Mr. Nuttall and the parson, he being, as I afore said, ready with every thing, which makes me think he was up to the whole business; and the young 'squire was so drunk he could hardly see; not but what he muttered strangely when he found we had brought the wrong lady. But we talked to him about Miss Fisher's money-bags, and put him in conceit with her; and so the knot was tied: for he was afraid of the laugh, if the story should get wind, and he was to miss both ladies. So it was all right as I had planned, and I thought I would come down to the Hall this morning, and have

a bit of fun, though I did not reckon on meeting you, Sir."

"Well, Mr. Thomas," I said, "but whose scheme was that of the crackers and serpents, and fiery dragons?"

"O, it was mine, Sir," replied Black Tom; "for I thought the more smoke we made the better chance of changing the ladies: and, indeed, we made such a smother, that we might have been changed ourselves, and not known it."

It was impossible not to laugh, although I did not feel altogether in a gay mood. At the bottom of my heart, indeed, I was very sad, though certainly most thankful on my Lucy's account. Yet I do not know that I ever laughed more heartily in my life than I did as I walked up the park with Black Tom.

"Surely," I said, "you are the strangest, wildest, oddest set of people in the world, at Roxobel. There is scarcely an everyday character among you. You are all either so good or so bad;—so very agreeable, or so particularly disagreeable;—that one must either be unhappy among you, or very hap-

py; for it is impossible to be dull or stupid. And so, Mr. Thomas, it was you that sent the snake whizzing at my legs, which threw me down, and caused me this broken head? Nevertheless, I am for ever obliged to you: though I don't see why you could not have prevented a great deal of this trouble, and the breaking of my head into the bargain, by giving us notice of the trick which was intended us."

"O, Sir," returned Tom, "where would have been the good of that? we should have lost all the fun."

"True," I rejoined; "and that would not have suited the genius of Roxobel."

In this manner we conversed; and we had not exhausted our subject when we arrived at Torville. We were introduced into the tapestry parlour, where Lucy soon joined us, and our meeting was very affecting. She wept, and thanked Black Tom in the kindest manner for what he had done for her. She had heard the bells, and had suspected that the wedding between David and Caroline had taken place; and while she testified her astonishment at Caroline's be-

haviour, she declared herself to be most thankful for her own escape. She expressed her gratitude to me and young Taylor, for our watchful care of her; and took sorrowful notice of the black patch on my brow.

Miss Lovel agreed to stay at Torville till evening. She was then conducted to the parsonage, where she still remains, having resolved not to go out till her brother returns.

After parting with Black Tom, at Torville, I proceeded to the parsonage, whose inhabitants were quite uneasy at the various and contradictory reports which had reached them. I lost no time in communicating to them the most authentic information; and when I departed left them in a state of strong excitement, though very thankful for the providential protection of their Lucy.

From the parsonage I returned to my lodgings, and made Mrs. Strickland's heart easy about her dear young lady; after which, shutting myself up in my room, I endeavoured to obtain a little repose. What

with the ringing of the bells, however, the shouts of the boys, (all set free from^r school in order to give Mr. Pen Map leisure to write an epithalamium,) and one noise or another, I found it impossible to rest: and I really expect that the various uproars of Mr. David's honey-moon will at length oblige me to take up my abode with Peter the hermit.

To-morrow an ox is to be roasted whole, in the outer court of the offices at the Hall, and a great dinner and ball is to be given to the inferior classes. Numerous other carousals and merry-makings are said to be projected: and gaiety and dissipation are to hold full sway at the mansion-house, while Mrs. Grizzy is scarcely cold, as one might say, in her grave.

But I will go to the parsonage, and there, in company with my beloved friends, I will endeavour to shut out the din of worldly commotion, and to encourage my meditations on that glorious period when the wicked shall cease from troubling, and the weary shall be at rest.

CHAPTER X.

THE RETURN OF EUGENIUS.

October.

Two months or more have passed since I contributed to my memorandums ; a chequered interval of mingled pains and pleasures.

“Pleasures!” my reader will repeat, “and can you so soon have forgotten Theodore, your loved, your lost, so as to speak of pleasure?”

I can only reply by proceeding to explain myself.

At the Hall, every thing is wild and disorderly. The first month had not elapsed, before the foolish pair broke out into expressions of mutual dissatisfaction ; as, in-

deed, might have been anticipated from the attendant circumstances of their union. According to report, Mr. Nuttall never spoke of his wife in any other terms than those of ridicule or reproach. He had suffered himself to be married in a sort of drunken frolic, and under the influence of the fear of derision, a feeling which is probably much stronger in low and vulgar minds than in such as are distinguished for intellectual endowments. And as Miss Fisher's fortune and appearance were such as to shelter the son of Timothy Nuttall from any thing like ridicule, on occasion of a marriage with her, his friends had tried to make it appear that this had originally been the object at which he had aimed. But it was very soon evident that he disliked her: for from the beginning he neglected her; and before the expiration of a month, as I before intimated, he became insulting.

Mrs. Nuttall, as I must now style the *ci-devant* Miss Fisher, (although the ladies of the former name multiply so rapidly that I hardly know how to avoid perplexity in speaking of them,) was not of so peace-

able a temper as quietly to endure the contempt which she had brought upon herself. She soon began to resent her husband's coldness and the attentions which he paid to others: for I am sorry to say, that he now resumed his acquaintance with Miss Esther, loading her with presents, and favouring her with much more of his company than he bestowed upon his wife: in consequence of which, matrimonial quarrels arose to such a height, that his unhappy consort threatened to forsake him and return to her former home.

It was on occasion of this menace, as Mr. Griffith informed me, that Mr. Nuttall first hinted to his wife, that, as she had married without a settlement, he was absolute master of her fortune, and would do with it as he pleased. This declaration roused her to appeal to his mother, who accordingly expostulated with him; but he silenced her remonstrances, by asserting that his only motive for marrying Miss Fisher was the possession of her money; that he had never loved her, and liked her less now than ever; but that he would ne-

vertheless let her alone if she would not meddle with him.

In the midst of these troubles, many of the old servants have been either dismissed or have dismissed themselves. Among the latter class are Mr. Porter and Richard; the footman having gone back to his father, a little farmer in the next parish, with whom he has resolved to remain till the return of Mr. Lovel.

Mrs. Winifred has never yet recovered from the shock which she received at her son's marriage. She did indeed put on appearances for a few days, and entertained some company on the occasion; but she has since withdrawn to her own apartments, where she lives very retired.

Mrs. Penelope and her niece have both endeavoured to appear in public as if on good terms with each other; but many little sparrings have been observed between them, even in company.

About two months after the marriage, Mr. and Mrs. Nuttall went off to the estates of the latter; and the two old ladies only are now residing at the Hall,

with comparatively few servants, and most of them new ones. And although no more than a month is past since the departure of the young people, yet I fancy that the old mansion already begins to wear a forlorn and deserted appearance ; to which the season of the year and the advance of autumn probably contribute.

As Mrs. Winifred lives so secluded, and is evidently suffering under deep depression of spirits, Mrs. Penelope undertakes the management of every thing : and while her nephew and his wife are reported to be wasting their hundreds, she is said to be saving her single pounds, by the most close and niggardly economy ; whereat the servants and the poor murmur without reserve. In consequence of the extravagances of the young pair, the tenants are threatened with an advance of rent : but for the present they are spared.

Ellen is manifestly improving in her health, and she sometimes permits Robert Taylor to see her in the presence of Mrs. Tristram. I have not yet, however, mentioned the name of the young man, in my

various conversations with her : for none of us seem inclined to promote any thing which may lead to the necessity of appearing gay. So much are we still depressed by painful recollections, that even if all difficulties were removed, as some are, I hardly think Sophia would consent, for many months to come, to be united to her Eugenius. She derives much consolation, however, from the presence of Lucy : for the young ladies live together in the tenderest friendship, being seldom deprived of each other's society, and almost always to be found within the walls of the parsonage.

The autumn has brought no changes in Roxobel, excepting those which I have mentioned. After the miseries, the deaths, and the numerous other excitements of the spring and summer, the mind of every individual seems to require rest : and, as if by one accord, we all remain within our own borders. Mr. Griffith still occupies his rooms at the Hall ; Mrs. Penelope having wisely determined to let him alone, and allow him a good dinner every day.

Eugenius is now near at hand. He writes to say that he hopes to be with us in a few weeks. His letters exhibit a mind depressed: every page is filled with lamentations for his Theodore, in which we all but too feelingly sympathize. Yet we are not without our consolations: some drops of heavenly dew have descended on our hearts. About a month since, I received a packet containing some of the possessions of our ever dear Theodore, brought over by one of the officers of the corps to which he was attached, a young man whose ill health obliged him to leave India some months after his arrival there.

I opened the package in great agitation; yet I thought it was better that I should do it than his relations. Inclosed I found his Pocket-Bible and a small manuscript. On opening the latter, I discovered that it was a sort of journal; and in the last page I read these words—"O, my God, be thou with me in this new scene upon which I am about to enter. I thank thee for the blessed effects which my afflictions and deprivations have produced on my mind

during the course of my late weary and melancholy passage. Thou, O Divine Remembrancer, hast brought to my mind many and many of those holy lessons which were given me in my childhood and my youth by the best of parents, and which, alas! have been long too little heeded by me. Thou hast made me to see and to feel the deep depravity of my own heart, and the utter helplessness and hopelessness of my condition by birth and by nature. Thou hast caused me, not only to feel my need of a Saviour, but to desire above all things that I may be united and made one with him in life and in death. Thou hast led me to pray that I may be divested of all self-confidence, and, above all, that I may be set free from that hard and haughty spirit which inclines me to despise others, and to seek my own exaltation. O, my Father, grant me humility. I formerly aspired to earthly glory; but now, all I entreat is that I may be made humble and compliant, submitting myself in all things to thy holy will." This memorandum was dated "Sangur Roads," and underneath it was written,

“*Eheu, Roxobel!—Ah, Lucy Lovel!*” No more was added; all the succeeding pages being blank.

Tenderly affected, nay delighted as I felt with this sweet memorial of our Theodore, I hardly knew whether I should venture to impart it to the family at the parsonage: but, at length, I resolved to submit it to Mrs. Beauchamp’s discretion. I could not, however, deliver it to her personally; and I accordingly sent it: and the following morning she sent me a letter, saying, “Come, Mr. Airley, come and weep with us. We cannot express what consolation that sweet memorandum of our beloved one imparted to us. His father exclaimed, ‘God be praised!’ and Lucy and Sophia knelt together to pour out their thanksgivings. Our Theodore is happy!—he is happy! We are now as well assured of his happiness, as if a voice from heaven had declared it. We wanted this assurance to make our grief supportable. We now can bear our afflictions. We were quite carried away, Mr. Airley, for a time, by our delightful feelings: one might al-

most have thought that our Theodore had been restored to us. But we have in some degree descended from our state of high excitement, and natural sorrow has again prevailed. Yet we are not fallen so low as before; the consolations of religion increasingly support us; and the sweetness of the reviving drop which we have received still rests upon our palates, and becomes more and more pleasant to us the longer it remains with us."

Being encouraged by this note, I went to the parsonage to rejoice and weep, and to weep and rejoice, with the friends whom I love most dearly on earth.

It was only a few days after this, that I was walking with my dear Lucy in the park, when she entered into discourse with me in such a manner as confirmed my opinion of the influence of religion on her mind, and added another proof to those which had already been afforded me of the general good effects of a religious education. There is, naturally, so much sweetness in the temper of Miss Lovel;—she seems so incapable of proud and angry

feelings, and is so forgetful of injuries;— that it has always been particularly difficult for me to decide, in her especial case, how far we might consider her as a renewed character, or how far she derived her amiable qualities from a naturally happy disposition, aided by the gaiety and cheerfulness of youth. It is certain, that no misfortune had touched her deeply and permanently, till the loss of her Theodore. Then came the trial of her principles: then were we to behold what the Almighty had done for our daughter; although, for some months, her grief was so overpowering as to seem to absorb all her other feelings. It was, however, on occasion of our walking together in the park, as I have before mentioned, that she first, since the death of her beloved Theodore, opened her mind fully to me, and spoke decidedly of her future plans.

“Mr. Airley,” she said, after a long silence, “I am happier now than I have been. That sweet passage in that beloved memorandum-book came to me like a message from on high. I had had some uneasy thoughts about him, Mr. Airley. I remem-

bered, that when he was here, he was not always so attentive to religion as he ought to have been; indeed, we none of us were: but he particularly (she seemed to fear to mention his name) was always, you know, so volatile. But these dreadful misgivings are removed, and have given way to the most happy assurances. I now can think of him as being in glory: and therefore I feel that I ought to resist my grief, since it is become entirely selfish. And I have been consulting the Bible, and I there find, that religion, if allowed its proper course, is able to give perfect peace.”

She then referred to this verse in John xiv. 27.—“‘Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.’

“I cannot yet understand, Sir, how I am to receive this peace; for my mind is still, at times, in tumults, and I am ready to murmur against my God. But I have prayed that I may receive the promise, and I know that I shall not be disappointed. I will throw myself on the divine mercy and

truth, convinced that all will yet be well. My Theodore, indeed, is gone; but not for ever. In a little while we shall meet again, Mr. Airley; and, in the mean time, I trust that I shall be directed how to make myself useful. When dear Eugenius comes back, I hope that it will not be very long before he is united with Sophia; and then, Sir, I was thinking that I might take her place with Dr. Beauchamp. I shall have great delight in comforting and attending him. Nobody could wait upon him but me after Sophia is gone. And this is the sort of life that I should like to lead; for Eugenius shall have my estate: I will never, never have any thing to do with it."

In this part of her discourse, the sweet young lady wept; and then, as if apologizing for her tears, she added, "It does me good to weep, Sir; I am always better after a fit of crying: you must not mind it, or notice it. I can assure you, Sir, that there is much less of rebellion and bitterness in these tears than there once was."

There was much, very much in this con-

versation which delighted me. And I was the better pleased, when I observed that this sweet frame of mind became habitual; and that the spirit of resignation was imparted to every other member of the family at the parsonage, shewing most decidedly that they had each derived the greatest comfort from the memorandums of their beloved departed one.

Eugenius is come, our dear Eugenius. He came to me first at my lodgings, about six in the evening. He was excessively affected when he saw me; he rushed into my arms, and even groaned in agony.—“My brother! my Theodore! my brother!” he exclaimed; “why did he ever leave us? Oh, my Theodore! my Lucy!”

In about an hour he became more composed, and asked me to accompany him to the parsonage, to which I consented.

As we were setting out, I asked Eugenius where he meant to take up his abode:

“Not at the Hall, certainly,” he answered.

“It must not be at the parsonage,” I rejoined. And I then proposed that we

should ask Mrs. Strickland if she could accommodate him with a chamber in her house.

Eugenius liked this proposal; and the good woman being called assured him that he was welcome to the best she had, offering to evacuate her own room for his use. To this he would not for a moment listen: so he is to have a bed in a light closet and to share my parlour with me. This latter arrangement was concluded in a few minutes, and we then proceeded to the parsonage.

We found the family at home as usual; but the servant informed us that the ladies were all up stairs with Dr. Beauchamp, Mrs. Beauchamp having prepared an upper room for the doctor, where he might recline on his couch and enjoy the society of his family.

The lamp in the hall enabled me to remark that Eugenius was extremely pale and in great agitation. I preceded him, in order to announce his arrival, and the news was received in silence. Every one at that instant, no doubt, remembered the

happy arrivals from Oxford, when another name was united with that of Eugenius. Lucy arose, but stood motionless; Sophia blushed and turned pale; the doctor tried to smile; and Mrs. Beauchamp dropped her needlework. Eugenius entered: Lucy rushed into his arms and fell weeping on his bosom; Sophia as she sat burst into tears; the poor doctor's lips moved as if in violent agitation; and Mrs. Beauchamp trembled so excessively that she could hardly stand.

Eugenius placed his sister on a chair, and hastened to kiss the extended hand of the doctor. He embraced Mrs. Beauchamp with a filial tenderness; and then, going up to Sophia, he seated himself on the sofa by her side, and, taking and retaining her hand, "Now, my Sophia," he said, "we part no more."

He was not rebuked, neither was the hand withdrawn.

In turning from this fair couple to look at my beloved Lucy, I was tenderly and painfully impressed with the forlorn and melancholy expression of her countenance. She sat alone, and seemed as it were to be

forgotten for a moment by her brother and Sophia. A vacant chair stood by her: I saw her glance at it; I read her thoughts. Eugenius and Sophia were soon aware of them: Eugenius started up, went to her, put his arms round her, and brought her to the sofa, still holding his kind arm round her waist, while her head sunk on his shoulder. Sophia burst into tears, and sobbed audibly; and the doctor raised his pale hands as if he were engaged in prayer. I looked towards the seat which Mrs. Beauchamp had occupied; but I found that she had withdrawn, no doubt with hospitable purpose. For some moments the scene was inexpressibly painful, but we gradually became more composed; and, endeavouring to promote a conversation, I encouraged Eugenius to talk of his travels: so that before the servant appeared to lay the cloth for supper, we were all as tranquil as could possibly have been expected.

Miss Lovel had resolved never to visit the Hall again till her brother's return: and although Mrs. Winifred had often ex-

pressed a desire to see her, she had always kept herself aloof since Mr. Nuttall's marriage. I had informed Eugenius by letter of the principal occurrences which had taken place during his absence: but we had a great deal to talk over next morning at breakfast; and we resolved to call on Mrs. Winifred that very day. We however determined first to send a note to enquire if we might be admitted: and, having received a favourable reply, we went at the time appointed.

As we were walking up in front of the house, "I hope," said Eugenius, "that I may be enabled to overcome all unpleasant feelings as they regard young Nuttall. Though I am ashamed of my aunt, I am resolved, with the divine help, (for it will be a trial to me,) to endeavour to make the best of the young man; to try if I cannot do him some good; and to lead him, if possible, to do some credit to his family: and, Mr. Airley, you must help me with your advice."

I pressed the young man's hand; but I could not speak, for my heart was too full.

A new servant opened the door; and Eugenius remarked it. I answered, "All is new here."

We were ushered up stairs and into Mrs. Winifred's dressing-room: but, as she was not there, we were desired to sit down. We continued silent, however, being on our guard against a certain eavesdropper who, we were well aware, infested these apartments.

Mrs. Penelope first entered, fluttering in grey silk, a sort of half mourning. She came in trippingly, as if conscious of her new dignities. She would have affected familiarity; but Mr. Lovel kept her at a proper distance by a sort of finished politeness, which, I thought, did credit to his breeding and to the courtly company which he had lately kept. At length, an inner door was opened, and Mrs. Winifred entered. Both Eugenius and myself were shocked at her appearance: for she was greatly changed, broken down, and subdued. She looked ten years older than the Mrs. Winifred we had last seen.

I admired the respectful manner in

which Eugenius addressed her ; and I perceived that she was gratified by it. She sighed, and then said, " You are come now, Mr. Lovel, no doubt, to secure to yourself the best of good things, namely, a good wife." She tried to smile and speak with ease. " I wish you joy. Tell Miss Beauchamp that I hope she will make you happy."

Eugenius felt the kindness of this, and bowed, saying that he should have great pleasure in delivering her message.

" And Lucy too," rejoined Mrs. Winifred, her lips trembling as she mentioned that beloved name, " give my love to her. Am I never to see her again? It has been one of the greatest faults of my life that I have loved Lucy too well."

" It is a fault into which we have all fallen, Madam," I said. " We have all made an idol of Miss Lovel."

" Will you bring Lucy to see me, Eugenius?" asked Mrs. Winifred.

Eugenius promised that he would: and Mrs. Winifred then spoke of her own health, which had lately, she said, been very indifferent.

“That is because you give way so, sister,” returned Mrs. Penelope. “If you would but go out and see a little company, it would do you a world of good. You ought to have gone to Town with your son: and you know that my niece pressed us to go, and would hardly take a denial.”

“I am too old for such schemes,” rejoined Mrs. Winifred.

“That’s as you think,” replied the other. Then turning to Eugenius, “Mr. Lovel,” continued Mrs. Penelope, “my nephew and niece have a very fine house in Grosvenor Square, and they have offered us a whole range of apartments: and I should have liked to have gone of all things; but my sister would not hear of it. It is a long time since I was in Town, and I was not long there then: it is as much as twenty-three years since; for it was just before my sister’s marriage, and my nephew is twenty-two past.”

At this speech both Eugenius and Mrs. Winifred reddened violently; and I was obliged to blunder out something to pre-

vent the awkwardness of a dead silence. We were glad, however, to take our leave as soon as we decently could do so.

“It makes me mad,” observed Mr. Lovel, as he quitted the Hall, “to think of the dreadful effects of the degrading folly of that wretched woman. Oh, Mr. Airley, how widely diffused is the ruin which she has occasioned! How many are now suffering from her wickedness! And when I think that our Theodore has been sacrificed to her hateful purposes, I cannot restrain my indignation. I endeavoured to be civil to her; but it was as much as I could do. Yet I pity her, vile as she is: and, surely, it cannot be the least of her punishments, to be obliged to submit to the arrogance of that detested housekeeper. But I am wrong to murmur, Mr. Airley. O for a more resigned submissive spirit!”

Eugenius and I did not immediately return to our lodgings, but we took a turn together in the park; and we there fell into discourse on the female character.

We first alluded to the character of

females abroad, comparing it with that of Englishwomen in general: and I remarked, that although, in the sight of a holy God, the sins of indiscretion in man might be equally culpable with the like offences in females, yet the interests of families were seldom so much affected by the conduct of the former as by that of the latter. "Were it possible," said I, "that a state of society could be formed in which the irregularities of females were to be overlooked, every source of domestic happiness would be closed; the sweet and lasting charities of the father, the husband, the brother, the sister, could not exist. Therefore, I trust, my dear Eugenius, that, in our now comparatively happy island, we may never be induced, by false notions of benevolence or liberality, to regard offences of this nature with any milder feeling than that of detestation. We may indeed pity a woman who has degraded herself as Mrs. Winifred has done, but we can never again honour or trust her in the same degree as before; nor will she ever be able to regain the station which she has lost in the estimation of

society. Neither can this be wondered at, if we consider how destitute she must have been of all feelings of delicacy, before she could have descended to marry as she did: for how would it have been possible that any low man could have thought of addressing her, had she not first made it appear that his attentions would be tolerated!"

We then proceeded to consider the tendency of public manners and customs in promoting or diminishing a high sense of female honour. I gave my opinion on the generality of public amusements; remarking, that I had observed them to be peculiarly powerful in lowering the standard of female delicacy; and more especially such amusements as those in which young ladies are themselves required to act a conspicuous part: and, on this account, I particularly objected to public balls. "But nothing," I added, "nothing but religion has real power to restrain our feet in the way of honour. Should Heaven bless you with daughters, my Eugenius, lead them betimes in the way of holiness; and lead them to

seek assistance from above. And bear it in mind, that as your child is, in manners, temper, and habits, at six years of age, she will probably be at twelve; as at twelve, so at eighteen; as at eighteen, so at twenty-four; and as at twenty-four, so perhaps for life."

"But, Mr. Airley," replied Eugenius, "do you make no allowance for regenerating grace, which may change the heart at every period of life, even in the latest hour?"

"I make all allowances for this," I replied: "and the most laborious parent, after all is done, must depend wholly upon God for a blessing on his labour. But, while grace is not at the command of the parent, the power of restraining his child is at his command: and this power must be exercised upon the habits and manners of his child, bringing them into conformity with that which is correct, from the first dawn of intellect, or otherwise he will incur the danger of witnessing its disgrace. And again I repeat, that early manners, tempers, and habits, are seldom eradicated, but spread their increasing influence over

the maturer years of life. Grace may indeed triumph over all impediments; and we have reason to trust that there are multitudes now

‘ High in salvation and the climes of bliss,’

who at one time were in the wretched condition of the publican or the harlot. But what man of any feeling or honour would not die rather than witness even the temporal disgrace of his child, when timely exertions on his part might prevent that evil?”

Eugenius entirely agreed with me, and referred to that retributive justice which is dispensed by the Almighty to all offenders, whether parents or children. “For although,” said he, “through the divine mercy, we may be preserved from the effects of our evil deeds in the world to come, yet, surely, our works will follow us on earth, and we shall sooner or later be made to feel their pernicious consequences; as, indeed, we have an instance in the case of Mrs. Winifred, who, in her old age, is gathering the bitter fruits of the vices of her younger years.”

Such was our conversation: and we prolonged our walk till we had talked ourselves into some tranquillity, and were able to appear in a composed state at the parsonage; where we needed all our spirits in order to support our friends.

Several weeks are past since the return of Mr. Lovel. All difficulties respecting his union with Sophia now seem to be surmounted; though she has entreated that the ceremony may not take place till the year of mourning for her brother has elapsed. The young lady's mind is evidently not in the best state for the reception of joyful feelings. Much as she loves Eugenius, and much as she is consoled by his presence, yet she will require some months in order to recover herself. In the mean time, we spend every evening together; and, during the mornings, Eugenius is much engaged in making himself acquainted with the affairs of his estate.

The domain which is now in his possession lies on the western side of Roxobel, and contains the Rock Hamlet, and some fine pasture and arable lands, and

coppices beyond it. Several farms in the adjoining parish also belong to it: and the whole is estimated at the yearly average of three thousand pounds.

There is no house on the estate which could be converted into a suitable residence: but there is a large sum of money in the funds; some of which, without the least inconvenience, might be appropriated to building. Eugenius, however, seems quite unsettled with regard to providing a habitation. Lucy is anxious that he should repair and fit up the old mansion in which the gamekeeper lives; which, being on her estate, she promises shall be his as soon as she is of age. It is very pleasantly situated, and we all like it exceedingly. It might be made a paradise. But Mr. Lovel declares that he never will take his sister's estates from her, and Sophia will not hear of it. So at present nothing is determined upon.

Eugenius is living with me at Mrs. Strickland's, and his servant Richard (for he has taken Richard as his servant) lodges in a cottage hard by: and the

money which is saved by living thus humbly is to be spent in repairing the cottages on the estate and improving the land.

