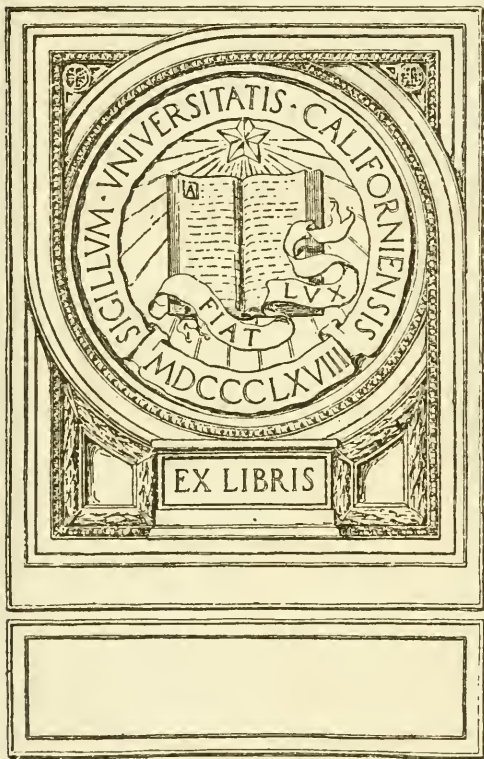




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FLIRTATION.

VOL. II.

LONDON:
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FLIRTATION.

A NOVEL.

“Are not they in the actual practice of Guilt, who care not whether they are thought Guilty or not?”—*Spectator*.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

LONDON :

HENRY COLBURN, NEW BURLINGTON STREET.

1827.

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FLIRTATION.

CHAPTER I.

“C'est un grand pas, c'est un pas irréparable, lorsqu'on dérôle tout-à-coup aux yeux d'un tiers, les replis cachés d'une relation intime—le jour qui pénètre dans le Sanctuaire constate et achève les destructions que la nuit enveloppoit de ses ombres.”

B. CONSTANT.

It will be remembered that, on quitting the Delvins' cottage, Lady Emily had left an injunction with her parents, that Rose should attend her at the Hall on the following morning ; and when, subsequently, she became acquainted with the circumstances of Ambrose's release from prison, her desire to see her protégée was con-

siderably increased, and the night had been passed by her in forming plans for the happy union of this once attached couple.

She felt, consequently, some disappointment as the hour passed away, and no summons came to apprise her of Rose's arrival. Breakfast was over ; eleven o'clock struck ; still she loitered in the morning room, and became every moment more and more thoughtful.

"Why, Emily, love," said General Montgomery, at length observing his niece's abstraction, "what is the matter?—you are not in spirits."

"Indeed, dear uncle," she replied, "I am not out of spirits—I am only thinking——"

"Thinking ! upon what grave subject, my Emily ? Remember, to-night is Mrs. Fitzhammond's ball, and you must put on your gayest spirits as well as your gayest attire. Tell me, dearest, has any thing occurred to make you wear this face of care ?"

"Oh, no, dear uncle, no ! only I expected—Rose ;—I desired her to come to me this morning, and it is past the time ?"

“Have you forgotten, then, what I told you of Mr. Carlton’s very noble conduct, in regard to Rose’s lover? She is taken up, you may be sure, with Ambrose. Depend upon it, they are too much occupied with each other for her to remember her appointment with you.”

Before Emily could reply, Lady Frances remarked that she really could not understand Mr. Carlton’s conduct in this affair, though she must allow it to be noble—quite singular.

“It is the very way,” she said, turning to Lord Mowbray with an assumed softness of manner—“it is the very way to encourage similar outrages on another occasion; it is quite a mistake, quite a misplaced generosity, in Mr. Carlton to pardon such a man, at least without having first made him smart for his offence. Do you not think so, my Lord?”

“You would, then,” replied Lord Mowbray, “were it your case, Lady Frances, hang the man first and try him after?”

“It is most probable,” said Emily, who, for the first time, showed any symptom of interest in what was passing—“it is most pro-

bable that Mr. Carlton may, on reflection, have thought himself in the wrong, and therefore took this measure as the best means of repairing his error; and he deserves praise for his candour, though I cannot think his conduct either very noble or very singular. All that is left to us, when we find ourselves to blame, is to acknowledge the truth, and make the best reparation in our power."

"Ay, but to acknowledge the truth, when a man is in the wrong, Lady Emily, is as difficult," observed Colonel Pennington, "as to find it out on any ordinary occasion. For truth, they say, lies in a well, and those who look for it there, generally see nothing but the reflection of themselves, together with all their prejudices and passions, and so are not a whit the nearer their object."

"And when you have found it," said Lord Mowbray, "what is it good for? All the pleasures of life lie in its illusions; and the only way to go through the world quietly, is to be content with the surfaces both of things and persons."

“The only way,” replied Colonel Pennington, “to avoid being put in a passion, is to avoid silly people; but, as the world is so full of them, that to keep out of their way is impossible, I suppose I am doomed to be in passion to the end of my life!”

Every body laughed at this declaration of the choleric but good-natured Colonel.

“I will answer for that,” cried General Montgomery, “since the day that you knocked the man overboard in the Mediterranean, and then jumped in the sea to save his life at the risk of your own, when the vessel was running nine knots an hour.”

“Yes, I remember it,” said Colonel Pennington in his roughest tone. “The fellow deserved to be thrown into the sea, but not to be drowned, at least by me; he loved me, however, all his life after that affair.”

“A curious recipe to beget love,” said Lord Mowbray; “but it had its admirers, though few imitators, I conclude.”

“No, no! nobody admires a man for being in a passion, Mowbray,” replied the Colonel;

“or for endeavouring to save the life that his passion endangers. It is a bad story—a bad story. I wish the General would, just as my friend, Miss Macalpine, says, ‘*let bygones be bygones.*’ Let us talk no more about it.”

“I think it was much to your honour, Colonel,” said Miss Macalpine;—“one might ken ye had a drap of the true bluid in your veins.”

“I have remarked,” said Lord Mowbray, “that there is something exceedingly congenial in Scotch blood with water.”

“How, my Lord?” said Miss Macalpine.

“First, you know, there is a drop of the morning dew, or right good Farentosh, to which I have heard it reported all your country folks are particularly addicted; and then I myself saw an instance of a young lady (one too, who had never resided in the country of her ancestors), who, from a sort of instinctive love of water, took off her shoes and stockings, and very deliberately forded a rapid stream.”

Lady Emily, who had once more relapsed into silent thoughtfulness, started at the latter part of Lord Mowbray’s speech, and, involuntarily looking up, blushed deeply; while Lord

Mowbray continued with affected gravity :—
“ Now, I conceive that this very extraordinary proceeding could only arise from that instinctive love of water, which the torrents and perpetual rains, &c. abounding, I have heard, in Scotland, naturally enough produce ; and this supposition seems confirmed by the story of Colonel Pennington’s jumping into the sea. Do you not agree with me, Lady Emily ?”

She blushed yet more deeply, but could not help smiling with consciousness, as she replied, hurriedly, “ Really, my Lord, I do not know ; I never was in Scotland ; why do you refer to me on the subject ?”

“ Why, what is the matter, Emily ?” said the General ; “ one would imagine it was yourself whom Lord Mowbray had seen.”

“ And so it was, dear uncle,” replied Emily, in confusion ; “ mine was that very pretty exploit.”

“ It is not possible !” cried her sister. “ A very pretty exploit, and a very pretty confession truly !”

“ Yes,” rejoined Lord Mowbray, with more earnestness of expression than was usual with

him, "it is a very pretty confession; and if every body told their peccadillos with the same candour, one would be apt to fall in love with follies."

Lady Frances coldly desired to know the solution of the enigma; but as neither party seemed disposed to reply, she turned from them, remarking with an expression that could not be misunderstood, "that she was now aware why Emily had taken to such strange habits lately."

Lady Emily looked at her sister, but did not trust herself to speak, for she felt her heart swell within her breast, while blushes suffused her cheeks, as she reflected on the unjust suspicions which her sister's words and manner had implied from the first. Lord Mowbray's allusion to the subject had given her pain and perhaps, too, though unconscious why she did so, she regretted that the sacredness of a secret hitherto preserved between them should thus have been violated.

There is a charm in the recognition of a secret but innocent intelligence, be the matter

ever so trivial, which is indescribably sweet ; but this pure feeling must not, can not, for a moment be confounded with that fever of vicious excitement, which exists under any circumstances of guilty intrigue : no, it is as different as light from darkness. It is the delicate consciousness of an interest apart from the rude realities of life ; the ethereal intercourse of minds finely tuned in unison.

In the present instance, Lady Emily had felt indebted to Lord Mowbray for his silence with respect to her girlish frolic ; and though he often spoke of pretty feet and ankles as indispensable to beauty, still, though conscious that his remarks extended to herself, her individual feet and ankles had not been named ; and her blushes, and a half smile that dimpled around her lips, whenever the subject was alluded to, had made known to him that she tacitly acknowledged the delicacy of his forbearance to its full extent. The spell, however, was now broken ; the secret divulged ; and Lady Emily's confusion was only equalled by Lady Frances's chagrin at the detection.

The circumstance affected Lord Mowbray differently: he did, indeed, regret the disclosure the moment it had passed his lips, and for the same reasons; but he had never seen Lady Emily to so much advantage. He looked at her, as she made her artless confession of the truth, with a kind of delighted interest, which he had never before felt for any woman; and the good humour of Lady Frances was not restored now by the discovery that this *was* the case.

Lady Emily, still distressed at what had occurred, and restless at the non-appearance of Rose, had risen to leave the room, when, as she reached the door, she was met by Mr. Aldget, who, bowing as he passed her, stepped forward with eager haste.

“ I bring excellent news of the Hon. Mr. Carlton,” said he; “ he is greatly better, and is so anxious, General, to make his acknowledgments in person for your kind attention, that he proposes calling at the Hall to-day.”

Lady Emily lingered at these words, in hope that something farther might transpire.

The man of law said no more, however ; and General Montgomery immediately added, “ I shall be happy to see Mr. Carlton. I hear he intends to live on his estate, as a sensible man should do ; and to ride through his plantations and his farm, and look after his affairs. He is fond of agriculture, I understand ; and this, let me tell you, is a promising trait in any one’s character. I agree with the oft quoted Dean Swift, who says somewhere, that ‘ He who makes a blade of wheat grow where none ever grew before, is a more valuable individual to the community than fifty heroes.’ ”

“ I’m thinking, General,” said Miss Macalpine, “ that you’re forgetting you are a hero yourself’.”

“ Pho, pho, Miss Macalpine ; not a bit of it, not a bit of it ;—in one sense of the word, I hope I have done my duty as a soldier, and can do so again : but pursue conquest in the cannon’s mouth for mere amusement ! not I, truly—no ! no ! Mr. Carlton’s tastes and pursuits are much more in unison with mine.”

How much the best of persons are blinded

by their predilections ! Even the good General could not entertain a suspicion to the disadvantage of one, who professed himself fond of the country and its occupations ; yet in Mr. Carlton's case, all things considered, and spite of his love for agriculture, there was room for hesitation. It is easy, however, to turn the tide of personal feeling : a word, good or bad, from the persons supposed to give tone to the multitude will do it ; and the unfortunate object of the praise or censure of the moment is raised to the skies by the award of this august tribunal. It is not meant, in the present instance, that General Montgomery imagined he was guilty of injustice or precipitation in thus giving his voice in favour of Mr. Carlton ; but he was too guileless himself to suppose any one who took interest in pursuits, which, of all others, lead the mind to a contemplation and a proper sense of the mercies of the Creator, could ever be undeserving of praise, much less be a vicious character.

The vote of the company, however, as the General ended his panegyric, (for thus it might be interpreted,) was in favour of Mr. Carlton. Lady Frances said that she had often heard

him spoken of in town: she had even seen him—once—or twice—she *believed*, in company with Lord Bellamont—(this part of her information was given with a slight hesitation and a sort of consciousness, which did not escape Emily's observation, though unmarked by others;) and though he might live a good deal in the country, she knew he also mingled with *society*, with that marked emphasis in the word which defined her view of the limits within which society was to be found.

Colonel Pennington declared he had always heard that Mr. Carlton was considered an entertaining companion; and that he remembered him, in various places and societies, as very gentlemanly in his address, and perfectly a man of the world.

Lady Emily confessed she should be "delighted" to see Mr. Carlton, because he had forgiven Ambrose.

Her sister laughed at her, for this declaration. "You can think of nothing," said she, "without a reference to your *friend* Rose Delvin. Not long ago, Mrs. Fitzhammond was the reigning favourite; but the fact is," (whis-

pering, as she turned to Lord Mowbray,) “Emily cannot live without a humble friend to flatter her.”

“I should think,” he replied, speaking aloud, “that Lady Emily might always *command* attention and admiration; and that, if her kindness leads her to protect those in humble life, it is benevolence, and not choice of companionship, which directs her conduct on the present occasion.

“Thank you, Lord Mowbray,” said Lady Emily, who had overheard him; “but I must say a word in my own defence:—I never liked any person because they were great, or powerful, or the fashion; I love those I love, naturally, without asking myself why, and then I find out a thousand good reasons afterwards. As to poor Rose Delvin, she is not an intellectual or improving companion, I allow; but she is very good-natured, and good-tempered, very pretty, very young, very lively, very much devoted to me, and helps me in my garden and in tending my birds and my pets. I wish to see her happily settled in her own rank of life; but I have no foolish wish to take her out of it.”

Lady Frances interrupted her : “ But you honestly confess she is, to use your own romantic phrase, very much *devoted* to you ; and that is sufficient, I suppose, to create all this flame of interest in return.”

“ And a very good reason too,” rejoined Lord Mowbray : “ did you ever hear the old song ?

‘ I love my love, because I know my love loves me :’

It is the best possible reason I know for loving man, woman, child, or animal. It might go a great way with me, I confess.”

“ I suspect,” said Lady Emily, turning her smiling eyes upon him, “ that you agree with the sentiment which I have read somewhere, namely, *Que nous aimons toujours ceux qui nous admirent, mais nous n'aimons pas toujours ceux que nous admirons.*’ There are many degrees of attachment.”

“ Then it comes to the same thing,” said Lady Frances ; “ you are flattered by the admiration of a person much inferior to yourself, into a friendship which otherwise you would not feel.”

“ Friendship ! that is a strong term, sister ! no, I could not make *my friend*, one whom education, rank, station, place at a distance from me :

Friendship argues an *equality*. I do not like exactly that my good-will towards Rose Delvin should be supposed to fill my *whole* heart."

She coloured as she said this, while Lady Frances, with a supercilious smile, observed: "Oh! I am happy to remark that you can be so cautious, and provide thus warily against possible contingencies, sister."

Lady Emily's spirits, worn out by anxiety, and already wounded by the interpretation given to her morning walks, could no longer bear up against this fresh and ungenerous suspicion; and, to hide her agitation, she made an excuse for suddenly leaving the room.

"What can be the matter with Emily this morning?" said General Montgomery.

A silence, which continued for some moments, seemed to acknowledge the inability of all parties to answer this question; until Lord Mowbray, who, perhaps, with Lady Frances, was the only one of the company who understood her conduct in the present instance, replied—

"I believe Lady Emily is very anxious about her little protégée, and uneasy at her not com-

ing to the Hall at the appointed hour. I have observed her watching for tidings every time the door opened.”

The General appeared satisfied ; but remarked, that he feared his dear Emily was laying up a store of misery to herself, in giving way, on all occasions, to the too vivid impulses of an affectionate heart.

Lady Frances’s lips curled in disdain at this expression ; and she looked at Lord Mowbray as though she would have asked of him whether he had not his share in the agitation evinced by her sister on the present occasion.

Lady Emily did not appear during the remainder of the morning ; and though Mr. Carlton made his promised call, and every one else, influenced either by curiosity or by politeness, had remained at home to receive him, Emily was still absent.

The arrival of a new face in a country-house is generally greeted as an accession of interest by the circle assembled there ; and it requires at first no particular claim to superiority to

render the visitor an object of general attention. But Mr. Carlton was really a young man of a handsome figure and prepossessing appearance. His recent illness had lent him, perhaps, an interest he would not otherwise have possessed; for he looked pale, moved languidly, and had a large black patch across his forehead. He came evidently prepared to make himself agreeable to the whole party at the Hall; and all being predisposed in his favour, the task was not difficult.

General Montgomery said, he hoped he should have the pleasure of riding with him over his estate, and, as he heard he was fond of agriculture, would show him some improvements in husbandry that he had lately adopted. Colonel Pennington talked to him about the last military promotions, and about fishing and hunting. Lady Frances went through a whole string of town acquaintances and town amusements; in all which, and in the latest fashions and scandal of the day, she found him quite at home. Even Miss Macalpine and Sir Richard Townley obtained an attentive hearing from

him, as they individually discussed Scotch scenery and the extirpation of thistles.

Lord Mowbray agreed with the rest, who considered Mr. Carlton a lively, gentlemanlike, young man ; but he expressed no opinion of his own. The fact is, that Lord Mowbray knew that, in certain circles, Carlton's reputation was not *en bonne odeur* ; and he had heard some anecdotes of him, which disposed him to think, not *too* favourably, of his principles and conduct ; but these had been related in confidence, and he was honourably silent.

Lady Frances had discovered that he was to be at Mr. Fitzhammond's ball, and the discovery seemed to have lent her new spirits. The cares of the toilette were no longer a matter of perfect indifference, and her alacrity formed an uncommon contrast with the pensiveness of Lady Emily.

Something of the nature of the mind may be judged of by the attire ; and it is easy to know whether a woman's taste has been formed on that standard which can never totally

change, because it is derived from a pure principle of suitableness and innate elegance; or, whether she is the slave of milliners and modes, which own no touch of higher origin. On the present occasion, Lady Frances's toilet was after the last exact Parisian costume; but Lady Emily's was rendered subservient to what became her own peculiar form and face, without departing too much from the fashions of the day, and possessed a charm of indefinite but indescribable power most felt where best understood.

When the party arrived at Sherbourne Park, Lady Emily's heart (notwithstanding the disappointments and contrarieties of the morning) beat with delight at a confused expectation of such enjoyments as she had never yet partaken; for, being two years younger than her sister, she had not run the gauntlet of a London season.

But, before we introduce the company to the Hall, we must introduce the host and hostess to the reader.

Mr. Fitzhammond's father had acquired a

large fortune in India, which his son, by bold and successful speculations, had nearly doubled. He was a clever man of business, knew how to seize the power and advantages which his immense wealth commanded, was respectable in private life, pompous with his equals, obsequious to those of superior rank, good-natured to his dependants. Vain and purse-proud, he had married a pretty little woman who worked hard to be fashionable, and gave herself the airs of a *bas-bleu*—in other respects, amiable and pleasing: she duly presented her husband every year with a fat, blue-eyed, white-haired baby; and it was to celebrate the birth of the last of these, a long-desired son and heir, that the present fête was given. A few of their most immediate neighbours were asked to dinner; and in the evening there was to be a concert and ball, to which all the leading people in the county (for which Mr. Fitzhammond was one of the members) were invited.

“ I hope we are not late,” said the General, pulling out his watch, as he entered the Hall.

in which he was received by Mr. Fitzhammond. "I believe your clocks and mine are set by the same hand."

"Always punctual," rejoined Mr. Fitzhammond—"always punctual, my dear General, to a moment."

"I know, people frequently do not pay any attention to hours," rejoined the General; "but then those persons seldom pay attention to any thing that is valuable in this life. But where is my dear Mrs. Fitzhammond? how does she do, and the newly arrived babe?"

"All well, thank you, General. Here, this way, this way, if you please—we have opened all our house in honour of the day; and it is not a small one, as you see, General. I believe you never saw these apartments since they were furnished. 'Through this room, to the left, I beg—there, up these steps—this was the old part of the house; the new is very cleverly added, is it not? My architect, Mr. Kent, piques himself upon this contrivance. I hope the perfume of the flowers is not too strong for the ladies; they are just brought in from my four hot-houses this day. My friend, the King

of Bangalore, sent me that shawl-curtain—it is put up quite in a new taste by my upholsterers, Ticken and Squab—nobody like them for contrivance—always finding out something new. Certainly very elegant, but devilish extravagant. My friend, the Duke of Godolphin, sent me these two cabinets. I bought that large picture out of a palace in Genoa—that *was* a bargain; only look at the size of it. But this chimney-piece is Egyptian marble, brought from Grand Cairo. My friend, Admiral Watson, was so good as to procure it for me—it is supposed to have been a bit of the base of Memnon's statue. It half-ruined me to get over; but never mind. Ha! ha! ha! I can still receive my friends."

And thus he ran on as he led his guests through the splendid suite of apartments, till, at length, they reached the drawing-room, where sat Mrs. Fitzhammond, several other ladies, and four children of various ages.

Mrs. Fitzhammond rose from the ottoman on which she had been reclining; and Lady Emily stepping forward, with all her own expression of animated kindness, wished her a thousand times

joy. Lady Frances paid a few elegant unmeaning compliments, and, after this exertion, dropped into a seat, and remained silent; while the whole of the party, Miss Macalpine, Miss Paterson, Sir Richard Townley, and Colonel Pennington, were presented in turn; and, though last, not least, Lord Mowbray, who had retired to a distant part of the room, to escape the ceremony, but in vain.

The Fitzhammonds were rejoiced to see any friend of the General's; and when that friend had a lord before his name, he became of course doubly captivating. Lord Mowbray, therefore, was doomed to be the object of Mr. Fitzhammond's peculiar solicitude.

“Your Lordship has not been long in this part of the country, I presume? I had not the honour of seeing you at our county ball last week, and your absence could never have been caused by such an omission as the want of an invitation.”

“Pardon me, I have been a good while at General Montgomery's; but I never dance.”

“Indeed! and yet, my Lord, dancing is much the fashion just now, I believe; but you

prefer sporting perhaps; the pleasures of the chase, a fine, noble, healthful exercise worthy of a man. I have a prodigious quantity of game in my preserves, and shall be vastly happy any day that you will do me the honour to take a morning's shooting; my gamekeepers shall be in attendance."

"Thank you, much obliged!" replied Lord Mowbray, "but I never shoot."

"Never shoot!" with a look of astonishment, and then calling up a smile and glancing at Lord Mowbray's slight figure, "Oh! doubtless, shooting is but a laborious sport, after all. I always said, commend me to the pleasures of hunting; nothing to equal it: such an enlivening exercise: well-trained hounds, horses in fine condition, men and animals all in pursuit——"

"Of a poor wretched fox, or a timid hare," interrupted Lord Mowbray.

"Yes, my Lord, yes; nothing like it; and then flying over a country at full speed, hedges and ditches disappearing like lightning, and, last of all, in at the death."

"Perhaps in at one's own death."

“ My Lord !”

“ I mean, that as I ride very ill, I should probably break my neck.”

“ Ah ! very true—doubtless, indeed, if your Lordship is not accustomed to ride. Hem ! hem !” and something of a doubtful expression between being nonplussed and thinking it possible Lord Mowbray was joking, evinced itself in Mr. Fitzhammond’s face ; but determining on the latter venture, and laughing, or trying to laugh, he proceeded :

“ Ah, I perceive your Lordship is witty—very witty, indeed, ah, ah !—in at one’s own death ! very good, indeed, ah, ah, ah !” But still he thought, “ I wonder what the devil he does like ? and what shall I say next ?” when, fortunately for Mr. Fitzhammond’s distress, he was relieved by being told that the clergyman waited for the presence of the party to commence the ceremony of the christening. The party prepared to obey the summons ; and, under the direction of Mr. Fitzhammond, were safely conducted through the various galleries, corridors, and conservatories,

to the door which finally issued into the garden, and thence, through the shrubberies, to the church itself, which stood within his park.

The solemn office of baptism, and admission into the church, was not, in this instance, garbled to suit the idle convenience of nominal Christians, who, without an excuse, save one, which might well raise a blush in every thinking mind, most frequently evade its public performance, and, in the privacy of their chambers, too often hurry over a duty which it ought to be their greatest pride, as it is their highest privilege, to fulfil. This ordinance so touchingly beautiful, so awakening to a sense of duties which, in all the different periods of our lives, in childhood and in maturer years, we are called to reflect upon, derived a higher effect from the sacredness of the spot in which it was solemnized, and the impressive manner of the officiating clergyman.

Lady Emily was moved to tears, and the beauty of her pure expressive countenance assumed an almost angelic loveliness. Lord Mow-

bray gazed at her with an admiration to which he had hitherto been a stranger ; and his own eyes (he knew not why, for he had not *thought*, he had only *felt* with Emily,) were also filled with tears, which he vainly endeavoured to conceal under his thickly fringed eyelids.

Lady Emily looked up, and there was a moment, an electric moment, of conscious mutual approbation, mingled with something dearer and tenderer still, the remembrance of which no after-time could efface.

The ceremony closed, and, the good wishes and congratulations on the occasion offered and received, the party returned to the house.

“ Well, General,” said Mr. Fitzhammond, as they re-entered the drawing-room, “ I hope your drive has given you an appetite ; we are only waiting for the Duke of Godolphin, with Lady Arabella and the Marquess of Bellamont, and Mr. Carlton, and Captain Lepel, and the Countess of Glassington. Sandford,” calling to his butler, “ the moment the Duke of Godolphin’s carriage is in sight, serve the dinner.”

At this instant, Lady Glassington was an-

nounced. She was an old lady, with the remains of great beauty, as straight as if laced up in buckram, and as formal as if she had been playing at visiting all her life. Her attire of half a century back, her consequential smile, and air of protection, as she paid her compliments to the master and mistress of the house, all told of the consciousness of being come of a race which held a charter of ancient nobility, but this was expressed, as it should be, with native dignity—ay, and with native kindness, too.

“ I hope,” said Mrs. Fitzhammond, addressing Lady Glassington, “ we are to have the pleasure of seeing Mrs. Neville !”

“ Surely ; I never go anywhere without Mrs. Neville,”—looking behind her for her constant attendant and inseparable friend—“ Mrs. Neville, where are you ?”

When in came a light figure, like a piece of parchment, covering skin and bone, with the springing step of fifteen ; in person, dress, manner, every thing the most perfect contrast to Lady Glassington herself.

“ Charming, charming !” she exclaimed ; “ so

you are all waiting for me?—pray don't wait any longer. How do you all do? My dear Mrs. Fitzhammond, how do, and baby? But what charming improvements you have made; I thought I should never have got into the room. And my dear General too! So you were at the christening, and the child is to be called Bangalore—well—the nabob's child called Bangalore!" (laughing) "mighty good that—charming; but, as I was saying, what a delightful house!" and she flew round the room, pushing aside, without ceremony, every one who impeded her progress; first admiring one object of decoration or curiosity, then another; while Mr. Fitzhammond followed her, endeavouring in vain to explain the history and reason and merits of each individual or ornament.

"Bless me, what a divine monkey!" stretching out her long, lean arm across an Indian cabinet to reach it—when, in doing so, she tumbled down several rare specimens of china that fell in fragments to the ground, and with

them, the object of her unfortunate admiration—the monkey itself.

“What have I done! who could have thought it?”

“Who could have thought otherwise, my dear Mrs. Neville?” said Lady Glassington, in a tone of disdainful anger, while Mrs. Neville ran up to Mrs. Fitzhammond, and taking her hand with a familiar air, exclaimed, “Oh, forgive me, my dear Mrs. Fitzhammond. What shall I do? I must buy you another monkey, but where shall I find such a divine monkey? I shall never be able to afford it if I do find it. I must try and persuade Lady Glassington to buy it.” The good-natured Mrs. Fitzhammond begged her not to distress herself, and ringing the bell, very quietly, desired the attendant to clear away the vestiges of her misfortune.

Lady Glassington, meanwhile, gravely rebuked Mrs. Neville. “You know, my dear Mrs. Neville, you should never touch any thing: I have told you so a thousand times. I wonder

you do not learn better manners, since we have lived a good deal together, and I have been indefatigable in teaching you. I wonder you have not at least learnt to know that you break every thing you come near."

"Well, I'm sure I do think I'm the most unfortunate!—thank you, Lady Emily." (Emily was endeavouring to disengage her flounces from the carved work of a gilt chair;) "I don't know how it is, my flounces are always catching in something or other—but don't scold, Lady Glassington, it is not *your* monkey, you know, that is broken, and Mrs. Fitzhammond is 'Mistress of herself though china fall,' so good-humoured, so serene. Well! to be sure, it is beyond belief."

The double doors now flew open, and the Duke of Godolphin came in with his daughter, Lady Arabella Courtney, his eldest son, the Marquis of Bellamont, and a fashionable hanger on of the latter, already known in these pages as Captain Lepel.

The Duke was a man of magnificent stature

and appearance, covered with honours and orders. Lady Arabella and Lord Bellamont were both handsome. Lady Frances, to whom their appearance was perfectly unexpected, absolutely half rose from her chair with astonishment; and she and Lady Arabella accosted each other with the measured tokens of mutual recognition, which it is allowable to fashionables to express.

The Duke approached Mrs. Fitzhammond with stately courtesy; but before he could get half through the compliments he had prepared for the occasion, he was interrupted by Mrs. Fitzhammond's entreating him to sit down, and pushing half a dozen chairs across his toes, which his Grace dexterously evaded by stepping aside, and declaring he had rather stand. Then having made a slight bow to the company, he placed his back against the wall, near the fire-place; and while his host stood on tip-toe to reach his ear, the grandee himself cast an eye around to ascertain that there was nothing so great or so powerful in

the room as himself; and having ascertained that fact, a smiling air of complacency overspread his features, and he whispered to the delighted Mr. Fitzhammond till dinner was announced.

CHAPTER II.

We meet ! but not as once we met ;
Our better days are o'er,
And dearly as I prize thee yet,
I cannot love thee more :
My young and precious hopes were wept
With many a tear away,
And since thy faith so long has slept,
It wakes too late to-day !

T. K. HERVEY.

THE company paired off according to Heraldic laws. Mr. Fitzhammond handed down Lady Arabella Courtney ; the Countess of Glassington followed on the arm of Lord Bellamont, while Lord Mowbray hung a little back ; Mr. Carlton stepped forward and offered his arm to Lady Frances ; Lady Emily, of course, fell to Lord Mowbray ; and the remainder of the party followed as near to the prescribed forms of precedency, as the arrangements of the moment permitted.

The Duke of Godolphin secured to himself the honour of conducting Mrs. Fitzhammond to the dining-room, where the parties became happily approximated in the manner most agreeable to their respective tastes.

Lady Emily found herself between Lord Mowbray and Colonel Pennington. Lady Frances was pleased to have Lord Bellamont on one side and Mr. Carlton on the other. While, within reach of the dumb-show peculiar to the caste to which they devoted themselves, and on the opposite side, sat Lady Arabella, with whom Lady Frances continued an intelligence throughout the dinner relative to all that was passing obnoxious to their ideas of ton. The favoured gentlemen of their suite, the initiated in this freemasonry of impertinence, were participators in the scene; and while the really well-bred part of the company felt distressed at the suppressed laughter and rude whispers which passed from one to the other, the unfortunate relatives of the house, persons, in fact, infinitely superior to those who scorned them, and whom Mrs. Fitzhammond had the

good sense and the good feeling never to exclude, even at the risk of having a mixed company, sat abashed and mortified by fashionable folly. In the midst of this inharmonious and uncongenial banquet, a pause frequently took place, which, if not disturbed by the significant looks and half words of the party alluded to, the host endeavoured to break by addressing himself to the Duke of Godolphin, who sometimes deigned to utter a monosyllable or two by way of reply.

The conversation, such as it was, was carried on in starts and at intervals; the Duke of Godolphin addressing the little he said to Mrs. Fitzhammond and Lady Glassington, who were on each side of him. The old General had found a congenial companion in the latter lady, who was an old and valued friend. Lady Frances was carrying on an animated flirtation with Mr. Carlton, perhaps to pique Lord Bellamont, whose eye and attention seemed to wander too frequently towards Lord Mowbray and Emily, who were opposite; while Mrs. Neville, who sat a little lower, no longer under the governing

look of Lady Glassington, made her shrill voice heard in every pause of the conversation, and her tongue proved on this occasion, as on most others, a very unruly member.

