

# LADY ANNE GRANARD;

OR,

KEEPING UP APPEARANCES.

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CHAPTER XLIX.

It is time now to return to the "Golden Shell," the "garden of Europe," the "matchless Italy," of which so much has been said and sung, and will continue to be till time itself shall cease, but in which (with all its beauties of surface and climate, all its charms of association, and its wonders of art) the sorrows and solitudes which belong to human existence are felt as acutely as in less favoured countries.

It was at least thus with the daughters of Lady Anne; for, although the gentle bosom of Mary once more admitted the guest into her confidence which she had long sought to banish, her love was attended with much of apprehension and anxiety — many

surmises as to the character, and especially the temper, of Lord Allerton, and not a few of the fears, which are the result of advanced judgment, and the knowledge which arises from observation. Mary could not be at twenty-six the same perfectly artless, confiding, hoping creature she had been at nineteen; nor could she expect that Lord Allerton could be the man she had known him. He knew himself to have been duped by a woman, and he might thence deem the whole sex more or less deceitful; his fortune had been injured by the extravagance of a first wife, and it would be natural for him to become suspicious, perhaps niggardly, with a second, especially the daughter of a mother whose errors were undoubtedly often descanted upon by the lady from whom he was separated. In her situation there could be no doubt that the home to which he might remove her must be much happier than the one she had long known with her mother, but it was a point for consideration whether it would be so compared with that she now enjoyed, and where she was so useful to her dear young sister. Love hides all faults, all discrepancies; but could the love felt by either party in this case effect that happy state of blindness?—she was certain it could not. Their happiness must depend on mutual esteem, the surest of all foundations, but the one most difficult to rely on, for slight inequalities might

produce great effects, when neither the novelty of situation nor the charm of passion were present to soften or relieve them.

If Mary had been subject to personal vanity (which we believe she never was), Lady Anne would have effectually cured it long ago, for she had as often told *her* that she had lost her beauty, as she had, with equal candour, assured Isabella that she never possessed any; a circumstance that gave the eldest and youngest of her family a more than common tie to each other, although they were never envious of the rest, but, on the contrary, most affectionately attached even to the most praised and admired, a proof of great excellence in both. At this time, it had this farther effect, that each supposed there was some kind of physical similitude in their situation. As Mary could not but perceive that Isabella was amazingly improved in her person since her marriage, yet retaining all its peculiar character, when either Glentworth or her sister spoke of her own improvement she thought it was possible, which otherwise, in her long state of subdued spirits, she might not. She had therefore the consolation of believing that Lord Allerton, whom she had never seen since his marriage, would not be shocked by her appearance, often as her mother made the assertion, for she must have been a fool, instead of an humble woman, if she had not been conscious that she was at

this time handsomer than she had ever been before, and externally more resembling her mother than any of her sisters, though she lacked Lady Anne's commanding height and that cast of countenance which indicated powerful intellect, but was unfortunately mingled with pride and superciliousness, which was the extreme reverse of Mary's expression.

It might therefore be truly said, that Isabella enjoyed the prospect of her sister's future honourable settlement more than she could do herself, for the wife had not yet learned to scan the good or evil inherent in matrimony with a just eye. She had suffered much, but she could not bring herself to suppose that any part of her experience belonged to the state itself, but to her own peculiar situation, and that of her dear, unhappy husband. The isolated state in which she was now living, far from her country and her friends, shut out from the society in which she had a right to move, of course prevented her from reading in the great book of human life those lessons of life which might have enlarged her views or increased her apprehensions; therefore, she saw nothing before her beloved sister but a course of unmingled and well-merited felicity.

She had still the buoyancy which belongs to girls in their teens, as well as the soberness which arises from experience; and when her spirits were op-

pressed with the anxiety inseparable from her situation, it was a great relief to allow her imagination to paint all possible pleasures for that beloved sister—that kind and watchful friend, whom every day made more dear and valuable to her. Sometimes she would be sensible of the great loss she should herself experience, and almost feared to be left alone without Mary to aid the conversation and soften the asperities of poor Glentworth; but she trusted the daily improving intelligence of her boy would do wonders for her in this respect; and, at all events, if Mary's happiness were secured, she could submit to the privation of her society. Reasoning on Lord Rotheles's principle, we should certainly say Lady Anne was the monopolist of selfishness in her family, for the girls had none; it may, however, be added, with great truth, that she had had enough for all.

When the Count's first letter reached them, in which he related the success of his mission, though he had spoken of the illness of Lady Anne in no alarming terms, they were convinced it was a bad one, or he would not have mentioned it at all, such had been at all times his anxiety to save them from pain; and as he knew better than any one else could the present state of Glentworth, and their apprehensions on his account, it was hardly likely that he would add to their uneasiness without a sufficient cause.

When the mind is in a state of solicitude on subjects connected with sickness and death, the well-disposed seldom attempt to fly from the contemplation of those things immediately connected with them, or seek consolation from looking beyond them. "Let us go to the Campo Santo to-day," said Mary; "I had rather contemplate among the tombs than visit the churches, fine as the music is, because I cannot think as I wish to do when so many things are going on which divert my attention."

To this magnificent edifice, wherein repose the ashes of the great during more than six hundred years, they therefore drove; and, although they had been there very often already, found much that could not fail to charm and interest them in the sombre and splendid monuments, the inscriptions, which were condensed histories of those who slept within them, or those admirable, though faded frescoes, which have been the wonder of ages. There were few persons within at the time, it being the general hour for mass; but two ladies having entered just before them, attracted their attention, in consequence of being, like themselves, unaccompanied by a gentleman, from which it was concluded they were regular inhabitants of Pisa.

Mary did not pay them any particular attention beyond noticing that the younger was a beautiful olive-complexioned woman about thirty, and her

companion apparently from the northern part of her own country, as she had, though aged, a fair complexion, ruddy cheeks, and high cheek-bones, with small piercing eyes, well calculated for the office of a duenna. Both were well dressed, and were, probably, relations, notwithstanding the difference of country exhibited in their persons; the superiority of the Italian style of feature struck Mary much, but that was all.

Isabella, on the contrary, felt a real interest in the strangers, at least in one of them, of whose face she did not get so good a view as her sister had done, and though her spirits were by no means in tone for forming acquaintance with a stranger, and she was really much engaged with the solemn and beautiful objects by which she was surrounded, yet still, from time to time, she could not forbear looking towards the younger. When she approached an old monument, as if to decipher the epitaph, Isabella went towards it also, and on the lady turning quickly away, because she found herself incapable of reading it, they suddenly faced each other, and Isabella exclaimed,

“It is—I am sure it is dear Mrs. Cranstoun!”

“And you are, certainly, a Granard; but it cannot be little Isabella?”

“Yes, indeed, dear lady, I am Isabella, but no longer a Granard: this is my sister Mary, but I

believe she was not one of those to whom you were so good."

"No, I knew only your mamma's three youngest daughters; is it possible that all my little girls are married?"

"Oh, no! Helen and Georgiana are neither of them married: Louisa is, but she was the second only."

The lady smiled, and perhaps wondered; nevertheless, she had already said to herself, "What a very fine young woman that poor child is become!" she now put the very natural question, "By what name, my young friend, shall I now address you?"

"I am Mrs. Glentworth," answered Isabella, blushing.

"Glentworth! Glentworth!" both ladies exclaimed, looking at each other, with great surprise, the elder adding, "you'll no mean to say ye are married to Francis Glaintworth, wha formerly lived at Marseilles?"

"Yes, indeed, I am; after our marriage we came out to Marseilles, to settle his affairs."

"Affairs! did not the old mon, his uncl leave him a rich mon?"

"He made no will, and my husband succeeded, as a matter of course."

"He did reight, varry reight; but guid traith, that's more than I can jist say a' yer mither, wha



garr'd ye marry Frank, because o' the money, and I shuld not ha thought he'd a ta'en the advantage, fra what I've hard say."

"I love my husband, dearly; I have loved him all my life, but never so well as at the time I married him, unless it is *now*, when he is travelling to regain his health, and I cannot be with him on account of my little boy."

"It may be sae, an I'm glad ye've got a wee mon to take down the Glaintworth estates to posterity, ye ken; its aw as it shuld be; ye have naithing but good wishes frae us, I'm sartin, na-theless it's better we meet no more, or meet as strangers."

"It must be so, indeed, my sweet Isabella," said Mrs. Cranstoun, taking her hand.

That hand was instantly withdrawn; poor Isabella felt as "if there were two Richmonds in the field," for every trait of person which had belonged to the late Marchioness di Morello, and had been so insisted upon by Glentworth in his descriptions of the beautiful, were the express characteristics of the delicate and fascinating woman before her. She well remembered the mystery that shrouded her years ago at Brighton; the certainty, that if she had a husband he was residing at a great distance, and that she was at that time under the decided care of her Scotch aunt. "Could Glent-

worth have been that husband or that protector who had so placed her, and could he, in a distant country, have forgotten her for the sake of *Margarita Riccardini*?"

There was an agony in that thought, which went far beyond all she had ever known of sorrow, for it showed her the revered, the idolized being, who ruled her destiny, as unfeeling and worthless. Turning on Mary a look of unutterable anguish, she threw herself forward on the tomb before her, laid her forehead on the marble, grasping it with her hands as if seeking support from the representation of death itself.

"We had better go now," said the old lady, looking at her watch, "the carriage is waiting."

"Whoever you may be, madam," said Mary, stepping forward, and laying her hand on the arm of the younger, with a pressure that made itself felt, "you shall not go till you have so far explained your situation and connexion with Mr. Glentworth, as to clear his character or to prove his guilt; you have awakened in *Isabella's* breast the agonies of jealousy; I see you have, and I appeal to your humanity to relieve her tortures, for I declare, upon my honour, that I think them natural and even justifiable."

"Oh, God!" cried the lady, "why did I not foresee this? *Isabella*, my dear child, I have never

beheld your husband, *never*; he knows not there is such a woman in existence as myself; I have wronged him, but most innocently, for I was a school-girl at the time; I am his relation, and, in my heart, his friend, but I am a married woman, was so when you knew me first, although a very young one; look at me, dear Isabella, and forgive me, if I have given you pain; I dare appeal to your memory for all the lessons I taught you, whether deception was not abhorrent to my nature? At that time I was, it is true, a mystery, and as such *allied* to guilt, though myself innocent and blameless; ‘a child of misery baptized in tears.’”

Mary remembered, that, at the time to which she alluded, Lady Anne had received notes from Mrs. Cranstoun, which she had said “were perfectly satisfactory,” but she knew also that circumstances, which might be so to her mamma, in a case where her younger daughters were receiving daily benefits, would by no means be so in the eyes of Mr. Glentworth, in an acquaintance of his wife’s, and she evidenced a desire to separate as decidedly as the old lady.

But the words, “I have never beheld Mr. Glentworth,” at once obliterated all fears from Isabella’s mind, and brought back all sweet and grateful memories, and she flung herself unreservedly into the stranger’s arms. She cared for nothing at the

moment but her husband's fame ; if he were guiltless she was satisfied ; but to have seen her venerated, her adored idol, hurled from his pedestal, as false to Margarita, and to his own professions ; to suppose he could, by possibility, be classed with the common herd, her fond and proud attachment could not endure ; she knew him to have been unfortunate, but she believed him to have been the most virtuous of men, and gloried in that virtue ; she did well to exult, for she was *right*.

## CHAPTER L.

A large party, at this time, entering the Campo Santo, several of whom appeared to be English, the ladies in question separated instantly and returned to their carriages, which were placed nearly together; so that, without manifesting any particular curiosity, Miss Granard could inquire of their servant "if he knew whether the ladies were of her own country?"

"Yes, it was miladi, the sposa of le Chevalier Osmond—she live in Pisa for the health; it was native air for miladi, *mais elle nee Inglis.*"

Mary translated this into the lady being born in Pisa, of English parents; and might have made farther inquiries of the man who had been with them in the capacity of courier ever since they arrived, and who was intelligent and faithful (though his great qualification of *speaking* various languages might have been construed into *mixing* many), but she saw that Isabella looked so ill, her only care was to reach the hotel where they resided as soon

as possible. In truth, she had received a shock which had a great effect upon her health, and which was rendered the worse from her consciousness of the cause, and her fear that Glentworth would be hurt, or angry, with her. "This poor woman," said she, "is evidently shrouded in mystery, so let her remain; it is not likely we should meet again, and we had better never refer to this interview, I think."

"I don't know that we could be justifiable in silence to Glentworth, when we have seen a lady who professes herself to be his relation, and to have been his injurer, though innocently so; which, indeed, I should *think*, for she was very good to you, and is a most lovely, interesting creature, and do you know I cannot help thinking she has a look of Glentworth, since he has been so poorly—the kind of sharpness which has been given, either by sorrow or sickness, to both their faces, is the same in its character, and the outline of their features has great similarity."

"You are quite right, for I can now recollect it was such when she was at Brighton, long ago, and looking well—I have heard him say, how often he had wished for a sister, from his childhood; and he thought his want of that dear relation had operated in rendering him attached to us, and you know how fond he is of calling you 'sister' and 'dear Mary,'

as if he had really gained the connection he had long desired; but I cannot see how this lady could, by possibility, be his sister, nor did I ever hear of any person wronging him, though he has often referred to the time when he was poor, and rejoiced exceedingly that he went into that commercial house in which he has so kindly placed Charles Penrhyn."

"I can remember the time when he was a young man, and used to come to Granard Park as a gentleman, but he was *quite* young, and I understood he had no mother, but a father abroad—then there came a time when papa used to pity poor Frank very much, and it strikes me that I have heard him say that 'he had been devilishly ill-used;' after that we were in London, and he came very often and seemed to be papa's only comfort, but never joined mamma's parties, though she often wished for him; for even when people called him poor, and some reflected on him the same as mamma did, yet they always considered him a gentleman, and spoke of him with a peculiar kind of pity and affection, but I never knew why. I now think this lady Osmond, or rather her relations, must have been the cause of it—depend upon it he has experienced some peculiar misfortune in early life, connected with his pecuniary affairs."

Isabella burst into tears as she said, "If his youth suffered from misfortunes of that kind, I am sure

his early manhood suffered no less from another cause. Oh! may God grant that I shall have the power to render the autumn and the winter of his life happy. I ask no other power, no other pleasure than to live for him, attend upon him, nurse his ailments, bear his petulance with patience, and divert the sorrows which memory may revive by every contrivance my love and imagination may suggest—yes, yes, other people may talk of my large fortune, but I know that it is my dear, good husband, which is Heaven's best boon."

As she spoke thus, in the language of awakened sensibility, Mary became sensible that her heightened colour, her rapid utterance, and the brilliancy of her eye betokened disorder beyond what she had apprehended. She lost no time in sending for an English physician, resident in Pisa, and held a courier in readiness to fetch Parizzi from Rome, feeling all the responsibility which belonged to her situation not less than the tenderest attachment and most perfect esteem for her who was the object of solicitude.

A fever, which soon denied the nutriment required by her babe, rendered a substitute for a mother the most pressing care on poor Mary's mind; but so violently did the invalid oppose this arrangement, that the devoted sister undertook to wean the child herself; and his perfectly healthy state, and naturally good temper, enabled him to



bear the trial without injury — a circumstance greatly to the relief of the mother, so far as she comprehended it; but, as temporary delirium occurred, though she was incessantly speaking of the child, she could not always be made to understand why it was withheld from her.

Happily letters arrived a fortnight after Mrs. Glentworth's seizure, announcing the speedy return of her husband, and the great improvement of his health, which he doubted not would be effected completely by his voyage to Pisa, or, at least, to the much longer one he had decided on taking, if it would not be prejudicial to their child — to herself he knew it would not. His letter was kind but short, and he added, jokingly, "If Mary wishes to appear irresistible in the eyes of my companion, I would advise her to make her *coup d'œil* with little Frank in her arms, for I have observed, throughout our journey, that Allerton gives all his spare cash to the mothers, leaving the girls (so much the better) to "shift as they may."

It did so happen that, on the arrival of the strangers, Mary was playing with the child (who would scarcely leave her since she had become so essential to his comfort), and had perhaps seldom looked better at any moment of her existence, though the combs in her hair, plucked out by little fingers, had left it beautifully dishevelled, to the boy's evident delight.

The stranger, who entered unannounced, stood a moment entranced with pleasure, then snatched the boy, and held him in a close embrace, till a loud cry, indicating alike health and anger, compelled him to restore his prize, and the question of "where is his mother, my dear sister?" recalled poor Miss Granard a little to herself.

"My sister has been ill, and is still delicate; the good news she is anxiously waiting for had better be told to her by me; she is nearly well, I can assure you, but is left weak and nervous, though the fever is quite gone."

Glentworth seemed astonished into silence and trouble; but Lord Allerton, attentively opening the door, followed Mary with his eyes admiringly, and, thanking her for the kind smile she had honoured him with, in his heart wondered where his eyes had been when he had forsaken her to "prey on garbage." She was soon followed by Glentworth, who stepped slowly and anxiously towards the dressing-room, and, ere he reached it, heard, with a delight the wayworn traveller and anxious husband alone can know, Isabella's cry of joy, her voice of thanksgiving to God on his behalf, and in another minute his pale but lovely wife was in his arms.

When the first joyful feelings of the moment had subsided, Isabella took an earnest survey of that which she undoubtedly considered to be her best

earthly possession, and, with sincere satisfaction, perceived that her husband was blest with the general characteristics of health, though many of the finer lineaments of his countenance were obliterated, and he was decidedly looking old for his years. But what was that compared to the pleasure of gazing on him, and listening to his words of pity or of praise ! to witnessing the sparkling of his eyes when he gazed on his boy, and sought, by every possible medium, to coax him to his arms, a task not to be achieved in a moment ; or in listening to that praise of Lord Allerton, which was likely to propitiate Mary in his favour !

In a very short time, Isabella said “ she was impatient to see and thank this kind friend of her husband’s ;” and, although not equal to take her seat at table, she could proceed for a few minutes into their usual sitting-room. Glentworth took her on his arm with an air in which respect blended with tenderness, and presented her, with pride not less than pleasure, to their noble visitant, who, although surprised by the youthfulness of her countenance (rendered the more striking from her late illness), thought that its gentle benignity augured well for his future hopes, which had waned considerably since he beheld her sister. When at a distance, he contemplated Mary, as she had been depicted to him, pale and shadowy, lovelorn and sallow, carrying in

her face signs of that silent, eating sorrow, which writes on the brow what the tongue refuses to utter : he felt as if it were his duty and privilege to soothe that sorrow, and restore that health of which she had been deprived, and that his justice and pity would suffice for love ; but he now saw her a fine and lovely woman, in the best period of her existence, her manners graceful, her mind cultivated, and her judgment so matured, it was little likely that she should suffer early recollections and impressions to warp it ; he saw, or thought he saw, clearly that they would not ; and he also felt, however strange it might be, that he was more in love than he had ever been in his life with either herself or any other woman. He appeared to himself as if he had stepped into the caldron which was intended to renew life and youth, and recovered, or rather acquired, more than he had ever known before of the higher influences of a soul-ennobling passion.

Nothing could be more delightful to Mr. Glentworth than to find Dr. Parizzi constituted one of his family party, save in so far as it indicated his lady's sufferings ; but, his presence being still more restorative, he was not likely to be detained at Pisa much longer. He was proud of the amendment of Glentworth, feeling assured that no other mode of acting would have proved equally efficacious in a case where both body and mind were affected so en-

tirely, and he was never weary of praising the admirable conduct of Isabella, at the same time turning round in his own mind how he might best break to him the circumstance which had in truth given the shock which occasioned her illness. He greatly feared the excitability of Glentworth's system, and dreaded that he might be induced to set out again in some long, wild journey in search of Lady Osmond, who he found, on inquiry, had left Pisa for Marseilles, where she expected to meet her husband, only two days after she had seen Isabella in the Campo Santo.

Under these circumstances, both Mary and himself were much inclined to consider that the youngest person had judged the best, and that any thing which could by possibility occasion a relapse to that state of distressing irritability and depression from which he had successfully emerged, ought not to be ventured upon. The doctor had never heard him refer to any relationship with this lady or any other; there could be no doubt that, whatever might have been the yearnings of his heart in days past, he no longer required them now, being happy in the strongest and tenderest ties. It was, therefore, after various consultations, agreed to leave for the present their peace unbroken by retrospection or acquisition, and a few days afterwards the worthy physician departed, reiterating his promise of some

time visiting England, whither he advised them to journey whilst the weather continued favourable.

Isabella was somewhat relieved when her good friend had departed ; for so much was she comforted by the presence of her husband, and so pleasantly did she perceive thoughts and feelings travelling on toward the haven she desired for her beloved sister, that she could scarcely bear to think of any change. In fact, "her soul had its content so absolute," whilst listening to her husband's description of what he had seen most remarkable in Sicily, or in witnessing his unwearied pains to gain the confidence of his child, and, having done so, play with him by the hour together, that, although both herself and sister had been wont to spend whole days in expatiating on the pleasures of returning to England, and again meeting those dear ones, from whom they had been so long separated, and, by some medium or other, helping mamma in those troubles which were sure to arise, that she now dreaded to speak of change, lest the happy rest which belonged to her situation should be revoked ; she did not know that the delicacy of her own appearance was such as to render her husband and sister fearful of fatiguing her by removal, for she had been formerly of so very little estimation, she had no idea of the extent of her importance at present.

## CHAPTER LI.

From the time of Glentworth's return, he had indeed appeared perfectly cured; not an irritable word had escaped him; and as every captious conclusion and petulant observation had been in days past always attributed, very justly, by Isabella either to the dyspepsia, brought on by his grief for Margarita, or the fever he sustained from the climate, her satisfaction had been the greater in his present most amiable temper; but, on this eventful day—the day which had begun so pleasantly—he was apparently cross and unwell.

There was nothing at dinner which he could eat—“the *cuisine* was execrable.”

“Yet you and I have made shift to live upon what was much worse,” said Lord Allerton, “within a very few weeks.”

“One may live on any thing in a mountainous country, but not in a plain like this. I shall leave Pisa very soon, I assure you.”

Letters from England the day following greatly

relieved the sisters, as they informed them that Lady Anne had arrived in Welbeck Street, and bore her removal very well; that the Earl of Rotheles, who had been in great danger, was better, and, it was hoped, would speedily be able to receive mamma, when her native air would soon restore her entirely. Lady Anne herself wrote to her eldest, desiring that on her return she would not fail to purchase for her a gown of Genoa velvet, of the richest description. "You can get the money," said Lady Anne, "from Isabella; young wives are privileged, and can always get money out of gentlemen who, although not old, are much their own seniors. Having got the velvet, which must be at least fourteen yards, you must carefully swathe yourself in it, and, being a kind of walking skeleton, I don't suppose the custom-house officers will suspect you. I know the thing has been done, and it therefore can be done again; remember I will have no excuses as to heat, inconvenience, &c. To be sure, if you were to be lost at sea, it might facilitate your drowning; but I don't think much of that, for the sooner you were out of pain the better. I hope, however, that will not be the case, for a real Genoa velvet dress would be a serious loss, especially after you have bought the Mechlin lace to trim it with, which you must manage to get in France. Say nothing about it either to Glentworth, because men who have been in business hate



smuggling, and it is necessary to propitiate *him*, as, I grieve to say, the Marquis of Wentworthdale has given up all thoughts of marriage ; and I am, of course, on the look-out for something for Georgiana, who is now with Louisa, and may be tempted to make a low connexion among the city acquaintances of Charles Penrhyn — not that I shall object to a man who keeps two houses, two carriages, and who will give her two hundred pounds pin-money quarterly. Such a marriage might answer to us all ; and I ought to think for myself, as your chance has been gone by for years. Lord Allerton will, of course, look out for an heiress ; he is travelling on the Continent for that purpose, and has taken the best method—for when people are jumbled together in miserable inns, frightened by banditti, or cheated by shopkeepers, it produces great union of opinion and interests—and there is little doubt of his catching somebody worth the bait his person and position offers. I merely touch on this subject, to guard you from thinking about him, should he cross your path. No man marries *two* portionless wives, especially after the first has played the fool, as Miss Aubrey has done. At twenty, young men call money dross, but at thirty they know it to be the staff of life ; therefore, do not subject yourself to further inconvenience, I beseech you ; it is sufficient

mortification to any woman to look as old as her mother, which you certainly did when we parted; and I greatly fear the sirocco winds and the blazing suns of Italy have made you resemble a parchment threadpaper at this time."

"Well or ill, near or distant, mamma is all herself to me at least," said Mary, as she put this amiable letter into Isabella's hand. "I have heard several ladies say they could not help having a *peculiar* feeling for their first-born; in her case, it is more peculiar than agreeable, I must say."

"Dear Mary, we cannot talk of mamma just now. A large packet has been brought to me, which undoubtedly came by the same vessel which brought the mail. My maid was inquired for below, and the packet delivered into her hands, with an injunction that she should give it me when I was alone, and say it came from a *lady* at Marseilles. There can be no doubt that it is from Lady Osmond; it seems to me, from feeling it, to be nearly all paper, and probably contains a history of her life. Had I better mention having received it before I opened it, or after?"

"*After*, undoubtedly, or you will deal unfairly by the writer, who may not choose to throw her history before the eyes of your husband; but, as it may take a good deal of reading, and Mr. Glentworth may break in upon you, you had better read it

in my room. He will be busy with his letters, we know, and I have promised Lord Allerton to drive out with him, so that every thing is convenient; though a married woman should never have a secret of her own, I think she ought to guard those of others when committed to her."

"But no good and wise person will burden with such a thing so young a woman as myself. Oh! Mary, what shall I do without you? surely I shall never be without a sister—but none can be to me what you have been!"

"We shall never be long parted, my precious Isabella," replied Mary, as she pressed her hand, and flew down stairs to fulfil her promise to Lord Allerton.

With a slow step, and tears in her eyes, Mrs. Glentworth, vaticinating trouble of some kind, proceeded to cut the string and break the seal of her packet. It consisted of several sheets of written paper, which enclosed a bracelet, the clasp of which was the miniature of a young and beautiful woman, dressed in a stile which, being classical, will be always becoming, the brown flowing hair curled on the forehead, but not so as to hide it, and being turned up behind to the crown of the head, was fastened with a diamond comb, and fell back in a profusion of ringlets.

"What a pretty woman! what a sweet smile!"

and those deep blue eyes are exactly like little Frank's—the round, dimpled, soft chin, too——”

“Knowing your sister was out,” said a voice behind her, “I came here to ask you ——. What have you got that you want to hide, Isabella?”

“The likeness of a very beautiful woman, which is also a likeness of our sweet Frank. I do not want to conceal it from you, Glentworth, beyond two minutes; nor can I tell you whose it is, as I have not read a single line of that parcel of papers from which I have this moment drawn it; but I hold it from you, because I think it will be of *great*, perhaps *overpowering*, interest to you.”

“How comes the parcel here?—I suppose it is from Riccardini?”

“Oh, no, it is from Marseilles. I think I know the lady who has sent it, and I stepped into this room to ask Mary whether I had better mention the receiving this paquet to you before I opened it? she thought I ought *not*; she said, ‘though a married woman ought to have no secret of her own, she had no right to divulge another’s.’”

“She is always right; pray do as you think proper in the matter; if it is not Margarita’s portrait, it is nothing to *me*, unless, indeed, it should be one of yourself, which it is natural enough to suppose a little like Frank.”

“I shall never be so fair and sweet a thing as

this," said Isabella, putting the bracelet into his hand.

"God bless me! wherever could this come from? it is my own, my angel mother's; it was painted for *her* mother when she married. I have seen it many a time when I was a boy, standing about her whilst she dressed her hair; read your packet, I beseech you, Isabella, it is of the utmost interest to me."

Holding the miniature to his lips, his eyes overflowing, and his whole frame in a state of agitation, Glentworth withdrew to his wife's dressing-room, whilst she (personally relieved, but in great solicitude for *him*,) took up the written papers, and read with deep interest, which increased, whilst she proceeded, as follows:

"My dear Isabella—My whole existence has been a tissue of mystery and misfortune, to myself as well as to others, for the who and what I was only was revealed to me by degrees, and my ignorance having operated as a blight on my own happiness, and must often have communicated a painful influence on those who were willing to love me, I have at length determined, in your person, and for your sake, to end it. I am on the point of leaving Europe once more, and I know I shall never return; the sentence has gone forth which consigns to an early tomb one who has passed through life

a stranger to herself and others, an alien to society nature inspired her to seek, and calculated her to enjoy. I have never known poverty, never suffered what is commonly called misfortune, my faculties have been cultivated to the uttermost, and I married the man I loved most fondly, and by whom in return I was idolized; my name is unblemished, my conduct blameless, even meritorious, yet has my grave been dug by shame and sorrow, solicitude and the curiosity of natural affection, created but to be crushed.

“I am persuaded you are a total stranger to many circumstances in your own family history, which your mother would properly keep from a daughter so young as you, and on which it is hardly likely your husband would dilate, if, indeed, he knew them, and it is very probable he does not. My friend and companion, Mrs. Cranstoun, assures me that nothing is more common in England, than for the very nearest connexions of parties, unhappily notorious for misconduct, to be ignorant of circumstances known to all others; few persons will expatiate on the guilt of her husband to a forsaken wife; they are aware she knows it, and suffers enough without the laceration their pity might inflict. But a child is still more sacred in their sight, for not only would they spare him the wound a father's infamy would give, but the know-

ledge which belongs to that infamy. For years I was thus guarded, and it is very probable Mr. Glentworth was not less so: the intention was good undoubtedly, but it prevented us from knowing any thing of each other, which I hold in the light of a misfortune, and never shall cease to do.

“ My heart recoils, my spirit trembles, as I approach my story; no personal sense of my own innocence protects me from the bitter shame, the burning blushes, that seem to blister my whole frame, as I approach the plague-spot of my injured and disgraced existence, yet, to save others from the pangs I feel, I would that every wife verging to my mother’s sin could witness my anguish, and so far share it, that she might quickly retrace her steps, renew her vows to her husband, and thankfully adhere even to age and imbecility, loathsome disease, and virulent ill humour, rather than indulge her own selfish passion at the expence of her suffering offspring.

“ My unhappy parent had no such excuse; she left a young, handsome, idolizing husband, who had given her rank and title, being no other than your own uncle, Lord Rotheles, to share the shame of a younger brother, already married to a lovely (an angelic) wife and the father of a promising boy about seven years old; that boy is Francis Glentworth, your worthy husband; alas! his only rela-

tion was a sister, unknown and of course unowned, my own wretched self.

“ Mrs. Glentworth sickened and died within two years of her husband’s flight to Pisa, where I was born, about seven or eight months after the elopement, and I understand, that Lord Rotheles took some steps to recover me, (believing I was his child,) but ineffectually, which I am glad of, for I am in fact decidedly like the Glentworths. My mother (who had been married extremely young,) never quite recovered a severe cold, caught at the time of my birth, was advised to remain in Italy, yet frequently to change the air, and my father devoted himself entirely to her, with the tenderness of a parent, not less than the devotedness of a lover: they passed under the name of Delamaine. Lord Rotheles procured, from his prosecution, a sum of money, which he gave to the county hospital, and a divorce; he refused to have any thing to do with my mother’s fortune, which was still in the hands of her guardians, who had a right to retain it till she was twenty-three, and entertaining a very bad opinion of my father, they refused consent to her marriage with him, after the death of his amiable lady permitted him to offer it; before the time came when she might have been a bride, she was herself a corpse; so nearly did she live to complete a long minority, that it was supposed



anxiety on that point hastened her decease: all I recollect of her is, that a pale and pretty lady often stood by my bed-side, weeping, or fed me with sweet cakes; I have also sad memories of a funeral, and of papa appearing distracted.

“ What passed between them previous to my mother’s death I never have been told, but cannot doubt that my father solemnly promised, that since I was not her heir, he would provide for me to the *utmost* of his power. He kept his promise only too strictly, in fact, he doated on me but too fondly. After my mother’s death, I was taken by him to England, and placed for a time in a boarding-school on the sea-coast, but being delicate, when I was about seven or eight, he hastened with me to Pisa, as being native air, and settled me as a pensioner in a convent, where there were many women of rank, and all things were conducted on the most liberal footing. Here I obtained that knowledge of music which has constituted the solace of my existence, but here also I experienced that want of the heart, the kindness of the good nuns could not supply. I was the only English child, but that was of little importance, since Italian was my native tongue; but every other girl in the place had brothers and sisters at home, or with them; I only was an isolated, unconnected child; I only, with a

heart overflowing with love, had no object on which I could lavish the fraternal feeling."

"Poor little girl," cried Isabella, "how I do pity her, what a wretched child must I have been but for my sisters: oh! that I had her here, how gladly would I fold her to my heart, and call her my own, dear, *dear* sister!"

"Have you finished your long letter?" said Glentworth, probably hearing her voice in exclamation; "you cannot doubt my anxiety respecting a circumstance so extraordinary."