It would almost appear that the riches of this world, and its pomps, are thrown away upon us; so thoroughly are all our feelings changed by the loss of our Theodore. Not that we ever were particularly ambitious: with the exception of Eugenius, none of us have ever been much troubled with that mania. We are, on the other hand, (I mean, both the family at the parsonage, and the young Lovels,) unusually attached to literary pursuits and the contemplation of the beauties of nature.

Dr. Beauchamp was, and still is, the most elegantly minded man I ever met with; the man most raised above the gossip and low feelings of the world; being a lover of simplicity and innocent enjoyment. He has ever lived in a world of his own creation; possessing the happy talent, wherever he has gone, of raising a sort of elegant society around him. He has the

most rare facility that I ever met with of combining religious feelings with the commonest acts of life: not in the manner of the ancient puritan, who reduced religion to his own low standard, introducing coarseness even into his prayers and praises; but in the style which we might fancy to distinguish those who, having become the subjects of the first resurrection, have been received as the inhabitants of a world without sin, and have been made partakers of a new and spiritual nature, perfectly purified from the corruptions of the flesh. The excellent pastor is now, however, withdrawn from much of that society on which he once shed the beaming influences of his piety and genius; though some of the flowers which arose and blossomed under those influences, still continue to shed their sweetness in the solitudes of Roxobel.

Miss Lovel and Sophia have both been to visit Mrs. Winifred. The old lady was much affected at seeing Lucy. Mrs. Penelope being present, no reference was made to past events. The young ladies were,

cause events do not happen as I could wish, am I to arraign Providence?—because I am in the dark, must I stand still? Nay, but I will go on. I will force myself to go on. I will pray that I may walk by faith; and light will anon break out upon me.

But, Lucy dear, you are not my daughter; you are not my sister: why should my happiness be so bound up in yours? And why cannot I see the tears in the dove's eyes of my Sophia, and be happy myself, and independent of you both? But I cannot; no, I cannot, fool that I am. Yet, can I not remember the time, when I came a stranger to Roxobel, and knew and cared for none of you?

But I will proceed with my journal. Something tells me not to despair. I will proceed.

To-morrow will be new year's day. But ah, what a day! The country mourns: it is covered with snow. The air is frosty and nipping. The wind whistles through the valleys. Here, as I sit alone, it mourns at my window. It seems to tell of other days

and times long past. Why am I this evening thinking so much of Emily and Edmund Lovel, and of the mother of Theodore? I never saw any of them. Why do so many scenes of my early life at Roxobel rise afresh to my recollection?—and that first walk with Eugenius and Theodore?—and that event, so often referred to, when little Sophia was tied in the wood and left there?—and Theodore's farewell of Roxobel and of his Lucy?—and of his "*Eheu, Roxobel!—Ah, Lucy Lovel?*"—and the cries of little Henry, and the tears of Ellen?—and the contrition of Robert, and his simple offering to love, the stone placed over *the grave of Henry?* My heart is worked up to a painful sense of the pathos of life. I must rouse myself: my feelings are becoming morbid. But I will rouse myself: I will write; I will be methodical; I will study dates; I will be the mere man of business.

December 31st, 1756, the last day of the year.

A fortnight since, yes, exactly one week before Christmas, Mr. and Mrs. Nuttall

arrived at the Hall, in a travelling-chaise and four. A coach followed them, filled with ladies' maids and French valets. They came at midnight, and nearly beat down the gates of the outer court in arousing the sleeping inmates. The next day the Hall resembled the booths in Bartholomew Fair; all the vagabonds in the neighbourhood began to swarm to it: and while my lady, with her painted cheeks, received the company at one end of the house, her amiable spouse kept his orgies at the other.

But to descend to particulars, and exhibit at one view a picture of the proceedings at the Hall, I shall give an account of an evening which I spent there, in company with Mrs. and Miss Beauchamp and Eugenius; being the only evening which we have thought right, or, indeed, which we have been invited to spend at the old mansion, since the marriage. It was on a public occasion; namely, the celebration of Mrs. Winifred's birth-day, which was appointed to be kept that day, though not precisely the true one: and, as we thought that it

might perhaps be the last time when we should be asked to attend this solemnity, (for to us it was a solemn, not a joyful occasion,) we agreed to accept the invitation. Mrs. and Miss Beauchamp, Eugenius, and myself, walked together to the Hall: Lucy would not join the party, excusing herself by alleging that Dr. Beauchamp could not be left quite alone. We invited Mrs. Tristram and Ellen, to sit with Lucy and the doctor; engaging that Margery should be a guest in the decent kitchen of the parsonage.

We were not invited as formerly at three o'clock, but at six; which shewed but too plainly that Mrs. Winifred was no longer mistress of the house. We were ushered by a French valet into the drawing-room, where we found Mrs. Winifred seated in her arm-chair, from which she seemed hardly able to raise herself without assistance. Mrs. Penelope sat by her, set off with a new London headdress of the first fashion. There were many ladies present, but all of them were unknown to me, with the exception of Mrs. Semple and Miss

Finchley. Among the stranger ladies was one of superior breeding, who, as I was informed, was a former acquaintance of the younger Mrs. Nuttall. There were many gentlemen also present, none of whom were known to me, excepting Mr. Semple and Mr. Aprice. Neither Mr. Nuttall nor his lady were then present.

I could be very sorry for the situation in which Mrs. Winifred is placed, were it not for one passage of her life, namely, her artful conduct towards our beloved Theodore. When I think of this, I cannot even seem to be cordial with the wretched woman. On this occasion, therefore, I was barely civil.

We were sufficiently dull and silent till the younger Mrs. Nuttall appeared. She entered apologizing, but made her excuses with such an air as if it were perfectly indifferent to her how her apologies might be received; and I thought that I had never seen a stranger compound of fashion and bad taste than that which she exhibited. She was highly rouged, powdered, and patched, excessively tight

around the waist, and, in consequence, bulging out above and below in a degree which did not appear natural. She was loaded also with ornaments; and her whole form was disfigured by puffs and flounces, pads and furbelows: nothing could be worse imagined. She courted slightly to the country ladies, assisted herself with her eye-glass to recognise Mrs. Beauchamp and Sophia, and then expressed a hope that her mother-in-law had not suffered any inconvenience from waiting so long for her dinner. "But you may ring now, and order it," she added, "for we are not to wait for Nuttall: he has been engaged with a tenant of mine from York, and we shall find him in the dining-room." She then took the arm of her friend; and, leading her into one of the embrasures of the windows, stood talking and laughing apart from the rest of the company.

In the mean time, we, the less refined persons of the company, were stupified with amazement. Mrs. Penelope (to whom her niece had looked when she said, "You may

ring now”) seemed hardly able to restrain her indignation; and Mrs. Winifred, sighing audibly, turned to Mrs. Beauchamp, and expressed her regret at the absence of Lucy.

At length, dinner being announced, we all walked down, the ladies going first, and the gentlemen following. Mrs. Winifred, pleading feebleness, left the head of the table to her daughter; and we found the young 'squire at the bottom of it. He made some sort of apology for not having appeared in the drawing-room, and we all seated ourselves as conveniently as we could. I inserted my small figure into a chair by Mrs. Beauchamp, and Eugenius contrived to place himself next to Sophia.

“Where is Miss Lovel?” was the first question asked by Mr. Nuttall.

No one answered till the question was repeated.

“She was so kind as to stay with the poor doctor,” said Mrs. Beauchamp.

Mr. Nuttall made no reply, but looked extremely gloomy.

The dinner passed off with sufficient vivacity, although the master of the house

hardly spoke, and Mrs. Winifred was quite silent: for the younger Mrs. Nuttall had so much to say at her end of the table, and Mr. Aprice at his, and the new and fashionable servants made such a clatter, that we were never once in danger of an English moment.

After dinner, the servants having withdrawn, the young 'squire began to amuse us in his own way, being, by this time, sufficiently exhilarated by repeated draughts of wine. He broke out upon us, by flatly contradicting his lady, on some unimportant point of discussion: on which she reddened through her rouge, and applied to her London friend to take her part.

The lady tittered, and remarked that she must not interfere between man and wife, lest she should incur the penalty of having both upon her at once.

“What for, Miss——?” asked David.

“If I take a part against you, Sir, your lady will attack me; and if I take a part against her, then you will be offended,” replied the lady.

“Catch me at that,” returned David;

“catch me at taking my wife’s part: she can take care of herself without my help.” To this impertinent speech he added a laugh, which drew from his lady a look in which she exhibited as much contempt as the female countenance is capable of expressing; and that is sometimes not a little.

Mr. Nuttall next called on Mr. Aprice to give a toast, adding a few words in a low voice, which I could not hear.

On this the Welshman, in his broken English, addressed the company, begging to be permitted to name “Miss Lovel.”

“Lucy Lovel!” repeated Mr. Nuttall, “the fairest flower of Roxobel!” And he tossed off a bumper, setting his glass on the table with a thump which made every thing on the board ring again.

Every one joined heartily in this toast, with the exception of the ladies at the top of the table: and Mrs. Nuttall the younger, after it was concluded, said, “I beg your pardon, but I did not hear what was your toast.”

Mrs. Winifred’s health was next drunk, (which, by the by, should have been first

done,) and the ladies then withdrew: after which, the gentlemen set to in good earnest; and Eugenius and I were speedily convinced that some very great change must take place in young Nuttall, before any gentleman could take pleasure in associating with him.

When the bottles had gone round once or twice, Mr. Lovel and I shewed an inclination to make an escape: on which Mr. Nuttall declared we should neither of us stir from the spot till we had finished our bottle.

We sat down again, but refused to fill our glasses.

Our polished host then expostulated with us in his own peculiar style, designating us as milksops, and dignifying us with various other titles of similar import.

We endeavoured to take all in good part: and several toasts and bumpers were proposed in rapid succession. At length, a toast was given which caused great merriment:—"The speedy death of all maiden aunts and dowagers!" Eugenius, however, looked grave, as well he

might; whereupon Mr. Nuttall chose to take umbrage, and asked Mr. Lovel if he suspected him of wishing the death of any particular persons.

“No,” answered Eugenius, “I hope better of you.”

“Then why don’t you fill your glass?” was the retort.

“Because,” replied Mr. Lovel, “I cannot drink much, without feeling inconvenience from it.”

“Ay,” returned David, “the doctor has brought you up on water and skimmilk, I suppose; and that’s what makes you look so pale.”

Eugenius was resolved not to quarrel; and he therefore answered good-humouredly, “I grant it; I have been sadly educated: I shall never be a three-bottle man.”

A good deal of this delectable conversation passed before we had any opportunity of escaping from the room: but on a servant entering with a further supply of wine, we made a bolt towards the door, soon left the jovial party behind us, and, taking

the first turning, ensconced ourselves under the great stairs.

It was well we chose so secure a hiding-place, for the bacchanals were after us in a moment, intending to chase us back; and we heard them swearing most profanely because they could not find us. However, they presently returned to their den; and we made another run, and succeeded in reaching the top of the stairs. Fancying we heard people behind us, we burst in at the first door which offered itself, and entered the very apartment which had been the ball-room on an occasion formerly described. It was already cleared and lighted for dancing, and there was a raised stage at one end for the musicians.

“O,” exclaimed Eugenius, “if I once get out of this house in my sound senses, I will never set my foot in it again. And think, Mr. Airley, what sort of a ball this will be, under the auspices of Mr. Nuttall, intoxicated as he is already! But we must get away with the ladies as soon as possible. We will not wait for the car-

riage;—(for we had provided a carriage to take the ladies back to the parsonage;—we will run through the snow to your lodgings, and remain there. I only pray that I may get away without breaking some of their heads.”

We had shut the door after us, and were standing to listen if the coast were clear, that we might take another run to the drawing-room, when we heard steps and voices approaching towards us from an inner door; and the next minute the door was opened, and a party of the second-rate ladies of the Hall entered the room, accompanied by their visitors. The intruders consisted of the ladies' maids, some of the farmers' daughters from the adjoining parishes, Mrs. Tolly, the widow Watchum, and Esther Stephens.

“We shall have a charming dance,” exclaimed Miss Esther, as she stepped forward. “And I am engaged first to Mounseer, (so she called the French valet,) and then to the 'squire himself.” But the young woman added no more, for she saw Eugenius.

“Bless me, gentlemen, are you here?” exclaimed the widow Watchum. “You are come to see the ball-room, I suppose, and perhaps to choose your partners before the rest comes? But I am sorry, Mr. Lovel, as I am engaged: for Mr. Tolly, he asked me as long ago as Christmas-night for the two first dances; and then, for the two second, I am to give my hand to Mr. Thomas, the warrener.”

“Do not distress yourself, Mrs. Watchum,” said Eugenius, cutting her short, and turning impatiently to me. “Mr. Airley, this is ‘out of the frying-pan into the fire.’ Out of this house I must go, or I shall certainly knock somebody down, if I stay another minute. Do have the kindness to tell Sophia and Mrs. Beauchamp, that I am to be found at our lodgings: and if you can bring my hat, pray do so.” So saying, he sprang from me, ran down the stairs, and across the great hall; and was probably out upon the lawn, before I well knew what was become of him.

I succeeded in getting the ladies to my lodgings, and bringing away Mr. Lovel’s

hat, about an hour afterwards: and we then resolved, that it should not be a slight occasion which should ever again induce us to take a meal at the Hall, "the poor old Hall," as Lucy sorrowfully calls it.

Mr. Barnaby Semple tells me that the young 'squire was carried to his bed that night in such a state of intoxication that his mother and aunt sent to request his attendance, fearing that the young man might actually expire under the influence of the ardent spirits of which he had swallowed immense quantities. "He will assuredly die in the same way as his father did," added Mr. Semple, "if he persists in his inebriety; and I have told him as much."

I commended Mr. Semple for his sincerity: and I expressed my wishes that poor David would pay attention to his advice. But I am truly sorry to find that he still associates with his old companions; namely, Mr. Tolly, Mr. Aprice, and some other of the worst characters which the neighbourhood produces. I foresee nothing but ruin for this unfortunate young man.

Our visit to the Hall took place about a week since: and this morning we were all powerfully and painfully affected by the public papers, which have brought the intelligence, that great successes have been gained by our troops in India, and in the field of Plassy especially. It is important news, no doubt, but it is a cruel subject for us; and that perfect gentleman Mr. Nuttall is so well aware of its tendency, that he is resolved, as I am informed, to have a day of public rejoicing on the occasion: to set the bells a ringing; to get up illuminations and bonfires; and, in short, as he expresses himself, to have a roaring night. It seems he was much offended the other day by our behaviour; and he has adopted this method of touching us to the quick. Yet I have reason to think that the scheme was not his own: for it has been hinted that it originated in another quarter; being, in fact, suggested by Mrs. Penelope. There are many, however, in Roxobel who will not join in this merriment; but I fear that there is a sufficient number of the malicious and of the thought-

less, to create such an uproar, and cause such a blaze, as may even make itself apparent to the inhabitants of the quiet parsonage.

After having carefully withheld the papers from Dr. Beauchamp and the ladies, for some days, it was with real horror that I heard this evening of these cruel resolutions. I could not have thought this, even of David Nuttall. Mr. Semple has expostulated with him; and so has Mr. Griffith: but he will hearken to neither of them.

I have even gone so far as to write to Mrs. Winifred, to beg her, if possible, to stop these proceedings.

Her answer is to this effect.—“Mr. Airley, I am, like many unhappy mothers, without influence. Had my Lucy consented to have married my son, she might have saved him: but——”

The word “but” was scratched over. Then were added these words.—

“I would be glad myself to be excused these public doings, on an occasion, which, however joyful in itself, must have caused the loss of many valuable individuals. I

have often been hurt to think that my efforts to save Theodore Beauchamp were so disastrous in their consequences. My health fails rapidly. I wish I could sometimes see Lucy: she reminds me so much of my sister Emily, that I delight to look upon her. She is the only representative of any of my sisters. I hope Eugenius will be happy with Miss Beauchamp. Had my son been more fortunate——”

These last words were also partially erased; and the letter seemed to have been signed and sealed in great haste. It was blistered with tears in several places. I received it about an hour before I sat down to write my memorandums.

To-morrow then must come, and must be a day of misery. I shall go to the parsonage, and shut myself up there. We will weep together: but, the Almighty helping us, we will not murmur.

CHAPTER XII.

A MERRY DAY.

I AM in a strange humour this morning, a strange wild humour. I cannot stay to date my memorandums. I cannot pause to analyze my feelings. My tears run faster than my ink. Yet, whose pen flies like mine? I have been excited and excited till I am—what? wild, I think. I scarcely know what I do—what I say—what I write. Do not think to save yourselves, my readers, from acute feelings by remaining in a state of celibacy. He that is born to feel for others would feel though he were shut up in the Bastile, and had no other living thing than a spider within the reach of his sympathies and regard.

Oh, that miserable morning, when, suddenly awaking from a heavy sleep, the pealing

bells reminded me of the day of suffering which was before me! I rose—I dressed—I walked into my room, and endeavoured to drown the torturing sounds with some of the loudest notes of my organ. I chose a hymn on these verses of Habakkuk.—“Although the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation.” I passed the time in singing till Eugenius entered my room. He looked very pale; and his heavy eyes betokened that he had spent a sleepless night.

The shouts of little boys set free from the daily task were heard under our window while we were breakfasting, with numerous expressions of congratulation. “Good morning, Sir.”—“Good morning, Mr. Airley.”—“Many happy new years, and much glory to the heroes of Plassy!”

“The little imps!” exclaimed Eugenius, snatching the kettle from the fire; “if I

do not pour the contents on their heads ——” and there he stopped.

I held his arm down. “Oh, Mr. Lovel,” I said, “don’t commit murder on these thoughtless ones. Finish your breakfast; and come with me, and see how the gentle spirits at the parsonage submit to these tortures.”

“Breakfast!” he repeated: and dashing his tea-cup from him, he rose and stamped about the room, breaking out in violent indignation. “Oh, my Theodore! my brother! my friend!” he exclaimed. “Grant that I do not meet that Nuttall in this temper! Heaven only knows what I might do.”

At this very crisis, Mrs. Strickland’s maid opened the door, and announced Mr. Pen Map.

“Mr. Pen Map!” returned Eugenius. And he added some expressions which I refrain from repeating; and, bursting open my chamber-door, took refuge within: and there he threw himself on my bed, as I afterwards found, in a state of absolute agony. Thus was I left alone to receive the

laureate, who appeared in his best suit, with a manuscript in his hand.

The poet bowed, flourishing his arm; and, addressing me by name, he said, "Mr. Airley, I am about to submit to your inspection a small specimen of my humble talents." I have prepared some verses to recite this evening at the Hall; and I am anxious for your opinion before I lay myself open to the comments of the *ignobile vulgus*; under which head I venture to denominate many who will there be present: for, if I have your approval, Mr. Airley, I shall be prepared to throw contempt on those reproaches to which I shall undoubtedly expose myself."

To all this I could make no reply; for I was like one perfectly stupified. I however bowed mechanically, and thus, no doubt, held out some encouragement to the poet.

"My subject, Sir," proceeded Mr. Map, "is the effect of our arms in India."

I bowed again, though I was in agonies: but I felt that I could not make the laureate understand my feelings, without using

a greater effort than I could at that moment command.

Mr. Pen Map is not one of those timid geniuses who require a vast deal of encouragement in order to be prevailed upon to exhibit their literary exploits. My silence therefore, as I before said, was quite sufficient for him. He accordingly advanced into the middle of the room, unfolded his scroll, placed himself in a proper attitude for recitation, and commenced his reading.

I saw him ; indeed I heard his voice, for he proceeded through many stanzas ; and I caught here and there a word, or part of a sentence, such as “ Britain, arise—floating banners—laurel crowns—glittering swords—thundering cannons—deadly wounds—blood—graves,” and so on ; but as to comprehending the drift of the poem, I did not attempt it. I was not in a suitable state of mind for an effort of that kind ; and even if I had been able to give the bard my attention, I probably should have been equally unacquainted with his plan : for if obscurity be a mark of genius, as some pretend it is, our Roxobel poet must be

allowed to possess this mark in its utmost perfection.

At length the reader came to a pause, changed his position, and recalled my attention by repeating my name. "And now, Sir, now, Mr. Airley," he continued, "you are to suppose, that having read thus far to the company at the Hall, and having as it were raised their spirits, and put them in good-humour with themselves as sons and daughters of the victorious country whose praises I have been celebrating, I come upon them in a way they little expect: and if I do not make those old women feel, I will throw my pen away, and forsake the muse for ever.

"If they have any hearts within them," proceeded the poet, with energy, "those hearts shall bleed this night: stony-breasted monsters as they are, to be wounding their neighbours, (I will not call them friends,) by their senseless rejoicings on those events which have caused Roxobel more tears than all the gold of India is worth."

I looked up. I was roused, indeed. I

did not expect this burst of feeling from the old schoolmaster. I did not think it was in him.

“Yes, Sir,” he continued, “I will work them up. I will make them smart. You shall judge, Sir.” And he then proceeded to read the two last stanzas of his poem, containing a really simple and beautiful lamentation on the fate of our Theodore. I do not say that the versification was without faults; but the sentiments were pure and lovely. They came upon me by surprise, and quite overpowered me. I shook the poet’s hand; I could not speak: but I hastened to my bookcase, and gave him on the spot a fine edition of Milton’s *Paradise Lost*, and thus dismissed him.

When Eugenius returned into the room, I told him what had transpired. He was surprised and affected: but we made an effort to restrain our feelings, and hastened up to the parsonage. The day was excessively cold; the ground was covered with snow; and the wind blew it in drifts in many parts of the park. As we passed

under the church we were saluted by the ringing of bells, but we went forward and took no notice.

We were received with cordiality at the lovely parsonage, and Eugenius and I used every exertion to pass away this day as cheerfully as possible. The doctor is seldom seen till near dinner-time: we therefore selected a book, and read by turns, while the ladies worked. No one alluded to the rejoicings at the Hall and in the village; but we all strove to the utmost to appear calm. I saw the tears once or twice in the eyes of the ladies, as the sound of the bells reached them in an occasional interval of silence: but whenever this was the case, Eugenius and I again raised our voices, and thus prevented any vehement expression of grief.

The dinner was set with great neatness, in Dr. Beauchamp's dressing-room. It was pitiable to observe the efforts which that excellent man made to render himself agreeable. Since, as he said, we had honoured him with our company, he must endeavour to enjoy himself.

After dinner, during the twilight, as he lay on his couch, we sat round him; and he directed our attention to those consolations which are derivable from an assurance of the parental tenderness of the Almighty, hinting especially at that testimony of infinite love which is exhibited in the gift of Christ for man's salvation. "For God," said he, "so loved the world, that he gave his Son, his only Son, for us, being enemies. His Son," he repeated. "Ah, it is necessary to have been a father to understand that word." And he sighed, and rubbed his hand across his eyes. Then breaking out, as if no longer able to restrain himself, he exclaimed, "Oh, Theodore! my Theodore! my son! my son!"

This was all that was wanting, and, indeed, more than was wanting to throw us off our equilibrium; and some minutes elapsed before we could recover ourselves.

We were sitting nearly in the dark, being lighted only by the glowing embers on the hearth, having quite forgotten to have the fire renewed, or the shutters closed, when suddenly our attention was drawn

to a blaze which illuminated the whole window. We rose to look out, in some alarm, and saw, nearly opposite the house, on a projecting point of the park, an amazing bonfire, which seemed to be kindling to the very heavens; and the reflections from which appeared to inflame the whole sky. The fire cast a wide red light over the snow, and we discerned the outlines of many figures, looking black in contrast with the snow, passing and repassing between ourselves and the flames. Another glance shewed us the Hall, illuminated to its very pinnacles, and sparkling like a palace of diamonds: and from the area before the mansion, arose a multitude of fiery rockets, which ascended to the clouds, and then came down like so many falling stars.

We turned away from this beautiful scene (for beautiful indeed it was) with feelings of the deepest depression; and Eugenius quietly closed the shutters, and let down the curtains, and we resumed our seats. Eugenius then, putting a force on himself, began to descant on his travels in the

north, while I asked several questions, in order to help him on. We were not however allowed to remain thus quiet: for the sounds of fireworks, sent off with loud reports, reached us from several directions, making the ladies to start, more with a sense of the thoughtless cruelty of the thing, than from any foolish feeling of alarm.

At length, a servant brought in tea, and informed us that Mrs. Tristram, Mrs. Strickland, and Ellen, were below. These worthy people were come to be out of the way of the riots which infested almost every corner of the parish.

The doctor ordered that tea should be made for these new visiters in the parlour, adding that we should all go down to them when he retired, which would be very early, and keep them to supper.

“We have some friends left yet, my Lucy,” he said, taking her hand; “yea more than we think of, perhaps.”

Lucy kissed his hand, and wept in silence over it.

About eight o'clock the ringing ceased for a short time, although the noise of the fire-

works continued; and the doctor was thinking of wishing us good-night, when suddenly a soft note, as of some wind instrument, reached our ears.

We listened: but it passed away round the house, dying on the ear.

“That was sweet and soothing,” observed the doctor: “it has done me good.”

“Hark!” said Sophia; “it comes again, Sir.”

We listened, and it approached. It then seemed to become stationary; and at the same time was accompanied by a clear, rich, and deep-toned voice singing these words:—

“Through every scene of life and death
 Thy promise is our trust;
 And this shall be our children’s song,
 When we are cold in dust.

“O God, our help in ages past,
 Our hope for years to come;
 Be thou our guard while life shall last,
 And our eternal home.”

“Ha! did you hear that?” said the doctor. “Whose voices are those? It is sweetly conceived. It has been planned

for our comfort, my children. It does me good; I shall sleep the better for it: I would not lose the frame into which it has put me. Good-night, my friend; good-night, my beloved ones, my children all. Come to your father's arms, my daughters, my son. God forgive those who do not love us. God bless the whole human race: and may all who are now in sin be regenerated, sanctified, and fitted for glory." Thus saying, he kissed his young people, shook my hand, and dismissed us for the night.

I went down into the usual sitting-room with the young people, and we there found our humble friends.

As we were all low, and unable to converse, I proposed a chapter in the Bible, and Eugenius rose and brought the book from its usual place. I was just turning it over, and the whole party was sitting in silence, awaiting my commencement, when we suddenly heard sounds, as of persons whispering and running round the house; and a gentle knock at the hall-door immediately followed.

“What is coming now, to disturb our reading?” I said, peevishly. And I looked at a maid-servant, who had been called to hear me read, to go to the door.