“Do look towards the top,” said she to her next neighbour below, the smiling, silent, polite, Sir Richard Townly, “nobody talks for fear of that great magog the Duke—they all look as frightened as if he were the only Duke in the world; but I am determined to talk. Charming! charming! Well! to be sure,—a gorgon’s head could not have turned them all to stone more effectually; and after all, what for? My grandfather remembered the family when they were nobodies; they got all their wealth from their lead mines, and some of them worked in them, no doubt; but arrogance has served them instead of birth, and pretension makes up what they want in nobility. Well! to be sure, *hunch! hunch!*”—an indescribable sort of groan which she uttered at every two words—“when I was young no one thought any thing of him or his family; but now, because they assume those airs, and cover themselves with an impe-

netrable mantle of pride, fools fall down and worship at their feet. Well! to be sure, it is beyond belief!" and she looked round to Lord Mowbray. "The great man," continued she maliciously, "expects your Lordship to pay more attention to Lady Arabella, nay, I am sure he expects you to fall in love with her; they are very anxious to graft themselves, with their new honours, upon some old stock—they could not do better; for they cannot deny your birthright. Birthright is a sort of comfortable freehold property, that makes the possessor sit down secure in his place in society. Nobody disputes it as far as it goes; and it goes a good way with the multitude, *hunch! hunch!*"

The latter part of this speech, uttered in a loud and peculiar voice, together with the indescribable *hunch, hunch*, of Mrs. Neville, failed not to attract the Duke of Godolphin's attention. The person to whom the remark was addressed, the descendant of indisputably one of the oldest families of English nobility, was doomed, in consequence, to undergo the severest scrutiny from his Grace, as if he would

read in the expression of his face whether there were any feelings of superiority above his own pretensions.

This circumstance was not lost on Mrs. Neville, who continued, in an under-tone, to Lord Mowbray—"My Lord, I assure you one sees plain enough the difference between the real privilege, and the impertinent and silly assumption of it. It is a long time before the badge of servitude and low extraction is worn off, let people carry their heads as high as they may. *Hunch! hunch! charming! charming!*"

"What is charming?" questioned Lady Glassington, in one of her most authoritative tones; "what is charming, pray? Mrs. Neville, you have got such a trick of saying 'charming, charming,' that I am confident you would say 'charming' if you heard that I was dead to-morrow morning;" and Lady Glassington drew herself up, and settled her large laced handkerchief, with a look of contemptuous scorn.—"The fact is," she continued, whispering to Lord Bellamont, "my poor friend never lived in good company in her younger days, though she

was the famous toast—'The pretty Peggy Popkins ; and one man literally died of drinking her health in Champaigne mixed with mustard.'

Here there was a pause, broken by Mr. Fitzhammond, who, with a very consequential air, addressing the Duke from the other end of the table, said, "Has your Grace looked at the new line of road which the town of S—— has proposed to carry along the coast? A wonderful improvement it would be; and they say there are many valuable mines on some parts of the direction which it is to take, but the present possessors are too poor to work them. The undertaking of a mine is a very heavy concern to a speculator in the first instance."

No sooner had this allusion to mining escaped Mr. Fitzhammond, than his Grace's countenance fell, and his dismay was evident.

"Charming, charming!" dropped in a whisper from Mrs. Neville, and she was awed into silence only by Lady Glassington's prompt and steady gaze. Mr. Fitzhammond, though he dared not look up, fortunately recollected the

name of some peculiar wine, and calling for it, he started this fresh game with a sort of desperate courage, hoping that the beverage itself, if not the history, which he attempted to give, would produce a lethean draught of his mistake. In his confusion, he pressed every one to partake of it, with the exception of the nobleman, whose feelings he was conscious had been offended by his inadvertency, and by so doing, drew the attention of all present, more particularly to the "head and front of his offending."

The wine was served, and the guests partook of it; but one little, short, quick-eyed man with a shining face, and well-powdered hair, a relative of Mr. Fitzhammond's, who had sat hitherto silenced by the presence of the company in which he found himself, seized upon the unfortunate subject of the mines, and, as one familiar in the matter, addressed himself with confidence and in an audible voice to Mr. Fitzhammond.

"By your leave, Fitzhammond, I think I can set you right in that affair. The thing

is this: there are mines, which I believe would well repay the expense of working, as you say, but there is a difficulty, and if his Grace would allow me, I think a word from his Grace in the proper quarter, would set it all right—I flatter myself——”

“Frank, will you take a glass of Sardana-palian wine with me,” said Mr. Fitzhammond, in a voice that by its echo he wished should drown all that had, or would have fallen from the lips of the last speaker. “This wine,” he continued in the same loud key, “was given me by a merchant from the Levant, and it is supposed to possess qualities such as no other wine in the world ever had. It is, in short, the *unicorn* of wine.”

“Unicorn!” whispered Captain Lepel; “capital, i’faith; I would not have missed that on any account.”

Mr. Fitzhammond’s cousin allowed his glass to be filled with this famous wine; but neither its flavour, nor the continued interruptions he experienced, when attempting to speak, availed in enforcing silence upon him. Turning each

time with imperturbable perseverance towards the Duke of Godolphin, he added—"But if your Grace would but condescend to give your attention to these mines, your interest would be all powerful. Your Grace's interest is paramount."

"You do me a vast deal of honour," replied the Duke, with one of those freezing looks of authority, which, among his own family and attendants, was wont to take effect like Jove's thunderbolt:—"you do me a vast deal of honour, Sir."

But the comfortable pertinacity of the character who addressed him, was proof against the cold superciliousness opposed to his attack; and taking his Grace's words of usage for words of favour, he continued with proportionate confidence. "Your Grace is too obliging. A company, now, formed under your Grace's direction, your name at the head of it——"

"Sir!"

"I shall be happy to give your Grace all the information in my power; indeed your

Grace will find the scheme very much of the same nature as that which your grandfather—no, your Grace's great grandfather I mean, undertook."

Here Mr. Fitzhammond was seized with such a violent fit of choking, that the whole table was thrown into consternation; and the united advice of the guests, all recommending opposite remedies, were well nigh completing the catastrophe by choking him in good earnest.

"*Hunch! hunch!*" cried Mrs. Neville, in the midst of the bustle; "what is the matter?—only choking, eh? oh, charming! charming! I have it;" and feeling in her pockets, (for she had never been persuaded to discard them,) she drew forth a piece of whalebone with a sponge affixed to the end: "here! this is the only remedy—it never fails,—put it down the throat; it is beyond belief how many lives it has saved: as to my own, it has been down my throat often and often."

Lady Arabella and Lady Frances exchanged glances.

"How obstinate you all are!" cried Mrs.

Neville; "will none of you use it? But I believe, after all, poor Mr. Fitzhammond only choked himself because he could not choke his cousin. Wasn't it charming?"—looking round and laughing. Then again whispering, "Lord Mowbray, how people can be such fools! it is beyond belief."

Lord Mowbray nodded assent, and replied,—"It is; but now I hope we are going away, for I see Mr. Fitzhammond is quite recovered, and I am tired of sitting here."

The last effort, in fact, made by that gentleman, to check the unfortunate turn of the conversation, had proved effectual; and though the issue of his self-devotion to the Duke's pride was, by the eagerness of friends to afford remedies, for some moments likely to prove fatal to himself; yet virtue, it is said, is always its own reward, and his heroism was ultimately crowned with success:—whether it atoned for the offence inadvertently given is not quite so sure.

Mrs. Fitzhammond now looked towards the ladies, and they rose with one accord, in obe-

dience to that uncourteous law, which dismisses them, after a limited sufferance, from the society of the nobler sex. In barbarous times, when females united in attendance on their lords, such dismissal from their presence might carry with it no consciousness of degradation, nor convey the idea, as it does at the present day, to a woman's mind, of ungentle and unpolished superiority exercised over her. In what scene, when she does take a part, will not her influence be felt, in shedding, over the manners and habits of man, a refinement and polish, which, robbed of her society, he never attains? and surely, in his relaxations and pleasures, man should feel that the more of knightly grace, the more of courteous elegance he can mingle with them, the more removed they become from mere sensual indulgence, the less they resemble the festive rites of by-gone people, among whom he would be indignant to be classed, but whose example, in this point, he follows more closely perhaps than he is aware. It is to the gentlemen of England that these remarks apply; and to a country where more intellectual and per-

sonal charms exist among the fair sex, perhaps, than can be found in the same limits all the world through; and yet it is here that this odious custom remains. It is to be hoped, that the "march of intellect," as it has somewhere been called, may succeed in overthrowing this remnant of barbarism; and that, with the belles lettres, a proper course of chivalry and good breeding may become one of the essentials of education.

Lady Arabella and Lady Frances, as they left the dining-room, directed a look of mournful intelligence to their respective cavaliers, indicative of the horrors they foresaw awaiting them in Mrs. Fitzhammond's female circle; and, as if forming a treaty of mutual defence and protection against it, joined arm-in-arm as they passed the door, and went whispering together from the apartment. Lady Emily never dreaded *ennui*; but, pleased and satisfied in herself, she always contrived to find some amusement in others; and, on the present occasion, she joined Mrs. Neville; for, with her unsophisticated taste, Lady Emily delighted in

originality of character, especially where worth and kindness formed its basis. As Mrs. Neville knew every body's history, she amused her young companion, who laughed heartily at the wit with which she related a thousand anecdotes of times past and present.

“I wish to heaven, Emily,” said Lady Frances, in a low voice, as she swept past the sofa, arm-in-arm with Lady Arabella; “I wish you would leave off those *grands éclats de rire*!—nobody laughs now—it is quite vulgar.”

“How do they manage?” asked Emily, looking up; “I am sorry it is vulgar; but if I must not laugh, I must not sit beside Mrs. Neville—take me with you, Frances!”—and she smilingly disengaged herself from Mrs. Neville, and took a turn up and down the room with Lady Arabella and her sister.

How strange are the laws which fashion and prejudice frame for the observance of their followers! how perverted often the nature of their institutes! The unchecked, easy flow of the youthful spirit; the early grace of nature, it might almost be said, of innocence, gives place,

under their baneful rule, to the measured expression, the artificial air, and, too often, to the assumption of a knowledge of the world, which in itself supposes the absence of that purity and delicacy which best adorn the youth of woman.

The characters of Lady Frances and Lady Emily were direct illustrations of the power of an early initiation into the frivolities of *ton*, and of the better tendency of an education uncontrolled by its ascendancy. Lady Emily had hitherto never shared in these frivolities, and the time which, happily for her, had left her free from their contagious influence, was a profitable period in her existence, wherein was garnered up many a virtuous and rational principle, many an active and useful habit of employment, which made her in after-life the comfort and delight of others, and bestowed upon her the inestimable possession of self-approbation.

Reflections similar to these were entertained by Mrs. Neville as she gazed on the sisters passing to and fro, and remarked, that Lady Emily had found the conversation of Lady Arabella and Lady Frances so complete an antidote

to laughing, that it had produced repeated yawns, till the entrance of Mrs. Fitzhammond's children furnished her with amusement, and she was soon engaged with two or three of them. They were nice intelligent little creatures, neither too forward nor affectedly *manieré*; and with that instinctive perception of character, or rather of *disposition*, for which children are remarkable, when tired of running the gauntlet of unmeaning caresses and silly compliments, they attached themselves exclusively to Lady Emily. They drew her away to the upper end of the room; set all their little faculties to work to amuse her, by bringing forward the thousand toys, trinkets nameless and numberless, which loaded the rosewood-tables—albums in splendid bindings, which were sure to please the eye by their outward magnificence, however they might disappoint those who too adventurously examined the contents within—portfolios which, in ambush, had often caught the unwary artist into a payment of his admission by a contribution of his talent; or, at other times, flattered the young lady who *paint-*

ed, but did not *draw*, by permitting her pink and white cupids, or Chinese perspectives, to be the pendant of some graphic effort that a Raffaele or a Titian had not blushed to own.

Thus, with one little cherub on her lap, while another had mounted a footstool to reach her ear, and a third was perched on the arm of a large fauteuil, Lady Emily sat in the recess of a large bay-window, partly closed in from the gay moving assemblage, by the curtains of Indian silk, which fell in rich folds on each side of the recess, relieved by a back-ground of myrtles and orange trees. She formed, with her little companions, so lovely a group, that the attention of some of the gentlemen was drawn towards them. At this moment, coffee was served; and Lord Mowbray, who was the first to leave the dinner-table, entered the saloon.

“Do, my Lord, luke at yon picture in the recess,” said Miss Macalpine, seizing his arm; “is it no’ bonny?—the sweet lady—the sonsie bairns, and a’? But dinna gang and spoil it!”

“It puts me in mind of Correggio’s Carità,”

said Lord Mowbray, with a glance of admiration and delight ; “ how unconscious she looks ! how lost to self ! ”

He proceeded, without well knowing from what motive ; and had just reached the recess, and met one sparkling glance from Emily, who looked up at his approach, when Mrs. Fitzhammond observed that music was the best way of filling up the time, and addressing herself to Miss Macalpine said, “ I have often heard that you Scotch ladies are famous for reciting and singing those interesting ballads, which are, I believe, common to your country : do pray favour us with any you may know ; there is nothing that I love so much ; no entertainment that so completely absorbs me for the time being, as the union of story and poetry with music.”

Mrs. Fitzhammond spoke her real sentiments ; for she had a genuine love of both, and understood and felt them thoroughly.

“ Oh ! do pray, do pray ! ” was echoed from all sides, save from the spot where sat the Ladies Frances and Arabella.

“ One must have lived before the flood,”

murmured Lady Frances to her companion, “to have had length of life for one of those interminable ballads. Good heavens! she will not sing, surely.”

“Troth!” said Miss Macalpine, in her broadest Scotch; “I never was gude at minding thae ballads: though ance I had a voice wad a rived a stane dyke; but my friend, Miss Pater-son yonder, has a gay whin o’ thae rants; come, Jennie, g’e us a tune.”

“Really, Marian, I dinna mind ony at this present; as sure as I ’m asked it aye pats them clean out o’ my head.”

“But The Lassies Moan wi the Aunt’s Re-proof,—may be, ye ’ll no hae forgotten that?”

“Ablins I can mind it, if you’ll just put in a word now and than: at ony rate I can but try;” and down she sat to the piano, giving it a fine thumping staccato touch. “Hoot! it’s no that—let’s see—” thumping again on another key—“whare was I? wait awee,” and she twirled her fingers about with the true jerking strathspey time. Then, in a voice that was still sweet, though it had known better days, she sang

The Lassie's Moan wi the Aunt's Reproof.

“ THE little foot page is awa' to Dundee ;
Much rather I wad he had bided wi' me ;
The bonnie wee boy wha ran light at my knee
Made me joyfu to hear, made me blythsome to see.

My little foot page diverted me weel ;
A glance frae my blue eyn rewarded his zeal :
Sae blythe yet sae douce, sae respectfu, sae kind,
I shall ne'er hae anither sae much to my mind.

A' day he stood watching to guess my intent ;
On me, and me only, his fancy was bent :
He stood at my back, or he knelt at my knee ;
Why is he awa' to that dirty Dundee ?

On him the first glamer o' fondness I cast ;
It dizzied his brain, and the chain held him fast ;
The chain was as light as his temper was mild ;
He fancied me mither, I fancied him child.

At morn he came saftly, and tirded at the pin,
And waited my pleasure till he would win in ;
At night he bow'd low whan he wish'd me gude e'en ;
He was a weel-doing and beautifu' wean.

He louped the burn and he clamber'd the brae,
To pu' me the rasp or the wee shining blae ;
The fast-binding ivy he tore frae the tree,
And gard it a wreath for my temples to be.

As I sat at my wark the gay callant was near,
 Wi' saft words sae canty my labour to cheer;
 He found the lost needle, the sunky he brought,
 And knew what I needed as soon as I thought.

Oh! Waly, I'm wae that the laddie is gane;
 I'm a' the day dighted sae weary alane;
 And when he departed, I grat mysel' blind,
 To forget him sae sune wad betray a light mind.

Now for the Aunty:—

“ Now hush ye, ye silly bit lassie! now hush,
 For sure the world's tongue wad hae been crying tush!
 To view a young creature o' gentle degree
 Forgath'ring and daundering wi' sic na laddie.

It is weel for ye baith he's off to Dundee;
 It is weel for ye baith that no more ye shall see
 Thae silly daft days o' sic bairnish delight,
 For sure they your life might wi' penitence blight.

Beware o' the scaith, and beware o' the scorn
 That dark overcasts fair youth's brilliant morn,
 Which cankers the flower ere its leaves are all blown,
 Till they drap ane by ane, and their glory is faw'n.

Calves luvè is a dangerous thing weel I ken,
 For bairns grow to laddies, and laddies to men;
 The burn rins by wimpling that passes the lea,
 But sune it is ane wi' the wild roaring sea.

Then haud your tongue, lassie, nae mair let me see
 Ye are murning for him that 's awa' to Dundee :
 Be wise, bairn, be wise, the glumer o' luve
 Is a vapour frae earth, no' a spark frae above."

And now the Lassie replies :—

O, auntie ! nae mair o' your prudence and preaching ;
 The lessons o' age to my youth ye are teaching ;
 The chill frosts o' winter now strip the bare tree,
 And preach wi' mair meaning a lesson to me.

They tell me each season o' life, like the year,
 First blooms, then decays, and at length becomes sear ;
 Should Spring's early dawn, then, an Autumn face
 wear ?
 Say when would ye gather the fruits o' the year ?

I heedna the scaith, and I heedna the scorn ;
 Sic tauntings and ginnings are easily borne :
 When the heart is right leal to virtue's fair laws,
 What care I for censure or warldly applause.

To you, like the seer, sae sad and sae wae,
 The past scenes o' life can the future display.
 You fancy that ill which perchance ne'er betides,
 And tyne present peace in the future besides.

But I, with youth's instinct o' joy, still pursue
 The glamer o' pleasure that blinks in my view ;

Wha is the maist happy?—be candid ; confess,
Though your pains may be fewer, your pleasure is
less.

I pu at the rose, and I heed na the bryar,
Gin I miss the fair flower I grip at a higher.
Say I catch but a leaf wi a thorn ilka while,
It is but repaying a tear for a smile.”

The Auntie’s last wordie :—

“’Tis unco weel, lassie ! I canna pretend
Wi’ the gift o’ your gab ony mair to contend.
Ye make wrong appear right, and right appear wrang ;
Sic fausseties sure to young lassies belang.

Oh ! wha to the waves o’ the ocean can say,
Your roarings gie o’er, and expect they ’ll obey,
Or wha will enkindle the fire wi’ the snaw,
Or bid the winds bide, when they ’re willing to blaw.

Gin there be ony sich, let them claver to youth ;
’Tis paulky experience alane teaches truth ;
Youths confident minds ’tis in vain to alarm—
Lord guide us, be gracious, and keep us frae harm !”

The circle who had stood around the piano,
professed themselves enchanted ; and Mrs.
Fitzhammond said she “could listen all
night.”

“ *Did you ever ?*” said Lady Frances to Lady Arabella, looking with contemptuous astonishment at the party around the singer.

“ *Did you ever ?*” Lady Arabella, with an answering expression of horror, replied—“ *too !*” and Lady Frances rejoined, casting her eyes upwards, “ *beyond.*”

It would have been difficult, certainly, for any one uninitiated in the manners and language of *the sect* to affix a precise meaning to unconnected words like the foregoing ; and if indeed any interpretation at all had been attempted, Charity would rather have inclined to the belief that they were sounds falling from the lips of infants who were as yet ignorant of the use or power of speech. But Charity, though kind, must be just, and the words which, in their insignificance might have challenged untutored Nature, in its first lisping efforts at pronunciation, came accompanied with looks of contempt and arrogance, that left those who caught them in little doubt as to the context, and none at the indecorum and want of breeding of the speakers.

Poor Miss Macalpine, who knew enough of the bye-language of the fashionables of her day to interpret Lady Arabella's and Lady Frances's expressions to their utmost extent, felt for her friend, and endeavoured, by talking to her, incessantly to draw off her attention from the attack ; but the language of the looks cannot be mistaken, and every one of the party, even Miss Paterson herself, was aware of the ill-suppressed ridicule of these *accomplished* young women of fashion.

Fortunately, at this moment, several of the expected evening guests were announced, more rooms were thrown open, and the saloon where the concert was to take place, was already filling with the different musicians, whose notes of preparation, as they tuned their various instruments, sent forth a prelude of the approaching performance. The children clapped their hands and sprang forward ; they were to sit up to hear the famous Italian singer of whom every one was talking. Lord Mowbray offered Lady Emily his arm without speaking.

“ You love music, I know,” said Mrs. Fitz-

hammond, as they passed her; “and your sister? where is she? Lady Frances, you must have heard this new *prima donna* in town?”

“No,” said Lady Frances; “she had not come over, though she was announced.”

“Does she sing so incomparably?” said Lady Emily.

“To say she sings finely, does not embrace one-half of her powers,” said Lord Bellamont; “she combines with the greatest compass and sweetness of voice, the talent of an improvisatrice, and composes, on the instant, whole scenes and entire pieces on any given subject, with the most astonishing facility and eloquence.”

“She is a most surprising creature!” said Mrs. Fitzhammond.

“I hope,” continued Lord Bellamont, “she will be in great force this evening; for Mr. Fitzhammond has prevailed on her to assist in the musical part of the entertainment, and she arrived here this morning; but she is so shy, or dislikes our English manners so much, or is so careful of herself, (as she assured us it was necessary to be in our climate,) that no per-

suation could induce her to appear in the drawing-room, and she will only make her *entrée* when every thing is ready in the concert-room."

"Careful of herself with a vengeance," said Captain Lepel, shrugging up his shoulders; "for no one, I am certain, has been allowed to approach her within an arm's length. She receives her glove, if one hands it to her, with a grace that appears equally calculated to keep you at a distance, as to thank you for your courtesy, and then you obtain nothing but a cold bend of the head to repay your pains. 'Pon my honour, she is too retiring a beauty for me—and not handsome either at first sight—and rather low of stature—but then she has an oval face, a harmony of features—a mouth without corners—and an expression, 'pon my honour, after all quite fascinating, quite indescribable, a sort of Sappho,—quite invincible, 'pon my honour.—Do you not think so, Bellamont? I know you *would* have been one of her most devoted admirers,—if—she would have suffered you."

“ A mouth without corners ! what does that mean ? ” said Mrs. Neville to Lady Emily : “ charming, charming ; well, to be sure ! it is beyond belief.”

“ Hech, Sirs ! keep me ; I never heard the like o’t. Weel I wot, ‘ a mouth without corners ; ’ it must be unco gashlike. I canna understand that same,” screamed Miss Macalpine, pressing her head over Mrs. Neville’s shoulder to look at the speaker.

“ Whare is ’t to be seen, Sir ? ” she continued, holding Miss Paterson by the arm, and addressing Captain Lepel ; who, eyeing her from top to toe, and questioning by his look her authority to speak to *him*, replied—“ Oh, in the next room, Ma’am ; ” and then turning superciliously on his heel, whispered to Lady Arabella—“ Who in the earth are those old frights ? Let not your Ladyship suppose by my answering that they have any claim or kin with me—there is disgrace in the thought.”

“ Why, no, Lepel,” said Lord Bellamont, “ we cannot suppose she had, by your *mode* of answering. Poor creatures ! how could you

send them on such an errand? they are looking everywhere for the ‘mouth without corners;’ and see, they have fastened on Lord Mowbray.”

“Oh!” said Lady Frances, “he is quite the sort of man for elderly ladies. He pays them the greatest attention from morning to night, I assure you; and there is Emily too, does the same: I should not be astonished if they also joined in the search.”

As Lady Frances ceased speaking, she observed her sister and Lord Mowbray approaching; and, as if to retaliate on the latter for past neglect, her eye glanced for a moment on him, and, immediately turning to Lord Bellamont, with an air of ill-concealed triumph, she endeavoured to engross his conversation and attentions entirely to herself. Mr. Carlton, too, stood on her other side, content to receive the smiles which now and then Lord Bellamont’s inattention allowed to fall short of their destined mark; and, encouraged by such good fortune, seemed proud of the permission tacitly granted of playing the second part in the piece. Indeed, to do Lady Frances justice, she managed these three flirta-

tions together with admirable skill, and played off her admirers one against another with infinite effect. Mr. Carlton, as a man well versed in female tactics, felt his situation to be one of no little importance. Lord Belamont was the prize; but in all probability his Lordship knew his own value, as far at least as Lady Frances's computation went, and was not to be gained without manœuvre and management. A rival, therefore, real or pretended, would prove the best means of deciding the question. And thus, the attentions of one who had sufficient pretensions for the purpose, had their value in the progress of such an affair; and, in the ending, let it end which way it might, would seldom go unrewarded.

“Ah, Lepel!” said Lord Mowbray, as he drew near the group, “I heard you just now speaking of Rosalinda. Whom do you mean?”

“Whom do I mean? whose Rosalinda? why, my Lord, my Rosalinda—your Rosalinda—every body's Rosalinda—the *prima donna* of the Opera.”

“Impossible!” murmured Lord Mowbray to

himself; "impossible!" he continued, in evident abstraction.

Lady Frances and her party seemed highly diverted by Captain Lepel's careless manner of explaining himself. Lord Mowbray, apparently irritated and indignant, turned from them, repeating, "Vain, impertinent coxcomb!"

"So he is," said Mrs. Neville, who had overheard the latter epithet: "Charming! if such truths were spoken a little oftener, it would do a great deal of good in the world."

"Pardon me," replied Lord Mowbray, for a moment recovering himself, "it would do much harm; I did not intend to have spoken so loud."

"Well, to be sure, it is beyond belief that you should think so. For my part, I would have a name found for these nondescripts, and it should be one quite as significant as those you have just now bestowed, my Lord. But where are you dragging Lady Emily, Lord Mowbray?—well, to be sure! how the man strides across the room."

Lord Mowbray's manner certainly was suffi-

ciently extraordinary to attract attention. Apparently unconscious that Lady Emily held his arm, he walked with hurried step from the spot where Captain Lepel stood, like one completely absorbed in painful reflection.

The gaze of the surrounding crowd rendered Lady Emily's situation very distressing; and she would have given any thing to have found Miss Macalpine, or some one of her party. At length, a general murmur running through the apartments, and the number of persons passing round them, aroused Lord Mowbray, who, trying to appear unembarrassed as he spoke, asked what all that bustle meant? It was impossible for them to proceed; and as Lady Emily felt they were less observed in the crowd, she was glad to remain where they were.

The whisper now spread, that the improvisatrice had entered the music-room, and the cause of the throng in that direction was explained. Lord Mowbray and herself were borne with it, and soon found themselves at the entrance, where the circle enlarged, and the company

were arranged to listen to the music. Rosalinda was standing at the extremity of the apartment near the orchestra.

A general and uncontrolled stare, such as people are too apt to imagine they have a right to exercise on those who are paid to divert them, was directed towards her; but though thus made the unhappy object of idle curiosity, her quiet unobtrusive dress, demeanour and manner, seemed to defy criticism, while a certain air of tranquil dignity, that would have awed even impertinence itself into silence, marked her whole deportment. Lord Mowbray and Lady Emily found the seats near the door occupied by Lady Frances, Lady Arabella, and their attendants; and the repeated entreaties of Mrs. Fitzhammond could not induce them to move to the upper part of the concert room. Disturbing the assembly by their whispers and remarks, and to the disappointment of Lady Emily, they persisted in remaining where they were; "for," said Lady Frances, "ten to one, we shall be tired of the thing

before it is half over, and we can never get away from the top; but if you are so anxious, sister, to be there, why do you not go? I dare say Lord Mowbray will take you very safely."

These last words were uttered with an expression that recalled to Emily's mind the former cruel insinuations of her sister, and she almost withdrew her arm from Lord Mowbray's. The movement startled him; and as her eye caught his features, she thought she had never seen such a visible alteration in any one's countenance in so short a time. He was deadly pale; but his outward manner, as he addressed her, was calm; and he inquired in a low voice if she desired to move higher. Lady Emily wished herself any where but where she was, yet the recollection of what she had suffered in following Lord Mowbray across the drawing-rooms, made her dread a recurrence of the scene by moving again. So, answering in the negative, they remained stationary.

"Dear me!" exclaimed Lady Frances,

staring rudely, "handsome! not in the least." Lady Arabella made a face in token of her coinciding in this opinion.

"But her eyes!" said Lord Bellamont,—
"surely you will allow *they* are beautiful; they are so like fine velvet; and her expression so engaging, so melancholy."

"Oh! my Lord, if you are for melancholy beauty, I can say nothing," replied Lady Frances, appealing to Mr. Carlton for his opinion, and turning full upon him with one of her most bewitching smiles—a smile that seemed to shake Lord Bellamont's preference of melancholy beauty. For a few moments, he did not even look towards the orchestra; but as Mr. Carlton dexterously paid his court to Lady Frances by exalting her beauty at the expense of that of the young Italian's, Lord Bellamont undertook the defence of the latter most eloquently, and she had the mortification to see that his admiration of the object before them was certainly as warm as unfeigned.

"There is something very uncommon in her countenance," said Lady Emily to Lord Mow-

bray, after contemplating Rosalinda with genuine unenvying admiration. “Do you not think so? It reminds me of the head of the Niobe which stands in the dining-room at the Hall—but she looks very, *very* sad—as if nothing could interest her: I pity her; don’t you?”

“Pity her!” ejaculated Lord Mowbray, shrinking, as a man would shrink, under a painful operation—“I do not know—that is—is she an object of pity?”

“Is she not obliged to leave her own country, to appear in public, to act and sing for bread?”

“I suppose not. I should think she need not do it, unless it were her choice.”

“Impossible! No woman would do it from choice—at least no woman who looks as she does. How interesting her countenance is!” continued Lady Emily, “I should like to be acquainted with her. You knew her in Italy, did you not?”

“Who said so?” said Lord Mowbray, with quickness.

“Oh! perhaps I was mistaken,” said Lady

Emily, alarmed at his sudden manner; "but if you know her, and would present me to her, I should be quite delighted to persuade her to visit us at the Hall. She is, I am sure, just the sort of person I should delight in."

"Perhaps," answered Lord Mowbray, "General Montgomery might not approve of my presenting her to your Ladyship."

At this moment, General Montgomery passed the doorway, attended by Colonel Pennington. His love of music had made the good General quit the whist-table even before the rubber was finished, and when he had three honours in his hand; but it was impossible, as he said, to resist the voice of the Syren. Lady Emily seized Colonel Pennington's arm; and while she was begging him to stop the General, Lord Mowbray disappeared.

Lady Emily felt relieved by his absence. During the last half-hour, she had been oppressed, she knew not why: she gladly, therefore, placed herself under Colonel Pennington's care; and, as they reached the spot where seats had been reserved for them, silence was commanded.

“Hush! hush!” went round the room, “Ros-
salinda is going to sing;” and the concert com-
menced.

The first part was from the “Didone Ab-
bandonata;” every body applauded, though
few understood or felt it. The General and
his family were exceptions. Even Lady Frances
knew what music *ought* to be; but there is a
point beyond which knowledge does not go;
and to reach this is to arrive at the very source
of art, where art itself is superseded by a higher
feeling. Perhaps Lord Mowbray would have
felt it all, but he had disappeared from the
moment he quitted Lady Emily’s side.

The whole performance was throughout ex-
cellent; the music chosen was of the highest
order; and for that very reason not tasted or
enjoyed by the greater part of those who heard
it; but it answered just as well. Half the de-
light of half the world at any exhibition of art,
consists in pretending to feel and understand
what they are totally incapable of comprehend-
ing or appreciating. There was, however, a
pathos, a passion in the united excellence of

Rosalinda's enunciation both of words and notes, which spoke a language more or less understood by the dullest minds; and in the scene which she *improvisé'd*, her action of itself conveyed the impression of her meaning, and became the interpreter of a tongue known but to few who heard her.

The whole room rang with plaudits, and as the concert proceeded to its close, these testimonies to her merit reached their climax. As soon as the last notes died away, Lady Emily hastened to find Mrs. Fitzhammond, intent on her object of becoming acquainted with Rosalinda, the display of whose talents had rendered her more than ever anxious to know her.

As she stood looking round on every side to discover Mrs. Fitzhammond, and entreating Colonel Pennington to do the same, Mrs. Neville joined them.

“Well! is it not charming? quite beyond belief?”

“Oh, yes,” said Lady Emily; “and she is such a charming person, that I wanted Lord Mow-

bray to make her known to me ; but he said, my uncle might not approve of his doing so. I quite long, however, to converse with her ; there is such an indescribable air about her. What could Lord Mowbray mean ?”

“ I know not,” said Colonel Pennington, “ unless it be that she is a public singer ; and perhaps for so young a lady it would be as well to avoid an intimacy,—though, to be sure, in the world there are many considered presentable, who might be avoided with equal and perhaps more justice than this poor lady.”

“ Oh, charming ! charming !” screamed Mrs. Neville. “ *Presentable !* yes ! No one objects to Lady Honeytown, and she is beyond belief. Why, she has lost her character over and over again. I believe she has as many reputations as a cat has lives ; and no one objects to her. But then she has had as many legacies as lapses, and has come out at last a rich white-washed middle-aged woman of good character ; has a large house, gives excellent dinners, and finer assemblies ; and that is all that is necessary. And as to Lord Mowbray’s objections

and scruples, and prudery, about this divine Rosalinda, and he a travelled man; it is beyond belief. You and I, my dear, will go up and introduce ourselves,—you speak Italian?”