"It is indeed extraordinary, and still more affecting. The writer is your sister, my dear Glentworth."

"Sister! She will not dare to say so, be she who she may! My father I have some reason to believe forsook my mother, who unquestionably died of a broken heart. Boy as I was, I can remember enough to believe *that*. After some time he appeared so sorrowful that he won upon my affections; but all the time I was at Harrow he was running about on the Continent; nevertheless, he paid my bills, and supplied my wants fairly, if not liberally. He died suddenly—I never knew how; and five or six hundred pounds were all that remained to me after his estate was sold and his creditors paid. That they were paid is my consolation now; though it was difficult for

a youth, brought up as I had been, to exchange a college for a counting-house. Pardon me if I speak hastily; but a man's mother—such a mother as this miniature has shewn you—can never be forgotten, or even coldly remembered.”

“ Dear Mr. Glentworth; surely you know how much I must feel with you, and for you, in all that respects that sweet lady to whom I could have been the fondest, tenderest, daughter that ever lived. But I know more than you of this melancholy case, and I wish you would read what I have read, before you say more.”

Moved by the earnestness of her manner, and certainly experiencing much painful curiosity, he took the sheets she had laid down, with a condescending air not a little repellant to poor Isabella's feelings, though she could fully account for it when she remembered the accumulated wrongs of his mother, continued, as they had been, to the unoffending and promising son of a father, who ought to have strained every nerve to serve him. She well remembered the many luxuries of Mrs. Cranstoun's elegant cottage at Brighton, and could not forbear contrasting them with the situation of dear “uncle Frank,” when he lived in the city. She returned to the perusal of the sad detail before her with a sense of pity as divided as it was ameliorated. She was at least assured that

the sympathies of her husband would be consistent with the justice of his character and the goodness of his disposition ; her only fear was the effect of that excitement too likely to be awakened in the bosom of a man so prone to feel too acutely, even when his self-command appeared to supersede his sensibility the most completely.

## CHAPTER LIi.

“ My father had placed me in the convent expressly as a Protestant, and it is only justice to the sisterhood amongst whom I lived to say, that they did not, for several years, seek to unsettle my mind ; but having had no instructions as to any other mode of faith, and being, by the rules of the establishment, required to join in the gorgeous services, though exempted from the penances of the order, every succeeding year drew me imperceptibly into their circle. I was affectionate and imaginative ; devotion alone seemed to supply the want of my heart ; and I therefore, in time, entered warmly into that faith by which their forms expressed it, and was already ripe for that which they would have proclaimed as conversion, proceeding from our patron-saint, when the death of my father was announced, at the very time when I was in daily expectation of receiving his accustomed visit, and had fully in-

tended to beg permission to be received into the Romish communion.

“ To tell you the overwhelming agony this dreadful privation inflicted is impossible. My father was my world, my *all*. Three times in the year had he spent two or three weeks in Pisa, ever since I was settled there, that he might every day pass some hours with me in the parlour, and where he never failed to lavish on me every gift his fortune could supply, delight me by the encomiums he bestowed on my music and needlework (always an object of importance in a nunnery), and prove, by his admiring looks and his tender tones, how entirely he loved me. Well do I remember the very last time he had visited me, when, to his question, ‘ Is there any thing in the world which you want, Sophia?’ on my replying ‘ Nothing, dear papa, save a sister or a brother,’ he became dreadfully agitated, and fled from the parlour to the cloisters, where he remained a considerable time. On his return, I saw he had been weeping much, though he then appeared to have regained composure, and said to me, with a tender seriousness which I often recollect, as if it were a presentiment of this being our last meeting—

“ ‘ My love, you have a brother, a good and handsome boy, seven years older than yourself, and like you, motherless. His name is Francis

Glentworth—do not forget it, and—do not speak—I cannot answer you a single question,—and I charge you not to ask one of the holy mother, or any other person.’

“ This is digression, Isabella, but I could not forbear to write it, for the names uttered in secrecy thousands of times have been as a spell upon me. Little did I then dream that I could become the injurer of that dear, unknown brother, whom my imagination invested with every charm, and every virtue, more especially an unbounded affection for myself. Thus far the dream of my heart was useful; it was the only possible consolation for the loss of my father; and although I must ever gratefully recal the kindness of the sisterhood, I well know that, from my secret hopes of finding a brother in the world, should I ever enter it, my only comfort was derived; and this brother I have never seen, never must see: the *die is cast*.

“ The death of my father was announced by letter to the abbess from a relation of her own, who had been the means of gaining me as a resident in the convent. He died in landing at Civita Vecchia, whether from a fall which took place, as he stepped on the quay, or from an apoplectic seizure, which occasioned the fall, was never known. Signor Testati, who had gone down to meet him, saw him approach apparently in florid health, and saw him

also expire, before his eyes. He was a good man, and performed the last duties, and wrote not only to the abbess, but to a Mr. Glentworth in England, with whom, he had reason to believe, the late Mr. Delemaine was nearly connected. Finding upon the corpse more money than was required for the funeral, he transmitted it to the abbess, together with a small valise, containing, besides apparel, some trifling articles of jewellery, and the bracelet transmitted to you, which was wrapped in paper, on which was written — ‘Miniature of my sainted wife.’

“ About two months afterwards, a person arrived from England, saying he was a trustee, and empowered by the will of my late father to settle my accounts, and remove me from the convent. In a short time, weeping, and almost senseless, I was literally torn from the happy seclusion (to which I but lately returned), and accompanied Mr. Barrow first to Rome, then to Marseilles, and soon afterwards to England. He always placed me under female care as soon as we arrived at a new place, and was extremely kind in causing me to be shewn every thing remarkable ; and after a while I began to enjoy the novelties, and enter into the new gaieties which courted my attention. I ceased to regret the convent, though I continued to love the nuns, and I believed that my vocation was for the



world. My guardian I found was a merchant, generally resident at Marseilles, and whose intention it was to send me to England when he could find any respectable persons willing to take the charge. He was more kind in manner the longer I lived with him, but he neither would answer a question respecting my parents or others; he was a good man, I cannot doubt, but he was a mistaken one, as I was an intelligent girl, two or three years forwarder than those of my age in England, and it would have been better that I should have been made acquainted with the misfortunes attendant on my birth, than be left as I was to feel their crushing influence when it fell with unmerciful severity.

“ I was at length sent with a servant to Geneva, where I found an English family, relations of Mr. Barrow, who received me politely, though coldly, and first taught me to perceive the peculiarity of English manners. I have no doubt they considered themselves extremely condescending to admit my company, but my musical talents subdued their pride, or thawed the frost of their hearts, for they appeared to grow every day a little kinder. They were staying in an hotel where there were several English families, and it was usual for them to make parties to view the wonderful objects of sublimity or beauty in that singular country, and which so entirely awoke my enthusiastic imagination as to

inform me with a kind of new existence, inspiring me with eloquence, and enabling me to express that which I felt, whatever might be the sternness or the rank of my hearers.

“ How often have I contrasted the freedom and enjoyment of my spirit then, with the unutterable weight which has lain upon it ever since ! I entered this paradise, ignorant of myself and my situation ; I left it informed and miserable, yet under that influence which is the most sustaining of all earthly solace, and which in my case was increasing every hour—need I say this solace was love ?

“ Lady Osmond was extremely intimate with the Mortimers, and might be said to be of their party, and to me she appeared much the most amiable. Soon after our arrival, she was joined by her son, who had been making excursions with other young men in the mountains, being almost as much an enthusiast as myself. There was in him no weighing of words, or repressing of thoughts, much less that measuring of civilities according to rank or wealth, which I had remarked in his countrymen, and he possessed the same taste for music, the same poetic fervour, and the same preference for the magnificent in nature and the excellent in art, which were inherent in myself. No wonder we soon distinguished each other, soon found that similarity of sentiment which led us step by step to—

I will not say destruction, but unquestionably to misery.

“ Mrs. Mortimer had seen farther into our situation than ourselves, and had, therefore, from pure goodwill, frustrated many little plans of walks and drives, held many anxious conversations with Lady Osmond, and at length arrived at a resolution, before we set out on a journey which would necessarily throw Charles and myself more than ever together, to speak to me on the most cruel and hateful of all subjects, as the only medium of preventing me from plunging into the most irretrievable of all evils, an early and imprudent marriage.

“ I will abridge my story as much as I am able. She told me I must guard myself from indulging any expectation of a marriage connexion with Charles Osmond, who was only a younger son, had been brought up to the law, and was destined by his father to practice in India so soon as he was called to the bar, which would be immediately on his return to England. ‘ Sir Henry,’ said she, ‘ has a large family ; even his eldest son will have a small fortune ; the younger ones must be content with an education which will help them to make their own.’

“ I had been told that I had a handsome fortune, and my heart swelled with the sweet, proud thought

that I could make him rich ; perhaps my countenance expressed what was passing within, for she immediately added—

“ ‘ You will yourself have a handsome fortune, it is true, but it will be between five and six years before you come into possession of it ; but that is not the matter—Sir Henry is a man of old family and unsullied honour ; had he only half of his estate, and were his family twice the number, he would pertinaciously disclaim an alliance with you for any one of his sons, and Charles is the especial darling of his heart, being indeed a youth of uncommon promise. Yes, he would spurn the idea that money could atone for——’

“ ‘ For what ? ’ cried I, indignantly ; ‘ wherein have I done wrong ? If he fears that I am of a different religion, tell him I will listen to instruction, I will——’

“ ‘ Sophia, his prejudice is one no effort, no merit of your own can ever remove. It is evident you are not aware there has been a ban upon you from the day of your birth. It cuts my heart to tell you, but you must be told, lest you learn it from a ruder tongue, a spirit less penetrated by pity than mine. Your parents were never married—never could be, for each had given their vows to another ; hence you are (though innocent) disgraced — though virtuous, one from whom the virtuous shrink. It is a

cruel, nay, a wicked prejudice; but your father knew it would avail against you in the world, and, in order to obviate it, he committed an act of gross injustice, by actually leaving you all the fortune his misconduct had left himself, to the ruin of his own amiable son.'

“ I will not attempt to tell you what I felt; in fact, the excess of my suffering relieved itself, for I fainted, and for several hours successively relapsed as the recollection of what I had heard came over me. Mrs. Mortimer, alarmed, revealed the cause to Lady Osmond, who loved me very much, and could not forbear to relate what had occurred to her son, expressing at once the excess of her pity to me and her fear of his father. You will anticipate the consequence: Charles did not resemble his father; he had no prejudices regarding my birth; he thought my father justified in giving his female child the fortune which would protect her from contempt, since her son could easily be provided for by his rich uncle, and he secretly determined never to renounce one whose claims on his pity were not less strong than he felt them on his affections.

In the course of our travels, every thing was arranged by letter, for I was closely watched, and, on arriving in England, was placed in a small, superior establishment in Piccadilly, designed for orphans, after they had quitted boarding-school. I

had liberty to visit Mrs. Mortimer, and her only. Charles published our marriage bans at a church in the city, and made a friend of one of his sisters, who contrived to accompany me thither, where we were married, in strict privacy — and indeed disguise, in part. Immediately afterwards we set out for Portsmouth, and embarked as soon as possible on board the ship where Charles alone was expected, and my appearance seemed to excite strange whisperings and surmises; but my husband lost no time in making a confidant of the captain, who introduced me to his own family, and insured my welcome to others. Still, there was an inquiry after me, the ‘who was she?’ that never can, that never must be answered; and it was pursued with only the more avidity, because my accomplishments proved that I had been expensively educated, and nature had stamped me with her own kindly distinctions. So grievously did these inquiries affect me, that on our arrival at Calcutta we lived in the very strictest privacy, which only increased the evil, and made us the subject of scandalous guesses, but had the good effect of keeping our expenses within due limits, and of rendering the talents of my husband effective for his advancement in his profession.

“I had a fine boy when I was in my nineteenth year, but he scarcely lived a twelvemonth, and his

long illness and eventual loss affected me so much that I was sentenced to England for a residence of two or three years. I may well call it a sentence, for it was certainly banishment from all who loved me; but I objected to it the less because it would embrace the closing of my minority. Amongst our few acquaintance was a Mrs. Cranstoun, the widow of a brave old officer, to whose legal affairs (when in an extremely embarrassed state) Mr. Osmond had gratuitously and successfully attended, for a long time to a good end; and she was willing to be my companion. My kind husband accompanied me to the Cape, but we were then compelled to part, or he would have lost the fortune for which he was toiling, and which could alone atone, even in part, for his marriage. That he had married *me* was, we still trusted, unknown; but that he was married, could not possibly be so. In order to give no offence, and excite no observation, I proposed to live on the sea-coast, and adopt the name of my friend, who was of an age and appearance likely to pass for my mother-in-law.

“ On giving due notice of my arrival to the house of which my friend Mr. Barrow was a member, to my great satisfaction that gentleman came to visit me, and, to my surprise, approved of my marriage, saying, ‘ he did not know what better a poor girl so situated could have done,’ adding that my hus-

band's character stood very high, and he would, probably, be a judge before my return. Thankful for this kind opinion, I proceeded to inform him that it had long been the first desire of my heart, and I had got full permission from my husband to that effect, to divide my fortune with my brother Francis Glentworth, for that I now knew from Mrs. Mortimer such a person was in existence; and I presented him the paper which my husband had drawn up for the occasion, and which it had certainly cost me some pains to procure, as he always thought my father must have known best what was his duty under circumstances so painfully peculiar.

“ ‘ You have had one child,’ said Mr. Barrow, ‘ and you may have another; the property is vested in our hands for your benefit and that of your offspring, failing which it goes to Mr. Glentworth and his heirs. We can neither pay it to your husband nor you, but we have made the most of it for you. You will have a considerable sum to return with, and henceforward the interest will be regularly transmitted to Mr. Osmond, whose father must be the most positive old fool in creation, if he does not see that his son has been a very lucky fellow to get a fortune at all with such a woman as you.’ ”

“ ‘ But my brother, pray tell me of him.’ ”

“ ‘ He has taken my place at Marseilles; he is working hard, and will do well, for a better or a cleverer man it would be difficult to find.’ ”



“ ‘ Has he ever heard of my existence ? would he be glad to know me ?’

“ ‘ I don’t think he has, and it is better he should not, for he is likely to marry, and will then have relations of his own.’ ”

“ Have you done with these papers, Isabella ?” said Glentworth ; “ they are to me of the greatest importance :” and he took from her hands those sheets the reader has looked over, receiving them with a very different expression of countenance to that he lately wore.

## CHAPTER LIII.

“ Closely shrouded in my cottage at Brighton, an object of wonder and conjecture to the idle and the imaginative, by slow degrees I gained the health I sought, and with it a certain portion of those spirits natural to my season of life, and which ought to be inseparable from the humble of heart, and the virtuous in conduct. Here I first obtained true light on subjects of religion, on which I read and meditated much : and here I experienced a partial relief to my solitude in the society of yourself and your sisters. Parted so far from my husband, the pleasures of correspondence were almost denied to me, and the more I found myself equal to enjoying society, the more acutely did I feel the deprivation of it. The languor which pervaded my faculties in India had rendered me content to wait, in passive quietude, the return of my husband from the scene of his exertions ; and his account of what had occurred fully satisfied my curiosity, and sufficed for my amusement ; but in busy, energetic England

—printing and publishing England—there was always a something afloat on which one wished to form a judgment, or communicate one. My companion was a worthy and sensible woman, but she neither read, nor approved of reading; and, considering my situation as a young and handsome woman even more critical than it was, actually dreaded my sending for a poem or a novel to the circulating library, lest it might attract attention, and involve me in trouble. I now repented that I had adopted a false name, and almost determined, at times, to address Lady Osmond, to whom I was sincerely attached, but a fear of giving offence prevented me. At length, however, I did venture to address a letter to Mr. Glentworth, the brother of my father, humbly imploring him to see me before I returned to my husband, and entreating to know whether my brother was likely to visit England before my return to Calcutta, or if I might be able to visit him on the continent.

“I have still his answer, which ran thus :

“ ‘ Madam — If, under any pretence whatever, Francis Glentworth either speaks or writes to you, I shall immediately disinherit him ; and if you dare to intrude upon me, I shall appeal to the law to escape intrusion from you.

“ ‘ EDWARD GLENTWORTH.’

“From that time I sought only to quit the country,

lest I should injure him I sought to save ; and so determined was my late guardian to prevent me from having any intercourse with my brother, that he transmitted the money due to my husband through the bank, in preference to myself. I now believe that he acted wisely towards him, whom I innocently injured, and was not permitted to benefit ; him whom I still fondly clung to, and even now would give the world to know.

“I was received, with sincere pleasure, by the only human being who cared for me ; but he had become a busy man, and one much sought after, so that there was no alternative between a positive solitude to me, or mingling in company, to which I had taken disgust from their first reception. Besides, my health was never good, and, at length, I was again sent to Europe ; but, as my husband accompanied me, we ventured on the overland journey, and settled for a time in Italy. When I was fixed in my native air, and near my old convent, Osmond left me, to visit the parents and family he dearly loved, and there he received the honour of a title, his father and elder brother being still living, and the circumstances of his family still calling for his exertions ; and I am in daily expectation of his return, when I shall proceed to India with him, by the same route which brought us ; but my old friend parts with us here for ever. I have received kind

letters and invitations from Lady Osmond and her married daughters ; but I cannot learn that the feelings of Sir Henry are altered towards me, even after the long period in which I have proved myself a loving, prudent, and generous wife ; therefore, I shall never stoop to solicit his suffrage, or reason with his prejudice. Knowing that in Italy Mr. Glentworth travelled much, I have pleased myself often, since my arrival, with romantic hopes of seeing him (unseen myself) ; but I have never dared to pronounce his name, until your declaration gave me permission, by shewing that my remorseless enemy was in the grave ; and, to my great relief, had gone thither without disinheriting him.

“ By this time he may have returned to you ; God grant him the health for which he sought at such an expence, as that of quitting you and your fair boy, who I have seen and kissed repeatedly, little thinking it shared my blood, but fancying (as women do fancy, that it resembled my own.) No human being but one, who is legally akin to none, who is disowned by all, and whose heart glows with all the sweetest affections of our common nature, can know the mingled and distressing emotions of a creature so situated—the indignation of one hour, the utter prostration of the next—the agony that recoils from a parent’s shame, the burning love, the weeping tenderness, clinging to that parent, as by a tenfold

tie—the consciousness that even he who loves you, honours your virtues, surveys your person and accomplishments with pride, yet shrinks from owning the name of that innocent creature who gave him a heart as pure as it was fond—oh, these are agonies!

“Dear Isabella, it will not be long ere my fortune reaches your husband’s hands; if, in the meantime, you can seize a moment, in which to tell him my sad story, and soften his heart towards me, do it, I beseech you! I know not whether he remembers his faulty but kind father, or his stern uncle; but I trust it is—indeed I am sure it is—the former, for I am sure you love him warmly, entirely. Seize, then, some melting moment, and plead on my behalf—a single line from him, in a letter from you, would be a sunbeam, which would revive hope in my sick and solitary hours, and shed comfort even on the grave of your unhappy, but most affectionate sister,

“SOPHIA OSMOND.”

The conclusion of this long letter unlocked the very sluices of pity and sorrow in the breast of Isabella, and for some minutes she resigned herself to tears; but feeling afraid of its effects on her husband, she stepped hastily to her dressing-room, and laid the last sheet down beside him, and then retired. She could not, however, do so without steal-

ing a glance at his face, in which she read the truth of all that she had feared—he was evidently overwhelmed by emotions, operating under the aid of circumstances, to awaken a sensibility so acute, as to be destructive.

“Alas! alas!” exclaimed Isabella, as she paced Mary’s chamber, whose return she impatiently desired; “all we have done for him will go for nothing—his long journey, his painful absence, all we have both suffered in order to restore him, will ——”

At this moment Glentworth rang his bell violently, and she heard him giving rapid orders to his valet; in the next he entered Mary’s room, and clasping her to his bosom, laid his head on her shoulder, and wept as man seldom weeps, save when his wife is a beloved one, and his only witness.

“I cannot wonder you are thus affected, my dear Glentworth, and it would ill become me to seek to ——”

“Yes, yes, I know, Isabella, you feel and see all that I would say and that I must do. But be comforted, my dearest; I have given orders for post horses; Williams is packing my *valise*, I shall get to Civita Vecchia as soon as possible, and then hire a felucca for Marseilles—the weather is calm, you have nothing to fear—but mind my words! Should

she have set out for Malta, I must follow—perhaps to Alexandria, for I cannot live till I have spoken peace to that troubled soul, till I have assured her that my mother's son can receive as a sister the innocent daughter of his guilty father. My sense of justice (even without the compassion she has stirred up from the very depths of my heart) compels me to seek her."

"But you will take me with you, dear Glentworth?"

"*You!* impossible! You! who have but just recovered from the country fever, so apt to return! Besides, the child; for Heaven's sake, take care of *him!* Allerton will do every thing for you, and you can follow me to Marseilles when you are able."

He flew down stairs; on his way met and kissed his child, and then was gone. The whole affair appeared a troubled dream; but it had left a real loss behind it, and scarcely could Isabella help deploring that she had ever met Lady Osmond at all, for she had got a fever and lost a husband by it. "If," said she, "her gains were equal to my loss, I hope I would not deplore it; but alas, poor thing! the very hour they meet they will be parted, and she will leave Europe with new regrets and acuter lamentations than ever."

Nothing could exceed the surprise of Lord Al-



lerton and Miss Granard, on their return, than this sudden movement, on the part of Glentworth; and very awkward did Isabella find it, to relate, in as few words as might be, the circumstances that led to it, as it was impossible to escape referring to circumstances which might wound Lord Allerton. He did not, however, allow this to be the case, for he was too happy to permit retrospective evils to touch him, and he was far too much attached to Glentworth to condemn the sensibility which actuated him; though he fully agreed with Isabella, that it would be well to follow him as soon as she was able.

Accordingly, four days afterwards the whole family embarked for Marseilles, and, on arriving there, had the satisfaction to find Glentworth in good health, and just returned from seeing his interesting relation on board, Sir Charles Osmond not having arrived at Marseilles until the day after himself, a circumstance in their situation desirable. At Isabella's earnest request, he took both her and the child on board, for the single hour which remained to the voyagers, to the satisfaction of all parties, and it seemed as if the long-drooping flower had already revived beneath the genial smile of consanguinity, and the very tears she had shed were sweet and grateful, refreshing the bosom moved so tenderly.

The pleasure evinced by Sir Charles was only less than that of his lady, and, as he appeared every way worthy of her, and sensible of her value, Mr. Glentworth bade her adieu with the more cheerfulness, and, on their return to the hotel, Isabella had ceased to lament the transaction, and all agreed to praise that promptitude of action which had enabled him to perform his wishes so happily. Lord Allerton founded on this a plea for hastening his marriage, as at Marseilles there was every convenience for that purpose, and after a certain time Mary consented, preferring the greater privacy, to be insured to the *éclat* of the ambassador's chapel in Paris, towards which capital they afterwards slowly journeyed, taking Switzerland in their way, at that season when its sublime horrors were witnessed to the greatest advantage, and its internal accommodations secured most effectually, because sought by few — they might, indeed, be said to be the only travellers to be found willing to “sup their fill of horrors.”

Although to Isabella Glentworth related every particular of his first affecting interview with her he now called sister, and dwelt on every lineament in her person, which recalled his father to his memory, or allied her to himself, a narrative that evidently cost him much, yet Isabella remarked that he seldom recurred to Lady Osmond, even cursorily,

therefore, she did not, for she dreaded every subject likely to awaken his feelings. One thing had resulted from the meeting of great satisfaction to her, which was an ameliorated sensation towards Lady Anne, because she had permitted the visits of her children to the *unknown* stranger, thereby softening the tedium of many a painful hour to one party, and imparting to the other her own happy pronunciation of the Italian tongue, in many of its most charming ariettas, as Isabella gave proof when they sate round the blazing fires of evening during a journey in which incident abounded more than comfort, and was one of constant solicitude on behalf of the youngest traveller.

All went eventually well with them ; they were neither “toppled down headlong from a precipice, nor buried 'neath an avalanche ;” and Glentworth grew better the more dangers they encountered, and difficulties they contended with. He frequently joked Lord Allerton on compelling his bride to pass through the rough paths of her new life, the first, in order that she might find all the rest of it comparatively smooth, but the latter regretted much that they had undertaken it at such a season, and, in truth, all were heartily rejoiced, when they found themselves set down at Meurice's Hotel in Paris, where they determined to rest for a time ; indeed,

Mr. Glentworth now spoke much of sending for Lady Anne and the two young ladies.

But how pleasantly was their ease awakened into enjoyment, when, on the very following day, Count Riccardini broke in upon them with all his accustomed cheerfulness and urbanity !

## CHAPTER LIV.

The meeting between Lady Anne and Lord Rotherles was more affectionate than any other had been since the days of their infancy, and in the eyes of Helen more affecting also, for both were much reduced by sickness, and each so sensible of the change experienced by the other, as to wear in their expression that pity they might be said to need for themselves. She was, however, fully aware that every day renewed the health and strength of her uncle, whether it would do so by her mamma remained to be seen.

“You have left Georgiana with Mrs. Penrhyn, I apprehend,” said the earl, “but it does not much signify where she is, as, of course, your determination has made her happiest of the happy.”

“I have not said a syllable to her on the subject, nor to any one of my daughters, and I depend upon your honour to keep silence as well as your prudence. Hope has always been called the nurse of love, and as she appears to have quite sufficient of

it at this period to keep her alive and tolerable, I would by no means render it a whit more buoyant. If she was allowed to build upon it and cherish it, she would be in a terrible situation when he is drowned, and, probably, lose both health and beauty for life : remember what an object Mary is become."

"*When he is drowned*, is a very strong term, sister. We all hope he will not be drowned, but run a happy and glorious career."

"How can he be killed off but by drowning, now we are at peace? and how can she get a pension till he dies? not but he must be promoted considerably to make it good for any thing? I wonder, as you are in the upper house, brother, you don't stir them up to make a war, and give young men of fashion a chance for preferment. Formerly wars were made when they were wanted on any pretext. I have read about one being made with Spain, on no other occasion than their having cut off a man's ears, quite a low man, but the whole nation bawled out for war, high and low. We are, I fear, a degenerate race."

"Fear no such thing; a little island, commanding somewhat round the whole surface of the globe, must have stirring pulses in her frame."

Lady Anne had begun to think for some time of the propriety of Lord Rotheles tendering *a consideration* for her agreement not to do that she had resolved not to do already:

“Disgrace would be rather a rebounding thing, Lord Rotheles,” she said, after having cleverly led him to the subject, “when it was known (as every newspaper in the empire would take care it should be) that the unhappy Lady A—G—, now an inmate in Whitecross Prison, is the only and elder sister of the Earl of R—, of R— Castle, in the county of Worcester, formerly distinguished as the beautiful Lady A—G—, of G— Park, in Yorkshire. Her ladyship was left a widow with five fair daughters, on so scanty a provision, it has been the surprise of many that they could be brought up at all, but that at length poverty should overtake and overwhelm the widow can excite none. We must, nevertheless, express our astonishment that the earl, her brother, a childless man, with a large estate, now redeemed from the mortgages a long course of profligacy had entailed upon it, including heavy damages paid to Viscount L—,

‘Can look on sights like this,  
And it not pale the ruby on his cheek.’”

“Upon my soul, Anne, you have made up as pretty a paragraph as could be desired for a gouty man’s punishment! I do firmly believe it was not concocted on the instant, either, but has formed a trial of your powers in composition; though I must laugh, I assure you I am very angry, and that I would put my design in execution, if you proceeded to do what you threaten.”

“ If I write a book, I shall get a thousand pounds, and laugh at prisons. My work is sure to sell ; the very *good* people you so much admire will read it with just as much avidity as the bad ones you consider *my* clients. The fact is, that the book will keep me *out* of prison, my creditors drive me *into* it. Can you, as a nobleman of high rank, moreover, one anxious to redeem the past, baiting for a reputation, and blest of late years with various successful nibbles, can you, even as an honest man, prevent me from effecting an honest purpose ? *unless* ——.”

“ *Unless!*” muttered Lord Rotheles to himself, “ she has not paid that good neighbour poor Georgiana was so anxious about, I see, and what the countess hinted at, as to her dress, is evidently true. But the more she *has*, precisely the more she will spend ; there is no appealing to her integrity or her feelings. I know not what to do, but something I must do. I would not have the Hales family know of her debts for the world, but how can she have any so soon ? Charles Penrhyn helped her, and ——.”

“ You are contemplative, my lord,” said Lady Anne, rising, and slowly crossing the room, which she quitted.

“ She is very thin, but very graceful yet, and has the most indomitable spirit in the world. I am in



her power, and she knows it. I must talk to my steward, there is nothing else for it; yet it vexes me to rob the dear girls' hoarded dowries for such a purpose as this."

The hoard to which Lord Rotheles alluded, and which it was greatly to his credit to have of late years contributed all that was in his power, was, as he believed, known only to himself and his man of business; but as the countess had discovered such an accumulation existed, she had of late been not a little curious on the subject, more especially since the alarming attack to which the earl had been nearly a victim suggested the idea that such another might be fatal, though for the present there appeared one of those positive renovations of life, usually denominated "a new lease." Lady Rotheles was really glad of this, for she well knew the fate of dowagers, and was by no means sorry to continue mistress of Rotheles' castle. "But still," she argued, "there is no harm in a snug little legacy being added to one's income, and I do not see who he can with any propriety hoard for, save his wife. As to helping his sister, it would be childish, and her daughters will never need it, they will all marry well. Who can he, or ought he, to save for, save me?" Still, it was matter of doubt; therefore any thing in conversation which tended towards what is called "a miff" between the noble relatives, was, to

a certain point, satisfactory to the lady; and having lately heard what might be truly called "high words," she had carefully abstained from interrupting them, or allowing Helen to do so, by engaging her assistance in some of the many nothings by which time is run over, or otherwise killed, in great houses. Helen was, as we have seen, very ingenious and industrious, and her noble aunt thought it wrong to suffer her talents to rust, and she had found out a most excellent method of oiling the hinges—to talk about that dear old gentleman, Sir Edward Hales, and his charming grandson, Lord Meersbrook; all they said and did, their love for Georgiana, and her respect for them, &c., was a sure method for getting torn point most admirably darned, new reticules beautifully embroidered, and wax flowers made to rival nature. It could not, however, be said of Helen, "the diligent hand maketh rich," for not even a pair of gloves from the countess's stock ever strayed from her repository to grace poor Helen's hands, though she was perpetually praising their operations, and diligently removing all those pleasant books which might have retarded them.

Lady Anne appeared in a week or two to have greatly recovered her appetite, and she talked much of the benefit derived from her native air, in order to gain which, she constantly drove out in Lord Rothel's carriages, and appeared to derive comfort

from her admiration of his beautiful bays ; beyond this Helen could not perceive that her airings were useful, as her cough increased exceedingly, and all the visitants at the castle expressed surprise “ that she did not place herself under the *surveillance* of one or other of the great physicians of the metropolis.”

As she constantly insisted that she grew better, and that she must know her own state better than any one else, and the earl was quite sensible that *he* was become much better, he concluded she was right, and that the circumstance of being thin was of no moment ; and the countess resigned herself to the fate she could not fly from, of “ having her dear sister’s society some time longer ;” but whilst thus situated, news arrived (both publicly and privately) of a nature to dispel the last remains of indisposition, and make her perfectly well again. It was first seen in *Galignani’s Messenger*, by the earl, who lost not a moment in reading aloud :—

“ ‘ Married, at Marseilles, on the 3rd instant, the Right Hon. Lord Allerton to Mary Jane, daughter of the late E. Granard, Esq., of Granard Park, and Lady Anne, late Rotheles, at the house of the British resident, and in presence of Francis Glentworth, Esq., and other friends.’ ”

“ Mary married !— married to Lord Allerton at last ! Read it again ; be certain it is true,” screamed Lady Anne.

“There cannot be the slightest doubt of its truth, sister ; and I most heartily wish you joy of it,” was the brother’s reply, as, throwing down the paper, he kissed both her and Helen. Lady Rotheles had silently withdrawn, at which no one could wonder.

“But how could they marry without my consent ? I cannot fail to be glad that Mary, a poor, sickly creature, and completely on the old maids’ list, should be taken off my hands ; but still I think they ought not to have married till their arrival in England, that I might have seen things were done properly.”

“It is much better as it is, for the expense would have been overwhelming,” said the earl, laughing, “seeing that you have not written your book ; if you had, by the way, you would never have had a lord for a son-in-law, and now you have got one, and a very worthy one, too. I shall be delighted to have dear Mary for a neighbour. I always loved her, and pitied her, too ; but that’s all over now. She has married a worthy man, and will be a happy woman. *Courage*, sister ; now you have got one lord, who knows but you may get another ?”

Helen became crimson, but it quickly receded, and left her pale as snow, but her expression was that of happiness in Mary’s altered situation.