I arose and followed her to the parlour-door, wondering who could have come at that hour to disturb us.

The person at the door was our friend Black Tom: and, as the candle which the servant held flared in his face, he looked so strangely, that it instantly occurred to me, that he had been making too free with some of the barrels which had been set abroad by the 'squire for our annoyance.

The wild man muttered some sort of excuse for his visit at this untimely hour, by saying, “Is the doctor to be seen?”

“What is your business, Mr. Thomas?” said Eugenius, who had followed me out into the hall. “Of course you cannot see Dr. Beauchamp to-night; he is in bed.”

“Ay,” said Black Tom; “I had forgotten the hour.” At the same time he stepped forward, and came to us at the parlour-door.

I had then no doubt that he was intoxi-

cated: and Eugenius and I endeavoured to fill up the door-way to prevent his entrance. We, however, did not choose to be actually rude to him, remembering his fidelity in the wood scene; and, therefore, we suffered him to go in and speak to the ladies, supposing that he would presently tell his errand.

“Your humble servant, good ladies,” said the strange man, bowing. “I am most happy to see you here, and looking so bravely; but methinks, such a night as this, you should have put off some of your sables, when the country is all rejoicing, and such like.”

The ladies did not answer; but Eugenius, fancying that he had a man highly intoxicated to deal with, spoke soothingly to him, and said, “Come, come, Tom, tell your errand, and be off; do, there is a good fellow.” At the same time he rang the bell for his servant Richard, who was, as he supposed, in the kitchen, for Richard had refused to participate in any of the amusements of the evening.

Richard presently obeyed the bell, and

was standing at the door when next I looked that way; but I had been so much engaged with Eugenius and the warrener, that I did not observe whence he came.

Eugenius was, as I before said, trying to persuade the warrener to depart; and Black Tom, on the other hand, was determined to remain where he was, spinning out the time by speaking first to one and then to another, till Mr. Lovel, being really angry, called out, "Richard, are you there?"

"Yes, Sir," answered the young man, advancing. "Yes, Sir."

Richard has very white teeth, and when he smiles, they appear very much: and as he advanced towards his master, it was evident that he was so overcome with some merry thought of his own that it was quite impossible for him to close his mouth.

"Here, Richard," said Eugenius, "be so kind as to shew this good man the door, and shut it after him. But what is the matter with you?" added the young gentleman, testily. "What are you shewing your teeth for? Where have you been?"

Do as I bid you: and don't let me see any thing of this sort again. You have been at the Hall, or at the Helmsley Arms."

"Well, and what harm?" rejoined Black Tom. "The poor lad must have his pleasures now and then. If such a night as this is not to make folks gay, I know not what is."

"For shame, Mr. Thomas," replied Richard. "I have not been out of these grounds since the morning."

At that instant the bells struck up again; and the hall-door being open, we heard them very distinctly. Then came a shout very near the house; and the next moment the bells were so rung as to imitate the report of great guns.

The eyes of Black Tom kindled at these sounds; and, losing all self-command, he exclaimed, "Ay, ay, fly your crackers! now is your time! send your rockets into the sky!" And he swung his arm, as if in the act of projecting some sort of firework. "Set the clouds in a blaze! O for the heroes of Plassy! Captain Clive and his brave soldiers for ever! If I have not a turn at

the bells myself before midnight, I am not Tom of the warren, but an old woman in a linsey-woolsey apron."

"Tom, Tom," said Eugenius, "do not come here with your abominable nonsense. Get home with you, and get to bed. See how the ladies are frightened. Richard, do you hear?" he added, looking at his servant somewhat sternly: "shew him the door, if you are any better than he is. What are you standing there for, laughing like a fool? Are you both mad?" And he turned to me in real distress, saying, in an under-tone, "What can we do? They are both intoxicated. I shall certainly dismiss Richard in the morning: but what are we to do with this wild man now? I shall strike him presently, I know I shall."

"What does the young master say?" asked Black Tom.

"He says you are mad, Tom," I replied: "but I say you are a very discreet sober man; and you would do me the greatest favour in the world if you would just walk out at the door."

"O do go, good Mr. Thomas, do!" said

the young ladies. And Mrs. Tristram and my landlady joined their entreaties.

“No, ladies, no,” replied the warrener; “I don’t mean to go just yet, by your good leave and permission. I would not miss being here just now for the kingdom of England and all the rabbits in the warren to boot. Why, I came for the very purpose, ladies. What else did I come for?”

“What purpose?” asked Eugenius.

“Why, that I might be here, to be sure, Sir,” answered the warrener.

Eugenius took a turn in the room, stamped his foot, and muttered the words, “Insolent fellow!” And then, drawing up again to the wild man, he said, “To be short with you, Tom, if you do not evacuate these premises in five minutes, I will lay my cane over your back.”

“Well, then I will give your worship leave so to do, if you are in the same mind five minutes hence,” replied the warrener, looking at Richard.

“Impertinent fellow!” exclaimed Eugenius. And my young friend was on the point of proceeding to strong measures in

order to rid the house of the warrener's company, when Lucy and Sophia, each seizing an arm, implored him to forbear.

"That's right, ladies," said the warrener, laughing. "I likes to see ladies kind-hearted to those in trouble." And then turning to me, "Ha'n't ye ne'er a burning snake to send at me, Mr. Airley?" he said. "'One good turn deserves another,' they say; and you owes me a snake, you know."

"I shall find a burning coal, or a red hot poker, or something else, to pay off the old scores with, presently, Mr. Thomas," said Eugenius, "if you don't make off shortly."

To this the warrener made no reply, for he was evidently listening to some noise without; and the next minute young Taylor entered, enquiring for Mrs. Tristram and Ellen.

"You are come in good time, Robert," I said. "I hope that you will persuade the warrener here to retire and go home to bed. He is acting in a very improper manner; and he will not explain what brought him here."

"I will take him with me, Sir, presently,"

returned Robert: "but I was directed to come forward to inform you that Mr. Barnaby Semple intends to do himself the pleasure of paying his compliments to the ladies in a very few minutes."

"Really," rejoined Eugenius, "upon my word, the doctor is very ceremonious, and very polite; and if it happens that he has been making a free with Mr. Nuttall's ale as the rest of you gentlemen may be supposed to have done, we shall form a very agreeable party by and by. But, since this seems to be the order of the day, of the night I should rather say, I would advise you, ladies, to withdraw; because it is impossible precisely to say whether something may not follow which may not be very pleasant. But, seriously speaking, I desire to know, Robert Taylor, what Mr. Semple means by sending word that he is coming at this time of night."

At this instant Mrs. Beauchamp entered, having seen her poor husband in his bed. "What is the meaning of all this?" she asked, as she entered. "Why are you all here, my good people? Why is the door

open, and the hall filled?"—(for all the servants were by this time gathered in the hall)—“What is the meaning of this?” And the good lady looked perplexed.

She however, had scarcely had time to speak to the warrener, and ask him his business, before Mr. Barnaby Semple entered, bowing to the ladies, and looking round with some astonishment at the curious assemblage of persons already in the room.

“To what circumstance are we indebted for this visit, Mr. Semple?” enquired Mr. Lovel, rather haughtily, I thought; (for my dear Eugenius, when off his guard, is apt occasionally to fall into hauteur of manner.) “We have had several unexpected visiters this evening,” he proceeded; “and, among the rest, Mr. Thomas, the warrener, whose behaviour has a little astonished us.”

Mr. Barnaby Semple answered like a person whose mind was engaged with other things, simply saying, “I am sorry, Sir.” And then, turning to Mrs. Beauchamp, he added, “I hope, Madam, that the doctor has not been disturbed by the bell-ringing

and the other noises which have occurred this evening. Has he retired to rest?"

"Yes, Sir," replied the lady, answering to the latter part of the enquiry.

"My good girl," said Black Tom, speaking to a maid-servant who was standing near the parlour-door, "just step up and see that the door of the doctor's room is shut."

"Do so," said Mr. Semple.

"Mr. Semple," returned Mrs. Beauchamp, "I cannot help feeling some alarm at all this. Is any thing the matter? Why are you all here? Do tell me."

We all joined in this request.

"Don't frighten yourselves, ladies," answered Black Tom: "there is nothing to alarm you. You know, perhaps, that the Hall is all in a blaze?"

"Hold your tongue, you fool," said Mr. Semple. "Did I not charge you not to come here to startle the ladies? Did I not charge you——? There is nothing the matter at the Hall, ladies, I assure you."

"But there is a something," remarked

Mrs. Beauchamp, looking round, "which we do not understand."

"Ay," said Black Tom; "but there is nothing disastrous."

"Nothing sad, I hope?" rejoined the lady. "Your countenances do not bespeak any thing unpleasant. Pray what has happened?"

"Is there any circumstance, Mrs. Beauchamp, which would give this company particular pleasure?" asked Mr. Semple.

"Ay, particular pleasure?" repeated Black Tom. "But I say, Mr. Semple, have you a lancet about you, doctor? perchance it may be wanted."

No one answered, but every anxious eye was fixed on Mr. Semple.

"What say you, Mrs. Beauchamp?" proceeded the worthy man. "What say you to a letter—a letter from foreign parts? In short, a letter—a letter from India?"

O, what a moment was that which succeeded this announcement! A silence solemn as death ensued; and a deadly paleness overspread the face of every per-

son who was unprepared for the intimation. For a moment every heart appeared to lose its motion; and respiration seemed to cease.

Black Tom whistled a few notes, but nobody reproved him; neither did any one venture to enquire what might be the contents of the letter from India.

At length, Mr. Semple spoke again. "Mrs. Beauchamp," he said, "you have heard the worst that could be heard from that quarter: are you so prepared as not to be overcome by hearing that that worst was premature?"

"Premature! premature!" exclaimed Lucy, at the same moment springing forward and seizing Mr. Semple's hand. "Do you mean to say—do you mean to say—do you mean to say, Mr. Semple, that Theodore—Theodore! dear, dear Theodore is not—is not—Oh, Mr. Semple! speak, speak! life or death? one word—life or death?" And, from the looks of my Lucy at that instant, it seemed, indeed, that life or death hung upon the next word of Mr. Semple. Never, never have I seen, or shall I again see,

so much feeling, such acute and excessive feeling, expressed in the human countenance, as was then exhibited in the features of my Lucy.

“Life! life, my dear Miss Lovel!” replied Mr. Semple. And scarcely had he uttered the word “life,” than Black Tom gave an exulting shout, exclaiming, “Set the woods in a blaze! make a bonfire of the Hall! and burn Mrs. Winifred for a witch.” And he struck up a stave of the old song — “‘See the conquering hero comes.’”

This, as I afterwards found, was the signal appointed among the party; for Richard and young Taylor rushed out of the room at the moment they heard it, and in a few seconds their returning steps were heard in the Hall. They did not return unaccompanied: with them was a handsome figure in a military great-coat and sash.

The maid-servants in the hall shrieked and retreated as this latter person passed them. The face which they beheld was that of one whom they had been accustomed to number with the dead. They

were evidently not prepared for the sight. They had but indistinctly heard what had passed within the parlour.

The figure of our beloved Theodore stood before us in the door-way of the parlour. There was no time for preparing the mind for the delightful assurance. Our senses seemed to deceive us. We thought ourselves to be in a dream. But that eye that longed and loved the most was soonest to be convinced. All form was forgotten in that rapturous moment. Miss Lovel had sprung forward, had burst through all impediments, and had thrown herself into the arms of him whom she had mourned as lost for ever, before any other member of the household had dared to believe the evidence of their senses, or to give way to their emotions of delight: for O! indeed, indeed, it was our Theodore! Surprising sight! joy inconceivable! exquisite rapture! O, my heavenly Father, how can I ever be sufficiently grateful for thy goodness?

I did not press forward; I could not. The room seemed to turn round with me; and

I should certainly have fallen, if Black Tom had not caught and supported me. I shook his hand ; I hugged him. He was the nearest to me. I should even have hugged Mrs. Penelope, had she then presented herself. I looked again : it was Theodore ; yes, it was Theodore. He was supporting Lucy, who had actually fainted in his arms, or nearly so. Mr. Barnaby Semple was rubbing her temples with hartshorn.

Young Taylor had brought a chair. She was placed in it : and Theodore still supported her head. He stooped over her. I did not see his face distinctly : but I saw and recognised the contour of his noble head, and the well-remembered crisp dark curls on his brow. Sophia was kneeling and leaning her head against his side, as if she knew not how to express her regard, continually kissing that side against which she knelt. Mrs. Strickland and Mrs. Tristram were attending to Mrs. Beauchamp, who was in a sort of hysterics. Robert and Ellen in their ecstasies had forgotten all past difficulties.

Richard and William were grinning from ear to ear. The maids looked pale with excess of feeling. Dr. Beauchamp was ringing his bell in vain: nobody attended to it. And Eugenius stood like one entranced; his eyes devouring, as it were, the figure of his beloved brother.

At length Black Tom spoke. "You must bleed her, Sir. I told you you'd need your launcet. You must bleed her."

"It would not have been necessary, had we used more caution, Tom," replied Mr. Semple.

"Caution!" repeated Tom. "You might have palavered and palavered for ever and a day, and it would have been all the same when she understood it at last: so it was better to out with it at once. Come, bleed her, and have done with it; the sooner the better. Here, let me hold her arm. Women, bring your scissars, that we may slit up the sleeve. It's no use your talking to her now, Master Theodore; for she don't hear a word you say. But don't look pale on it: folks don't die of joy. Here, strip up the sleeve. And now, Mr. Semple,

with your lancet, it will be all well presently. Did not I say as much, Mr. Airley, as that Mr. Semple would want his lancets before we had done?" And the wild man chuckled again, bursting off in a roar of laughter.

Theodore looked up for a moment from his Lucy; and then I saw, for the first time for many months, those dark fine eyes, and that arch glance, which I had never expected to see again. It was but a momentary glance, however, for he was instantly intent again on his beloved, whose blood was flowing freely from her arm. But it was enough: I had seen that face again, that lovely noble countenance, and I was relieved by a violent burst of tears.

The poor doctor rang and rang, and I took pity on him. I feared that some more injudicious person than myself might go up to him, and kill him by a hasty disclosure of the happy news. I therefore crept out of the room, and, going up to him, I found him in great agitation.

"Sir," I said, "Black Tom knocked at the door just now; we let him in: he is in-

toxicated, and he has startled the ladies. Don't be alarmed; it is all over now. We will keep our door shut another time."

The poor good man was satisfied, thanked me for my kindness, and turned round to go to sleep.

I wished him to have a night's rest before the communication of the news. I will reconcile him to Black Tom to-morrow, and explain the nature of his intoxication.

O, with what different feelings do I now hear those bells, and see those bonfires! Roxobel! fair Roxobel! thou hast not clad thyself with thy holiday robes in vain.

After having soothed and quieted the old and tender father, and left him reposing on his pillow like a harmless infant in its cradle, I hastened down stairs, and found nearly the same party in the parlour as I had left, though grouped somewhat differently. Lucy had recovered, and was sitting on the sofa; our Theodore, our beloved, was by her. She was weeping like a person in the bitterest distress; sometimes joining her hands, and raising her

eyes, as if in thanksgiving, and sometimes sitting pensively as if unable to move. Sophia was hanging on her brother's bosom; and he had one arm round her. Mrs. Beauchamp sat at a little distance, looking to and from Theodore, and now and again bursting into tears, as she regarded him. Mrs. Strickland, having been put in authority by Mrs. Beauchamp, was bustling to and fro, directing the servants to make the table as long as the room would permit, and ransacking every corner of the house for good things, having, as I afterwards heard, sent home for her good man, and requested him to forward immediately all that her pantry could afford; Black Tom being the bearer of the message. Ellen was standing in one corner talking with Robert, from time to time directing her eye to the party on the sofa. Mr. Barnaby Semple sat quietly participating in the joyful scene, in a manner which made me esteem him more than I had ever before done. And my beloved and happy Eugenius was standing with his affectionate gaze fixed on his Theodore, the

tears from time to time overflowing his eyes, and running down his cheeks.

As I entered I rushed forward, and embraced my Theodore; giving occasion for a new burst of feeling on all sides. But there never was a happy party more silent than we were. Now Black Tom was gone, nothing was to be heard among us but sobs and exclamations; unless any one happened to say, "It cannot be," "I don't believe it:" and such expressions I heard many times, together with certain short ejaculations addressed to the Author of all good.

At length, Mrs. Beauchamp, rising, came up to Theodore. "Another and another kiss, another and another embrace, my child, my son," she exclaimed. "O! who could have hoped for joy like this? And your poor father!——"

Theodore rose. He took the best of step-mothers in his arms; he sat by her awhile; he talked of his father: it was known that I had been with him.

"How are we to tell him of our happiness?" asked the tender wife.

“It must be done very cautiously,” remarked Mr. Semple; “and certainly not to-night.”

Eugenius had taken the vacant place between Sophia and Lucy. Theodore left his mother, and went to them again. Eugenius sprang up, and threw himself into Theodore’s arms. “Never shall we be parted again but by death,” he said. The two brothers seemed perfectly overcome by their feelings, and desiring perhaps to make no display of their emotions before so many witnesses, they walked together out of the room.

They were no sooner gone than Lucy, falling on her knees, and joining her hands, expressed her gratitude to God in the most ardent terms. We all followed the example, kneeling down in our places. I led the thanksgiving: it was short; it was broken off by our sobs; but I trust it was accepted. This act seemed to compose us.

The entrance of sundry guests, and various curiously assorted dishes and waiters, brought some relief, in diverting us from the intensity of our feelings. The head-

waiter, namely, Black Tom, with a cold pasty, which I charged him with stealing from the Hall, was the first phenomenon which appeared on the occasion, and he set us all to laugh; for, on joyful occasions, the transition from tears to laughter is not very difficult. Tom had tied one of the maid's aprons before him, for effect: for the wild man was precisely in that state in which people do not know what to do in order to spend their spirits. Mrs. Tristram followed him with a cold ham. Richard and Dr. Beauchamp's footman were not far behind: but the two young men, I fear, will never be able to close their mouths again. Mrs. Strickland also peeped in, and was invited to join the party: and, every thing being ready, we only waited for the re-appearance of our gallant youths in order that we might sit down to supper.

In the mean time Mrs. Beauchamp went up and peeped at her dear husband. He was fast asleep, it appeared; and she reported, that he had commenced his slumbers, most fortunately, with his deaf ear

uppermost. His sleeping-room happens to be within his dressing-room, which seemed to be a very happy circumstance: and she carefully shut up both the doors, and came down exulting in his being beyond the reach of noise.

On her return, she found another addition to her party in the person of Mr. Griffith, whose first salutation was to compliment our hostess on being so well able to deceive her husband. "The poor good doctor!" he said, "he does not know what a wife he has. But, dear Mrs. Beauchamp," he added, "dear Mrs. Beauchamp, I do rejoice with you from my heart and soul."—And he actually shed tears on the occasion. I loved him for it. I loved every body that night. I think that if the Widow Watchum had then asked me to dance, I should not have refused her on such an occasion.

"But where are our boys?" said Mrs. Beauchamp. "The steaks will be cold. Our boys!" repeated the excellent woman: "how that sounds like old times, Mr. Airley!—our boys! But come, my

friends, be seated : you must all sit down ; and the warrener too, and near to his party. Mrs. Strickland, Mrs. Tristram, Mr. Strickland, Mr. Semple, Mr. Griffith, Ellen, Robert, pray take your places. I must have my Theodore by *me*. Leave a chair for him, my Lucy."

"They are coming ; they are coming ; I hears um," said Black Tom. And the door opened, and our lovely youths appeared. They had both been weeping : and O ! how elegant, how noble did our Theodore look ! His haste to proceed to Roxobel had prevented him from providing himself with coloured clothes ; so that he was in uniform. He seemed paler and thinner than formerly : but we all thought him handsomer than ever.

Mr. Griffith rushed forward to welcome him : and then we all sat down to supper. And O ! what a supper ! Can I ever forget it ? Never ! never ! never ! O, how can we ever be sufficiently thankful for the mercies of our lot !

We did not disperse till a late hour ; and, leaving Eugenius at the parsonage, I walk-

ed home with Mr. and Mrs. Strickland. It was between two and three o'clock when we arrived in the village; and we were informed that the party at the Hall still kept up their festivities.

I did not fall asleep till six o'clock in the morning:—(how could I?)—and I slept in consequence till nine; Mrs. Strickland not suffering me to be disturbed.

As soon as I was dressed, I hurried up to the parsonage, and found the happy party at breakfast, with the exception of Theodore, who was with his father.

“And how did you open the matter to the doctor?” I asked.

“I hardly know,” replied Mrs. Beauchamp: “but the truth is, he saw that something had affected me this morning; and, becoming anxious, he questioned me; and I could not evade his enquiries.”

“And how did he bear it?” I asked. “How could he bear the news?”

“He was very much overcome,” answered Mrs. Beauchamp. “He nearly fainted. But he is much better now; and Theodore is with him. Mr. Semple has

also been here; and he seems pretty well assured that his patient will not be injured by the excess of his feelings."

O happy, happy, thrice happy day! How great was the contrast between this morning and that which preceded it! Yet I know not how the hours flew; for we could do nothing. We could not even converse with any thing like consistency; but laughed, and cried, and spoke of old times and new plans, and asked a thousand questions, and talked at random. Many of the neighbours, poor and rich, called to congratulate us. The bells were ringing all day; and our men-servants left all the household-work to the maids, and went to assist the ringers.

At length, having parted with all the strangers, we dined in the happy father's dressing-room. And after our meal was ended, when

"The dying embers through the room
Taught light to counterfeit the gloom;"—

Theodore, Eugenius, Sophia, and Lucy, (these our four lovely children, who had

supposed that they would never again be all assembled on this side of the grave,) being once more seated by the fireside of their beloved parent;—the happy father being laid on his couch, the kind wife sitting by his side, and the little man of Roxobel being seated in his arm-chair;—then our noble and beloved Theodore was induced to relate his story to his eager and attentive friends; a story which the said little man has taken no small pains to commit with fidelity to his memorandum-book.

CHAPTER XIII.

ACCOUNT OF A YOUNG OFFICER.

“ I SHALL endeavour as briefly as possible,” said Theodore, “ to give you, my beloved friends, the history of my short though disastrous campaign. Yet, why should I call it disastrous, since its termination is thus blessed?

“ I embarked from England, with several other officers of the same corps, for the purpose of joining my regiment in India. We carried out letters from the court of directors in England; and, after a dangerous voyage, we joined the English fleet at Fulta, a station on the Hoogly, below Calcutta. Here our numbers were augmented by a company of seventy European volunteers, who had embodied themselves at this place. Among these additional

troops were merchants, of greater or less respectability, and several inferior persons, who appeared to be a sort of nondescripts, being Europeans, to judge by their countenance, and even by their speech, which was a sort of mongrel English; but, in other respects, being almost altogether Hindoo, their complexions being blackened by the climate, and their manners having become naturalized to the country in which they had resided so many years. These had all been adventurers; men who had gone out to India as sailors, or in some other capacity, and had remained in that country, making out their living in any way which had offered.

“Well do I recollect the state of mind in which I was, during the progress of our gallant fleet up the river;—a progress which was not very rapid, inasmuch as we were obliged to wait for the tides.

“There were several young men like myself among the officers: and how rich, how bright, how dazzling, were the anticipations in which we indulged! What golden dreams did we enjoy! And yet,

are not my hopes more than fulfilled? Is not my cup of happiness more full than I ever dared to expect?

“The prospects which presented themselves on the shores between which we sailed were not very inviting. Nevertheless, they pleased us from their novelty, and from their extreme contrast with any thing that we had ever beheld in Europe. For the most part, however, they presented us with nothing more cheering than long reaches of barren sands, bedecked with dusty and stunted bushes; and at intervals we perceived large flocks of vultures, bearing a strong resemblance to our turkeys. Yet, sometimes, we caught glimpses of fairer prospects at a distance from the shore; such as gentle eminences covered with woods, or lawns sprinkled with forest trees, and partially occupied by a few scattered huts. In viewing these objects, however, a tropical sun, and a sky without clouds, occasioned a glare which was almost intolerable.

“During this our progress up the river, while our superiors were busied, no doubt,

in concerting their measures, we who had nothing to do but to obey occupied ourselves a good deal in conversing with the volunteers, asking them many questions about the natives of the country, their military force, their mode of living, and so on.

“There was one among the volunteers, an old man, though still well capable of bearing arms, to whom I particularly addressed myself. Among other questions I asked him how long he had been in India: to which he answered, ‘Thirty years and more.’

“‘What was your age when you arrived?’ I enquired.

“‘More than thirty,’ he replied.

“‘My father,’ he added, ‘was a descendant of an ancient house, which once was noble, though fallen very low at the time of his death. I had a younger brother, with whom I could never agree. No matter what the subject of our dispute might be. Suffice it to say, that he employed a servant to inveigle me to a seaport, about twenty miles from my native

place, where I was induced to drink to excess; and I was betrayed, while under the influence of intoxication, to a press-gang, who carried me on board a ship. For the first three or four years after I became a sailor, I thought of nothing but of England, and of how I could be revenged on my brother; but this feeling being past, I became more and more reconciled to a wandering life. It is no matter how long I continued at sea. At length I came to India, and, sailing up to Hoogly with my captain, I formed a connexion with a native woman, obtained leave to remain behind, and have lived for some years past at no great distance from Magapore in some credit and comfort: and indeed I am now so reconciled to an Indian life, that I would not exchange it for all the comforts of the cold climate in which I was born.'

“‘And in what part of England were you born?’ was my next question: ‘for your story reminds me much of the history of one of whom I have often heard.’

“‘And who might that be?’ asked the volunteer.

“ ‘A young man named James Torville,’ I answered, ‘who was missing about the time you mention, and has never since been heard of.’

“While I was speaking, my new acquaintance turned round to empty his mouth of the juice of the tobacco which he was chewing; and then, addressing himself to me again, he coolly rejoined, ‘I believe that my story is not a rare one, and that I am not the only elder brother who has been put out of the way by this and other contrivances. But has not the man of whom you speak yet returned?’

“ ‘No,’ I replied; ‘he had not been heard of when I left Roxobel.’

“ ‘And does his brother still enjoy his estate?’ returned the stranger.