“Yes; but, my uncle, I must know what he thinks.”

At this moment, Lord Bellamont and Lady Frances passed, on their way to the ball-room.

“Emily, are you not going to dance?” asked her sister; and before she could reply, Mr. Carlton stepped forward and requested her to dance the next dance. Lady Emily was disconcerted, and hesitated to reply. Her whole thoughts were for the moment turned on Rosalinda and Lord Mowbray, and perhaps too, she had hoped that Lord Mowbray would be her partner; but her sister’s voice, and the look which accompanied it, as she said “Come, Emily, come if you are not engaged,” obliged her to decide against her wishes, for she was *not* engaged, and she dreaded Lady Frances’s interpretations.

She took his proffered arm, therefore, with an appearance of as much gaiety as she could

assume; and they had nearly reached the ball-room when her attention was attracted to Lord Mowbray and Mr. Fitzhammond. The latter was following him to the door, and endeavouring by holding his coat-sleeve, to prevent his moving on, insisting with great earnestness—"Pray, my Lord, if you *will* go, let me order your carriage to come up; I cannot think of letting you wait for it on the staircase: but I wish I could prevail on your Lordship to stay?"

"Why surely Lord Mowbray is not going," cried Mrs. Neville, who hastened up to ascertain the cause of the bustle; "I will not allow him to go away upon any account. I delight in your monosyllabic conversation, my Lord; it is so quaint,—charming, upon my honour!—and now-a-days, when every one copies his neighbour, so that there is no knowing one person from another, there is something quite captivating in originality. It is beyond belief! I cannot allow you to go, my Lord."

"You do me honour, Mrs. Neville," said Lord Mowbray; and gently disentangling him-

self from Mr. Fitzhammond's fingers, he excused his departure on the score of sudden indisposition, and with a dexterous sliding bow, made his exit.

"Well, to be sure," echoed Mrs. Neville, looking after him; "well, to be sure, it is beyond belief!" then making her way to the dancers, she singled out Lady Emily, and appealed to her for the reason of Lord Mowbray's sudden retreat.

"I suppose he was offended by your not dancing with him; why wouldn't you?"

"Indeed," replied Lady Emily, "Lord Mowbray had not asked me to dance."

"Well, then, I suppose the Italian woman,—what is she called?—is the cause. I never saw a man in such a hurry to leave a pleasant party in my life; I declare it is beyond belief!"

Lady Emily felt for Lord Mowbray, who, she was conscious, had drawn the eyes of all the room upon himself by his extraordinary conduct. She hoped only, that no one had seen so much as she had done; for whatever

occasioned the violent agitation of feeling evinced by him, she pitied, as she always did pity, every one who she saw was suffering.

“Poor Lord Mowbray, he looked very ill!” she said, in reply to Mrs. Neville’s last remark; “and I dare say he has done wisely to leave all this crowd and heat.”

“Pshaw!” said Mr. Carlton, “he is always complaining of his health and his nerves. He is horridly affected and consequential: a pretension to refinement too, that is quite disgusting. I saw him before he travelled—he’s spoiled now—so altered for the worse!—every body thinks so who knows him.”

“Do *you* know him, Mr. Carlton?” said Emily.

“Oh! we used to meet in town, but I always avoided him as a man would a foggy day in November.”

“Indeed!” said Lady Emily, “*I* have known his lordship during the last few weeks, since he has been with us at the Hall, and I have found nothing of what you describe.”

“ Oh ! your Ladyship’s smiles would dissipate the densest cloud, I am certain ; even Lord Mowbray’s gloom must yield to them, if turned on him,” replied Mr. Carlton, with an air of gallantry : “ for my own part, he was the only chilling thing I encountered this morning at Montgomery Hall.”

Dancing commenced, and Lady Emily wondered why she did not find as much delight in the amusement as she had expected. She blamed the music—the heat of the room—her partner (who, if not a dancer of the first excellence, at least was not negligent or self-engrossed,)—she blamed, in short, every thing but the true cause. She sat down after the first quadrille, and felt happier when General Montgomery proposed returning home, than she had even felt in the prospect of the ball. Such is pleasure ! nine times out of ten, such is pleasure !

Lady Frances, however, was in high spirits, and though a little dissatisfied at leaving the scene so soon, was, on the whole, content with the progress made during the evening, in an

affair which she fancied affected her heart. Again, in returning, as in setting out, Lady Frances was the gayest of the two sisters; a circumstance so unusual, that General Montgomery rallied Lady Emily on the subject, and she was obliged to plead a bad head-ache as an excuse for her apparent silence and want of spirits.

CHAPTER III.

“In all losses I would have a double prospect ; I would consider what I have lost, and I would have regard to what I have left. It may be in my loss I may find a benefit. I may be rid with it of a trouble, a snare, or a danger.”

OWEN FELTHAM.

ON the morrow, when General Montgomery left his room, a note was put into his hands. It was from Lord Mowbray, thanking him for his kind hospitality, and alleging urgent business (which, however, he would not allow to interfere with his accompanying the family to Mrs. Fitzhammond's the preceding day) as the reason of his sudden departure. He had set off at a very early hour, before any of the party were risen.

The note was read at the breakfast-table, and Lord Mowbray's departure would have given rise to expressions of general regret at any other moment; but the different individuals had so much to say and to remark upon the subject of the last night's amusements, that the announcement made little impression apparently, beyond a transient pause in the conversation, and an exclamation from Colonel Pennington, of "Pooh! pooh! what business can a man have who never does any thing? All nonsense!"

But Lord Mowbray was gone; and as it has been said, the company were too much engaged to speculate upon the cause.

As Miss Macalpine, however, paced to and fro on the terrace with Colonel Pennington, in the course of the morning, she referred to the subject, saying—

"Perhaps it's just as weel, after a', that the young Lord should hae ta'en himsel aff."

"Why?" said the Colonel; "he'll do no good anywhere else."

“ He was doing na gude here, Colonel !” said she significantly.

“ Ah ! how do ye mean ?”

“ Colonel, ye ’re an auld and discreet friend. Dinna ye think our Leddie was beginning to tak to him ? I minded her last night, when he went away so suddenly from Mrs. Fitzhammond’s ; and this morning, when the General was reading the note, did ye mind those sweet eyes o’ her’s, Colonel ?”

“ No—I was minding my breakfast.”

“ But do you think — for I fear no’—do you think, Colonel, that Lord Mowbray is just a man to sit down content by the ingleside wi’ a wife for the rest o’ his days ? He ’s a queer chap yon ; there ’s no making him out rightly.”

“ It’s not easy,” said Colonel Pennington ; “ for he is mighty mysterious. I do not like mysteries ; and yet, as I loved the late Lord Mowbray, so do I love this ; but his conduct is something that passes reason. Urgent business indeed ! What urgent business can he have to take him away in such a deuce of a hurry ?—

all nonsense ! he lives by chance, and does not know his own mind from one day to another."

"It's like eneugh," rejoined Miss Macalpine ; " and for the sake o' our Leddie Emily I am just as well pleased he's awa', for he might hae wiled her heart out o' her breast, and then hae thought no more o' it or o' her. You men, Colonel, *can* do thae things whiles !"

Colonel Pennington heaved one of his heavy groans, but made no reply ; and they continued walking the terrace in silence till interrupted by Lady Emily, who came flying towards them, and with an expression of joy on her face very unlike the look it had worn in the morning, exclaimed, " Oh, I am so happy, dear Alpinia ! so happy, dear Colonel Pennington ! the day is fixed for Rose's marriage ; the parents have made up their differences, and every thing wears a smiling aspect at the Delvins' cottage. I *am* so happy !"

And Lady Emily *was* happy : but it was by participation in the promised happiness of others. In her own heart, another feeling would

have prevailed, had it not been overmastered by this excitement of the moment; and already, though unconscious of it herself, the cloud was rising there that was so soon to overshadow the brightness of her youthful path.

As she hurried from the terrace to seek General Montgomery and acquaint him with the good news, Miss Macalpine followed her with her eyes, exclaiming, "I wish I could think all this quite natural, but somehow she's not quite like herself. What think ye, Colonel?"

Colonel Pennington seemed loth to reply; and as if he had not digested his anger against Lord Mowbray, or was doubtful what answer to make to Miss Macalpine, he walked on in silence for a few minutes, and then abruptly left her and entered the house.

Mr. Carlton became a constant visitor at the Hall. The previous interest shown by General Montgomery during his illness, and the reception he met on his first calling, aided by the sort of tacit intimacy which appeared to have taken place between himself and Lady Frances,

placed him, in some measure, on the footing of an old acquaintance ; and while he availed himself of the privilege which circumstances had given him, his general politeness had made him a favourite with all parties. He accompanied the General in his rides over his plantations and farm. On these occasions he showed himself so well acquainted with the age of every tree, descanted on its growth and properties with so much knowledge of the subject, suggested so many ingenious improvements in husbandry, and appeared really to take such interest in every thing allied to a country life, that he daily gained in General Montgomery's good opinion, while to Lady Frances, in the drawing-room, he proved himself a most able auxiliary, either as a flirt to be played off against Lord Bellamont when occasion offered ; or, in his absence, a very useful and devoted cavalier.

Lady Frances, as we have related, had the misfortune to lose her mother very shortly after her introduction into " Life," as it is called ; by which is meant bringing forward a very young girl into society, who, hitherto immured

in the school-room, escapes at that period from the trammels of her governess, with no other ideas beyond those of a suitable alliance and establishment, and who, ignorant of every thing which in the long run constitutes the happiness of married life, is by this one act rendered competent (such is the conclusion) to decide on a point involving the fate of her entire future existence. For marriage is the first object of every young lady ; and, too generally, of every mamma ; and constitutes the very end and aim of an introduction. The sagacity and affection of the parent may, by averting the mischiefs incident to such a system, sometimes succeed in saving her offspring from the shoals and rocks of a hasty or ill-judged connexion ; yet where this friendly counsel is wanting, what accumulated dangers gather round the inexperienced adventurer in her choice ! what perplexities bewilder her judgment ! what temptations assail her innocence, and stand ready to betray her into levity, if not into guilt ! Such had been Lady Frances's fate : introduced into the world at an age when her judgment and her

principles were alike unformed, and deprived of the only support and direction which *can* effectually influence a young mind to its true interests, she had become the victim of this too early initiation into the follies of fashion. She had not hitherto married, because the dangerous vanity of universal suffrage and homage from men in general, had made her look upon the devotion of *one* individual as in comparison flat and insipid. She had not sought or gained a single female friend; because women, who by similarity of habits might have been her associates, were, in a career of coquetry, for this very reason, dangerous rivals; and those from whom no competition was to be feared, shunned naturally an intimacy with one whose principles were so much at variance with their own. Youth, however, and novelty and great personal charms, will for a time prevail against the judgment of the thinking and sober part of the world; and Lady Frances, with all these advantages on her side, was not likely soon to feel the effect of her error. Wherever she appeared, she commanded *admiration*, if

she did not ensure respect ; and in the gay and giddy throng in which she moved, it was not likely she should hear the partial censure on her conduct that fell from the lips of a few moralists, or the lesson which even worldly prudence would have taught her. Her career was too dazzling and too successful to admit of reflection, even if Lady Frances had been more capable of it ; and reflection to a mind like hers seldom comes but at a time when it can avail nothing by its counsels. She had shone and glittered for four successive seasons, exercising a tyrant's sway over the heart of almost every young man of rank and fashion who approached her ; and she had rejected offer after offer, in the indulgence of her ruling passion for admiration.

But time, and a conviction perhaps that her powers of fascination were declining with their novelty, had taught her the wisdom of securing an alliance suited to her future views, and in a degree such as her vanity and ambition in her zenith might not have disdained. Marriage, therefore, became first tolerable, then desirable,

and last of all, a leading motive and object in Lady Frances's mind. Still young—more beautiful even—more matured in charms than when she first attracted the gaze of the court on her presentation, she felt that it required only the will to yield her independence, to insure her any alliance that might appear adequate to the sacrifice.

The last season spent in London had been devoted to these heartless calculations; and the facility which her stay in the Duke of Godolphin's family afforded of making Lord Bellamont the victim of them, had decided her choice. Lord Bellamont was heir to a dukedom; the wealth of his family was great; its political influence vast; and he himself was mild and good tempered; and, though not devoid of sense, was still the kind of character whose easy disposition was likely to yield to the influence of any woman whom he loved, and by whom he could believe he was loved in return. He became in consequence the object of Lady Frances's matrimonial speculations, and the circumstances both of her previous and pre-

sent intimacy with the family, appeared to give her promise of complete success. But Lord Bellamont was universally polite and attentive, and it was difficult to determine, frequently as they were thrown in each other's society, whether he intended any thing more in his civilities to Lady Frances, than what his natural urbanity would have led him to exhibit to any other woman. Versed as she was in all the turnings of the heart, Lady Frances, at the end of the London season, and when her visit to the Godolphins drew to its close, still remained in doubt, therefore, whether any impression had been made on Lord Bellamont; and it was under this idea, and considering her frequent opportunities of being seen by him in the country, that the attentions of Lord Mowbray on his arrival at the Hall, and subsequently, of Mr. Carlton, had become a point of such importance with her; for, as has been observed, she felt certain that no circumstance would operate so powerfully in her favour, or bring matters so readily to a conclusion, if any love existed in Lord Bellamont's heart towards her,

as a suspicion that she was interested in some other quarter.

It is easy to suppose that in a family circle, with attractions such as Lady Frances and her sisters' society constantly offered, and where the most cordial hospitality joined with the most urbane manners, ever welcomed the visitor, an idle young man of fashion, like Mr. Carlton, found a constant resource, and one which he failed not to avail himself of; and it is equally easy of belief that, in doing so, he afforded to the busy gossips of the neighbourhood ample grounds to conclude that his marriage with one of the Lady Lorimers was already definitively arranged, and that it waited only the drawing-up of the settlements for the event to be formally announced. In that mart of village news, good Mr. Combie's shop and *café*, the subject had been already discussed and settled in full conclave. In the coteries of the neighbouring town, it had been the same; and Mr. Aldget, who was looked up to as the surest oracle in the matter, contributed to give strength to the rumour by his knowing looks and innu-

endoes, as often as the subject was alluded to, and by a certain rubbing of his hands and a smile of complacency, which he never assumed but when affairs were likely to go well with him ; and, in fact, General Montgomery himself, although matters had not proceeded so far as his sagacious neighbours surmised, was rather prepared for a formal declaration on the part of Mr. Carlton ; and, with the predilection already formed in his favour, an offer of marriage with one of his nieces would have met the most hearty concurrence from the General.

But in the currency of these rumours, to a certain degree sanctioned by appearances, what thought Lord Bellamont ? Neither he nor his family made allusion to them ; and the conduct of the former underwent no change towards Lady Frances whenever they met, and that was frequently. It was impossible to suppose the report had not reached them ; and their silence, therefore, could only be attributable to a disbelief of it ; or to offence that the communication had not been more directly made ; or if (and certainly there was an *if*) Lord Bellamont had been

interested in the affair, to pique and resentment on his part, which he determined to hide by an apparent carelessness as to the issue.

Whatever was the real cause, the accustomed intercourse between the families continued without the matter coming to any conclusion. Lord Bellamont, when in her society, invariably attached himself to Lady Frances, and Mr. Carlton as invariably "vacated his seat, and accepted" Lady Emily, although the latter, setting aside her good-nature, was by no means a companion so suited to his taste as her sister. And as this at last seemed mutually understood between them, Lady Emily, whenever she could, excused herself from the dance or the promenade; and, joining Colonel Pennington or Miss Macalpine, found in their conversation a relief from the empty dulness of Mr. Carlton's diary of town-scandal. Lady Frances, in her turn, never failed to take advantage of these opportunities afforded by Emily's want of taste, as she termed it, in thus discarding her beau; and Mr. Carlton too readily accepted the offer,

whenever open to him, of holding a tenure, in common with Lord Bellamont, in her smiles.

It was impossible that either party *could* be ignorant of the reports circulated respecting them; and as the views of Lady Frances on Lord Bellamont were sufficiently apparent, it must be supposed that she and Mr. Carlton had each their interest in keeping up a semblance of Flirtation, although the motive, if any were assigned, would have been little creditable to them.

Three weeks had now elapsed since Lord Mowbray left the Hall; and, with the exception of Mr. Carlton's intimacy and the gradual advancement of Lady Frances's plans, no event had occurred out of the usual routine of a country life. Circumstances, however, rather at variance with that tranquil innocence which certain moralists consider as indigenous in rural scenes, while they suppose it flies the feverish turmoil of a large and populous city, arose to break the general monotony.

One morning as General Montgomery was

talking over with Mr. Carlton some intended plantations on his estate, Lady Emily entered the room. She shrunk back at the sight of Mr. Carlton; but her pale agitated look had caught her uncle's notice.

“What is the matter, dearest and best? Are you not well?” he inquired. “Tell me, what is the matter?”

“Oh! dear uncle, Rose—Rose has fled from home, and her parents are distracted—Poor Ambrose, too!”—and as she pronounced these words, she fixed her eyes on Mr. Carlton. She fancied his sank under her gaze.

“Rose fled!—and with whom? What can this mean?” General Montgomery exclaimed. “It is inexplicable. With whom, and why is she gone?”

“Oh! dear uncle, it matters not; some wicked, some very wicked person, can alone have tempted her to this step. It matters not who he is; the dreadful deed is done;—it is everywhere known; and the good Delvins are childless and disgraced.”

“It is inexplicable!” said General Montgo-

mery, in a low voice, and as if he was musing inwardly.

“ My dearest Emily, why she was to have been married at the end of the month, was she not ? and *who* can thus have tempted the poor girl to her undoing ? When did she quit her parents’ cottage ?—and how ?”

“ I know nothing more,” replied Lady Emily ; “ I know only the melancholy fact ; and I left the wretched parents but now, to communicate with you, dearest uncle, assured that you would feel for them, and advise them for the best.”

“ I do indeed feel for them, from the bottom of my heart ; and for you too, dearest Emily, on this unhappy and guilty conduct of your protégée.”

One of the most painful feelings the heart can know, is to learn the unworthiness of a person who has hitherto shared our good opinion and protection ; we are at once mortified at our mistaken judgment, and wounded in our affections.

“ Come hither, my child,” resumed General

Montgomery ; and as he folded her in his arms, her bosom heaved in quick and convulsive sobbings. General Montgomery was himself deeply affected ; but struggling with his own feelings, he sought to assume a calmness which in reality he did not possess. “ Emily, my love, instead of lamenting, should we not think of what is to be done ? Go, leave me for a short time, and I will consider the matter over. I will either see or send to the Delvins ; and I intreat you, do not give way to this sorrow. Go, dearest, and we will meet again soon.”

As he spoke, he kissed her forehead, and again assured her of what, indeed, she had no room to doubt, his affectionate and instant attention to the subject of her grief.

After she was gone, General Montgomery paced the room in silence for some moments. “ This girl Rose,” he said at length, turning to Mr. Carlton, “ has been an attendant on my niece, and she had become attached to her : I hope her kindness has not been misplaced.”

“ I trust it has not,” said Mr. Carlton.

“ But at any rate,” resumed the General, “ if

she can be rescued from infamy, for her own, for her parents' sake, I shall be happy ; and the attempt must be made. I must send for these poor Delvins and hear the story from them."—He went towards the bell, but checked himself.—“ Stay ; they will be in grief, and it will pain them to meet the village gaze so soon after what has happened. I will ride down to their cottage ; will you object to accompanying me, Mr. Carlton, so far ?”

“ Not in the least, General,” he replied ; “ but cannot I spare you the painful task of witnessing a scene such as will doubtless present itself in their now wretched circumstances ?”

“ But I must do something, and instantly,” the General observed, “ though I have little hope of being able to do any thing effectual.”

“ I know old Delvin,” said Mr. Carlton ; “ he holds his cottage, you are aware, from me, and I have been in the habit of seeing him often. Do let me go. I will endeavour to learn every particular, and will return and report to you what I can gather.”

“My dear Sir, I thank you,” said General Montgomery, taking his hand, “as much for your wish to spare me pain, as for the interest you feel in an affair that so affects my Emily. Go: if you will kindly undertake this charitable office, I shall await your return with impatience.”

Mr. Carlton immediately left the apartment, and stood higher in General Montgomery’s opinion, if possible, than before, from his prompt alacrity in charging himself with this mission, to undertake which, certainly argued a degree of feeling and sympathy much to the credit of his heart.

General Montgomery sent for Emily, and they continued together in his own apartment, looking with anxiety for Mr. Carlton’s reappearance. The first dinner-bell had already rung, and the servant was asking his orders respecting it, when a note was brought to the door. It was from Mr. Carlton, and contained a few words, written in pencil, in a hurried manner, from the Delvins’ cottage:—

“My dear General,—The information I have

received here, leaves no doubt of the direction taken by the fugitive; but the utmost despatch is requisite to take advantage of it. I believe I am only following the wishes of yourself and Lady Emily in immediately pursuing the clue which I have obtained. You shall hear shortly from me.—George Carlton.”

General Montgomery read the note over a second time; and being informed that it was brought by a peasant, to whom Mr. Carlton had given it, from the door of Delvin's cottage, and that he had immediately taken the road to the Manor House, the General communicated its contents to Lady Emily. Whatever distrust of the individual who had thus voluntarily stepped forward to assist the Delvins in their distress, and who, unasked, had taken upon himself the task of investigating the mystery attached to Rose's disappearance, might have suggested themselves to Lady Emily, she carefully avoided any expression of her sentiments, well aware that her doubts of Mr. Carlton's integrity on this occasion would be considered in the light of the most ungenerous and un-

founded suspicions. But there is frequently in woman a discernment which supersedes all reasoning: it is best designated, perhaps, by the French word *tact*, and may be called a sixth sense, given pre-eminently to the female sex.

Several days passed, and no tidings of the fugitive reached General Montgomery, or the unhappy parents. Lady Emily was their sole comforter, and, under the affliction which had visited their humble roof, her sympathy was the only earthly balm they could bear to receive. Every day saw her steps bent to this house of woe. She said nothing; for what can words avail in the first moments when sorrow assails the heart? Heaven alone can give consolation to the wounded spirit.

The poor Delvins knew that Lady Emily felt for them; and even her silent presence shed a calm over the minds of both. The bitter tears of mingled sorrow, anger, and shame, which burst from the eyes of the wretched mother, were changed to the soft weeping of a subdued and humble spirit, as the hand of her kind benefactress was affectionately laid upon hers;

and old Andrew, with eyes fixed, hands clasped, and despair, in its most iron form, imprinted on his countenance, yielded, at the ministering angel's approach, to calmer feelings, and to a more resigned and Christian frame of mind.

Thus had passed an entire week ; a period which, measured by the duration of suffering, had appeared to the sufferers a long and countless succession of days and nights.

At length, on the eighth morning, a letter was brought to the Hall, under cover to General Montgomery, and directed to Andrew Delvin ; still there were no accounts from Mr. Carlton. Lady Emily immediately carried the letter herself to the poor old father ; anxious, and hoping that it might contain tidings of comfort. The writing was evidently that of a feigned hand. Delvin seized it in the first eagerness of the moment, and breaking the seal, was preparing to read its contents, when, sinking back in his chair, he extended it to Lady Emily, and begged her to read it aloud to them. Covering his face with both hands, the poor man appeared

to be collecting strength to listen to the nature of its intelligence: it was as follows:—

“ Dear parents, I hope you will not grieve and take on for me, for I am very happy, and hope soon to convince you of this, and to make you also very happy, and very rich too. I was very sorry to leave you; but I determined in my own mind never to marry Ambrose, and I am under the care of one who will make me much happier than he could ever have done; for I hated his brutal behaviour, and he may thank himself for having lost me; however, I do not wish him any ill, now I’ve got rid of him. I will write to you from time to time; in the mean while, accept the enclosed bill for fifty pounds, from

“ Your dutiful and loving daughter till death,

“ ROSE DELVIN.”

“ Base and deluded girl!” exclaimed old Delvin, in a voice almost choked by agony, and taking the letter and its enclosure from Lady Emily, as he continued, “ What! does she think that this, *this*, the price of her infamy, can prove a recompense to us whom she has

brought to shame, and will see before long, laid broken-hearted in the grave! No! no! unnatural, ungrateful girl; these are the wages of her sin, and never shall it be said that Andrew Delvin could barter his child's innocence for money. No! nor bear to look upon it, nor touch it: take it, take it away, let it not be found under my roof. Oh! lady, that I should have lived to this day, to learn the ruin of my child, my poor, lost, deluded child!"

A flood of agonizing tears streamed down his furrowed cheeks as he ceased speaking, and, with clasped hands and eyes uplifted to Heaven, stood rooted to the spot.

Great grief and strong passion give eloquence to the *rudest* child of nature; and the bursts of sorrow and indignation that alternately escaped the lips of the unhappy parents, would have formed a tragedy of the deepest pathos.

A third mourner was added to this miserable family in old Philips. He had succeeded in bringing back his son from the recruiting party, and had obtained his discharge. Andrew Del-

vin and himself had been reconciled, and their children would have been married in a few days when Rose fled. Struck down by this second blow, and unable to endure his existence in the state of life and in the scene where he had promised himself so different a fate, poor Ambrose had disappeared upon learning Rose's treachery. It was at first supposed he had pursued her flight; but though his father fondly indulged in this idea, those whose feelings were less interested, or whose minds were more alive to the probable effect which the calamity that had befallen him would produce, began to fear the worst.

Inquiries were made on every side: no traces could be discovered, and suspicion daily grew stronger. The search was renewed with more anxiety: at length his body was found several miles below the village, carried by the current of the stream into which he had cast himself in his despair, and where a dam across the water had stopped its farther progress. As it was borne home to his wretched father's cot-

tage, it seemed as if this horrible catastrophe was alone wanting to complete the tragedy.

Poor Philips received the news with more composure than might have been expected; and though he went as a mourner to the Delvins' cottage, where Lady Emily saw him, he also went in the kindness of his heart to afford what comfort he could; for, said he, "Their child lives but to be a disgrace to them; while my poor boy, though he is no more, has, I hope, found mercy for his sins; and the errors which he committed cannot be said to be his: Andrew Delvin needs consolation more than I do."

Lady Emily left him there as she quitted the cottage, pleased with his resignation and the true Christian spirit he displayed. As she took her way to the Hall, the countenances of the villagers all wore marks of sorrow and consternation at the tragic occurrences of the past week; and though the word was an unknown tongue to them in *their* humble sphere, the fatal effects of Flirtation, the want of that prin-

ciple and purity in the female character which alone uphold and protect woman in every different station of life, were deeply felt and acknowledged by them ; and became, in the fate of Rose Delvin, a long-continued warning to the rising generation around.

CHAPTER IV.

“ Oh ! meet him not to-night—be not alarm’d—
I am not mad—but, in th’ Almighty’s name,
Beware of him ! I have had dreams and views
Of coming evil, from this man : be sure
Some stumbling-block, some unknown trial, now
Awaits your faith. Oh ! pray, and turn for help
To Heaven.”

JUBAL, BY R. M. BEVERLEY.

“ It is curious,” said General Montgomery to Colonel Pemington, as they sat after dinner, having listened to Lady Emily’s detail of Rose Delvin’s conduct and poor Ambrose’s unhappy end—“ it is curious to observe the difference which exists in characters of the same family and the same sex. Emily is as deeply concerned at the misfortunes of the worthy Delvins as though she were one of their own rank

and station in life; and though you will understand that I feel the misery of a fellow-creature is still misery wherever it occurs, yet the force of habit is strong, and, generally speaking, mankind sympathise in proportion only as the object of commiseration approaches their own immediate sphere, and calamity appears to draw nearer to themselves in the misfortunes of some individual of their own particular class. Emily is an exception to this rule; but, on the other hand, Frances is an instance in its favour."

"I can understand," said the Colonel, "why Emily should feel so much more for the Delvins than Lady Frances does; but I cannot account for her indifference to her sister's feelings."

"Nor I; at least I can account for it on no other principle than that which I have named. When I look forward, Pennington, to the fate of these two girls, whom I consider as my children, for they are both very dear to me, I confess to you, that I think with terror how soon they may be left without a protector. Miss Macalpine, you well know, is like a child in the

affairs of the world; and the fortune of these girls will render them objects of attraction, setting aside their personal charms. My dear friend, should I go first, promise me to be to them what I am."

"Nonsense!" replied the Colonel, forcing a smile, "I shall die long before you."

"Life and death, Pennington, are not in our own power, or within our calculation; we will not dispute about what it is foolish to talk of. But will you give me your promise?" continued General Montgomery.

"With all my heart, if you wish it; only it is great nonsense."

"You promise me though, Tom?"

"I do."

They wrung each other's hands. "And now let me confide a secret to you," added General Montgomery: "Aldget, the worthy Aldget, has invested the principal part of my funded property, as well as the fortunes of these girls, in a manner so advantageous, that the return will be enormous. I feel the affair, on his part, to have been an act of

friendship, and not a mere lawyer's job; and though you shake your head now, you will agree with me in thinking so in the end, I am certain."

General Montgomery here entered into a long explanation of the scheme in which he had been induced to hazard his nieces' fortunes, and a very large portion of his own money. As he finished speaking, he looked up into Colonel Pennington's face; but no approbation of the measures he had been detailing, nor any acknowledgment of the soundness of his reasons for adopting them, was there *apparent*; on the contrary, the Colonel knit his brows closer than usual, and the only articulate sound that escaped him was a loud and very equivocal "*humph!*"

"'Sdeath, man!" cried General Montgomery, betrayed into unusual warmth by Colonel Pennington's manner, "one would think I had told you I had embezzled my wards' property."

"Perhaps you have," rejoined the latter.

"What do you mean?"

"Nothing, my friend, counter to your ho-

nour, but a good deal counter to your prudence. Mad attempts to obtain wealth are seldom crowned with success. It does not seem destined to man that he should acquire riches without labour; and if hereditary descents, and the accumulation of wealth from one generation to another, are adduced as instances in contradiction to this principle, they cease to be so when duly examined. I will be bold to say, that scarce a single generation passes away, between the original founder of family greatness and his successors, when, if the *duties* that such possessions impose, and which are labours in their kind, have been neglected, the wealth and riches of that family have not been removed; and as my friend Miss Macalpine would say, ‘Misled awa like snaw aff a dike;’ for though we are apt to account for such circumstances by attributing them too frequently to contingencies, to misfortunes, and to *chance*, yet be assured there is more of a higher influence in our individual destinies than mankind are in general ready to allow. The talent, you know, is

taken from him who makes an unworthy use of it, and is bestowed where it will be better employed; and this just sentence is often passed upon us even *here*, that we may avoid its condemnation at a future day, when there will be no appeal. In the step you have taken, I think you have been over anxious to provide for worldly objects—beyond what was incumbent on you; you had enough—your circumstances were sufficient for the station in which Providence had placed you. Why seek to gather more? ‘Give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me,’ was the prayer of a wise man.”

“God knows it was always mine, Tom; and if I have erred, it was from a mistaken idea of what I considered my duty to others. I should, at the time, have thought myself to blame had I not acceded to Aldget’s proposal.”

“It was tempting, I allow; but I should not have done it,” replied Colonel Pennington.

General Montgomery sighed, and for a few moments there was a dead silence, broken only by the heavy breathing of his friend, and his

beating a tattoo on the carpet with his right foot, while he pulled his ear to its utmost extent, as if implying, he would rather pull it off than withdraw a point in the opinion he had pronounced.

The evening was now quickly drawing in ; and the air, which had been heavy and sultry all day, became more and more oppressive. The setting of the sun had been obscured by a host of dense clouds, which, gradually ascending from the western horizon, had overspread the whole firmament, and had hurried on the darkness of night, without the sweet intervention of twilight. A short, languid gust swept past the window every now and then, but suddenly subsided, without refreshing the close air ; the slender trees, which stood near the house, and which, even in tranquil weather, greeted the ear with a light and pleasant rustling, were now entirely motionless ; the birds ceased their accustomed evening song ; faint flashes, like the reflection of distant lightning were occasionally seen ; and every thing betokened the approach of a thunder-storm.

“ Pennington,” said the General after a pause, “ the storm that has threatened us all day is coming at last. Do me the favour to ring the bell. We must have the outer shutters closed.”

At this instant, a violent peal of thunder shook the house, and a dreadful crashing sound followed as if some part of the building had fallen, or an explosion had taken place near it. The bell was rung again loudly, and at the same moment several servants entered the room in haste. They were endeavouring to answer the inquiries of the General as to the cause of the tremendous report just heard, and to explain the mischief done, when the great bell of the entrance-hall sounded several loud peals: the servants looked at each other, but no one moved.