“I was just thinking it possible I might, as you say, get another nobleman for another daughter. I

wish I could get that letter I wrote about the sailor out of the old man's hands, indeed I do. Rotheles, I fear I have been hasty?"

"Never mind, sister, cheer up; write your *book*, and depend upon it, not one of the Haleses, to the tenth generation, will look on the side you are on. You have the infidels on the hip there, depend upon it."

"I wish you would be serious, Rotheles; I call this an important affair."

"So important, I must have half a bottle of claret upon it, and much shall I wish for a whole one. Poor Mary! her innocent, sorrowing, but always kind, good heart, is indeed a thing to dwell on and exult in."

"But when shall we have letters from Lady Al-lerton?" said her mother.

"To-morrow, I apprehend, since they are not come with the newspapers; most likely the parties are on their way homewards now. You know the letters would be delivered in Welbeck Street; that accounts for the paper coming first."

"They will stop some time in Paris, and send for us to join them; it will be the best possible thing for mamma's cough," said Helen.

"By the same rule, they must send your mamma her travelling expences, miss; she can't have the clog of a couple of grown daughters at her

heels without money in her pocket. I have still two left, remember."

"Only one to provide for, Lady Anne, beyond a very short period."

"Two, Lord Rotheles, positively *two*. I have two unengaged, unprovided daughters."

"Well, well, as you please. I am two hundred pounds the richer than I intended to be to-morrow morning, in consequence of your ladyship's decision."

## CHAPTER LV.

The following morning brought the expected letters, announcing to Lady Anne the marriage of her eldest daughter with a nobleman she well knew her dear mother would highly approve, a few lines of most respectful courtesy from the new relative, and, what was still better, a letter from Isabella, which mentioned an intention of inviting herself and sisters as soon as they were settled in Paris, and information that Mr. Glentworth had written to Mr. Penrhyn to present her dear mamma with three hundred pounds, trusting that it would enable her to come to them with ease. “It has been delayed (in fact, the letter was lost), or you would have had the money before now; but it will be the more convenient for you at this time. You will receive it three days after this letter comes to hand.” The letter went on to talk of her babe, her illness, &c.; but Lady Anne saw nothing, thought of nothing, but how to secure the money, and prevent Lord Rotheles from knowing she was likely to receive it,

lest he should suppose she could do without that which he had mentioned, and which she was determined to insure, although her reawakened ambition induced her to withdraw her consent to Georgiana's marriage, recently as it had been given. After holding the letter some minutes so closely to her face that no one could read the many thoughts busy in her mind, she all at once dashed the good news into the fire, exclaiming—

“ Oh, Isabella, Isabella, how can you be so foolish ! All young mothers make sad noodles of themselves, but you are the worst of all.”

“ Why did you burn the poor child's letter, Lady Anne ?” said Lord Rotheles ; “ I have been waiting to hear what she says ; I should like to hear her prattle of her boy.”

As he spoke, he tried to catch the remnant of the paper, but was too late—Lady Anne's eye had been more accurate than to admit such an interposition ; but, as he appeared hurt at its destruction, she began eagerly to repeat the contents, and, with one omission of moment, succeeded admirably, especially as she laid additional weight, or at least words, on the passage which invited them to Paris. In conclusion, she proposed setting out for Welbeck Street the following day, saying, “ that she had a thousand things to do, and not being *very* strong, must do them by degrees, and very quietly, in order



to give herself the advantage she expected to reap from her journey."

As this appeared very reasonable, and the weather was rather mild for the season, no objection was made, and Lord Rotheles, confident that the sons-in-law she was about to visit would keep her up to the promise she had given to Sir Edward Hales, and also preserve her from the sin of book-making, he would neither teaze her by exhortations, nor allow her to be harassed by disappointments, and she received from him the two hundred pounds which he considered necessary for her on the present occasion, "and which, after all, poor thing, would do little more than pay the expences of her illness."

Lady Anne left Rotheles Castle on such a terrible morning, that, even after her horses had arrived, both the earl and countess earnestly requested her to stay ; but there was nothing cowardly in her nature, and she had a grand point to carry of which they knew nothing — her great object was to be in London, so as to catch the three hundred pounds from Mr. Penrhyn on the morrow, lest he should take the liberty of paying Mr. Palmer, whose money had been due more than six weeks, also to prevent the agent who received her own income at Christmas from exercising any liberty beyond paying her rent.

“ To go to Paris without plenty of money in one’s pocket would be a positive act of weakness, for which I could not forgive myself, especially as I shall be there in the *demi-saison*, when things are the most beautiful and becoming. Without any great stretch of vanity, I may expect to cut a better figure than the poor sallow bride, or that brown Isabella, and the other two can be thrown to a distance. Lord Allerton must be a fool; but that is nothing to me. I am the more obliged to him, and I cannot doubt that he will gladly unite with me in saving Georgiana from the sad fate which seems to await her. I must give the marquis up; there are some hopes of a gouty man, but rheumatism is a vulgar complaint, and would sink even a ducal coronet—the very lowest people have it. I question if there is a workhouse in Great Britain exempt from it. Neither is there one free from asthma, and yet all the world knows a royal duke suffers from it as much as a coalheaver might do; really these things are incomprehensible, and at times make one inclined to listen to Riccardini’s exhortations. However strange, he is no fool, and, as Isabella said, ‘ he is of the essence of kindness; ’ when I return from France, I will talk with him seriously.”

The day following her journey, Lady Anne was actually unable to get up; nevertheless, when in

the evening she was told that Mr. and Mrs. Penrhyn were below, she sate up in bed, adjusted her *coiffure*, and gave orders for them to be admitted immediately, receiving them as her dear children, and inquiring affectionately after little Charles, especially as to “the cutting of his teeth, concerning which she had been in anxiety ever since she went to Rotheles Castle.”

“But surely, dear mamma, you have, like us, been delighted by Mary’s union with Lord Allerton? there is something in it so singular — I may even say so providential to both parties! atoning to him, poor man, for the miseries an artful and inveigling woman brought upon him, and to her for years of cruel mortification and pining sorrow. I hope my uncle is pleased with it also?”

“We are all pleased with it, of course, exceedingly; it is the kind of connection which *all* my daughters ought to have made, and would have made, had it taken place at a proper time. However, I do not mean to advert to the past, but I am not well enough to keep up conversation, so I will thank you, my dear Charles, to give me the three hundred pounds which I know Mr. Glentworth has sent me.”

“Here are three fifty-pound bills; I gave three others about an hour since to Mr. Palmer, who most handsomely declined receiving any interest.”

Lady Anne hastily sprang from her pillow, and fixed on Penrhyn eyes that glared with fire — that were positively appalling, as she exclaimed, in a voice which, though shrill, was not powerful.

“How dare you, sir, meddle with my affairs? be assured, I shall immediately inform Mr. Glentworth of your conduct. I am going to Paris in a fortnight or three weeks, and you must see what a figure you will cut in the eyes of your patron, when he hears of your misconduct.”

“My orders from Mr. Glentworth are expressly to appropriate the sum of three hundred pounds to the payment of Lady Anne Granard’s debts, giving her the overplus. I have paid the half of the sum where it was strictly due, and I have a claim on the other half myself. I did not intend to enforce it, but you treat me in a manner which compels me to do so; for if I am to have no credit for kindness, I will ensure it for regularity. You will be pleased, at the same time, to remember that you owe Louisa eighteen sovereigns.”

“To say nothing of the board of my daughters, I presume, most generous merchant?”

Charles Penrhyn’s cheek and eyes gave signal, as Bunyan would say, “of a storm in man-soul,” but Louisa was hanging on his arm, and the way in which she pressed it recalled the resolution he had made on entering the house, and he answered coolly and drily—

“I shall not charge you for them till you are in cash, Lady Anne, nor will I be hard upon you when that time comes, though I cannot forget that you have never given a biscuit to my child since he was born.”

As Penrhyn spoke, he unclasped his pocket-book, and laid in the three notes one after another, as if a single crease would be their ruin. Lady Anne’s eyes were on the process, and the bitter scorn of her countenance continued till the last of the family (which she could have apostrophized as Macduff, his children, “all my little ones—*all*”) was laid in its cradle, when she broke at once into a loud laugh, but of such discordant sound as really to frighten all her daughters, and, so soon as she could any way speak, exclaimed :—

“Well done, Charles, you really are a droll creature. I am sure Matthews, the acting man, is a fool to you ; ’tis well I don’t see you often, for sure enough, as he says, that boy would be the death of me.”

Poor Lady Anne was interrupted by a fit of coughing so violent as to alarm all who stood around her ; and Penrhyn inwardly determined that she should have all her own way, since it could not be for long ; it was, however, a great consolation when she was able to speak, that she said, in a languid voice :—

“ Seriously speaking, dear Charles, I am very glad you paid my worthy neighbour, and I will go over myself to-morrow and thank him. We are going to France to meet my daughters, and the bills in your pocket, with my income, will enable us to do so. I shall thank Mr. Glentworth in person, I hope, in a fortnight or so.”

Mr. Penrhyn mechanically opened his pocket-book, and gave the neatly-folded bills into the white hand extended to receive them, and which closed on them with a miser’s grasp, its next motion being a dismissal of all save Helen.

“ Who knows,” said Lady Anne to herself, “ but I may get the money, or the best part of it, out of the old man’s hands before he goes into the city, in which case this untoward affair may turn to good account ; it will strengthen my credit without materially diminishing my funds. The great art of life is undoubtedly ‘ keeping up appearances,’ and one must pay their debts now and then, on that account.”

Having arrived at this conclusion, and become reconciled to the transaction, the lady naturally concluded she should sleep ; but, alas ! the “ innocent sleep” had been frightened either by the cough, the anger, or, worse than all, the *dread*, produced by the evanishing notes ; and, notwithstanding all the pretty epithets poets have bestowed on this said *sleep*,

we all know it to be naturally perverse and rebellious, greatly resembling Miss Edgworth's Irish boy, who said, "the more you call the more I won't come." In short, Lady Anne did not sleep till morning; and, before she arose, a certain iron safe in the detestable city had closed its "inexorable iron jaws" on the three bills which she did not consider as actually lost till then.

Her humour was evidently so bad after it was known that Mr. Palmer had been sauntering down the street more than an hour before, that neither daughter presumed to speak, and their movements were as gentle as if they trod on down. At length Georgiana ventured to say, when Lady Anne had breakfasted—

"Please, mamma, may the page go to Mr. Penrhyn's for my things?"

"How, in the name of wonder, could the boy carry your portmanteau and bonnet-box, to say nothing of other rubbish?"

"I thought he could take a hackney-coach, mamma."

"You *thought*, did you? that is a new occupation with you, I believe, and I would advise you to leave it alone. After seeing the way in which your dear brother Charles choused me out of my money last night, you might have concluded that I had not any thing to throw away on hackney-coaches to-

day. However, as the things must be had, your best plan is to go over the way, and get Mrs. Palmer to drive Helen to see the boy, which she can pretend to be fond of. If they take my money, it is as little as they can do to contribute to my convenience."

Lady Anne's will, once expressed, saved all further trouble, and they were not long in throwing themselves into the arms and upon the pity of Mrs. Palmer, who promised to take one sister and bring back the other sister's clothes on the morrow; after remarking that the weather was very boisterous, she said, emphatically, "really I cannot sleep for thinking of the poor sailors in the Channel: I don't think so much of those who are a long way off, but of the poor creatures on our coast, God help them!" Though believing Mrs. Palmer to be, generally speaking, a perfectly upright woman, neither sister exactly believed her at this time; their impression being that she *was* thinking of a sailor who was a long way off, and that, as she understood ships and high winds much better than they did, there was much more to fear for the one sailor they were acquainted with than had as yet entered their heads. Mrs. Palmer congratulated them warmly on the marriage of their sister, which she had only learnt the evening before, and rejoiced that the two families were so near home, and talked much of the plea-



tures of a trip to Paris ; but Georgiana's heart had got a subject for contemplation, which held it far too intensely to admit of pleasurable emotion ; and Helen, who was, in truth, in a state of great anxiety on her own account, readily chimed in with her sister's feelings, scarcely sorry to have an excuse to herself for indulging that pensive tone of thought, which every day rendered more decidedly the "temper of her soul."

On their return home, they found that a fashionable friend had looked in, in order to be among the first to congratulate Lady Anne, and informed her of a number of arrivals, owing to the very early meeting of parliament. "Of course," said the lady, "the great body are gentlemen. Members of both houses, and their eldest sons, are up ; the ladies will not be here till after Easter ; four young peers make their *debut* next week, I believe ; it is quite a stirring time—don't you think Mr. Glentworth will go into Parliament?"

"Of course, when there is a vacancy for a county member ; had he been at home, I should have put him in for Lincolnshire the other day."

This was said so coolly, the "*I should*" was pronounced so quietly, that, although the visitant was by no means new to the world, and knew perfectly well that Lady Anne had no more parliamentary influence than the netting-needle she was playing

with, or than other poor dowagers enjoy, and that of the county in question she literally knew nothing, yet she was staggered into the belief that some unsuspected power, either of wealth or connection, beyond what appeared, had arisen; and she departed with her mind fully occupied in making out the manner in which Lady Anne could dispose of county representations, and heartily wishing she could do as much by boroughs.

Lady Anne pursued the idea thus awakened, and her castle-building propensities became so absorbing that she did not hear her daughters enter the room; but when, at length, she perceived Georgiana, she asked her so abruptly, "what made her such a ghost?" that the poor girl burst into tears.

"Have you lost your clothes?" cried Lady Anne; "if you have, you may go back to Penrhyn's, for I have no money to buy you any thing; on that you may depend."

"I have lost nothing, mamma — nothing that I know of; but the wind has been so very, *very* high; and Mr. Palmer says, at Lloyd's, there is such a terrible list of accidents—*accidents*, every body must feel for their fellow-creatures—Mrs. Palmer is very low indeed."

"Why, truly, she is in the right to feel for her *fellow-creatures* by way of variety, for I am sure she has not a single trouble of her own to feel for;

it is a great comfort persons of sensibility, like her and you, never in London can want subjects—what with the hackney-coach horses, and the cats left to starve to death in the areas of empty houses, to say nothing of donkeys unmercifully beaten.”

“ Yes, mamma, that is all very true and very shocking, but I was not thinking of them.”

“ No, madam, you were daring to think of a *man*—to be afraid for a *man*—to shudder and cry, for fear a sailor should be drowned ! Don’t you know that such fear is an act of positive indecency ? What right, what *possible* pretension can any woman have to care for a man till she is actually married to him ?—there is something in it so utterly repugnant to female delicacy, it absolutely shocks me.”

“ However,” continued Lady Anne, “ this nonsense must be put aside, at all events, for the present ; as I shall muster a little party in honour of Lady Allerton’s wedding, and I shall expect you to exert yourself very diligently in employments more calculated for Lady Anne Granard’s daughter than crying for her *fellow-creatures*.”

## CHAPTER LVI.

Though we take the liberty to dissent from many of Lady Anne's dogmas, we certainly agree with her as to the value of employment to those whose minds are in a state of anxiety, or even of actual grief, if in that grade which admits of *any* exertion. Its great value to Mr. Glentworth will be evident when we remember that, during the years when he was in business, he was perpetually suffering all the hopes and fears consequent on an unhappy attachment, endured throughout that period of existence when sensibility is most acute and passion most ardent; yet, that his mind was by no means overthrown in the manner it was afterwards, when more subdued and better regulated feelings might have been expected by those who glance over the surface. In his case, the boy was parent to the man, in those misfortunes which nurtured feeling at the expence of firmness.

The following day, whilst Helen accompanied Mrs. Palmer to Mrs. Penrhyn, Lady Anne took a rapid survey of her own wants for her supper-table, so far as her daughters could supply them.

“ I must have a large *bouquet* of wax flowers, and a new set of baskets for glass dishes — they look very pretty and hold little — then, I have not a hand-screen in the house; all went to Brighton, more pity; what money I have thrown away on you girls, in the last twelve months! — however, ’tis of no use repining; if it answers, I shall be satisfied — hunt up all your materials, and bring them hither; there is no occasion to have two fires.”

So saying, with an air of resignation to her troubles and of due regard to her finances, Lady Anne dismissed her daughter and took up the *Times*, in which she had not proceeded far before she found mention made of many injuries done to the shipping by the late winds, and particular fears expressed as to the safety of the *Thetis*, Capt. Middlemore, she having been seen in a dismantled and suffering state off Corunna, during a severe gale, and it was well known she had been previously enduring much from stress of weather, being spoken with off the African coast, when it was said the captain was actually dying of fatigue.

Lady Anne read the whole twice over, and then turned up her eyes as if to heaven:—

“ So Cornish men, who dwell upon the shore,  
Look out when storms descend and billows roar,  
Devoutly praying with uplifted hands,  
That some well-laden ship may strike the sands.”

But we must add, that she did say, by way of at-tempering her pleasure : “Well! I must say I never saw a finer young man in my life—indeed I don’t know that the court of Great Britain quite boasts his equal. I am sure I forgive him, poor creature, fully and freely, the vexation and uneasiness he has caused me, and I shall always remember him with kindness, and he is the only younger son for whom I ever had such a feeling. I am now very glad I wrote that letter—very glad, indeed; it will have an effect with Lord Meersbrook; indeed there are many more unlikely things than that he should think of Georgiana himself; in my opinion, nothing could be more natural. I will put her in deep mourning; with her complexion she must make quite a sensation, nor can any thing in nature be more interesting than a widow in her minority, and of course she will look like one, and they may call her ‘the mourning bride,’ with great propriety.”

Lady Anne now turned to the theatrical news, little dreaming that the short, hurried knock she had heard, but not attended to, had admitted a visitant to her daughter, Georgiana, who, however contrary to etiquette, was at this moment alone with him in the dining-room. She heard herself inquired for, and instantly obeyed the summons, for the voice was familiar — it was that of Lord Meersbrook.

“Georgiana,” said he, taking her hand and looking in her face, “it is proper, my dear girl, you should know that the *Thetis* has been seen in great danger, and as the late winds have strewed our own coasts with wrecks, we may infer that similar effects have taken place elsewhere ; but then she is such a fine vessel, Georgiana, — mind what I say — such a very fine vessel, with a capital crew and admirable officers, there is great reason to hope she would wear out the gale.”

Georgiana could not reply ; her sobs were suffocating, and Lord Meersbrook, fearing the infection of her tears, went on to say, —

“My grandfather and my great aunt will be in town this evening, at the neighbouring hotel. I am going immediately to Plymouth, that I may be on the spot to learn the tidings, and I trust to —, yes, Georgiana, I trust in Heaven (for to God alone must we look), to receive our dear Arthur. Give them all the time, pay them all the attention you can, Lady Anne’s consent sanctions you, which is a great comfort to me now. Tell them I was well and in spirits, Georgiana.”

Georgiana tried to look up, for she had received comfort, however mingled with sorrow ; she saw that he was pale to ghastliness, but she comprehended his charge, and said “she would do her best,

she would not cry before Sir Edward, and she wished to know Mrs. Margaret very much."

"How is Helen, dear Georgiana? I know she is gone out with Mrs. Palmer, or I should have begged to see her, and yet it is better I should not; but how is she?"

"Much better in health; indeed she is well, and looking well, but her spirits are not good in general, and just now she feels much for *me*, for *all of us*."

Lord Meersbrook pressed Georgiana's hand convulsively, touched her cheek with his lips, and muttered something in which the word *sister* was alone distinct, sprang into his cab, and was gone.

"Mamma has consented, yet never told me; what can be the meaning of this? She has always an intention in every thing she does or lets alone. Alas! my fate is in far different hands to hers, and compared to which she is an atom; but I cannot see her now. I will read the prayers for those at sea, in my own room."

Georgiana pursued her way, repeating, as she climbed the many stairs, "*He stilleth the raging of the sea, He maketh the storm to cease, so that the waves thereof are still,*" and she certainly felt a trust in Providence strangely contrasting itself with fear of her mother—a kind of dread that should Arthur, in answer to the prayers of the good, be mercifully spared, still Lady Anne might wrest her from his



arms. If, in pursuing this train of thought, poor Georgiana attributed to her mamma more of the powers of the principle of evil than she or any other lady ever possessed, let it be remembered that she had suffered more from the fear of persecution than any of her sisters, and that she was at this period without personal possession of that ring, which she considered to be a talisman that would protect her from all danger.

Long before Georgiana had risen from her knees, Count Riccardini might have been heard in expostulation with the page.

“ I tell you she will see *me*, ask Mam’selle Fanchette if she will not? I am not as another gentleman, I am the relation, the doctare, the frien. Now you go before me and say, ‘ the Signor Riccardini is come.’ ”

The button-covered servitor had no doubt but that his sovereign’s answer would be in reply, “ Then he may go ; ” but he was mistaken, for Lady Anne had discovered that she looked well in her beautiful lace nightcaps, as most people do when their flesh has fallen away, and they are verging to the lantern jaw ; therefore, she received the Count very graciously, and accepted his congratulations on her daughter’s marriage in the most cordial manner, but when he adverted to the bad weather, the numerous wrecks, and the supposed loss of the *Thetis*, she interrupted him with,—

“ Dear Count, do not allow your conversation (usually so agreeable) to ‘suffer a sea change,’ for really I have not nerves for it, and you are certain I shall be very sufficiently troubled by that silly girl, Georgiana, who, I find, with an utter disregard of all etiquette, has seen Lord Meersbrook this morning, for two minutes, after which she ran up stairs, with eyes as red as a burning coal; a pretty object he must have thought her.”

“ I don’t believe he look at her, save for the sympathy. I have meet him myself, and he is overwhelm with the solicitude, the anxiety.”

“ Solicitude!—anxiety! I thought he was come to tell her that his brother was really drowned. I am sure it would be the best thing that could happen to him. I can’t conceive a more disagreeable thing than tossing about, night after night and day after day, without a morsel of warm victuals, or even dry clothes; all the while the headsman standing over the officers, and the hangman over the crew, ready to do execution, as it were, yet still delaying. Oh! it is terrible to think of. I am sure I hope he is out of his pain before now; but pray don’t let us talk about *him*.”

“ I will say no more, but I must think for sake of Georgiana; but are you really well? has the native air make you strong?”

“ Oh, yes, I am well, of course, but I shall not

be strong all at once, especially with such trying weather; one week at Paris will set me up completely."

"Does the physician say you must go there? have you see him to-day?"

These words were uttered with such deep interest, such sincere pity, that, few as they were, they awoke in Lady Anne's mind a train of thought, on which she instantly acted. Fixing her eyes on those glittering with kindly drops of compassion for her altered appearance, she said in a low serious voice—

"Count, I have no physician, nor do I mean to have one. I paid more to those medical men at Brighton than is satisfactory to my conscience on reflection; but, as I took care of the prescription, I get my drugs from the chymists, and make them up at home."

"Oh! that will never do; what is right at one time, is no right at another. I am great nurse. I know all the steps which take the complaint; you *must* have doctare."

"Doctors must have fees, Count. Rotheles said, 'you *must* go home, Anne, you *must* have advice,' but he omitted the purse of sovereigns, which might have purchased the advice."

"It was pity, great pity, but the rich man do not know the want, so he no *think*, he is not bad, but

he fail in the good, for want of *think*. I will tell you what I will do. When I come from Brighton, I buy myself a horse and a cab, so you call him, quite diminutif cab, and together he is smart affaire. I sell him, and bring you the sovereign—never I will borrow the money, never I will be in the difficult, my principe no allow that; but I sell my *indulgence*, my *toy*.”

If Lady Anne had any portion of that property she had just, to the great joy of her auditor, laid claim to, *i. e.*, *conscience*, we may suppose it gave her at this moment a gentle twinge, but she loved a scheme, had pleasure in the exercise of those faculties by which it was pursued, and had a truly masculine mind in the pursuit and attainment of any object self-love selected as desirable. She had now two wants, each demanding money, therefore, when she said, “Indeed I cannot think of your doing any such thing, my dear Count,” she by no means repressed the cough, which made him see the necessity for doing so. When she was able to speak, she mentioned being all the poorer at this time, from having paid a large sum to Mr. Palmer, adding, “But really, Count, it would be a thousand pities to part with your carriage, for it was only yesterday that Mrs. Pevensey was saying that you and it altogether were the prettiest set out in town, and much admired in the parks.”

“ So I have hear before,” said the Count, rising, “ they tell me myself, and another foreign Count, bring in fashion the middle age gentilman ; he is more yong than me a little, but I preserve my figure better than him ; bah, bah, this is nonsense, only it is good, so far as it make large the price. I buy my horse cheap, because he is starve, poor thing ; the Bibel say, ‘ the merciful man, he is merciful to his beast,’ so I have much mercy to him, and he grow very handsome, and I understand the *ménage*, so we look good together. When I will sell, come the rich Englishman, perhaps he is short and round, or perhaps he is long, and ill-made *n’importe* he jump on my horse, and he say, ‘ now I am look like the Count Riccardini,’ bah, bah, he give large money, and I bring him money to you for the doctare fees.”

“ Really, dear Count, you are too kind. I thought you had been rich, or I could not have taken so much from you last autumn.”

“ Rich ! so I am, my good madam, in Italy, and not poor in England, but many degrees from the rich in your estimation, and always shall be great way from the poor in my own ; ’cause I have no debt, no show, no pretence ; I no injure the poor man, that is baseness ; I no rival the rich man, that is foolishness.”

Lady Anne had many times made efforts of this

nature to learn the actual amount of the Count's income, but she never failed to be baffled — it was hard for her endeavours of any kind to be thus eluded by a man who usually held his heart and his history in his hand for any one to read, but yet every trial she made to this end was sure to be foiled, and she was always compelled to recur to the truth of her own assertion to her daughters, “the Count is a very odd man, but he is no fool.”

The evening of the second day after this occurred, he again visited her with every mark of pleasure in his countenance, but he said nothing on what was uppermost, until Lady Anne, by a gracious nod, told her daughters they might go, when, taking a canvas bag from his pocket, he emptied its contents on the table, saying, “Here is the money for doctare, all in gold, as I say : seventy-three pounds ten. I sell my horse for one hundred, and my expense is ten. With a little more put to the remainder, I treat myself to Paris for kiss my *Bambino*, and welcome the bride and Glentworth, and dear Margarita, (so like her angil cousine). Oh ! I must see them, my heart have no peace till it see.”

Nothing could be more satisfactory than this declaration to Lady Anne ; she almost felt capable of giving him five sovereigns of his own money to help his journey, so willing was she that he should

go soon, and she inquired eagerly, "what day he would go?"

"I think it will be Monday."

"So soon as that? Well, then, since we are alone, I will give you a commission, (the only one I shall trouble you with) seeing I shall be soon there myself, you know. It is to dispose of a diamond ring, which you can manage better than I can, a great deal."

As Lady Anne spoke, she opened a cabinet, and took from a little drawer a diamond ring, which she put upon the fore-finger of her right hand, and passed before the lamp.

"It is very splendid, indeed," said the Count, "I would not have you sell it; Lady Allerton should have it for a wedding present."

At this moment Fanchette appeared with a large fur lined cloak, saying the chair-men could not wait, as there was a *rout* in the neighbourhood, and she began hastily to draw on that glove of her lady's which was on the table.

"It is a monstrous bore, but I am going over the way to meet Sir Edward Hales and his sister; you might as well go with me, and I will tell you about the ring, which, by the way, is still on my finger."

To account for its being so situated, we must inform the reader that poor Georgiana, at the time

when her sister and Mrs. Palmer returned, was heard to exclaim, "Helen, did you bring my work-box with your own hands? Please to give me my work-box, Fanchette," on which Lady Anne just opened her dressing-room door, and beheld Georgiana hugging her box to her bosom, as she made her way to her own room, as if it were a precious something she could not value enough.

"Rather odd *that*, after so much crying," said Lady Anne; "she can have very little money, nothing to be anxious about, certainly. I must examine that box, young lady; most probably there have been letters, but there may have been presents."

When Georgiana was able to speak without tears, she related her short interview with Lord Meersbrook, and inquired if she might accompany Mrs. Palmer to call on Mrs. Margaret Hales, adding, "Sir Edward was very kind to me when he was at Rotheles Castle."

"Yes, you may go, and take Helen with you; of course you will apologize for me properly, but don't encourage the old people to come here much, it would be a dreadful bore. However, it can't last long; we shall be gone soon, I trust."

As they were descending, Lady Anne recalled Helen, to ask her to leave her the key of her work-box, as she had mislaid her own, and Helen, of



course, put it in her hand, saying, "she was afraid it would be found too small."

All the work-boxes of the sisters had been presents of Mr. Glentworth's, and were exactly alike, so that there was not the slightest difficulty in opening Georgiana's box with Helen's key, and Lady Anne was not long in finding a small satin bag, in which was placed her one precious love-letter, in the folds of which was found a brilliant ring of such extraordinary beauty and apparent value as to be perfectly dazzling. "Oh, oh! Certainly, it must be said the sailor has done the thing handsomely; if he is drowned she has got something to remember him by. Not that the thing is fit for so young a girl at all. Doubtless this has been a prize. If I thought it were a family jewel I would not touch it, of course; but that is out of the question, for Lord Meersbrook would have been the possessor in that case. No! it is some transaction of the sailor's, so I shall take it and sell it; it is a surer card than the Count's horse a good deal, for it will fetch two hundred pounds from a jeweller at least. However, as she knows nothing of its worth, yet may have a great value for it, suppose I put her one into the letter, just to kiss and to cry over."

Lady Anne generally wore a great many rings, and she drew from her hand one of little value, but which

was, perhaps, about the same size with Georgiana's, and put it into the letter so adroitly, it might have lain there undisturbed for months; since, although it had been much the poor girl's custom to gaze on her prize, to press it to her lips and her bosom, since she knew every word of the letter, it was of late her habit to caress the bag which contained it, and be content with feeling the ring instead of seeing it. In consequence, she never missed it; and two days had passed, in which Lady Anne remained in quiet possession of her secret, and, what she emphatically deemed, "a prize." There were further conjectures respecting the Thetis, but nothing of any importance was added to the information originally given, and which was of so alarming a character.

Under these circumstances, the party assembled at Mr. Palmer's was unavoidably of a very serious description, and Lady Anne took what she called "their cue," though she could not fail to make many comparisons between them and herself, very much in favour of the latter. "They are very much older than me," said she; "though they carry things off mighty well; and really, if that Mrs. Margaret chose to dress properly, she might take from her looks a good ten years, not but the close *coiffure* and the milk-white hair parted on her brow has something pretty in it, when supported by that fair, smooth, unwrinkled face. She never

can have known a care ; any one may see she has neither a debt nor a daughter."

Our readers will have seen that debts and daughters did not necessarily go together, but it was always Lady Anne's will to class them as part and parcel of each other, without a due regard to either justice or mercy.

Count Riccardini was invaluable to the party : he met the trial of the time, not eluded it. As a dweller on the banks of the ocean, he related various accounts of the sufferers by tempest ; and in every case where the vessel was seaworthy it eventually overcame its difficulties, and without directly saying "that British men-of-war could not, and did not go down," he yet enabled every one to make a favourable inference ; and as it was impossible for the most positive man of the world not to rely on the truth of his stories, even when they clearly saw the end he had in view, so, of course, the artless and upright implicitly believed him, and thankfully accepted the consolations he offered them. These were naturally enhanced by the respect they entertained for his character as a convert to Protestantism ; and Mrs. Margaret, who had heard of his open renunciation of the error of his creed, and, on more than one occasion, classed him with those individuals represented in Fox's Martyrs tied to the stake, and holding up their clasped

hands amid flames that were any thing but light, was absolutely astonished to see a man who, although no longer young and lovely, like Frederic and Arthur, was handsome enough to have charmed bloody Mary herself, and could hardly have failed to touch the heart of the virgin queen, who was the object of her special veneration. A single evening sufficed to place the Count in the same position in the hearts of his new acquaintance which he had always held in those who had known him long and intimately. The sincere are the confiding, and integrity and kindness possess intuitive faculties for distinguishing and preferring each other: penetration is not the exclusive property of the worldly-wise, though they are perpetually claiming it.

## CHAPTER LVII.

Precisely at ten Sir Edward Hales's carriage drew up at Mr. Palmer's door, and Mrs. P. bustled about to see the necessary wrappings assumed by her aged guests, previous to their leaving her warm drawing-room, the temperature of which had been so agreeable and suitable to Lady Anne, that she determined to remain an hour longer, and Count Riccardini felt himself bound to see her and her daughters safely home; in fact, he was in good spirits, for he felt that he had been with the good, and if they were, to a certain degree, the afflicted, they were not the hopeless and the deserted.

When Mrs. Margaret had made her curtesy to each individual and kissed Georgiana, Sir Edward advanced to Lady Anne, and carefully pulling off his glove (in which there happened to be a little difficulty), tendered his hand. The lady (who had been very charming all the evening) would not be behind in any old-world act of courtesy; she pulled off her glove, placed her hand in that of Sir

Edward, and the ring dropped on the carpet in the sight of several of the party, whose eyes led him to the brilliant which lay close to his foot.