“ ‘No: he has been long dead,’ I answered: ‘and, as to enjoyment, he never had any.’

“ ‘Very likely,’ rejoined the volunteer, rolling his tobacco in his mouth. ‘Goods unjustly gotten never prosper. But, young Sir, how came you to be so well acquainted with this story?’

“ ‘ Because my father is rector of the parish,’ I answered.

“ ‘ And what may they call him?’ enquired the stranger.

“ ‘ Beauchamp,’ I replied. ‘ But why do you ask?’

“ He made no reply to this question : but, calling to a sailor at the other end of the ship, he said, ‘ I say, Jack, mind those things you are towing over-board, or the sharks will have them by and by.’ And then rising up, (for he had been sitting on a hen-coop,) he shook himself, and began to jabber Bengalee to one of his comrades : and thus ended our discourse.

“ We had left Fulta on the twenty-seventh of December ; and a few days afterwards, we anchored at Magapore, a town which is situate ten miles below a fort called Buzbuzia which was in the possession of the enemy. It was determined that this fort should be attacked the next day after our arrival at Magapore ; and, as it was supposed that the garrison would not defend it for any great length of time, it was resolved that an ambuscade should be

laid in order to intercept their retreat towards Calcutta. Accordingly, a party of five hundred Europeans, accompanied by all the seapoys, and provided with two field-pieces, and a tumbrel of ammunition, were landed; and at sunset we marched from Magapore, under the command of Captain Clive."

"Ah, Theodore," interrupted Sophia, "had we known!——"

"Had you thought," returned Theodore, smiling, "that your brother was marching into the cannon's mouth, you would have shed a few gentle tears: would you not, my sweet sister?"

"Not gentle tears," replied Sophia: "they would have been bitter, bitter tears."

Theodore raised her hand, and held it to his lips. Then looking at Lucy, who sat on the other side of him, he said, "And can it be, can it be, that I am now so supremely blest?" And he arose, and walked to the window; but returned the next moment, and proceeded with his narrative.

“Guides were provided ; and my new acquaintance also volunteered his assistance for that office. As no bullocks could be procured for the purpose of drawing the field-pieces and the tumbrel, the troops were compelled to perform this laborious service : and as the guides, in order to prevent discovery, led us at a distance from the river, through a part of the country which was uninhabited, and which was intersected with swamps and rivulets, and overspread with prickly bushes, the transportation of the carriages was rendered exceedingly fatiguing and tedious ;—so much so, indeed, that we did not arrive at the place of ambuscade till an hour after sunrise.

“This was the first night that I had spent on Indian ground. It was a bright starlight night, and a fresh invigorating breeze blew upon us from the sea.

“The place of ambuscade was a deep ravine which, though it was then dry, bore the appearance of having been filled with water during the last rains. It lay about a mile from the river, and a mile and a half north-east of Buzbuzia. The east-

ern and part of the southern bank of the hollow were skirted by the huts and inclosures of a village which seemed to have been abandoned a few days before. The grenadiers and three hundred seapoys were detached from the hollow to take possession of another village, which was situated upon the bank of the river, and which adjoined the northern wall of the fort of Buzbuzia. It was hoped that their appearance would have led the garrison to believe that they were the whole of the English troops on shore; and that, in consequence of this notion, the enemy, on evacuating the fortress, would retreat along the high-road. The remainder of the troops continued with Captain Clive, endeavouring to conceal themselves, some in the hollow, and others among the neighbouring huts; and the two field-pieces were stationed on the northern side of the adjoining village.

“Being all excessively fatigued, we were permitted to quit our arms in order to obtain rest. Every man laid himself down where he thought proper; some preferring

the deserted houses, and some remaining in the hollow; and, in consequence of a certain feeling of security which nothing could justify, and which would hardly be believed if it were not a well-authenticated fact, the common precaution of stationing sentinels was neglected. In a few minutes we were all asleep.

“It happened that Moruckchund, the governor of Calcutta, had arrived at Buzbuzia, the day before, with a large force. It seems that he had employed spies to mingle themselves with us from our first appearance at Fulta; and among these emissaries, as I afterwards found, was my new and mysterious acquaintance. I had seen this man, whom his comrades called Johnston, several times during the march, but had not observed him after daylight.

“I will now,” continued Theodore, “refer my beloved auditors to the public prints for the details of that successful stratagem to which the troops with whom I was associated fell a sacrifice, on this unfortunate occasion; not doubting that the friends here present will be most anxious to ac-

company me in my individual adventures, which from this time were entirely distinct from those of the persons with whom I had commenced my short campaign.

“I had chosen a deserted hut for my resting-place: it was a square room, with a low door-way, and was entirely unfurnished, excepting that it contained a *charpoie* or bedstead, of unhewn wood interlaced with cordage, and a few broken earthen pans, or *kedjeree* pots. I was too much fatigued to be nice respecting the manner of person who might have preceded me in the occupation of my rude couch: so I threw myself upon it, dressed as I was, and fell into a deep sleep in a few seconds.

“I had slept about an hour, when I was awakened by the reports of fire-arms. I sprang up in a moment, and rushed to the door; but before I could extricate myself from this incommodious passage, I received a shot which struck me back, and left me senseless on the spot; causing me to fall in such a position that my body must have been almost altogether concealed within the hut.

“ I know nothing of what afterwards passed for some hours, excepting from report. When I recovered my senses, I found that I had been dragged within the house, and laid again upon the *charpoie*: but, at the same time, I found myself totally unable to move, and was burning with a dreadful thirst. I endeavoured to call for help, but my tongue and my mouth were so excessively parched, and I was reduced to such a state of feebleness by the loss of blood, that it was impossible for me to utter a sound sufficiently loud to be heard at any distance.

“ I lay in this condition till it was nearly dark, when an old native woman, of a very disagreeable appearance, entered the hut. She was the first native female whom I had ever seen near at hand, and her figure I shall never forget. She was not lean and shrivelled, as the old women of low rank in India commonly are, but was plump, or rather corpulent, for her fat hung loose about her, and seemed almost a burden to her. By this I might have inferred that she was one who fed on the best produc-

tions of the land: for it is not with the sons of Ham as with those of Japheth;—while the latter require mental ease, or some peculiar tendency of the constitution, to render them what is called fat, the former are fattened so agreeably to one general rule, that we may determine the nature of their food by their appearance, nearly as accurately as we can determine that of our fowls or our cattle. Added to the strangeness of her figure, this woman had features nearly approaching to those of the negro; her teeth were black, and her lips had been dyed of a blood-red with the juice of the araca-nut. She had also stained the whites of her eyes with some sort of black juice; and the lobes of her ears were so stretched with heavy silver jewels, that they hung down to her short thick neck. She came in, and advanced to my couch; and then returning to the door, and calling to some persons without, four men entered, and, taking a large thin sheet, they laid it entirely over me: after which they took up my bed, and ran off with it at great speed. It was already getting dusk; and this cir-

cumstance, together with the sheet which was spread over me, would have prevented me from noticing the ground over which I was carried, even if I had been capable of making my observations. But I was scarcely brought into the air, before I fainted; and I continued insensible till I was set down again, the sheet taken off my face, and a cup of water held to my lips. How much kindness there may be in a cup of cold water! O, my Sophia, how often had I thought, during that long sad feverish day, of the dropping fountain in the glebe at Roxobel, where we, my Lucy dear, my Sophia, and Eugenius, were all once found by our father, in our infant days, with bare feet, and splashing each other, by catching the spray in our hands, and throwing it about. The scene was before me all the day, either in my waking or my sleeping visions."

"But go on to realities, dear Theodore," said the doctor; "you keep me in pain."

"I had no sooner swallowed the water," continued the amiable young man, "than I felt myself a new creature, and

was able to ascertain somewhat of the circumstances which surrounded me. I found that I was in a house which seemed to contain several chambers, having doors leading in various directions from the room in which I was; and some of these opened into a garden, from which poured fresh air, laden with the perfume of flowers. There was little furniture in the room, which was paved, and covered in the centre with a striped Benares carpet, whereon stood my *charpoie*, as those people call their bedsteads; over which hung a curtain of China gauze, at that time knotted up. An old grey-headed native, and the female before described, were the only persons in the room when I recovered my recollection. They were both jabbering Bengalee; and the old man made signs to me that he wished to help me to undress, that he might examine my wounds. I was not inclined to resist, for I was in great pain, and felt that I could hardly be worse. He accordingly undressed me, and, having laid a covering over me, he proceeded to make his observations. There were two

wounds, one in the arm, and the other in the thigh. The ball had passed through my thigh without very serious injury. He bound up this wound, having applied some herbs which the woman brought in a brass dish; and then, examining my arm, he extracted a ball, giving me great pain, though on the whole I was satisfied with his skill, which was superior to what I had expected. He then bound up this wound also, and administered more water to me: after which, feeling myself comparatively in a state of ease, I fell into a long deep sleep, without any exercise of mind concerning the reason for all this kindness; yet not, I trust, without the most ardent feelings of gratitude to the Author of all good.

“It was then, my dear father, in that hour, that the divine blessing was, I think, first bestowed on the pious education you had given me. It was then that I first began to feel the power of religion on my heart, and that the former unsanctified state of my mind and feelings first revealed itself to me.

“It was about midnight when I awoke

from the sleep into which I had fallen after my wounds were dressed, and I called for water. There was a lamp burning on a stand in the corner of my room; and I had no sooner called, than a man rose up from the floor on my bedside, and gave me what I required, at the same time asking me in English how I felt myself.

“ ‘What!’ said I, ‘is it to you, Johnston, that I owe all this kindness? I suspected, indeed, that it was so; and if I survive these accidents, it will be to you, under God, that I shall owe my life.’

“ ‘Take this water,’ he answered, ‘and may it do you good. You are the son of Dr. Beauchamp. You came from Roxobel. You were perhaps born there. I wish you well: but as to the rest of you, you Englishmen, what business brought you here, but to disturb and trouble those who were in peace?’

“ He muttered some other words, amidst which I distinguished certain imprecations; from which, however, he again excluded me.

“ ‘You knew my father, then?’ I said.

“ ‘If I did know him,’ he replied, ‘and if he once gave me that advice which would have saved me from ruin if I had followed it, what then? And if my eyes first opened in infancy on the woods of Roxobel, and if all the days of my childhood were passed in that region of cool and refreshing verdure;—if the sabbath-bell was wont to call me to the village church and to the service of God;—what then? It is no matter. These things are now as if they never were: and if I am become as a heathen, those will have more to answer for who planned my ruin.’

“ ‘Then you are, indeed, the same James Torville,’ I said, ‘of whom I have heard so much?’

“ ‘They call me Johnston,’ was his answer.

“ ‘Well, and I will call you Johnston, if you please,’ I replied; ‘but yet allow me the comfort of thinking that I have before me one who was born and bred at Roxobel, and one who has distinguished me for my father’s sake.’ And then, being exceedingly weak, I broke out into

tears, and uttered several passionate exclamations, apostrophizing the woods and dingles, the waterfalls and cool breezes of my native place, weeping like an infant as I repeated the name of Roxobel, sweet Roxobel, then so far away.

“The hardened Johnston (for he was indeed a hardened character, it having been through him, as I afterwards found, that Morukchund was prepared to give us so warm a reception at Buzbuzia) was affected by my exclamations, and dashed a tear from his eye, at the same time bidding me lie down and compose myself; while he went to the door, where I presently saw the outline of his figure as he sat in the door-way smoking his *hookah*.

“I had now no longer any doubt that it was James Torville into whose hands I had fallen: and while I indulged the hope that my comrades had escaped the snares which he had laid for them, I fell into a second deep sleep, under the delightful assurance that the Almighty, who had provided a friend for me in this wild and heathen land, was the best and most

tender, as well as the wisest and most powerful of beings; and had I actually been at that moment in my earthly father's house, and felt his arms around me, I could not have enjoyed a more perfect sense of safety and comfort.

“ I awoke at sunrise with the same sweet feelings and without any symptoms of fever; but being thoroughly disabled by my wounds, I was again obliged to depend on Johnston, (or James Torville,) his black wife, the old native doctor, and one or two native servants, (which last appeared before me in the morning,) for all the comforts and necessaries of life.

“ Day after day passed by; and the attentions of my kind preserver were still continued. One thing, and only one disturbed me; namely, that I could obtain from James Torville no account whatever of the progress of the war, nor even ascertain from him whether the fort of Buzbuzia had been taken, or the ships had gone forward. He seemed to take great pleasure in talking with me about Roxobel, and always seemed softened when speak-

ing of his native place : but, after the first burst of indignation respecting the English, he never once alluded to their proceedings in India, neither would he answer a single question respecting them.

“ I presently discovered that James was in the confidence of the Mahometan government, and that he wished no success to the English. I also found out that the house in which I lodged was situate within a small walled village lying somewhat more inland than the fort of Buzbuzia, that it was by far the best edifice in the village, and that James Torville occupied some situation of authority in the place.

“ It was dreadfully tantalizing to me, however, notwithstanding the temporary comforts of my situation, to be thus imprisoned for a great length of time, without hearing any report of passing events ; and, as I had no money about me, I could not even bribe any one to carry a letter to my commanding-officer.

“ In the mean time, though my wounds did not give me much pain, yet they healed

slowly, probably in consequence of their being unskilfully treated; and I was left to drag on a weary life for months, having it utterly out of my power to escape to the river, even could I have been sure of meeting a European vessel as soon as I arrived there.

“ During this period, though I knew it not, our army was going on conquering in Bengal, and establishing their power on the ruin of that of the Mahometan tyrants. In the month of June the decisive affair at Plassy took place. Some time before this, I had perceived that the mind of my host seemed greatly disquieted; and he at length explained his feelings, informing me of the many triumphs of our countrymen, and of the downfall of his Indian friends. He also confessed the plans which he had adopted in order to discover the designs of our commanders. For this purpose he had volunteered his services at Fulta: and he informed me that the loss at Buzbuzia had been brought about by the information which he had communicated to the native chiefs. He added, that

a large reward had been granted him for this piece of treachery. ‘But,’ said he, ‘I have no doubt that I am suspected by my countrymen; and that I shall be made to die the death of a traitor if I fall into their hands.’

“I felt assured that there could be but little question on this subject: and I asked him what he intended to do. However, as he seemed uneasy and undecided, I entreated him to allow me to make my situation known to my corps, promising to do all in my power to assist him, and to use every effort for the preservation of his life and property.

“He was evidently obliged by my offer, but said he would take a day or two to consider of it.

“Notwithstanding the perfidious conduct of James Torville towards our government, I did not doubt his fidelity to me in the least, for he had not only expressed strong regard towards me, but had ever shewn the utmost attention to my wishes. My influence, indeed, was so great with him, that I had sometimes

reason to hope that I had awakened old English feelings in his mind, and, through the divine blessing on my conversation, had been the means of giving him some correct notions respecting the Christian religion. For, although I had no Bible with me, I had not so far forgotten the lessons which I had received from my dear parents, and from you, my excellent Mr. Airley, as to be unable to expatiate upon the doctrines of our blessed religion with some degree of pleasure, and to confirm and sanction their authority by various sacred texts. I had, indeed, for many weary weeks derived my chief consolations from the instructions of my childhood, chewing the cud, as it were, of all those fragrant herbs on which I had been fed through my early happy years: and I trust that these aliments will conduce, through the divine blessing, to the everlasting good of my immortal soul. I was perhaps, at that time, particularly prepared for administering advice to poor James Torville; and yet, I could hardly have anticipated so speedy and so sure a

harvest from my poor endeavours as I soon afterwards received."

"Theodore, my son," interrupted the doctor, all glowing with impatience, "I am anticipating a triumph infinitely more glorious than any which Plassy itself could supply. Go on, my boy. My God, my God, I cannot be grateful enough. 'Lord, I believe; help thou my unbelief.'"

Every one was affected: the ladies wept silently; the tears started into the eyes of Eugenius; and as for me, the little man of Roxobel, I walked to the window, and stood there listening at a distance, unable to restrain my feelings.

"A few days after the conversation of which I have spoken," continued Theodore, "being just able to move about with a crutch, poor James Torville came into my room at the dawn of day, in violent agitation; his grey hairs being disordered, and the traces of tears being visible on his cheeks.

"'It is all right, all just, Mr. Beauchamp,' he exclaimed. 'Why did I connect myself with the daughters of the Hittites,

the daughters of this cursed land? Is there one of my own countrywomen who would have done this? Has she not lived with me these twenty years, lain in my bosom, and borne me sons and daughters? Yes: and did I not grieve over her little ones, when they were committed to the cold grave, her little ones and my little ones, as I would have mourned had their mother been of the fairest of my own fair countrywomen?' And in this strain he proceeded to lament himself, beating his breast and head, and tearing his grey hair: and it was some time before I could comprehend the cause of his sorrow.

“At length he told me that his wife, understanding his perilous situation, (the full confession of which she had drawn from him by many endearments and professions of affection, like a second Delilah with a second Samson,) had made off, during the night, with all his hoarded rupees, the place of which was known only to himself and to her.

“‘But,’ added he, ‘she will not be satisfied with this robbery; she will not be contented

with the plunder; but she will bring down her people upon me. She will state to them the connexion I have had with an English officer. Nothing now remains to us but immediate flight. We must try this very night to escape to Calcutta; and I only trust it may not then be too late.'

"We spent the rest of that unhappy day in making such preparations as could be effected without the knowledge of the servants, whom Torville informed me that we must now consider as so many spies and bitter enemies. His plan was to place me on a small horse which he had provided, and to proceed to the river, where he told me there was little doubt of our meeting with an English vessel of some sort. Or, if disappointed in this, we were to proceed all night in the direction of Calcutta.

"Such was our intention, but it was painfully prevented; for, towards the hour of sunset, poor Torville was seized with a disease which often does its fatal work in twenty-four hours in that awful climate. It was the cholera morbus, a complaint which is attended with dreadful vomitings and

spasms, and which frequently changes the countenance to the appearance of death in a very few hours.

“ I watched by the poor man all night, all that long miserable night. Yet, why do I call it a miserable night? Was it not the sweetest season I had enjoyed for months*? Was it not an occasion on which I received the most visible evidences of the divine favour?

“ Poor Torville had seemed to be insensible for some hours: but towards midnight he opened his eyes, and looked at me as I sat by him. ‘ Dear Beauchamp, my countryman, my friend, my* only friend,’ he said, ‘ tell your father, (for you will see Roxobel again,) that it was in a blessed hour in which he sent his son to India. I have been a fool. I have been a villain. I have served Baal, and he has forsaken me. I fled the presence of the Lord, and he has pursued and laid me low. He has divested me of all self-supports; he has brought me to the dust: but not with an evil intent toward me. No: *I feel, I have been made to feel*, in the space of a few short hours,

that my whole life has been one course of sin, and yet that there is a sufficiency of grace and merit in Christ our blessed Saviour, not only for me but for all mankind. I am persuaded, I am fully persuaded, and you, Mr. Beauchamp, have been the means under God of bringing me to this conviction, that there is mercy left even for me the chief of sinners.'

“Such was the purport of his declarations; and, from that time, I perceived that he was frequent and earnest in prayer, turning his hollow and glassy eyes upwards, and from time to time clasping his bony and burning hands together, as if in ardent devotion.

“I helped his aspirations as well as I could, by joining aloud with him in his petitions, and repeating every text I could possibly recollect which suited the situation of his soul. In the mean time we were both left alone in the house, as far as I could perceive; not a neighbour nor a servant answering to my calls.

“At sunrise the poor sufferer experienced an awful change: yet, a few minutes before

death, he revived a little, and asked for water; after which, he directed me to take possession of a roll of paper sealed up, which was hidden in his bosom, bidding me to conceal it about my person, and give it to my father. Then commending me and his own soul to the divine mercy through Christ, he fell into the agonies of death, and his soul had departed before five o'clock in the morning.

“ I closed his eyes, and laid his body straight. I could do no more for him. And now I thought, that if the *tattoo*, or small horse, which had been provided the evening before, and placed in a retired shed, was still there, this was my moment for escape. I lost no time; but putting on a large *labardour* which belonged to the deceased, and one of his usual caps, which were composed of leather, I took one last look at the remains of my poor friend, went to the shed; found the *tattoo*, and rode with all speed in the direction of the river.

“ I met several women by the way, who had been to fetch water on their shoulders, and one or two devotees also, who had been

washing themselves in the sacred waters ; but I arrived at the river without accident, and there obtained a passage in a fishing-boat to the first English station, where I was received by my brother officers as one raised from the dead, and soon, under the care of an English surgeon, recovered the perfect use of my limbs. Nevertheless, as my health still suffered by the climate, it was thought right to send me home by the first opportunity ; and here I am, my friends, more happy, more blessed, more thankful, than ever mortal was."

Thus speaking, the fine youth rose and ran into his parent's arms : and new tears were shed, and new bursts of gratitude poured from every mouth.

" Now, now," said the tender father, " now, now let me hear a song of praise. Mr. Airley, lead the band, the happy band : my children, all unite. O, did I ever, ever think, of hearing this blessed chorus again on earth ?"

We began to sing, but we could not proceed ; we were too much affected : and the doctor said, " Not yet, not yet—I cannot

bear it yet; the contrast between our joyful notes to-night, and the sweetly sorrowful cadences we heard yesterday evening, is more than I can bear. Theodore, my Theodore, you have made me feel more than I can express; my son, my child, my beloved one. Poor James Torville! Ah, my Theodore, it was not for nothing that you were sent to India; but the laurels you gathered there will not be gilt with earthly glory."

"And rightly so, my father," rejoined Theodore; "for I did not gather them, neither will I wear them. If James Torville was rendered happy in death, it was not by me, though I was permitted to be the instrument of communicating that happiness: let us give all the glory to God."

Our beloved son then proceeded to relate various particulars respecting his passage home, which had been a prosperous one; his arrival in England; and his immediate departure for Roxobel from the place of his disembarkation.

"O, my father," he said, "you cannot think what I felt, when I was actually on

my way towards home. I travelled night and day: and when I arrived at Beckington, I found the coach nearly filled with passengers who were going to see the illuminations at Roxobel. It happened that none of them had ever known me, or at least they did not recollect me: but I asked many questions about old friends, and was perfectly stupified by the accounts I received of the various strange changes which had taken place; being particularly astonished at that most marvellous act of folly on the part of Mrs. Winifred, which had so lately been disclosed. On the whole, however, I was gratified with the information I obtained respecting my father and those I loved best; though there was one piece of news which put me into a terrible alarm. I am ashamed to say what it was."

"And for that very reason we must know it," observed Lucy.

Theodore whispered the secret in her ear: on which she laughed, and said aloud, "I thought what it was. He did not like to hear of my estate: he did not know that I

had already given it away; and he feared that I might think myself too great a lady to accept of him. Now, Theodore," she added, "I could almost quarrel with you for this; only, I could not find in my heart to do so after all that you have suffered."

"You must excuse me, my sweet Lucy," replied Theodore; "but true love is always apprehensive."

"And pray," returned Lucy, playfully, "how long did you entertain these apprehensions, Theodore?"

"Not after I had seen you, my Lucy," answered Theodore, gaily. "I had none after our meeting."

"Well, but now go on with your story," said Lucy. "Whom did you first see when you came to Roxobel?"

"I first met Black Tom," replied Theodore: "he was in the street, near Mr. Semple's house, and I called to him. The wild man did not know me at first; but, when he did recognise me, I thought that he would have become more mad than ever. He was for running up to the dear parsonage immediately, to tell the news: but

I made him promise not to communicate a hint of my return till Mr. Semple should give permission. And then he went with me to Mr. Semple's; but we were obliged to send for the doctor from the Hall. I did not go into his house, but waited for him at the gates: and after he came to me, while we were concerting our measures, Black Tom left us; to which circumstance you are indebted for his untimely visit. Indeed, the poor fellow was quite mad with joy."

"He did not keep his secret very well, however," remarked Eugenius; "for I understand that he told both Robert Taylor and Richard, and he nearly drew down my hot displeasure on Richard. I really fancied the young man had been intoxicated. Poor Richard! I should have been very sorry had I said any thing unkind to him; for he and young Taylor had just been performing the little concert which gave us so much pleasure."

Thus we discoursed; and the proceedings at the Hall were not forgotten in the course of our conversation, though we

avoided every circumstance which might have had a tendency to inflame Mr. Beauchamp against Mr. Nuttall. We had the pleasure, however, to discover that our dear Theodore was no longer the rash hotheaded young man, who had, in former days, made me tremble for him, whenever he opened his mouth in the society of persons who were not agreeable to him.

We finished our evening with a solemn act of thanksgiving, and retired early, our dear Theodore having had little rest for several nights.

CHAPTER XIV.

VARIOUS EVENTS.

EVERY one who has long been a sojourner upon earth must have had opportunities of remarking that there are periods of life in which few changes occur; periods in which the stream of time glides gently on, with scarcely a ripple in its current: and again, on the other hand, that there are seasons of continual excitement, wherein the waters foam and dash around; the troubled waves roll high; and overwhelming destruction is threatened by the furious eddies.

Such fluctuations I have myself experienced. When first I came to Roxobel, and during the seven succeeding years, all was peaceful and serene; whereas, now I can hardly take a step from my door, with-

out meeting with some adventure to harrow up my very soul. But man is not formed to endure under violent emotions, whether of a painful or a pleasing nature. The human frame is too frail to support prolonged agitations. I feel that a few such days as I have lately experienced would bring me to my grave.

I was hurrying back to my lodgings last night, anticipating a season of undisturbed repose, when, passing by a little gate which opens from the park into the Hall gardens, just at the corner of the church, I was met by a servant of Mr. Griffith's, who delivered his master's compliments to me, and added, that he would be much obliged if I would do him the favour to call upon him before I went home, to sign some papers relative to Miss Lovel's affairs.

I thought that I would rather have gone home, but not knowing what excuse to make, I turned in with the servant; and, being led through some retired passages in the offices, presently found myself in the steward's room.

Mr. Griffith was sitting by a large fire, refreshing himself with a bottle of wine and a mince-pie after his day's work. He requested me to be seated; and, after we had settled our affairs, he would have made me eat and drink with him, but this I declined. He seemed, however, very anxious to detain me in discourse.

“Well, Mr. Airley,” he said, “I hope that you are getting on better at the parsonage than we are here; and that you have a better account to give me of the young captain, than I have to give you of the young 'squire?”