“ It is the lightning again,” said Colonel Pennington, “ running along the wires: set the windows open, or we shall be suffocated.”

This advice was about to be followed, when another loud sounding of the bell made General Montgomery think differently. “ Go directly,” he said, “ to the door; it is some one

who seeks shelter from the storm : go directly, and admit them."

"Why, to be sure," said Colonel Pennington, "if any one be at the door, he ought to find admittance; one would not shut the door against one's enemy's dog on such a night as this : but it's the lightning, I tell you."

"We shall soon see, Tom," replied the General.

"Ay, and feel too," murmured the latter, "when we are suffocated with brimstone, and burnt to a cinder."

"Where are my nieces, and Miss Macalpine?" continued General Montgomery to the servants, with some anxiety.

Before any one could answer, the servant who had gone to the hall-door, re-entered, apparently out of his senses with terror. "Who is it?" asked the General hastily. The servant was speechless. "Who is it?" again repeated General Montgomery; "cannot you answer me?"

"I hardly can, Sir; for I never saw him before, and hope—"

“ But you have let the person in, whoever he is, have you not ? ”

“ Why, no, Sir ! ”

“ Good heavens ! go, all of you, instantly, and bid him enter. In such a storm to shut the door in the face of any one ! Go instantly : you Gregory, stop : tell me what it is that alarms you in this manner ? ”

The General was obliged to repeat his orders a third time to the attendants, for the distrust that their fellow-servant's looks and half-answers respecting the visitor inspired, made them loth to obey.

“ Go with them, Pennington, will you ? and see what all this is about. Tell me,” continued General Montgomery, very quietly turning to the man-servant, who remained in the room, and whom he imagined the loudness of the tempest had bewildered—“ are you afraid of lightning ? —it is very awful—and I know some persons *are* terrified beyond the power of commanding themselves,—but it is no fault, Gregory.”

“ No, Sir ; I have been in too many storms by sea and land to be afeard of *them* ; but such

a man as stood at the door when I opened it, I never saw before. He was wrapped in a large cloak of scarlet, which looked like fire as the lightnings played upon 't, and his face deadly pale like death; and he held a black steed by the bridle, that seemed as impatient to come in as himself."

"Nonsense, Gregory; your senses have forsaken you in the uproar of the tempest. Why, to be sure, man and beast would alike be impatient in a night like this."

Before he could inquire farther, Colonel Pennington entered, and, beckoning to the servant to leave the room, seemed anxious to speak.

"Well, who is it, Pennington?" said General Montgomery; "Gregory would have made me believe it some Blood-red Knight from the other world, who has rode on this storm to visit us."

"By my faith!" looking with anxiety to see whether Gregory had really left the apartment, "I do not wonder the fellow was startled," replied Colonel Pennington, "for your visitor is a strange one, to say the least of him. He

wears a mask, and declines giving his name, although he demands, and with an air of authority too, to speak with you, and his communication can be with no one *but* you. My word for it but he bears himself highly enough, and I know how he should fare were he in my hands;—he should but dry his dripping garment at the fire with your grooms, and then go bootless of his errand, and be glad he had escaped a second ducking in your horse-pond.”

“You are always violent, Tom,” answered General Montgomery. “There is some mirth intended at my expense, depend upon it, in this exploit; to see whether I am to be alarmed at a mask, perhaps; but, be the object what it may, I think the actor in the drama has been punished enough already by the elements.”

“I would show him, however, that this was no house to play his practical jokes in,” grumbled the Colonel.

“Nay,” said the General, “we need inflict no farther vengeance. 'Tis plain he is no conjuror, or he would have chosen his times and

seasons better. We'll see him, and I think the laugh will be on our side."

The General then rang, and desiring the stranger to be admitted, a tall, commanding figure, wrapped in a scarlet cloak, and with his features completely hid by his vizor, entered the apartment. He bowed as he advanced towards General Montgomery, who, as he surveyed the wet and pitiable condition of his visitor, thought how dearly he had paid for his jest, were it one, and expressed himself sorry that the storm had burst before he reached the Hall. Then, pressing him to be seated, with that courtesy which it was natural to him to show to every creature, he begged to learn the nature of his communication, which he understood from Colonel Pennington, his friend, was to be made only to himself; and an explanation also of the unusual disguise which his visitor had assumed.

While he spoke, his eye glanced towards Colonel Pennington, who, not quite so much at his ease on the subject, had walked towards the window, and, throwing open the blinds stood

scrutinizing the stranger by the help of this additional light.

“I am aware that my appearance,” said he of the red cloak, “must excite unfavourable suspicions in the mind of General Montgomery; and yet I am come to him on a friendly mission, and intend a friendly service.”

“Surely that voice is familiar to me; I have heard it somewhere before,” thought Colonel Pennington: and he drew nearer to catch his words more distinctly; while the Mask continued:—

“My purpose, however, cannot be explained before a third person, and I must request to speak with General Montgomery alone.”

“That you shall not, if I have any influence,” said Colonel Pennington promptly, and with great determination in his manner: “I can answer for it, General Montgomery will offer no objection to my being a party, let your communication be what it may.”

The Mask surveyed the speaker from head to foot, as if impatient of his interruption, and as if he would awe him into silence. Then turning to

General Montgomery, he added in a measured voice,—“ Am I to understand, Sir, that this is *your* determination also, and that you deny me a conference but in the presence of a third person? If so, my mission must fail, for, I repeat, I can intrust to no ear but your's the intelligence I have to communicate.”

“ I stir not a step !” said Colonel Pennington resolutely.

“ Let me warn you, however,” continued the Mask, disregarding the Colonel's words, “ that it is no light matter which brings me to seek this interview; and I bid you beware, if you persist in refusing me, lest you meet with misfortune where you little fear it. Arrange the matter, therefore, with your friend: but resolve quickly, for I have yet many a weary mile to ride.”

So saying, he turned away, and, walking to the farther extremity of the apartment, left General Montgomery to decide upon his answer.

The General and Colonel Pennington exchanged looks, as the stranger moved from them. “ I do not know what to make of my

visitor," said the former; "he seems too much in earnest to be playing a part: what's your opinion, Pennington?"

"That he's an insolent rascal!" replied the other, in a voice which made the Mask look round and again eye him from head to foot.

"Hush! hush!" whispered General Montgomery; "you will do no good by intemperate language. Here, step with me into my study, and at least speak quietly, whatever you may think."

Colonel Pennington followed General Montgomery somewhat like an angry dog, when his master's command, and the fear of chastisement, oblige him to quit a fray; but the tail erect, and sidelong mode of retreat as he leaves his antagonist, and the long-continued growl of defiance, show him at the same time unconquered, and anxious for a renewal of the combat:—in such temper, muttering the indignation which he felt it impossible entirely to suppress, and casting back looks of anger and suspicion upon the Mask, the Colonel entered the study,

and as he closed the door, gave way to the vehemence of his temper.

“Audacious villain! does he take you or me for a fool, that he should suppose you would closet yourself, or I permit it, with a fellow, an unknown vagabond from off the highway, and an assassin, for aught that’s known of him? I wonder, Montgomery, at your patience!”

“My dear Tom, my patience is needed to make up for your want of it! I tell you, violent words are of no use at any time. I feel as much inclined as you do to suspect this man; but we shall never convict him, if he deserves chastisement, unless we hear what he has to say.”

“You mean, then, to be fool enough to let him have his own way, and to cut your throat, or shoot you through the head, after his own fashion, do you? Very considerate, very kind indeed, upon my honour, to those who care for you.”

“Nonsense, my good friend! sure you would never let it be said that old Montgomery could be frightened by a mask?”

“Pho! pho! you are not the sensible man I

took you for," said Colonel Pennington, "if you talk in this manner. When a fellow has had as many balls whizzing about his ears as you have had, he need not much care what is said of his courage; at least, he's a fool if he does—that's all. I tell you again, this rascal shall not have you to himself to do what he likes with—or my name's not Tom Pennington."

"Neither shall he, depend upon *that*," said the General, taking down a pair of pistols from a collection of arms that hung around the walls of the apartment; "and now, let me not hear another syllable upon the subject."

The tone in which these words were spoken, and the manner that accompanied them, showed Colonel Pennington that all farther remonstrance would probably be vain; but, glad to see that his arguments (or rather his pertinacity) had awakened something like a spirit of precaution in his friend, he was determined not to yield the point entirely. Placing himself, therefore, in an easy chair, and leaning comfortably back in it, he remained for some minutes beat-

ing his finger on his lips as if to enforce silence on himself, and seemingly resolved not to move from his post.

“ Did you not hear me say that I would speak with the Mask in *this room*, Pennington ?” said General Montgomery.

“ To be sure I did ; but what of that ?”

“ That you must leave it. Come, Tom ! I feel all your friendship ; but you must be guided by me in the present affair.”

“ And I suppose,” said the Colonel, “ you intend to talk with this rascal in the dark. Well, it’s all of a piece—and if you will, you must ; but you *shall* have lights, even if you put them out afterwards.” So saying, he rang the bell with violence, and left the apartment, followed by General Montgomery.

When the door opened, the stranger rose from his seat which he occupied at the window ; and as the last faint gleam of light streamed with a reddish glare from the West, the reflection of his cloak was returned upon the mask he wore, and gave it the appearance of a countenance of living flame. It was impossible not

to start at the preternatural effect thus produced; and even General Montgomery paused as he was about to make known his compliance with the stranger's terms of conference.

“The very devil incarnate!” said Colonel Pennington aloud; but these words only served to recall the General to a recollection of what he was about to say.

“I am alone, Sir, and ready to hear whatever you have to communicate. We will wait till the servants bring lights, and I will then accompany you into the next room.”

The Mask bowed; lights were quickly brought; General Montgomery, pointing to the door of his study, motioned to the stranger to enter. Colonel Pennington's eye followed them as they left the room, and every instant his breath was drawn quicker and quicker as their steps receded from the spot where he stood. The Mask had already passed into the study, and General Montgomery was on the point of following, when, again overcome with an idea of the danger to which his friend was exposing himself, Colonel Pennington darted forward to

arrest his entrance, and once more remonstrate with him on his imprudence. The door closed against him; and as he heard the key turn in the lock, his hands fell, and he remained in silent vexation.

“ ’Tis madness!—’tis worse—’tis wickedness!” he at length exclaimed, “ to place his life in the power of a scoundrel, who comes on no honourable errand, or he would need no such assumed mystery. Curses on my own folly, that I did not rip the disguise from off him !”

In vain did Colonel Pennington, when this burst of impetuosity and anxiety had subsided, endeavour to ascertain if the parties within were speaking in any tone that argued menace or defiance. The double door was closed, and not a sound of any kind escaped.

“ He will not be fool enough to remain silent, surely, if this fellow offer violence, either in his words or behaviour:—he is armed;—and I must hear the scuffle.” And again Colonel Pennington was quiet. His impatience, however, soon returned: he took out his watch—“ They have been there full twenty minutes!”—

and, in increasing anxiety, he paced twice or thrice to the other end of the apartment, then looked again at his watch, and then compared it with the clock that stood by the fireplace. As the minutes passed on, his fears gained ground; and at length, when he had reckoned more than the half-hour since the General's disappearance, he walked straight to the study door, and knocked loudly.

“Did you call me, Montgomery?” This was repeated twice. The General came near enough to be heard; and in a calm tone of voice answered, “No, Tom; make yourself perfectly easy; I did not call.”

Colonel Pennington's heart leaped for joy; and again for an interval his apprehensions subsided, but they returned as time went on and the conference still continued. It was in vain that he endeavoured to argue himself into a conviction that no violence could be intended General Montgomery, when immediate assistance was at hand to rescue him; the absurdity of any attempt of the kind had never once entered into his view of the affair; and though

a really brave man, he had in this instance become the victim of a panic, which, to any common nerves or understanding, must have seemed perfectly chimerical.

At length, another half-hour elapsed, and neither Colonel Pennington's patience nor his fears could longer brook the uncertainty. He was too well aware of his friend's determination of character, to hope that he would acknowledge any influence which he had thought it right, in the first instance, to oppose; and though he might have quieted his own anxiety for the moment by a repetition of his inquiry at the study-door, he preferred another expedient, which he trusted might induce General Montgomery to put an end to the interview, and at once release him from the torment of suspense. The power Lady Emily possessed over her uncle was unbounded, and Colonel Pennington bethought himself of her assistance at this juncture.

Walking hastily, therefore, to the end of the apartment, and opening the communication with the library, he called her by name: no one an-

swered. He advanced into the room, but found no one. Again he called ; and, unwilling to remove farther from the scene of his anxiety, continued repeating her name several times:—still no answer. He stepped to the bell ; at that instant, imagining he heard voices in a room adjoining, he hurried forward in the direction, and his hand was already on the lock, when a report, as of a pistol, echoed through the apartments. He started at the sound, and was hastening back to the spot he had quitted : at the same moment, several doors seemed to be opened and shut with great violence, and, full of alarm, he quickened his steps towards the study. That door was still closed.

“ For God’s sake, Montgomery ! I beseech you, open to me !”

The door was opened, and the General, pale and evidently much agitated, came forward to meet him. He endeavoured to smile, but the attempt was fruitless, and only gave a deeper expression to the gloom which overshadowed his usually radiant countenance. The sud-

den change was evident to Colonel Pennington, as with breathless anxiety he exclaimed, "Are you wounded—are you hurt—Montgomery? Where, where? tell me, I beseech you!"

"No, Pennington, no; my good friend, I am quite safe."

"But what have you done with the Mask?—where is he?"

"Gone," replied General Montgomery: and as he spoke he appeared to gasp for breath, and sunk exhausted into a chair.

"You are surely ill?" said Colonel Pennington, calling at the same time for assistance. "I implore you, tell me what has occurred—was any violence offered, tell me?"

"No, no," answered General Montgomery faintly; "I am only fatigued, Tom—I shall soon recover. Dismiss the servants when they come; and, as you value my peace, ask no farther questions."

Colonel Pennington drew a deep sigh at a request so unlike the open confidence which marked their usual intercourse; and as he

gazed on his friend, he exclaimed inwardly, "'Tis strange—*how* strange!—and I am much to blame to have let it come to this. Montgomery," he added, "I must transgress your positive injunction; I must learn——"

At this moment, the servants, alarmed at Colonel Pennington's repeated calling for assistance, entered the apartment, and were immediately followed by Lady Emily.

"Dearest uncle," she said in a voice of agitation, and shocked at his altered looks, "I hear that a mysterious stranger has been with you, and your attendants have been sadly alarmed."

"My love, it is nothing—do not you be alarmed!"

"It is but this moment that I learned the occurrence, or I had been with you long ago. Tell me, tell me, dearest uncle! what has happened; you are not well—I am certain you are not."

"Dearest, nothing has happened: a person came to speak to me, whose appearance has excited the curiosity of the servants; but nothing

of any consequence has occurred ; you see there has not."

" Oh dear, dear uncle ! what you say has never hitherto been doubted by me ; but you look as if something had happened to agitate you."

" Do I, love ? it is your fancy. The tempest, maybe, has bewildered me with its noise : " and General Montgomery made an effort as he spoke, to raise himself from the chair, and, turning to the servants, inquired if much damage had been done during the storm. They answered in the affirmative, that one of the gables of the house had been much injured, and a stack of chimneys near it thrown down.

" Is any one hurt ? " asked the General eagerly.

" No, " was the reply.

" Then that was the crash that stunned us so, Pennington ? " he added, appealing to the Colonel.

" Yes, " was Colonel Pennington's answer ; " I wish it had been the *only one* we had heard to-night."

General Montgomery took no notice of what was said, and continued his inquiries: "Are any of the trees injured?"

"Yes, Sir: the gardener has come in, and says many have had large branches torn off by the wind; and the great Methuselah is shivered to the roots by the lightning, and lies its length on the lawn."

"What! my favourite cedar, say you? Then has the storm beat upon my house, indeed!" and General Montgomery seemed to relapse again into a train of deep and painful reflection.

"It was a fearful storm," said Lady Emily, endeavouring to draw her uncle's attention. He looked up to her; but an expression of agony sat on his countenance, to which words would fail to give interpretation, and which made Lady Emily start back in increased alarm; when, placing herself on her knees at his side, she continued to hold his hand in speechless anxiety. Colonel Pennington felt in his inmost being all that passed, and both were preparing to speak, when General Montgomery said in a faint voice—

“Dismiss these servants. Emily, dearest and best, retire. I have some business with Colonel Pennington, and do not think I shall have any whist to-night: make my apologies, and good-night, sweet love! Bless thee,” he added, kissing her forehead; and Lady Emily, impressed with a sense of awe for which she could not account, returned this farewell of affection, and departed.

Again left alone with General Montgomery, Colonel Pennington looked for some explanation of the mysterious visit of the Mask; but his anxiety rendered him impatient of even the short pause that followed Lady Emily leaving the room.

“My dear Montgomery!” said he, “I must act in opposition to your commands, and ask you what means this agitation—this unusual and sudden change, apparent to every one, and which renders you so unlike yourself? Do not consider me, I beseech you, for the first time in our lives, unworthy of your confidence; repose in me the cause of your present pain of mind. You cannot deceive me.”

The General only sighed, or rather groaned deeply.

“ I know, at the present moment,” continued Colonel Pennington, “ you are suffering from extreme mental anguish ; and if long friendship can give me any claim, I think I deserve to be made acquainted with your grief ; let me, if I cannot in any way alleviate, at least share it with you.”

General Montgomery pressed the hand of Colonel Pennington warmly, as he replied—
“ My worthy and excellent friend, there is a mystery in this affair, which I am not at liberty to disclose to any living being ; else, be assured, there exists not the person in whose bosom I would more cheerfully confide my secret than yourself. Be satisfied with this assurance. I *cannot* divulge any thing of this night’s transaction ; ask me, therefore, no farther questions, for I cannot answer them ; and from this hour will I never utter word upon the painful subject.”

There was a quiet determination in the tone and manner of General Montgomery, from which

his friend knew there was little chance of appeal; and he turned away with an ill-suppressed sigh of regret, and paced backwards and forwards in the room for some minutes, in deep silence. Then stopping suddenly, he questioned General Montgomery as to what he had done with his pistols; for he felt a conviction that the report he had heard, when in the library, proceeded from some sort of fire-arms, and by this inquiry he thought to obtain farther knowledge of the fact.

“ My pistols are safe, Pennington, let that suffice: force me not to repeat in stronger terms my determination never to divulge aught more of this night’s adventure than you already know; and you will best act the part of a friend, if you yield to my wishes and cease to urge me upon it.”

“ But the appearance of such a strange visitor is enough to make the whole parish talk! The servants——”

“ If the servants gossip, or any one ask questions, I wish you to reply that it was an idle frolic to astound us; but not being relished,

had better not be spoken of more. You will please me, Tom, and you may serve me by observing my request. And now good-night. I wish to be alone—I am better: and you may leave me safely. Go to my nieces and tell them so. Good-night.”

“It is very strange,” said Colonel Pennington, as he walked slowly out of the apartment; “it has no savour of good in it. It has been a stormy and dark night, and will usher in, I fear, a long and dreary day. It is strange,” he went on repeating, as he advanced to the drawing-room, “passing strange!” and the events of the evening continued to pursue him long after he had sought oblivion on his pillow.

CHAPTER V.

“Your most intimate friend, however dull, may be guilty of a statistical quarto; your youngest daughter may, unknown to you, write all the poetry for a magazine, besides having a volume of fragments in prose and verse, almost ready for publication. Oh! glorious days for the rag-gatherer and the paper-maker! Oh! lamentable days for the wings of the grey goose and the crow.”

PHANTASMAGORIA.

WHEN Lord Mowbray took his sudden departure from the Hall, he betook himself to a villa he possessed on the banks of the Thames, near Windsor. To this place he retired, with a firm intention to come to some resolution in regard to his future life. It was a sylvan scene of English beauty; and here he thought to lose sight of certain uneasy sensations, which recent

events had forced irresistibly and involuntarily upon him. But we cannot always fly from ourselves at the moment we wish it; and while he mused on the stream as it coursed along, now bending the heads of the bulrushes by its pressure, now buoying up the large circular leaves of the water-lily, whose blossom, like the Naiad queen of the element, floated on its surface, he drew a fanciful resemblance between these objects and himself.

“My youth,” he said, “where is it? hurrying fast away like the current of the river, and like it, soon to be swallowed up in the immeasurable ocean of eternity! My pursuits and prospects resemble only those reeds, now bent and changing in their direction, now showing an evanescent blossom, that depends for its support on an uncertain element, which bears but too apt an analogy to my own restless mind; for I too have cherished and supported some flowers that bloomed upon the surface of my precarious affections; but I have dealt rudely with their fragile texture, and they are sunk and overwhelmed.”

Had any body told Lord Mowbray that he was poetising on life, he would have smiled in derision; but when the feelings are roused, the most torpid imagination becomes poetical, and, unknown to himself, he now looked upon existence from that height which renders the dullest view of it sublime. He saw, in his own character, the gifts of nature and of fortune despised, misused, squandered, contemned; he felt that he might have been a statesman, a warrior, a man of letters, or a Mæcenas; a patron, at least, of pursuits which, if he had not energy sufficient to prosecute, he had fortune enough to encourage, and he was deeply alive to their charm and influence. He felt within himself (nor was he mistaken in the feeling) the power of these many varied gifts; and he had essayed in turn the different careers which they opened; but, satisfied with the proof thus given to the world that he *might* have excelled in any that had been his choice, he withdrew from the competition abruptly, even as though he disdained the goal for which he had started.

In fact he did so, for there had been hitherto

no preponderating power in his mind, no defined sense of moral obligation to fill the duties of his station, which could give efficacy or stability to his choice, or fix on Lord Mowbray's actions the stamp of character; the "*A quoi bon?*" which Madame de Stael has denounced as "*la plus vulgaire de tout les questions,*" was the constant question with which he neutralized every attempt; and in truth, when there exists no motive superior to the transient ends of this world's cares, there cannot exist in any mind a sustaining principle to persevere in climbing the tiresome steps of laudable ambition, or in pursuing the more blessed, but still more rugged paths of private duty.

The consciousness of this great want, in Lord Mowbray's instance, was gradually corroding while it hardened a naturally kind and generous heart. The pleasure of the passing hour, or rather I should say, of its ease; the excitement of the moment's wit, which, like brilliant bubbles flung by children in the air, was gone as soon as called into existence: these had insensibly usurped the place of higher attainments and

nobler pursuits, and supplied the votary of indolence and selfishness with all that was required to make life glide easily away.

Thus was Lord Mowbray in danger of being confirmed in habits which, though repugnant to his better reason, he had not sufficient strength of character successfully to combat, when the unexpected appearance of one who had lived with him at another period of his life, startled him from this half lethargic half sardonic state of being, and made him involuntarily exclaim, "Was I born for this?"

The Rev. Mr. Altamont was the visitor announced to Lord Mowbray—a person equally beloved by the gay and the grave; one whose varied talents made him the delight and soul of the society in which he lived; and whose powerful mind spread itself over a wide circle of influential bearings, and was ever directed to the support of the principles he professed, unwarped by interest, and unintimidated by rank or station. Those who envied his success through life, and were most inclined to depreciate the abilities and worth that had led to it, never-

theless, dared not openly avow their feelings; and, in his presence, were frequently beguiled into sentiments which, if not of friendship, were certainly those which the pleasure and amusement arising from Mr. Altamont's conversation, were sure to beget. Such was the man, whose noble port and beaming countenance recalled a crowd of past delights to Lord Mowbray's mind.

“How very glad I am to see you, my dear Altamont!” cried Lord Mowbray, seizing his hand; “and to see you looking so well! Just the same as ever, I declare; somewhat fuller in person, it may be, but just the same expression, the same air!”

“Somewhat fuller, my dear Lord!” rejoined he, as he returned the affectionate pressure of his hand; “you have been studying French politeness, I perceive, since I had last the pleasure of meeting you, and season your observations with skill to the palate. Here I am, always the same in heart, at least, towards you.”

“Well now, this is kind, my dear friend! to

come thus, and take me for better for worse, just as you used to do in old times."

"Stop, my good Lord; if you please, *I* do not mean to take you for worse," (looking at him from head to foot,) "not I, truly; I hope I am taking you for what you ought to be—for better. 'Else, wherefore live we in a Christian land,' if time teaches us to no purpose? But I am *frappé en haut*, as we say at Paris. I have attained to great perfection in the French idiom, you see; and now" (throwing himself into an easy chair) "I cannot moralize till I have refreshed myself with some of your good things." (Lord Mowbray instantly rang the bell). "I am fairly knocked up, my dear Lord, vulgarly so to speak; and I hope, therefore, you will allow me to put up here for the night?"

"Ay, for a hundred and one nights, and welcome!"

"Have a care what you are saying; for unless I could tell as many stories as Dinarzade, I think a hundred nights of my presence might

put your friendship to the test ; but, for half a dozen, who knows but it may be borne ?”

And now followed all the bustle of servants, trunks, and postboys, the allotment of the sleeping-room, the preparations of the toilette, the drawing breath after the flutter of a first meeting, and then the returning sense of unbroken enjoyment in an old friend’s society. When all these impediments were removed, the table cleared, and the attendants gone, nothing remained to check conversation, or prevent the mutual interchange of thought.

“ Well,” said Mr. Altamont, when he had thus arrived at the acme of English comfort, and filling his glass with claret ; “ I drink to you, my dear Lord, and give you joy of not being in the least *improved*, as it is called, by your residence in foreign lands—your long residence—your too long residence there.”

“ Why too long, my good friend ?”

“ In the first place, *too long*, because I dreaded seeing you grown into something that was not of English growth ; and, let me tell you,

that will not do for a man of your consequence, and your responsibility—there, do not smile so jesuitically—look at me straightforward while I tell you, it won't do for any Englishman; but, as far as I can judge, you have '*escaped it beautifully.*'”

Lord Mowbray continued to smile in despite of his friend's prohibition. “There are some people, my good Sir,” he said, “who always remain the same in all places, and in all countries; better does not mend them, and worse does not mar them—to tell you the truth, I suspect I am one of these.”

“There now, there spoke the very boy I knew fifteen years ago; but come, we will not dispute this point at present. I don't agree with you, I do not agree to your sophistical axiom; but, because *it is yours*, I won't dispute it, though I know it is nonsense (you'll excuse me). Another glass of claret, if you please, while it is cool—ha—that's good! better, I am sure, you never tasted than this, on the lands where the grapes grew. Those foreigners send every thing that they have, that is worth having,

over to us. Why should we be at the trouble to go to them for it?"

"I wish they could send us their climate," said Lord Mowbray, shivering, and drawing his chair towards the fire: "think of being obliged to have a fire in June—and look at that mizzling drizzling rain!"

"Don't look at it: shut it out; vote it winter, and then what does it signify? Nay, it is more agreeable; it makes a greater variety, and one has an excuse for candle-light and a blazing fire, than which nothing is better, especially when accompanied by a glass of Burgundy or claret; then we have *la belle France* in *la comfortable* England both together; for, though I give France leave to come to England, hang me if England shall ever go to France with my leave."

"Well, my dear Altamont, nobody is talking of endeavouring to make the attempt."

"I am glad of it, I am glad of it with all my heart: and so what are you going to do?"

"I going to do?—any thing—nothing—as I have always done."

“ Pshaw, my dear Lord, this language is obsolete—don’t let us have any more of it : a man like you, in your situation, must be at the head of a party ; your sovereign and your country demand your support.”

“ I stand at the head of a party ?—No, no ! People may be gulled by impudence, but they are not fools enough to be so when there is neither that commodity nor ability of any other kind ; then how can I pretend to such an eminence without having climbed the preparatory steep ? Impossible ! And as for cringing to this man of power, and t’other man of talent, to get a lift on their wings—more impossible still !”

“ But if you do not choose to shine in the senate, why not support the public interest by your pen ?”

“ What ! I become a man of letters ; I, who have a positive *pen-and-inky phobia* ! Worse and worse : you give me the headache but to think of it. Besides, that too requires an apprenticeship ; and at my time of life ! no, not though it were to be indentured seven years to

the Muses themselves. And then a lord's or a lady's writings are but poor things, after all; with a few, very few exceptions, liable to the just criticisms of every periodical critic, and obnoxious to the censure of every idle and superficial reader. No, Altamont; I have too thin a skin to try that experiment: people always make fools of themselves when they step out of their sphere."

"You reason wrong, my good Lord, like the mad people, from right premises; but granted that you do not choose to be a statesman or an author, you may yet be that most dignified, and perhaps happiest of all beings, a great man living on your estates and dispensing happiness around you—that would not be going out of your sphere."

"At least I should be stepping very much out of the sphere of my inclinations if I looked after poor-rates and road-bills, and parish business, and county meetings. Why the bare enumeration of these delectable duties and pleasures gives me the vapours. What then is left for me to do, a poor insignificant reptile, crawl-

ing out my little day of life, and fancying, for a moment, that it matters *how* I do it; whether, like that jolly fly who is now sipping my wine, or like my good hound, dreaming over his chase after a rabbit?"

"When you are a fly, or a hound, that may be all very well; but if you—a man—a man with good abilities, a man born to a high station, endowed with large property, choose to liken yourself to an insect, or a mere animal, you must, my good Lord, make up your mind to fall lower than either in the estimation of your fellow-beings and in the scale of creation. It will not do, my Lord Mowbray, it will not do at all; I put my strong dissent upon every word you have been pleased to utter, and I am perfectly aware that your mind is diseased. Allow me to feel your pulse" (affecting to take out his watch)—"now every patient confides in his physician—suffer me to feel the pulsations of your heart, and then I will tell you what makes you talk so much nonsense—you'll excuse me."

At this moment, a letter was brought in by a servant.—"I thought," said Lord Mowbray

peevishly, taking the letter, "that I had at least escaped this plague till to-morrow's post-time."

"Well, while you, my Lord, are perusing your epistle, I will, if you allow me, retire to the drawing-room, where I conclude I shall find materials for writing one of those very things called letters, to which you have so great an aversion."

Lord Mowbray nodded assent; and being left alone, he turned the paper in his hand, and looked for the post-mark: there was none; turned it round and round; at last broke the seal, and saw a clear small character, which at once bespoke it to be a female's writing. He glanced his eye over the first page; looked into the second; still it was closely written: that, too, ensured its being a woman's letter. He looked for the signature; there was none.

The letter stated a case of some interest:—A woman, whose prospects in life were fair, but whose fate had been the reverse; who, now houseless, and driven by the cruelty of near relations from the only home which ever had been hers,

was become a wanderer on the face of the earth, had seized upon the first idea which presented itself to her for relief; namely, to write a book. She declared herself to be totally ignorant of any scientific or deep attainment; was not even sure that she wrote any language correctly, and had not yet determined what sort of book to write. Travels were disregarded, unless the name of the traveller were prefixed to the page. Biography required too much research, too much knowledge of human character in general, for a person who had only moved in one particular circle; precluded from consulting any books of reference, alike from her peculiar situation and the fear of being laughed at for pretending to be wise. History, except that of "Goody Two Shoes" and "Jack the Giant-Killer," entirely beyond her ken. Still she declared she felt, that out of her own heart's stores alone she could draw materials that would not be devoid of a particular species of interest. All she requested was—permission to dedicate her work to some person whose name would ensure it success. Would his Lordship permit an unknown

to avail herself of the undoubted advantage which *his* would confer on one so insignificant? without some such aid, she had no chance whatever of attaining her end: and he, by granting her request, would be doing a greater charity than by bestowing hundreds. "Do not offer me money," the letter concluded, "for though I am a beggar, I have a pride in my heart which would render its acceptance impossible. If you are condescending enough to answer this, direct A. B., post-office, Windsor."

"A curious letter," thought Lord Mowbray, "but not devoid of a sort of charm—quite a woman's letter—and that is no poor praise either. Shall I do what she wishes? or shall I refuse? What if the work should be disgraceful — foolish — impertinent? I shall be pointed at: but, after all, what does it signify? And if I am laughed at, is there any body that is not laughed at? And who is the worse for that? Only those who are fools enough to fret about it. But I will ask Altamont what he thinks. No, I will not either; for if I do, I

must take his advice, or act in opposition to it, it may be. Am I still so much of a boy that I cannot act for myself?"

He took up the letter and read it over again, half intending to tear it in pieces, and take no farther notice of it;—but the characters were fair and feminine—and the style bore the impress of being a female's, apart from all masculine pretension,—a circumstance which is at once so winning and so soothing to the natural pride of man. It breathed, it is true, a spirit of independence; but it was a womanly independence, professing only to assert its right to those powers allowed by man to the weaker sex; not that sword-and-pistol independence, which arrays a female in an attire foreign to her nature, and which at once, whether in argument, or in the display of knowledge, or in the declaration of sentiments, however just or well-supported, never fails to abrogate her right over the heart. When a woman ceases to be remembered as a woman, she lays down her highest claim to consideration, and can assume none other that will supply its place. In the

present instance, there was a kind of compelling gentleness in the letter before him, which held a magic power over Lord Mowbray.