“Georgiana! Georgiana! you have lost your ring,” said the baronet: “I could know it from a thousand.”

“Lost her *ring!*” cried Mrs. Margaret, in superstitious alarm, which words were bandied from tongue to tongue, though several observed “It was not dropped by Georgiana, it fell from Lady Anne’s glove.” But the old gentleman being not quick of hearing, and very desirous of doing away with the painful impression made by his sister’s explanation, called to Georgiana, who was near the door, whispering with Mrs. Margaret.

“Come here, come here, naughty child, and take your wedding ring from his hand who gave it to you, and be more careful another time.”

“Don’t scold me, dear Sir Edward; it was mamma who wore it, and her fingers are grown thin; her own rings have all a little silk pad, but this being *mine*, was not properly prepared.”

Lady Anne held out her hand in confirmation, but she did not speak, for the Count’s eyes absolutely transfixed her, and as Mrs. Margaret was observing, “that she had at home the identical, light, silver chain, with which it was fastened to the wrist of their female ancestor, who was a great

beauty at the court of James the First," he exclaimed, "they ought never to be part, that ring, and that chain, and it will be best for you, my dear madame, to take it in your custode, and keep for Georgiana, till certain time. She shall have her ring, when she have got her *chain*; the ring have had one *grand escape*, and I *humbly* trust, the hand that give the chain will have one also."

Georgiana, who well knew that "more was meant than met the ear," gladly gave her treasure into Mrs. Margaret's keeping, though she trembled for the letter, which was much the best part of it. Helen recovered her usual colour, which had utterly receded, for she felt implicated in the transaction, and longed for the moment of dismissal; but when the old people were gone, Mr. Palmer proposed a rubber, stirred the fire, and seemed inclined to be comfortable; but the Count, starting up with a slight bow to Mrs. Palmer, and a look of almost tearful pity on his nieces, muttered "good night," and was gone.

An hour with his dear invaluable books, a glass of lemonade, and a biscuit, sent the Count to bed in peace with all men; and if he could not exactly forgive one woman, he was at least able to forget her; he was not compelled to say,

"Thy image steals betwixt my God and me."

Far different were the feelings of the family in

Welbeck Street; Lady Anne was at once, or rather alternately, enraged, ashamed, and relieved; she could not fail to be angry that she had lost a prize, when it was literally in her grasp; nor could she hope to look her own innocent child in the face, however darkly she might frown, without shrinking from the mode of the transaction, which she considered the only objectionable part of the affair; that she had not actually parted with an article that a powerful and respectable family would have raised every possible means for regaining, and would be eventually brought home to her she could not doubt, since the Count would unquestionably have told the literal *truth*, if both her life and his own had depended upon it.

At all events, she had not strength to punish to-night; therefore, on returning Helen her key, she said, "You may both go to bed; to-morrow I shall have a good deal to say to Miss Georgiana, as she probably expects."

"Oh! give me your key—quick, quick, dear Helen, that I may see if it will open my box."

It did so, and all within was found quite *comme il faut*; there was even a ring within the precious letter; it appeared positive witchcraft, but the letter was unfolded with an eager but trembling hand, and she beheld a ring, with a stone beneath, in which a small skull and cross-bones ap-



peared, indicating that it was worn in memory of the dead; both knew it well, it was on their mamma's finger yesterday morning.

“Oh! Helen, Helen, how thankful I am that my own ring is safe, and that we have both seen it; had I found this at a time when I had retired to think and to pray for poor Arthur, I should have believed my ring was changed in order to warn me of his death; I should, *indeed*; how could mamma perform so cruel an act towards me, when I am suffering so much?”

“She did not think of that, depend upon it; she only meant to swindle you out of the ring, because it is so beautiful and costly.”

“But she never pulled off her glove, never showed she had such a thing.”

“She did not, therefore I am the more persuaded she meant to keep it and sell it, in order that she may give an entertainment in honour of Mary; poor Mary, who never got a kind word, or a decent gown, when she was with us, must now be *fêted* and applauded, because she has married a lord.”

“Well, Helen, don't blame her for making a piece of work about that, for it is something. I'm sure I wish she was going to do it for your marrying a lord, that I do; but be assured I should never envy you if it please God to give me Arthur,

for I consider him a hero, and above all lords, ay, all princes.”

The following morning, Lady Anne really did summon a physician, feeling assured, that by no other medium she could allay the fears of the Count. In all cases, where neither acute pain nor violent fever was experienced, she considered medical assistance useless and ridiculous, a mere waste of money, for which she could find much more agreeable employment. When very young, she had been well acquainted with several women of rank, the friends of her mother, who occupied and doubtless amused themselves with being regular nervous invalids, under the *surveillance* of the then celebrated Dr. Warren, who reckoned them as a sure card for ten thousand a year. Lady Anne determined, even then, never to belong to the delicate and ailing. She did not blame them, for she considered it in the light of a leading fashion, suitable for great houses, and by no means incompatible with beauty and coquetry, having seen it answer in various cases, which, if she had written her projected book, it is probable she would have exhibited in good stile. She rejoiced that it was not the fashion of her day, and had probably rendered her daughters on the whole good service, by making them sensible from their babyhood, that to be poorly was to be naughty; and,

on the present occasion, it must be said, she either resisted indomitably, or yielded reluctantly, to the demands of sickness. The indulgences of habit she would not resign, therefore held by the pleasures of the table; but the comforts of equable heat, which was particularly necessary, she denied herself much too long, and resisted warm clothing most determinately; “the last thing on earth she could bear was, that of being an old woman before her time, unless, indeed, it was giving *real* sovereigns to the doctors;” a little, *leetle* inclination to coining on the occasion of giving a fee would arise, for it is certain she never did it without remembering a certain depot of yellow medals in a shop-window, which she considered admirably calculated for rewarding the sons of Esculapius.

When the Count had contrived to exchange a few words with the gentleman for whom Lady Anne had sent, and who was not less a man of integrity than skill, the poor girls eagerly seized upon him, and demanded “what the physician said, and what he recommended.”

“He say Lady Anne is much more bad than she will allow, and that she must be prevent doing what will be injurious, so I tell him, ‘her will is her law, it always have been and always will be;’ then he say, ‘her daughters must persuade her, she will yield to one or other of them; perhaps the

marry one that she respect, perhaps the young one, who is the darling ;' so I say, ' Sir, she care for the whole five one pinch of the snuff, and no more.' "

" Oh ! fie, fie, uncle ! how could you say such a thing to the doctor ? "

" I was in anxiety, my dear Helen, and the true flew out of my mouth ; so he smile, and he say, ' She must have firm nurse, and warm rooms, and never come out of them, and the ba-ro-meter must keep her in one temper, day and night. Wonderful instrument, I am sure it will be ! "

" But how is she to live, uncle ; will he give the proper directions ? "

" He give them to herself and Fanchette—she must drink nothink but lemonade or milk ; fine medicine that ; and no culinaries she now eat ; that will make her angry, I fear, notwithstanding the ba-ro-meter. You have great task before you, but take comfort. I go to bring you great assistance in the good sisters ; an the hosbens of them will be your brothers ; and am I not the father to you, and always will be ? Bah, bah ! it will not do for cry, my daughteres. "

Hastily kissing them, the Count withdrew, and, as we have seen, the day but one after crossed the Channel, and was so far fortunate, as to be there only one day before those whom he sought arrived, as we have already mentioned.

The physician, in consequence of the Count's admissions, and his own observations, perceived that it was necessary he should be as peremptory as his patient, whom, however, he could not induce to admit a nurse, though he deprecated, for Helen, the continuance in one apartment. Lady Anne argued, "that what was good for herself could not be bad for her daughters, as they must originally have the same constitutions; but whether that was the case or not, it was their duty to attend on her—two daughters could surely manage one mother.

The doctor had his doubts; but the pertinacity, and the quiet, half-concealed contempt of the lady, piqued him into using his utmost endeavours, by way of convincing her his way was the right in preference to her own; and, in about a week's time, she really did admit as much to Mrs. Palmer, who, with her wonted kindness, sought every day to soften the term of her imprisonment. At this time she informed her, that Lord Meersbrook had written to his grandfather, "that he had seen the captain of a vessel who had been in the same storm with the *Thetis*, and maintained that she did not go down at that period; and that, being a much larger and better appointed vessel than his own, he trusted she might be then working her way homewards, though slowly."

Mrs. Palmer added, "that this news, though it

could scarcely be called exhilarating, had had such an effect on her elderly friends, that they had determined to set out to Bath, and, when rested, proceed thence to Exeter, in order to be nearer the place where the vessel was expected, and to be a support to Lord Meersbrook, in case of the worst."

"I wonder," said Lady Anne, musing, "whether they would like Georgiana to go with them; but it would hardly be proper, as the young man is coming home so soon."

"Alas!" said Mrs. Palmer, "I do not see there is any more prospect of that than there has been the last fortnight. Every day that passes diminishes my hopes; and I would certainly advise you to give my friends the comfort of Miss Georgiana's company, if you did not require it yourself."

Lady Anne had, in the meantime, recollected that she could not spare Georgiana; therefore, she said, "You are quite right, dear Mrs. Palmer, she must stay with me; nevertheless, I am so nearly well, that I am sure this excellent news (for I am sure it *is* excellent, croak as you please,) will give me spirits to call a little party together, in honour of my daughter, Lady Allerton's marriage, previous to my setting out to France."

"I think you must not venture into the drawing-room during March, Lady Anne, it is a trying

month ; and I would not have you cross the Channel till late in April."

"If you had seen the breakfast I eat this morning, my good lady, you would not have talked about months, and airs, and that nonsense ; 'tis the cant of the medical men ; and who can blame them for using it, when it puts money in the purse ? Do you think Mrs. Margaret Hales ever shut herself up in a room, and stuffed the keyhole with paper, as Helen has done ? Not she, indeed !"

"But then she has no complaint whatever, which makes all the difference."

"She has seventy-five years on her shoulders—complaint enough, in all conscience ; she has refused many an offer, I'll be bound, before I was born, for she must have been very pretty. If one could be like her, really many persons would not object to becoming old women."

"I will tell her what you say, and see if it will get a smile out of her ; I am going there now, and will, if you please, take Georgiana's arm, as they will go to Reading to night."

"By all means ; offer my warmest congratulations ; tell them, their first letter will set me at work to kill the fatted calf ; but they must expect the wanderer to be in a sadly reduced state, and had better keep him a while in Devonshire. Should I give up going to Paris, as my doctor advises, I

shall go down to them there, and take Georgiana with me."

"I think that an excellent plan ; and I will tell them exactl what you say."

"Well," said Lady Anne to herself, as the door closed, "if they have a grain of sense, they will see the propriety of writing immediately to their game-keeper, to send me whatever he can muster next week ; and Rotheles is so mighty fond of these *respectable* old people, that, considering the party as made in honour of the young sailor, nothing can be more likely than that *he* will be very liberal indeed ; the Palmers ought to be so, I am sure, for they had their money, which was, I dare say, more they expected. If the young man is drowned, after all, it will only prove that I deceived myself (owing, of course, to my ardent hopes and wishes), shew that Georgiana is at liberty, and give Lord Meersbrook a hint—the doctor will take one ; he *is* considerate at present, and has done me a world of good ; but he must know, that a woman who entertains a party, can only desire to see him in the quality of a guest."



## CHAPTER LVIII.

The parting between Georgiana and her kind friends was exceedingly affecting, for the aged have not the faculty which “travels through nor quits us when we die,” in any comparison with the young, and at this time the poor girl could not forbear rather to share their evident fears, than give way to those hopes natural to her age. She had heard her mother’s words to Mrs. Palmer, but, alas! she could not venture to believe that Lady Anne thought what she said, otherwise such was her opinion of her judgment, that she would have had a comfort in relying upon it, however slight the foundation on which it might rest. “No; mamma said that which suited her whim or her convenience, not that which she knew, or believed to be true.” What a conclusion for a young, ingenuous heart to come to respecting its only parent, but how unavoidable in a case like that before us, and how natural was it that she should cling, with a tenacity almost beyond con-

sanguinity, to those who had received her with such abundant and disinterested kindness.

The good old baronet reiterated his assurance of love and protection, "come what might," and Mrs. Margaret deeply regretted the circumstance which prevented her accompanying them, especially when she learned that she seldom attended her mamma except in the night, to which she would have objected seriously, if she had not believed that this sad trial would be soon over; and she observed "it was no wonder poor Lady Anne wished to have two such angels of daughters near her, for that really in her whole life she had never seen two in one family so amiable." Turning to Georgiana, she said, "Don't be jealous, my dear, but I really do love Helen almost as well as you, because she loves you so dearly. I shall never forget how pale that poor girl looked when she thought my brother would be angry about the ring, her heart throbbed not a little for you. Ah! it is a sweet thing to see 'sisters or brethren dwell together in unity.' "

Just as her foot was on the step of the carriage, she gave Mrs. Palmer a *carte blanche* to get whatever might be wanted from Meersbrook for her own use or that of Lady Anne. "There will be pheasants and woodcocks, or, at any rate, snipes, and she may fancy—" But the carriage drove off.

When Georgiana had taken what Mrs. Palmer called a hearty cry in her dining-parlour on their return, the good lady inquired "whether she thought it advisable to communicate the message to Lady Anne?"

"Certainly," said Georgiana, "for mamma's appetite, which has been very capricious, has returned again; and it would be a great pity to deprive her, you know, of any thing she liked."

Mr. Palmer was shortly afterwards announced to Lady Anne, and, after certain preliminaries, admitted. These only amounted to an adjustment of the cap and the shawl; *madame* had no occasion for *rouge*—her own was *en peu trop*. Lady Anne's good dinner had not arrived at the retributive period; she was in good spirits, glad to see her worthy neighbour, and take him by way of dessert, so far treating him as an orange that, wherever she could find an available reservoir of juice, she seized upon it without mercy, by no means frequently reminding him "that she had actually paid him the hundred and fifty pounds she borrowed of him, which, with her narrow means, was a great thing to have done, especially after the dreadful expences she had been impelled to incur at Brighton, both as regarded the fancy fair and the consequent illness. But she did not regret the

past — it was only natural that a widowed mother should be the sacrifice for her children.”

Mr. Palmer had a keen perception of the ludicrous; he was naturally a humourist, which was indicated by a peculiar twinkle of the eye-lid at those times when he determined to repress a hearty cachinnation, and pursue the subject that tickled him to its utmost. That Lady Anne should play *tender* mother to him he considered the very essence of folly, but he held it to be the perfection of good acting at the same time; and, as his pity for the fair, shadowy thing before him inclined him to “fool her to her bent” as much as his curiosity, he listened to her plans and her reasons, promised the assistance of his lady and servants, but declared positively that, unless something more favourable was ascertained respecting the fate of Lieutenant Hales, neither himself nor any one of his family should enter any “house of feasting,” since “that of mourning” would be more congenial to their feelings.

“I set out,” he added, “to go with the dear old people to Reading, but left them at Hounslow in consequence of one or other recollecting a certain bin of very, *very* old hock at Meersbrook, which they think would be of especial service to *you*, in consequence of which (that no time might be lost) I left them, put myself in an omnibus, and am here at your service.”

“ It is the very thing I want—the very thing to do me good.”

“ If you may have any wine, it *is* ; but we must ask the medical men’s leave in your predicament—nothing can be done without *them*. As you value your life, Lady Anne, as you value your noble daughter, and your rich daughter, to whom you may look for years of enjoyment, avoid all quacks and quackeries, stick to the very clever man you have wisely selected, and do just what he bids you.”

The solemnity of Mr. Palmer’s adjuration, the recollection of the many pleasures, and the unquestionable importance of the houses in question, together with the certainty that the mistresses of them would be entirely under her command, rose before her in the most striking point of view ; she therefore gave Mr. Palmer a positive promise to comply with his request by recalling the physician, whom she had not seen for four days, and obeying him literally ; but she added, very earnestly, “ do not delay sending for the old hock, as we are sure somebody can drink it, at all events.”

Mr. Palmer cast his eyes on Helen, and thought to himself *somebody* ought to have it, and shall have a little ; and he inquired if she might not step home with him, and tell Mrs. P. what her ladyship had been talking about, “ for his memory was very leaky.”

Lady Anne readily consented, for by this time her fever was sensibly high, her cough bad, her limbs weary ; and Georgiana and Fanchette were ordered to put her to bed.

Lady Anne could not sleep, therefore they could not talk ; and, in a short time, she ordered Georgiana to her own room till five, when she would be called up to relieve Helen, who happily did, after a while, recal somewhat of that sweet emotion she blamed herself for indulging.

She paced slowly up and down the room, now renewing the fire, now moistening the parched lips of her mother, or gently raising her head when the cough was troublesome, but not speaking unless she was called for. By degrees the hectic heat subsided, the irritation abated, and the patient sunk into short snatches of sleep, each of which promised to be lasting. Helen gazed long upon her with tears in her eyes, and those hopes mustering at her heart which so naturally belong to the inexperienced. At length she sunk on her knees, and became absorbed in devout and ardent prayer for her suffering mother—it was the humble petition of a deeply affected heart, and, perhaps, some sounds escaped her lips unknown to her in the earnestness and anguish of the moment, for Lady Anne became awake, shook herself, and said, “ Where are you, Helen ? ”

“ Close by you, dear mamma.”

“ What are you doing there?”

“ I was praying, mamma,” she answered, in a low, tremulous voice, “ praying to God Almighty.”

“ I did not know you were as bad as Georgiana. I cannot see that the sailor is any thing to you. I don't like sentimental misses, I assure you.”

With these words Lady Anne dropped again into slumber, leaving poor Helen with a revulsion of feeling so strange and so painful, with so much of horror added to her sorrow, that all of grief she had hitherto felt seemed happiness in comparison.

## CHAPTER LIX.

The day following, Lady Anne, restored to a proper system, experienced great relief, and was enabled to dictate various notes to Georgiana, which were pretty generally precluded with such words as "Lady Anne Granard" (who has lately been troubled with a severe cold), or, in some cases, it was "a slight cold," but always meant an apology for a short notice, as it fixed the invitation for eight days afterwards. At the time these notes were dispatched, it appeared to her neighbours an act of madness, and it was to her daughters one of bitter sorrow; but, for several successive days, as she was careful in observing the strictest regimen (and they took care that the temperature of her rooms was precisely that which suited her), she actually became much better, especially as to these favourable circumstances was added great calmness of temper, she wisely substituting the quiet sneer of contempt for angry vituperation and vindictive scorn.

The third day after Sir Edward and his sister



left town, Mr. Palmer had a letter informing him that they were now on their way to Exeter, finding it impossible to give up the hope of assisting Lord Meersbrook, who was harassing himself to death in traversing the coast along Devonshire and Cornwall; and who, undoubtedly, as the weather was at the present moment favourable, would set out to seek his brother, or rather the wreck of his brother's vessel (however hopeless the search might be), if he had not faithfully promised them to abstain from it for their sakes. The letter added, "that they had no doubt but that he would come to them at Exeter, and perhaps conduct them to Plymouth."

The circumstances attending this family had been frequently discussed in Rotheles Castle (where they were beginning to talk of the London campaign, for which, every year of his life, Lord Rotheles expressed less liking), and it always was a subject of great interest to the Earl, who, every day, in his airing, called on the baronet's aged tenant, whom we have mentioned, either to tell him what was said in the newspapers, or inquire "what had been communicated by his youngest son, who was Sir Edward's personal attendant?"—At length the news ran thus—

"Ah! well-a-day, my lord, we shall never set eyes on Sir Edward again, for certain—he have gone all the way to Exeter, an he'll never live to

come back, for the young lord's not with him, poor creature. William says, he raally thinks he's right down crazy, more pity, on account of Master Arthur being drowned—not but he may be alive, after all."

Lord Rotheles read William's letter, and saw very clearly, however obtuse the poor fellow's expression, that his heart was penetrated with compassion for his master and the family; and, not considering, as his sister would have done, that it would be derogatory to share a plebeian's feelings, he fairly gave them way, allowed them to conquer his habitual indolence, and immediately proposed to Lady Rotheles to take a trip to Exeter, observing, "that a month in Devonshire, at that season, did every body good."

The lady was decidedly of opinion that a month any where did so, and she so facilitated affairs that they set out the following morning, and, by the aid of post-horses, accomplished their journey with a facility surprising to themselves; and the delight with which they were received, the gratitude felt for a movement so friendly, would have repaid the ailing peer for ten times the exertion.

Nor was the affair less agreeable to his lady, for she had been afraid of being called to London by Lady Anne's illness, as she never believed any of her assertions as to the improvement her health had evinced; and, although she was perfectly willing

that her sister-in-law should die, she neither desired that herself nor her lord should watch her dying bed, nor did she approve of wearing mourning in the London season. Finding that Lady Anne had been well enough to meet the Haleses, at Mr. Palmer's, was therefore a relief, and she most magnanimously (in her own mind) permitted her to live till August.

Could she have seen her under the improved management of the last few days, she could scarcely have doubted that such permission would be acted on, for her improvement was surprising; and her friends and daughters, thankful for the change, only the more deprecated her determination of receiving the party; but, if a word was spoken on the subject, she became so angry that it appeared an absolute cruelty to injure by opposing her; and even her physician thought it better to leave her alone on the subject, saying, "that when the day arrived, her own feelings would point out the necessity of continuing her present course."

Alive to every thing connected with this object of her ambition, the directions she gave, and the questions she asked, were innumerable; yet she did not appear to be the worse, but the better, for her exertion: on learning, indeed, that the Marquis of Wentworthdale had arrived in town, her joy was so excessive as for a few hours to cause an accession of fever, but she fairly starved it down,

and declared a determination, when it was gone, never to allow its return.

“ And in order to contribute your share to this good end, Helen, I desire you to go to bed for the three next nights, to eat your meals regularly, and let the page fetch you half a pint of beer, unless old Palmer happens to give you a glass of wine—you will see clearly I can spare none, for every body will drink the health of Lady Allerton in bumpers, and not ten to one pay the same compliment to Isabella, for the well-known wealth and talent of Glentworth brings him near to the rank of Lord Allerton. Now, my dear Helen, mind what you are about, and, depend upon it, you will do far better than either of your lucky sisters—I say nothing of Louisa; she has chosen her lot, and must abide by it.”

“ Ah ! how happy a lot !” silently ejaculated Helen.

“ You know, Helen, both you and Georgiana are delicately fair, with blue eyes and small pouting mouths, which yet, by smiling, shew your teeth, which are good. Girls like you should always smile and look cheerful; the graceful and interesting are unattainable to you; in my opinion, Georgiana looks shockingly, and I really give her up completely. If the sailor lives, he takes her; if he is dead, I think the old people will have her; and it may

happen, in time, living in the country, and waiting on his grandfather, and all that, may induce Lord Meersbrook, who has nothing of the man of fashion about him, but the manners and person, to think of her; but for you, dear Helen, my good, patient girl, I do augur a higher destiny—I do, indeed!”

Helen hoped the grave would be her destiny, if Georgiana married Lord Meersbrook, but she said nothing.

“ I will lend you my pearl necklace with the diamond drops (for I cannot wear it myself); and Fanchette shall do your hair, and, if you continue pale, give you the least possible tint of rouge, which has always a good effect on the eyes, and is often required by eyes like yours, though they are, when you are in high health, ‘ deeply, darkly, beautifully blue,’ as Lord Byron says; but few people give him his title — he has to thank his poetry for that. Every low fellow says Byron this, and Byron that, which is not very agreeable to him by this time, I’ll be bound (provided he knows it); for he was as proud of his ancestry as a nobleman ought to be, and mistook himself prodigiously when he preferred wit to nobility — *wit*, the most evanescent of all things. Poor man! I remember flirting with him a whole evening for the *éclat* of the thing. I was the fashion that winter as much as himself, so the thing appeared *selon les règles*.”

Although many, *many* things occupied the mind, and could have moved the tongue of poor Helen, there was not one which she dared to utter, for her mother was hedged round with observances, which, from one cause or another, must not be broken in upon. "She must not be made angry, that would be death to her; she must not be made sorry, that would be a thing to regret hereafter."

The poor girl's fears and tenderness operated so far to Lady Anne's encouragement and comfort, that she felt quite certain the great wish of her heart would be accomplished, and that she should see Ellen Marchioness of Wentworthdale — we do not say the *last* great wish of her heart, for that was not the case. If Lady Anne had believed she should die, her cares for Helen might have existed, because they would have contributed to the aggrandisement of her epitaph, but they would have been comparatively small. She had discovered, within a short time, that doctors were not the cormorants (often ignorant, but always insatiable) she had supposed them to be, and that certain causes produced certain effects; therefore she firmly believed that, by prudence, she should overcome the complaint which troubled her, and for many years enjoy the proud distinction of being the mother of three peeresses, who had not a shilling of dowry.

When Georgiana was ordered to sit down and

write a note of her mamma's dictation to the Marquis of Wentworthdale, sympathising with his late illness, slightly adverting to the indisposition under which she had suffered, and entreating him to meet a few friends, who were impatient to congratulate her on Lady Allerton's marriage, amongst whom she would venture to say not one would be found unfit for the example of her own innocent daughters, she hoped she had given a delicate and efficient hint.

Lady Anne had a week before forbidden any newspaper from entering the house; but Mrs. Palmer took care that Georgiana knew what was said, and she already had learned that there was no public announcement on the subject most at heart. But for this happy information, which gave her the melancholy comfort of prolonged doubt, she would have been certain in her own mind that her mother had ascertained the death of Arthur, and was anxious to insure him a successor. As it was, she wrote with difficulty, and drew upon her a sharp reprimand, though uttered in the calm voice of which she gave so many examples.

“You need not give yourself the trouble to be frightened at the marquis, miss, for I can assure you I have too great a regard for him to put such a forward girl in his way. No, your day is past, whether the tailor is dead or alive! but Helen (who

I really think is destined to be a lady) may secure a prize in life's lottery."

"I wish she may be a lady—oh! that I do."

"Mighty fine! you are as enthusiastic in your filial as your nautical affections — will they burn equally bright, think you, when you see Helen wearing my pearl necklace with the diamond drops, and the bracelets to match, and find she has got the beautiful gown I bought at Brighton (by the way, that gown brought on all my illness) made up for her, and that she looks charmingly in it?"

"I am sure I shall always rejoice to see Helen look well, mamma; and so far am I from wishing to rival her, that I intended to beg, as a favour, I might keep in my own room—and, indeed, Mrs. Palmer says I ought to do so."

"What right has Mrs. Palmer to give an opinion? I say you *shall* make your appearance. I don't ask you to look smart, or cheerful; be as great an object as you please, and look as *triste*, but you shall be there, because, as I have adopted, that is, chosen to adopt, the idea that the sailor is safe, it is perfectly consistent that I should really compel his *fiancée* to take a little pleasure."

"Would you wish me to wear this ring, mamma?—it is one that was put into my box when Sir Edward's valuable present was taken out—a mourning ring."



Lady Anne remembered that it was Georgiana, the very girl she had injured, who got her out of that scrape, so she said, very graciously, "Well, the Palmers have said, 'unless good news arrives, they will not come,' so, in that case, you shall go to the old lady, provided you persuade Mr. Palmer to come here, for I remember the marquis was quite taken with him, and he will be sure to inquire for him."

This arrangement was a great relief to poor Georgiana, who doubted not her influence over Mr. Palmer, little foreseeing the different engagement awaiting them both. But we must now turn to other parties connected with our story.

## CHAPTER LX.

The intense anxiety manifested by Lord Meersbrook, when he first went down to Plymouth, did not, in the least, relax when the case became hopeless in the eyes of others, but rather increase, until it became a perfect fever of solicitude, admitting of no relief but that of perpetual action. It was soon partaken by numbers of fishermen, principally, of course, for the hope of reward, on the announcement of intelligence, but, in many cases, from that sincere sympathy man feels for man, when smitten by sorrow, and that peculiar fellowship with each other, experienced by all who gain subsistence on the waters. Perhaps, however, the wives and daughters, to whom he often spoke when rambling on the coast, peering from the headlands and inquiring the route of the fishing-boats, were become more interested in his search than the men: and many a pair of kind, bright eyes, at early dawn and late evening, looked out on the rolling waste of waters for him, when he was no longer there to watch for himself.

As his aged relatives travelled slowly, he was enabled to reach Exeter before them, and arrange every thing for their comfort in such a manner, that he hoped the climate would be as much for their advantage as their long journey might be to the contrary; and even before their arrival he placed them under the care of Mr. Kingden, as a medical adviser, on whose skill and kindness they might rely. He had great satisfaction in receiving *them* comparatively well, but they saw in him a change that was positively distressing; he was grown old with sorrow and ceaseless anxiety; and the rapidity with which he paced the rooms, the hurried way in which he swallowed his victuals, and his wandering gaze — all told them that till the worst was ascertained for him, there could be no peace; therefore they entreated him to resume those inquiries likely to be best prosecuted in Cornwall, about the Land's End and the Needles.

When he was gone, often would they consult on the propriety of releasing him from his promise, and forwarding him in a voyage to the Spanish coast; but the weather, which had been favourable, was again tempestuous, and they durst not commit their last treasure to the stormy deep, which they fully believed had engulfed his beloved brother. Their sorrow was beginning to take great effect on both, for their hearts were far younger than could

have been supposed. Although they could not feel like Frederic, they felt more than they could sustain ; and when the medical man's visit had been paid, they sat in silence, brooding on their troubles, and feeling that their "sun must set in clouds and thick darkness."

Under these circumstances, the arrival of Lord and Lady Rotheles, for the express purpose of cheering and comforting them, was like "a beam from heaven ;" it compelled them to find new subjects for thought and conversation ; and as the hotel could accommodate all with comfort, and they had the pleasure of visitors without the trouble, nothing could be better calculated for their revival and comfort. So much was Sir Edward delighted that he sent an express to inform Lord Meersbrook of this great act of friendship, in order that he might be the more easy on their account ; but so much was his heart touched by this proof of what he deemed a tribute of friendship to his father's memory, that he could not forbear again going to Exeter to welcome and thank them ; and this journey did him good—the only one of all his wanderings that did, for it included the only good night he had experienced in the last twenty.

After a short visit to his grandfather's room, and an affectionate farewell to Mrs. Margaret, Lord Meersbrook set out for Dartmouth, thinking that

he had been wrong in going to Cornwall, since it stood to reason that Plymouth, far more than any other, would be the haven at which the *Thetis* would aim, because she would be so much more likely to fall in with other vessels from whom she might gain the help she could not fail to require if she yet survived. It was his intention to proceed in any little vessel he might be able to hire on the dart, but the weather was stormy ; so he proceeded to Plymouth, and the following morning found him as it had often done before, wandering about Rame-head, asking questions of the pilchard curers, walking or riding, as he supposed was most conducive to extending his vision over the plain of rolling billows before him.

“Zur, zur,” cried a pretty young woman, with whose husband he had held many consultations, “doan’t ee mount ageen, doan’t ee, till I’ve show’d ee the very thing ye want. I seed un in the trough not bye a minute agon, and ye’ll now see him yer-self ; there he be, a hull and no better wi’ neer a stick about un, but a mighty grand un for all that.”

“Where is James’s Sally ? where is the boat ? I think you’re right—yes, yes ! there is a ship dismanted, helpless, very large.”

“Zure, zur, my eyes bean’t use to deceave nobody. James is down there, if yer zarvant gallops quick, he may easily stop him ; he’s a putten up the

zail, as you may see ; but he can't go far, for he be alone to-day."

But Lord Meersbrook had mounted his own horse and flown to the spot, followed by the man, and Sally, putting her child into a neighbour's arms, followed also, determined, as she said, "to see what would come on it."

Although the trepidation and anxiety under which Lord Meersbrook now suffered prevented him from giving the shout he meditated being seen, he was attended to, and the fishermen soon put about and neared the shore sufficiently to learn his desire to be taken to a vessel about two miles distant, which he believed to be the *Thetis*.

"I am sorry to zay, zur, I fear ye be mistaken. I ha zeen nothin' o' the zort."

"But your wife has, and she showed it to me."

"That's enough ; Sally's eyes are always right, but I ain't got my pardner, and I fear your man bean't worth a farden ; bezides, he got the beasts to zee to."

"I am an old sailor myself ; we shall manage very well."

"Just as if I couldn't help him," said his wife ; "as if I hadn't helped him scores o' times !"

"Well, but thee knowz I promised, when the lod were born, I'd never ask thee agin ; but come along, the'll be precious useful, I know."

And thus, indeed, she proved ; for so accu-

rately had she marked the situation of the slowly-rolling, weltering hulk, as to its bearings from where she stood, as to give her husband the best possible directions, though view he had none, for there was a lull on the water ; and the little skiff now rose, now fell, in a way that would have been alarming to unpractised persons, and at length appeared to be, all at once, precipitated on the huge vessel she sought, and which, despite of all its injuries and sufferings, was the Thetis.