“I have much the same to say of Theodore,” I answered, “as you have of Mr. Nuttall.”

“How is that, Mr. Airley? how is that, Mr. Airley?” asked the steward.

“Why,” I replied, “they are both acting so as to verify Holy Writ; that is to say, they are both going the way that they have been taught to go. What does Scripture say but ‘Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it?’”

“ True, true, Mr. Airley,” he rejoined, “ very true. I must tell you, there is no man in the world fonder than I am of a good dinner and a few glasses of wine, and the company of a friend: but ‘ there is reason in roasting of eggs;’ though there is none at all in the way we manage matters here at present. Such a set of people as were got together here yesterday, such a collection as sat down to dinner, surely never met before in a gentleman’s house. I can only suppose that Mr. Nuttall is determined to put his lady out of patience, and, perhaps, to drive her out of his house, or he could not have thought of inviting such a company as were gathered round his table yesterday. We dined between five and six. Mr. Semple was called away about eight o’clock, and I left the dining-room about the same hour. The gentlemen were then quite fresh. I stepped up into the drawing-room to the ladies; and about nine o’clock the gentlemen came up, one or two at a time, and some of them, I could see, were scarcely able to stand. Poor Mrs. Winifred, in the

mean time, sat like the figure of Grief on a monument. I was quite sorry for her.

“But, as I said,” continued the steward, “the gentlemen came up; and tea being handed round, Mr. Nuttall spoke to one of the servants for brandy and water, on which his lady, who was near him, rebuked him very sharply, hinting that he had had quite enough already. On this he took fire; and she answering him again, words ran very high between them. However, Mr. Nuttall insisted on having the brandy, and he drank off a glass of the neat spirit.

“Just at this moment,” proceeded Mr. Griffith, “Mr. Aprice introduced our poet, and asked permission for him to recite some verses which he had prepared for the occasion. And so, just for the fun of the thing, he was led to the centre of the room: and there he stood and spouted away, and we all laughed; for it is morally impossible to see and hear Mr. Pen Map without laughing. He kept his countenance, however, remarkably well, for he never smiled once, but looked quite fixed and settled in his features: and, when he had

gone on for a few lines, he came out all unexpectedly with as pretty a piece of versification, Mr. Airley, as I ever heard, containing a sort of lamentation for our young captain. We were all struck silent in a moment; there was no more laughing then: but our young 'squire looked very much inflamed, and swore at the poet, and bid him be gone for a fool. And Mrs. Winifred turned all colours, and wiped her face with a handkerchief, as if she were ready to faint, poor thing! So the poet walked away, looking, as I thought, pleased with what he had done. And our 'squire broke out again in fresh oaths, abusing Map and his verses, and saying he had never heard such abominable stuff in his life. And then he called for another glass, and got up, and was lounging out of the room, when the butler that is now came to inform the ladies that every thing was ready for the dance; for there was to be a dance of all sorts in the great hall, the younger Mrs. Nuttall having set her face against these dancings in any of the rooms up stairs. Accordingly we all crowded down;

and a pretty collection there was of us in the hall: high and low, young and old, and no one to keep the people in order as in former times.

“It was then about nine o’clock,” continued the steward; “and being come into the hall, the company crowded to the windows to see some fireworks which were being let off in the park. Just at this time, Mr. Claypole, who had ridden from Beckington after shutting up his shop, rushed in, in his riding-coat, exclaiming as if he were deranged, “Joy! joy! joy! News! news! happy news! Who can guess my news?” And he ran forward to Mrs. Winifred, who was seated in a chair by the fire, crying out, ‘Mr. Beauchamp is returned, Madam.’

“He was surrounded immediately; and I thought he would have been pulled to pieces. There was such a noise in the hall that no single voice could be distinguished. I only heard Mr. Claypole asseverating the truth of his assertion; and declaring that Mrs. Semple (who is confined to the house,

you know, Mr. Airley, by indisposition) was his informer.

“Notwithstanding Mr. Claypole’s protestations, however, not one of us believed him: some thought the news too good, and some thought it too bad to be true. Mrs. Winifred rose from her chair and went up to him; upon which the crowd gathered back, and there was nobody standing close about Mr. Claypole excepting Mr. Nuttall and his lady, and some of the superior visiters at the Hall. Mrs. Winifred put her trembling hand on Mr. Claypole, (for, poor lady! she is declining fast,) and said, ‘Dear Sir, if you can but prove to me that Mr. Beauchamp is living and well, you will confer on me the greatest obligation that man ever bestowed upon woman.’

“On this Mr. Nuttall broke out beyond all bounds of decency, (the brandy being in his head,) and he swore at his mother, and called her a fool: and he said something about Miss Lovel, which his lady taking up, he bade her hold her tongue; and he then turned away with other oaths

in his mouth, which I shall not repeat before you, Mr. Airley.

“Still, however, we would not believe Mr. Claypole, though he was firm to his story; and I was just on the point of running out to see and judge for myself, when I heard a shriek from a woman’s voice outside the door, in the direction of the offices. Accordingly, I rushed to the door, and into the servants’ hall, which opens, as you know, Sir, by a side-way into the great hall.

“Now,” continued the steward, laughing heartily, “there was a table set out with cold meat and pasty in this hall, ready for the second sort of gentry, when they felt themselves hungry. And there we saw Mrs. Penelope struggling with Black Tom for a large pasty. O, Mr. Airley, I thought I should have died with laughing. The duenna, as you please to call her, was roaring and shrieking, and calling the warrener thief, smuggler, poacher, and I know not what else. Tom was holding fast his pasty, and declaring he would have it in spite of all the

old housekeepers and key-keepers in Roxobel.

“I called silence,” said the steward, “(for no one had followed me into the servants’ hall but some of what I term the second sort of gentry,) and I said to Tom, ‘Why, you must be one of the most daring impudent fellows, Mr. Thomas, that ever was heard of, to come and steal pasty in broad candle-light, and before the owner’s face.’

“The rough man burst into a loud laugh, and said, ‘If I am not welcome, when I tell you that this pasty is to regale the young captain from India, my future lord and master as is to be if I have any eyes in my head, why then, Mr. Griffith, I give you leave to flay me like a rabbit, and to make a pair of boots of my skin.’

“‘Mr. Beauchamp!’ I repeated; ‘then he is come? the good news is true? Give me my hat: take the pasty, and away with you. Ladies and gentlemen, your most obedient humble servant; I wish you a very good night.’ And away I came, though the warrener outran me with the

pasty. And truly, Mr. Airley, till I got to the parsonage, I could hardly believe the happy news ; it seemed so beyond all ideas of probability.

“ Well but,” proceeded the steward, “ you know that when I left the parsonage it was full two o’clock ; and when I got home, they were still dancing in the great hall, and roaring and singing in the offices. I, however, went quietly into my own chamber, and locked myself in ; but I heard them for hours after that : and our young ’squire, I am told, was actually carried up to bed, because he was not able to walk. And when his servant went to him this morning, he was so frightfully stupid that it was thought right to send for Mr. Semple, who assures me that he will presently kill himself, if he goes on as he has begun. He has been very unwell all day ; and yet this evening he is drinking again in the Brown Parlour, with some of his wretched associates : and if he is not in a raging fever to-morrow, I shall be greatly surprised ; though, by the by, Mr. Airley, I am beginning to think that after a while

it will be no very easy matter to surprise any of us at Roxobel. We have been tolerably well accustomed lately to strange turns of fate and fortune. I shall wonder at nothing a short time hence; and should scarcely take the trouble of looking out of the window to see you parading through the Hall gardens to be married to Mrs. Penelope Nuttall."

"Really, Mr. Griffith," I replied, "I trust that you will never be called upon to witness such a sight as that. I think, of the two, I would rather unite my fate with one of the old gipsy wives. But I am truly sorry for poor David Nuttall: there Mrs. Winifred is not to be forgiven. Had she owned her folly, acknowledged her son, and given him a good education, the poor young man might have been saved. From my heart I pity him; and I reproach myself for not having endeavoured, in his more tender years, to obtain his confidence. I have done wrong; I feel that I have, and I am humbled under that feeling."

Thus we conversed till the clock struck eleven; and, knowing that this was Mr.

Strickland's hour for retiring to rest, I started up: and I had just taken hold of my hat, when a distant murmur, as of persons in high altercation, reached our ears. We ran to the door, and then distinctly heard the echo of loud and furious voices resounding through the passages.

“What now?” exclaimed the steward; “are we in Bedlam?” And he snatched up a walking-stick which was near at hand, and we hastened towards the quarter whence the voices appeared to proceed.

When we arrived at the great entrance-hall, from which all the galleries diverge towards the four wings, we heard the sounds more distinctly, and met many of the servants who were running on the same errand as ourselves. Mr. Griffith placed himself foremost, and pushed forward; and I followed him as quickly as I could. We were led by the noise along the passage which conducts to the Brown Parlour, a passage where in former days a whisper was hardly ever heard. I was close behind Mr. Griffith; and when we were about twenty paces from the door, a loud report,

as of a falling table and broken glasses, burst upon our ears.

We hastily forced open the door : and then what a scene presented itself ! The company within consisted of Mr. Aprice, the miller, the gamekeeper, the young 'squire, and two ordinary-looking men who were unknown to me. Four of these individuals were standing, as if they had just got up from sitting around a table which now lay on the floor amid heaps of bottles and glasses all smashed to pieces : two or three lighted candles also had been thrown down with the other things, and were flaring amid the ruins. These persons seemed so stupified with liquor as hardly to be able to move; though they were vociferating aloud. In another part of the room were David Nuttall and Tolly the miller, dealing blows at each other, with all the malice of the bitterest foes. And at the instant in which we advanced into the room, the more experienced Tolly had got his adversary at a great disadvantage ; and we were too late to save a blow which sent poor David to the floor with such a tremendous force (for

he was rendered exceedingly weak by the quantity of liquor he had taken) that I never more expected to hear him speak, or even to see him move.

The servants at this moment rushed into the apartment, and overpowered the miller by the main force of their numbers; while Mr. Griffith and I ran to the assistance of the unfortunate young man, crying out that some one should fly immediately for Mr. Semple.

While I was endeavouring in vain to lift poor David from the floor, and had only succeeded in raising his head, and removing the handkerchiefs from his neck to assist his respiration as much as possible, the miller was overpowered and forced out; and the rest of the drunken party had slunk away, with the single exception of Mr. Aprice, whom I am sorry to call a clergyman. Mrs. Winifred, Mrs. Penelope, and the younger Mrs. Nuttall, too, had appeared, all drawn to the spot by the same dreadful uproar.

What a feeling of ruin, of utter ruin, must have seized the miserable mother of

the unfortunate young man, as she entered the room, and saw her son stretched on the ground apparently without life; his head raised up and resting on my breast, as I knelt on the floor! How must she have been horrified by the scene of confusion which presented itself!—the table overturned in the centre of the apartment, and surrounded on all sides by broken glasses and decanters, which were lying in the midst of torrents of spilt wine, and were intermingled with wicks of candles wasting away amid streams of melting wax. Mr. Griffith had his head out of the window, vociferating aloud to the persons without, and urging them to fly to Mr. Semple's; and the cold night air, admitted through the open lattice, agitated the flames of the lights which still burned on the chimney-piece, and threatened to extinguish them every moment. Oh, what a pang must have been felt by the miserable mother, when this scene broke upon her sight, and confirmed her worst fears!

Mrs. Winifred, however, advanced quickly with the other females; terror having

given her strength and activity to forget her infirmities. But I shall never forget her shriek of agony as she looked upon her son; and the wild accent in which she exclaimed, "I knew it! I knew it! Yet I had hoped it would not have been so soon!" Then falling on her knees, and bewailing her child (for he was indeed her child) as if actually dead, she used every tender appellation which a mother's heart might be expected to suggest on such an occasion, apostrophizing Dr. Beauchamp as if present, and saying, "Nay, nay, I did not triumph in his death; I did not mean it; I did not wish it: and I did rejoice, yes, heartily rejoice, when he came back again."

No one, however, appeared to notice the old lady, excepting myself. The servants, who had returned into the room, were preparing the couch to receive their master: and, with the help of Mr Griffith, he was soon laid upon it.

"How did this happen?" asked the younger Mrs. Nuttall, addressing Mr.

Aprice, while the attendants were removing poor David. "This comes of your vile propensities to the bottle. You are a shame to the cloth, Mr. Aprice."

"It was the miller," replied the crest-fallen Mr. Aprice. "I call Heaven to witness, Madam, that it was Mr. Tolly. Mr. Nuttall, poor youth, and Ben Tolly, had drunk deep, and then they began to talk of Esther Stephens. And the miller said she was not worth a bag of bran. And Mr. Nuttall became hot: and so, from one word to another, anger grew. And Mr. Nuttall threw a glass at the miller's head; and then they got up, and threw down the table, and dealt blows at each other, till poor Mr. Nuttall fell on the floor: and then Mr. Airley and Mr. Griffith came in."

"And why did you not part them?" said Mrs. Penelope. "You are a vile worthless vagabond."

"No more a vagabond than yourself, woman," replied the testy Welshman. And the angry pair raised their voices, and scolded each other, with a vivacity

which, on any other occasion, would have made me smile.

Never shall I forget the look of cold contempt with which the younger Mrs. Nuttall eyed Mrs. Penelope and the Welshman; nor the perfect indifference with which she gazed on her wretched husband, who still lay insensible, while his miserable mother stood wringing her hands, and almost shrieking with agony.

At length, Mr. Semple appeared. He was made to understand the state of the case in a moment, and he was very expeditious in giving relief. He at first attempted to bleed the young man in the arm, but could not succeed. He then put his lancet into the jugular vein. This succeeded, and the young man soon shewed signs of returning recollection.

Poor Mrs. Winifred! I shall never forget the expression of her countenance when her son gave the first symptoms of renewed animation. It was a time never to be forgotten.

“He will do now, Madam,” said Mr. Semple. “Let a bed be warmed. We will

carry him up stairs, and put him into bed. I will stay with him all night. He has been struck on the head: yet the blow will not, I trust, prove of serious consequence. But, Mrs. Penelope," he added, "if you allow your nephew to drink as he has done, his career will be a very short one."

"And how am I to hinder it?" asked the duenna, sharply. "He is above my hand."

Mr. Semple took no notice of this retort: and all being prepared, poor David was carefully lifted from the sofa, and carried up stairs; Mr. Semple promising to send for Mrs. Winifred when her son was in bed.

All the other men then present went out with the poor sufferer; and I alone was left with the wife, the mother, and the aunt.

Mrs. Winifred sat, or rather sunk down, on the couch from which her son had been removed, and she was for a while speechless; the wife stood quite still, and spoke not a word; while the aunt broke out into every sort of angry and violent expression. She vociferated to the maid-servants to put the room to rights; and

when no one answered her summons, she set to work to do it herself, muttering a great deal about slovenliness and waste, as if waste and slovenliness were of the smallest importance when set in competition with the evils which threatened her family. Not one of us, however, paid her the least attention: and when she had shut the window, set the table on its feet, and picked up the candles and the broken glasses, she bustled away; leaving me with the wife and the mother of her unfortunate nephew.

For a moment nothing was heard in the wide and gloomy apartment, but the deep sighing of Mrs. Winifred, and the moaning of the wind as it whistled among the chimneys and towers of the old building.

At length, the poor mother broke out in an agony of grief. "Oh, my son! my son!" she exclaimed: "my unhappy David! Ah, Mr. Airley, I have acted like a fool. I can almost forgive myself my first offence, in marrying as I did; but I cannot forgive myself for not owning the affair, and not bringing my son forward

to have him educated as a gentleman. If Dr. Beauchamp had but been his tutor, what might he now have been! Had you been his companion and adviser, Mr. Airley, he might have been a blessing to me." And she wept, and wrung her hands, and then went on. "But I was mad, infatuated; I was worse than mad: I was ambitious, unjust. I hoped that my sisters might have left their estates in my power; and I was wicked enough to wish to have them all to give to my son. My husband's sister always predicted that I should survive my sisters. Her predictions are verified: but she failed in her purpose—we failed in all our purposes—against the young people whom we ought to have protected. I thank God that we failed in many of them; but there was one, yes, I still wish——" and she looked towards her daughter-in-law, and stopped abruptly and in some confusion.

"You are sorry, Madam, that you failed in obtaining Lucy Lovel for your son," retorted Caroline. "I understand you. You have never been able so to act by me as to

conceal your regrets on that account ; and yet you thought me good enough for your nephew, and invited me to Roxobel with that sole purpose. But, permit me to add, that if you have regretted my marriage, I too have sorely repented, and am truly sorry that I ever saw your son's face."

"I cannot help it," replied Mrs. Winifred, with dignity. "Remember, Madam, that the marriage was entirely your own act and deed ; it was sought by yourself : and it therefore becomes you, above all persons, to bear with the faults of my son, feeling as you must, that you married him with a knowledge of all his defects, and, in fact, that you took advantage of those defects in order to obtain him as your husband."

"You are perfectly just in what you say, Mrs. Winifred," I remarked ; "and nothing now remains to be done by Mrs. Nuttall but to endeavour to reclaim her husband by kindness."

"Kindness !" she repeated, contemptuously : "and to be told that I am not worthy to be called the cousin of Lucy Lovel when-

ever I attempt to shew him any sort of kindness!"

"You knew that he preferred Lucy when he married you," returned Mrs. Winifred. "You therefore understood what you had to expect. You have nothing, however, to fear from Lucy. She never even sees your husband. Be kind to him then in due time, and you will obtain his respect; and this is the utmost that you can expect."

"And in the mean time," replied the lady, with scorn, "he is to amuse himself with the gamekeeper's daughter, or with my waiting-maid; to drink and fight with the miller; and to call me a fool whenever he meets me: while his mother and aunt are to lecture me, and vent their indignation upon me, whenever it pleases them so to do." Thus speaking, she began to weep, but more in passion than in grief: and then again breaking out in indignation, she said, "At least I thought that I might have expected his mother's gratitude, when I condescended to take the son of Timothy Nuttall for my husband, in order to preserve him from public ridicule."

“Mrs. Nuttall,” I returned with warmth, “is this a time for reproaches? Have we not serious troubles enough to endure, without adding to them by private discord? You have acted, let me tell you, very imprudently; but don’t give the world occasion for triumph by letting it see that you suffer for your folly. Excuse my freedom, but I must be sincere.”

She turned round, and cut me short by walking out of the room; and I was left entirely alone with Mrs. Winifred. The poor woman then wept and sobbed without restraint; and I endeavoured in vain to comfort her.

“Oh, Lucy, Lucy Lovel!” she exclaimed, “if you had consented to marry my son, I might still have been happy!” And she continued to repeat the name of Lucy, like one beside herself.

Mr. Barnaby Semple at length sent for us. We found Mr. Nuttall in bed. He was able to speak, but he looked wildly; and I perceived that Mr. Semple did not like his appearance. However, we did what we could to console the poor mother:

and Mr. Semple having promised to sit by the young man all night, Mrs. Winifred was prevailed upon to retire for a few hours.

I stayed with Mr. Semple till about two o'clock, when, feeling myself quite exhausted, I went home, and found the family up, and well acquainted with what was going on at the Hall. They told me what I had not learned before; namely, that the miller, when dragged from the parlour, had been carried to the top of the house, and shut up in one of the pinnacles; from which, however, he had already contrived to escape, having, it was supposed, found some passage over the leads.

“Well, let him go,” I observed. “Justice, or an evil conscience, or both, will follow him, go where he will. That man is a pest to society.”

Mrs. Strickland then insisted that I should go to bed. She told me that I looked ill, and it seems she was very correct; for I had not been in bed an hour, before my head began to swim, my limbs to burn with fever, and my thoughts to become

delirious. It was no wonder that I felt in this way; for, during the last few hours, I had been forced into a state of high excitement. Yet I did not wish to disturb the family before morning, and therefore kept quiet. But when morning arrived, I was unable to make myself heard. And when Mrs. Strickland came to call me about ten o'clock, she found me perfectly stupid and burning with fever.

She immediately sent for Mr. Semple. Mrs. Tristram also was summoned to nurse me, for I was entirely helpless; and Ellen and Margery, as I afterwards found, most willingly undertook the care of the school, in order that the good schoolmistress might devote her whole attention to me.

My fever was not infectious, but it very greatly oppressed my brain. The dear family at the parsonage were soon made aware of my condition; and they lost no time in coming to see me. They continually visited me during my illness, and ministered to my comfort by every means within their power. Notwithstanding the

kindness of these dear friends, however, united with the skill of my medical attendant, I lay for more than three weeks in a state of alternate delirium and insensibility; and another fortnight elapsed before I could leave my room.

Thus did five weeks pass by: during which time, the constant endeavours of my friends were particularly directed to the purpose of keeping my mind easy. The young people from the parsonage, as I have just hinted, were one or another always in attendance upon me, and contributed in a high degree to soothe and solace me. Lovely young creatures! what affection did they display towards me! Had I been their very father they could not have evinced a stronger regard. At length I was permitted to regain my strength, and then I was told the real state of affairs as they had taken place during my illness; and I was very thankful that my strength had been considerably restored before these events were communicated to me.

CHAPTER XV.

BLIGHTED PROSPECTS.

POOR David Nuttall, I was informed, was still living; but, alas! no hopes were entertained of his long continuance. He had never risen from that bed on which he had been laid by the direction of Mr. Barnaby Semple on the night of his accident. The injuries occasioned by his fall, it is supposed, would not have proved fatal, had not his blood been very much inflamed: yet it seemed that not only his head but his spine had been injured; for it presently appeared that the lower parts of his person were completely paralyzed, so that he was unable to move; and his pains, poor fellow! were extreme. He was, at this time, dreadfully violent and impatient, using shocking language. Neither would he admit any of

his former associates to see him, raving like a madman whenever Mr. Aprice came near him.

At that period I was exceedingly ill, and my friends were very uneasy about me; but the dear people at the parsonage were not so occupied by me as to have no commiseration to bestow on the unhappy son of Mrs. Winifred. They took counsel with their kind father; and it was agreed among them that Mrs. Beauchamp should write to Mrs. Winifred, (I cannot call her by any other name,) and offer her any assistance which either she herself, or her family, or Mr. Lovel could give.

The proposal was gratefully accepted; and Mrs. Beauchamp went over immediately to the Hall. She was introduced into Mrs. Winifred's apartment, and found the poor old lady broken down with grief.

When Mrs. Beauchamp saluted her, she wept, and said, "Oh, Madam, dear Madam, how grateful am I for this kindness! My poor unhappy boy! he raves when he sees me: and I cannot bear his reproaches. If they were not just, I might endure them.

‘ Though it is sharper than a serpent’s tooth,
To have a thankless child.’

But what thanks does my miserable child, my David owe to me? I did very wrong in bringing him up as I did: but I was so much under the dread of my sisters’ prejudices, and my sister-in-law had such influence over me, that I dared not act as I wished. Oh, Mrs. Beauchamp, how dreadful was that influence of my sister-in-law! But it is over now. Since the secret has been avowed, I am comparatively at liberty from that horrible thralldom. Oh, who can tell so well as I can what it is to be under the power of a low and sordid mind? When my waiting-maid became the confidant of my secret,—when I first allowed her to draw from me the mystery of my prepossession for her brother,—I riveted a chain around my neck, which never could be broken till all was divulged, and the mystery was one no longer. But then, Mrs. Beauchamp, then was it too late; then was my David lost.

“ But I make no excuse for myself,” added the poor lady, weeping; “ I am

a miserable wretch. I have no comfort. My son reproaches me; and that cruel daughter-in-law! Oh, Mrs. Beauchamp! had Lucy loved my son! But why do I say this to you? What avail regrets and reminiscences? our ruin is complete. I have no hope at this moment but in death."

Mrs. Beauchamp described her interview with Mrs. Winifred as being one of the most painful that she had ever witnessed. She could do no more than weep with the poor old lady for a length of time. When they were both become more composed, however, she proceeded to urge upon the afflicted mother the duty of striving, late as it was, to accomplish that which ought to have been attempted before; namely, the work of impressing upon her son's mind such a sense of the reality and importance of eternal things as might be the means, under the divine blessing, of bringing him into a fit state either to live or to die as the Almighty might be pleased to appoint. Enlarging, with feelings of delightful satisfaction, on the

fulness and sufficiency of the salvation provided for lost mankind by the Lord the Saviour, Mrs. Beauchamp begged that no time might be lost in attempting to make the poor young man acquainted with the awful danger of his present situation, and with the glorious salvation presented to him in the Gospel.

Mrs. Winifred seemed much affected by Mrs. Beauchamp's kindness, but said in reply, "I trust that the pains and sufferings of my poor boy will atone for his offences; for if he has done wrong, he has suffered severely for it: and God is merciful, as you well know, good Mrs. Beauchamp, and will not be extreme in punishing."

Mrs. Winifred thus gave utterance to a common and fatal error; and, in reasoning respecting the Almighty, wholly omitted the requirements of his justice. She seemed to lose sight of the consideration that every attribute of the Almighty is infinite, and that his perfections are exactly counterpoised; so that, in the government of the universe, justice, as well

as mercy, must have its perfect work. No man, indeed, can be saved but through the atonement of God the Son, who, in his character of Mediator, pleads the merits of his infinite sacrifice on the behalf of those who penitently and humbly seek for his mercy. This, however, is a mystery too high for the human understanding, and which can be apprehended by those alone who are brought under the blessed teaching of the Holy Spirit. If the common methods of instruction had been sufficient for this purpose, Mrs. Winifred could hardly have failed of being better informed, since this subject had been the constant theme of Dr. Beauchamp's discourses for the last thirty years; during which long period the doctor has filled the pulpit of Roxobel, with the exception of the short time in which it has been occupied by Mr. Aprice.

Notwithstanding the erroneous notions which Mrs. Winifred had cherished on the subject of religion, the mind of the old lady being now better prepared for the reception of the truth, she was enabled

to understand more of the doctrine of justification by Christ only, during the short period of her discourse with Mrs. Beauchamp, than she had ever done before. In consequence of her opening convictions, she was eagerly desirous that the excellent lady should visit her son in his chamber, and avail herself of such opportunities as might present themselves, of reasoning with him, and tranquillizing his mind : and she also most gladly accepted the services of Eugenius and Theodore, which Mrs. Beauchamp had been commissioned to tender.