“No,” he said, walking up and down and thinking, aloud; “it would be unmanly, unnatural, to disappoint this woman; and, after all, there are other lords in the world to whom she might have addressed this request. What can make her give the preference to *me*?”

In Lord Mowbray’s character there was a strange mixture of vanity and humility, which at first sight appeared quite contradictory, but which, nevertheless, often meets in the same person. The fact is, he felt pleased at having been selected by the unknown; and, yielding to the kindly impulse of his nature, as well as to that excited by self-love, he wrote a few gracious lines of permission, and sent off his answer directly.

No sooner was this done than he repented him of the deed, resumed his perambulations in the apartment, and began figuring to himself the appearance of the person in whose favour he had come to this decision. Was she young?

was she beautiful? Interesting she certainly was from her history; the secret she affected would undoubtedly transpire. All such secrets always do. "*Tôt ou tard tout se sçait;*" and it would be pleasant enough to be the patron of a lovely young creature, whom his charity had saved from want; and then he would have conferred an obligation for which she would be grateful. Grateful! pshaw; what boots it to disguise the truth? turn it which way one may, *rien pour rien dans ce monde*, and gratitude is only one feeling given in exchange for another. But what if the unknown prove to be an old and disagreeable woman? He glanced again at the letter,—“No, no; in a handwriting it is always possible to trace some analogy to the appearance and the character of the writer; at least, I have always thought so; and there is nothing, I am sure, that is disagreeable here. I feel certain that I have a good chance in this unknown of finding my conjectures right; perhaps, too, her society may prove as sweet as that I once enjoyed through a chance almost as vague as this. *As sweet?*”—and Lord Mow-

bray drew a long and impeded respiration—
“No; these things never occur twice in a life-time: I wish they had never occurred at all. I will go to Altamont; he may drive all these things out of my head.”

When Lord Mowbray rejoined Mr. Altamont, he found him seated at the piano-forte in the music-room.

“Ah!” said the former, “how delightful to hear the tones of music, after our ears have undergone a fast from sweet sounds. Do not cease from playing! Convey me back to youth—to uncertainty—to health!”

“Gladly to the latter. Youth has not yet escaped you; and surely, my dear Lord, uncertainty is to you a kind of chartered freehold that I heartily wish you would get rid of. But if you like to hear some old tunes, now is your time; the fit is on me. I wish it could take the fit out of you—who knows?”

Among Mr. Altamont’s varied gifts, he possessed in a supreme degree the art of *improvisè-ing* sweet sounds. For a man, and one of his high attainments and sacred profession, it might

be deemed a minor talent. Had any one else possessed it, it would have been considered a title quite sufficient for fame. As it was, it stood eclipsed by the many intellectual powers of a higher order, which this accomplished man possessed; and it was known by and displayed only to those who shared his social hours. The present, was one of Mr. Altamont's happiest moments of inspiration. He led the ear of the listener through a vast variety of complicated harmony, till he fixed it on some well-known simple melody, the familiar sweetness of which awoke a thousand fond recollections, and possessed that universal power which in a numerous circle would have spoken to the particular feelings dearest to the heart of each individual hearer. There were moments when he occasionally varied the solemnity and refinement of his conceptions, by passing off into a buffo strain, that would have delighted the best Italian composers in that line, while it amused all who only knew to regard it as a matter of drollery.

After indulging for a few instants in one of

those capricios, Lord Mowbray observed, “ Well, you only prove to me what I always felt and thought—that there is no music equal to Italian music, since even your caricature of it is superior to every other; it is the shadow which proves the substance true, you know.”

“ All a prejudice, my good friend; very well in its way, but music is music when good of its kind, and the test of that is its speaking to the feelings. Was there ever a finer air, one more touchingly, more intensely sweet, than our own ‘Cease rude Boreas,’ when played with due expression? And now I am upon national airs, why do I name secondly that which ought to have stood first? ‘God save the King.’ I maintain, that whenever an Englishman, whose heart’s in the right place, hears that noble strain, his breast will swell with loyalty and love. To complete the trio, ‘Rule Britannia.’ There’s liberty for you, true, rational liberty and patriotism—‘King, Lords, and Commons for ever!’” And with all the fire

of his own enthusiastic feelings, Mr. Altamont gave these airs in their true spirit of love and glory.

“I wish I were as young as you,” said Lord Mowbray, with a melancholy smile; “but I cannot give up the supremacy of Italian music over every other, for all that; an ear once formed upon it, can never like any other so well.”

“Pho! pho! don’t tell me so—the more ’s the pity—the more ’s the pity—but there is nothing in any country under the sun better than what is to be found in England.” And then again he struck up ‘Rule Britannia’ with all the majesty of that commanding strain.

“But come,” he said, breaking off suddenly, “I forgot; you are sick of some outlandish disease, and I must positively get at the root of the evil:” so rising from the piano-forte, he placed himself opposite to Lord Mowbray.

“I must positively know your disease, my dear Lord,” looking at him with friendly earnest-

ness ; “ come, tell me what ails you, and then I will prescribe.”

Lord Mowbray could not choose but laugh.

“ Laughing’s a good thing, but won’t do always: come, tell me what is the matter with you, my good friend ?”

“ Too much beef,” replied Lord Mowbray ; and he drew a long and heavy sigh, took two or three turns to and fro through the room, then stopped opposite to Mr. Altamont : “ life is so different in different places, that were I to describe mine to you, while in that land of enchantment—Italy, I should appear like a madman in your eyes—perhaps in my own ; and, besides, I do not know that I like to go over my Italian life even in description.”

“ How so? would it be too good or *too bad* to bear description ?”

“ Something, it may be of both ; at all events, it is so diametrically opposite to every thing one does or thinks, or feels here, that it would be like talking of what one did in some other world.”

“ Well, my dear Lord, if in my happy igno-

rance of foreign countries and foreign manners, and *foreigners*, I enjoy my own people in my own land, with a sort of satisfied felicity, to which you are a stranger, by your own account; at least, I can hardly wish to exchange my dulness for your enlightened view of things; but what I do wish to know, is, how you, individually, passed your time in Italy, and with whom? There now, fancy this room a painted church, this great arm-chair a confessional, only don't fancy me a monk; I leave your imagination to supply this defect in the illusion as best it may."

Lord Mowbray could not help smiling, but it was a sad smile.

"Now whisper to me all your adventures: you must have had a dozen Flirtations at least, five-and-forty escapes from banditti, and as many abductions from convents."

"*One Flirtation only.*"

"I am sorry for that; the word seems to change its meaning in the singular. Humph! One Flirtation only! worse than I thought for.

I don't like that ; I should not like at all a black and yellow Lady Mowbray, though her eyebrows were as arched and as fine as Rosalinda's, or her eyes like a gazelle's."

" My Flirtation, nevertheless, was with Rosalinda."

" The dence it was ! so much the worse. Well, now you have begun to break the ice, don't stop—don't let the aperture freeze over again ; *it is only the first step which cuts !* But, in short, you will believe, for you know that whatever predilection I have for laughing, instead of crying, I *can* be serious."

" What would you have me do ? you cannot help me, Altamont !"

" Confide in me, my dear Lord," affectionately and earnestly grasping Lord Mowbray's hand ; " for I am truly interested in all that concerns you."

Lord Mowbray swallowed a sort of sigh, passed his fingers through his hair, leant back deep into his chair, and then spoke rapidly in a low and indistinct voice, like a man who is compel-

led to narrate something which presses on his mind, of which he would gladly disburthen it; but which, nevertheless, he cannot endure to disclose.

CHAPTER VI.

“ Oh ! felice chi mai non pose il piede,
Fuori della natia sua dolce terra ;
Egli il cor non lascio fitto in ogetti
Che di più riveder non ha speranza ;
E cio che vive ancor, morto non piange.”

PINDEMONTE.

“ IN the month of July,” said Lord Mowbray, “ the great heats render a residence at Naples insufferable ; and the noise of the streets throughout the night as well as day makes it a perfect Pandemonium. The vaunted clearness of the sky no longer exists. The Bruma di Mare—”

“ That again in English, if you please, my Lord, means—?”

“The mists that lie on the sea, which are often so dense that they conceal Vesuvius from its base to its summit; and Capri, that beautiful island, at the entrance of the bay, which seems to stand forth as a champion to the unrivalled charms of the parent city, is totally obscured.”

“And this,” interrupted Mr. Altamont again, who was delighted to find something to abuse in all of foreign kind, “is your vaunted blue heaven. I am happy to hear it with all my heart.”

“This is the case during a short period, or may occur at intervals; but when it does, one goes to Castella Mare, to Sorrento, to Ischia; all of them retreats, which offer a paradise to the enchanted senses. On quitting Naples, it will be two years next month, I chose the first mentioned of these places. Lying under a brow of the Sorrento coast, it is shaded from the sun, and affords in its mountain paths every luxurious and beautiful situation which the eye can wish for, or the mind desire to contemplate. There is too in its climate a refreshing coolness, which is unlike all the damp airs, so called in

this country ; and, after the suffocation and glare of the capital, proves indescribably delightful. It was with great satisfaction that I found very few of my countrymen settled at this spot.”

“ Your Lordship surely mistakes ; for satisfaction read affliction :—but no—very true ; I stand corrected. It is only the worst portion of the English community who reside abroad ; the present company always excepted.”

Lord Mowbray smiled and resumed his narrative :—“ A few regular sight-hunters, who were too busily engaged doing nothing, as all people are who follow that sport, did not impede my comfort much ; once or twice they invited me to join their *coteries* and be ‘ sociable,’ as they termed it : but, as I excused myself somewhat peremptorily, in order to avoid a repetition of giving offence, they voted me, according to the phraseology of one of the young ladies, a *philanthropist*,—that is, I presume, a misanthropist ; and I was left at liberty to follow my own devices as I willed. I was known by the name of *the strange Englishman*. My vo-

luntary seclusion made my time completely my own. For my favourite pursuit, sketching, I had ample leisure and ample subject. I found every thing adapted to picture, seldom any thing to reject or change, as though Nature had combined her elements in this enchanted region for the very express purpose of the painter. No overwhelming feature of greatness usurped undue space or interest in the scene; but a harmony of scale reigned in all the parts. An outline undulated through all the forms, such as the classic Poussin must have delighted to trace; and how often have I recognised the groundwork of his finest subjects on this spot, while a colour, such as the pencil of Claude alone has reached, would be spread over the whole, and leave the senses to repose in unmixed delight and ecstasy upon the glories of the Italian world! Yet do not the glories that I speak of pall upon the sense by their luxuriance, any more than they strike upon it at first by the wonderment they create. Wonder is not the homage which we pay to the most refined and perfect objects; neither is it the sensation

most grateful to our own breasts; but the consciousness of an increasing and ever renovated charm, which ‘grows by what it feeds on,’ *that* is the test of true superiority in the object we contemplate.”

“I should like to see Italy,” said Mr. Altamont involuntarily; “let us go.”

Lord Mowbray smiled, and shook his head—
“Go, and *feel* Italy, and then you will never be happy out of it.”

“Not for the world, then, would I go; if I am to believe you. No, no! I will not stir on any account; there is nothing like England!”

“When I had pretty well exhausted Castella Mare, (the expression is a wrong one,) I mean to say, when I wished to explore fresh beauties, I gave my people orders to arrange my baggage; for I never learnt to do without it, though there is always more than is necessary, and always more plague than pleasure in it, and desired them to go by sea to Sorrento, I myself purposing to take the mountain path, across a chain of hills that

skirts the coast, and with a couple of half-naked Lazzaroni, who are to be caught at all hours for a few paolis——”

“That, again, ‘done into English,’ I conclude means ragamuffins. You’ll excuse me, but I don’t like larding the English tongue with useless foreign phrases.”

“Well, a couple of these ragamuffins, if you choose them to be so called, were found as readily as you may catch a pony in the highlands of Scotland with a handful of oats, to accompany me as my guides and carry my portfolio. I took my gun, and, with my faithful Flora there, proceeded across the mountains.

“At first there was a kind of path apparent; but gradually this was lost in brushwood of wild myrtle, gum-cistus, and innumerable odoriferous shrubs, and soon became difficult and impracticable by reason of huge pieces of broken rock that lay piled upon each other and seemed to forbid all progress; but my scrambling guides, jumping from one projecting fragment to another, as from so many convenient stepping-stones, cried out continually, ‘*Ecco la Strada!*’

ecco la Strada! and I was obliged to follow for mere shame, although I have no love of what is called exercise, and never could fancy any pleasure in possessing the agility of a goat. But there was no choice; it was as bad to return as to proceed: besides, I had sent on my baggage; and that was a sort of trammel which, as I have before said, I was too much of an Englishman to do without."

Mr. Altamont rubbed his hands with pleasure at this confession.

"When I reached the highest point of my journey, I stopped to look around me and enjoy the fruits of my toils. It was a glorious sight that met my view;—fragments of rocks, and masses of cinders, and other matter which had once been ignited, lay piled in heaps at my feet, intermingled with such luxuriance of vegetation, that these objects alone might have afforded delight and interest; while the spicy exhalations they diffused, intermingled with the luscious perfume of the orange-groves from Sorrento, wafted at intervals on the breeze, produced an inebriating and overpowering influ-

ence upon the senses. I sat down and enjoyed myself, in the full meaning of the word; and remained so long absorbed in thoughts, too rapid, too various to be defined, (although the recollection that I *was* thinking is still fresh in my memory,) that at last my guides reminded me that if I did not quicken my footsteps I should fail of reaching my destination. ‘Never mind!’ was my reply. It is one of the delights of Italy, that one never does mind time and circumstance; one seems enfranchised from all the minor lets and hindrances which are constantly crossing the path of existence *here*, and arresting our most innocent enjoyments.”

“False! false! my good Lord: it sounds romantic and fine; but it is all nonsense. You’ll excuse me. We are all the better for being kept in order, and relaxation is only innocent when it follows duty. But pray proceed.”

Lord Mowbray, without adverting to his friend’s observations, continued speaking, like a man who is recreating his own fancy by returning in idea to past scenes of happiness.

“On one of the highest parts of the moun-

tain, with the sea sleeping at its base, intensely blue, the wing-like sail, made small by distance, glittering in the last setting rays of the sun as it sank behind Vesuvius — Vesuvius itself, darkly grand in shadow, and emitting from time to time volumes of pyramidal smoke, which came hurrying forth from the mouth of the crater, black as Erebus,——”

“Just like a glass-house, I suppose,” interrupted Mr. Altamont.

“And then fading gradually through a succession of grey tints, as it rose and rested like a filmy veil in the air. It was in a scene like this, and indulging in visionary speculations, such as the objects before me were calculated to inspire, that I sat musing, when the slight, moaning growl of Flora, who was cowering at my feet, caught my attention. I looked around; and, in a recess formed by the encircling masses of rocks, some little distance in the descent, I perceived a female asleep; at the same moment, above her head, I beheld a snake rearing and coiling itself in spiral folds, and, with a trembling vibration and prominent crest, gloating

upon and ready to seize its prey. The reptile was, as I afterwards learnt, one of the constrictor species, not unfrequently found in Southern Italy, and which destroy their victims by strangling. I sprang on my feet, and for an instant was stupified. My presence of mind forsook me. I was powerless; but Flora repeated her warning, and the reptile's attention seemed drawn to the dog; for, before I could rush forward, it recoiled with a hiss, and was soon lost to my eye in the thick mass of entangled brushwood that covered the spot.

“Flora continued advancing, barking triumphantly, as she perceived her antagonist retreat. The sounds awoke the sleeper. I approached; and explanation ensued: but her expressions of gratitude were so vivid that they overpowered me, more particularly as I felt I had no share in the preservation of her life, and that Providence alone had interposed. I was distressed beyond measure at thus receiving acknowledgments which I did not merit; and all I could say was, that it was fortunate—it was providential; for at one time I had intended to send

Flora by sea, and certainly her interference had been the cause of the timely discovery.

“ ‘ Ah ! ’ she replied, in a voice, the sweetness of which could only be equalled by the language she spoke, and the perfection and choice of phrase in which it was spoken ; ‘ you are an Englishman—that trait alone proves it. Where one of another nation would avail himself of the circumstance which has now occurred, to enhance his claim to notice, it is the character of *your* countrymen to evade even the due expression of grateful acknowledgment. Is this pride, which will not be repaid even by words ; or a generous disdain of praise as the reward of an action which appears (as you would imply in the present instance) too simple to call forth such a sentiment ? ’ ”

“ A philosophical Sleeping Beauty of the Wood, upon my word ! ” cried Mr. Altamont ; “ a got up scene for effect, I am afraid. Are you sure the snake was a real one ? ”

“ You may be sure that this person, from her appearance and manner, as well as from the circumstance of our extraordinary meeting, ex-

cited in me as much curiosity as it does in you, Altamont, to know who she was; and I ventured, as soon as her reiterated expressions of obligation allowed me opportunity, to inquire if I could render her farther service, by conducting her in safety to her home. She thanked me, as she added, ‘ I live near Sorrento; we are not above a mile from my palace. I had been beguiled by the beauty of the evening, to wander from my gardens farther than I intended; and, overcome by fatigue, proposed to rest under covert of yonder rocks, while I bade my attendants await my call.’ I observed that it was a most unusual exertion for one of her country and appearance. ‘ True!’ she said, ‘ but I am not guided by usages. Will you allow your guides to seek my attendants? It grows late, and the anxiety of friends, who expect me at the accustomed hour of meeting, will lead them to wonder at my absence.’

“ My two guides proceeded in different directions, shouting, in the harsh tones of the Neapolitan dialect, for the servants of this fair unknown; who were, with some difficulty, dis-

covered, and roused from the slumbers in which, like their mistress, they had indulged ; for an Italian always finds a refuge from *ennui* in sleep, which he commands at almost any hour in the four-and-twenty ; and it is invariably the resource of the multiplied dependents of the anti-room, who in that country form, as it were, so many escutcheons of pretence in the halls of their employers.

“ Accustomed as my eye had become to the splendour and gaudiness of this nation in their establishments, I was surprised to observe the peculiarly magnificent dresses of the two attendants, who now approached their mistress, making their excuse, and felicitating her after the fashion of the country, although in a more familiar manner than we Englishmen would understand, on her providential rescue ; in the same breath, and in equally extravagant terms, blaming their own negligence in quitting her, and extolling my happy interference at the moment when her life would have fallen a sacrifice. The lady’s page, whose ebony complexion appeared in all the powerful contrast which his

turban of white, studded with precious stones, and his long ear-drops of turquoise could give to it, gathered up his mistress's shawls from the spot where she had lain; and she herself, addressing me, as she rested her hand on the shoulder of her other attendant, and stood preparing to descend the path, inquired if I also were not going towards Sorrento. The expression which accompanied her words, conveyed to my mind almost an invitation; and if I had been journeying in the contrary direction, I doubt not I had turned back."

"Oh! I'll be bound to say you would, my dear Lord!" replied Mr. Altamont; "you'd have gone if she had told you to walk on your head thither, or have tumbled before her all the way, like the fool (you'll excuse me) in the pantomime."

"Well, she moved quickly on, as I acknowledged my intentions were to proceed to Sorrento, and, with a light elastic step, bounded over all the difficulties and impediments in the road. But little progress could be made in our acquaintance so long as attention was requisite

to the extreme intricacy of our path; but as we descended and reached the Pianura of Sorrento, the way gradually became less rugged, and I was enabled to join my companion. Dismissing the attendant who had hitherto served her for support, she continued the route with myself only at her side, and I was already becoming more and more fascinated with the charms and intelligence which her manners and conversation developed, when a buzz of voices, apparently little distant from us, announced the approach of a numerous assemblage of persons.

“ ‘They are surely my acquaintance,’ said my companion, listening, ‘ who, alarmed at my unusual absence, and learning the direction I had taken, have come in quest of me; let us hasten to meet them.’

“ So saying, she sprang forward; and, calling to her page at the same moment, bid him hasten and acquaint the party of her near approach. We soon met, and it would be impossible for me to describe the vivacity and animation of the scene which took place.

There were such greetings, such kissing of hands, such inquiries for the cause of absence, that one, unaccustomed to the manners of the country, would have thought the object of them had been separated, during some painful interval, from persons of the dearest kindred to her.

“ But exaggerated as their expressions and gestures sometimes appear to us, the Italians are not insincere ; they are a people of strong feeling : they are naturally given to warm expressions of attachment ; and though to a phlegmatic Englishman the cause may seem often too trivial, which calls forth their demonstrations of pleasure ; yet we ought not to judge them by our own measured mode of phrase and cautious profession ; nevertheless, however, I felt that the persons before me were of a nature so inferior to the being to whom they thus paid homage, that I was impatient of their attentions ; and, half displeased with an interruption which seemed likely to deprive me of an opportunity of knowing more of my companion, I prepared abruptly to take my leave, excusing myself on the plea of the presence of her friends, to

whom I resigned the charge, which good fortune had placed for a few happy moments in my hands.

“Rosalinda (for it *was* Rosalinda, as you may have already imagined,) chided my wish to absent myself, and pressed me to her palace, as my home during my visit to Sorrento; she looked, at least I thought so, reproachfully, as I declined her earnest entreaties, to be her guest; and when I persisted in taking my leave, I did so half reluctantly, half angry with myself for rejecting an offer which, a few minutes before, I should have embraced with the liveliest pleasure imaginable. But I was out of humour with the crowd that surrounded her; and at length became so with myself, and all the circumstances of the evening’s rencontre; and, again making my excuses, I bowed and passed on. From one of those contradictory impulses, however, under which it appears I am always doomed to act, the farther I advanced, the greater was my inclination to return and accept the proffered invitation. But still I pursued my way; and, entering Sorrento,

was soon established quietly in the apartments which my people had got ready for my arrival.

“ On the morrow, while debating with myself whether to renew the acquaintance of the preceding evening, or leave it where it was, and questioning at one moment the propriety of doing so on the score of etiquette, (*not* of prudence, I confess,) and at the next, feeling Rosalinda’s invitation sufficient to authorize my inquiries at her palace door, I was released from all doubts and perplexities on the subject by the announcement of a gentleman, who came, on her part, to inquire for me.

“ As he entered the apartment, I recognized one of the party who had contributed, in my mind, to disturb the enjoyment of my evening’s adventure; and had I not been rejoiced at an interposition so favourable to my wishes, it is probable my chagrin at the visit had shown itself in some coldness and reserve; but the frankness with which he accosted me, joined to his very earnest manner, as he repeated Rosalinda’s invitation to make her palace my home,

would of itself have dispelled any cloud of previous dissatisfaction ; and, not to tire you, my dear Altamont, with farther detail than is necessary——’

“ Oh, my dear Lord, be assured I can fill up any hiatus in your pretty story ; I can see it all *now* ; but go on. I like to hear how *very clever* these Italian ladies are, and how very—but pray proceed, my dear Lord ; I would not deprive you of living over again any of those past happy moments ; I only hope, they *are past*.”

“ Well, then, I yielded to the invitation, and proceeded with this kindly and warm-hearted envoy, at once, to Rosalinda’s residence. In a few hours, I was as comfortably and completely established there as if it had been my habitation for as many months ; but, with the novelty of my situation, the pleasure arising from Rosalinda’s society soon began to wear away, impeded and interrupted as it was, by a constant throng of attendants and followers, who beset her path from dawn till night. There was not an excursion, not even a casual wandering amidst the beauties of nature around her dwell-

ing, which seemed of themselves to invite tranquillity, and a seclusion from the world, that was free from interruption, or that could be enjoyed in the mutual society of herself, and the person whom she had, to all appearance, selected in preference to every other. I wondered each day more and more at the character of the being with whom I was associated; and though my impatience increased in proportion as I found her permitting the intrusion of individuals, who, however estimable, were still her inferiors in intellectual qualities, I had not the power nor the courage to break the silken tie which held me, nor yet the pride to refuse what I have owned I felt to be a divided interest.

“ The time came at last, however, when I could endure this state of existence no longer, and I spoke openly to Rosalinda my opinion of the train of idle followers who continually surrounded her. She seemed thoughtful; but answered me with gentleness, and admitted that perhaps I had reason to despise her companions as being inferior to myself in intellect and acquirements. ‘ Yet, if you knew their kindliness

of disposition,' she added, 'if you could read and understand their affectionate hearts—if you could bear with the harmless ebullition of their feelings and expressions of attachment for myself, and take their words and actions for what they are, the offsprings of guileless and unsophisticated nature, I am convinced you would judge the characters of my friends with less severity. You would abate a little of the contempt you are now disposed to feel for them. The homage of unfeigned admiration, too, which they profess for yourself, surely would disarm censure, even if no reciprocal feeling was engendered from it. But there is one, amongst the many who are thus devoted to me, whom, notwithstanding your fastidiousness, I am sure you would approve, were he here; I trust he will not linger long before he joins us, and then——'

“ ‘What, another!’ I said with impatience, and not disguising my displeasure. Rosalinda smiled as she added, ‘I will speak no more in his praise, since you seem unwilling to hear me, but will leave himself to prove whe-

ther I have judged amiss in supposing you would find him suited to, and worthy of yourself.’

“ I determined, in consequence of this conversation, to abandon Rosalinda’s society; and, to avoid the embarrassment of bidding her adieu, as well as the entreaties which I knew would be used to deter me from my purpose, I gave orders to my servants once more to proceed to sea, and with as much secrecy as possible reach the destination I pointed out, meaning myself to follow the line of the coast, and gain the picturesque and interesting port of Amalfi. My departure was silently taken, and no obstacle occurred to my quitting Sorrento in the manner I wished. One of the natives of the place being easily found to act as my guide, and conduct me through the various sinuosities of the shore which I intended traversing, I continued my walk for some miles, now in the midst of olive woods that clothed the valleys and gorges of the cliff, now mounting on the summit of some bold projecting point that overhung the still and azure waters of the

Mediterranean; from whence the eye wandered to the site of Naples and of Baia, to the promontory of Misenus, and the more distant islands of Procida and Ischia; and returned from the contemplation of their dazzling glories, only to dwell with more quiet satisfaction upon the humble fishing hamlet on the shore beneath, or on some retiring convent that lay bedded in the surrounding cliffs, and half hid in groves of orange and citron-trees: dwellings of man, that afforded fit emblems of a peace and security, which the outstretched regions beyond, with all their charms, and in their brightest days, had never known.

“ I forgot, however, dear Altamont, while I am dwelling on scenes which have so much interest for me, that you must, by this time, be tired of my powers of description, and I will pass them all by for the future; with the exception, however, of one spot, which is connected with my narrative, and which, from the evidence it affords of the singular truth in the pictures given us by Roman poets of the scenery of their country, I must, in its proper place,

beg you to listen to; for I know you are an admirer of the *ancient* inhabitants of Italy and of their works, if you are not of those who possess the land at the present day."

"Yes," observed Altamont, "the modern Italians bear about as much resemblance to the ancient Romans, as your Rosalinda does to the Cornelias and Portias of other times. I beg your pardon—you'll excuse me—proceed."

"I lingered on my road," continued Lord Mowbray, "enchanted by the various beauties which on every side met me; and forgot that my place of destination was yet many miles distant, and that I should with difficulty reach it before nightfall. I inquired, therefore, of my guide, how far we were from Massa, a small town at the extreme point of the bay; and partly from a desire to return again to some particular spots in the path I had quitted, and partly from the fear of being unable to reach Amalfi while daylight lasted, I determined on seeking shelter among the fishermen's houses, at the former place, and to indulge in fresh contemplation, on the morrow, of the scenes I had passed; for I

found the works of Nature and my portfolio the best means of diverting my mind from a subject, which had I dwelt upon, my resolutions of seeing Rosalinda no more would have proved quite in vain.

“ Three days had elapsed since my quitting Sorrento, and I still lingered in its environs, secure in the secluded retreat I had chosen, and the unfrequented paths which I trod. My portfolio will witness for me that I was not idle, and the beauties of the scenes which held me captive there, inadequately as they are rendered by my pencil, will remove, I am sure, every suspicion you may entertain of the motives of my stay.”

“ Oh, my Lord! no explanations—I am quite convinced of the purity of your motives !”

“ I had resolved, however, on making out my journey to Amalfi on the following morning, knowing that my servants must have arrived there, and that, in a country where banditti are not unfrequent, any farther delay might lead to apprehension for my safety, and consequent search after me. My conclusions were just ; but

alas! the reflection had come too late. I had already trod back some miles of the road between Massa and Sorrento, in order to regain the path branching off to Amalfi, when my attention was arrested by a scene of such singular grandeur and interest, that to pass it by and not attempt its delineation was impossible. True it is, however, that Nature always baffles the pencil in proportion as she draws forth our admiration of her; and my study cost me a considerable time to render it in any way worthy of what was before me: perhaps, too, I had been roused into a kind of competition in my work, by the perusal of Silius Italicus, who has left us a description of the identical spot I was portraying, in language of such truth and poetry, as at once to lead to its recognition, even though so many ages have intervened, and so many storms and tempests have rolled over it; while at the same time he gives to his picture all the sublimity and magnificence it really possesses.

“ I had written down the lines on my paper, from a little volume of his poem, which I ever carried with me as the best classical

guide to the scenes of antiquity ; and, as if in rivalry of his powers, continued my efforts to render the portrait as true and living as his own,—when my attention was roused by a sudden exclamation from my attendant ; and, lifting up my eyes, I beheld a human being differing, certainly, as much from the half-naked and ragged appearance of the inhabitants of the country, as he was *out of keeping* with the scene before us. It was Le Brun, my valet, who in breathless haste approached the spot where I sat, presenting a figure which I shall never forget. My first impulse was to laugh ; for the *exquisite* style of his costume had turned to the poor fellow's discomfiture in the exertions of his search for me. My inclination to be amused at the decoration of his person, nevertheless, gave way to another feeling, as he flung himself on his knees before me, and, with a voice and expression of countenance which evinced sincere attachment and solicitude for my safety, thanked the Saints, and the Blessed Virgin, that I was alive ; then starting upon his feet, he looked first at me, and then at him-

self, and, as if drawing a comparison between our relative appearance, he exclaimed: ‘*Ah! mon Dieu! et Monsieur est si tranquille, s’occupant paisiblement comme si de rien étoit, pendant que tout le monde se désobit là bas, et que pauvre Le Brun a couru ça et la ventre à terre afin de le trouver! Voyez donc le sang-froid de Messieurs les Anglois: jamais je ne le comprendrais. Mais vous voilà, Monsieur, grâces au ciel, sain et sauf, et me voilà quitte pour la peur,*’ and looking down with woful grimace at his torn garments, he added, ‘*et la perte de mes habits.*’

“ It was some moments before I could recover sufficiently from my surprise to ask any questions; and when I did, I was constantly interrupted by Le Brun’s exclamations at my imprudence, at my disregard of the anxiety which my delay occasioned himself and my servants, and, above all, of the solicitude and illness which the Signora Rosalinda had experienced on account of my sudden departure. In the end, I obtained something like a clear statement of what had occurred. Le Brun, it ap-

peared, had reached Amalfi on the same evening that he quitted Sorrento, and had remained there, patiently awaiting my coming, two entire days ; when, as I failed to make my appearance, as he received no intelligence of me, and as reports of the danger of the route which I had to traverse reached him from all quarters, he determined on returning to Sorrento by sea, and following the road by which I had left it, in the endeavour to find me, or satisfy his apprehensions respecting my fate.

“ With this object he had embarked, leaving one of my people, in the event of my arrival, to inform me of his movements ; and calculating that he should make the journey in return, by land, in the space of two days. On reaching Sorrento, his inquiries were naturally directed to the dwelling of Rosalinda : there he obtained no intelligence that could at all tend to diminish his anxiety ; but, on the contrary, the alarm she expressed for my safety, added only to the dismay which my sudden and secret departure had occasioned, and contributed more than ever to confirm him in his opinion of the disastrous

issue of my journey. Rosalinda, he told me, had never quitted her apartment since my return had ceased to be a matter of hope; and, overcome with sorrow, had refused consolation from the hands of even her most intimate associates. On being made acquainted with my servant's arrival, she had given her domestics instant directions to proceed in search of me: she had informed the Government of Naples of my sudden disappearance; and while parties were sent out to scour the country between Sorrento and Amalfi, Le Brun himself, and a gentleman in whom Rosalinda placed the utmost confidence, left the place, with other friends, accompanied by guides and servants, who were to track every by-path and unfrequented route, in order to gain intelligence of my fate."