Lord Meersbrook sank down breathless from extreme agitation, utterly unable to ask a single question ; the young couple comprehended his situation, and, not doubting that his brother was the captain, seeing they were attended to, bawled out, hastily, “ How’s your captain ? ”

“ Dead, and buried in Corunna long since,” was the sorrowful reply.

Lord Meersbrook started to his feet, and screamed rather than shouted, “ Where is Lieutenant Hales ? ”

“ Here, and *alive* ; no one is *well* ; we are starving ! ”

“ Alas ! alas ! and we have nothing to give them.”

“ Lord, zur, never trouble yourself for that’n ; here comes the tackle, and if you’ll please go up, Sally an’ me ’ll be back in a crack, and send your man to the government house at Plymouth, in a

twinkling, and there's a loaf an' a bottle o' beer in the locker, at all events."

"An' a bit o' mutton, too, for his honour's brother, which I call great luck, great luck."

"*Luck!*" exclaimed Lord Meersbrook, recalling his senses. "Sally, here is a lucky purse for you; you must keep it and a bit of the gold in it for your boy, and then he'll never want, you know."

"Well, zur. Oh! dear, I'm raally ashamed; doan't ee go up without the loaf an' bottle, doan't ee; hunger's a sad thing. What a heap o' golden pieces, all spick an' span! Jim shall have a hat an' feather all round."

The murmurings of Sally's voice ceased, and many hands, for all were weak ones, assisted in receiving the stranger, and he looked round from one pale and sallow face to another, for the one he sought. "Go to the cabin, sir," was said by some one near him, and soon afterwards a hand took hold of his and led him to the captain's cabin. "Alas!" thought he, "Arthur keeps his bed; I have arrived to see him die." The person who led him in, closed the door—then fell on his neck, exclaiming, "Frederic, you do not know me!"

And was this lank, shadowy, parchment-skinned creature, Arthur?—the handsome, animated, loveable Arthur? Where was the fire of his eye? the charm of his smile? the youth and vigour



breathing through his frame, and almost inspiring the feelings it expressed? The long-trembling brother felt as if his worst fears were realized, his most distressing imaginings fulfilled, and he wept in very anguish of soul, from pity of the past, and fear for the future.

“ Please, captain, the gentleman have brought these here wittles,” said a voice.

“ My good fellow, ask the doctor to divide the loaf amongst you ; give me a morsel of the mutton, and give the two sick the remainder. Tell the crew I thank them for this act of good conduct more than all the rest ; to-morrow, I trust ——.”

“ To-night, to-night,” exclaimed Frederic, starting up, “ you will all be relieved ; food will be brought, the vessel towed into harbour, and ——.” But the poor fellow had vanished. However inadequate Sally Bragley’s brown loaf might be to giving the men a mouthful a-piece, it was no fool of a loaf, being meant for a week’s provision for two men, and the sight of it was cheering and promising. Lord Meersbrook felt himself to blame in giving way to his feelings rather than thanking God for the good he had obtained, and which had so long eluded him. “ Had I sought you sooner,” said he, “ perhaps I might have helped you, but my grandfather made me promise not to tempt such terrible seas.”

“ He was perfectly right. We have been driven to and fro, in the most extraordinary manner, if any thing that happens in a tempest can be called so, and no power on earth could possibly help us. We had such bad weather in the Mediterranean, it fairly wore out my good captain, and scarcely had we left Corunna, when it re-commenced; our excellent Lieutenant Maxwell, and many a brave fellow besides, have been its victims.”

“ A drop of water, your honour; the doctor says it's your share.”

“ This *is* a comfort; Frederic, you brought it, of course; 'tis a strange colour, but very welcome.”

“ No, your honour; it was the fisherman's wife handed up her husband's water-cask and a bottle o' beer, so we puts 'em together.”

“ If I live to land, I'll give that woman a kiss, if she's as ugly as Hecate,” said Arthur, setting down the glass with the air of one exceedingly refreshed; it was the first moment in which he had appeared to resemble himself at all, and Lord Meersbrook seized it to say, “ You have never inquired after Georgiana?”

“ How could I even dare to think of *her*, with death staring me in the face, as he has long done, knowing, too, as I must, that although I have the good wishes of the rest of the family, the mother will

compel her to marry whom she will. I must not talk of *her*; hunger has come into my door quite sufficiently to send love out of the window."

"It is hard on Georgiana, whose mother has given a formal consent, and who is at this very moment breaking her little heart for you. However, I do not wonder at your hunger having a considerable effect, for I could do very well with my own tiffin, as we have often seen it in days past."

"I must see how the water in the hold is getting on. The poor fellows are getting so weak, though there are still many, the work can scarcely be performed."

"I will go with you, I am a fresh hand; I will do my best."

Lord Meersbrook did enough to convince himself that he had overtaxed his strength of late, and to prove to the crew that he was own brother to him they called their "noble captain," and whom they devoutly believed to be the best and cleverest man beneath the sky. Every one felt that he owed his life to his captain's knowledge and ceaseless exertion, and valueless as that life might seem to be under their privations and labours, all were grateful for its preservation and the necessity of perpetually labouring to that end undoubtedly prevented them from yielding to that despondency natural to their awful state. So slow had been their progress for

the last six or eight days, and so regularly had the water gained upon them, that it had been almost matter of certainty with the officers and the more experienced of the men, that they must sink even in view of their haven. Signals of distress seemed to offer their only chance for relief, and these, as the day declined, they began to make. Nothing could exceed the agonising expectations, the rack-ing fears of Lord Meersbrook at this period; he could rely on the intentions of his messengers, but not on their intelligence. Happily, there was no fog; they could look round, and could see more easily than they could be seen; it was, therefore, right to continue their lights, right too, that the harassed hands should still labour, that the spark of hope should be kept alive in the more noble spirit, and the less gifted be compelled to perform its share, that even pity should sleep at the command of duty, and every man be induced to do his duty with all possible kindness, but yet with all necessary authority. What a task for one so young, so gentle, but happily so wise and firm as Arthur!

The moon was in her first quarter, and she shone sweetly on the world of waters, here and there glistening on a white sail in the distance, but leaving a large portion of the scene she illuminated in shadow. "Oh! when would she shine on those vessels sent for their relief?" Whilst these words were for the

thousandth time passing Lord Meersbrook's mind, he heard a voice near him say, "She settles fast," to which the reply was, "I know it—it is over." The speakers passed on, but in about another minute, Arthur came to him and said, "I have ordered out the long-boat; it is not in very good condition, but may serve; you must be the first to descend, be in readiness, for although my men are and have been wonderfully good, it is a moment of great trial, but of course I shall guard you to the utmost."

"Arthur, you will not leave the ship, and I shall not leave *you*."

"Then, my lord, I *command* you to quit the ship; and, if you do not obey instantly, I will put you in irons and have you carried down."

"Don't talk nonsense, Arthur; this is not a moment to——"

"Take care of Georgiana — tell her my last thought was for her. Give my love to the dear old people, and—— Go, my lord, I *command* you, this instant."

"Avast, there! ho ship! Thetis ahoy!"

"All right!" was exclaimed by many a tongue, and, lo! two mighty ships hove near and offered themselves as asylums to the mariners about to perish; and, as the Thetis lightened to a certain degree, she recovered her buoyancy, and the fresh strong men placed at her pumps soon succeeded in

so far relieving her as to insure her safe conduct into port, whither Arthur, his brother, and two others, in the course of the next few hours, found her safely conducted.

That his warfare with the elements was ended, his crew saved, and his ship in port, could not fail to be satisfactory to him whose steady courage and untiring efforts, under an all-seeing eye, had been blessed to this end, we cannot doubt, but the joy, the rapture of the hour, were all for his brother. Exhausted nature demanded rest and food ere she admitted those warm emotions of pleasure and gratitude, which, we trust, may be oft renewed and enjoyed to the latest moment of existence.

It will be evident that much care was still required for a crew so situated; and the surgeon and his mate, who had been invaluable to their young commander, might have been compelled to extend the help so greatly needed, if the whole place had not been moved, as the heart of one man, to succour and assist the sufferers; so that, with the responsibility, the care and watchfulness of Arthur's situation was removed; and Lord Meersbrook, knowing that the arrival of the long missing ship, under the care of Lieutenant Hales, was telegraphed early in the morning, applied himself to writing various notes, the first being sent by express to Lord Rotheles, in order that he might have the

pleasure of imparting the joyful news; the second was to Mr. Palmer, for Georgiana's especial comfort; but neither the servants at Meersbrook nor the old tenant in Worcestershire were forgotten, the only trouble of the writer being the impossibility of seeing every one himself, and sharing with them the sweet emotions and the profound thankfulness of his heart.

## CHAPTER LXI.

Having placed Arthur under the restraining care of Lord Meersbrook, assured the reader that he fulfilled his promise to Sally Bragley, and rewarded her husband as sailors are accustomed to deal recompense, we must now return to Paris.

The information given by Count Riccardini, in the first place, made every one anxious to lose not an hour in setting out for England.

French roads are not English roads, nor French travelling English travelling; and, on reaching the coast, such was the state of the Channel, that three more days passed before they ventured to cross. Riccardini was not very sanguine with regard to Lady Anne, and the remarks he made on the subject were of a nature to make them prepared for the worst, since he maintained the probability of the weather having a fatal effect on a patient of her description.

Their passage was rough and dangerous, though not very long; but they were all rendered so un-



well that it was impossible to proceed without a few hours' rest, which Isabella's situation compelled them to renew at Canterbury, so that it was nine o'clock when they arrived at the hotel where their courier had been sent to procure accommodation, Lord Allerton's house not being in readiness for his reception.

The very first thing was to secure all possible comforts for Francis II., who, albeit small, was great in the eyes of all; when, finding that the Count had already set out for Welbeck Street, they put themselves into the most comfortable coach which could be procured at the moment, and followed. It was between nine and ten; few people were stirring, but several carriages were standing near the place where Lady Anne lived, and their courier, who was still in attendance, on alighting to look for the number, said "there was a rout at the house, which was lighted up and company entering."

"Poor mamma has let her house and gone to the sea-coast," said Lady Allerton: but, just as she was about to give orders for inquiry, the Count, opening the carriage-door, cried out with more than his usual buoyancy \*—

\* There is something in the frank simplicity of a well-conditioned Italian that makes one fling aside one's mask of worldliness, as a man strips off his coat.—(*Cecil a Peer.*)—  
ED. NOTE.

“ Joy ! joy ! I giving you large joy ! The telegraph this morning say to the city the Thetis have arrive, the crew is save, Arthur was the capitaine.”

“ But my mother, Count ! where is she ? ”

“ Oh ! she is at the toilette. She have party in honour of the wedding of Miladi Allerton ; and those who will not come before (as the Palmers) come now ; and Georgiana, who was the willow that weeping, she is the laurel, the rose, the every thing which will smile. I telling her to go to her mamma and say to her, very gently, you are here ; but I am no uneasy at all for her.”

“ But, dear uncle, you have made us very uneasy ; and, as it now appears, without a cause.”

“ Oh ! for the cause you will see for yourself. Come, come ; there will be great crowd in few minutes, and you cannot be seen, remembère.”

Lady Allerton gave her hand in silence to the Count, and was quickly followed by the rest, who, when they found themselves in the handsome passage Lady Anne termed the entrance-hall, looked anxiously upon each other, as if they had been on their way to prison, so small and cribbed did every thing appear after their residence in the noble mansions of Italy, and the ladies could scarcely believe it was the house they came from, whilst their husbands were amazingly struck by the incongruity of giving an entertainment of any kind in such a

place, especially as they heard name after name announced of rank and importance.

“That she is not ill,” said Glentworth, “internally is evident; but that she is mad is not less so. The Count must have meant his account to be metaphorical, or emblematical, or some thing of that kind.”

The dining and back parlour were locked, and they hastened up stairs to Lady Anne’s dressing-room, from which she had been carried in the arms of Mr. Palmer’s coachman, and safely deposited in the drawing-room, whilst the Count was speaking with them at the door. On hearing of their arrival from Georgiana, she gave orders for the ladies to take off their bonnets, obtain Fanchette’s assistance, and then come to her, since it was impossible for her to come to them.

“Then poor mamma is lame, it appears,” said Mrs. Glentworth, as she led the way to what was formerly their own apartment, leaving her mother’s dressing-room to the gentlemen. On entering it they were alike struck by the air of want and discomfort it exhibited; and perhaps their hearts had never turned so warmly to their husbands as in that moment, and they understood each other well when Lady Allerton answered to the observation—

“The Count may have been wrong about

mamma, Isabella; but depend upon it he was quite right about her daughters and their duties."

Fanchette was engaged on Lady Allerton's redundant tresses, when Georgiana and Helen burst into the room, overwhelming them with caresses, and receiving them with a joy almost amounting to sorrow in its effects; and before composure could be obtained, Louisa joined the circle—grateful, happy Louisa, whose joy on beholding Glentworth and remembering all he had done, was such she found herself obliged to fly from the room, and find a spot in which the warm tears of her glowing gratitude might have leave to flow.

Message after message arrived to hasten the appearance of the strangers, with assurances that their situation was known as travellers, and would be excused by every body; and Lady Allerton soon went down stairs, and, notwithstanding the disadvantages of her appearance in many respects, looked so happy and so handsome as to surprise those who had known her previous to her journey. She was led by her lord proudly forward to Lady Anne, who half rose, received her with a kindness she never remembered to have awakened before, and placed her on a chair by her side, when she became indeed aware that her uncle Riccardini had not, in the slightest degree, exaggerated the change which had taken place in the person of her mother,

and it was matter of astonishment, not less than sorrow, that any one so reduced should be capable of her present exertion. True, she was dressed *à merveille* at once richly and becomingly. The face was comparatively little altered, but never had it been so lighted up with smiles as now, when the name of her *lady* daughter so often met her ear, accompanied by kind wishes, in this case not always words of course; for many persons had known Mary of old, and pitied her sincerely, and scarcely any had failed to feel indignant on her lord's behalf, therefore their union was agreeable to every one's sense of justice.

At length Mary saw her old mamma again as she cast her eyes around, and perceived Helen enter the room, unaccompanied by Georgiana and Isabella. "Where are your sisters? what are they about? Tell Isabella to come this moment; she can't make herself fit to be seen, one doesn't expect that of *her*."

"Mrs. Glentworth can't be hurried," said her husband, proudly; "indeed I must speak to her before she sees her mamma."

"I'm afraid you spoil her," said Lady Anne, suddenly returning to the gracious in her manners: "you make her a petted wife."

"Indulge her I may, spoil her I cannot," he replied, elbowing his way to the door, where Isabella

was really waiting an opportunity for entering with Mr. Penrhyn. “Hold yourself prepared for a great, indeed, an alarming change in Lady Anne, my dear Isabella; she is a shadow of her former self, but by no means a change from it. Go forward with your brother; I will be near to protect you, if she scolds.”

Isabella was seized with as genuine a sensation of girlish fear as if she had never left the paternal dwelling, yet she had also an ardent desire to see her mamma, and a sincere pity for her complaints, be they what they might; and between these various emotions of the mind her countenance was lighted into positive beauty; she was grown not only taller but fuller, and her contour, which was perfect, was aided by a bearing expressive of self-possession, the grace of which was rather heightened than compromised by the earnest, yet timid expression of her features. Lady Anne absolutely started with pleased surprise as she threw her thin arms around her and exclaimed—“Well! I never expected to see my little brown girl grown into so fine a woman; but what a pity it is to receive you thus *en déshabille!* Dress must become you much, Isabella.”

“Pity to receive us at all to-night,” said Mrs. Glentworth, who could not utter another syllable for the suffocating sensation in her throat; and the

moment she caught sight of Mrs. Palmer, she seized her arm and drew her into a corner, overcome with many memories of all that had passed since her wedding, impatient to converse of her sisters and with them, more particularly Georgiana, who being nearest her own age, had been most closely associated in all her childhood's history, and under existing circumstances was especially interesting. Indeed, nothing could be spoken of in the room but the return of the *Thetis*, and since no one had got later particulars than the travellers appeared to have picked up at Cherbourg, the little they could tell was eagerly sought after, until Mr. Palmer appeared with the second edition of an evening paper in his pocket, which made him the observed of all observers, especially as he had seen a person who had seen a score of the crew, and heard from them such praise of their wonderful young captain as pointed him out as a man whom the sovereign must delight to honour.

Poor Georgiana's whole existence was a blush. She blushed for modesty, for pride, for thankfulness, and for love. In the midst of Mr. Palmer's news came the Marquis of Wentworthdale, leaning on the arm of his nephew. Lady Anne declared to her eldest daughter that it was really overcoming, and would, she feared, oblige her to retire sooner than she intended. "I could have

borne the sight of his crutch," said she, "but the crutch and the nephew together really oppress me like a mephitic vapour."

"They appear to me exactly suited to each other; when a man's infirmities compel him to the use of one, it is happy that the other should be supplied to his affections."

"But it says as plain as can be, I find myself old, or poorly; I have given up all thoughts of marrying, and consider my nephew my heir."

"It does that, certainly and properly, in the present case."

"You have been a short time a peeress, or would have known better the value of strawberry leaves on a coronet. You don't suppose, if I could have induced the marquis to propose for Helen, that she would have thought much of his crutch; indeed, I should have taken care she should not; but the nephew gives the *coup de main* to all my hopes. It is really dreadful, for, though convalescent, I am not strong, I confess."

"Dear mamma, don't trouble yourself about Helen; she is very lovely, and very young, very amiable, too, and by no means desirous of marrying, I dare say."

"More shame for her, she ought to think of her mother, in my opinion; if you look at her, you will see how I have thought for her. I have lent



her my pearl necklace, given her a gown I never wore but once, and contrived that she should be talked of for her charity, her industry, humility, and all that; in fact, I know her to be admirably calculated for the wife of an old nobleman, and I hope you will assist me in looking out for her."

"I must own I had rather see her suitably married in point of age, though to a private gentleman."

"You are unworthy of your own good fortune, or else you meanly determine to be as superior in rank, as you are in age; but, remember this, you can't compete even with your youngest sister, in point of fortune."

There was a working of the mouth in poor Lady Allerton's face, which was literally between laughing and crying; her eye had been glancing from sister to sister, after their long, long, absence, with ever new delight; now resting on the blooming, happy countenance of Louisa, and remembering the painful way in which she had been driven from the maternal home, in the most material period of her existence; now glancing at the girlish figure and glowing cheek of Georgiana, anticipating the triumphs and the fears of her future life; and now looking at the quiet demeanour, the beautiful but subdued expression of Helen, whose pale but perfect features indicated more of thought than she

desired, but which a single glance at the shrunken form of her mother seemed to account for:— “was *she* likely to look down in the pride of rank on these fair creatures? On the contrary, its best gift was the power of presenting them favourably to the world.” Least of all, was it possible Lady Anne could, by insinuation or command, make a breach between her and Isabella? the thought was ludicrous; little did she know, or ever would know, how closely the sorrows of one, and the sympathies of the other, had bound them to each other.

But where was Isabella? Did she give herself wholly to Mrs. Palmer, or, unable to bear the heat of the rooms, had she gone home with the Count, who, unlike the younger men, had returned to the hotel, dressed, and made his appearance in the drawing-room, but was now missing. Lady Alerton rose to seek her, and inquire if she should not like to go home before the supper rooms were opened, for which she had become exceedingly impatient, understanding that Lady Anne would then be carried to her room, her physician having looked in, and earnestly advised that measure, though he acknowledged that she was by no means as much worse from her present proceeding, as he expected.

“Worse!” exclaimed Lady Anne, “how can a woman be worse for receiving her own children, and the congratulations of her friends? Heated

rooms and large parties are to me the native atmosphere, required for health, not inimical to it."

"We shall see to-morrow," said the doctor.

"We shall," replied Lady Anne, very sententially.

## CHAPTER LXII.

When Lady Allerton discovered her sister Glentworth, though Georgiana and Mrs. Penrhyn were singing duets very charmingly, and Isabella felt their voices at her heart's core, and certainly preferred them to all she had heard in the land of song, (where, by the by, there is as much that is bad as in other countries) she was yet earnestly engaged in conversation with a lady, who had come in not long before, and communicated the information, that, in consequence of the unexpected death of a certain nobleman, a member for a great manufacturing town would be sent into the upper house, and, of course, his seat be vacated.

Had Isabella possessed two pairs of ears, wherewith to listen, and two tongues with which to inquire, she certainly could have given them all full employment. Her sister was astonished, not less at the object of her anxiety, than her adherence to it, for it was evident that the observations and assurances of various experienced ladies, who, having

known her all her life, thought themselves entitled to give advice, no more affected her desires, nor altered her resolution, than the "idle wind." All the powers of her mind, all the desires of her heart, were awake to the subject, and she immediately went to Lady Anne, accompanied by two of these kind friends, to lay the matter before her.

"Dear mamma, ought not Mr. Glentworth to get into parliament as soon as possible?"

"To be sure he ought; and, once accustomed to parliamentary business, I would have him proceed to be prime minister."

Isabella started; this was not within her contemplation, and the smile which played on the face of Lady Inglis, the wife of a country baronet, made her apprehend that her mamma was laughing at her, but she was soon relieved on this head by Lady Anne adding, "I have thought much on the subject of late, and shall proceed to get him elected immediately; he is particularly well suited for the town in question, as being acquainted with commercial affairs, besides, it is within the circle of Granard Park visiting, and may be managed."

"It will rob you of your husband, I can tell you that," said one.

"You are a great deal too young to make any impression as a political character," said another.

"Even, if your *cuisine* is French to the utmost," added a third.

“I political!” cried Isabella; “I never dreamed of such a thing; I neither know nor wish to know any thing on the subject, nor do I affect to be patriotic enough to resign my husband to my country, if, as Lady Inglis says, it will rob me of him, for no one could feel the loss more; but I have been advised by one I never knew wrong, to get him into parliament, as a mode of employing the energies of his mind beneficially, and it cannot be doubted that I shall enjoy the popularity his talents must procure.”

“Precisely in proportion as he is a man of talent will he be liable to be abused, misconstrued, caricatured, and slandered. How would you like that?”

“I should not *like* it, but I think I could bear it.”

“But are you prepared to bear the reflections sure to be made on so very young a person as yourself, who happen also to be a very handsome one; who have the means of dress, and are accustomed to foreign manners; who, in the very innocence of your heart, may do many little things that will be trumpeted out, as errors arising from your elderly husband’s devotion to the House, and neglect of his own house? Have a care, my dear, have a care.”

“I will have a care, for I know the wife of Cæsar must not be suspected; but you all appear to forget how very fortunate my position is. I am a mother. I have four sisters (to say nothing of mamma’s

guardianship). What have I to do with dissipating pleasures and idle acquaintances, when my whole time will be occupied with domestic ones? And what right has a mere girl to think such a man as Glentworth (a superior man I may well call him) should give, not only affection, but time, and talent, to *me*? No, no; he shall live in the world he will adorn and bless, and I will be his principal admirer."

The little coterie surrounding the *fauteuil* of the invalid were, in the first place, all female; but several gentlemen gathered round them, and the rubber being finished, the Count begged them not to renew it, in order that they might induce the remaining visitants to go into the supper-room, and enable Lady Anne to retire. In consequence, Glentworth heard the greatest part of what was said by his young wife, as he stood behind her, and began eagerly to inquire, what had given rise to the conversation. When informed, he determined to lose no time in presenting himself, and mentioned his intention openly, in order to gain the opinion of those around him, which was well worth ascertaining.

In truth, they were a respectable, pleasant, but grave company; for Lady Anne, being compelled by her friends to admit one younger brother, was determined no more of the abhorred race should

enter her dominions ; and her object being to procure Helen's smiles for the marquis, and the marquis's suffrage for Helen, the gay and the handsome were much less in request than the highly respectable, the agreeable, and the conversational ; and, with her usual far-seeing cares, she carried her object completely, save in the case of the marquis, who did not reascend the stairs. The rooms had been most distressingly crowded ; but they were reduced to a small and very comfortable party when they entered the supper-room, and Helen alone remained above, Lady Allerton undertaking the honours.

Completely worn out, yet trying to say she was brave, Lady Anne at last retired to her chamber. Helen assisted Fanchette to undress her, not sorry to see that extreme fatigue induced her to fall asleep without her usual night-draught. The company, pleased with the society of the travellers, stayed late, for persons of sober habits ; and the travellers, though wearied, were excited by the subject of the election, and forgot their fatigue. All parted in great good humour ; and even Glentworth, who had, in his own mind, severely condemned the folly of Lady Anne, in making such an entertainment, both on account of the expence, and in the state of her own health, owned, " that she really had the art of assorting people admirably, and he could not



forbear to feel pleased with the interest she expressed on his behalf in the election.”

But this was little, when compared with what he felt for Isabella, whom he held to be “a very Daniel ;” and when they stepped into their room at the hotel, he did not hesitate to clasp her to his bosom, and exclaim—

“ Oh ! how much wiser art thou than thy years !”

In fact, if ever it was possible to outgrow, by care and wisdom, by affection and good principles, the evils threatened by an ill-assorted marriage, himself and Isabella were the couple who would do it ; but he was also deeply, and, for his young wife, *happily* impressed, with the belief, that she had thus far made the greater sacrifices, and showed the more active disposition to that end ; and he said to himself, “ Really I love that poor girl better every day ! I have been singularly fortunate in having so sweet a young woman to be the mother of my son.”

It appeared, that Lady Anne had a strength of constitution, a tenacity of life, or much of that strength of mind, which could resist, to an extraordinary degree, the inroads of disease, and those prophecies of attendants, which so frequently assist the complaint. In her case, one might truly exclaim with Young—

“ Is death at distance ? No ; he hath been on thee.”

Nevertheless, he apparently, notwithstanding his allowed regality, was shy of a branch of the aristocracy so armed, at all points, as Lady Anne ; for, on the day after her party, though she looked much worse, she insisted she was much better, and after a slight breakfast, summoned Georgiana to her bed-side, told her to bring her writing-desk, and prepare for despatching a whole batch of letters.

Most anxiously did the poor girl expect to read a letter ; but as to holding a pen, or for a moment thinking on any subject but one, the thing was impossible ; but as it was equally so to dispute her mother's orders, which resembled self-command, by proving how much more we can do than we think we can, she took out a sheet of pale pink note-paper, and a new pen, adjusted her writing-desk, so as to enable her to catch the eye of the invalid, in order to make out her meaning, at the least possible expence of breath, and listened at once for the postman's rap in the street, and to her mother's low, but shrill voice, in the chamber, as she said—

“ I intend to address very friendly letters to several of the families in the neighbourhood of Granard Park—that class of people who used to come to parties and public days, and will be surprised, and, I apprehend, delighted, to find that I remember their existence ; the fact being, that I want their votes and interest for my dear—be sure you

say *dear*—son-in-law, Mr. Glentworth (it is necessary to say *that*, for in past times they may remember I was not over and above civil to him); you may say what you please in the way of praise—as to integrity, honour, knowledge of trade, and that kind of thing; but be particular to begin and end as I tell you, exactly.”

There was a postman’s knock at the end of the street; but being at the *end*, Georgiana most magnanimously dipped her pen in the ink, and began, as her mamma commanded; but, as the knocks drew nearer and nearer, so did her poor heart “beat high against her breast,” and, utterly unable to command its movements, she sank back in her chair, literally as pale as her mother, who, putting out her arm, took the paper, observing, “You are soon at a stand still; but one can scarcely wonder, the subject is quite new, and you are dreadfully ignorant of most things. Um, um.”

“Dear and much valued Friend—The election for the borough of B—— having at length happily arrived, after a most tempestuous and distressing voyage—”

“Tempestuous and distressing! why the old lord was found dead in his bed, and never knew what a tempest was, for his wife was as dull as a tortoise. You have fairly spoilt the paper, and must take another sheet.”

But there was a knock at Mr. Palmer's door : human nature could bear no more, and Georgiana was down stairs, and, truth to own, across the street and in the library before Mr. Palmer had wiped his spectacles, and Mrs. Palmer drawn her chair close beside his, to hear that Arthur was safe, and so reduced, his brother would not have him seen by Georgiana at present for the world ; but she must imagine a thousand loves and good wishes from him, though happily, at this time, he was asleep. So soon as it was possible for him to bear the fatigue, he would of course present himself at the Admiralty ; probably the writer should be up before then, and was " their happy affectionate Meersbrook."

Helen, who, being employed below, had seen the way in which Georgiana fled, and earnestly desired to follow her, completely comprehending her movement, yet felt it was her imperative duty to hasten to their mother, whom she found, with the usual prudence of a person given to extravagant habits, carefully tearing away the spoiled part of the note, and folding the other in such wise as to make it useful. On seeing how things stood, she placed herself on the unoccupied chair, and signified her readiness to write, as they had nearly finished below.

" Well, I must say, it is a comfort to have any

body like you about one, Helen, for Georgiana (I blush to say it, and would not say it out of my own house) is really over head and ears in love with that sailor (who, probably, has a wooden leg and a patch on his eye by this time; Nelson, who was a great sailor, and even made into a lord, had no right arm, and looked like a starved apothecary); she thinks of nothing else, I am convinced, though the most spirit-stirring affair in the world is on the *tapis*—your brother Glentworth's election."

"I hope he will obtain it," said Helen, languidly.

"You hope, do you? your hope is as like despair as if they were twin sisters; but you have an excuse. I assure you, my dear, I was so hurt last night, when I saw the sad condition in which the Marquis presented himself; it took away all my pleasure in the return of your sisters, miraculously improved as they both are."

"The sight of them made me completely happy. I really thought of nothing else."

A slight blush, the consequence of a conscious fib, played on Helen's cheek for a moment; but her back was to the light, and Lady Anne observed it not, and added,

"Yes, you were happy, because your mind was disengaged, Helen; because, in short, you were

not in love, and I have in your case hope that you never will be any way different to what you are at the present moment.”

Helen pitched herself still farther into shadow.

“When you were all little, it was a peculiar object with me (and, in fact, the only point I studied in your education) to preserve you from a weakness to which I had never given way myself, or, at least, not in the grand affair of matrimony, and merely as an hour’s amusement, *en passant*, at any other time. I imputed a good deal of my strength of character, in this respect, to the circumstance of my losing my mother early in life, by which means I escaped happily that kind of conduct called fondling, which is sure to awaken sensibility prematurely; and by rendering the exercise of the affections necessary for happiness, and satisfactory to that end, induces people to resign the higher purposes of existence, and lays a certain foundation for love itself. I saw all this in other persons, and I did not discourage it in our tenantry, or other low people; but what was proper in their daughters was of course objectionable in the Misses Granard; and I can truly assert, I did my duty by you all. I had no moments of weakness, no bed-times kissings, no morning fondlings, no little rewards for good girlism; cold and stern, I tried to brace the system, and hoped, that in its strength,

ambition, as a noble passion, would be elicited. How have I been disappointed !”

“ Don’t say so, mamma ; every body last night said how happy you were in your family ; how few mothers could show three daughters so charming and so well married, and a fourth engaged to the most promising man in the country !”

“ So they may well say, when they look round and see what other dowagers have done ; but yet, Helen, they have not done well in accordance with my system ; or, in consequence of it, every one of them in her turn have admitted the weakness of love ; not one has risen in consequence of her ambition. The two who have done well, have been even more attached than the two who have done poorly ; and the one who married a man twenty years her senior, loves him the most entirely and exclusively :—how strange !”

“ Remember, dear mamma, how fondly we all loved each other, finding in our sisters what other girls find in their mammas ; besides, some people have the weakness you speak of naturally, uncle Rotheles, for instance ; he has a very tender heart, so, indeed, has uncle Riccardini.”

“ But as it does not become women to imitate men, I advise you, Helen, to place my example before your eyes in preference to theirs ; you are modest and pretty, be also *free* ; do not “ hold your

heart in your hand for jays to peck at ;” be prudent, and you will command fortune ; never forget, for a moment, that

“ the maid who loves,  
Goes out to sea upon a shattered vessel,  
And puts her trust in miracles for safety.”

As Lady Anne uttered the last words, she appeared exhausted, and, after taking a jelly, disposed herself to sleep, leaving poor Helen to cogitate over the words she had last uttered, and conclude, with a deep sigh, that she was herself in the precise situation described ; and that Arthur Hales, in his worst troubles, was no nearer shipwreck than her own happiness was at this very moment.

But Georgiana entered on tiptoe, recited every word of the short letter received by Mr. Palmer, and withdrew, leaving her to think and think again, what could possibly bring up Lord Meersbrook to town before his brother, at a time, too, when certainly he was called upon to attend to his aged relations. No business was even alluded to ; and surely none, save of the heart, could induce a man so situated, to quit for an hour objects of such dear and commanding interest. “ It is fine talking to be free, and to be prudent ; say what mamma will, my lot is cast ; I must love, and I must be unhappy.”