Mrs. Beauchamp kindly resolved, that, whatever might be her reception in the sick-room, she would endeavour to make her company acceptable to poor Mr. Nuttall. She was, however, more coldly received than she had even anticipated: for she found the poor young man in a state of extreme sullenness ; and his aunt, who was in the apartment, having her own reasons for keeping her post notwithstanding her nephew's evident distress at her presence, saluted the

visiter with a hint, that strangers were not agreeable in a sick-chamber.

“ I come,” replied Mrs. Beauchamp, “ by the authority of Mr. Nuttall’s mother, and with the wish to relieve you of some of your cares. I have been accustomed to wait upon the sick ; and the regard I have for your nephew will urge me to use my utmost skill.”

“ The regard you have for the son of the lady of this house!” retorted Mrs. Penelope. “ Well, be it so : poor David is in a new situation ; wherefore should I wonder at his having new friends ? But I shall speak to my sister on this subject.” And out of the room swam the duenna, as Mrs. Beauchamp afterwards described to me ; and she troubled her very little from that time forward.

Mrs. Beauchamp is peculiarly tender in her treatment of invalids ; and poor Mr. Nuttall soon derived such comfort from her attentions, that he not only became reconciled to her company, but after a while felt quite uneasy whenever she was absent. Thus she insensibly acquired influence

over him, and, no doubt, used that influence as a Christian ought to do, in leading his thoughts to the concerns of his soul.

The poor young man, as must have always appeared, is not endowed with strong sense, having more of his father than his mother about him, and his mind is totally uncultivated. Like other weak characters, he is always strongly biassed by those with whom he associates. It is difficult to judge of such persons, and to decide how far their conduct is to be ascribed to absolute imbecility, or how far it is influenced by natural depravity. But, God be praised, we are not required to judge our fellow-creatures; they are in better hands than ours. "Who art thou that judgest another?" (*James* iv. 12.)

Mrs. Beauchamp was strengthened in her authority in the sick-chamber, both by Mr. Barnaby Semple (who, although his wife is in the Nuttall interest, acts in a most conscientious and independent manner) and also by the physician who was called in from Beckington: and the salutary effects of her influence very soon ap-

peared in the comparative composure of her patient.

After a while, Mrs. Beauchamp contrived that Theodore and Eugenius should be admitted into poor David's chamber; and these young men, together with Mr. Barnaby Semple, took their turns in watching by the poor youth, so that he was always attended by one or other of them: and thus, innumerable opportunities were afforded of directing his attention to the concerns of his immortal soul. Theodore recollected what had been done for James Torville in his last hour; neither was he backward in using the same efforts for the spiritual good of one whom he had known from boyhood as he had used on the behalf of a comparative stranger.

And here again, as Mrs. Beauchamp told me, the ardent and warm character of her son displayed itself to advantage.

“I come, Mr. Nuttall,” said Theodore, when he first approached poor David's bed, “to beg your pardon for all the unkindness I shewed to you as a boy. Oh, that I had been kinder to you! Will you, then, say

that you forgive me? and will you grant me your friendship, and let me be like a brother to you as long as it pleases God that you and I may live?"

"I cannot refuse you my hand," said poor David, in reply, "as you speak so kind: though, of all men, you are the last I could have thought of making a friend of, as you have stood in my way in the only thing I ever had heart on. But that is past now; and partly my own fault, for taking that woman who despised me all the while. But here is my hand: and I thank you for your kindness."

Mrs. Beauchamp informed me, that Eugenius had more difficulty in setting himself at ease with his poor cousin, for he has more pride and diffidence of character: he, however, acted from principle, and a blessing is with him.

Thus, through the mercy of Providence, the poor young man was placed in good hands at an early period of his illness: and we trust that, with the divine blessing, there will be time for bringing his mind into a right state before he is called hence; for

there is no hope of his life, I hear, no possibility of his recovery. Time for preparation, indeed, is in all cases highly desirable: for, although the work of regeneration is instantaneous, and that of sanctification often equally rapid, as in the case of infants who only live to draw a single breath before they expire, yet, in the case of adults, the satisfaction of anxious friends is incomparably greater when they have leisure allowed them to observe the progress of the work, and to behold the blossoms, if not the ripened fruit, of the grafted stock.

Ah, poor David Nuttall! may the Almighty hear my prayers for thee! Where was I, and what was I thinking of, that I did not seek thy friendship when first I came to Roxobel? But Oh, my pride! my pride! there was my obstacle. I could patronize a peasant boy; I could adopt the poor Ellen: but I could not bear to be supposed to court the favour of a servant of the Helmsleys, by noticing her nephew. There was a dark corner of my heart which I did not then suspect. Oh, the pride, the

cruel pride of our fallen nature! Lord, help me, a miserable sinner: set not this sin to my charge. O, my God, have mercy on the soul of this unhappy youth.

It is a week or more since I made any addition to my memorandums. Poor David still lingers. I am gaining strength rapidly. I hope in a very short time to be able to go over to the Hall. May I be spared to see poor David once more! Lord, hear my prayers for this poor youth!

The reports I hear respecting him are very pleasant. I am in my sitting-room; and Lucy and Sophia are with me many hours every day. They came into my apartment this morning with tears in their eyes.

“Mr. Airley,” said Lucy, “Dr. Beauchamp feeling himself particularly well this morning, sent for Mrs. Winifred’s garden-chair, and is gone to see poor David; and he will call on you as he returns. You must have some coffee ready for him. Shall not you rejoice to see his dear face in this room again? And are not you glad that he is able to go to see poor Taffy? Oh, Mr. Airley, you do not know how very

sorry I am for Taffy. O, that he might yet be spared, and be a good man to enjoy the Hall many, many, many years, and to bless his poor mother! How have I prayed that this might be!"

As she spoke she burst into tears, and Sophia wept with her.

"And it is Eugenius's prayer, and mine also, Mr. Airley," added Sophia. "Then all would be right."

"All will be right, my Sophia," I replied. "Let us commit the poor youth in faith to his heavenly Father, and all will be well."

We continued to converse on this subject till we heard the step of Dr. Beauchamp on the stairs: and the good man once more entered my apartment.

"My friend," he said, as he advanced to shake my hand, "thank God we meet again. And I am in spirits on another account," he added, as his two daughters took each an arm and made him sit down on an easy chair which had been placed for him. "That poor young man, Mr. Airley, that poor young man at the Hall! it will all be well with him. Yes, Mr. Airley, it will be

all right, poor boy! God bless him, he is as humble as a weaned child. I wondered how it had happened that I had not loved him formerly, poor boy! But good is working in him. Our prayers are heard. He will have an inheritance fairer even than Roxobel, our lovely, lovely Roxobel."

The good man could say no more; he melted into tears: and Lucy and Sophia, who were weeping also, pressed him to take the refreshment which they had set before him, Lucy saying, "Now, papa, you will make yourself ill again: eat and drink, and don't think of these things."

"But I will, I will," he replied. "They are meat and drink to me; and you know it, my saucy daughters. But Heaven bless my Lucy, and my Sophia too, and my friend, and all my children, and my poor people. May none of them be lost. Gather them all, O good Lord," he added, clasping his hands, and looking up, "gather them all into thy fold. May none, none be missing, in the last great day."

"Eat and drink, papa," repeated Lucy. "If you will not, I will feed you. Bad old

man, do as you are bid." And she put her arms round his neck, and kissed his cheek.

"Avaunt thee," exclaimed the good doctor, "and let me alone. Don't I know, my dear girls, that you are as much interested in the well-being of poor David as I or any of us are? Well, but I will eat and drink to please you, and then I will go home, and lie down, and be very good."

The dear doctor made his visit short; but, short as it was, we were much consoled by it.

More than a week is past since Dr. Beauchamp paid his first visit to me in my lodgings, and he has been at the Hall every day since. He is extremely satisfied with what he sees of the poor dying youth.

Yesterday David spoke to the doctor very fully respecting the offences of his past life. He said, that he imbibed the love of drinking, at a very early age, from the low people about the Hall, who attempted to pay court to his aunt by their attentions to him. To this inordinate propensity he ascribes his ruin: he speaks

of it now with the utmost horror. He remarked, that if he had been made acquainted in his childhood with his real place in society, and had been permitted to associate with his mother's friends, he might have been preserved from that disgrace to which he is now subjected. He spoke with some bitterness of the conduct of his mother towards him; but, being reproved for this by his spiritual adviser, who quoted to him the clause in the Lord's Prayer which refers to the forgiveness of trespasses, he said that he would pray for a forgiving spirit.

The doctor informed me, that even on his first visit poor David seemed acquainted with the conditions on which alone a sinner can be saved, namely, a renunciation of all earthly hopes and a simple reliance by faith on the Redeemer; in consequence of which reliance, he is made to partake of the inestimable blessings of regeneration, sanctification, and glorification. As to his own good works, his own righteousness, the poor young man had no temptation to set any

value upon these. And herein, perhaps, he was nearer to the kingdom of heaven than many who have led more decent lives : though this, I fear, will be thought a hard saying by any one who may hereafter read these memorandums in a pharisaical spirit.

Several days have elapsed since Dr. Beauchamp paid his first visit to poor David ; and the good man has been with him every succeeding day, and becomes more and more pleased with the state of his mind. This morning his Christian friends were particularly struck with his manner. It seems that he had had a weary night ; and when daylight shone upon his face, he appeared to be greatly changed. He asked for Dr. Beauchamp, and when the doctor came, he said, " Call my mother, I have been thinking of her in the night ; let me give her one parting kiss. Perhaps she did not mean me any harm," he added. " I know that she always loved me. Let me tell her that I wish I had been a better son to her. And I will see my wife too, and my aunt : but do not let them stay with me."

All these persons were accordingly called: and the interview between the mother and the son was truly affecting.

“I am going, mother,” said poor David, “to that place from which none return. But I am not unhappy: I have been taught where to put my trust, and where to get help to do well. I wish I had been taught these things before. Perhaps I might have done better had I known them, though I am not sure that I should. Yet I do see people who have been brought up in the fear of God doing well. But I know that it is right for me to go now; for if health, and strength, and spirits were given me again, I am afraid that I should give way to my old habits, and then it would be worse for me than ever. So farewell, mother, farewell;—and farewell, Roxobel—and farewell, all those hopes of happiness which I once indulged. But they were gone before I was laid on this bed.”

Such was the purport of his address to his mother: but he said nothing more to his wife and his aunt than that he wished them

well, and hoped that they would take warning by his fate, and not cling to the world, but seek those things which are above.

The doctor, thinking him in a proper state, administered the holy communion to him. If possible I will see him myself this evening; for it is apprehended that his end draws near.

I was preparing to go to the Hall about six o'clock, though contrary to the advice of Mrs. Strickland, when a message was brought me from Mr. Griffith, requesting my presence if I were at all fit to leave the house. It was dark when this message was delivered to me; and the messenger brought a lantern and a cloak.

As we hastened along, I enquired what had happened, and was told that poor Mr. Nuttall was drawing to his end, and that Mrs. Winifred was in such a state that no one knew what to do with her. "And Mr. Griffith thought that you, Sir, might be able to bring her to reason," added the servant.

"What reason?" I asked; "what does Mr. Griffith mean?" However, I pushed

forward; and in the lawn, just at the entrance-door, I met the steward.

“Oh, Mr. Airley!” he said, “Mr. Airley, I am glad you are come. You saw the beginning of this last affliction: you are now coming to witness its closing scene. Poor Mr. Nuttall! his career has been short—it is enough to make any one serious to think how short: but come in. Mr. Beauchamp and Mr. Lovel are above with Mr. Semple and the physician.”

“And where is the poor mother?” I enquired.

“I can hardly say,” replied Mr. Griffith: “she can rest nowhere. But come in.”

We ascended the steps of the portico; and entered the great hall. One solitary lamp was suspended from the lofty ceiling. I could recollect the time when the blaze of many lights used to illuminate that wide apartment; but either from neglect, or the economizing spirit of Mrs. Penelope, one is now made to serve the purpose. In consequence of this new management, the long arched passages which open into this

magnificent hall shewed only their dark and gaping mouths, and they were now almost altogether empty and deserted. Most of the old and faithful servants of this venerable mansion had already passed away with the name of Helmsley; and those who filled their places were either conversing in the remote offices, or serving in the chamber of death. There was no self-important major-domo, as in former times, to strut before the visiter and display the pomp of office: on the contrary, the steward, having directed the servant to bring a candle, was himself obliged to be my conductor.

What various recollections crowded on my mind as I went up the noble staircase! I remembered the last time I had ascended it, when I and Mr. Lovel escaped from the dining-room, not many weeks ago, flying from him who now lay helpless, yet I trusted penitent, on his dying bed. Where were those roars of mirth and folly which then issued through every door-way, those peals of laughter, those idle jests? All, all were hushed; and the murmur of the winds, and the rattle of the lofty case-

ments were the only sounds which met the ear.

Being arrived at the head of the stairs, Mr. Griffith stood still. "You will not be alarmed, Mr. Airley?" he said. "The scene is a solemn one: but you have seen death before?"

"Do not be uneasy on that head," I replied. "I have not lived so long among the changing scenes of earth without knowing the appearance of the mortal nature when it is about to be separated from the immortal."

The steward then proceeded. We passed by the door of the beloved library. It was open, and a fire within glimmered on the books. I looked towards it. "The younger Mrs. Nuttall is there," observed Mr. Griffith. "She is not able to bear the scene of death. She remains almost all day in the library. She talks of her nerves. Heaven protect me from a wife who, when I am ill, finds it necessary to attend to her nerves. The very perfection of a female is to be kind and attentive to the sick."

I entirely agreed with Mr. Griffith, but

could not help remarking that such a wife as Mrs. Nuttall was better out of the room than in it.

We passed the area at the head of the stairs, and entered a long gallery. A light appeared at the end of it. Advancing gently forward, we arrived at the door of a wide chamber, at the further end of which was a rich bed hung with dark damask. On this bed the dying man was extended; and most awful was the scene which exhibited itself as I stepped slowly and softly into the room. There were several wax lights in the chamber; and as all the curtains were drawn up, to assist the respiration of the dying person by the free admittance of air, the figures around and within the bed were all fully revealed. Poor David was raised by pillows, and supported also by the arm of Theodore. His head was resting on the pillows, his eyes were closed, and death was marked upon his features. I should not have recognised him in the least, so entirely was he changed, even in the expression of his countenance, which now, for

the first time, struck me as having something of the cast of his mother's family, the coarser similitude of his father having disappeared. He seemed to be sleeping, but it was that sort of heavy slumber which often intervenes, through the divine mercy, between the acute agonies of dissolution. His respiration was, however, awfully and fearfully laboured.

The persons who were standing round the bed were Mr. Semple, Eugenius, the physician, a nurse, and several servants; but I did not see the aunt or the mother. No one seemed to notice my entrance, though all must have perceived me; but every eye was intent upon the motions of the poor young man.

Some minutes elapsed while we all stood fixed: and so silent, so still was the scene, that the ticking of a time-piece which stood on a table in a distant part of the room was distinctly heard. Why are the motions of a clock in the chamber of death so particularly solemn, but because we expect that the index will shortly point to the moment when the soul shall depart and the

body will become a lump of lifeless clay? And are we not aware that after few or many revolutions of these same golden fingers, our own hour and minute will be designated in a similar manner?—for thus it must be until the end of time, and until all flesh shall be swept away, and time itself shall expire in eternity.

At length the object of our attention started, as if from a fearful dream, and, looking wildly round, uttered some broken accents, struggling and gasping as if for breath; and then becoming for a moment more easy, he raised his dying eyes to Mr. Semple, and said, “It was but a dream; I shall soon be better.”

“Shall I speak to him?” I asked.

“Do so,” replied Mr. Semple: “he has desired to see you.”

I went up to the head of the bed, and addressed him by name.

He knew me. He recollected that I had been ill, and asked if I were better: and he then said, “They have been very good to me, Mr. Airley. You will be glad to hear that they have been so good to me.”

“I am indeed glad to hear it,” I answered.

“I knew nothing before,” resumed the dying youth. “Nothing—nothing.” And his mind seemed to wander. But after a while he added, “Mr. Airley, I know now.”

“Know what, my dear Sir?” I asked.

“Where peace—peace—where peace is,” he said. Then closing his eyes, he lost himself again.

“Poor creature!” I exclaimed; “has he found peace at last? Blessed young man! then he has found what the world could not give him!” I felt so much affected, being still weak in consequence of my recent illness, that I walked to the door, in order to give vent to my tears. I was standing in the gallery, near the entrance of the sick-chamber, when a door exactly opposite to me, at the further end of the passage, was opened, and two females appeared in warm discussion; being no other than Mrs. Winifred and Mrs. Penelope.

“Not let me see my son! my child! my boy once again!” exclaimed the miserable

mother. "It does not signify, but I will see him." And she was rushing forward, when the other caught her arm, rather roughly I thought, and said, "Really, sister Nuttall, you are excessively irrational to go to disturb him now, when he is at the last gasp—in his last agonies, I may say. And you know nothing can be done for him now. Really I have no patience with you, sister. But of late days you have become so very self-willed, that you will hear no reason."

"But my child! my son! my unhappy son!" repeated the wretched parent, her accents going to my very heart: "I must see him once again."

"What is the use of seeing him now?" asked the other. "He is not able to settle any business now; that should have been done before: for that large sum in the consols, which came to him by his wife, might have been willed to his own family, and that you know. It was in no way bound down. But I have never once been able to get to his ear, ever since that Beauchamp tribe established themselves about him. And I tell you now it is too late."

“Too late! too late!” shrieked the distracted mother; “for what?”

“For settling that business,” returned the sister-in-law.

“Business! money!” exclaimed Mrs. Winifred. “Oh, my son! my son! But I will see my boy—I will.” And she broke away from her tormentor, and was rushing past me, when I addressed her, and spoke soothingly to her, begging her not to disturb her son.

“But I may see him once more, Mr. Airley?” she said, with meekness.

“Surely, Madam, surely,” I replied. And I accompanied her into the room.

Short as my absence had been, it had occurred at a critical moment. Poor Mr. Nuttall had fallen into his last agonies: and, at the instant when his mother reached the side of the bed, his soul departed, with one long deep-drawn sigh. We watched for another respiration, but watched in vain; he neither moved nor breathed again: David Nuttall was no more. His miserable mother thus saw the end of all her ambitious dreams. It was a hum-

bling lesson, an awful lesson. My spirits were more depressed than they had been for a long time.

Theodore gently laid the head of the corpse upon the pillow, (for poor David had died in his arms,) and Eugenius closed the eyes. I noticed the lips of both the young men moving, as if in prayer, while they performed these last sad offices; and the tears burst from their eyes. As they were silently moving away from the remains of him for whom they could now do no more, Mrs. Winifred sprang forward, and threw herself on the lifeless body; and she was lifted off in a deep swoon.

I could bear no more. I could endure no more. I took up my hat, and hastened down stairs. In the hall I met Lucy: she was in tears: she had heard the news, and was hastening to her aunt.

“You do right,” I said, as I passed. But I could add no more; I was glad to get back to my lodgings.

CHAPTER XVI.

VARIOUS CHANGES.

ALAS, poor David Nuttall! I cannot cease to think of him: short and disastrous was the course of this son of a preposterous marriage. Yesterday morning he was consigned to the grave, after his remains had lain in state for ten days. The interval has been a most solemn period to us all. As if by tacit agreement, we have seldom met, but have devoted the time, I hope, to improving meditations. Lucy has been at the Hall with the miserable Mrs. Winifred ever since the death of poor David, and has had much to suffer. All that pomp and splendour could achieve to do honour to the remains of Mrs. Winifred's son, has been achieved. Had half the amount been expended in providing

him with a good education, all might have been well. But is not all well? I feel that it is. The poor young man died in peace: what more could have been desired? The last articulate word that he uttered was "Peace."

The younger Mrs. Nuttall took her final departure from the Hall this morning: and no one appears to grieve at her going. She intends to reside on her own estates.

Mrs. Winifred sent for Eugenius this morning, being the first day after the funeral. She received him in her own dressing-room. "I am about to leave this place," she said, "to return to it no more; never do I intend to set my foot in this house again. I resign to you the management of my affairs. This house and furniture are at your service. They will, probably, at some future period, be wholly yours. I cannot yet, however, positively decide upon my plans; a few months more will be requisite before that can be done. But I have settled with Lucy that I am to have apartments at the

Grange, where there are many vacant rooms. Thither my furniture shall be sent, that is, the furniture of my own private apartments; and thither will I go, and there will I die: for, Eugenius, my heart is broken, and I shall not long survive my son. In the mean time, till my apartments are ready, I shall shut myself up in this house. Never again will I walk in those gardens, or even descend those stairs, till I go to return no more."

Eugenius attempted to speak some words of consolation to her, but she would not hear him; neither would she listen to his professions of duty, but insisted that he should leave her. Her nephew thought that there were strong symptoms of wildness in her manner.

Eugenius called on me, in company with Theodore, to tell me of his conference with Mrs. Winifred; and we all agreed, that the poor old lady would best consult her comfort by removing from the scene of her sufferings; though I could not help thinking that a more distant place might suit her better than that which she had chosen.

This evening another piece of news was communicated to me, which gave me considerable uneasiness, namely, that poor Esther Stephens has eloped from her parents' house, in company with Mr. Nuttall's French valet, who was dismissed for ill behaviour the day before the funeral. The unhappy girl was seen the same night at Beckington, taking her place on a coach which leaves that town for London at a late hour. She and her companion got on at the turnpike, and were recognised by the toll-collector, who had once kept the gate at Roxobel. The poor father has started off to London in pursuit of them. Unhappy girl! here is another sacrifice to a neglected education.

What the duenna will do with herself, when Mrs. Winifred leaves the Hall, I know not; but I do sincerely hope that she will quit Roxobel: for I believe that no one will have any cause to lament her departure.

I see that several days have passed since I added any thing to my memorandums. My mind is now recovering its

elasticity. I am beginning to look with more cheerfulness on the objects around me. I am aware that all that has happened has been intended for good; not merely for the personal advantage of myself and my dear friends, but for the more lasting benefit of the departed penitent.

Yesterday morning, Theodore and Eugenius called upon me, having recovered in a great measure their usual good spirits.

“Mr. Airley,” said Theodore, “I am come to demand your congratulations. You will be surprised to hear what we have discovered; and yet we might have known it some weeks ago had we recollected ourselves.”

“Well, Sir,” I said, “go on. What have you to tell me? I shall not be surprised, however. Don’t expect to astonish me. I have lived too long at Roxobel to be astonished at any thing.”

“Well but, Mr. Airley,” returned Theodore, “if I cannot succeed in astonishing you, yet I think I may have a chance of puzzling you, which will please me almost as well. Do you know that I am become

a landed proprietor in Roxobel, a freeholder in my own right?—the law has adjudged it to me. Mr. Watson assures me that my possessions are as well secured to me as the Hall is to Mrs. Winifred. Eugenius indeed may have the largest rent-roll, but probably I shall not be far behind him. Not only am I a great man *per se*, but I have a right to various roads through the park, and shall possess other privileges vexatious to the great people; in consequence of which I may look the fine mansion of the Helmsleys in the very face, and build barns on my estate, and cow-houses to be eyesores to the proud inhabitants. I shall even take precedence of Eugenius at church: my pew will look down upon his by as many degrees as there are steps from the body of the church into the chancel. In short I am a great man—Monsieur le Baron du Tour de Tourterelle.”

So saying, he began to strut about the room, while Eugenius laughed heartily at the perplexed expression of my countenance.

“Really, I am quite in the dark,” I replied.

“O then you are puzzled? you confess it, Mr. Airley?” exclaimed Theodore, standing still in the middle of the room, and eyeing me with the utmost composure. “You really are?—But come, Eugenius, I must be off to look after my possessions. Men of property, such as I am, have always a great deal on their hands.”

“No, no,” I exclaimed, “that is not fair. Please to explain yourselves before you go. I will not be left in this state of doubt. I must know what you mean. I must have this perplexed account speedily unravelled.”

“Address me with respect, if you please, Mr. Airley,” returned Theodore. “Monsieur le Baron is to be treated with reverence.”

“Well, well,” I said, “then pray be so good, Sir, as to satisfy my curiosity. Surely that same paper which James Torville committed to your care was not a will bequeathing the lands of Torville to you?”

“It was,” replied Theodore, “and it is

duly dated and signed, and in every respect legal. Mr. Watson tells me, (for I have been consulting him,) that, as James Torville's handwriting is well known, and can be sworn to, and as the estate is not entailed, the instrument is perfectly valid. He remarked also, that the right of the testator was incontrovertible, inasmuch as the brother has never been properly in possession; for there are evidences, independent of my own, of the existence of James Torville, long after the death of his brother. Indeed there are no descendants of the family in existence: so that there is nobody at all interested in disputing my right to the house, the lands, and the appurtenances of the estate. Such being the case, you see, I can cut down the woods, turn out the widow, hang Snow, whitewash the house, build stables of brick, and do every thing that comes into my head to annoy my neighbours. There is likewise an old title appending to the lands: this I can rub up, and Lucy shall be my Lady Torville; and then my wife will take precedence of yours, Eugenius."

“ Really,” I replied, laughing, “ with such excellent purposes, I cannot but congratulate you on your acquisitions. But are you not in jest? Are you really in possession of Torville? Is that paper such as you have described it to be? or are you joking? How did it happen that this matter was not known some time ago?”

“ Merely owing to the state of our feelings,” replied Theodore, “ and the various harassing circumstances which followed my return. The packet was given to my father, and laid aside by him and forgotten. Yesterday he was reproaching himself for not having attended to it; and then it was looked for, and its import was discovered. But to be serious, Mr. Airley,” continued Theodore, “ Eugenius and I have been conferring together, and we have come to the conclusion, that, since the widow Torville would probably be better provided for if the estate were under my management, I shall immediately take possession of it; but that till her death I shall not appropriate any of the proceeds to my own use. If, however, at

that time, nothing should appear to invalidate my claim, I am to assume my just prerogatives, and to convey the whole of the property to my sister, as her marriage-portion."