"No wonder, indeed, my Lord, you were run down," said Mr. Altamont, "with such numbers after you. I wish it had been in a better cause: but let me hear the end. You went back, of course, to Sorrento, not to the other place?"

"Le Brun," continued Lord Mowbray, "in-

formed me that at certain points of the road, he and his party separated in different directions; and, after pushing their search to a certain extent, and to a given time, were to re-assemble on the same spot which they had quitted. They had already divided, to meet again, three times; and, drawing out his watch as he spoke, Le Brun pressed me *earnestly* to lose no time in accompanying him to the rendezvous, that the anxiety of his companions, which continued to increase in proportion as each succeeding effort proved unsuccessful, might not suffer any unnecessary augmentation.

“ You will readily allow, my good friend, that this was not a moment when a man’s powers of reflection would have the fairest chance. My valet’s account of the interest which my fate had excited, amongst those very persons, whom, a few days before, from a feeling of caprice and selfishness, I was conscious I had unjustly despised; the idea of Rosalinda’s solicitude, and ill-repaid hospitality, (even if no stronger motive had influenced me in regard to her); the want of a *reason* for re-

fusing to return and acknowledge my debt of gratitude for their exertions in my behalf;—all conspired to force me to the meeting, which Le Brun urged with his utmost energy and impatience; and hastily tying^o up my portfolio, I prepared to accompany him. The joy of the poor fellow seemed at this moment to have obliterated in him all recollection of his own pitiable appearance; and, as he scrambled on before me, and went skipping on all-fours from rock to rock, he looked every moment back to me with an air of triumph; and as he gained the last summit, his hat was waved repeatedly, and a loud shout followed from his fellow-labourers, who hastened forward to meet us; and I soon stood in the midst of full twenty persons, all gathering round me, suffocating me with their embraces; (for, you must understand, such is the common salutation of the country, even amongst the men)—“I hope not amongst the men *and* women,” said Mr. Altamont, continuing the parenthesis)—“hugging—congratulating—inquiring of me—then pausing—and then repeating their demonstrations of joy and

their questions, over and over again; and, at length, supposing me half dead with fatigue, and exhausted, they were actually preparing to carry me between them,—when I obtained a hearing, and endeavoured to explain my object in having loitered so many days beyond my intention, and my deep regret at occasioning so much anxiety to Rosalinda and her friends, however flattering that anxiety might be to my feelings.

“ As I spoke, one of the party, whom I immediately discovered to be a stranger to me, stepped from the group, and, taking my hand with warmth, assured me their labours were fully rewarded by having found me safe, and that Rosalinda needed only my presence to make her forget what she had suffered on my account. I imagined he spoke these last words with a tone and expression of concern, as if he implied I had acted wrong; and I at once recognized in the speaker the person in whose favour Rosalinda had seemed so much prepossessed, and whose expected arrival, and the terms in which she spoke of it, had hastened my determination to fly from her society. But the

frankness and captivating manner of my supposed rival were irresistible ; and I did no more than justice to his noble and disinterested heart, as you will learn in the sequel, in not suffering a suspicion of his sincerity to cross my mind, while he continued thus earnestly to press my return.

“ ‘ I will go,’ I said ; and, without a word more, I began to retrace my steps to Sorrento by the side of my new acquaintance. I soon found I was in the company of a man very different indeed from the class which had formed the society of Rosalinda during my acquaintance with her. He was well read upon every subject ; possessed a delicacy of perception and a depth of capacity rarely united ; and with it no display—no vanity. My first impression of his character was confirmed on longer acquaintance. Without being a fanatic or a bigot, he was the most zealous religionist, and, without any effeminacy or weakness, the most refined of mortals. I have known many good, many great characters ; but so many rare qualities united I have never seen, except in Alessandro Cor-

rajo. Such was the name of the person whom I then met for the first time, and under such peculiar circumstances. During our walk, notwithstanding the high tone of his conversation, and the character of his demeanour, which had something of reserve and dignity in it, which evaded familiar discourse, I ventured to put several questions to him relative to Rosalinda, which I thought might elicit some particulars of her history, and of the degree of intimacy subsisting between her and the person I was addressing; but at that time I could only learn that he was her friend in all the purity of the term.

“ I will pass over Rosalinda’s reception of myself—it was too flattering—distressingly so:—and I need not describe, for you will conceive better than I can tell you, the delusive state of existence which succeeded to our reunion. Hours, days, months glided away :—the longer I lived in her society, the more I became attached to her; and yet I cannot say I was positively in love with her. This might proceed from certain doubts respecting her, or it might be

that my hour was not come: I cannot say. - But as time went on, the intercourse existing between the Conte Corrajo and myself became gradually more open; my inquiries became more direct, and his replies less reserved and cautious.

“ At length, one day he addressed me, in answer to some questions which I had put rather pointedly, and the object of which he sufficiently understood: ‘ I have always found,’ he said, ‘ that evasion of the truth, whatever pain its disclosure may at first cost, causes in the end more suffering than it avoids; but perhaps (for something of imperfection and of selfishness will creep into and mingle with our best intentions,) in the present case my apparent sincerity may possibly afford me the means of ascertaining what it most imports me to know, and therefore little deserves the title it would assume. Judge of this, when I tell you that I love, and have long loved Rosalinda; but the conviction is at length clear to me. I have watched with too much acuteness to be deceived, and, with feelings, alas! of too deep interest, (though never have they been mingled with the bitterness of

envy towards yourself,) have, discovered the fatal truth. Rosalinda's heart and affections are wholly yours.'

“ Prepared, as I might be supposed, for the knowledge of a fact which, had I doubted, I could not for a moment have endured my state of intimacy with her, I nevertheless was deeply shocked at the idea of having involuntarily supplanted, in Rosalinda's affections, a man whom I looked upon as my superior in every sense, and whose noble and amiable qualities prompted my earnest wish to call him by the name of friend. I started back as he spoke, and the word ‘Impossible!’ escaped from me, in a feeling of surprise that the avowal should proceed from *his* lips; for it could not arise from any conviction in my own mind of its fallacy, or impossibility; and I felt my face glow with undefinable sensations, as I dwelt on the words which he had uttered.

“ ‘My Lord,’ he continued, (the English are all my Lords on the Continent, you know,) ‘your diffidence induces you to conceal even from yourself the certainty of this truth; but *my*

unhappy attachment draws aside and penetrates the veil. Suffer me to proceed: About three years since, I first knew the Signora Rosalinda: we met at the court of Turin. Her family was of Genoa. She was then only just emerged from her tutelage, having lost her parents at an early age, being of very noble family, and possessed of great wealth. Added to her personal charms, and the endowments of her mind, she became an object of general attraction. During her nonage, many overtures had of course been made, of alliance with one so distinguished as herself; but circumstances had contributed to render them all abortive, and she became mistress of herself and of her fortunes, unshackled by any engagement, and free from every tie—an occurrence very rare in this country. When I first became acquainted with her, she was of an age, and possessed a mind sufficient, to make her value the independence thus vested in her; and, in the indifference with which she received every fresh votary at the shrine of her beauty, it was long before I felt that my distant and sincere admiration had

wrought any thing in my favour. Our intimacy, however, increased; and it was when admitted to the privilege of her domestic circle, the narrow limits of which displayed in their true colours the character of the individuals composing it, and at the same time the taste and feelings of her who had drawn them around her, that I fully appreciated Rosalinda's worth.'

“The Count, seeing I listened with deep and sincere interest, continued his relation, or rather his panegyric.

“‘Her natural endowments,’ he said, ‘were varied and powerful; her feelings supplied her with that intuitive knowledge which yields in nothing to acquired perception, as far, at least, as direct views of any subject can be requisite to an understanding of it. From her, I derived new lights on themes I had fancied exhausted; from her conversation, perceptions were awakened within me, which I knew not I possessed; and with this superiority was combined such a winning sincere humility, such a softened feminine feeling, that

leant, as it were, upon the opinion of those with whom she conversed, and without which no acquirement, no natural superiority in woman, however dazzling its influence on the understanding, can ever charm the heart of man, (at least, could ever charm my heart,) that I at once acknowledged her claim to command and subdue all judgments to obedience with her own. And if I admitted this power in her intellectual qualities, how much was it likely to be increased when, daily and hourly, I contemplated beauty such as hers! Need I say I became desperately enamoured, and wished (the word is a poor word to express my soul's dearest object) to make her my bride? Others might think it was her fortune I coveted, but Rosalinda was not the woman to misinterpret motives: she might, possibly, be deceived, but she could never suspect deceit till its rude reality was forced upon her. On this point, therefore, I had nothing to fear. She did not, however, accept my love. Motives of generosity, I knew, influenced her in declining an offer which she felt would be ill repaid

by a less vivid attachment than that which I professed; but, at the same time, she avowed to me that her heart and her hand were free. I imagined this sentence did not preclude all hope, and I continued to be the favoured *friend*. In several excursions to the different states of Italy, to Milan, Venice, Florence, and to Rome, I was the companion of Rosalinda. To those who have wandered amid the fair scenes of Nature in our country, or studied the efforts of art *alone*, the sufferings of solitude under such circumstances are painfully familiar; to them, the want of interchange of thought presents itself in the loss of many of the advantages, and much of the charm which otherwise would be theirs; and need I explain to you, whose mind is so capable of appreciating the beauties around you, and so susceptible of the feelings which the scenes and productions of this country are calculated to inspire, that our intimacy increased in proportion as we travelled under the fostering influence of sentiments united in the admiration of the same sublime objects? And if a congeniality of temper and

tastes, in the case of individuals attached by no other interests but those of a common pursuit, can enhance enjoyment, and draw nearer the ties of intercourse—how immeasurably superior, how inexpressibly greater must the felicity prove, how dearer and stronger still the bond which unites, when the companion who shares such happiness is the being in whom our existence and soul is centered ! But I enjoyed transports like these only to suffer the more bitterly. My fate is now sealed ; *you* have at once, and without effort, perhaps without any wish to do so, (and he looked doubtfully in my face as he spoke,) ‘gained Rosalinda’s affections : be it as it may—*you are beloved !*”

“ I did not think,” cried Mr. Altamont, pulling his chair closer to Lord Mowbray’s, “ that any one, save an Englishman, much less an Italian, could utter so sane a speech. Are you sure, my Lord, you have not composed it for him ?”

Lord Mowbray smiled : “ I am aware,” said he, “ that you doubt the faithfulness of my report ; but I am not much given to inven-

tion; least of all should I invent virtues for a rival."

"So much the worse. I could wish," said Mr. Altamont, "your whole story was but an invention—it grows too serious."

"But you must not interrupt me," continued Lord Mowbray, "or I shall never reach the end of my history. I can account to you, in some measure, for the noble disinterestedness of my friend's reflections, by briefly telling you that he was of Piedmontese origin, and had been brought up under the influence of opinions bordering on those of the Waldenses, with which of course you are acquainted."

Checked, however, in the flow of his sentiments, Lord Mowbray had again recourse to passing his fingers through his hair before he could proceed. At length, after drawing a heavy respiration, he resumed his narrative :

"Spite of this avowal, Corrajo lived on with Rosalinda and myself. The more I knew of them both, the more I delighted in their society. It was impossible not to love and honour Alessandro Corrajo:—Rosalinda did both. I feel

convinced she did ; but there was a worthless being of the party, whom if she honoured less, she loved more. One morning, I found her in tears. Corrajo was gone. An open letter, which Rosalinda held out to me, explained the cause of his departure. It ran thus:—

“ ‘ My dear friends, It is because you are very dear to me, that I leave you. Let me but know that you mutually make each other’s happiness, and honourably make it, (for without honour no happiness exists long,) and I shall rejoice. I will seek mine elsewhere. Though it is easy to write these words, yet who can understand the anguish they cause to the writer, unless it *be one*, who, in a similar situation, and from similar motives, adopts the same course that I have chosen. In after-times, when you are established in England, I will, if you permit me, come to you ; Till then, farewell !

ALESSANDRO CORRAJO.’

“ Rosalinda’s eyes were fixed intently upon me, while I read this note : I felt they were, though I did not dare look up. A revulsion of

thought and sensation came over me, and I was speechless. ‘*When you are established in England!*’ were words of awful sound, and big with meaning which troubled me, and brought me back to a conviction of the moral position in which I was placed. I saw myself on a frightful precipice, and I saw another, dearer than myself, standing beside me.”

“No! no! stop there, my good Lord,” said Altamont, “you mistook, believe me! Not *dearer*, that is a wrong term: had she been even *as* dear, there would have been no precipice in question. For *her*, at least, most fortunately it was otherwise; it is all quite right, though *you* were wrong.”

Lord Mowbray gulped down the observation, and proceeded: “Yes! I was placed in a situation, in which a man of honour and tenderness ought to have spoken, and spoken out: but a spell was on me, I did *not* speak, I laid down the letter in silence, and Rosalinda from that day became a prey to the deepest melancholy. She proposed to me, after a time, to return to Naples. We did so. Whatever were her own

sorrows, she exerted herself to render my existence happy. Her society was chosen in conformity to my predilections and my tastes. Her every action—her language—her manner, were all modelled on principles and rules which she had heard approved by me; and even down to national prejudices and points of etiquette, she was the slave of my will, and became, for my sake, often the object of ridicule and satire from her countrywomen, than whom no nation are more tenacious of their privileges, or more ready to attack the pusillanimity which they consider guilty of a surrender of them. Our whole life was passed in a constant succession of entertainments. I felt happy in the relief they afforded me from the *mal aise* which I endured, I hardly knew why; and was flattered by the unwearied anxiety of her who thus sought to promote my enjoyment. Yet, though the sweet habit of seeking Rosalinda's society constantly led me to her residence, I no longer experienced the same delight in her presence; and if I inquired of myself why this was so, there was no outward cause or ground, which I could

assign for the change. Her life, her habits, her feelings, were all sacrificed to mine: but I was still restless, I was still dissatisfied. The source of unhappiness lay within my own bosom. I felt conscious that I was acting ungenerously by one to whom I owed a very different conduct, yet had not the courage either to confess or atone for my fault, or folly, whichever name you will give it.

“The spell, however, which held me in this state of painful hesitation, wavering between what I felt due to a being, led by my own thoughtless conduct to place her happiness in my keeping, and my reluctance to adopt the cruel alternative of ridding myself of the embarrassment by an open avowal of my feelings, was at length broken by one of those fortuitous circumstances, the insignificance even of which cannot prevent their being attributed to providential interference, since we often see the simplest means employed by Omnipotence to effect the most complicated ends.”

Mr. Altamont nodded his head, saying, “Right, my good Lord; I taught you that,

and am happy you remember your lesson so well by rote; hem! hem! I wish I could say by *heart*." Lord Mowbray gave one of his melancholy smiles, and proceeded.

"Amongst the English travellers resident at Naples, there was a certain Mr. Beverley, a man of noble family, but whose intimacy I had never cultivated; partly from a want of sympathy in our general tastes and pursuits, and partly from the same cause which had kept me at a distance from my own countrymen:—I mean, my wish to understand and know thoroughly the people amongst whom I resided, and an acquaintance with whose manners and habits was a principal object in my travels. We were, however, on speaking terms; and visits had occasionally passed between Mr. Beverley and myself. He called one morning at my door, and was received. After discussing the current topics of the day,—the opera—the last favourite singer—the last great loss at play—and the scandal of Naples in general, he pre-faced his allusion to the subject of his communication, by many apologies for the liberty he

was taking, the want of sufficient intimacy to authorise what he was doing, &c., &c.; and then again excused himself on the score of regard for a fellow-countryman so distinguished as myself, whose national character and reputation, at such a distance from home, was as dear and valuable to him as his own, till I was perfectly lost in surmise as to the probable explanation of his mysterious address.

“ At length, he drew forth a letter ; and, at the same time repeating his apologies, he began reading the paragraph on which he stated his interference was grounded. It referred to Rosalinda and myself, and contained, as is generally the case in such instances, some shade of truth in the leading outline of *fact*, while the details were made up of falsehood and gratuitous assumption. The conclusions at which the notable compiler of this precious scandal arrived, were briefly summed up in the last sentence :—‘ Thus the heir of the distinguished title of Mowbray is on the point of being sacrificed to the arts of a designing and intriguing foreigner ; one whose former life and habits, if

fully disclosed, would present, in their repulsive and hateful nature, an antidote to the charms of the syren, let her victim be as weak or as madly devoted as possible. Hitherto she has had the skill to evade, or the success to escape detection ; or if such of her paramours as have fled from her blandishments in time, and saved themselves from the toils spread for them, have known her true character, they have sought to conceal their own follies and delusion by their silence. Rosalinda stands condemned, on moral evidence, as the most vicious and depraved of her sex. How much is it to be lamented that our noble countryman should fall a sacrifice to this ignorance of his situation ! Is there no means that can be used to awaken him to his danger, and rouse him, before it is too late for exertion, to throw off these dishonourable chains ? Were I on the spot,' continued the writer of this notable epistle, 'though unknown to him, I feel convinced I could not resist the powerful impulse which dictates this wish to save him from impending disgrace and misery. I should go to him and declare at once all the circumstances of the case ;

and though the task, I fear, would be an ungrateful one, yet the sense of having discharged a great duty would be my reward. The Dormers (you know them?) are here. Poor Ophelia, to whom the subject of this letter paid formerly very marked attention, and succeeded in making a deep impression on her heart, is the picture of misery, and undergoes constant martyrdom in hearing the conduct of her former admirer discussed in the manner it is in all societies. To those who are acquainted with this amiable girl, and her attachment to the person I allude to, the contrast of choice on his part is a matter of astonishment, and induces the strongest feelings of regret at the probable issue of his conduct.'

“ Mr. Beverley paused as he concluded this contemptible and shallow effort on the part of his correspondent, to conceal the real motive of the calumnies and falsehoods in which he had indulged at mine and Rosalinda's expense; at least unjustly at *hers*, as far as I was concerned; for never was victim held in chains less galling, or more in his own power to cast off, than myself;

and as for knowledge of her character, I did not conceive I was so blinded by passion as not to be aware of the real feeling and disposition of one with whom I had been for months in daily intercourse. As I said, Mr. Beverley paused, and appeared somewhat agitated when he arrived at the end of his task. I confess I had listened to him with much impatience, but made up my mind to hear all I could before I spoke.

“ I then looked him very steadily in the face, and said, ‘ It is better, Sir, that I remain ignorant of the name of your correspondent (neither can I suppose, that he himself wishes otherwise) ; for, dishonourable as he has proved himself, by giving utterance to the slander which I have just heard, and which is as false as its author is contemptible and wicked, I fear I should not easily refrain from chastising him as he merits, did I, in the first impulse of my indignation, know who he was ; but I myself should be the first to regret having yielded to my feelings on an occasion so little worthy of exciting them ; and should consider I had stepped from my situation as a gentleman, and acted a very ill-

judged part towards the lady who is the object of this attack, if I condescended to reply in any shape to the charges and insinuations of her accuser. You perceive' (for I observed he began to tremble for himself) 'that I at once admit your character, Mr. Beverley, of being merely the channel of communication; though I am afraid, in acquitting you of participation in the mischief intended, I must do so at the expense of your understanding. You are very young, and perhaps did not consider, that, in becoming the tool of an artful person on this occasion, you were exposing yourself to a suspicion of being the author of the calumnies propagated; at least you would be so judged by the world, till you proved the contrary to be the fact. I have done, however: I repeat it would be giving too much consequence to the tissue of falsehoods you have just read to me, to notice them farther; and if you acquaint your employer with the fate of your mission, I only beg that you do so with a proper regard to truth, as to how it was received, and with an assurance to him, that if any circumstance

could add to the contempt I feel for his conduct, it is the unmanly way in which he has endeavoured to lead you blindly into this affair, while he had not courage openly to proceed in it in his own person.'

"Mr. Beverley bowed, and retired, without any attempt at farther apology or explanation; and, in this part of his embassy, certainly acquitted himself with more sense than when he consented to undertake it. He left Naples immediately, I believe, for I saw no more of him; nor, indeed, have I ever met him since. Well, Altamont, I must hurry to the close of this sad story—it does not tell well for me."

"No," said Mr. Altamont; "I cannot flatter you so far as to say it does."

"I will not excuse myself; but proceed:—As my feelings of indignation at the manner as well as matter of this communication subsided, I began to view my relative situation with Rosalinda in somewhat a different light. It was true I had discovered that I was no longer *happy* in her society; but I argued that

my not being so, proceeded from a sense of injustice towards *her*. I had never reflected that I might also be unjust to myself and others, who had claims upon my duty and affection, by thus clinging to an attachment which, even with all my preference for the object of it, I had never looked to in any definite or conclusive point of view. This reflection occurred to me now for the first time. I asked myself the question—in what light do I appear to others, in regard to my actions? The answer was obvious to me. But I have a right to love whom I please, to marry whom I please;—but to marry Rosalinda—it was a step I had never yet contemplated; and one which, without resolving *not* to take, I had never as yet inquired if I was prepared to hazard. These reflections, having reduced a subject which pressed heavily upon me into a narrow compass, were likely soon to bring in their train some decisive conclusion. I felt it impossible that matters *could* go on as they had done; and although I had habit, inclination, and indolence to contend with, and, yielding to their influence, still con-

tinued for a time to linger in Rosalinda's society; yet every day the conviction grew stronger upon me of the necessity of coming to the resolution either of making her my wife, or abandoning her for ever. I confess, much as I despised, and, indeed, disbelieved at first, the mass of calumny heaped upon her by Mr. Beverley's correspondent, yet its poison was not entirely without effect. I ruminated on the mixture of truth and falsehood that ran through what I had heard, till I separated, as I imagined, what was worthy of credit, and what the reverse; and as admission of the possibility, first of one fact, and then of another, found place in my mind, my distrust of the accuser gradually abated. The bias my mind had taken, was sufficiently apparent. I will not attempt to excuse the want of principle betrayed in this change of feelings and opinion. *I called it reason* at the time; and acted upon it as if it had been such. I called it justice; and felt satisfied my decisions were founded on the strictest laws of right. I became, in short, suspicious of Rosalinda: I scrutinized her mode

and manner of existence. I considered her conduct equivocal; her character as any thing but free from taint. Could I then make a being of *such* a stamp my wife? It was impossible. What happiness could be expected from such an union, where want of confidence obtruded itself on the first outset, and in the contemplation only of such an event. It was in vain I felt, that in the first stage of my acquaintance with Rosalinda, it became me thus to inquire if the object I was pursuing were worthy of my regard, were such as I could desire to be united to in the indissoluble ties of marriage, and, in the calmer moments of reason and reflection, hope to look up to with sentiments of esteem and respect. It was in vain that the remembrance recurred to me, that what I now did was done *too late*,—unless character, honour, even common humanity, were to be set at nought, and sacrificed to my selfishness and want of decision. As if anxious, however, to find an excuse for the line of conduct I had been preparing to adopt, I daily dwelt on all the little circumstances of Rosalinda's life, since our first

acquaintance ; and, in every one, thought I found some ground for the suspicions that hourly haunted me. My resolution at last was taken : I quitted Naples. I addressed a few lines to her, whose charms had so long spread around me the delusive dream of existence, from which I now awoke ; but I made no attempt at explanation ; I gave no reason for my abrupt departure, for I dared not trust to the vindication which I felt Rosalinda, spite of my suspicions, had the means of offering, in regard to herself and all her actions. My only safety was in sudden flight. My letter was cold and unanswerable. Rosalinda never replied to it. Would to God my conscience had been equally silent ! but I have felt it here and here” (striking his head and heart) “ ever since.”

“ You were wrong, certainly,” said Mr. Altamont ; “ but it is best always to retreat from error, and not, because one has been half-way on the road to ruin, continue on to the journey’s end. Poor Rosalinda ! was she totally silent ? was she quite passive under the blow ?”

“ Not a word—not a reproach escaped her. Her silence has been her only rebuke, and it has sunk deep——”

“ Ah!” replied Mr. Altamont, “ this is curious; but she has pursued you here, it seems, though the character in which she comes is strange enough. She is engaged as prima donna at the Opera, I believe?”

“ I know not,” replied Lord Mowbray, “ how all this is, or what it means; I have seen her once only while staying at Montgomery Hall, at some house in the neighbourhood; but I fled her presence: and from that very cause I am here at this moment. I came hither to reflect upon what I should do.”

“ Oh! not marry her surely, I hope, after having had courage to resist all allurements to do so in the very atmosphere of the original syrens themselves. Be assured, my dear Lord, it would never have done—it will never do. Had she not appeared on the stage, it were different, perhaps; but since she has *chosen* such a resource, (it must be choice,) that settles the matter.”

Lord Mowbray sighed. “ Well, Altamont, I can talk no more to-night : I never talked so much before, and never shall again, I believe. Good-night !”—and they separated, to reflect upon, and to feel, the unhappy results and true sense of Flirtation.

CHAPTER VII.

“ O hone a rie ! O hone a rie !
The pride of Albin’s line is o’er,
And fallen Glenartney’s stateliest tree—
We ne’er shall see Lord Ronald more !”

WALTER SCOTT.

WHEN our main subject was interrupted by following Lord Mowbray to the retirement he had chosen near London, where the history of his early life has been developed in his account given of it to Mr. Altamont, the family at Montgomery Hall were left in a state of great anxiety and agitation, occasioned by the visit of the mysterious stranger in the mask. Whatever efforts had been made by General Montgomery to conceal the real state of his mind, evidence of what was passing within too plainly showed itself in the absence of that serenity of

countenance which was his peculiar characteristic. A look of care withered his placid brow ; and the smile that was wont to play around his mouth was exchanged for a fallen expression of woe, which marked, more than the lapse of time had ever done, the deep furrows of advancing years.

There was also a change in Lady Emily. Her quick, light step became measured, and as it were thoughtful, in its path ; the song that she carolled gaily through the house, in passing from one part of it to another, was no longer heard ; and she would sit, listless and unoccupied, gazing on vacancy.

One evening, while Miss Macalpine was studying her favourite Madame De Sevigné, and Lady Emily was listlessly touching some chords of her harp, Miss Macalpine said, after a long pause, during which she had been contemplating the changed expression of Lady Emily's countenance—" I ha'e been thinking, Lady Emily, it's mony a lang day now since Lord Mowbray gied awa' in that *burky* manner ;—I wonder whaur he is now ?"

“What made you think of him, Alpinia?”

“No’ a bit, but I miss him; I think he had a pleasaunt way wi’ him, and the General began to tak’ to him; for ance he forms a habit, he gets a liking for the company of ony ane, and can ill spare them: there’s that feckless bodie, Sir Richard Townley, just because he chaunced to come, and remained; though he’s but a kind, quiet, silly bodie, he gets leave to roost here ablins for life.”

“Poor Sir Richard! he is a lonely creature; he has no one in the world to care for, or to love him; and that is such a melancholy case, that were he twenty times more vapid than he is, I should feel inclined to soothe and cherish him.”

“Ay, lassie, you ha’e mony o’ your uncle’s ways o’ thinking and feeling; the mair the better.”

“Besides,” continued Lady Emily, “he has become so useful to my dear uncle in his minor cares, and is so anxious to please him, that it is quite reason enough for me to hope that he will live and die with us; but as to Lord

Mowbray," (and she hesitated, and coloured,) "he, you know, is but a new acquaintance, and my uncle does not seem to miss him."

"That's like eneugh; but yoursel', Lady Emily, dinna ye find the time langsome; and are na ye unco dowie like, since the young Lord's awa'?"

"I thought him very agreeable, and liked him—rather liked him; but yet, I hardly know *why*. No! Alpinia, I know what you mean; but it is not *that* which makes me melancholy; it is the change which all of us have observed in my dear uncle. Since the visit of that mysterious stranger, there seems to be a noxious influence shed over his mind, which communicates itself to every thing around. He hardly now bears to hear us sing, and never joins me; all is changed from what it was, and in how short a time—it is scarcely a week, and we *were* so happy! and then, the melancholy fate of Rose—that is another source of grief to me. I am depressed, dear Alpinia, by these circumstances, and it is in vain I struggle to prevent their influence over me."

At this moment, Lady Frances entered the room. "So, Mr. Carlton is arrived, I am happy to say, and I trust his presence will relieve the dull monotony of our silent hours."

"Is he come back?" cried Lady Emily, starting up; "then, no doubt, he will have brought some tidings of Rose: where is he?"

"He is with my uncle, in the breakfast-room."

"Don't you think I might go, and knock at the door, and just ask my uncle?" And without waiting for an answer, she ran past her sister, and, hastening down the great staircase, she met Mr. Carlton.

Forgetful, or rather unconscious of the interpretation that might be given to her manner, she addressed him with the unrestrained eagerness of feeling which her anxiety for the intelligence he was supposed to bring naturally prompted. "Oh! Mr. Carlton, how happy I am to see you!" and she held out her hand. "What news have you brought us? have you been able to learn any tidings of Rose?"

Her breathless agitation, her kindly extend-

ed hand, all seemed to Mr. Carlton's presumptuous interpretation to be indicative of an uncontrollable passion for himself which she had hitherto disguised, but which could not be longer concealed. He caught her hand, pressed it rapturously to his lips, and declared he had never known a moment's pleasure since he last beheld her! This mode of receiving her greeting, quickly brought her to a sense of her own imprudence.

"It is of Rose," she said, drawing back, "that I come to inquire; and it is your obliging readiness, in having acceded to my uncle's wishes, by going to inquire for that unhappy girl, which makes me feel so grateful to you!"

"And yet," he said, with a look and smile of the utmost self-complacency—"and yet, suppose I should not be content with gratitude!" and again he attempted to take her hand.

"Sir—Mr. Carlton, I do not understand you. I must go—I must go to my uncle!"

"Not till you promise to hear me!" he

said: and he led her into a room, the door of which opened on the staircase. "Dear Lady Emily, forgive me!" he continued; "but indeed I were deserving of losing this opportunity for ever, if I suffered it to pass by, without taking advantage of it, to declare, what you must have observed, that I am deeply attached to you, and desirous of making such proposals as I think your uncle, the General, cannot disapprove."

Emily, utterly confused, or rather confounded, did not immediately reply; and Mr. Carlton, with increased confidence, went on.

"Do but confirm, with your gracious lips, what your eyes, your manner, your blushes, have so sweetly betrayed to me, and I will fly to your uncle to make known my happiness, and to procure his sanction to our union."

Lady Emily's unfeigned surprise during this declaration, which had hitherto made her silent, brought her to a sense of composure; and with that innocent dignity, which awed even the presumptuous Carlton, she replied, "Indeed,

Mr. Carlton, you so astonish me, that I have not had sufficient presence of mind to explain away the mistake under which you labour."

"Mistake!" said Mr. Carlton, starting back; "surely no mistake! your manner!"

"If my manner, in the late brief moment of my accosting you, assumed a colouring, which it most assuredly never had before, I must beg leave to say, that my great interest in poor Rose, alone could have occasioned it; and as it is impossible that I should affect to misunderstand the flattering meaning of your words in respect to myself, I must beg to undeceive you, and to express, in the most explicit and decided manner, that I never did, and never shall, entertain any other sentiment towards you, than that which, I hope, I feel towards every one—the kindness and respect I owe to all my uncle's friends."

Mr. Carlton stood abashed—confounded—enraged; but with a ready effrontery he rallied his scattered senses, and began to affect to laugh, saying, "My dear Lady Emily, pray do not alarm yourself; I have now proved, what I

always have heard was true, that ladies are as credulous, when the power of their charms is in question, as they are apt to be hasty. I have certainly misunderstood your meaning; but you must blame yourself.—Ha, ha, ha!—I cannot help laughing; my dear Lady Emily, you have a great deal to learn—ha, ha!—you are indeed quite new to the world!”

Lady Emily, somewhat abashed, and considerably indignant at the insolence of this impertinent coxcomb, could not for a minute or two regain her composure; but, recollecting herself, she replied with great dignity: “At all events, Sir, I have just been taught one useful lesson, which is, to be made aware how far self-conceit may lead one into error, and how much farther impudence may attempt its concealment.” Having thus spoken, she awaited not for any farther conversation, but hastily withdrew.

She was no sooner alone, than she reproached herself for having allowed an impetuosity of manner to subject her to the insolence of such a man; and she determined to check that tendency

to yield to impulses, even when innocent, which she felt aware must ever lay her open to misinterpretation, perhaps to insolence and injustice. She longed to repose these feelings in the breast of some one who was capable of feeling them with her—some one who would soothe and restore her to self-approbation. Lady Frances was her sister, only by the ties of consanguinity; no sympathy whatever existed in their characters or their tastes: it was a circumstance which often depressed the spirits of Emily; but there was an elasticity of joyousness in her disposition, which soon recovered its spring after any depression, and buoyed her up again to taste her blessings, and endure her trials patiently. Some persons might mistake this heavenly gift for levity; but it was only those who look not below the surface of things, and who are themselves strangers to the placid beam which illumines such as are firm in religious trust.