## CHAPTER LXIII.

A daylight view of their much altered mother was undoubtedly a very painful thing to our travellers from the Continent ; but Lady Anne was refreshed when they saw her, and, being dressed and laid on a couch, was seen to greater advantage than when in bed ; and, on her old system of keeping up appearances, she still managed to be agreeable-looking. Lord Allerton was busy giving orders for the renovation of his house in Cavendish Square ; where he contented himself with the reports his lady might bring ; but Glentworth accompanied the sisters, though himself busied with hunting in the first place a ready-furnished house. In truth, he wanted to present little Frank to his grandmamma, for he feared lest the child might be alarmed, and thought his presence would impose silence.

But Frank behaved with all due decorum, clapped his hands at the word of command, pronounced his two words, and shewed his four teeth to admiration, and was declared by his grandmamma to be

perfection; "but he was really too delightful, he excited her too much;" and, as both parents thought this very possible, Helen carried him down stairs, her mamma internally observing, "how can people be such fools as to talk of a child, who have an election before them! besides, to tell truth, Charles Penrhyn's boy is the handsomer and bigger."

Released from "the enchanting creature," she entered with avidity and warm interest into the election affair, reminded Mr. Glentworth of numerous persons he had met in his boyhood, and others of whom he had heard Mr. Granard speak, shewed herself perfectly cognizant on all subjects connected with obtaining votes, and thought, by an hour's calculation, she could find what would be the average price of all who hung back, and recalled the different character of the neighbouring parishes. Lady Allerton ventured to remind her, "that a great change had taken place since she left the Park, as the Reform Bill had passed."

"The Reform Bill has shortened the period for the *canaille* to get drunk in, we all know, but it has nothing to do whatever with the voters themselves. Some give their votes for the colour, because their fathers did; others, to oppose their fathers; the thoughtless, for the honour and the fun; but prudent men sell them, and are always the surest card."

“ I cannot bring myself to encourage a system of corruption,” said Glentworth.

“ Nor would I have you ; but you cannot fail to be aware that considerable, unavoidable, and what may be called *natural* expenses must take place ?”

“ Of course ; and I shall go to my bankers the first thing, and secure a round sum in my pocket.”

“ Well, then, set out, and leave women to talk about women’s work.”

The moment he was gone, Lady Allerton was placed at the writing-desk ; and Lady Anne not only dictated a succession of notes to dear old friends with the utmost perspicuity and ability, but she drew up with her own hand minutes for the forming a committee, and a short digest of what it was necessary for a candidate to promise, admit, and avoid. Recalling her local knowledge of the neighbourhood, she advised what charities he should subscribe to, what interests he had best support, and on what topics he must touch, observing, “ that there was not any thing so flattering to obscure people as shewing, beyond a doubt, that you had made their welfare a particular study, and knew not only the magnates of the town, but every gradation, down to the lowest cobbler’s last apprentice.”

On Glentworth’s return, he was absolutely surprised by exertions which were wonderful, as made by such a shadow ; and, struck by the penetration

and practical knowledge displayed, he could not help exclaiming, "What would I give for such a secretary?"

"Give! you know you will give nothing; it is my misfortune to have such an incorruptible chief. But I shall continue to work for you, because you are your son's father."

Yet Glentworth was aware his bank-notes, like Acres's courage, must ooze out for all this kindness; but he did also see that her heart was in the business, that her gay and busy, her proud and aspiring, days had returned; and, as she had asserted and shewn the night before, that, as either on Granard's account or his friend's, she had been a busy woman at eleven elections, and never lost one, he could not forbear considering her a lucky person. Like Lord Meersbrook, his anxiety made him a little superstitious. The wisest of men do not walk on the stilts of philosophy through the whole of life's paths; and, since it is allowed that sorrow may have its phantoms, love its presentiments,\* why should not ambition (the meaner passion) be allowed its lucky numbers and lucky days!

"The most fortunate thing in the world for you," continued Lady Anne, "would be, were it possible, to secure the companionship of this young sailor;

"Presentiment is the superstition of tender hearts."—*Madame de Stael.*

only, one would not like him to be positively killed by any extraordinary exertion, otherwise he would be as great a show in Yorkshire as the 'living skeleton' was here; and, though he may not have eloquence (which is by no means desirable in a friend when the candidate has it himself, since he ought always to be the prominent person, the positive leader), yet being, I must own, a most pleasant spoken young man, and calculated to charm the women, depend upon it he wouldn't be refused by any body—his courage, his misfortunes, his profession itself would render him irresistible: the Count, too, would be a good auxiliary; his fine person and broken English would tell on the hustings."

The latter words were spoken so exactly in Lady Anne's own old peculiar tones, that the sisters considered her at the moment to be all herself; but the effort so exhausted her, that she sank into a swoon, which they would have considered death itself, if Helen had not reassured them, and by slow degrees recalled her perceptions; but for this day her efforts were ended.

Nothing could offer a greater contrast to the life Mrs. Glentworth had ever previously led, than that presented by ever-bustling London, at this time every day increasing its inhabitants, and presenting to her especial sight some object of dazzling captivation or extreme interest; but the former were

entirely abandoned for the latter : notwithstanding, every day Lady Anne inquired what she was doing not to shew herself at the Opera, and enable her friends to pay her due honour. She had to spend a quiet day with dear Louisa, learn to know more of her excellent husband and admire her handsome boy, devote another most happy one to the Palmers, and meet there the kind Gooches, who had proved so much the friends of her beloved sister in her day of trial ; her choice in carriages was positively demanded by her husband, and her taste called upon by Lord Allerton, who found his modest, considerate bride averse to giving an opinion, lest she should increase his expense, and considering every thing she found on the spot only more handsome than she desired. She did not discover, though Isabella did, that he had very naturally set his heart on changing the general appearance of things, in order to erase from his memory its written sorrows, and enter into a new existence with that amiable woman, who every day grew dearer to his heart, and more approved by his judgment.

How different this to the solitude of Pisa ! to the long, anxious time when her husband was wandering in search of health and peace, and the pains of widowhood were suspended over her head in a strange country, where she had not a single friend, and her extreme youth and unprotected situation

made her shrink from strangers; when a drive to the Campo Santo, and a melancholy walk within its walls alone varied the scene, save as it was soothed, or enlivened, by the child whose father was far away and might return no more.

Come what would, however, the election was certainly the uppermost thing, and she consented even to leave her child under Louisa's care, in order to accompany her husband. The very first of Lady Anne's letters had been addressed to the present owner of Granard Park, who had not lost an hour in answering it, lamenting that his interest was not great on that side of the country where the borough in question lay, but assuring her he would use his utmost exertions on behalf of Mr. Glentworth, with whom he considered himself acquainted through Count Riccardini, and he offered his house especially to the ladies of the party, his fair cousins.

The offer freely given was freely accepted, this gentleman already standing high in their opinion from his conduct to the Count; nor could they doubt that Lady Anne had lost herself many years of pleasant, and probably profitable intercourse with him, from her own acrimony of temper and overweening pride of manners; but her severest judge (because he had known her the longest) could see no fault in her now. Every one of her letters

were answered, and her requests every where attended to, either from a naturally kind disposition inclined to forget and forgive, from the abiding love inspired by her husband, and the pity felt for his fair children, or certain recollections she had adroitly called up of “the handsome youth who danced with your daughter when a bride,” or “the beloved *protégé* of my lamented Granard, whom you taught to shoot;” there was an universal predilection excited in Glentworth’s behalf, and offers of houses made on every side, with all the hospitality habitual to the West Riding, which we need not say comprises the finest tracts of beautiful, picturesque, and fertile country on the island, enriched by castles and mansions inhabited by the noble, the ancient, the wealthy, and the good.

“Surely,” said Isabella to Lord Allerton, “you will permit my sister to accompany me to Granard Park! I have been so used to look to her for advice and comfort of every description, that on this momentous occasion I should be lost without her; and it is natural to suppose we should like to see the old place together, especially *her*, who knows it so much better than I do.”

“It would be a difficult matter for me to refuse my Mary any thing she wished, for, indeed, I fully intended to swell the pomp of my friend Glentworth’s train, and I have still another motive for



my journey. I much desire to introduce my wife—my virtuous, excellent wife—to a worthy uncle, the brother of my mother, whom I know to be deeply interested in me, and who lives not more than thirty miles from our scene of action. In fact, you and Mary, to which I may now add Mrs. Penrhyn and the girls, have given me such a high sense of the value and sweetness of family affection and family intercourse, that it will not be my fault if we are ever long divided. As an only son, I have never till now known the comfort and pleasure of such alliances, which I really consider to be holy ones.”

Thus reassured on a point of infinite moment to her, Isabella again became a traveller; Lady Anne rejecting with anger any idea of increased ailment in herself being a sufficient cause for their detention, “As if,” said she to Mrs. Palmer, “I could do so imprudent a thing as to die at this momentous period! Think what I have to do; insure Glentworth’s election; witness his reception in the house, which must be flattering; get young Hales well, insure him a ship and at least knight-hood, both being due to his father’s son, let alone his own great merits; marry him to Georgiana; and ensure some *parti* of respectability to poor Helen. The great advantage of one marriage in a family is, that it pretty generally

makes another ; in that respect Lady Allerton was useless to her sisters.”

To hear Lady Anne run over her catalogue of pressing affairs demanding her life, and to look at her, and feel how closely those words applied to her case—“Thou fool ! this night shall thy soul be required of thee !” rendered her visit, as usual, a very painful task to the kind-hearted and well-judging neighbour. As this, however, was the first time she had ever permitted the possibility of her dying to escape her, Mrs. Palmer hoped it was the beginning of better things, and that, perhaps, in the midst of so many engagements for this world, she would remember she was booked for another.

A huge caravan of caps from Miss Griffiths, and an assortment of satins from Howell and James’s, ushered into the dressing-room by Fanchette, silenced all observation, save on the subjects before them. Mrs. Palmer indulged a latent hope that Georgiana, who really wanted dress to a painful degree, was the person to be provided for ; but that hope quickly vanished, like the one which preceded it, as Lady Anne said—

“ There cannot be a more foolish idea, my dear friend, than that of thinking any kind of dress may do for an invalid ; on the contrary, there never was a time when it is so necessary to have one’s *coiffure bien arrangée*, one’s general drapery flow-

ing and rich, substituting the beauty and wealth of art for the deficiencies of nature. Autumn arrays all things in glowing colours; Spring produces snowdrops and violets, showing clearly that a girl may be dressed in cheap muslin; but her mother, dahlia-like, should appear in claret-coloured satin. Pope's satirical verses, in my opinion, only prove that the dying lady (for you'll observe she was a lady) understood dress properly, when she said—

“ ‘ No, let a charming chintz and Brussel's lace  
Wrap my cold limbs and shade my lifeless face.’ ”

Mrs. Palmer could only shake her head, take orders for more jellies, and depart.

## CHAPTER LXIV.

The kind neighbour, on returning from the constant morning visit, found her husband earnestly occupied in reading the following letter.

“ My dear Sir—I am not able to leave my invalid an hour, though I have contrived to bring him and my dear old friends to Bath (as you will perceive by the date); and I can also assert, that he is much better, and looking almost himself again, nor can there be any doubt that he has regained some strength, and is devoid of all actual complaint; still, he is no more like Arthur than I to Hercules—he sits silent for hours together, as if he were on board his ship, and calculating how long she would last; and when he begins to talk, it is only of the good captain he loved so dearly, and whom he buried so honourably at Corunna, or of one or other of the poor fellows who died during his disastrous voyage—it seems as if his whole mind and memory were converted to a log-book registration of their expiring sighs, and as if he thought

the only way of shewing due respect to their virtues was a kind of self-immolation to their honour.

“This disposition unhappily is encouraged by my grandfather and aunt; they sympathise with him too much, either for him or themselves—setting him to spin yarns of poor Jack this, and Tom that, till we all weep together; if it were not for Lord Rotheles, I really should lose my senses; and he, poor man, is threatened with his old enemy, in such a manner, as to alarm the countess much. In fact, we want a young person amongst us dreadfully; will you, who wear your years so lightly, take pity on us; but, above all things, would you bring Georgiana? I have her uncle’s sanction for pressing her to come, and the countess, who you know is prudish enough for any thing, declares she thinks it her duty—you know best how she is situated.”

“She shall go; she must go,” cried Mrs. Palmer; “or my own dear Frederic will be absolutely ruined amongst them! He is the last man in the world to live in an infirmary, for his judgment will continually yield to his sensibility. Lady Anne is no worse; in fact, her disorder has stood still some weeks. I will answer for her consent—the question is, how will you travel?”

“I shall be obliged to post it all the way, or

Lady Anne will go off in a puff of indignation. I myself would prefer the mail coach."

"And you shall have it; only pay me the difference, that I may go out and buy the poor thing a few odds and ends, which no woman can do without. She wants bonnet, shawl, gloves, every thing. For dresses, Helen can help her a little. Isabella and Mary are gone. And Louisa's are too large."

"Well, well, there's fifteen sovereigns for you—doubtless I can smuggle the girl into York House, safe enough, and no one the wiser; but only remember the recipe, 'first catch your hare'—go to Lady Anne's before you go to the shops."

Away went Mrs. Palmer, stepping across the street, with unwonted agility, her husband watching her the while, with somewhat of a cynical smile, muttering—

"Ay, ay, visit your great neighbour, my good dame, whilst you have her, for depend upon it you are much too unlike each other, to be likely ever to meet on agreeable terms any where save in Welbeck Street."

Mrs. Palmer arrived at a happy moment, for a cap had been found, so admirably fitted to fill up the vacuum of thin jaws, and exhibit the contour of a fine forehead, that Lady Anne not only seized upon it as a benefaction, but declared that she would

make it a fashion—"it would not be the first time she had brought a thing in which had a long run, nor could she see any reason why it should be the last, as it was plain, though she could not go out of the house, she must receive many friends in it."

(It will be owned, at the present day, Lady Anne was as good as her word, for many a plump and lovely face, in the full bloom of youth and health, is at this moment half hidden by blonde, flowers, and ribands, and many a forehead, neither high nor classical, denuded of those curls, which are the natural ornament of youth and modesty.)

When Georgiana heard of her destination, she naturally enough concluded, that poor Arthur was exceedingly ill, and called her to his death-bed; but Mrs. Palmer sent her over the way, that she might read Lord Meersbrook's letter, and, committing Lady Anne to Fanchette, who was never so happy and attentive as when her lady was increasing her stock of finery, took Helen aside, and inquired what Georgiana wanted most, and what she could help her with? This was, indeed, little; but oh! with what fullness of good-will was all she had laid on her bed for the good neighbour to choose! how warmly was every thing that had any pretence recommended, even while the heart was aching with the recollection that Lord Meersbrook

would see it on Georgiana and not on herself! —  
Poor Helen! she was indeed like her

“ — who pined in thought,  
And let concealment, like a worm i' the bud,  
Prey on her damask cheek,”

save in so far as Georgiana was concerned; and although it was a great loss to part with her, yet she well knew, that notwithstanding her deep solicitude for Arthur, she would not forget her sister, but would carefully examine every circumstance on which an opinion might be founded, or a hope indulged. So far as regards Lady Anne, she had that of receiving, every evening, the Penrhyns for an hour. Charles, as might be expected, meant to be present at the election of his kind patron-brother, but he could not spare time to go so far until the polling began.

When Mrs. Glentworth stopped for a moment, to bid her mamma farewell, she presented her husband's adieu in the shape of two hundred pound bills, which Lady Anne thought particularly acceptable; and in return for which, she poured clear but rapid instructions into the ears of his wife, as to disposing of certain moneys, always understood to be required at elections.

“ Why should a poor man be deprived of the alms a rich man desires to give him, because he happens to have a vote?” said Lady Anne; “ or,



if a gentleman is delicately circumstanced, not choosing to relieve the poor man, lest it was likely to be attributed to wrong motives, should not his lady help the poor man's wife, thus easing both parties? If you see occasion for this kind interference, and hesitate in using it, you must be an unfeeling woman, and an ungrateful wife."

Isabella departed, with a determination to be neither.

It was on the strength of this present, that Lady Anne sent for the milliner and silk-mercant, not foreseeing, as she said, that the Palmers were about to come over her for expences on Georgiana's account. When her writing-desk was opened, and she had placed her bills in their usual deposit, she opened that containing the poor Count's sovereigns, and began saying, "Whatever she spends, now, may, indeed *must* be, deducted from her wedding finery. (I should not wonder if that Mrs. Margaret, seeing her condition, gave her something very pretty)—three sovereigns will do for her pocket very handsomely. Two parties I will have, they are inevitable; and confectioners must be paid. I wonder what government will give that young man, for being half starved, and half drowned, and saving them a whole crew of scarecrows? Something handsome, surely, in which case he will have sympathy with a person so like himself, as I am (by

the way, that ring, with the chain, would be the very thing for my hands); but governments are seldom generous in countries they call *free*. I can't see the reason of it, for I think we are sufficiently taxed, but *that* is the advantage of a despotic government. Heigho! I hope Glentworth will invent something new."

Of late, whenever Lady Anne had either talked or thought beyond her strength, exhausted nature found refuge in short but refreshing snatches of sleep, and she was thus situated when Georgiana sought to bid her farewell, which she could only do by touching her thin, withered fingers with her lips, affording a strong contrast to the blighted yet still fine outline of her mother's wasted features. Habit had, however, so inured the daughters constantly about her to the change in her person, that they by no means saw it in the same point of view with others, and the young know little of death besides the name.

Lady Anne, by closely adhering to the advice of her physician, had so far subdued her disease, and kept herself at what might be called a "stand still," that she firmly believed she could, on the same terms, live as long as she pleased. By breathing air of the same temperature, she avoided the sufferings induced by cough, and her extreme temperance and light food had delivered her from the

wasting effects of fever ; and her ever active mind, being employed only on subjects flattering to her love of importance, experienced much to soothe and stimulate existence, but nothing to wear it ; and, having long considered May as the month which would conclude her imprisonment, she built castles for the time beyond it with the happiest avidity. Now and then the old trouble would arise, “ that such and such tradesmen would want money — an evil always to be apprehended from those low people ; ” but it was evident that, with three sons-in-law, and a fourth expectant, she could never be in positive distress, since, for their own sakes, they would enable her to “ keep up appearances.”

Leaving her to pleasant dreams, and poor Helen (who now alone received those many light darts the invalid threw off in the way of habitual exercise) to many a waking dream of “ the virgin’s first love,” so sweetly described by Mrs. Opie, we will follow the travellers to Bath, as they reached their destination considerably sooner than those on their way to Yorkshire.

## CHAPTER LXV.

“Georgiana Granard here? in this very house? how dreadful! For Heaven’s sake order a carriage of some kind, and let us escape! What the devil can have brought her here?”

“That kindest of all friends, Mr. Palmer, is come to see you, and Georgiana, who is much wanted by Lord Rotheles, took the advantage of his escort, having, of course, an eye to you, for she knows we are under the same roof; and, as you are really much improved, I hope you will have pleasure in seeing her.”

“So I should, but it must be on the express condition, Frederic, that she does not see me. The poor soul would find herself a complete little Red Ridinghood, and expect the naughty wolf to eat her up at a mouthful. Could any worse misfortune befall any man than that of terrifying the woman he loves? I hope I am not more of a coxcomb than other young men, though more than you are I grant I always was; but, upon my soul,

rather than frighten the woman I love, I would lie fifty fathom deep any day in any sea !”

“ And, if I did not think the woman I loved could not take me ‘ to have and to hold, for better and worse, in sickness and in health,’ I would not marry her for the wide world. You have often said I am too fastidious, too solicitous — that my desire to be decidedly, exclusively preferred, is as much the result of my vanity as my timidity ; it may be so, but I declare to you solemnly, Arthur, I would desire no better test of a woman’s regard than that presented by your present appearance, although it is by no means what you apprehend it to be. You are quite a stout gentleman to what you were last week, and, when your collar is properly adjusted, your hair brushed, and your wrapping gown, or even your frock coat does *devoir* aright, make a very tolerable appearance.”

Arthur thought for a very long time, took a glance at himself in the looking-glass, said “ it wouldn’t do,” and sat down again. Once he said, with great emotion, “ *You* wouldn’t deceive me, I know, Meersbrook ;” but, in so saying, the melancholy, even ghastly, expression his face assumed, rendered his brother infected by his fears, and he said, “ We will suffer a few days to pass before you see Georgiana ; but I trust you will admit our worthy friend Palmer as soon as he awakes ?”

“Of course, of course. I care not if all the men and very near all the *women* in England saw me. His good wife, Lady Anne, and Georgiana, are the exceptions: the first because her dear old heart would be grieved; the second, because, as an invalid, it might injure her; the third—oh! how could I bear that those sweet blue eyes and blushing cheeks, which first beheld me through a vista which she supposed concealed her wholly, and, in the beautiful benevolence of her own sisterly heart, fancied I was a hero, because I had merely performed a commonplace service to my own beloved brother—how could I bear that she should shrink and tremble to behold me—to feel she was bound to that which she feared to gaze upon?”

“But she is not bound; her mother’s consent is not her consent. It is true, I believe a letter was written, but you have never received it.”

“That won’t do, Frederic. I know more than you do. My grandfather—God bless him!—has told me every thing: how he married her for me, and kissed her blushing cheek, down which the purest, warmest tears were flowing. I know she holds herself to be mine.”

“Whilst you are young and handsome, lose a leg and an eye, and what is to be done then? such, at least, is your own doctrine.”

The dispute was ended by the entrance of Mr.

Palmer, who, whatever he might feel, betrayed, by no start or exclamation, his grief and surprise, and who entered warmly on the subject of Mr. Glentworth's election. Although very few men were more distinct characters than this gentleman and Arthur Hales, it was certain that a decided and extraordinary affection bound them to each other, and which, perhaps, might be explained by saying that the young sailor loved his advanced friend because he had been useful to him. From the moment the election was mentioned, a strong desire sprang in his bosom to be present with him and assist him in his pursuit, and Mr. Palmer was not slow to assure him that, of all other things, his presence was most desired by the party in question.

“ My first movement must be to the Admiralty, from whom I seek not to hide my bones, since their high mightinesses may be pleased to look on them for a good purpose, nor do I care for exhibiting them on the hustings in Yorkshire ; but by Georgiana I will not be seen at present, for I cannot wish to wring her heart with pity for me ; and far less would I inspire her with disgust, of course ; and really to know myself under the same roof and not speak to her, is killing work : yes ; it is cruel to her, and death to me.”

Lord Meersbrook, who was bitterly mortified at the failure of his scheme, appealed to Mr. Pal-

mer whether his brother was not wholly wrong as to his conclusions—but that gentleman thought him right, and said, “ Arthur had much better go down to the election, recover his spirits, encourage his appetite, brace himself by change of air, and amuse himself by variety of scene, until he got rid of an idea produced by the weakness of his nerves as much as his personal alteration.”

As every word that passed was repeated to Georgiana, which tended to reconcile her to the disappointment she experienced, and she had too much delicacy to say any thing, whatever she might feel, the circumstance only tended to make her appear more amiable in the eyes of her friends, who left nothing unsaid or undone to convince her of their regard; and the good baronet and his sister promised to reconvey her to London in a day or two. Meantime she was all on the *qui vive* to catch the sound of his voice, to learn where his room was situated, and who went into it; but, alas! in this she was foiled, for his sitting-room was at a considerable distance; and Lady Rotheles had no idea where he slept, nor what passage he used. She had procured a small room for Georgiana near her own, which was at the end of a long gallery up stairs, but the Haleses she believed kept as near the ground-floor as they could.

The second evening of her sojourn, Georgiana,



thinking that a little work would help to pass the melancholy time, and recollecting that Helen had placed the materials for netting in her portmanteau, took the opportunity of fetching it whilst there was light enough for the purpose. There was some little difficulty, for the day was decidedly closing, but at length she found it, and was proceeding along the gallery, which, being carpeted, her foot was noiseless, when a gentleman opened a door a little before her, and, like herself, went onwards, but he walked slowly; therefore she checked her own steps, not wishing to pass him; he sighed deeply, and she stood still, but her eye was on his form: he was tall and very thin; his hair was full and dark. It was, it must be he; she sprung forward, laid her hand on his arm, and, turning away her glowing face, said, in a tremulous voice—

“Surely, surely, it is Arthur!”

“My own Georgiana! my sweet girl! I thank you for knowing me, but do not look at me, I beseech you.”

“I cannot see you; it is getting so dark; but I am not afraid of thin people; my poor mamma is much more wasted than you are, I am certain.”

At this moment a servant came towards them with a lighted candle in her hand, on which he rushed down stairs with a celerity which, at least, assured his anxious ladye love, that if thin he was

not weak ; and, instead of going into his own sitting-room, he entered that of his grandfather, and, to his brother's exceeding joy, related the incident as one that had given him the most delightful emotion he ever experienced, dwelling with the humour of former days on the horror of the housemaid, who heheld Alonza and the fair Imogene by the blue gleam of a farthing candle, and, being turned into a Leonora by the terrific vision, would henceforward go tramp, tramp, tramp, and splash, splash, splash, over all the regions of York House, for ever and ever, like the Dutchman's leg that was wound up and running to this day.

The voice, the touch of Georgiana, proved, indeed, a restorative talisman, but he did not the less adhere to his resolution of avoiding her for a time ; and the next day set out as proposed, with his brother and Mr. Palmer, for town ; a decision not regretted by their venerable friends, because it enabled Georgiana to be entirely with them, and assist in their arrangements for their journey, this devotion of herself being particularly pleasing to Lord Rotheles, who was gratified with every circumstance which connected him with the family.

Many were the inquiries he made respecting his sister, but he could not judge of her actual state from poor Georgiana's account, so utterly incon-

sistent did it appear. She was exceedingly ill, confined to two rooms, properly medicated ; yet, she received many friends, wrote many notes, and was exhilarated by the occupation. She lived only on a little jelly and a little chocolate : she was reduced to skin and bone, yet she was choosing new dresses and planning more parties ; well might his lordship exclaim, “ Lady Anne was always an extraordinary woman ; ” and his Countess determined narrowly to watch, lest she should make extraordinary claims on his purse ; for, although Georgiana had said that both Mr. Glentworth and the Count had been very kind to mamma by making her considerable presents, and Mr. Penrhyn had also lent her money, she was well aware it might be said of Lady Anne—

“ Her great expence had stomach for them all.”

“ We shall be up in May ; that will be here in five weeks, you know ; should your mamma, or should you, for any occurring reason, wish me to come sooner, write to me, child, and take these bills to buy yourself pretty things. I cannot spare you more just now, but I will not forget you, my dear Georgiana, be assured.”

These words were spoken in great haste, but still greater affection, on the morning when they were parting, which was a trial to all ; for a sense

of esteem on one hand, and obligation on the other, bound them very closely: and, although they expected to meet again very soon, the continuance of life can never be reckoned on when the thread has passed fourscore, or nearly reached it. Unlike our heroine, the Kentish family in question held themselves familiar with the idea of removal, and therefore could never be startled by the summons; and the blessing of receiving Arthur, as from the dead, and of leaving Frederic in such a state of happiness as that gift bestowed on him, made them frequently own to each other, that if they were now called away with little personal pain and in full possession of their faculties, it would be a most happy circumstance.

“Not,” said Mrs. Margaret, “but one would have liked to see Meersbrook married still more than his brother, because he is so likely to be happy as a married man living at home in peace and honour, rendering his tenantry comfortable, setting an example to all other young men of family, as his father did before him—one would have liked it, I say; but God’s will be done!”

“One would, indeed, dear Margaret, but you see this is his first London season; he may meet some one soon, as it may happen, whom he can fancy.”

“I could have wished him to marry before he got into that fancy fair, or vanity fair, a London

season presents ; it would break my heart (though, being old, it may be deemed tough) for him to be inveigled into marriage by mere beauty or showy accomplishments — by mere money he never will — I could have wished much — but here comes Georgiana ; we must say no more.”

Sir Edward did not doubt but his sister wished the elder brother had chosen her, because he had allowed such thoughts at times to occupy his own mind ; but in this he was mistaken. Enough for both that they were cheered by her unceasing attention, her cheerful prattle, and her powers of grateful listening, when they were able and willing to address her. Both herself and sisters had struck them as resembling the girls of olden time, always the criterion for excellence with the aged, who seldom believe that beauty is beautiful when denuded of those accompaniments it adopted when their own young hearts first throbbed at its bidding, when they felt that

From the hoops' bewitching round  
The very shoe had power to wound.

And it would be difficult to persuade any old man that the court of William IV. contained so many fine women as that of George III., even when they own that the absence of small-pox alone gives us nine out of ten left as handsome as nature made them. Perhaps, however, it is a happy provision

of nature that a predilection in favour of their own early times should be deeply implanted in the human breast; for, when that time has arrived in which it is truly said, "the soul hath no pleasure," it is well and wise to look back to years in which there certainly was some; though, even in that particular, the most fortunate might say—

“ That distance lends enchantment to the view.”

## CHAPTER LXVI.

At the end of two days (at one period the common time of accomplishing a journey to or from Bath) Georgiana was set down in Welbeck Street, and eager inquiries from those who remained within the carriage were made, as to the health of Lady Anne, of the servant who admitted the young lady.

“Much the same, he believed,” but, as “*the same*” was a term not easily defined, they were glad to perceive Helen running in the passage to answer them herself, snatching a kiss of Georgiana as she passed her—there was a buoyancy in her step, a smile on her countenance, which made her look the herald of good tidings, and her earnest manner of inquiring, “how they had borne the journey?” indicated an interest in the answer which showed her in the most endearing point of view; but, when she spoke of her mother, a sweet seriousness overspread her features, and she observed, “mamma was no better, apparently; but she was extremely busy, watching the progress of the election through the

medium of the newspapers, and, when they asked how she felt, she answered, 'she had something else to do than to attend to her feelings;' from which they inferred she did not suffer much."

As they drove off, Mrs. Margaret said, very pointedly—

"Well, brother, that's the girl for my money—she's the flower of the flock, decidedly."

"Penrhyn's wife is the flower of the flock, and Helen resembles her much; but give me my pet lamb, Georgiana, and I ask no more."

"I do," said the old lady, with more of sternness than was her wont.

Lady Anne received her daughter by observing, sneeringly, "that she had been made a pretty complete April fool of," followed by the question of "how much of your money have you left?"—to which she replied, "two pounds, fifteen."

"Umph! you were quite right to spend nothing, as the sailor wouldn't look at you; give me back the sovereigns, and you may keep the silver."

"I will fetch them, mamma," said Georgiana, leaving the room, for oppression teaches cunning, and the poor girl well knew she had her uncle's gift in the same purse with her mother's loan; so, after appearing to take them from a box in which she deposited the notes, she laid them on the table, not having the slightest doubt that the whole would



have been seized by her mother, had they been seen.

“ I recollect, Mrs. Penrhyn,” said Lady Anne, “ borrowing some change of you at Brighton, which your husband was mean enough to remind me of ; a proof that he looks pretty sharp after you.”

“ He is a very generous husband, indeed, mamma ; but eighteen pounds, you know—”

“ I know nothing about it—you may take those two sovereigns—I am not in a situation to be teased ; pray, be silent.—I suppose Georgiana has a message for me, from Lord Rotheles.”

Georgiana, in a low, distinct voice, repeated her uncle’s words.

“ I understand him—my family are to send for him, either if Georgiana marries, or if I die—neither circumstance is likely to happen in a hurry, I can assure him. A man who is so frightful he dare not look that girl in the face who is most likely to forgive its defects, cannot fail to be an object some time longer—and, for me, I have something else to do than to die—it’s all very well for an idle man, like Rotheles, who never looked sharp after any thing but pleasure in his life, to suppose I have been long ill and must drop off ; because, having no exertion himself, he supposes nobody else has any—did you tell him about the election ?”

“Oh! yes, mamma, and he is exceedingly anxious Mr. Glentworth should get it; but he has no interest in that part of the country at all.”

“Umph! no interest; I have as little, I apprehend, yet I have done great good already; so often as the Earl of Rotheles, and his handsome ladies, have been visitors at Granard Park, and shot with one, partaken a haunch with another, hunted with the 'squires, and flirted with their wives, he might surely remember some one name to whom a line, with a coronet on the seal, might have done wonders; he is lost in indolence, at least in my affairs; he could take a long journey to the Haleses; he ought to remember that Mrs. Glentworth is my daughter; of course, her husband's election is a thing that comes very near me.”

“My uncle considered that I was your daughter in their case, mamma, and, of course, their circumstances were more pressing a few weeks ago than Mr. Glentworth's.”

Lady Anne fixed her eyes, which were become very large looking ones, upon Georgiana, elevated her brows, and, in a measured tone of voice, indicative of extreme contempt, said, “*You are my daughter!* granted, Miss Georgiana Granard; and Mrs. Glentworth is my daughter, *true!* but how can you be *equally* my daughters, when the husband of one can lay down a thousand pounds,

yes, at least a thousand pounds for every hundred the intended husband of the other can produce. Will any body venture to say, that any comparison can exist between two men so differently situated? or that it is not, in point of fact, a much more important thing, that Glentworth should secure his election, than Arthur James Hales preserve his life."

Georgiana burst into tears, which became hysterical sobbing.