"Do not say that you and I have concluded this last point," replied Eugenius. "If ever I possess Torville, it shall be mine by fair purchase after a proper valuation. I have had enough of coveting the goods of others. May the Almighty preserve me from a repetition of this crime, and keep me ever sensible of its sanguinary tendency, for I am convinced that murder itself often originates in the sin of covetousness. I take this opportunity, also, in Mr. Airley's presence, solemnly to declare, that I will have no part nor share of any lands or monies which my sister has inherited from her aunt Judy. Now, therefore, my dear Theodore, make up your mind to let this matter rest for ever."

"You are right, Eugenius," I exclaimed, "perfectly right: and let this be your motto, my children, through life—'Goods unjustly acquired never profit the possessor.'" Then

taking the hands of my two sons, and joining them together, I pronounced my paternal blessing upon them, and further added, "It is only by the continual exercise of Christian feelings, my children, that brethren can live together in peace. Such feelings are not the natural products of the heart of man: they are the fruits of the Spirit. May the plenitude of these blessed fruits be vouchsafed to you both; and while, through every period of your lives, you are duly impressed with your dependance on Almighty power for all needful gifts and graces, and are ever influenced by the solemn injunction which commands you to 'grieve not the Holy Spirit of God,'—may the heavenly benediction abound towards you, 'blessing you with all spiritual blessings in Christ.'"

We then resumed our discourse respecting the intentions of the young people. I began by saying, "Come, my sons, let me into your private counsels. I know that you have already formed your plans, and have determined where you are all to live, and every thing about it. In the first

place, where do you intend to settle yourself, Mr. Beauchamp?"

"I do not mean to forsake Roxobel again," answered Theodore: "and I have made my father happy, and almost well again, by this assurance."

"And I will tell you the rest of his schemes," rejoined Eugenius. "He means to induce my sister's trustees to fit up the Grange for him, adding a few rooms perhaps, so as to convert it into a comfortable and convenient residence. As soon as the habitation is ready and his affairs are put into a proper train, he intends to solicit my sister to be his house-keeper; and I hope he will hasten his arrangements as much as possible on my own account."

"And you intend to occupy the Hall?" I rejoined.

"As a tenant of Mrs. Winifred," he replied; "and to give Mr. Airley a suite of apartments there, in which the library shall be included."

"No," exclaimed Theodore, "Lucy will not allow of that; she has the first claim."

“O, my children! my children!” I replied, melting into tears, for I was still in a weak state of health, “may grace be granted me to bear my happiness with meekness and with gratitude.”

“And what do you think,” added Theodore, “of settling Robert with his fair Ellen at Torville, to take care of the widow and of the farm?”

“Excellent!” I answered: “it is only all too happy.” I was about to add, “How have we deserved this?”—but the thought occurred to me, “Why talk of our deserts, when we are assured that all we receive is of the free goodness of God?” O Lord, give us thankful hearts.

The two young men sat down one on each side of me, regarding me with looks of affectionate kindness. “Dear Mr. Airley,” they exclaimed, “have you not been as a father to us both? and shall we have a joy in which you are not to participate? Have not you wept with us? and shall you not be permitted to rejoice with us?”

After a few minutes’ silence, I asked

the young men what they meant to do with the gamekeeper.

“ He is a bad man, Mr. Airley,” replied Eugenius, “ but he is an old servant of the family, and we pity him too on account of his daughter. Mr. Griffith, however, advises us not to retain him in his situation, as he countenances all the ill-disposed people at his end of the parish, where, I am sorry to say, there is a nest of very disorderly characters. On this account, we are inclined to dismiss him, allowing him a hundred pounds a year for life, on condition that he henceforth reside at a distance from Roxobel. The proposal has been made to him, and he has accepted it gladly, for he is almost ashamed to look up since the disgrace of his daughter. He will accordingly remove to Beckington; and we have offered the vacant situation, together with a house in the village, to Richard, whose honesty has been long tried, and who is very well adapted for a gamekeeper. Mr. Griffith recommends that a house should be built for him in the park; but this we shall consider hereafter.”

I asked if any thing had been heard respecting Tolly, the miller.

Eugenius replied, that he had not been seen abroad since the unfortunate night of the quarrel, but that it was little doubted that his wife knew his hiding-place. He added, that it was generally believed that the wretched man would not appear again in Roxobel, since young Watchum was bargaining for the remaining term of Tolly's lease: and it was supposed, that if this bargain should be concluded, Mrs. Tolly would soon quit the mill, and the furniture would be brought to the hammer.

I enquired as to the character of young Watchum: and Eugenius answered, "At any rate, not so bad as that of the miller."

"And what is to be done with Mr. Aprice?" I asked.

"He is already dismissed," replied Eugenius; "and I have heard of a young gentleman, who has not long taken orders, to whom I have written to come and assist Dr. Beauchamp. His name is Vaughen: and if we like him, we will keep him here, and he will be ready to step into your

lodgings when you remove. Till then he is to have rooms at the Hall."

After this conversation, another week elapsed, during which I still thought it prudent to keep in the house, as there was a thaw, and I felt fearful of taking cold after my long confinement. During this period, Mr. Aprice departed, and Mr. Vaughen appeared as his successor.

Mrs. Winifred also has removed to the Grange. I saw the coach pass along the park. She is the last of the Helmsleys who have quitted the Hall. There is not one now left to preserve the family name from oblivion. *Sic transit gloria mundi*. But I have strangely forgotten myself: she has long ceased to be a Helmsley.

Mrs. Penelope went away with Mr. Aprice: and I may truly say that no one has regretted her removal.

How deserted, how lonely, how sad, looks the poor Hall! Where are those crowds of servants which formerly filled the offices? Mr. Griffith occupies two apartments in the great house, and Eugenius and Mr. Vaughen about the same number each;

and each of these gentlemen has his respective attendants: but the remainder of the extensive mansion is abandoned to the peaceful labours of Arachne and the conversations of Æolus.

The snow has passed away, and the tender green of spring has begun to appear on the leaves in the warmer regions of the park.

I walked to the parsonage just before the usual dinner-time of the family, and found the doctor in his study, reposing, not on his couch, but in an easy chair. It happened that Theodore and Eugenius were at the Hall, where they have much business; and Mrs. Beauchamp and Sophia were the only persons of the family who were present with the doctor.

“My friend!” exclaimed the doctor, rising to shake my hand: “welcome, my friend! How long has your absence appeared! And you are recovering rapidly are you? and you see me quite a new man! Ah, Mr. Airley, when the heart is at ease, how light are all mere corporeal sufferings! But I am now getting better,

rapidly *better. I hope I was not rebellious when the delight of my eyes was taken from me. I did not think myself so then, but I have thought so since. Well, there is one comfort for us: we are not to be judged by our own merits but by our borrowed, our imputed ones; and in these no flaw will be found. No, no; the righteousness wherein we desire to be clothed is without spot, brighter than the sun, whiter than the driven snow. Is it not so, my friend? And I hope poor David has found that righteousness. Poor young man! his fate has cost me some tears. Did I try to do all I could for him in his youth? or did I admit a prejudice against him? I am guilty there again, Mr. Airley," he added, with a sigh: "but I trust that the chief Shepherd found the stray sheep at last, and brought it from where it had wandered in the cloudy and dark day. How sweet are those words, my friend, 'I will both search my sheep, and seek them out!'"

Thus the good man addressed me while the servants were placing the dinner on the table; and we sat down to the repast

(namely, the doctor, Mrs. Beauchamp, Sophia, and myself) in as perfect happiness as sinful mortals ever knew, the sweet and dovelike eyes of my Sophia being often turned towards me with a look which seemed to say, "How glad I am to see the little man at the parsonage once again!"

In the evening our party was augmented and enlivened by the presence of our two young men and Miss Lovel, the latter of whom came from the Grange, having left Mrs. Tristram with Mrs. Winifred.

Lucy has nearly recovered the natural vivacity of her character. I heard her voice before she came into the house, while Theodore was handing her from the little garden-chair which had brought her from the Grange. She ran into the study, and, seeing me, she sprang forward, seized my hand, and said, "Now is our party complete again. Mr. Airley, we have missed you sadly. I have had nobody to find fault with me when I was imprudent; nobody to contradict me and call me to order: but now you are come again, and we will keep you fast. You

shall go back with me to the Grange to-morrow, and choose the rooms which you like best, and they shall be prepared for you; and you shall not stay another hour at Mrs. Strickland's, after they are ready."

"But," said I, "if you give Mrs. Winifred one range of rooms, and me another, Miss Lovel, where are you to be?"

"O! any closet will do for me," she replied. "Besides, the Grange is a larger house than you suppose, and contains a greater number of apartments than I shall want for a long time to come: and when it is papered, and painted, and furnished neatly, it will be very pretty; and I do not wish for any body else there but you and my poor aunt."

"No one else, Lucy?" exclaimed Theodore. "Then I may go back to India."

"Pray do," she replied. "We can do very well without you. We did not fret after you: and we can part with you again as easily as we did before."

"As easily!" repeated Sophia, smiling. "Yes, Theodore, we were very easy when you were absent; and Lucy was exceed-

ingly gay, and not at all glad to see you again. And yet, without Black Tom's specific, it is to be feared we might have lost her pleasant company for ever."

In this manner we conversed, talking principally of our plans for the future. But I trust we bear in mind the utter uncertainty of all earthly bliss, and the reference which our present enjoyments ought to have to that state which is eternal and invariable.

We spoke of Black Tom, and of the many points which are amiable in his character, and we busied ourselves in planning how we might best secure him from the temptations to which he is particularly exposed in his present situation. One of the party suggested that he should be married to Mrs. Tristram;—this was Theodore's project;—and another thought it would be well to give him a honest man for his colleague: but, in truth, we were at a loss how to manage with him; and we at length resolved that we would give the matter further consideration, and in the mean while that the doctor should send

for the wild man, and obtain his own opinion on the subject.

We finished our evening with several hymns; and the next morning I accompanied Miss Lovel in the garden-chair to the Grange, where we had appointed to meet Mr. Griffith.

The steward had already set workmen about the repairs, poor Mr. and Mrs. Stephens and their family having gone off in the early part of the morning. The grounds around the house looked quite disconsolate, and were covered with litter. I was conducted into the interior, and I found that the old mansion was capable of being rendered a most delightful habitation. In its centre is an immense hall, into which all the doors of the lower rooms open. There are several apartments which might be easily converted into sitting-rooms, one we have fixed upon for a dining-room, another for a library, another for a withdrawing-room, and a fourth to be appropriated as a study for the master of the house. Two of the best rooms, with a closet up

stairs, are already occupied by Mrs. Winifred; but there are many other apartments: and Lucy, perceiving that I particularly admired two of these that opened towards the woods and waters, whispered to me, that those rooms should be mine. To this, however, I demurred, saying that smaller rooms would do for me.

“O, very well, Sir,” she rejoined, laughingly, “now I have found you out; so you actually mean to live with us. This is the first time that you have condescended to hint as much. You wicked little man, you love to tease. But you shall have a servant of your own, and you shall be kept at a respectful distance, and only come among us when you are good: we will have nothing to do with you when you are not in a good temper. And you shall have the garden-chair to take your airings in; and if you are not contented,”—(and she shook a rose at me, which was in her hand, in a threatening manner.)

Then I finished the sentence, “I shall not deserve to be so. But, Lucy dear, we will

have family prayer morning and evening ; and I will have my organ in the great hall, and we will make the echo, who, by the by, is our very near neighbour, resound with our songs of praise. But hark," I added, " what music we shall have in the summer season ! I hear the waterfall even now that the windows are shut. And there is an abundance of bees, and wood-pigeons, and blackbirds, if not nightingales. O, Lucy, my beloved, you may well say this is a paradise. I am not sure whether I do not like it better than the Hall itself."

" Yes," returned Lucy, " but we will go to the Hall when we want to be gay. Think how lovely Sophia will look in that great house, so sweet, so humble as she is !"

" Not more sweet and humble than you are, my fair Lucy," I could have said ; but I did not give utterance to my flattering thoughts. I felt too much to be able to make fine speeches.

I was preparing to depart, when Mrs. Susan came to say that Mrs. Winifred desired to see me. " She is very low,"

observed the messenger; "but, I think, she wishes to have the first interview over with you. Do not refer to any thing past, Sir, if you please, and make your visit short."

"Of what may I talk?" I asked.

"Of any thing indifferent," answered the faithful waiting-maid.

"Well then," I enquired, "may I speak of public news?"

"No, Sir," replied Susan; "such topics would remind her of that sad evening when the Hall was illuminated."

"Of Mrs. Semple?" I asked: "she has a daughter, I hear."

"No, Sir: if you speak of Mrs. Semple, you will remind her of Mrs. Penelope who brought Mrs. Semple to Roxobel."

"Of the intended marriages then?" I enquired.

"No, Sir, no—on no account," rejoined the waiting-maid.

I felt puzzled, and knew not what I should say. Resolving to be guided by circumstances, however, I followed Mrs. Susan into an apartment which had been

hastily prepared as a dressing-room for the old lady.

I found Mrs. Winifred dreadfully changed. She was habited in deep mourning; and she received me with an awful degree of solemnity, though she evidently struggled to appear at ease.

I hardly ever felt myself so fettered in my movements; however, I made an effort to be lively, and talked a great deal, though I cannot recollect the subjects of my eloquence, further than that my own health, the weather, and the crops, were each in their turns distinctly enlarged upon.

When I took my leave, I felt very much dissatisfied with myself. Had Mrs. Susan given me no caution, I should have done better. I should then have behaved naturally, shewn my real feelings, and made my discourse much more acceptable.

Leaving dear Miss Lovel with Mrs. Winifred, I proceeded from the Grange to the parsonage, where I spent the remainder of the day in the society of Dr. Beauchamp. In the course of the afternoon Mr. Vaughn

came in. I was pleased with his manners and conversation; and we received from him a piece of news which was in some respects particularly acceptable to us. He informed us that certain circumstances had lately come to light respecting Mr. Aprice, which had led to the discovery that he had assumed the profession of a clergyman of the Church of England without any proper authority, having never been ordained.

“If you can prove that point, Mr. Vaughen,” I replied, “you will contribute most materially to my satisfaction: for I assure you that I have been much grieved that our venerable and beloved church should be disgraced with such a son.”

Mr. Vaughen immediately produced such proofs as perfectly satisfied me; and he also informed me that the Welshman had fled the country in consequence of this discovery, and it was not known in what part of the world he had taken refuge.

“I bear no malice towards Mr. Aprice,” said Dr. Beauchamp; “but I am most glad to hear that this bad man is not an

ordained minister: for although ministers, being human, are liable to error, and oftentimes subjected to trying temptations, yet I am always sorry when any vicious character is found among them: for such a circumstance gives great advantage to the enemy of souls by strengthening the prejudices of the world against the cause of Christ. It is not by those open and notorious transgressors who have gone out from us, but by those inconsistent professors who would be thought to be of us, that religion is rendered a laughing-stock to the infidel and the blasphemer."

Our discourse then turned to the subject of providing for Black Tom, who had been with the doctor during the morning. Dr. Beauchamp had dealt very sincerely with the old warrener, and Black Tom in return had been equally candid. He disclosed to the doctor many circumstances which astonished him; explaining that, for years past, a sort of understanding had existed between Mrs. Penelope Nuttall, the gipsies, the gamekeeper, and a party of smugglers, whose haunts were the Warrener's

Tower and the Green Dragon at Burrow-Town; and that, in consequence of this confederation, the plunder of the Helmsley property, especially of the game, had been past calculation.

Black Tom confessed that he was at one time intimately associated with these pillagers; but he said that he had felt great remorse on the subject for several years past, and that, at length, a few months ago, he broke off all connexion with the smugglers, having given them notice to remove their goods, under the impression that they were suspected of haunting the Tower, and were in danger of arrest. In order to confirm this account of his reform, Black Tom desired that some person might be sent to examine the vaults under the Tower.

He also informed the doctor that the gipsies had not been seen in the neighbourhood since the night of poor Mr. Nuttall's marriage; and, as they had now lost their chief friends in Roxobel, namely, Mrs. Penelope and the gamekeeper, he doubted whether they would ever appear again.

The warrener likewise communicated the names of certain persons in Burrow-Town over whom it would be necessary to watch; but entreated that his information might not be used to the injury of any one.

The doctor gave the old man every assurance he could desire: and Black Tom then said that he should not like to leave the Tower, after spending so many years there; but he should wish to have a sort of companion appointed him, a honest man, who would watch him and keep him in order.

All this candour on the part of Black Tom was highly satisfactory; and I liked it the better, inasmuch as it agreed with certain indications of returning probity which I had formerly remarked. We all rejoiced over the wild man, as over a sheep which was lost and is found.

It was during the month of March that I wrote the foregoing pages. To-day is the fifth of July; and this may probably be the last occasion on which I shall sit to write at that table, and in that apartment which I have now used for so many years.

Since I last wrote we have been very busy. My new apartments are now quite ready. I spent some hours in them this morning arranging my little nic-nacs; and, having completed this business, I sat down with my window open, to listen to the song of the blackbird, the wrangling of the water-nymphs, and the murmurs of the zephyrs. The bees in the flowery parterre beneath my window added also to the chorus of rural sounds; and now and then the barkings of a dog in a farm-yard, which is situated in the heights above, was returned by the echo with repeated reverberations.

O, how exquisitely lovely is this spot! And to live here with my Lucy! my lovely Lucy! to have such a one as a daughter, one who will bear patiently with me in age and under infirmity, and who will be at hand to smooth my dying-pillow, and to close mine eyes; yea, and to embalm my memory with many tears! O, my heavenly Father! what more could I have desired? Yet more is added: my cup is running over. Have I not other children at the Hall?—another daughter, my

sweet Sophia?—and a friend too, the excellent Dr. Beauchamp, the most amiable of human beings?—and Mrs. Beauchamp too?—and my old neighbours?—and my pretty smiling Ellen to preside over my linen, and to see that it is delicately washed and scented with lavender? O, my heavenly Father, give me a thankful heart! And then, when the time of separation comes, then to hope for, to expect, nay, to be assured of an increase of happiness, through the unspeakable mercies of redeeming love! O, it is too much! My God! my God! give me a thankful heart!

But what have I been doing since I last wrote? Very much. I have been excessively busy. I have been signing settlements, and directing lawyers, and taking care that these legal gentlemen did not provide work for others of their brethren. I have been settling Master Robert Taylor at Torville, and seeing the old house put in good order for the reception of his wife. And I have been very busy at the Grange, for my daughter Lucy cares very little about the

adornment of her house, so that every inmate be provided with a comfortable lodging, and the kitchen-grate be wide enough to cook, on certain occasions, for the whole parish. I believe that she would not trouble herself if we were to hang her parlour with old hop-sacks. I would not however wish my reader to understand by this that we grow hops at Roxobel, otherwise he might be able to fix its site in Worcestershire, Kent, or Herefordshire; and I do not intend that he shall ever learn where my lovely Roxobel may be found: if the inhabitants of this fair island have not yet had taste enough to discover the charms of this most charming place, they do not deserve that I should point them out to them.

But let me recollect: what more have I been doing? I have been employed in negotiating a marriage between the new gamekeeper and little Margery, or Margaret as we now call her, Mrs. Tristram's adopted child; and I have been reconciling Mrs. Strickland to a separation from me, having introduced Mr. Vaughen to her fa-

your, and actually brought him to sleep where Eugenius slept after his return from the north. And I have had my organ taken down, and placed in the hall at the Grange, in order that I may make use of it in conducting family worship. I have even been doing more, (though this is at present a secret :) I have been helping Mr. Pen Map to write an epithalamium, respecting which I shall have something to say by and by. I have also been at the pains to procure a new suit of clothes and a new hat; and, for once, the colour of my habiliments is not black.

But what changes have we had during the last three months? Few that I recollect, excepting that the winter has entirely vanished, and our lovely Roxobel has put on her greenest, fairest, brightest, gayest robes. She even appears to excel herself this year, or perhaps we are in a better mood for admiring her. Yet surely there never was a May so fresh, so fragrant, so balmy, as that which is just past: and how many occasions has this month afforded me of visiting the

woods, as in former happy days, with our social family party, namely, the doctor, his good wife, his friend, and his four children !

Three years have elapsed since the doctor enjoyed the delights of spring ; and the good man is so pleased, so thankful, that every word he utters is a sort of thanksgiving. He seems to breathe but to praise his God, and his gratitude appears to grow with the expression of it. "We cannot do enough, my children," he often says, "to express our thankfulness. Eternity itself will be too short for the acknowledgment even of the favours of the past." The good doctor discerns in every natural object which offers itself to his eyes, some new revelation of the divine goodness. The excellent man seems to be totally absorbed by these delightful contemplations ; and even when he is sitting quietly in his apartment, and thinks himself unobserved, we often see him waving his hands, opening and clasping his fingers, and moving his lips, his eyes beaming at the same time with holy love, as if

he were employed in acts of exalted devotion.

We have arranged our plans for the bridal-day: every thing is ready; and to-morrow is fixed upon for the happy event. We intended that these marriages (for there are to be four of them) should have taken place in the beginning of May, but a painful piece of news, which reached us towards the end of April, caused them to be postponed. This news was no other than the death of young Mrs. Nuttall, which was occasioned by that horrible disease the small-pox. I was truly shocked when informed of this catastrophe, and asked the young people, who were all present, if they had had that dreadful malady.

“ Yes,” replied Mrs. Beauchamp; “ I am able to say, with gratitude to Providence, that they all had it at the time when Mrs. Penelope was so ill with it. It then ran through the parish; and none of the young people in Roxobel escaped its contagion. Some few died, but our children had it lightly.”

The awful and sudden death of poor Mrs. Nuttall occupied our minds the whole of that evening; and it was subsequently thought right, on this account, that the marriages should be put off from the first of May to the sixth of July.

In this interval Eugenius has been enabled to arrange his plans more fully than he would otherwise have done; for poor Mrs. Winifred no sooner heard of the death of her daughter-in-law, than she sent for her nephew, and placed him in full possession of the Hall and its domains, reserving only an annuity of one thousand pounds for herself, which was more, she said, than she required, with a broken heart and a worn-out constitution.

This fact was no sooner known than all the old servants came crowding back to the mansion, and among them Mr. Porter, the butler; the old man having declared that he had never enjoyed an easy day since he left his place.

But I can add no more at present. May Heaven preserve our children; and may the divine blessing be vouchsafed on the

solemn vows which will be taken to-morrow: for, after all, marriage is a serious concern.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE WEDDING-DAY.

“WHAT! only five o’clock by my watch, and no more sleep? Really, Mr. Strickland, it is too early. What am I to do for the next three hours? What sort of a day is it? What! are the bells ringing already? that should not have been till after the ceremony. This is quite out of the common way, Mr. Strickland, quite unusual. But I forget myself—this is Roxobel: we do not adhere to the ordinary way at Roxobel.” Thus soliloquizing, I sprang up, and was accoutred from head to foot in a few minutes.

I did not, however, leave my room before I had prayed most earnestly for the divine blessing on all our lovely young people. I then went out of my room, and

found Mr. Vaughen ready dressed, and making the tea. Mrs. Strickland stood by the table. She was in tears. This alarmed me; and when I enquired the reason, she answered, "I was speaking of you, Sir. It is ten years, wanting a few weeks, since you first came; and you are going to-day."

I shook her hand; I could not express what I felt: but I said, "Excellent Mrs. Strickland, I will often call. Send for me in any distress. Mr. Vaughen knows your value: and he will be happy here. I shall not take leave. I shall see you after the ceremony."

Mr. Vaughen made me take some breakfast; and we hastened from the house. I was in a fidget: I could not be calm.

We found the street in a bustle already. Mr. Claypole had been invited to Roxobel on the joyful occasion, (which was indeed doubly joyful for him, as he had almost emptied his shop to supply the wedding-feasts,) with permission to bring with him as many of his friends as he chose to assemble for the purpose. Mr. Claypole was not the man to despise a privilege of

this kind; and, in fact, he had formed a party of his intimate friends sufficiently large to fill, or rather load, four carriages. Query, is Mr. Claypole a happy, or an unhappy man, to have so many intimate friends?

Well! this party from Beckington, in their various carriages, drew up to Mr. Barnaby Semple's door at the instant we descended into the street; and Mr. Claypole, who had ridden on the outside of the first coach, was the next minute on his brother-in-law's steps, ready to hand out the ladies.

I was apprehensive for the walls of Mr. Semple's house; and I feared that there was not a sufficient area in any of the apartments for the finely dressed ladies who stepped out of the coach. I was much amused by the vivacity with which Mr. Claypole moved about on this occasion; the importance with which he gave his orders for the postillions to drive up to the Helmsley Arms; and the sort of familiar yet friendly bow by which he recognised me. I should, no doubt, have

stood to examine the scene some time longer, if the voice of Miss Pilkington had not reached my ear, saying, "I declare there's Mr. Airley abroad already—good morning, dear Sir,—how ambient! how balmy!"—She was proceeding, when, making one of my very best bows, I made good my flight by speeding up the street as quickly as my small limbs would carry me without absolutely making a run of it.

"Did you not hear the lady address you, Sir?" asked Mr. Vaughen, pursuing me.

"Did you speak, Mr. Vaughen?" I rejoined, when I thought myself at a sufficient distance. "Not to-day, if you please, Mr. Vaughen—sensibility, felicity, and Miss Pilkington!—not to-day, if you please, Mr. Vaughen."

The carriages which were proceeding to the Helmsley Arms, were now come up between us and the other side of the street, sheltering us effectually from the party on the steps; and we proceeded in a line with them, till we arrived opposite the Helmsley Arms, when they turned into the yard, and left the street clear for us to observe the

people who were gathered around the door of the inn. I knew many of the faces; they were persons from the neighbouring parishes, and chiefly tenants of the family, who had ridden there, and put up their horses.

The landlord, who is extremely corpulent, was handing a morning draught to his customers just as we came up. "Your humble servant, Mr. Airley," he said, calling across the street to me. "A fine morning, Sir. 'Happy the bride on whom the sun shines!' Is not that an old proverb, Sir?"

"It will be a busy day, landlord," I said: for he was always called "the landlord" among us by way of distinction.

"Such a day as I have not seen since I kept house," he replied.

At that moment, making her way on the old mare down the street, appeared the redoubtable Widow Watchum, in her usual beaver hat and safeguard, and provided, as I have generally seen her on all important occasions, with a bundle fastened to the crupper of her saddle.