Though Lady Emily's spirit soared above sublunary things, her heart was alive, achingly alive, to every tender feeling, whether those

feelings were called into action for herself or for others. She awaited, therefore, anxiously to know what tidings Mr. Carlton had brought of Rose, and lamented that any circumstance irrelevant to that subject should have occasioned delay in coming at that, to her, most interesting fact. She flew, therefore, to the General, as soon as she had composed herself after her late unpleasant interview, and asked him what news he had heard of the wretched object of her solicitude.

“Have you not seen Mr. Carlton yourself?” interrupted the General. “Edwards told me you were with him in the blue-room.”

“Yes, I was; but—I could not learn from him any thing whatever respecting Rose.”

“No! that was strange, my Emily. What then did you converse about?”

After a moment's hesitation, Lady Emily related the substance of their interview exactly as it had occurred. The General rose from his chair, and walked to and fro with a disturbed air. “Are you sure, my love,” said he, “that you make no mistake? Perhaps some little

perturbation on your part may have led you to misunderstand the gentleman."

"No, no, my dear uncle, what passed was too recent for me to forget; and I am very certain that I have repeated to you our conversation as it took place."

"Coxcomb!" exclaimed General Montgomery, "he shall never more set foot within these doors; that is to say—" and again the General strode across the room. "Emily, my dearest and best, I may as well tell you now, as at any other time—*This* is no longer a home for us."

"What mean you, my dearest uncle? what matters the impertinence of Mr. Carlton? we need not see him again?"

"Very true, my sweet Emily," replied General Montgomery thoughtfully; "but that is not the question; we are destined to be wanderers on the face of the earth:" and he leant his forehead on his hand. Lady Emily stood dismayed and silent.

"Speak not of this matter, my dear one," continued he; "I have confided a secret to you,

let it be one for the present ; I know I may trust you ; and now leave me ; send Pennington to me ; remember, dearest, be silent."

Lady Emily's emotion was visible when she joined Miss Macalpine in the library.

" Weel, Lady Emily, and what's the news? there's matter in't, indeed, when the General winna see Mr. Carlton ; but you've had a gude lang crack wi' him yoursel'. I'm thinking ye ken mair nor ye'll tell. What na business could Mr. Carlton ha'e wi' ye but ane? Are ye gawing to tak' him? Dinna be sae close to an auld friend."

" I marry Mr. Carlton ! never, Alpinia."

" How is this?" said Lady Frances, entering at the same moment with no very pleased expression of countenance ; " what are all these violent professions about?"

Lady Emily repeated the words, which she was aware her sister had overheard.

" What ! before you have been asked? You are already enjoying the thought of refusing a proposal of marriage ; at least wait till the choice is in your power."

“ And what then, Frances ? ”

“ My word for it,” she replied with bitterness, “ with all your romance you will not refuse the handsome Mr. Carlton, presumptive heir to an earldom, and all the advantages of splendour he can offer you to boot. No, Emily, you are not quite mad enough for that.”

“ Yes I am though ; but I do not call it madness.”

“ Psha ! you are wise enough to know, that there are certain points beyond which *il n'est pas permis d'être bête.*”

“ *Bête* or not, I must ever think and feel as I do ; I will not marry Mr. Carlton.”

“ Oh ! wait till you are asked.”

“ Why ! do ye doubt the lassie's been asked ? ” said Miss Macalpine.

“ No ! ” said Lady Frances, the colour flushing her face, “ I am *sure* she has not ? ”

“ My dear Frances, I am very new, as Mr. Carlton said, but as far as I could understand—”

“ Oh, does it rest there ! some mistake, some nonsense ” (affecting to laugh) ; “ but don't tell me, that *if* Mr. Carlton would be persuaded to throw himself at your feet, you would refuse

him. Psha ! refuse to be a countess in reversion, with twenty thousand a-year !”

“ We do not understand each other,” replied Lady Emily, with a sigh.

The conversation of the sisters was ever apt to terminate in a manner equally unsatisfactory ; and, as Lady Emily observed, they did not understand each other.

The day passed off heavily enough to all parties. Mr. Carlton had returned to his own house considerably mortified at his reception ; the General had his sorrows, Lady Emily her sad surmises, more sad that they were indefinite ; Miss Macalpine was burning with ungratified curiosity, and Lady Frances with ill-suppressed disappointment and envy. Towards evening, after dinner, the arrival of the post was hailed with unusual interest. The post-town was some miles from Montgomery Hall, and there was a private bag in which the letters to and from the family were deposited. The bag was delivered to the porter, the porter gave it to the steward, and the steward to the groom of the chambers, who placed it with all due form upon a large

silver tray, and presented it to his master ; then came forth the key of keys from the General's own pocket, which opened this important budget of hopes and fears, griefs and joys. During this ceremonial, Lady Emily had frequently found it more difficult to restrain her impatience than to perform any other exercise of virtue which had hitherto fallen to her share to practise ; but there are some foibles in the very greatest characters, something to bear with and to be forborne by all those whom we most love and esteem, or by whom we are most loved and esteemed ourselves ; these are the minutiae of life, which nevertheless compose its sum total ; and upon our treatment of these, depends more of our happiness than is gratifying to self-love to acknowledge.

On the present trial of patience, Lady Emily had jumped off her chair ; but the General's love of order was not to be broken in upon, even in favour of his niece's infirmity, and she had to sit down again and witness the accustomed process of letter delivery with what philosophy she could summon to her aid.

“ Let us see,” said the General, feeling for his spectacles;—“ Emily, love, fetch me my spectacles; they lie in the second volume of Evelyn.”

Another pause, but not a long one; for the light messenger returned in a moment, and then, at last, the contents of the bag were distributed.

“ Alpinia, there is for you; and Frances, my queen, there is for you—these are newspapers;” laying them aside; “ but here is one for me: I think I know the hand:” and turning it round and round, he opened, and having perused it, gave it to his niece. Lady Emily coloured as she saw the signature; but recollecting that it probably contained the intelligence she was so anxious about, she hastily ran her eyes over the page, and read as follows:

“ My dear General,—I grieve to say that the person about whom you have interested yourself so kindly, is not worthy of your goodness towards her. She is become the mistress of a low fellow who keeps a tavern, and is

apparently quite satisfied with the part she has chosen. As you could not receive me this morning, I have sent my servant over to B—— with this note, to be put into your letter-bag. I shall call again in a day or two at the Hall, and give you details concerning this unlucky affair, &c. &c.’”

No sooner had Lady Emily perused this note, than she burst into a passion of tears, overcome with the sad tidings of Rose’s disgrace, and she wept bitterly.

“ Ah ! my dear child,” said the General, “ you must not indulge in this sensibility ; indeed you must not. Life, and its practical duties, will require of you to be more chary of your tenderness.”

But what availed the General’s experience and gentle caution ? It is not till the heart has been torn to pieces, that we learn the art of wrapping it in a leaden shroud, ere it has ceased to beat altogether. The tears of Lady Emily flowed abundantly ; and, unrepressed by any selfish reserve, she felt as though her own

purity had been blighted in Rose's fall. The first time we are convinced of the fallacy of trusting to mortal virtue, is the first time we are humbled to a due conviction of the imperfection of our own nature. The effect produced on Lady Emily by this melancholy story, was much greater even than the cause seemed to justify; but it was an epoch in her moral existence, and tended to the formation of no common character. Unable to recover any composure, she retired for the night.

“Go with her,” said the General, in a faltering voice—“go with her, Alpinia, and soothe her.”

Nobody ever asked Lady Frances to soothe any one; it seemed to be quite out of the question that she should either suffer herself, or console others in their sufferings. It appeared as though she were a sort of person exempt from the common lot of human infirmities. On the present occasion, she contented herself with remarking, “it was a pity her sister should indulge in these agitations: she would be an old woman,” she said, “before she was a young one.”

“ You are right, Frances,” said the General; “ but Emily cannot avoid being what she is. I wish I could divide dispositions more equally between you.”

“ Pray, my dear Sir,” in an affected tone of languid tranquillity, “ do not talk of such a thing; you quite frighten me to think of such a possibility.”

“ There’s no fears,” said Miss Macalpine dryly; “ but, General, when I return from Lady Emily’s chamber, I want a word with you, if you please; I have just received a letter which astonishes me, and I would like just to know what you thought upon it.”

“ Certainly, whenever you wish; only go now to Emily, and assure the dear child that whatever can be done for the Delvins, shall be done. Well, Frances, and who is your packet from? It seems to have afforded you pleasure.”

“ My letter is from Lady Arabella, and it does really afford me much delight in prospect: for it proposes my visiting them in Gloucestershire for the winter; and then, that they should take me on from thence to London.”

“And would you, Frances, like to accept this invitation, or not?” asked the General, with one of his cunning looks.

“Oh! I should like excessively to go, my dear uncle, if you have no objection; there are few things that will afford me greater satisfaction.”

“You jest,” rejoined the General: “this is only to deceive me. I know better; by all means send an apology.”

Lady Frances saw that *he was* only in jest, and, therefore, she bore the trial patiently; nevertheless, she did not let the subject rest till she had declared her own sentiments in unequivocal terms, and obtained her uncle’s consent to her wishes. Lady Frances returned her thanks after her best manner, (a manner, that when put on, few could resist, not even those who knew it was *merely* manner,) and left her uncle to the perusal of a packet of letters, which he had not yet opened.

The next day, General Montgomery proposed to Lady Emily to accompany her sister. “It could be easily managed,” he said, “I am sure;

for I know you were ever a favourite of the Duke's."

"Oh no! not at present, if you please, dearest uncle. I have so many things to think of and to arrange here, that I should not like to leave my home just now." Lady Emily did *not* say "I see you are unhappy, uncle, and I will not leave you while I have power to cheer or soothe you;" but she was not misunderstood.

The General sighed, pressed her hand, and left her; while she went to her sister and most warmly offered her her services, in making any little preparations for her journey; which obtained for her a kinder acknowledgment of thanks than she was wont to receive, and Lady Frances added to these a hope that she would not be long immured in her present dull situation; "for," said she, "my uncle is become so gloomy, it is quite impossible to exist here any longer. Could you not contrive, shortly, to go with Mrs. Fitzhammond to Sherbourne Park?"

"What, Frances, when you are absent, to leave my uncle alone?"

"It is all very well, Emily, to sacrifice one-

self now and then to a dull life in favour of old relations, but all the year round is really too great an effort; besides, has he not Colonel Pennington, and Miss Macalpine, and Sir Richard Townly, that prince of thistle hunters?"

"All these persons, I acknowledge, are of use to him in their different ways; and Colonel Pennington he truly loves—but *I*, you know, am the *favourite*, though you are the queen!"

"You pay dear for your favouritism, as every body does, I believe. Defend me from being a favourite! it is a troublesome distinction."

"Well, Frances, it may be so, but I would not give up being my uncle's favourite, so long as I am able to maintain my post, for any other advantage whatever; and I am repaid for any little sacrifice I make, by observing that my uncle's countenance lights up whenever I come into the room. He would miss me, I am sure, at the card-table; he would have no one to sing with; his violoncello would lie useless; Alpinia would cease to be entertaining, if I did

not torment her; in short, I cannot think of leaving him at present; besides, I am so happy as I am, and where I am, why should I think of going elsewhere?"

"Come, Emily, do not play the hypocrite—I know better. You cannot deceive me; the fact is, you imagine Lord Mowbray will return, but you are entirely mistaken, I can assure you. I have got a letter this day, which tells me that Lady Dormer and her three *missy* daughters are just arrived from the Continent, and the Flirtation which began there, between him and Miss Juliana, is, I understand, to wind up in a marriage."

"And if it does, Frances, how does that concern me?" said Lady Emily, colouring. "Lord Mowbray never regarded me in any other light than in that of a good-natured child; but he appeared to admire *you*, and to pay you more attention than any one else."

"Oh, I will make all his admiration over to you—a generous present—take it and welcome; that man will, I am sure, be a tormenting husband. All husbands, I believe, are tyrants;

but at least I will take the best chance of being the tyrant of a tyrant, and I do not feel that that would be at all an easy matter with the lord in question."

"Well, as we are about disposing of Lord Mowbray, according to our own views, he might perhaps, from the very quality you have mentioned, suit me better than he would you; for, provided I loved my husband, I am sure I should have no will but his; and of this proviso I would previously make myself certain, for I never would marry any man I did not love and honour."

"Well," said her sister, smiling, "keep your own secret: but people do not get up at six in the morning to look after daisies and bird-nests for nothing; still less do they ford brooks and frequent fortune-tellers, without some better and more sensible object than putting their feet into cold water to get a pleurisy, and talking to dirty people in a dirty lane, under a hedge. No, no! you had a mind to show your pretty feet and ankles, and therefore you forded the brook. You wanted to know how soon you would find

an admirer, and you sought the fortune-tellers. You thought that an early walk, before anybody but the housemaid were up, sounded interesting; and so you set forth. It is all very natural in its way, only do not over-do it,"—nodding with a look of sagacity.

"Indeed, my dear Frances, you are mistaken; I am sure admiration must be very delightful, but no one ever thought of admiring me; and I do very seriously declare, that the old story of my fording the brook happened simply as I related it to you."

"Well, if I do believe you, I can only say there are some ninnies in the world, and that I am sorry my sister is one of them."

Lady Emily laughed her own natural laugh, and hoped that her sister would find that happiness in her wisdom which she enjoyed in her folly. "But somehow, Frances," said she, "I am afraid you will not."

"Afraid, indeed!" reddening with real anger:—"pray, why?"

"Why, because I never yet have seen you what I call happy."

“ Because I have no particular *penchant* for romance or flowers—or walking out to see the sun rise!—or have not a broad laugh ready on every occasion, eh? But it is quite in vain to talk to you. We shall see what a reform will take place when you go to town; that is to say, if you have any sense. In the mean time I leave you to enjoy your ruralities, your roses, and streams; now and then a ghost, perchance, may enliven you.”

“ Oh, sister! dear sister!” cried Lady Emily, cowering near Lady Frances, “ do not make a joke of that. You know what we saw. You know that I am the veriest coward alive; and as to what regards powers beyond mortal ken, I would leave them untouched upon by mortal presumption.”

“ You are really too silly, or too hypocritical. Good night. Time and London may mend you—I cannot. Good night!”

The next day Lady Frances took her leave courteously of the inhabitants of the Hall. She did not even attempt to appear sorry upon the occasion; but a hearty burst of tears fell from

Emily's eyes as she strained her sister to her bosom ; to which the latter replied by settling her *pelerine*, which had been disarranged ; and, declaring that she hated scenes and scene-making, gracefully departed. This heartlessness helped to dry Emily's tears the quicker ; and she put on all her smiles and artless arts to comfort her uncle for Lady Frances's departure.

The loss of an accustomed face, which is endeared by habit, if by no tenderer tie, makes a sad blank in a domestic circle ; and although Frances was not Emily, she was still very dear to her uncle, and her beauty recreated his eyes. How much the very aspect of the young enliven the aged !

“ She is gone, poor thing ! ” said General Montgomery, looking at the place which she was accustomed to occupy at the dinner-table ; “ she is gone to that gay world, which she thinks of but as a show-box, and herself as the fairest show in it. She knows not what deadly snares lurk there. She knows not how false and hollow are all its pursuits when it is from

them alone that happiness is expected:—this must be proved by experience; preaching will never convey the lesson. But you, you, my Emily, that cozening world will not, surely, prove so false to you; because you look at it *through another medium*: it will, therefore, in all probability, disappoint you less. But are you certain, dearest and best, that you do not repent of your choice in remaining here with me, instead of accompanying your sister, as you might have done?”

“No, indeed, dear uncle, I have no wish but to remain with you. Where you stay, I like to stay; where you go, I like to go. I love gaiety and diversion; but I have so many pleasures at home, that the day is never long enough for enjoying them all. So why should I go elsewhere in quest of more?”

“I used to think this really was your case, my best Emily; but of late your joyousness has been subdued. I trust, however, it is only poor Rose’s fate that has affected you.”

“Ah! poor Rose!” and the big tear rushed to her eye and dimmed its sparkling; but she

brushed it off hastily: "I have, indeed, no other cause for sorrow."

The General pressed her hand, and they were sure, at least, that they were happy in each other's affection.

"I want a word wi' ye, General, at your leisure, if you please," said Miss Macalpine, looking in at the half-opened door.

"As many as you please, my good lady. Is it a secret? or will you disclose your business now?"

"It's no' just a secret; but an' if it's the same to you, I would rather say what I've gotten to say to yoursel' first and Lady Emily presently."

Accordingly so soon as the rest of the guests were departed after dinner to their several occupations, Miss Macalpine drew a letter from her pocket.

"Well, Alpinia," said the General, "I see you're

'Big with the fate of Cato and of Rome.'

Let us hear it at once."

“Keep me, General! but I scarcely know how to begin. I ha’e gotten a letter from Lord Mowbray:”—and there she stopped, rubbing the forefinger of her left hand as if she would have rubbed it off.

“A proposal of marriage, doubtless,” said the General, smiling cunningly; (it is an odd thing that even the best-hearted people always make joke of an old maid: the kindest thing that is ever said of them is, ‘Poor things! they are much to be pitied certainly.’)

“A proposal o’ marriage, General! Guess again; better nor that, Ise can tell ye.”

“How can that be, Alpinia? Is it not what all ladies like to receive, whether they accept it or not?”

“But what would ye say, now, if I tell’t ye, General, that Lord Mowbray has gi’en to me his grandaunt’s estate o’ Heatherden, out and out—gi’en them to me, for my ain sel’.”

“Say! what should I say? Why that it was nobly done, bravely done; and that I rejoice at it with all my heart.”

“Read these lines, General,” said Miss Mac-

alpine, tendering him a letter. He took it and read aloud.

“ My dear Madam,—I know it was my cousin’s intention to have done that, which I have done, namely, to put you in possession of Heatherden; but his sudden illness prevented him from executing the deed, which lay prepared for that purpose. I am, therefore, only fulfilling his intention in completing this arrangement, and I have very great pleasure in informing you that I have now finished this business, and that, as soon as it is convenient, I shall hope to see you in town, where your presence will be necessary to the signature of some of the papers respecting this transaction. I have the honour to be, with much esteem and regard, &c. &c. yours,
“ MOWBRAY.”

“ Oh! my dear, dear Alpinia, how very happy I am!” replied Lady Emily, overcome with a thousand sweet feelings, the source of which she did not very minutely analyze, and throwing her arms round Miss Macalpine’s neck.

“ A noble deed, truly,” rejoined the General;

I am sorry to add, for the sake of human nature, a rare and an uncommon deed ; the gift, and the manner of the gift, speak the character of the man ; so simple, so unostentatious !”

“ Is it not quite delightful ?” cried Lady Emily, her eyes sparkling with delight, her cheeks glowing with pleasure.

“ It is, indeed, my dearest, and I give our worthy friend, Miss Macalpine, a thousand joys, and may the setting of her sun be brighter than its rising !”

“ We ’ll no’ speak o’ what canna be mended. I am thankfu’ : but happiness and Marian Macalpine can no’ be ane.

‘ The flowers o’ the forest are a’ wed awa.’”

“ My dear Miss Macalpine, there’s many a green leaf lingers when the summer’s blossom is gone ; may these, at least, be yours !—when a moment of brightness comes, it is a duty to bid it welcome.”

“ True ; but did ye ever hear of ony thing happy occurring to any ane, that they did na say, ‘ Oh, if such an ane were alive now to see

it !' or ' oh, gin my health permitted me to enjoy it ;' or, ' had I the strength o' limb, or o' eyesight, or o' understanding,' or something or ither that they had not, which did na tak' a grace frae that which they had ; this is the way o't ; it must needs be sae here. Nevertheless, I am thankfu'."

" Very true, my good friend. There spoke the observer of human nature in human affairs ; but let us only talk now of your being the Lady of Heatherden, where I hope you will allow us to pay you a visit ; that is to say, if I am alive this time next year."

" Oh, dear, dear uncle ! do not suppose evil ; think, as you yourself said, only of the brightness. As to me, I feel so happy, so happy that Lord Mowbray should have done this noble deed ;" and she stopped short ; " so happy, that I really do not know what I am saying."

Alas ! how soon was the scene to change ! A very few days after this, the General sent for Lady Emily. He was sitting in his usual red velvet chair ; his one hand in his breast, his other resting on his knee ; his gold-headed

cane lay resting against his chair, and his favourite terrier slept at his feet; the whole costume was so simple, yet so noble, so suited to the wearer, that it seemed a part of the man; and it was impossible even for a stranger to stand in the presence of General Montgomery without blended feelings of love and respect.

Lady Emily's habitual affection and veneration for her uncle had latterly been deepened by the interest which his evident alteration of spirits and health inspired. On the present occasion, as she advanced towards him, she saw traces of strong emotion upon his countenance, though he appeared anxious to master himself in her presence; she lifted her eyes to Colonel Pennington, who was standing up behind the General, as if to inquire the cause of her uncle's evident distress, but she could only read a reflection of that sorrow in his expression, and he made no answer to her questioning glance, but kept his eyes fixed on the opposite wall.

General Montgomery first broke this portentous silence. "Sit down, my dearest and best, I have heavy news for you to hear, but it must

be told, and young as you are, you are not unprepared to meet a reverse of fortune."

"My dear uncle, while you live and love me, I can bear any thing; but tell me, but tell me quickly, what it is I am to bear. Is Frances ill? Is——"

"No! no, my child, nothing of that kind. It is the total ruin of fortune that I have to announce to you."

"Is that all?" said Lady Emily, as if a weight were lifted from her heart as she spoke.

"I have for some time past," continued the General, "been expecting something of the kind, and now the storm has burst; for myself, it matters little whether I spend the remainder of my days in comparative poverty, or not; but, I grieve to say, the stroke has not fallen on me alone. Your and your sister's fortunes have also been implicated in the great general wreck. In me, you see a man ruined in point of fortune, beyond recovery! In yourself, my own best Emily, one who has been led into much loss, by the imprudent speculation

of him, whose experience ought to have guarded you from such a fatal chance; but it is in vain to lament! You will forgive me, although I can never forgive myself."

"Forgive! dearest uncle, it is but to try your own Emily, that you use such a word. Colonel Pennington, speak, I beseech you!" (seeing General Montgomery was too much overpowered to do so); "speak! and tell me what my uncle means! Surely he is not angry with me! surely he does not doubt the affection, the reverence of his own Emily!"

And as she said this, she took the rough hand of Colonel Pennington between her delicate fingers. He struggled for a moment to conquer his feelings; but in the attempt to speak he could no longer command them, and burst into loud sobbing.

"Come, my good friend Tom, I expected better behaviour from you, than this woman's weakness," said the General.

"It is Lady Emily's fault; I never wept before in my life!" replied Colonel Pennington, walking to the window.

General Montgomery was the first who composed himself sufficiently, to relate the particulars of the event he had announced.

He had been persuaded by his plausible agent, Aldget, to embark the bulk of his disposable property, and part of his nieces' fortunes in some mining speculation in America, which was to produce thousands *per cent.*! according to Mr. Aldget's calculations. "And," continued the General with a deep sigh, "for reasons which I am not at liberty to explain, I do not feel justified in incurring the expenses which my continuing to reside at this place in my accustomed manner would entail upon me."

Colonel Pennington here interrupted him with an expression and look of surprise. Without noticing, however, this interruption, the General proceeded: "You see, therefore, there is nothing left for me, but to abandon this seat of my ancestors, and to retire into some distant province, where the little that is left me from my profession will suffice to support an old man for the few years he has to remain on earth. But to leave these dear children, whom

I have always considered as my own, and to have made them in great degree the sufferers of my imprudent desire to increase their fortune, a fortune already small, which did not justify a risk; this imprudence will, in truth, bring down my grey hairs with sorrow and dishonour to the grave!"

"Dishonour! General," exclaimed Colonel Pennington; "if any man but yourself, that walks the earth, had coupled such an epithet with General Montgomery's name, it should have been the hardest morsel he ever swallowed; but he should have eaten it up nevertheless!" and he puffed out his cheeks, and walked up and down the room, repeating "dishonour! indeed!"

"And is this really all, my dearest uncle? why should the loss of money separate us? nothing shall separate us, please God! You know, you used to say to me when I was a child, to check my pride, that I should be your little housekeeper, and now, I will really be such: only promise me, promise your own Emily you will never send her away from you.

I will serve you, tend you, watch you, but leave you!—never!”

“There spoke the heart of my own child Emily; you have been tried by me, and are not found wanting! What have I to lament? nothing! not all that fortune can bestow, would give me the riches of this moment!”

The touching expression of heartfelt disinterested attachment on the one hand, and of grateful love on the other, was altogether overpowering to Colonel Pennington; he sobbed and beat his breast, and an oath once or twice escaped him in the honest ebullition of his feelings.

“My good friend Tom, you will oblige me by walking into the garden and composing yourself. I require all my own fortitude to fulfil my duties, to collect my thoughts, and to give orders to my Emily; leave us for a time, and we shall meet better prepared for what we have to undergo.”

The Colonel walked away, banging the door after him, as though he had been in a passion: and when the General and his niece were left

alone, the latter said to her, "Now, my dear child, we must turn our thoughts to these domestic cares and arrangements, which seem in moments of great interest to be beneath consideration, but they are not so; nor is it intended by a merciful Providence that they should; on the contrary, they are wisely appointed as the softening medium through which we are obliged to view our sorrows, and they place certain restraints on the feelings, which are salutary."

"If you will give me your orders, my dearest uncle, they shall be carefully obeyed," was Emily's gentle and composed reply.

"That is my sweet and quiet Emily;" and she proceeded to take down notes in writing of the directions he gave her, with the same placid tranquillity she would have manifested on any subject of happier moment. When, in making an inventory of the books and a few articles of every-day comfort which were to follow them to their retreat, the eye of General Montgomery rested on Lady Emily's harp: "*That,*" he said, "my sweet

child, shall never be absent from us, neither shall your piano; no! never will I consent to be without *these!* They were our sweetest delights in the hour of prosperity; they may be our sweetest solace of lighter kind in adversity."

Emily felt this deeply; but she would not excite her uncle's feelings by giving unnecessary vent to her own, and contented herself with gently pressing his arm.

"There's my own comfortable and useful child, not only my dearest but best. It is, perhaps, the privilege of woman only to extract the sting of grief from others by the gentle patience with which she is taught by Nature to set the example of meek endurance. Her first step, in the career of duty, is generally by the bed of sickness or of suffering. There, she hushes helpless infancy to repose; and to the infirmity of age supplies the sweetness of cheerful patience. It is her province to smooth the angry passions, to allay the violence of intemperate man, to divert or soothe the querulousness of peevish fretful tempers. It is hers,

in fine, to be a peace-maker on earth ; and let her not disdain this her allotted career, nor ever swerve from it. It has not the promise of this world's beatitudes or glories, but it is blessed, and it is glorious nevertheless; and oh! above all, let not those who ought to cherish and foster these gentle virtues, endeavour to stifle or eradicate them by substituting in their place the excitements of frivolous vanities, and the empty cares of dissipation."

Never woman performed the part of woman with better or with sweeter grace than the meek-spirited Emily. Her uncle had hitherto only loved, but now he honoured her.

"Deep are the ways of Providence, and past finding out!" said Miss Macalpine, a few days after this sad story had been disclosed: "little did I ever think to see the day—I, a rich woman, and the General, General Montgomery, a poor man! wha'd ha'e thought it?—but ye'll all come to Heatherden, Lady Emily, and live wi' me; and then, I suppose the Government will be settling a pension on the General for past services."

“ Ah ! my dear Alpinia ! past services are considered as dead letter ; and at my uncle’s age, with my uncle’s feelings, and the strong rooted attachment he has to this spot, a spot which he himself has created, and where, in the barren heath, he has opened as it were a paradise in the wild, I do not think that any thing in the world, or any riches, will ever compensate to him for being banished hence.”

“ Heeh, Sirs ! at the gloaming o’ life it’s sair to bide ; but there are mony places whaur the General might sit down in ease and comfort for the rest o’ his days, though he had na a bodle left ; for he is no’ a man to greet for mere splendours and superfluties : and mony’s the ane in his ain euntrie wuld be honoured wi’ his presenee—there ’s Heatherden——”

“ True,” interrupted Lady Emily, “ my uncle will not miss his luxuries and state, at least not for his own sake ; but I observe that in aged persons there is nothing so difficult as to make them like any thing that is new. Either they dread incurring the pains and penalties always attendant upon loving any thing, and therefore

narrow the circle of their attachments as much as possible ; or else they have a slowness of affection, just as an aged tree does not shoot out as many green offsets as a young one, but holds with greater tenacity to the spot where it grows.”

“ Woe’s me ! but that’s true ; I find it in mysel’ ; I never could loe ony place, no’ this same, as I loe the braes o’ Hetherden. Oh Emily, datie, ye’ll come and see me there ! One would think Lord Mowbray kent ye were to be warsled wi’ poortith when he gied me that noble gift ; it’s just the same as it were yere ain. As for the General, let him go whaure he will, he has a comfort in you that will never forsake him : you’re just ane to cheer awa’ the gloom o’ a winter’s night, with a spirit in your gentleness that pats a heart intilt.”

Lady Emily loved these commendations, and determined to endeavour to deserve them ; but she was called away from the indulgence of listening to such kind words, by General Montgomery’s desiring her to walk with him : away she flew.

The alacrity with which the minor courtesies of life are performed, is precisely that which gives them their greatest charm. Emily was by the General's side quick as his own wish. Instead of offering her his arm, as was his wont, he leant this time on hers, and she felt this little change, as much as to say, 'You are now my only stay and support on earth.' They spoke not, nor had they need of words to understand each other's sensations and thoughts; they continued to walk on in silence to the garden; their eyes mutually wandered over the well-known shrubs and flowers.

The General stopped: he shaded his eyes with one hand from the sunbeam, while he gazed on a fine rising bank of trees that were waving their green tops in gentle undulation, like the swelling of the ocean to a breeze. Emily ventured to steal a glance at her uncle's countenance; it was placid, but so marked with sorrow that it was with difficulty she restrained her tears.

Again he moved onwards, and they came to the seat on which the General's lines from Ho-

race were inscribed. He closed his eyes as if to drink in the essence of the words; and recited them in the original. So often was he in the habit of quoting passages from the Latin classics, that Lady Emily fancied she understood them; at least, from his translations she had been taught to feel their pathos, and the *quando ego te aspiciam* sunk deep into her soul. She ventured to say—"Perhaps, dear uncle, we may sooner return here than you at present believe."

"No, my Emily, do not deceive yourself; I have more reasons than even those which I have disclosed to you for thinking we shall never return; but I ought not to repine; I am, doubtless, chased from this paradise for my sins."

"Oh! say not so, dearest uncle—not for your sins—you have *no* sins!—to try your virtue rather."

"Emily, Emily," he replied, with solemnity; "where is the being who walks this earth, that dares to say he has no sin?"

Lady Emily felt the rebuke, and blushed.

“ There are the trees I planted forty years ago,” continued General Montgomery, after a pause. “ How vigorous and beautiful they seem ! if there is any thing in this world that can be said to be sure to endure, it is a love of natural pleasures : they lead the mind into ways of pleasantness and paths of peace ; they afford us occupation in youth, and beneath their shade and beauty we enjoy the most fitting and delicious reward of old age—repose. Every man should till the paternal field of which he is heir ; plant his small forest, or his large, the number of acres adds or diminishes little from the pleasure ; and the exercise of these tranquil, yet active employments, will have more effect in leading him to practise the virtues of social life, than unthinking persons are aware of. You remember the *Beatus Ille*. In its stanzas, my Emily, I read the fate which is henceforth to be mine ; that fate which I have often envied, and to which I am now called. Instead of the ‘ Wife,’ alluded to in the poem, you must be my comforter ; and thus, in recollecting the wisdom of past ages, I have en-

deavoured, not in vain, to attain some of that tranquillity which it eulogises.”

“ Ah ! my dearest uncle !” said Lady Emily, “ that you, who feel all these delights so keenly, should be abruptly called upon to resign your favourite abode for any less dear to you, I scarcely can bear to think of.”

“ Hush ! my Emily. In that consists the trial : we are not to choose our own trials ; and, indeed, we should not know to choose them for our advantage, even if to do so were permitted us. No, my love, we are to receive those that are appointed to us with resignation.”

No more was said by either uncle or niece ; they had sighed their last sigh, and looked their last look, at all the dear-loved groves and glades, and returned together in silence to the house.

At length came the dreaded moment of departure. Steel our hearts as we may, the last, last moment of seeing what one loves—of leaving a spot endeared by a thousand recollections, is that uptearing of the roots of affection which

lacerates the heart, and from which we vainly endeavour to shield ourselves.