"Really, mamma, you are very hard on poor Georgiana, who is just come from a long journey, and has of late suffered so much; nobody owes Mr. Glentworth more than I do; nobody loves and honours him more than I do; but I cannot see how," said Mrs. Penrhyn.

"You see! how should *you* see? people whose eyes are blinded by city fogs, city occupations, even city wealth, are not likely to see into any subject clearly."

"Yet Mr. Glentworth himself owes to the same medium."

"I deny it; Mr. Glentworth was the son of a gentleman, though a younger brother, who was very genteely provided for; he was a bad man, and left his son next to nothing, so he was glad to go into a commercial house rather than starve."

"My husband did the same."

“But Mr. Glentworth’s pretensions at this time arise from the property of that old hunk, his uncle, whom I always expected to leave me a legacy, for I sent him game every year of my life; but he disappointed me and many others by making no will; of course, Glentworth owes me a legacy, in conscience. Now go away, you fatigue me dreadfully. Send Helen and Fanchette.”

Louisa touched Fanchette’s bell, and obeyed. Lady Anne forbade (very wisely) more than two persons in her room at a time, therefore, Helen had been chatting with Penrhyn in the parlour, whilst her sisters were up stairs. On entering, Mrs. Penrhyn said, “You must go up this moment, Helen, for poor mamma is so cross, Fanchette will be saucy, I fear.”

“She has been so all day, but, thank God, I am able to bear it, because I am quite certain it does her good.”

“I believe it does, provided she does not speak loud,” said Georgiana; “anger would kill her, whereas scorn and contempt relieve her; but certainly they are the hardest to bear.”

“Poor Helen! what she must have endured during this week of your absence, Georgiana!” transferring her pity from the indignant weeping girl to the one who was quitting the room, escaped Mrs. Penrhyn’s lips.

Georgiana looked in Helen's face, and was certain the look of calm happiness she wore indicated some secret consolation; and so delighted was she with the thought, that her own passing trouble was instantly banished, and she gladly shared the very humble fare she found placed before Mr. Penrhyn, aware that she should not see Helen again until that hour when she would be called in the morning, and which in her kindness she would make a late one.

Our evils are not unfrequently attended with good. Louisa did not appear to need the lesson, for she was a happy wife, and an excellent one; but the close observation of what her sisters had to go through at this time (when Lady Anne's ambition and exhilaration caused her to appear to strangers, despite her sad state, a most charming person) made her own home appear a perfect paradise, and her husband a beneficent angel. Never did he fail to console her, by an assurance that Helen should always find a home in his house, and be to him as a dear sister; but there frequently were times, when he declared, "that even the visit of an hour must be relinquished, if she were rendered so miserable in paying it, as she too often appeared to be."

At this very time, his step-mother was much in the same situation as poor Lady Anne; therefore,

his estate of eight hundred per annum, with a good house upon it, being nearly in possession, rendered him easy, as to money matters ; and if Lady Anne had wanted a little cash, (and she did always want,) he would have furnished her with it ; but Louisa did not mention the circumstance, having no doubt whatever that it would form a reason for a demand ; and she could not reconcile herself to sending her husband's money to Howell and James's, through her mother's fingers, at the time when her sisters were kept in a state of poverty, no decent tradesman could have borne to witness in his daughters. That Isabella and Mary would help them as far as they could, she was certain ; but she knew how they felt on the subject, from her own feelings, and she was aware, that although Isabella, from her alliance with great wealth, might be supposed to have the most money at command, she was, in some circumstances, more awkwardly circumstanced than any of her sisters. She was the wife of a man so much older than herself, she never could presume to dispute his judgment ; he had done one such great thing for her family, (in her own case,) that he might omit little ones, and his very love to their father had rendered their mother an object of mistrust and dislike. At present, these feelings were suspended by one engrossing object, to which might be added the emotions naturally called forth

by a return to his country after long absence, and the delight he evidently experienced in his child, of whose welfare she wrote every day of her life; but it would not be always thus. If he discovered how far her uncle Riccardini had relieved her mother, and to how little purpose, she was confident her conduct would be held unforgiveable, for it might be said, truly, that Glentworth doated on the Count, and the Count on him. How it happened, where they had formed their acquaintance, and conciliated their friendship, she knew not; but little as she had seen, she could not doubt the fact.

Upright and simple-minded, adding, of late, the obligations of religion to a native sense of integrity, Louisa was also an intelligent woman, of excellent capacity; and the trickery of her mother, though only partially understood, had taught her to know that "such things were" as deception. Lady Anne had asked repeatedly of late, what had become of the Count's cab? to which she truly replied, "she did not know; she had observed he did not use it, and she wondered why."

"He has sold his horse, his Hector he was so fond of. I think he was foolish not to sell the cab at the same time, for, if his love for his horse was a pleasure, because he fancied it loved him, we are quite certain that was not the case with the cab —

the most sentimental Italian would hardly say the wheels smiled upon him, and the seat welcomed his continuations."

"But why should he sell either? He told me that he had ascertained his expenses, and formed a plan for his future mode of life; he would live in the immediate neighbourhood of Exeter eight months in the year, two in London, and two with Glentworth. That he liked the first because he could attend the cathedral service; the second, because it permitted him to learn all the news of Europe, and placed him in the society he had a right to enjoy; and the third, because it gave his affections their proper and accustomed food, recalling memories he desired to cherish to the latest hour of existence."

"He is an extraordinary creature," said Lady Anne; "somebody says somewhere, 'He who gives his money never feigns.' I often wish when I am thinking about it that he had not sold his horse, it gives me the fidgets when it crosses my mind."

Lady Anne's words were not addressed to her daughters, so much as herself, but they conveyed clearly to Mrs. Penrhyn's mind the belief that the poor Count's horse had been the sacrifice to her mamma's passion for luxury now abandoned, or finery more indulged in than ever. She felt that it



was her duty to tell her husband her suspicions, and that there ought to be some interference, in fact, some investigation of her mother's affairs, since Helen had repeatedly complained of duns, more especially the butcher, "whom her mamma peremptorily refused to pay, though she had plenty of money;" but, whilst these thoughts were passing her mind, one single glance at the subject of them put all to flight. Either pity and habitual respect for one so fragile, so reduced, operated on the tenderness of her nature; or the fear of her mother's flashing eye, and the tongue that could speak daggers, deterred her.

Lady Anne early in life studied how best despotic power could be exercised on a small scale; like Henry VII.,\* she preferred the homage exacted by respect and fear, to that which is offered by love, and she had firmly abided by her choice, being neither drawn aside by a husband whom any other woman would have found irresistibly seducing, nor by five sweet children, all calculated to win a mother's heart to weakness, and all imbued remarkably with domestic attachments. Some weeks ago she began to entertain doubts as to the excellence of her system, though she never divulged them, but at this time she was fully confirmed in

\* See Bacon's Life of that monarch.

its value, by the respect paid to her letters, and the hospitable manner in which her family had been received in the neighbourhood where she had reigned for years a queen, at once dazzling and commanding.

“ Yes, yes, it is all very right,” she observed to Helen, to whom alone she disclosed what was really passing in her mind; “ every one of the half dozen letters are quite satisfactory, for, the writers, as Hamlet says, are ‘*tolerably honest*,’ and will help my son Glentworth heart and hand, but, certainly, not from *love* of me. I don’t believe, Helen, in all that great county, from its people of rank, down to its cowherds and artisans, one human being had the feeling for me generally distinguished as *love*, the same kind of attachment the Palmers feel for *you*, and which, in point of fact, is a very silly affair. A quarrel may break such a tie in a moment, absence will wear it out, and misconduct ruin it. Look at the different effect my mode of impressing my acquaintance made on them, how much more useful and lasting? Admiration and fear, respect for my rank, my talent, and my taste, were the engines by which I drilled them for my own purposes, whilst amongst them, and knowing that not one loved *me*, I escaped all pain in leaving *them*, and ——.”

“ Pardon me, little as I was, I remember many,

*many* tears being shed, mamma, when we left Granard Park.”

“ Yes, many tears were shed in memory of the last Granard they knew, and, on sight of his five little girls in their black frocks — country people, having few exciting scenes, make the most of them, and, undoubtedly, talk of the handsome widow and her fair children to this day, all stuffed into the family coach, which went a snail’s pace, while the elder girls cried, and waved their cambric handkerchiefs, and my lady sank into the corner. That part of the thing had its effect for the moment, but, I tell you again, of all our own domestics who went weeping by our side to the park-gates, of all the crowd that received us on the outside, the men bare-headed, and the women crying, there was not one that had any love for *me*, and not more than half a dozen that had any pity.”

Helen thought it was a very odd thing to boast of, yet, certainly, Lady Anne spoke in an exulting tone of voice : for herself, she could only “ answer with a sigh,” nor was more required, for when her mother had taken breath, she continued :—

“ Yet there was not one creature in that crowd that would not have obeyed any command I might have willed to issue, because they were accustomed to obey ; accustomed to hold the master mind in

awe, not that I was always proud and stern, certainly not: 'honey catches more flies than vinegar,' and occasions arose then, as now, when a few soft words assuaged an angry creditor, or an offended neighbour, but my system was that of being proud and unapproachable, and you see how it answers, they have never forgotten me, never ceased to honour me; and now I deign to appear amongst them again by my representatives, every one flocks to my standard, every one regards my notice as a distinction; having taught him in past days to shrink from my *hauteur*, he now exults in my smile, and is proud to be one of my train. My mode of government, too, had the greatest of all advantages, it subsists to the end of life; you know, Helen, nobody *loves* old women, but many people fear them; I have mentioned this before, but it cannot be repeated too often."

Helen remembered, also, that her heart, both then and now, denied the assertion, but, wishing the subject to go by, she ventured to say:—

"The butcher is very angry, and says he shall send an execution into the house; surely he will not kill the poor creatures under this roof?"

"If he kills a simpler mutton than you, I shall wonder—he said an execution?"

"Yes, mamma. Pray, mamma, what is it?"

“When it comes you will see, and your sweet simplicity be properly enlightened, but, remember *this*, come what will, you get no money out of me.”

## CHAPTER LXVII.

The communication thus given to Lady Anne took place during the absence of Mr. Palmer at Bath, a circumstance which added much to Helen's uneasiness, as she felt as if she were quite alone in the world, since she could not speak freely even to Louisa, who, again likely to be a mother, might be injured by any thing of a nature to alarm her. Something very terrible seemed impending over her—something which suspended even the claims of love in her gentle bosom.

Nor were her fears without foundation ; for, one morning, when she had been in bed only between two and three hours, she was awakened by the cook, who, after many apologies and lamentations, assured her “ that they had been told that there would be an execution in the house within an hour.”

Helen jumped out of bed, and began to dress as quickly as she was able but what she was to do,

in case the threat took place, or how it would act, she could not conceive.

Fanchette, in extreme alarm, asked innumerable questions as to the "villain law of England," and received, of course, false and exaggerated accounts, in consequence of which she sent the page for a coach, and began to fetch down box after box with so much avidity, that cook took the liberty of peeping into several and handing them into the dining-room, observing, "it was quite as well for my ladies' fal-lals to pay her debts as be trotted off that way." Fanchette began to insist on their restoration, on which she was told, "that, if she attempted touching one of them, she would be immediately put in the hands of a policeman;" so she set out with amazing rapidity, exclaiming bitterly against the *gensdarmes*, whom she saw by chance at the moment. Meantime, poor Helen stood by her mother's bed-side, the image of despair, now looking at the pale invalid, who slept apparently in great comfort, and now on the writing-desk, which contained that money she so wanted, but must not, dared not take; the most terrible part of the affair being the declaration of the servant, "that an execution in a house was the most disgracefullest of all

things, and would make his honour Glentworth go parfitly wild."

Feeling as if madness had actually seized her, and that somewhere she must go, to some one she must speak, Helen ran down stairs, and was just desiring the cook to go to Lady Anne, when the door was opened by the boy to three men, who entered with the ease prerogative bestows, and their chief addressed Helen, assuring her "that they wouldn't make no noise, for they knew as how the ould lady was in a criticising sitivation, and might pop off all of a suddent."

Helen rushed past them, flew across the street, where the servant was taking in the "Times," and, pursuing her way to the library, where Mrs. Palmer was sitting at the breakfast-table, flung herself on her knees beside her, crying only—"Help me! help me! Dear Mrs. Palmer, I have only you in the world!—pray help me!"

Both her sympathizing neighbour and all who heard her (for, though she saw none, there were several present) had no doubt at all but that Lady Anne had died when only poor Helen was near, and felt for her exceedingly, and Mrs. Palmer, stooping over her, said tenderly—



“It is a great trial, my love; particularly from your being alone; but try to conquer this emotion. I would rather see you cry, Helen. You know this affliction has been long expected by us all, my love.”

“No, I didn’t expect it, didn’t believe it. How could I think the butcher would send in the execution men, when mamma is so ill? when I know there is money in her desk?—plenty of money.”

“Oh! it is only money matters, after all. Don’t frighten yourself, Helen.”

The sound of Mr. Palmer’s voice gave her sudden comfort; she sprang to her feet, turned towards the table, and met the earnest gaze of Lord Meersbrook. Shame, deep, distressing shame—a sense of her family respectability being blighted for ever, her faint hopes crushed, her heart broken, fell upon her; the room turned round—the pulses lately beating so violently suddenly stood still, and she fell with such utter lifelessness, that she might have been much hurt, if she had not been caught in the large folds of Mr. Palmer’s dressing-gown, which broke her fall and left her head upon his slipper.

But his were not the hands that raised her with all a mother’s tenderness, and gazed in mingled fear

and admiration on that skin, whiter than the Parian marble, those chiselled features, beautiful in death. No! Helen was in Lord Meersbrook's arms, when Mrs. Palmer cried out, as she led the way—

“Bring her into this fresh, cold room; lay her on the sofa, but keep her head raised as high as you can. I wonder where my *sal-volatile* is. I must go to the medicine-chest—I must get something.”

All activity, as all kindness, the good lady bustled about, and had soon the satisfaction of seeing Helen's eyes open, and she was not sorry to observe that they swam in tears, for she thought they might relieve her; but only a few drops rolled down her cheeks; nature found another refuge in the sleep she had been deprived of, and, as the most kind and encouraging words fell upon her ear and solaced her heart, she sank unresistingly into a state which appeared to be equally slumber and faintness.

The first moment she had observed symptoms of returning life, Mrs. Palmer had rushed to the library, and said, “She is better, she will soon be well; for God's sake stop the people over the way, for they are actually bringing the sideboard into the street!”

“I must have my coat and my shoes,” said Mr.

Palmer, lazily. "It seems to me a very extraordinary thing altogether, that a woman, who sacrificed all the comforts of life to 'keeping up appearances,' should allow such a *contretemps* as this to take place, when all her prospects are so bright, her honours in full bloom, and no other frost likely to befall them, save the chilling one of death."

"But, my dear sir, somebody must go and save the rigging; let me do it; if the law shows its claws, let me show my teeth, and you'll see which comes off best."

"Get along then, but remember 'poor Jack's no hand at a bargain;' send or bring the land-sharks to *me* for the money."

Doubting the prudence of the ambassador, when the coat was adjusted and the shoes tied, Mr. Palmer followed to the scene of action, astonished to find the van driving down the street, the porters sheering off, and the commander-in-chief seeing the sideboard nicely replaced, and insisting that the removed bookcase should be adjusted to a tittle, the creditor, standing near, with the look of a delinquent, and, what Helen called the executioner, appearing with smirking looks, because praised for "doing his bidding gently."

“Rather sharp work this, Mr. Cutlet. I suppose you are giving over business, and don’t care how you part with your customers?” said the old gentleman.

“No, indeed, sir; these are no times for giving over, especially to a man with a large family; but, really, my Lady Anne Granard being such a bargainer to an ounce o’ meat as I never met with, and who kep her family on less than one-half what other people consumes, ought to be made to pay, since she von’t do it vithout. That there foreign gen’l-man vot paid her debts last summer, an’ vent and sold his ’oss (as pretty a bit o’ blood as ever I see), to oblige her, is gone away, and she have shut herself up and purtends to be hill, so I adn’t no other vay.”

“Pretends!—she’s dying. Here’s a check for you, and send *my* bill immediately.”

Many apologies were in course of being uttered, but the men, having finished their job and received some silver from Arthur, all went away together, leaving Mr. Palmer to turn over all he had heard respecting the poor Count, and what he had called Lady Anne’s “devilries,” which he determined to communicate to Mr. Glentworth immediately on his return.

As they were leaving the house, the poor boy told them, with a long face, "That ma'mselle had run away in a coach, and cook was frightened to stay alone with milady, and he hoped Miss Helen would come home."

"I don't wonder the poor wench is frightened; egad, she's afraid mam'selle's elopement may be followed by her lady's with a 'gentleman in black.' No wonder! for the creature that could practise on Riccardini, the most noble, simple, generous, self-denying of all human beings, could do any thing. Oh! here comes Dame Palmer. Well; how have you left Helen?"

"She still sleeps, and will do so till her usual time, between ten and eleven. Now is your time to go and choose Arthur's hat and other things, because at one he goes to the Admiralty. Pray take pains to choose it a becoming one; there is more in a hat than any other thing which belongs to a man's wardrobe."

Having seen them pursue their route, and satisfied herself that no sharp, loud knock at this early hour was likely to disturb Helen, Mrs. Palmer made her way to Lady Anne's room, and relieved the poor servant, equally to her satisfaction and that

of her lady, to whom she had, with much more truth than prudence, related the events of the morning.

“A friend in need is a friend indeed,” cried the invalid, who was a little fond of proverbs. “I am so glad to see you, for you are the only person who can tell me what is to be done in this distressing case.”

“Make yourself easy, Lady Anne, for the present. Cutlet’s bill is paid, and, when you are able to sit up, you can give Palmy the money; don’t hurry yourself about it.”

“I do not intend; but I was alluding to Fanchette. I fear she has robbed me, and what can I do without her? I shall never be fit to be seen again.”

“Never fear. You told me three days ago that you thought Helen managed you the better of the two.”

“So she does; why is she not here now? it is four hours and a half since she went to bed; sleep enough for a young woman, in all conscience.”

“And little enough, in all conscience; for the young require rest and food more than their elders. However, I must inform you, that Helen has had a bad fit in our house, and is now laid down——.”

“ A fit ! a fit ! There never was such a thing in my family before.”

“ My dear madam, you have fainted yourself repeatedly within a fortnight.”

“ Oh ! she fainted, that was all. I can forgive *that* ; it arose from being awoke in a fright ; besides she’s very subject to anxiety. When you have given her lunch, pray send her home, as I shall be miserable till I know what Fanchette has taken ; if it only is to the amount of seven pound ten, I shall be nearly safe, for in another month I should have paid her a quarter’s wages. I always paid *her* to the day, come what would.”

“ So !—that creature had thirty pounds a-year, and numerous presents and privileges, whilst those dear girls were wanting necessaries—but their days of distress are waxing short, that is a comfort,” said the good neighbour to herself.

## CHAPTER LXVIII.

After a time, Helen half opened her blue eyes, and saw a pair of dark ones look kindly into them. She had been dreaming of such, so she closed her own again, and for a short time again slumbered; but, as Mrs. Palmer had predicted, at her usual time she really awoke, roused herself to life, and was aware that it had many cares for her, though she knew not exactly their nature. Impressions of a painful character, blended with sweet and dreamy sensations, every instant vanishing into thin air, never to be recalled, floated around her.

But again the eyes were on her. She put up her hand to shade her own, when a gentle voice said, "You are, I trust, much better now?"

"Where am I?—what is the matter?" cried Helen, starting to her feet, and looking wildly, as if unconscious why she had a cause for shame and sorrow, yet certain one existed, and her eloquent blood rushed to the pale cheeks it had so long



deserted, whilst she covered her face with her hands.

“ Surely you do not wish to hide your face from one who has watched you so long, and with such deep interest as I have, Miss Helen ? ”

“ My lord, I do not know how I have happened to be here, and to find myself alone, and to be told I have been sleeping. It is very strange, very shocking ! but, indeed, I could not help it. ”

“ No, you could not help fainting : a painful circumstance occurred at home, which was too much for you, and you dropped senseless in the library. Mrs. Palmer and I carried you here, and brought you to life, though not quite to your senses ; and, most happily, you dropped asleep, and I took a book and watched you, at the bidding of our dear friend, whose housekeeper has come in repeatedly, to put a shawl over you, to light the fire, and so on. I have been a faithful guardian, my sweet Helen ; you must not hide your face from *me*. ”

“ But where is Mrs. Palmer, dear Lord Meersbrook, and what time is it ? I fear mamma will be angry. ”

“ No, she herself desired you might remain till after lunch-time, which is two. At *one* I am going

out with Arthur, on a most important errand, so that my present moments are very, *very* precious; allow me to lead you to the fire — you shake with cold. My sweet, *sweet* girl, are you again poorly?”

“No, my lord; but please not to use such words — they are not proper.”

“They are, upon my honour, for I love you sincerely, Helen, and have long loved you — perhaps even longer than Arthur has loved Georgiana. But Lady Anne’s conduct to *him* checked *me*, and I made a resolution that his happiness should precede mine. Her recantation gave me liberty and life; but, before I could reach you, he became (as you know) either lost or in imminent danger. You are aware, I am sure, from the feelings of your own kind heart, that whilst my brother was so situated happiness was a stranger to my bosom, and the very sight of dear Arthur will have told you how much I have suffered since God in his mercy enabled me to save him.”

“I did not see Mr. Hales, *indeed* I did not. I am very sorry, but I saw nobody; I heard dear Mr. Palmer’s voice, I remember, and ——”

“And you saw *me*?” said Lord Meersbrook, with solicitude amounting to agony.

“ *I did see you*, my lord. I saw you, and felt glad, and sorry, and so *ashamed* ——”

“ Shame ! banish the word — it was never made for one so pure and good as thee, my angel — my long-loved, precious Helen.”

Mrs. Palmer’s rap was heard ; it was low and considerate, but it was double.

“ Will you accept my letters ? — will you answer them ?—will you ——”

How many petitions were crowded in that brief space we know not ; but, whilst the good old lady “ proceeded gingerly” through the hall, words, and looks, and blushes had passed which bound two fond hearts, two noble and virtuous spirits, to each other ; and, the moment Mrs. Palmer had entered and closed the door, Helen threw herself on her bosom, exclaiming,

“ Oh ! my friend, my more than mother, help me to thank God—I am so, *so* happy.”

“ Leave us, my dear Frederic, your brother and Palmy are coming. Tell Richard to have the door open ; this dear child is so nervous, a breath, a sound will overdo her.”

Lord Meersbrook obeyed ; but he cast a “ lingering, longing look behind,” which was answered by

an assurance that she would soon be better ; and in another minute he was heard to drive off with his brother and Mr. Palmer.

“It is all quite right, I see, dear Helen. That which I have long wished, and sometimes hoped, has come to pass. I may truly say, ‘I have seen the travail of my soul, and am satisfied;’ but I must have no more faintings, nor crying either ; the men are all vain enough, my dear, even the very best of them, and mustn’t be led to suppose you love ’em too well. Your mamma used to twit poor Georgiana with her love, and call it *indecent*, which was a cruel word, and could never apply to any one of you dear creatures ; but Dr. Gregory, whom every body read in my time, does say ‘a woman should never allow a man to know the extent of her regard.’”

“Dear Mrs. Palmer, I never shall do that by Lord Meersbrook, for it is boundless.”

“Well, well,” said the old lady, “I can do no good, I see, with advice ; but I must get you something of more use ;” and she rang the bell for a cup of chocolate, then sent her up stairs to wash the traces of tears away, and make her hair a little tidy.

“But who is with poor mamma besides Fanchette ?”

“I have sent her in a very nice woman—my late maid, Mary Ball that was. As to ma’mself, she has run away — a very good thing, in my opinion, if she hasn’t taken more than enough with her — and I have engaged a nurse for the night, and positively bargained that you shall have a whole night’s rest, so make your mind at ease, and go and do as I tell you.”

When Helen was quite alone, she sat down to look back on the miraculous change in her situation, for such it really appeared, and then she knelt down to thank the Great Bestower. Her spirits were composed, her frame refreshed; she found time for every thing, and was descending the stairs, when a carriage stopped at the door. Just as she reached the bottom step, a pair of long thin arms were thrown around her, her cheek was kissed, and Arthur’s voice, in its most joyful tones, exclaimed,

“I have got a lift for every man of them. The king’s a sailor himself, God bless him, and he knows what’s what; but we’re off in one hour, or I shall be sent for, and choused out of the election. The present excuse is, that which is made to the sultan, before whom no one can appear *uncloathed*, that I am not fit to be seen by a king, and barely so by his subjects.”

“But what will be done for you, *yourself*, Mr. Hales?” said Mrs. Palmer, earnestly.

“Every thing that my mamma elect can desire—tell her so, dear Helen, and pardon my rudeness; but you looked so like Georgiana, I couldn’t help it, for I knew she would be so glad to hear my brave fellows would be considered properly.”

“So am I very glad,” said Helen, but she looked so *very sorry*, that Lord Meersbrook now thought his brother had done wisely to avoid wounding the feelings of Georgiana by allowing her to see him; since, although every day made an improvement, it was evident, from her sister’s looks, much more was required.

He felt it hard, very hard, to be torn away from Helen “just as his wooing days begun;” but there was no leaving Arthur, and Arthur was impatient to see his friends and share in the election bustle; and so much were his spirits renovated already, that his labour of love must be continued—besides, he could write, explain all, say all, or, at least, a part of all which was welling up in his heart as a fountain overflowing with love, pity, esteem, and confidence.

Little was said, during lunch, by any one but

Arthur, who expressed a very great desire to call on Lady Anne, and tell her that himself and his fortunes were improving; but this was strongly opposed by Mrs. Palmer, who said she was sure an invalid, in so weak a state, had had quite as much to bear as could be borne in one day, from the circumstances which took place in the morning, and professed an intention of going home with Helen, when the travellers had set off, in order to prosecute inquiries as to Fanchette's honesty, or rather her extent of being dishonest.

“As Helen is not here,” said Mr. Palmer, “I may say I shall be very glad if the jade has fleeced her lady to the bones.”

“Fie, fie,” said Mrs. Palmer, “I am sure you wish no such thing.”

“Fie, fie, say I; it is hard enough for the young to be stripped to the bones, I can tell you; therefore, never desire it for the old—I pity poor Lady Anne for her sickness and her poverty. I admire her for her conduct to myself, and, while I've a crust in the locker, she shall have half of it, I swear.”

“Her conduct to *yourself*, Mr. Hales!—Why, didn't she refuse you in the most positive manner,

in the hope of wheedling Lord Wentworthdale into marriage with Georgiana, though the girl's heart might be broken in the operation, at the very time when you were a better match than she, that is, *the mother*, had a right to expect?"

"She explained that away entirely, Mr. Palmer—*entirely*. At the time the old Marquis went there so much, it was to see Lady Anne *herself*. She as good as said so in her letter to my grandfather—of course, as it was a delicate subject, she could not be explicit, you know; but she told us, positively, 'that a malicious report, tending to criminate Lieutenant Hales in her eyes, as a mother, though not, perhaps, in those of the gay world, had been the *true* cause of her refusal. That reason she did not choose to mention at the time, as it might injure me in the eyes of my venerable relatives (so it would, you know), but that having most providentially—yes! *providentially* discovered that the person alluded to was Lieutenant Halls, of a quite different ship, she now came forward to do me justice—to declare my personal character was as respectable in her sight as my family connections and my noble profession—yes! she said *noble* profession, and—"



“ And what besides ?” said Mr. Palmer, who had exhibited extraordinary contortions of countenance all the while Arthur was speaking, accompanied by a sound from his tongue, on the roof of his mouth, resembling the clacking of a mill—“ what besides, my good fellow ?”

“ I don’t remember any more exact words, but those I will swear to, for I read them over and over again, and I confess that they inspired me with a great regard for Lady Anne. I remember, very well, how angry she made me in this very house ; and that I might call her an old cat, and talk nonsense, as young men will ; but I have been properly sobered since then, Mr. Palmer, and I can see clearly, now, how much a sensible woman might fear for a daughter’s happiness in marrying a man ill provided for and *bad* into the bargain.”

The clacking ceased, yet Mr. Palmer made no answer ; and as, in point of fact, each party wished to prolong the conversation, though neither were cognizant of the other’s reasons, which were in both to give Lord Meersbrook a few moments’ conversation with Helen, whom each, by a glance, had seen softly drawn into the library, “ the sailor” seized the opportunity to go on.

“As to Lady Anne being in the scrape she was in, this morning, I think nothing of that—nothing at all—I have known as brave fellows as ever stepped between stem and stern have plenty of debts; worthy creatures, that would have shared their last shilling not only with a messmate but an enemy, who couldn’t move for their creditors; and I won’t say that I shouldn’t have been liable to get into a bad berth, myself, with those kind of people (indeed I did so, to a slight degree, when I went out first), if it had not been for my father. ‘Arthur,’ said he, when he paid up the bills, ‘I expect you never to buy a thing again, as long as you live, without paying for it; in that case, you will never buy any thing you can’t afford, and you will never have a *creditor*, nor be in a situation unbecoming a Hales.’ He said a good deal more I don’t remember, so I *promised*, and many a time since have I rejoiced that I did; but poor Lady Anne mightn’t be taught in her youth, you know, and bad habits are sad things. I look upon her as exceedingly to be pitied.”

The clacking was renewed, for it was the only possible way in which the performer could get rid of “pitied! be d—d!” which sprung to his lips,

and were even read upon them by his wife so legibly, that, in order to check the sound, she interposed with—

“Much to be pitied, in some particulars, certainly! Very much, indeed!”

Mr. Palmer suddenly changed the undefinable sound, into a loud “whew!—w—!” which might have been followed by a Shandean lillabullera, if Arthur, who had been looking earnestly at the four horses awaiting them, had not turned round from the window, and added gravely—

“Of one thing I am certain, that if Lady Anne Granard had offered to sell me a wife, which is done, not only in Egypt, but the most civilized countries in Asia (and must, therefore, be an ancient and wise custom), I would certainly have sold out my last shilling to buy Georgiana. On the contrary, poor, dear creature, she only ——”

“Please, sir, my lord is in the carriage,” said Lord Meersbrook’s valet; and, turning to Mrs. Palmer, added, “my lord begs his kindest regards, madam, and hopes you and Mr. Palmer will excuse him; he will write to-night.”

“Oh! yes, yes, Wilkins! Our love, and we wish him a good journey,” said the lady; and

Arthur, having pressed a hand of each, and fled, Mr. Palmer burst into a loud reiterated fit of laughter, which brought the tears to his eyes ; and it is probable, had any other persons been present in his dining-room, during the last few minutes, they might have laughed also, for nothing could display better acting than the anxious pantomime of Mrs. Palmer, beseeching him to restrain his sentiments, and his extraordinary difficulty in complying with her request, increasing every moment, in consequence of the perfectly unsuspecting sincerity of Arthur. At length, seeing her steal out of the room, he checked himself, to say—

“ Stop a moment, Dame Palmer. What in the name of wonder could induce you, of all people in the world, to aid and assist the old woman’s humbug, by preventing me from showing her up to that honest lad properly ?”

“ Because you could have done no good by it, and might have done great harm ; it is much better, surely, that her future sons-in-law should think well of her than otherwise. Two of them know her thoroughly ; and to them nothing can be said, or need be said ; but the others had better remain in ignorance, beyond what is eventually necessary for them to know.”

“For what possible reason? I have no notion that honest people should be imposed upon by the deceptious and selfish, the malicious and cold-hearted.”

“You may *not*, but I *have*, when the innocent and amiable will alone bear the reproach and punishment. I can’t bear the idea of these two young men throwing Lady Anne’s faults in the teeth of Helen and Georgiana, dear, affectionate children, who love both you and me, Palmer, so dearly.”

“God bless the woman! what nonsense she does talk! neither of ’em would think of such a thing.”

“No, they would not *think* of such a thing, I grant (noble-hearted creatures as we know them to be); but they might do it in their pets, you know. Does not every man (and woman, too) say things, in their anger, they never intended to say?”

“But those girls, whom I certainly *do* love, are not passionate, and won’t provoke their husbands to retaliate.”

“That they will not; they are sweet-tempered by nature, and obedience has been the habit of their whole lives; but still husbands will be husbands; the best of men are but men, and I would spare ——”

“ Well, well, get along, goody ; I’ll spare you to the damsel, who is piping her eye in the library.”

“ If it were not such a confounded long way into Yorkshire, especially the northern part of the West Riding,” said Mr. Palmer, seating himself before the fire, and soliloquizing, “ I would certainly follow this electioneering party ; for, whatever the candidate may be, and whatever the people he represents may be, unquestionably he musters some of the oddest fish, in the shape of friends, a similar occasion ever invested a man with ; they are, in the first place, all ‘ too honest by half,’ of the thorough Cincinnatus breed ; and I greatly fear the Yorkists won’t bite at gudgeons, for every body knows them to be a deep race.”