“Good day, widow,” shouted the landlord. “It would not have been a wedding without the Widow Watchum.”

“Widow!” repeated the dame, riding on to the horse-block.

“Why, is not it widow?” asked the jolly landlord. “Is it wife again?”

“It is so,” she answered with a smile; “and has been so these three weeks.”

On this there was a general laugh among the bystanders; and the landlord said, “And who is the happy man? and what am I to call you, as it is Watchum no longer?”

“John Philpot is my husband,” she answered. “Philpot is my name now.”

“What, of Clifton!” returned the landlord. “Philpot the tailor? Philpot by name, and fill-pot by nature. Well, keep the key of the beer-barrel in your own pocket, Mrs. Philpot.”

By this time the lady had got off at the horse-block; and, having dropped her calamanco petticoat, exposed to our astonished and admiring eyes a full suit of crimson silk, set forth with large golden flowers,

and flounced and furbelowed in various directions.

The widow, or rather I should say the bride, stood sufficiently long on the horse-block for all present to see and admire her dress, and to allow me to think of the simile of a full-blown poppy; and she then descended and disappeared beyond the doorway of the inn; while the landlord, laughing and looking after her, repeated the couplet——

“ If I survive,
I’ll make it five.”

Having seen and heard enough of this refined breeding, we proceeded a little further, and turned into the park through the gate at the head of the village. There we suddenly lost all the noise, and entered into a scene as lovely, quiet, and elegant, as that which we had left had been otherwise. There stood the parsonage embosomed high in tufted trees, the magnificent old Hall which stood unaltered through all the changes which had befallen its masters, the grey tower of the church, rising from amid the graves, the quiet resting-places of many

who, I trust, will rise to glory; and, among these, the young and unfortunate David Nuttall, who had so lately aspired to one of those lovely brides whose presence was to grace the present festivity.

The extensive woods and lawns of the park spread themselves before us; and we saw many persons approaching in different directions, and tending to one centre, namely, the church. The groups which thus presented themselves were of that description with which I am always pleased, consisting, for the most part, of those family parties wherein the nearest and sweetest relations of life are exemplified: such as a mother leaning on an elder son, a father carrying an infant child, an aged couple advancing feebly and slowly, alternately supporting and supported, a cluster of little brothers and sisters, a grandfather with an infant granddaughter, or a daughter hanging on a father's arm. All these little parties were advancing towards the church of Roxobel; for the happy bridal-day was to be a universal holiday, a day of innocent happiness for the whole popu-

lation of the parish. Almost every individual of these various groups exhibited some token or other of the bountiful care of their amiable patrons, displaying either a gown, or a coat, or a cloak, or some other garment, which was the gift of a bride or a bridegroom. Every one was to be fed at the expence of the lords and ladies of the manors: in consequence of which arrangement, there was not a smoking chimney in Roxobel, excepting the chimneys of the Hall, during the whole of the day.

The first person whom we encountered was Peter the Hermit dressed in a new russet suit, and carrying a basket of the fairest flowers his garden could supply. The fine hale old man, who is as upright as a palm-tree, (I trust so both in the natural and spiritual sense,) was trudging along with his staff in his hand, as brisk as a bee. "Good morning, Sir; good morning, Mr. Airley," he said as he passed me. "The sun shines on us. It will be very hot when the dews and the mists have passed away."

On went Mr. Peter; and presently we

overtook a string of little girls, all dressed alike in light-coloured frocks, spotted with small sprigs, resembling a strawberry half hidden beneath a leaf. These handsome dresses were the gift of the brides, as were also the white tippetts, white aprons, and caps of thin lawn, with which the little maidens were adorned. Across the right shoulder of each little damsel was placed a gay garland of flowers, which passed under her left arm, and fell carelessly over her frock. Some of these young ones might be as much as fifteen years old, and others of them not more than three. They came forward and approached us, each having a basket of posies in her hand to present to her friends. The spirits of the young things being attuned to the gaiety of the occasion, they came laughing towards us as we proceeded onwards, and gathered round us, courtesying and singing,

“ Young and old come forth to play
On the summer’s holiday.”

“ Good morning, Mr. Airley,” they said ;
“ many happy returns of the day to you,
Sir.”

“Get away with **you**, you little fairies,” I replied, “and carry your songs elsewhere.” So saying, I shook my cane at them; on which, pretending to be alarmed, they fled away laughing and crowing, stopping, however, from time to time to look back at us, and then making off again as we approached them.

We were scarcely rid of these troublesome creatures, when a second crew of scarcely less hateful beings appeared from another direction: these were the pupils of Mr. Pen Map; little curly-pated rogues, many of them grinning from ear to ear, and shewing their white teeth. They were all dressed in clean new smock-frocks, the gift of the bridegrooms, with new hats and shoes, each of their white linen collars being tied with a black riband, and their hats adorned with flowers. “Good morning, Mr. Airley,” they said, or rather shrieked in my ears; “many happy returns of the day to you, Sir.”

“What day?” I asked, assuming the tone of astonishment.

“The wedding-day, Sir,” replied the

chief wag of the party "and may we all be married every year."

I had my stick up again: on which the little rogues, pretending alarm, scattered themselves all about, screaming and crying till they made the valleys ring again. "Get ye gone," I said, for they almost distracted me: and they presently made off, racing along the valley as if a mad dog were after them.

We were now arrived at a point of the park from which, through the shafts of the trees on the higher grounds, we could distinguish the lawn or glade among the groves, where certain white tents or awnings had been spread for the feasts, which were to be ready by three o'clock in the evening. Here, finding a bench under a tree, we sat down to wear away about another half-hour which still remained to us before the bridal-parties might be expected to appear. In the mean time the bells were ringing merrily, as they had been from the earliest dawn of morning. The church was straight before us, at the distance of about a quarter of a mile, and

the crowd was thickening fast around the door.

“ We shall have all the country here presently,” observed Mr. Vaughen: “ I am afraid such a concourse of people will distress the brides.”

“ No,” I answered, “ not at all; they will be less disturbed by it than any of us. Miss Beauchamp will suppose that no one will look at her, while Miss Lovel is present; and Miss Lovel would be content to see as many about her as were collected at the Tower of Babel: when she is pleased herself, she likes to see every body else pleased too.”

“ But,” returned Mr. Vaughen, “ I cannot conceive that any marriage, however happy, however promising, however long-expected, can take place without some nervous apprehensions being felt by the contracting parties: the change of life from a single to a married state must be so solemn, so important, and so much depends upon it.”

“ True,” I replied; “ but minds are differently constituted, and Miss Lovel’s is a

peculiar mind. I never knew a human being so little influenced by selfish feelings, and at the same time so warmly and so cordially sympathizing in the feelings of others. In this respect she is the happiest creature I ever knew. Dr. Beauchamp, however, and, indeed, the two families, have a spice of this disinterestedness, and this is the quality which endears them to every one."

Mr. Vaughen smiled, and expressed the joy he felt in having become an inhabitant of Roxobel, praying, at the same time, that he might be rendered a faithful assistant to his excellent rector, and that he might long remain where his lot had fallen. "Here," added he, "here is benevolence without coarseness; dignity without pride; elegance without dullness; wit without severity; and learning without pedantry."

"In short," I said, begging his pardon for the interruption, "here are to be found some of the most beautiful examples of Christian graces, which ever, perhaps, appeared among mere human beings: and these exquisite examples are the produc-

tions of the divine blessing on the unwearyed labours of Dr. Beauchamp; who, through the course of more than thirty years, has made it his constant endeavour to display in the eyes of his people the beauty and consistency of the divine attributes. The doctor is the finest specimen of the very few real ministers of Christ whom I have happened to meet with. He seems perfectly to understand his office, which is not that of a censor or a reprover, but that of a teacher. He has delivered his message faithfully, and you now behold the result. And to you, who are a young man, I say, 'Go, and do likewise:' apply not the scourge to the diseased wound, but pour in abundantly of the balm of Gilead."

Mr. Vaughen thanked me for my hints, and solicited my friendship, which I willingly promised him. We continued to converse till we saw a carriage approaching from the direction of the Grange, and another was visible on the road from the Hall. We immediately sprang up and hastened towards the church, where the

throng was now so much increased that we should have had great difficulty in passing, if Mr. Claypole, having settled his party in convenient pews, had not suddenly appeared at the church-door to make way for us. In this obliging occupation, he was assisted by Mr. Pen Map, in a bran-new suit (to use a rustic phrase) which stood out at all points as stiffly as broad-cloth and buckram could be made to do, having been put together by the most awkward tailor which the country could afford. The poor schoolmaster was not only conscious of a new suit, but he had another thing on his mind, which shall appear by and by: and this consciousness of knowing something which nobody else knew excepting one other person, appeared in his erect carriage, and in the solemn importance of all his movements; though he kept his mouth pursed up as closely as if it had been hermetically sealed.

The inside of the church was already crowded; and I perceived that the party from Beckington had appropriated the best seats to themselves. I took my station

near the altar, in order to be ready to give away the young ladies: since it had been arranged that the doctor should marry Lucy and Sophia, and I should give them away; and that Mr. Vaughen should marry the other brides; one of whom, namely Ellen, was to be given away by me, and the other, Margaret, by the doctor.

I believe I have not mentioned that Miss Finchley was invited to be the bridesmaid; and she had been presented with a very handsome dress for the occasion.

Some minutes elapsed before we heard the carriages: but at length their distant rumbling was distinguishable, and, at the same moment, Mr. Claypole and Mr. Map hurried into the chancel, neither of them having hitherto found it possible to sit down or to take a quiet station. In a minute or two the doctor entered, in his gown and cassock, looking better than we had seen him look for many months: and I could not help remarking to myself, that, no doubt, Dr. Beauchamp, in his youth, had been quite equal to his son in manly beauty. He advanced to the altar, and

there took his place, raising his eyes as if in prayer. He had no sooner opened his book, than the young and lovely brides and bridegrooms appeared.

Lucy and Eugenius first entered. Eugenius looked agitated; but Lucy was perfectly calm and serene: she was dressed entirely in white, and wore a cap and veil of the finest lace. Sophia followed, led by her noble and gallant brother. She was evidently alarmed, being naturally timid; but Theodore looked more gay, more animated, more handsome, than ever.

Ellen next appeared, attended by Richard; and Margaret, conducted by young Taylor; for the other ladies would not be separated from their humble acquaintances.

I did not trouble myself to take particular notice of any others of the party, neither can I tell how they were paired: all I know is that Mrs. Beauchamp, the bridesmaid, Mrs. Taylor, Mrs. Tristram, and some other persons, closed the procession.

We were more than an hour in the church, the four marriages occupying that space of time; and when the ceremony

was concluded, there was, for some minutes, such congratulations, such weepings, and such embracings, while the multitude of spectators were going out, that I hardly know what passed. We had opened the door from the church into the Hall gardens; and Mr. Claypole led out his party that way, in order to display his knowledge of the place.

The brides and bridegrooms, together with their particular friends, waited till the rest of the congregation were gone out, and then the parents kissed and blessed their children. Sophia and Lucy mutually embraced, and wept in each other's arms. Eugenius and Lucy also ran into the arms of Mrs. Beauchamp; and the good woman shed many tears over them. Ellen and young Taylor surprised me by kneeling before me, and calling me their father and their friend. Eugenius looked more perfectly happy than I had ever seen him. And the poor doctor burst forth into exclamations of thankfulness and joy. At length I terminated the scene by taking the doctor's hand and leading him

out of the church, all the rest of the party following us.

We had arranged (I say *we*, for I had been, as the housewives say, at the end of every thing) the tables and rooms at the Hall in such a manner that the brides were each to preside at separate tables, and some of them in different rooms.

The servants-hall was allotted to Margaret and Richard, with their friends and equals; the oak parlour to Ellen and Robert; the great dining-room to Mr. and Mrs. Lovel, Mr. and Mrs. Beauchamp, and their guests, in which number was included the party from Beckington, and the persons who at Roxobel are designated the quality. In the library was a couch for Dr. Beauchamp, on which we immediately placed him, forbidding him to stir. A breakfast also was prepared in this apartment for those of his dearest friends from whom he would on no account be parted on that day for any length of time; among which favoured individuals I had the happiness to count myself.

After having done the honours of the

breakfast, first Sophia, and afterwards Lucy, came to us in the library, while Mr. Claypole, Mr. Griffith, and Mr. Barnaby Semple, shewed off the Hall to the ladies from Beckington.

Besides the tables before mentioned, there was an immense party breakfasting out upon the lawn, being seated on the grass; and Mr. Griffith, who had undertaken to supply the honest people in that quarter, was excessively entertained with the immense quantities of good things which were consumed by them.

While Sophia sat with her father, in order to entertain him and keep him composed, I went round to visit the various tables, and to pay my compliments to the company; and I think that I never saw so many merry faces together in my life.

Black Tom was at the third table, and I felt very much afraid that his high spirits would not be kept within their proper bounds; for I have found that when persons of certain habits are highly excited, they are apt to become rude and boister-

ous in their behaviour: and hence I believe that public amusements are more dangerous to the manners of the lower classes than to those of the higher. I, however, whispered a word of caution in the ears of the wild man, reminding him that we were now, at Roxobel, to relinquish our old ways, and seek and follow better ones. In consequence of my remonstrance, he very handsomely begged pardon of the company, and said that they should never again have to complain of him.

“That is, if the Almighty will in his great kindness assist you to do better, Mr. Thomas,” I remarked.

“True, Sir,” he answered. “True; our best resolutions are but poor things, if not backed by the help of the Almighty.”

“Backed and forwarded too, and made in the strength of the Almighty,” said Richard, taking the hand of his bride. “We shall make but poor work of it, Margâret, with all our fine beginnings, if the Almighty does not abide with us.”

I made a sad uproar in the lawn by throwing sugarplums among the little chil-

dren, for I had provided myself with a quantity of these luxuries. But Mr. Griffith and Mr. Semple called me to order. Mr. Griffith said I should find it much less difficult to excite the little urchins than to quiet them again; and Mr. Semple observed that he should have some dozens of them to cure of a surfeit, without the help of my sugarplums. Being thus reproved, I returned into the house, like a naughty child who has been detected in mischief.

Between one and two o'clock, as many carriages as could be mustered in Roxobel drove up to the door of the Hall; and the grandees of the company, being placed in them, were driven to the spot in the park where the entertainment had been prepared, while the multitude cut short through the woods, and were at the place of rendezvous nearly as soon as we were.

The spot we had chosen was that beautiful lawn where the old yew-tree seat is situated, being about two acres in extent, encompassed by woods on three sides, and bordered by a deep dingle on the

fourth. In the centre of this lawn were arranged many tent-like awnings, under which various tables were spread; and within the groves were placed other tables, cloths also being laid upon the grass, and furnished with an abundance of refreshments. Each of the poor people had been requested to bring a drinking-horn, a knife and fork, and a pewter plate; for we had anticipated, what really happened, that we should have many visitors whom we had not invited. The poor people, and even some of the more substantial inhabitants, now appeared from Clifton and the neighbouring parishes—fathers and mothers, with their little ones in their arms and around them; and who could have sent these empty away? Accordingly, they were all invited to sit down and partake of the provisions: and certainly I never saw so numerous an assemblage conduct themselves with greater propriety. There is something, however, in the openness of day which has a powerful tendency to check the manifestations of evil. Had this concourse of people been collected

by candle-light, we should probably have found them less manageable. I made a remark of this kind to Eugenius; and he replied, "I am perfectly aware that such is the case, Mr. Airley; and I intend to encourage no public amusements that are not suitable to broad daylight; I will not have any candle-light entertainments."

Under the yew-tree a small table had been placed, and a couch for Dr. Beauchamp; and this retreat was to be exclusively appropriated to the doctor: in consequence of which arrangement he went to it several times during the day, when he felt himself fatigued.

After the company had arrived in this delightful spot, more than an hour elapsed before the plum-puddings appeared. These were the only hot dishes which had been provided: and, when they at length arrived they afforded a wonderful fund of mirth, in consequence of the elegant method of conveyance which had been adopted; for the housekeeper could hit upon no superior method of transmitting them to the company than that of inclosing them in bas-

kets, in the dishes and cups in which they had been baked or boiled, and packing them off in a cart.

During the interval, however, wherein we were waiting for these same puddings, we were any thing but dull. In one part of the scene appeared numbers of little children, playing at hide-and-sceek, or puss in the corner. Among the trees sat many clusters of old men and women, who were talking of former times, and expatiating upon events that had long gone by. There was the party of beaux and belles from Beckington, amusing themselves in their own way; namely, by paying and receiving compliments, and talking nonsense, as beaux and belles have done from the ages previous to the Trojan war even to the present day. There was Mrs. Taylor telling her neighbours how her son was to live at Torville, and be a great man. There was Peter the Hermit discussing the beauties of his flowers, and presenting his posies to the ladies. I saw Miss Pilkington too, and I saw her mouth moving; but I kept at a proper distance. Mr.

Claypole also was not to be overlooked : he was here and there and everywhere, directing, arranging, planning, providing ; his coat flying behind him like the fan-tail of a pigeon. Sometimes he was dealing out his attentions to the Beckington ladies, among whom he appeared to divide his regards pretty equally, for fear, no doubt, of giving any offence ; and at other times he was to be seen edging himself into the circles of the brides, smiling, bowing, and wiping his brow now and then with a yellow silk handkerchief, the gift of the captain from India, the work of a *cosim bazar* weaver, sworn to be genuine. The Widow Wafchum likewise, or I should rather say the happy bride of the Clifton tailor, was a very prominent object in the crowd. She had doffed her beaver hat ; and had added to her natural graces by assuming a cap richly dight with yellow ribands. She held the arm of her husband on this happy occasion ; a little spare man, sallow and threadbare, and apparently very observant of any hint which might fall from the lips of his lady. Mr. Griffith also was

not to be overlooked. He had most providently brought his three suits with him; and he changed them as frequently as a harlequin finds it necessary to change his habiliments in the performance of a pantomime. When Mr. Griffith approached the brides of nobler degree, or their lords, he was all complaisance, all softness and politeness; with the Beckington party, he was "Hail, fellow, well met!" and when with the lower orders, he evidently appeared to be a very fit companion for Black Tom. He was pleased himself, however, and he tried these various methods to please and accommodate others. We had provided a band of music, and they played us several lively airs, and much amused us, when the cart arrived, by striking up, "O the roast beef of old England!"

During this period Sophia had crept into the yew-tree seat, and placed herself by the side of her father and mother; and I, peeping in, was invited also to enter. Here we were soon joined by Eugenius, Lucy, and Theodore; and I reminded this hap-

py family of our first delightful meeting in that very place ten or more years since. "It was then I saw you first, my fair Sophia," I said. "Do you remember how you stood by me, and offered me your friendship without saying one word? O, the recollection of those days, and of my Lucy's first visit, and of that walk with Theodore and Eugenius! How sweet, how tender, how touching, are those reminiscences! May the remembrance of the innocent happiness of former days influence us so strongly as to prevent us from ever seeking happiness in any other sources than those which are equally pure!"

"All we can say," rejoined Lucy, speaking for the rest, "is, that we have agreed henceforward to be guided, under the blessing of the Almighty, by those who have guided us hitherto. We have made this agreement: and we confirmed each other in this determination last night, when we were all together. Did we not?" she said, looking round upon her young friends.

"We did," they replied. "Our father and mother, and you, Mr. Airley, shall ad-

wise us as you used to do: and may you all live long, very very long, to direct us!"

We were all affected by this: Sophia's face was covered with tears in a moment, and the more ardent Lucy sobbed violently with the strength of her feelings. It was also delightful to see how the two young men seemed to participate in the sentiments and feelings of their brides, and how they soothed and cheered them.

At length, perceiving that we mutually agitated each other, we rose up, leaving the doctor and his lady in the yew-tree seat. We were scarcely come upon the lawn, however, before a very touching sight met our eyes: there was the widow Torville and her little dog Snow; the old lady leaning on her stick, and advancing feebly through the grove. We all uttered an exclamation of surprise, which brought the doctor and Mrs. Beauchamp from their retreat; and Theodore and Eugenius, darting forward, each gave an arm to the old lady, and brought her through the crowd. The doctor and Mrs. Beauchamp then addressed her affectionately, and the two brides em-

braced her. We placed a chair for her in a shady place; and Sophia, on whom she doats, as indeed she well may, seated herself by her side.

It was at this moment that the cart arrived, and the band struck up. We then arranged ourselves under the awnings to partake of the repast; the bridal-parties separating, in order to preside at the different tables.

We were a considerable time at our banquets: for when the first tables were served, and the companies around them had concluded their repasts, there were other parties to be supplied. The ladies afterwards rose, and left the gentlemen for a little time at their bottles; but there was, comparatively, very little drinking during the whole of the day.

When all was ended, and the residue of the feast had been divided among the poorer classes,—(for nothing was to be carried back to the Hall,)—the company present were ranged in a shady part of the lawn, in a sort of semicircle; and the musicians took their station on a bank near at

hand. All this was done by my direction ; but very few persons knew the purpose of these arrangements ; though I had been obliged to let Mr. Claypole into my secret, for he was indeed, that day, the most useful of all useful men.

All these preparations being accomplished, the musicians struck up a kind of triumphant march, and Mr. Pen Map advanced into the centre of the circle ; while a number of his best scholars, past and present, approached and formed a half-moon behind him.

The laureate stood erect in the middle of the area ; one foot was brought forward ; he bowed to the four several brides respectively ; he raised one hand, placing the other on his breast ; and he then addressed the assembly, expressing himself in the following stanzas:—

“ Ye social powers of Hymen’s reign,
Assembled here to grace his fane,
Bid Triumph all his pomp display ;
Bid Joy assume and crown the day.
Let the fair nymphs their timbrels bring,
And dance, and ‘ Io, Hymen,’ sing ;

Let the brisk youth too join the dance,
With lifted garlands now advance ;
And, as their light feet touch the ground,
A louder ' Io, Hymen,' sound.
Yea, all ye powers of Hymen's reign,
Come, haste, and join the jocund train :
And on these lovely pairs bestow
The utmost bliss which man can know."

I was asked whether this composition were not a little too refined for the poet of Roxobel? I, however, answered decidedly in the negative; but I had hardly had time to say "No," when the band again began to play; and, to the astonishment of the poet himself, a chorus of young voices repeated the verses, their music being adapted to the words of the song. The tune had been well selected, and the effect was very fine: for so loud and so full was the chorus, that the woods and the valleys thrilled with the echo.

The piece was twice encored; and during the whole performance the poor poet stood in a delirium of transport. But his triumph was not to cease here: for while the last notes were yet passing away along the valley, Ellen and Margaret

rose up, and, with much grace and dexterity, placed a crown of laurel upon his brow; this ornament having been handed to them from the group of boys who stood behind the preceptor. The music then struck up a triumphant air, and the two young women handed the poet out of the circle.

There was a roar of mirth and of applause: every one was amused and gratified. But Mr. Barnaby Semple, pretending to fumble in his pockets, said he was feeling for his lancet; for he well knew that he should be called upon to bleed the poet in a very short time: and Lucy whispered in my ear, that she was quite certain that the crown was not upon the right head.

The company then rose up, and amused themselves just as they thought proper. A number of the young people proposed a dance; and Mr. Lovel, as the 'squire and the lord of the manor, was asked if he approved of it.

He whispered to me, "Can there be any harm in this, out of doors, and in broad

daylight? for I am resolved I will have no midnight balls and carousals at the Hall."

I agreed with him, that no mischief was to be apprehended from such a recreation by the light of day, and in the presence of so many elders.

Eugenius then took the hand of Miss Finchley, while Theodore selected one of the fair ladies from Beckington: and the musicians being then placed in a central position, several different sets were formed, and the dancing continued for at least two hours.

At six o'clock tea and coffee were prepared under the awnings; and the various parties amused themselves till between seven and eight. At that time, the doctor, fearing that some of the company might take cold if they remained much longer in the open air, came out from his yew-tree seat, for the purpose of giving the signal of departure. He had spent the last few hours in this snug retreat, in the society of the chosen few, among whom were his children; Eugenius and Theodore having retired from the lawn as soon as they had

set the dancers in motion. Having caused the whole multitude to gather round him, Dr. Beauchamp addressed them in a manner which no one present ever will forget.

“My children,” he said, “we have this day had a foretaste of that species of innocent pleasure which, if it be not our own faults, we may enjoy in an infinitely more high and perfect degree through all eternity. Those who represent religion as gloom and austere, fancy the Almighty to be, not as he is revealed in Scripture, but as he is painted by sin and unbelief. The divine justice is indeed tremendous to those who view the Father through any other medium than that of the Son: but this very justice is that which renders our assurances of eternal happiness the most perfect, if we be but willing to unite ourselves with him who has satisfied that justice, who has endured all its penalties for our sakes, and who has, by his own infinite merits, purchased rewards for us as infinite as his merits.

“But I come not here, my children, to steal a sermon upon you: I come to en

treat, to supplicate, to beseech you, so to desire and seek to be united with Christ, that we, who have now met on this happy occasion, may hereafter meet in that blessed state, and in that happy land, in which the heavenly Bridegroom will be united with *his church*, made white in his blood, and clad with her bridal crown, even with her sons and daughters, which shall be as precious jewels blazing in the glory of the sun: for, as the diamond drinks in the rays of light, and pours them forth again through the dazzled eyes of the beholders, so, that day of the espousals of the church, shall the believer, drawing his light from the Sun of Righteousness, shine forth in the realms of glory.

“Let us then live and act, my beloved ones, as pilgrims travelling onward towards the heavenly Zion. Let all offensive words and deeds be henceforward banished from our lovely Roxobel. May these, my sons and daughters, who are thus suddenly raised to places of responsibility, live only to promote the best interests of those beneath their influence. May

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God the Spirit be poured on every household. And may I be able to say in the last day, in the morning of the resurrection, 'Of these that thou hast placed under my pastoral care, not one, O Lord, is now wanting.'"

The doctor melted into tears: he could add no more. I stepped forward, however, and gave out a few lines of a hymn; upon which the horns and other wind-instruments belonging to the band struck up a tune, and, being accompanied by the voices of every person present who could sing, we repeated that hymn, the last verse of which is this—

“ Then let our songs abound,
And every tear be dry;
We're travelling through Immanuel's ground,
To lovelier worlds on high.”

THE END.