The abandonment of a home we have formed, where we have made intimate acquaintance with every hill and dale, and tree and stone; where these have spoken that mute language which is known only to the lover of fields and the cultivator of the earth, that sweet silent language which has soothed our sorrows and heightened our joys, and which, unlike the world, is sweetest when we are saddest, ah! to be torn from all these endearing and endeared objects by circumstances as cruel as they are unexpected, is a trial which ends not with the first wrench of agony. It is an ever-renewing spring of regret, and can only be duly appreciated by those who have felt its bitterness.

The General and Lady Emily left the Hall with the benedictions of all their dependants; and if any thing could have softened the blow, it was the consciousness of having blessed others, and of being by them blessed in return.

CHAPTER VIII.

“ Whom call we gay ? That honour has been long
The boast of vain pretenders to the name.
The innocent are gay ; the lark is gay,
That dries his feathers, saturate with dew,
Beneath the rosy cloud, while yet the beams
Of day-spring overshoot his humble nest ;
The peasant too, a witness of his song,
Himself a songster, is as gay as he :
But save me from the gaiety of those
Whose head-aches nail them to a noon-day bed.”

COWPER.

WHATEVER sorrow Lady Emily felt at leaving the scenes of her youth, whatever cloud had come over her from the unforeseen circumstances which had recently occurred, she was at an age when the excitement of novelty went far in dissipating her sorrows and her fears.

General Montgomery lodged at a private hotel in Sackville-street, and did not announce his arrival to any of his town friends; wishing to escape with as little observation as might be, from a certain crowd of idlers, who he knew would be ready enough to flock around him, so long as they believed him to be gifted with wealth and the world's consideration; and as the moment was not yet come when he chose to declare his fallen fortunes, he dreaded the influx of these persons, which would, in some degree, rob him of his time and his tranquillity.

Yet he did not feel justified in entirely depriving his Emily of the possible chances which might occur of her making some valuable acquaintances in the world; and he determined therefore to write to Mrs. Neville, a person whom he had known from his earliest years, and request her to take charge of his niece during their stay in the metropolis; for although she had many ridiculous points about her, Mrs. Neville was esteemed by all, for

the sterling truth and honesty of her character. It was hardly possible to suppose that the note could have reached its destination, ere Mrs. Neville came in person to reply to it. They heard her scramble from her carriage, and, scarcely allowing the servants time to put down the step, she had actually reached the room where they were, before General Montgomery and Lady Emily had recovered from their surprise. As she came up-stairs, she screamed to the waiter who attended her: "How is the General? I wonder what has brought him to town; something unexpected, I am sure. It is beyond belief that he should come here so late in the season. I don't understand it. Well, to be sure, these stairs are so steep! let me sit down, I am quite out of breath. Oh! there you are—how do you do, dear Lady Emily? Out of my way, let me sit down; I cannot speak to any of you till I have rested myself. Well, such stairs! they would do for the Tower of Babel."

"I am truly happy to see you, my dear

Mrs. Neville," said the General, approaching, and taking her hand; "and to see you looking so well."

"I wish I could return the compliment, with all my heart; but you look very ill indeed, my dear General. Why, what have you been about?" (taking him to the window, and staring in his face) "it is beyond belief, upon my honour it is! I never saw a man so changed in such a short space of time; but there's my Lady Emily too, as thin as a thread-paper! For my part I don't understand it—a pretty creature though, General! quite charming, truly, fat or thin; and as for Miss Macalpine, my friend there, she's much as she was. It is beyond belief how precisely she looks as she did ten years ago; charming, charming"—(aside to Lady Emily) "a perfect Egyptian mummy,"—(aloud) "but that is the comfort of growing old; then one don't care how one looks, does one, Miss Macalpine?"

"There's no' ane auld," said Miss Macalpine, reddening with anger, and forcing a smile at the same time; "there's no' ane auld, save ane

whom we need na name in gude company ; and I think aeboddy's right to keep themsels as neat and trimlike as possible. So lang's we are in the warld, we had better be as agreeable as we can, and no mak' oursels like daft bodies, or gaberlunzie randies."

That was a hit at Mrs. Neville's dress and address, which, however, was quite lost upon her ; for she never knew one word in ten that Miss Macalpine uttered.

" Charming, charming !" said Mrs. Neville ;
" Miss Macalpine is so entertaining !"

" And," said that latter lady, going on with her own ideas ; " and we suld aye be striving to be as pleasing as we can."

" Pleasing ? hunch ! hunch ! pleasing ! Yes, my dear Miss Macalpine, in a sort of a way ; but not by our charms. You and I have not much chance in that way."

" It may be your way to be no' caring what na figure ye are, but it's no' mine : we differ quite, Mrs. Neville."

" Well, well, never mind ! But, my dear General, I say, what was the story about the mask ?

It is beyond belief how it has been talked over at least nine days, the usual life of a wonder in London! It is beyond belief how I heard of it wherever I went. Were you not very much shocked?"

This question brought back all sorts of terrific images to Lady Emily; she turned very pale, and said in a half whisper, "Do not, my dear Mrs. Neville, talk of that; I wish you would not bring back the remembrance of it."

"Ah, I suppose, General, that is the reason why you left the Hall at this unusual season. I don't wonder! Well, it is to me beyond belief, how you could bear to stay one minute there after such a mysterious affair; but I am delighted to see you: it is charming that you are come any how, though the London season is nearly over. Why the Opera closes in a fortnight: how unlucky! You will go to the levee on Thursday, General?"

"If I go any where;—but I am in town only on some very pressing business, and I do not think I shall leave my apartments except to take the air."

“But, bless me! where is Lady Frances all this time? I declare I had totally forgotten her;” and she laughed heartily at the idea: “now that is charming! well, to be sure! it is beyond belief.”

“My sister is on a visit to the Duke of Godolphin’s,” said Lady Emily: “we expect them in town shortly.”

“How very odd! — then depend upon it they are come; for I saw the Duke of Godolphin’s carriage driving towards Whitehall just as I came here. And then, sauntering up St. James’s-street, who should I see but Lord Mowbray, walking as if he could not help it? but looking very handsome in spite of himself. Well, to be sure! it is beyond belief, to observe what air will do. Air is every thing: it is more than beauty; for beauty does not always give it;—and it is better worth having, because it is not destroyed by time. Nobody knows what it is; but it is felt by every body. Oh! it is charming! — it is beyond belief! By the way, they say my Lord is going to be married

to Miss Juliana Dormer ; but I don't believe a word of it. Lady Emily, what do you see out of the window, that you look so intently into the street ?”

“ I see,” said Lady Emily, trying to speak freely,—“ I see, what is a marvellous sight now-a-days, a very magnificent sedan-chair, with two footmen.”

Mrs. Neville ran to the window: “ Ah, bless me ! This is beyond belief ! Lady Glassington herself. Oh, I must run off. I see a door open.” And Mrs. Neville ran out upon the stair, just in time to meet the enemy front to front. She attempted to slide past with a nod and a touch of the hand ; but Lady Glassington, holding up in one hand a glove rather more soiled than befits a lady, and in the other a much-tumbled and not very white pocket-handkerchief, cried, in an authoritative tone—

“ Stop, Mrs. Neville, if you please, for one moment.” Then advancing to the General, giving him her cheek to salute, first on one side, then on the other,—“ Well, my dear Ge-

neral, forgive me for an instant!" And turning again to Mrs. Neville, her little fiery blue eyes rolling about in magnificent indignation:—"One would think," said she, "that General Montgomery lived at Rag Fair! Only look here!" (and she waved the gloves and the pocket-handkerchief alternately) "'Mrs. Neville,' I said, 'must be here,' as I picked them up. It is certainly very strange, that having lived so many years in my society, and having heard my opinion on this subject so very often, you have not yet learnt to attend to these minor cares and duties. Ah! well may you be ashamed of yourself, and try to get out of my way. There, take your goods!"

The General and Lady Emily were enjoying the scene.

"Well, to be sure! my Lady Glassington, your Ladyship should have a new order made for you, the Mistress of the Manners of the Age; but I only dropped them that you might have something to find fault with.—Hunch! hunch!" and she laughed heartily.

"I find fault, indeed! I find fault, truly!

I, who never found fault with anybody in my life. I appeal to the General!"

"Never!" he replied, stifling a laugh; "never!"

"I, who never was in a passion in my life, I appeal to the General! could almost be in one now to hear your impertinent nonsense; General, speak!"

"Never! certainly, never in a downright passion, except now and then. Once, you know, Lady Glassington, when we were all young and wild, and that I incurred your displeasure, when you threw a glass of water in my face!"

"I am surprised, General," hiding her wrath under an appearance of dignity, "that you should recall a scene, and before your own niece too, which it were wiser to forget altogether: although I certainly was not in the wrong. You remember the cream-cheese!"

"Oh! now," replied the General, laughing outright; "*il n'y a que moi qui ait toujours raison!* But, my dear Lady Glassington! let us lay aside all these recollections, and allow

me to inquire for your health, you are looking delightfully well! quite like your picture!"

"Charmingly! quite charmingly!" said Mrs. Neville; "my Lady Glassington outshines us all! But what's become of Lord Mowbray? for I saw him coming this way; I suppose he was frightened when he knew my Lady Glassington was here, and so went away again."

"Frightened!" said Lady Glassington, tossing up her head disdainfully; "I flatter myself, that the insignificant and the ill-bred may not choose to come uncalled into my presence; but why my Lord Mowbray should be frightened for me, I cannot say."

"Oh! oh! oh!" laughing, "but I can though. You'll excuse me, my dear friend, for it is beyond belief how many people are afraid of you, and would sooner turn a corner to meet the east wind, than they would confront you! well, to be sure, nothing's more certain than that!"

Lady Glassington turned away in dignified silence, and addressing the General, she said:

"But do tell me, General, what has brought

you to this horrid part of the town. You are not, surely, going to stay here in this dull street; it is not fitting you should remain here. You will not surely keep your nieces in this situation?"

"I am sorry," said the General, "that you do not approve of my residence, Lady Glassington; but I purpose leaving London so soon, that where I live during my short stay is of very little moment."

"Well! but positively, short or long, you must not remain here!"

"Nay!" rejoined the General, with one of his sweetest smiles; "if you come to talk about positiveness, I can be positive too, and I do assure your Ladyship, I shall not remove from hence whilst I am in London."

"Well, General, I am the last person that ever interfered with anybody's affairs, as you pretty well know; and all I can say, is, that I came to offer myself as chaperon to your nieces, unless you are already provided."

"I thank you; I have already bespoke the guardianship of my old friend Mrs. Neville,

and she has promised that your Ladyship will unite with——”

“What! what! Mrs. Neville usher a young lady into the world! Mrs. Neville take charge of manners and decorum! You astonish me! indeed, I must confess, I should never have imagined——I have a great regard for Mrs. Neville, but I cannot say I should have ever thought of such a thing:” and she shook her petticoat in token of disdain.

The General assured her, that if he could have imagined, that with her many avocations, she could possibly have had time to escort a young lady to balls and operas, he would certainly have applied first to her; and, in saying this, his politeness trenched upon his sincerity; but he failed, nevertheless, of appeasing the ire of Lady Glassington. She had a *great regard* for her dear friend, Mrs. Neville; but that Mrs. Neville, whom, from long habit, she considered as under her tutelage, should be chosen in preference to herself, as the chaperon of a young lady of fashion, appeared incomprehensible; and drawing herself up, with

one of her most frigid looks, she bid good morning, and swept out of the room."

"*Her majesty, the queen, is in a passion,*" said Emily, who could not help laughing, as she re-entered the apartment, for she had followed Lady Glassington out.

"Well, my dear Emily," said the General, "what is become of Mrs. Neville? and Alpinia, where is she? she has had a long conference with Lord Mowbray—did he not ask for us?"

"Oh! yes, my dear uncle, he did, only upon hearing that Lady Glassington and Mrs. Neville were here, he said he had not nerves for them, and would call another time. Mrs. Neville was in a great hurry, as she always is, to get out of Lady Glassington's way, and went off almost immediately, but promised to call to take us to the Opera to-night, if you have no objection."

"No objection in the world, my best child. Go! for I shall be delighted to think that you are amused, and I can entrust you to Mrs. Neville with perfect confidence: living her whole life in, or about the court, a reigning beauty

at one time, Mrs. Neville has always, nevertheless, kept the straightforward path. She was a good wife to a bad husband, and having done her duty by him, declared that she would in future live a life of single blessedness, and she has kept her word, not for want of offers to do otherwise. The peculiar ingenuousness of her character has preserved her own native good qualities intacte, in the midst of a factitious world; all art is defeated by her simplicity, all manœuvring is vain with a person who never manœuvres. Mrs. Neville never did harm, that good might come of it. She is, perhaps, too sincere; at least, too out-spoken for the world as *it is*; and her manners, I do not desire you should imitate; she *sets up for an oddity*, as it is called, and much is allowed to her that would not be tolerated in another; but she is respected and respectable; knows every body; is of high family, and highly principled; therefore, my sweet Emily, to Mrs. Neville I will entrust my greatest treasure; and whether she drops her gloves, or her pocket-handkerchief, or not, I had rather see you under her care, than in that of one, who, possessed

all the outward graces and proprieties in the world, which are calculated to shine in the world alone, if they are unaccompanied by her sterling good qualities. And now, Emily, I have some business to transact, and must not have any more inroads made upon my time. Good-bye, sweet child, till dinner. Yet stay—if Frances comes, I shall of course see her.”

When Lady Emily was alone, she began to wonder that she had never heard from Frances since the latter had left them; for although the sisters were too unlike in disposition and in taste, to be a great loss to each other’s hourly amusements, still Lady Emily’s youthful heart had all the bloom of that beautiful instinct fresh upon it which is implanted by the hand of the Creator; and she thought, that not to love one’s relations, particularly any thing so near and dear as a sister, was quite impossible. While she sat musing upon this careless indifference in Lady Frances, a note was put into her hand; it was from her sister.

“ I give you joy, my dear Emily, of being

in town; how fortunate you are to have escaped so soon from that dull prison, the Hall. I thought there was some such hope in the wind when you professed yourself so mightily well pleased, not to remove thence: my love to my uncle, and say I shall wait upon him to-morrow morning. I did intend to have been with you to-day, but I cannot have the carriage. My best regards to Miss Macalpine. Yours affectionately. F. L."

It was a heartless kind of note: Lady Emily felt it was. Yet there was nothing positively to say against it. How many notes and letters are written of the same sort, that give heart-aches to those who receive them, and cost the writer no trouble at all! Lady Emily dispatched a tender one in return, with affection and delight, running over to the very turn-downs of the paper; and, in the pleasure of having heard from her sister, forgot the *manner*. She gave a translation of it, however, wisely, to her uncle, which came very much sweetened, through the fond medium of her

affectionate interpretation. The disrespectful mention made of the General's favourite place, was what Emily felt to be unkind, so she left that out.

The intermediate hours between the morning and the dinner, were spent in certain arrangements of the toilette, in which all women, wise and foolish, young and old, can contrive to beguile a few hours occasionally, without putting any great force upon their inclinations.

During dinner Miss Macalpine entertained the General, and did not positively displease Lady Emily by sounding the praises of Lord Mowbray, whom she declared to be a young man of *extraordinar' endowments*; and she continued in this strain, till the arrival of Mrs. Neville's carriage put a stop to her eloquence. Twice, during the few instants in which Lady Emily was putting on her cloak, and drawing on her gloves, a message was sent up from Mrs. Neville, to say—"Mrs. Neville is *rather* in a hurry! she is afraid she shall be late."

"*Rather* in a hurry!" cried the General, laughing; "when was she not in a hurry? I

shall not, however, detain you, for I am quite unable to go. Perhaps Miss Macalpine will have no objection to avail herself of my ticket."

The offer was joyfully accepted by that lady. She had never in her life been to the Opera; and not Lady Emily, nor any girl of fifteen, could have been more enchanted at the idea of going. Miss Macalpine had an uncommon love for fine sights; and such a taste is not at all incompatible with a great simplicity, and even romance of character. It sometimes subjects the person to ridicule; but it is unjust that it should do so. It is often a concomitant of that very simplicity of character, which was Miss Macalpine's particular characteristic, and certainly was no proof of want of high qualities, both of head and heart.

Notwithstanding Mrs. Neville's hurry and impatience, they found themselves early; the first scene of the 'Tancredi' was just over; there were few in the boxes; but to our two novices the whole spectacle was enchantment. Lady Emily's ear and taste, already formed to Italian

music, received the utmost gratification, from hearing it performed to perfection; and her animated countenance expressed, without reserve, the delight she experienced, unlike the *nonchalant* manners of the greater part of the audience, (of those in the boxes, at least,) which might lead a beholder, unversed in the secret, to suppose they came there to perform some necessary but dull duty. This lively interest, on the part of Lady Emily, drew the attention of many persons, whose admiration and astonishment were alike excited by the novelty and charm of her appearance; so that the whisper of—“Who is she, who is she?” went quickly round the boxes, and she continued to be stared at during the rest of the performance.

In the meanwhile, Miss Macalpine was very busy, stretching out her neck right and left, and inquiring of Mrs. Neville the history of every one whose appearance struck her as being anything distinguished. The constant “Wha’s yon?” accompanied by a push of the elbow, would have provoked a less good-humoured person than Mrs. Neville, but it afforded this

lady an opportunity to talk, and she certainly did love that better than most things.

“Mrs. Neville,” said her catechist, “do see yonder, the third box frae the stage, wha can yon be?—a bodie by himsel’! lukiing as though he were sound sleeping, wi’ his legs upo’ a chair, and his glove dangling ovr the side of the box?”

Mrs. Neville had recourse to her opera-glass:—
“Oh, that’s Lounging Lepel! do you not remember him at the Fitzhammond’s? why, he could not believe such a thing was possible, as that any person who had once seen him could ever forget him. So you really don’t remember him? charming! I should like to tell him so, how he would stare! Thus much I can tell you of him; but as to who he is, that indeed I believe it would be difficult to do; for I do not suppose he even knows himself. He is one of those stop-gaps in creation, who, by dint of massive impudence and consummate flattery, alternately applied, make good the post they seize upon in the world. It is quite charming, I do assure you, to observe the rise, progress, and decay of this genus of fashionable life.

Well, to be sure, it is curious; but some such there have been, and always will be, in the gay world; and indeed they are very amusing; it is beyond belief how they divert one. Lepel is seen every where; a party is not a party without him; a coat is not a coat if it is not made by Lepel's tailor. A snuff-box cannot be fit for a gentleman's pocket, unless it be sanctioned by the fiat of his approbation. Well, to be sure, it is beyond belief, but quite true; he has neither fortune nor rank, beauty of person or brilliancy of parts, or depth of learning; and by sheer impudence is king of the fools. Well, to be sure, it is quite charming!—however, I prophecy he is in progress towards decay, for he has overshot the mark lately two or three times, in various instances; and that impudence which placed him on an eminence, where he has no right to be, will hurl him back to his native mire—that will be charming, quite charming! and then you know we shall have some new fogle-man to head the ranks of fashion, and give us the cue for our follies. Well, to be sure, it will be a change, but only

a change; for the same parts must always be played in the great drama of the world, only by different actors."

"And wha's yon queer-like chiel there in the pit? the auld bodie wi' the glasses. No' a bit but he's unco fearsome like; keep me, but he's just like a corpe!"

"That's my Lord Delafield; he has held the same course any time these twenty years. He never misses a theatrical exhibition, is the intimate friend of the whole *corps de theatre*, from the Prima Donna down to the candle-snuffers. He has a fine place which he never visits, an amiable wife whom he detests. His tenantry are racked, and his estates destroyed to fill the pockets of opera-dancers and singers. Isn't it charming?"

"Hech, Sirs! but it's curious that same: now Mistress Neville, if I'm no' intruding upon yere courtesy, wha are yon twa bonnie young folk that seem sae taen up wi' ane anither; but maybe ye'll no fasche to tell me ony mair just ee now. Hech, sirs! they luke as if they were just gawing to be merried."

“ Married !” said Mrs. Neville, laughing, “ why they ’ve both been married some years.”

“ Troth, then, but it ’s a pleasure to see twa beings sae fond like, after some years o’ matrimony.”

“ Well, you are charming, quite beyond belief! Why, my dear Miss Macalpine, that is only a Flirtation, or perhaps worse, but the world agrees to call it a Flirtation. They are both married, and the husband of the lady and the wife of the gentleman are probably on their parts playing exactly the same game.” (Miss Macalpine lifted up her hand and eyes.) “ Why you do not really suppose that love, such as you read of in books, exists in the world of fashion?—No, no! nothing beyond Flirtation is tolerated; when it goes openly farther, then away the parties go—for a time disappear or do not disappear—are only supposed to be invisible. A divorce ensues; and after a few years, perhaps a few months, if the parties are sufficiently great and powerful, or handsome and agreeable, to obtain absolution quickly, back they come on the scene with a change of

name ; and they both, as married people, begin to grow tired of each other in their turn, and commence new Flirtations. Well, to be sure, it is beyond belief, to observe how the same routine goes round ; why it is as regular as the return of the seasons—charming ! But you do not suppose that the red-hot love lasts after the chill of matrimony has passed over it !—No, no ; Flirtation comes in like a master of the ceremonies, to hand Love off the boards very quickly.”

“ The mair’s the pity, the bigger’s the shame ; but it’s no’ to be believed folk would go on sic na gait as thae twa in the blaze o’ this lamp o’ light, no’ a bit but it’s awfu’. I’m grieved the lassie should see sic na things :” pointing to Lady Emily.

“ Oh, she !—she’s devouring the music. She hears nothing but Caradori’s ‘ Quanto dolce nell’ alma.’ I hope Lady Emily will never be in the fashion, but get well married quickly to some good man, who will guide her youthful steps—and that will be charming ! charming !”

“ I wish it, wi’ a’ my heart. But what na

heap o' fine folk are yon just come in at the stage-box? no' a bit but she's a bonnie leddie yon same; and hech, sirs! she's a power o' gentry round her."

"Oh, that is the famous supreme, the woman who is the queen of the ton. She has climbed to the very topmost bough, and that pretty little wren sitting by her is striving hard with her busy wings to hop after her. They and their set give themselves a great many ridiculous airs, and for that very reason they are suited to the place they hold. Well, to be sure, it is impossible anybody could be more so. I never saw any corps de ballet more perfect than they are in their parts; and, to be sure, I have seen many such, since I first came out in life. It's charming! charming! to see how vain, and proud, and silly they make themselves, and how the still more foolish multitude play into their hands. It makes me die of laughing; but, notwithstanding all that, people remember who they were, and say every now and then—'But why has the barber's granddaughter, or the fishmonger's, or the per-

fumer's, a right to do so and so?' It is beyond belief, when their backs are turned, how their dear friends pull them to pieces.—It's quite charming!—isn't it charming? Observe, Miss Macalpine, that quiet-looking lady who sits alone there in her box. That is a really great person, who never gives herself any airs, forms no exclusive circle, unless it be that the sterling great and good seek her society; who belongs to no sect of fashionable folly, and yet contemns no one who lives in the world; who can command its smiles, yet never courts it by those petty restless arts on which, and by which, the others live, and move, and breathe.—Oh, it is quite charming, to see how she's hated, but they dare not show their hatred either. It is *charming, charming, charming!* to see the real old nobility shining out splendid in its tranquillity, amid the tinsel glare of the *ton*. Well, to be sure, it is beyond belief; but then remember, Miss Macalpine, these really great people are *not* the fashion of the day."

"No' a bit but it's a pity."

"Pity! not a bit of it; no such thing, Miss

Macalpine ; it's charming ! charming ! I tell you it's a glory, not a pity."

At that moment Lord Mowbray came into the box. Lady Emily, who had been sitting absorbed in what was passing on the stage, at the sound of his voice turned quickly round, and with her whole countenance beaming with sudden and inexpressible delight, could hardly refrain from thanking him for his generosity to Miss Macalpine. That noble trait in his character had been uppermost in her mind ever since she knew of it ; she had dwelt upon it by day, and dreamt of it by night ; and she found it almost impossible not to talk of what had so completely and so deliciously employed her thoughts.

Lord Mowbray modestly attributed Lady Emily's joy at seeing him, to this cause, and to this alone ; while she, on her part, accounted to herself for it in no other way, which left her at perfect liberty to show the full tide of the delight she experienced at meeting him again, unrepressed by any consciousness of a tenderer sentiment.

" It is very new, and very grateful to the

feelings," said Lord Mowbray, "to find any one so exactly the same in town as in country. I felt rather nervous just now at the idea of coming into Mrs. Neville's box; but as I have for some time observed you from the pit engaged entirely with what was passing on the stage, I conceived that I might venture to steal in, determined not to interrupt your amusement, by my conversation, at least, but merely make my bow and retire again. As it is, perhaps, you will allow me to remain a few minutes."

"You knew, then, that we were here," said Lady Emily, a cloud passing over her brow: "you knew that we were here; you even saw us, and did not come directly to us: how very odd."

"Odd! was it, indeed, so?" replied Lord Mowbray, colouring with pleasure: "well, then, I promise you it shall never be so again; but perhaps——"

"Perhaps what?"

"Oh, nothing," he said; and leaning back in his chair, his manner prevented Lady Emily from pressing the subject farther. After a few

minutes' silence, (that is to say, between her and Lord Mowbray; for the two *chaperons* ceased not talking for a moment,) the latter inquired for the General.

“ I thank you, my dear uncle is well; that is to say, pretty well.” And again, that mutability of expression, which varied with every varying sensation, threw a dark shade across her countenance; and the words, “ pretty well,” were slowly and faintly repeated.

“ I am afraid,” replied Lord Mowbray, with that deep but tender intonation of voice, which once heard was never forgotten,—“ I am afraid, then, by your manner of speaking, that the General is not so well as *we* could wish.”

“ *We* could wish!” repeated Lady Emily, to herself, laying an emphasis upon the *we*. How the little monosyllable thrilled through her frame! “ No, he is not, I grieve to say it, by any means so well as we, who love him dearly, could wish. You know, we have had some sorrowful, some awful events at the Hall.” And she shuddered as she spoke.—“ Has not Miss Macalpine told you?”

“ She mentioned something of a mask and a mystery.”

“ Oh ! Lord Mowbray, I cannot speak of it here—here, where the glare and the gaiety, and my own thoughts,” (passing her hand across her brow,) “ are so unsuited to the solemnity of the subject ; but when you come to see us, then I will tell you every thing, every thing which I am at liberty to tell ; but——”

“ But what ? Pray proceed.”

“ Oh !” she answered, recollecting herself, “ there are some things which I may not——”

“ Do not keep me in suspense, Lady Emily, if, indeed, you are so good as to confide in me : there is no place where one is more completely alone than at any great public assembly, especially an opera ; every body is thinking of their own affairs, their own vanity, their own Flirtation ; nobody has time to think of their neighbour.”

“ Indeed !” said Lady Emily, who found that her own chair had insensibly slid back in the box close to Lord Mowbray’s, and that the hum around her had produced that sort of in-

definite confusion in her brain, which renders it easy to abstract one's thoughts, and fix them on any subject, however little analogous to the place. She took courage, and began to recount the events of the portentous evening when the masked man had first arrived at the Hall; when, just as she came to the most interesting part of her story, a deafening burst of applause from the whole audience made her lean forward over the box; and Mrs. Neville exclaimed—"The Rosalinda! the new singer! Now, Lady Emily, no more talking. It is the fashion to listen to *her*!"

It was Rosalinda herself; and after Lady Emily had gazed at her for a minute in rapturous admiration, she turned to express this feeling to Lord Mowbray; but at that instant the box-door shut suddenly, and Lord Mowbray was gone.

"Well, to be sure! it is beyond belief!" cried Mrs. Neville. "How strange that Lord Mowbray is! I cannot make him out at all. He comes and goes, like a man in a harlequin farce—nobody knows how."

Lady Emily's countenance betrayed too visibly all that passed within, not to show that what gave the greatest interest to the scene, in her estimation, was departed. Nevertheless, she listened with an aching heart to the tones of the Rosalinda: others *admired*—she *felt* their power. Her eyes wandered round the house in vain to see Lord Mowbray; but, unaccustomed to distinguish objects in the glare and confusion of a public place, she deemed it very likely that he might be present, and yet that she could not discover him. Weary with hoping, and her eyes fatigued by seeking perpetually for that which they never found, she felt relieved when the curtain dropped.

“ Well, to be sure! it is beyond belief! What an odd man that Lord Mowbray is! always flies off like lightning!” repeated Mrs. Neville, as they rose and prepared to leave the box; “ a perfect *ignis fatuus*, I declare. But he is very original—not cut out upon any body else's pattern: and then, the charm of being perfectly natural! Well, to be sure! *that is*

charming. Altogether, he diverts me exceedingly. Come, come along; we shall be in the midst of the crowd, and I shall never get to my carriage."

It was all Lady Emily and Miss Macalpine could do to follow her as she elbowed her way through the press of people. Apologies mingled with laughter, were heard all round about; but Mrs. Neville pursued her victorious way, and made good an excellent position for seeing and being seen. In the waiting-room, Mrs. Neville found many acquaintances, and became so deeply engaged in conversation, that though her equipage was announced to be ready, she never listened to the summons; and when reminded by Lady Emily that they would be detained half the night if the carriage drove off, Mrs. Neville said, "Well, to be sure, we may; never mind, my love, never mind; I am vastly well amused, I hope you are?" and suddenly catching hold of Mrs. Fitzhammond, as she was passing, she held her fast, saying, "You must come and tell me what you think of the new work. 'EAST AND WEST' is an excellent name, isn't it? it

comprehends so much, and it does not disappoint you in that; there is a great deal in it more than many people will like; but let the ‘galled jade wince;’ it is beyond belief how many people look frightened!”

“Frightened!” said Mr. Lepel, who had overheard this conversation, while employed examining Lady Emily; “delighted, you mean; the generality of people live only upon being talked *of*, or *at*, no matter which, or *how*.”

“You speak your own sentiments,” rejoined Mrs. Neville; “*you* live upon it; but many others do not like the idea, I can tell you, of being hauled over the coals.”

“Vulgar!” exclaimed Mr. Lepel, loud enough to be overheard, and turned away.

“For my part,” continued Mrs. Neville, “I think it may do them all a vast deal of good, if they will only take the covert hints it contains.”

“My dear Mrs. Neville, did you ever hear of books doing anybody any good?” said Mrs. Fitzhammond; “I mean, any body of fashion: few read, and still fewer think of them.”

“ Oh, for the matter of that, EAST AND WEST is not very deep ; and yet in one or two places there is something to touch the feelings, too.”

“ Its being dedicated to Lord Mowbray, is the circumstance which obtains for this novel so much celebrity, I believe,” rejoined Mrs. Fitzhammond. “ I am told there is some allusion to himself ; and all the mammas, who want him for a husband for their daughters, are interested in finding out the enigma.”

During this conversation they had reached the staircase, which was very much crowded ; and Emily, as she leant upon the balustrade, heard just beneath her a voice which made her start : it was too loud in its tone for propriety, too sweet in its sound for vulgarity ; it proceeded from a beautiful female, who, dressed in the extreme of fashion, with a gentleman on each side, was leaving the pit. Lady Emily looked and looked till she was bewildered : she thought she knew the face, the voice ; but dress and rouge, and a totally changed expression, so perplexed her, that for a length of time

no distinct recognition came to her of the person; till suddenly a laugh, such as she had heard in green lanes, when culling violets, left her no doubt that she looked upon Rose Delvin.

She turned pale—she felt faint—she could hardly support herself; Mrs. Neville pushed on, and in the next moment they were at the bottom of the staircase. Emily found herself for an instant in absolute contact with the object of her solicitude.

“Rose,” she said, in a low voice, and with an emotion she could not suppress, “Oh, what do you here?”

The unhappy girl started, and, uttering a loud scream, seized Lady Emily’s arm.

“See, she is ill! she will faint. Mrs. Neville, Miss Macalpine, it is Rose. Oh, save her, save her!”

There was a general commotion, and Lord Mowbray came up among some others.

“Are you not well, Lady Emily? what is this?”

“Oh, it is poor Rose! those men are taking her away; save her, bring her back to me!”

“ Wretched girl ! I can do nothing. Lady Emily, this is no scene for you ; let me put you into the carriage ; every eye is on you, and you tremble :” he pressed her arm in his as she leant upon him.

Mrs. Neville utterly confounded, and Miss Macalpine horror-stricken, followed them : the former overpowered Lady Emily with questions, but she was in no condition to answer ; she sat, overcome with sorrow, shame, disgust, every way distressed. She gave way to a passion of tears. She felt she had made herself conspicuous in a most unworthy cause, and she wept incessantly till the carriage set them down at the hotel.

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.

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