The result of his cogitations was a determination to set out that very evening in the mail ; and this resolution he announced to the ladies in the library.

“ It will be quite too much for you, Mr. Palmer ; you have been keeping company with boys, till you think you can do as they do. A mail coach is fatigue enough of itself, without carrying a man into the middle of more.”

“ But I mean to rest a whole day at my cousin Palmer’s, at Nayworth Hall ; and you know what

excellent people they both are, and how glad they will be to see me."

"But what will become of *me*," said Helen, "without one creature I can look to? If you knew, Mr. Palmer, what I felt in wanting *you*, and what good your voice did me, you wouldn't, couldn't, think of leaving me at this trying time."

"Well, well; I must give it up, I see. A pretty fool I am, now some honest fellows have taken away the plague of my own daughters, to be cozened by those of a man I never saw in my life, and a woman ——"

"We are going to see this moment," said Mrs. Palmer, significantly.

## CHAPTER LXIX.

On reaching Lady Anne's apartment, which was now the drawing-rooms of the house, into which she had introduced an elegant French bed, both her daughter and neighbour literally shuddered at the extraordinary sight before them. Lady Anne occupied a sofa in the larger room, her head supported by many pillows, her face perfectly pallid (for it may be recollected that her toilette had not been assisted by the initiated), and her eyes beaming with unnatural lustre, all around her by turns attracting her gaze, as she had ordered her cook and her new nurse to cause every article of her dress which they could find in her wardrobe, drawers, and boxes, to be brought together for her inspection. She now eagerly demanded Helen's attention to the subject, saying that "hitherto she had only missed a cloak and a tippet, which the servant said were worn by the supposed culprit, when she went away."



After a long investigation, it turned out that Georgiana was the only loser; a box, into which Mrs. Palmer (when in her kindness she prepared for the poor girl's hasty departure) had laid the shabby things not proper to be taken, but which in itself was handsome-looking, being the only prize Fanchette had purloined. This being ascertained, Mrs. Palmer eagerly assisted Helen in folding and carrying away the finery which so painfully contrasted with the attenuated form and altered countenance of her who had been the wearer so very lately of these splendid draperies, on each of which she still cast "a longing, lingering look," as it was carried away, and so far as her strength admitted, dwelt on its history and good qualities, thereby enumerating properties in colour and form, and secrets in the art of beauty, of a nature to edify her neighbour, who was absolutely astonished to find that things she had her whole life long never deemed worth her consideration, or supposed that others did, should have employed the mind and occupied the heart of a woman to whom nature had imparted a more than usual capacity and acuteness.

When, to the regret of the patient, but the relief of those around her, the world of frippery had

departed, and Helen, having deposited all safely, returned with the keys in her hand, Lady Anne said, with earnest anxiety,

“ Pray accept the custody of those keys, Mrs. Palmer ; French servants are, in my opinion, less subject to literally robbing than English ones. Fanchette was an importunate beggar and a petty depredator ; but I don't think she would have made the bold effort she did, if she had not been pressed. As I must necessarily have strangers about me, after what has happened, I ought to be careful ; so you shall take my keys, and my casket, too, my kind friend, until——”

There was a pause, and the heart of the good listener beat more quickly as her eyes filled with unwonted drops. The invalid has at length ascertained her *true* state ; what more may she not say relative to those eternal concerns we are so foolishly forbidden to mention !

“ Until,” resumed the patient, “ I am better, and the month of May is over.”

The heart of Mrs. Palmer sank within her ; and although grieved to leave Helen, whose looks distinctly said, “ I, too, am disappointed,” she yet rose to go, taking with her, from the hands of

Lady Anne, the deposit she had spoken of, though it was with great difficulty that her feeble, trembling hands turned the key of her writing-desk, and sought out the drawer which contained the treasured casket.

It is the most deplorable of all spectacles humanity can exhibit, when the body has survived the mind, when health and strength remain though intelligence has departed, and reason and memory die, while life continues. To see that god-like creature who was made "but a little lower than the angels," apparently cast down beneath the level of the brutes (as in derangement or paralysis), is that which we justly deprecate *more* than all other afflictions; but it is also an awful and affecting sight, when the mind evidently is too strong for the body, and is ever compelling the fragile clay which enshrines it beyond its powers. It is an appalling thing to see the immortal spark illumining the already half-perished, half-existent partner of its long career, urging it beyond the powers of its nature, and apparently continuing to tenant its earthly tabernacle, in defiance of the laws which govern it. That this was the case with Lady Anne for some weeks, was the impression of all

around her; her indomitable spirit appeared to sustain her by its own energies, independently of the common aids of life, for she scarcely imbibed the smallest portion of sustenance, appeared to have attained the power of commanding sleep according to her will, and sunk into it after every exertion made in speaking, so as to recruit her strength for a new trial. There was some reason to believe she did foresee her end, for faculties so clear as her's could not be blind to it, but she had made up her mind for some time not to *own* that her illness could be fatal, and she abode by the declaration.

Nevertheless, on the day following, to Helen's great relief, she consented to remain in bed, by that means husbanding her little strength, and enabling her the better to attend to those letters from her daughters in Yorkshire, which at this time were the great points of interest to which the sands of life were devoted.

When these had been duly commented on, she now said to Helen—

“When cook came up with my mouthful of chocolate, she told me nothing could exceed the kindness of young Hales yesterday, in sending away those vulgar people. Do you know any thing about it, Helen?”

“ I know that nothing could exceed his desire to do you good, mamma ; and when he came from the Admiralty, and had got news he thought would please you, it was all Mrs. Palmer could do to prevent him coming to tell you. He said you would not mind *him*, for he was only a shadow : he is always joking about his appearance.”

“ I am glad he did not come, for he might have joked about *mine* ; and remember, I now tell you once for all that, unless Lord Rotheles should come up, I will not see any human being beside Mrs. Palmer and Georgiana, until—until I have grown more *embonpoint* ; this is beside the subject. I want to know who actually paid the money, yesterday ; was it the sailor ?”

“ I don't know, mamma ; but most likely Mr. Palmer.”

“ Why not the sailor, if he were so much concerned ? He must have had money in his pocket when he was setting out on a long journey.”

“ Yes, to be sure—I don't know—I can't tell, only I thought——”

“ What did you think ? Why are you looking so like a fool ?”

“ I—I thought, mamma, Lord Meersbrook found the money, perhaps, when they were travelling.”

“ Most probably he does, and so you blush for *him*, knowing that he would prevent the sailor from helping me. I dare say you are right; 'tis a very common course between persons so circumstanced.”

“ Indeed, *indeed*, mamma, I neither thought nor meant such a thing for a moment. Meersbrook is quite as generous as Arthur, and loves you as much, I don't doubt; but as your letter was in favour of his brother, he may not say as much and yet feel *more*.”

“ I would advise you to feel *less*, and to say nothing at all.”

Poor Helen would have given the world for courage to kneel by the bedside of her mother, and confess that on this subject she had a right to feel much—a right to claim her mother's congratulations on her own principles, a right to hope that her promised destiny should solace her mother's melancholy situation.

But fluttered and timid, the moment passed by, and the next saw Lady Anne in one of those happy slumbers we have already adverted to; but it will not surprise the larger portion of our readers (for we apprehend that will be the young) if they are

told that an image stole between the sleeper and herself, beaming with what she considered a celestial smile, and whispering words such as "Helen, sweet Helen," "My long-loved Helen," and other similar murmurings. These day-dreams are never to be whispered to the worldly, and but seldom to the wise; but Heaven help the man who never uttered or heard them, nor be pity withheld from him that has forgotten them, a case by no means uncommon with the sterner sex. Hard indeed is the lot of woman when she loses the memories of such moments, for she has lost her *all!*

It was not long after Lady Anne's awaking, that she began to display the temper which eventually led her to receive poor Georgiana, who arrived that evening, in the manner we have already mentioned; had she thought that Arthur Hales had advanced the money instead of Mr. Palmer, his betrothed would have been received with more suavity, if not more kindness; because she felt certain her neighbour would be paid *some time*, and she was certain Arthur *never* would. The ruling passion was strong in death.

At length, to their infinite joy and relief, the sisters were dismissed to bed at the same time; Geor-

giana, in consideration of her journey, and Helen, of her late indisposition; but it was done at the express request of Mrs. Palmer, whom it would not be wise to deny, since she brought her housemaid to share the cares of the nurse, and because the invalid had made up her mind to turn a deaf ear to all possible hints on the liquidation of the latest debt. “ They managed me once, but shall never do it again—*never!*”

With very different feelings did her liberated daughters mutually give and receive those sweet communications which were to them the life of life; so much had they to hear and to tell, that, despite of fatigue, sleep fled; but neither were sorry, since it not only enabled them to hear of things which laid up a store of pleasant thoughts on which many a gloomy hour might lean for comfort, but also to step down from time to time, and see how the long night waned away with their languishing parent. Her present state proved Helen’s words were right, that a few hours of irritability had done her good, for she had slept well, and was free from cough and fever, therefore, they also could sleep in peace.

The following morning, Mr. and Mrs. Penrhyn came early, the gentleman to bid adieu, as he was



setting out for Yorkshire ; but neither were permitted to see Lady Anne. As they came in a coach, they brought the two little grandsons, to the great delight of their young aunts, who knew not which most to admire and love. When Charles had set out, Helen was permitted to accompany her sister and the little boys to call on Sir Edward Hales and Mrs. Margaret, and again Helen felt her secret burdensome, for, although she was received with much affection as well as courtesy, yet she was conscious that she was without the pale of her own privileges, for Georgiana was “ *our* Georgiana,” and the “ *dear* child,” whereas, she was “ Miss Granard,” or “ dear young lady,” at best, and it seemed to be somewhat of a hardship to find her a substitute for her they considered *bona fide* their own. Another day removed her difficulties.

“ Only one letter,” said Lady Anne ; “ what can they be thinking of ? Lord Meersbrook could give them franks. Not that they can tell one any thing of consequence till to-morrow. Take off the cover and give me my glass ; it seems short, and I can manage to read it.”

Georgiana took the letter out of Helen’s hand, and placed it in that of her mother, perceiving that

the former looked more like "the statue that enchants the world" than any living lady of her acquaintance.

Lady Anne read it carefully through, then turned the fly-leaf, but seeing nothing on the other side, read it through again, and next asked for the envelope; having examined the seal and the post-mark, she put it into Georgiana's hand, saying, "Do you know that handwriting?"

"It is Lord Meersbrook's, mamma. I saw him write often at Bath."

"You are sure it is not *your* sailor hoaxing me?"

"Arthur Hales would not do such a thing for both the Indies; besides, his handwriting is a great deal better than this, I assure you, dear mamma."

"Most likely—it is always the case with younger brothers."

Lady Anne was perfectly silent, and seemed plunged in deep thought. May we hope that her heart was ascending to Heaven in thankfulness that this only remaining object of her solicitude was so happily (and what in her eyes was better), so magnificently disposed of? Alas! it could only be of

earthly courts she was thinking, for the first words she said to Helen on this the most important business of her life were these :

“ I suppose you expected I should receive this letter, telling me the welcome news that you are chosen by Lord Viscount Meersbrook ; of course you are exceedingly elated (for that is but natural) with the circumstance of taking precedence of your elder sister, more especially as the time is probably not distant when you will both walk in the coronation train of a lovely young queen — but, Helen, remember what I am now going to say.”

“ Yes, dear mamma,” said the fluttered yet happy girl, dropping on her knees, and looking earnestly into the eyes of her mother.

“ You must never forget for a moment, that your sister Mary is the wife of a baron of eleven descents, and that your viscount husband has but two ; therefore, never treat your sister with even a shade of *hauteur*.”

“ *Hauteur* ! God forbid I should treat any human being any way proudly ; but my dear, dear sister Mary, the example of my life, I must always be proud of honouring and of following, so far as I am able.”

“Those who live longest see most. Ten years make a difference in many women.”

“It will make no difference in Helen, I am sure,” said Georgiana.

“*You* are sure! what can *you* possibly know, or expect to know, of the feelings of a woman of rank? content yourself with your lot in life, which will give you a title ere long, I doubt not, that will set you above two sisters who have none, though it places you below the other two. Besides, you are romantic, and may grow more so, in which case every want and wish can be supplied to you by considering your sailor husband in the light of a hero. I can assure you, Georgiana, for your comfort, that to my own knowledge the late Duchess of Wellington was as much attached to him (who was indeed her heart’s chosen one) when he was Sir Arthur Wellesley, as she was when, covered with the jewels he had won, she saw him divide the homage of the world with the sovereign who thought he could never do enough for him. Don’t allow yourself, therefore, to be ashamed of Arthur.”

“Ashamed! surely that is impossible; I am more likely to err the other way a great deal.”

“You have not seen your sisters’ carriages roll

along, passing you and half a dozen curly-headed brats squabbling on the pavement ; but I don't wish to distress you before your time."

Poor Georgiana certainly looked not a little discomfited ; her mother's words seemed spoken in such "prophetic strain," that she felt as if they must be realized ; and, though one or two curly-headed urchins, very like her little nephews, and yet more like Arthur, was something rather to love than fear, *sic*, all "squabbling on the pavement," was awful ; but the rich sisters' carriages rolling near her added no dark shade to the picture. "If they see me," thought Georgiana, "they will stop and help me ; and if they do not, I shall know they are happy, and that will be a certain comfort : nothing can make us cease to love each other."

About two hours after this, Helen was summoned to the dining-parlour, for Sir Edward had also had a letter ; and, if its subject had not been so pleasant and so prolific as forming matter of discourse, he and his sister would have been here some time ago, for their hearts were full of Helen, as well as longing to see Georgiana, who ought undoubtedly to have visited them ere now, and certainly would, had she been permitted. It is unnecessary to say more,

than that their kindness and warm welcome of Helen, as a future daughter of the family, put the seal upon her happiness, and made her strong to endure those daily thorns, which were still plentifully strewed in her path, even by the mother who never rested till she had informed all her friends, directly or indirectly, “of the splendid and *suitable* union awaiting her *favourite* daughter Helen.”

No one who knew Lady Anne doubted that the daughter who made the best match would be the favourite ; but every one unluckily remembered that Louisa enjoyed that situation from her fifteenth birthday to that of her marriage, though neither herself nor any other person recollected that she was the better for it, save in the gift of a bonnet, wherewith to catch the gazing baronet she had the virtue to disapprove, and the good sense to refuse.

## CHAPTER LXX.

Although events are increasing upon us in Welbeck Street — for the baronet has written to Lord Rotheles on the subject of Helen's marriage with his heir, and dilated much (considering that it was somewhat of a task to write at all) on his perfect satisfaction in the union, and his anticipation of great happiness arising from it, and the earl being absolutely delighted by the news; and, although by no means free from gouty symptoms, determines to come immediately to town, yet we must follow those in the first place from whom we have been separated — not long, perhaps, in point of time, but very long as to the course of our memoirs.

The first transit of our travellers was to Granard Park, where they were most hospitably received by the present owner, not only because they were of his party in politics, but because he really wished to show every possible attention to the offspring of a relative he loved and pitied, so far as could possibly

be expected in a successor with a large and promising family. His kindness made them as much at home as possible ; and Isabella had soon a kind of childish pleasure in finding the place where she kept rabbits, and in seeking the little gardens, still in the hands of children ; but on the mind of Lady Allerton a far different emotion prevailed. In such a place she had first learned to ride ; and, whilst she was instructed by the groom, dear papa, in his anxiety, stood by to watch her ; in that avenue she had accompanied his daily walk when he was unable to go farther ; and by that elm-tree she had watched for his returning carriage when he was too weak to walk at all. Her recollections of this nature were fully shared by Mr. Glentworth (ever prone to acute feeling) ; and he, too, soon became a wanderer into the park, where he might recall the early observations made by his love on the sorrows of a friend he held especially dear, because friends were at that time few. Whoever had taken the pains to observe these parties thus suffering from the renewal of sorrows long past would have learned the important lesson of never flying from the scene of our afflictions, but bearing as best we may that which God has appointed in the place where we received it.



So soon, however, as their arrival was bruited through the country, the pains of memory were exchanged for the troubles of business. Numerous families of great local importance made calls of ceremony or friendship—some even from the immediate environs of Keenborough; and Mr. Granard introduced to Glentworth an attorney of importance in the country, who desired to do him service, and was well able to do it as an agent. This gentleman (for such he was, however strange ladies who class country attorneys with vulgar pettifoggers in fashionable novels may deem the assertion) was the son of a brave officer, but, with several other children, left scantily provided for, and owed his present respectable situation in the first place to the kindness of the late Mr. Granard. His “restless gratitude” had often sought wherein to manifest itself—but in vain till now; but, on the first blush of this affair, he as eagerly sought employment as others sought to give it to *him*; and, well remembering Mr. Glentworth as a youth whose countenance had, like his own, been

“Sicklied o’er with the pale cast of thought,”

he became the more inclined to rejoice in his prosperity, and to forward his views.

To love and praise poor Granard, was the way to the candidate's heart, not less than to prove the speaker had one of his own; and Mr. Wigram and he soon understood each other, as good men generally do, and when Mr. Glentworth inquired whether the chance of being chosen was equivalent to the trouble and expense before him, he felt a certainty of hearing the simple truth in reply.

“I really think it is, or I would say go back at once, and let your handsome, inefficient opponent walk over the course, for beyond his vote he will never do either good or harm. He is a cadet of the noble family whose heir vacates the seat from the demise of Lord M——, and is in the army (which, perhaps, gives me a trifling predilection in his behalf, as a gentleman, though not as a senator); in fact, one of those persons from which the Reform Bill intended to free the country, but which it has not yet done, nor, perhaps, will do very hastily.”

“I suppose the borough is radical, like most others?”

“Perfectly rabid, but accompanied with the usual symptoms, ‘one word for the country, and ten for myself,’ in general; but there are some

sturdy, honest fellows amongst them. Our humans (as Jonathan says) are in fact as respectable as most towns can pretend to, for the two clergymen of one of our churches are active as well as good; and we have a considerable body of Wesleyan Methodists, 'staunch men and true;' and our wealthier tradesmen are Tories to a man; but these are the sacred *few*, when compared to the *many* pot-walloppers of Keenborough; and, like the orator of old, we must look to *action*, i. e., investigation of circumstances, and attention to persons, for our success. I have secured boys enow to hurrah for the ribbon of green, and I think we can raise a song or two in praise of the green member, and the green ocean."

"*Green member!* surely, Mr. Wigram, you will not assign such a sobriquet to me? I would rather return to town within the hour."

"I see, I see! 'twas a vile phrase, and must be avoided; but what can be done? our opponents are blue, and have been since the Revolution. If we had been pink, you might be laughed at as a blushing boy; if purple, pointed out as a votary of Bacchus; and orange denotes ultra opinions, to which you object: the fact is, Mr. Glentworth, a

man who mounts the Hustings, must not allow himself to be sore-boned, or he invites his opponents to ‘touch him on the raw,’ not in the exercise of their malice, but their power; an election is a saturnalia.”

Mr. Glentworth assented to the truth of the observations, but he so nearly repented engaging in the affair at all, from understanding his own mental temperament, that it required the exertions of all his friends to counteract the weak point in a strong mind. They knew not that it originally was implanted by the disgraceful conduct of his father, and the consequent sorrows of his mother, and in their ignorance communicated a happy influence; in the mob of Keenborough his history must be unknown, since it was so to Lord Allerton and Mr. Wigram; *years* sometimes have an advantage—his sad story was forgotten.

They removed to the town on which they designed to practice, and Mary and Isabella, accompanied by their cousin Granard, and Sir Henry Scriven, an old friend of their father’s, began to make a series of calls on the gentry, requesting their “votes and interest,” which, for a while, they found pretty generally accorded, for they were now among

the *few* of whom Mr. Wigram had spoken. He considered that himself had better become sole conductor of the ladies to many other voters, leaving the gentlemen to pursue their system with the respectable shopkeepers, to whose tender mercies we consign them.

They entered a long, hilly, irregular street, the houses of which had been erected "in firm despite of beauty and of taste;" nevertheless, they accommodated the progeny of labour well, and were, in general, kept so clean and comfortable, as to attract the admiration of Lady Allerton; but the candidate's lady had seen a more attractive object. Two fine boys, each about two years old, had come out from either side the way, and were embracing in the middle of the street. They reminded her so much of little Frank and his cousin, that she fancied even their features resembled them; and, darting forwards, she caught the one she deemed most like her own, and kissed him fondly, for his face and hands were clean, and his clothing decent, though coarse; his mother was at the door, and he flew eagerly in terror to her arms, on which, Isabella said to the woman, apologetically,

"I thought he was like my own little boy,

(though he is bigger,) so I kissed him ; but I have got some sugarplums in my bag ; I hope he will forgive me."

As she spoke, she entered the house, and took some comfits from her reticule, which made immediate peace with herself and the heir, whose father, a well-looking young blacksmith, who had just stepped in from his workshop behind to look at the quality ladies, observed,

"My Tom's like a many more hereabouts, marm, he's all for what he can get ; you're a seek-in for votes, I takes it, so you'll soon find that out."

"Are there many people here who have no work ? I mean people who are in poverty, against their own will and endeavours."

"Yes, marm, I know three families in right down misery, hard-working creatures, too, as ever were born, in this very street."

"Will you lead me to them ? or will you take them help from me ? you have an honest face ; I am sure I can trust you."

"I'll show you where they live, but I don't advise you to go into the first, for the fever it is that has pulled 'em down, and as you've a little lad o' yer own, it winnot be proper."

“No, I dare not go; but you will take them these four sovereigns.”

“Why, for sure I will; but I’m afeard James’ll not live to vote.”

“I didn’t think about voting, I had forgot all about it;” said the fair canvasser, with all the simplicity of truth; “but there are two others in great distress; take them each a sovereign; when I have got more they shall have more; but I must not stay now, my companions are leaving me.”

“We are none of us rich in this street, marm;” said the woman.

“Nor many of us to call *poor*, we are all pretty farrantly;” added the man.

“I am sure *you* are not, for every thing is so nice and clean, and you are happy in each other; and little Tommy! he is riches enough — like my Frank, who is every thing to me, and your feelings are the same as mine, so I expect you to give my husband a vote, without teasing you or affronting you by unlawful offers.”

“I scorns all people that do such things,” said the husband, “but I makes no promises till the time comes.”

As he spoke, he left the house, and Isabella,

placing four sovereigns in the wife's hand, said — “ These are to be put into the saving-bank for Tommy ; they are not your's, remember, but *his* ; so take care of them.”

She had been lucky at her outset, and she continued to be so, for her few sovereigns for the sick had been well spent ; but those were not the only cases demanding pity and help, and it cannot be supposed that many were not venal and craving, that she was not frequently thrown back on her mother's words, and might have been so, on her mother's conduct, had she known it, but she was of an age to laugh at peccadilloes her graver *sposo* might have viewed with sterner eyes, or with more shrinking disgust ; and Mr. Wigram began to be tolerably satisfied with the result of a week's residence at the borough, although many had refused to promise, and a proportion of those who had promised were doubtful ; so much was the general sense of the lower orders against Conservatives, that, although many also protested against the Whigs, their opponents, he had great reason to doubt whether they would accept of either. It was well that both parties should put a good face on the affair, in order to prevent a third starting



up in the shape of a spouting pedagogue, or a reasoning shoemaker, either of whom might carry the day by a *coup-de-main*, and both of whom, whatever might be their merits or demerits, were considered incorruptible, therefore remained untempted, for worlds would not have induced Glentworth to tamper with principle, or unsettle conscience.

It was in the forenoon of the day preceding the election that Lord Meersbrook and his brother drove into the town, and were gladly hailed by Lord and Lady Allerton, who had been watching the construction of the hustings, and gladly pointed out to them the inn where they would find their friends. This circumstance informed the carpenters of the actual arrival of that friend of the elder candidate, whom they considered the latest wonder of the world, and respecting whom an interest had been awakened which would, at least, ensure that immense attendance at the hustings, which never fails to give an impetus to the proceedings. There is much of animal magnetism in all large bodies; the preaching of Peter, the hermit, which sent half Europe to the Crusades, would have taken very little effect if delivered in a parish church, to a small con-

gregation. Every newspaper had told of the sufferings and escape of the *Thetis*.

The sisters did not learn any thing painfully now respecting their mother; for the execution business was from delicacy perfectly concealed, but Arthur could not forbear giving a sufficient revelation of other matters on the *tapis* to fill their hearts with the sincerest joy. Often had each calculated on the happiness of offering a home to dear Helen when she should require one, but they could not fail to rejoice that she was likely to be so honourably situated, and blessed by a partner so singularly amiable and worthy. As, in the course of the evening, Penrhyn also arrived, and had volumes to tell the candidate and his lady, of little Frank's perfect health and wonderful accomplishments acquired during their absence, it will be readily believed that few more happy and united parties ever spent a gay evening together. They did not therefore forget that some distant ones there were "who were most dear," for Helen and Georgiana occupied a large space in the minds of the brothers, Louisa and her boy in that of Penrhyn; Frank was the world to his parents, and the Count and Lady Allerton who, with her lord, seemed more

exempt from anxiety than the rest, gave secret though suppressed sighs, for the state of her mother. Perfect happiness is not intended to be the lot of imperfect humanity. Let us take what we can get, and be thankful.

Every one concerned in this affair arose the next morning in a state of nearly equal solicitude with Mr. Glentworth, who had certainly not a quarter as much as his lady, she being as completely absorbed by it as any one in a state of sanity could well be by such a reason. She had laboured more in the good cause than he was aware, and dipped perhaps farther into his purse, though under Mr. Wigram's auspices, than he might approve, if unsuccessful; therefore every circumstance tended to make it a matter of almost distressing anxiety to her. She, nevertheless, did as her mother bade her, dressed well and looked smilingly, occupying a window canopied by green boughs, supported by green flags, from whence she gave green ribbons in abundance. Lady Allerton, similarly placed and employed, occupied the adjoining one, both ladies supported by gentlemen who had now become so interested in the affair that they exerted themselves as much as if their own life or honour depended upon its success, thus

verifying Lady Anne's assertion, that people in the country having few opportunities of experiencing excitement, generally make the most of them.

But of all who were concerned, the most anxious and active was Mr. Wigram, who, from the dawn of day, was busied with arrangements of all descriptions; and, having learnt that his opponents had expressed much surprise on finding him they had contemptuously considered only a commercial man, accompanied by two noblemen (said to be his relations), and warmly supported by Sir Henry Scriven, a baronet of much mark in the county, and a great number of gentlemen, it was his object to strengthen the impression.

Horses, carriages, music, provisions, flags, and fantoccini, whatever could sustain life, or amuse it, excite good humour and keep it up by song or sound, promise or reality; objects to charm the eye, or divert the mind, were resorted to: and, by the aid of jingling bells, bawling ballad singers, cracked trumpets and fiddles without number, before nine o'clock, when the candidates and their respective friends sat down to breakfast, and when many a barrel of old October and round of beef awaited the will of the public, Keenborough was as much alive as Smithfield at Bartlemy fair.

## CHAPTER LXXI.

It was the pleasure of Mr. Longueville, the young rival candidate, to issue from the castle of his noble relative, Lord Malhamshire, mounted on a milk-white steed, accompanied by two or three friends who sported coal-black ones. They were followed by his lordship, in a splendid carriage, drawn by six bays, in which sat that parliamentary orator who constituted not only a host in himself, but the one distinguished and experienced person, for the late member was still a very young man, placed for a short time in parliament solely by family interest, or rather by old associations, which are not easily eradicated even in parties adopting new doctrines.

Many other carriages followed, filled by Yorkshire gentlemen, forming a procession with which our friends could by no means compete, being lamentably defective in their equipages, personally considered, the candidate himself, having only the

travelling chariot bought for immediate convenience on his arrival in town; therefore he accepted a seat in the lumbering but important-looking coach of his nominee, Sir Henry Scriven, who exhibited six noble greys and two outriders, all admirably matched after the fashion of the county, and his lady had soon the satisfaction of seeing that, with their own party, Mr. Granard and his friends, her husband had considerably the longer procession, and, though not so striking in the first instance, yet no way deficient in show and consequence.

“ How I wish dear mamma could see them ! I wonder what she would say ? ”

“ She would say that, although we have not one young man equal to Mr. Longueville, perhaps, seeing Captain Hales is so altered, and looks so particularly shocking this morning, that, on the whole, our men cut down the other party all to nothing. ”

“ I never saw Glentworth look so well since we were married, it is certain ; but I can see a great change since then. ”

“ Because you make yourself too anxious : he looks very well — so does Allerton ; Meersbrook is

a perfect rival in person to the candidate; Mr. Granard, a noble-looking man, very like papa; and the Count a perfect picture—a Titian stepped out of his frame. If mamma is right ‘that person and manner carry the day with the mob,’ I am certain we shall do.”

“But they are all new to their work—all sadly too modest,” said the candidate’s wife, anxiously.

“So were you and I *new*, Isabella, and certainly modest as women ought to be, yet we have done our full share. Have no fear for the men, my dear.”

But she was very full of fears, and remained so till green ribbons were loudly vociferated for below, and, looking out, she saw Tommy’s father and a considerable body of his neighbours, for whom they were demanded; as also “seven for poor James White and his relations, whom they had carried in a great chair to the hustings.” (The sick man to whom she had sent relief.)

This party despatched, others succeeded: it appeared very plain that great numbers had indeed not made up their minds till the day arrived, leaving themselves free to choose, or to bargain, to the last. This was decidedly the case with the

religious part of the community, who did not *sell*, and made it matter of conscience how they should *give* their votes, therefore attended closely to every word spoken on either side, in order to support that party who appeared the most upright person. The mayor and the greater part of the corporation belonged to this class, and several had promised Glentworth purely because they considered his opponent too young a man for so serious an office as that of representing their reformed but still ancient borough.

Thousands now stood around that palladium of British liberty, the hustings, where, in the first place, Mr. Longueville was put in nomination and duly seconded by a noble friend. The same ceremony took place with Mr. Glentworth, who was seconded by Sir Henry Scriven; after which the mayor, who presided with great propriety and impartiality, called for the show of hands, and, the voters being very numerous, and all anxious to come within ken, an universal movement took place, a rocking of the billows, for a few moments actually alarming.

To one hand the greens far outnumbered the blues; but, on the whole, they did not appear to



preponderate, as, in the distance, many friends of the opposite party appeared to press forward. Mr. Longueville's friends, therefore, demanded a poll, which, to the great satisfaction of Mr. Glentworth, was fixed for the following morning at ten o'clock. After this, both parties returned as they came, each cheered by the loud hurrahs of their respective adherents, the number of which it was impossible to guess, as the bells were now ringing with all the force of their iron tongues, and "silence was displaced" by every possible contrivance.

Still there were words addressed to Arthur, which might be distinguished: he was "the noble captain, willing to go down with his men with the port in view," "his honour, the clammed\* sailor" — they wanted him "to speyk, and tell 'em all aboutt things;" and, this being agreed to by dumb show, the party readily followed to the respective committee-rooms of the respective candidates.

The two principal inns of Keenborough were in the market-place of the town, and joined each other at right angles. The King's Head was the best house, but the Malhamshire Arms was as well

\* Yorkshire for starved by hunger.

situated ; and, in order to give the splendid orator who was the sole strength of the blues every advantage, a temporary platform had been erected in front, and, when young Longueville alighted from his proud steed, he presented himself here before the assembled multitude as if to receive the worship of the women. Those of his friends who had prepared his speech, and had seen him con it, and heard him recite it, urged him to address the crowd, who evidently expected it. But, alas ! this effort was beyond his power — he stood “ looking delightfully with all his might,” but he could proceed no further.

His friend, a young collegian, pressed to his side, whispering, “ I have the honour ; ” and the words, “ I have the honour,” passed his lips. “ To appear before you,” followed ; but beyond “ to appear ” could not be heard, and one of the mob called out lustily—

“ We see you appear, sir, an a varry pratty figger ye cut. No lass can cast her eyes on a hansomer lad than yo are.”

Shouts of laughter followed, and the young candidate was completely *hors de combat* ; he sought and found refuge in the encircling refuge of his

vexed and pitying friends—his opponents felt for him, and were silent.

But now, at the turn formed by the market-place square, were seen preparations for the great man's address to the people, who had come, in many cases, for many miles; and whom friends and opponents were alike anxious to hear, and prepared to admire. The crowd below remained quiet and calm, as if suddenly transfixed to stone, and every outstretched head seemed to double its powers of hearing, when, stepping upon a temporary platform, the dignity of conscious power covering the defects of an awkward gait and a physical imperfection, the great man commenced, under the most favourable circumstances, the speech so ardently desired. The day was beautiful, the air balmy, the people predisposed to admire, and every topic on which the orator touched found its echo in the hearts of the great body of his hearers, for he talked of the majesty of the people, the true and only source of power—the freedom of Britons—the triumphs of their perseverance—and the necessity of exhibiting it on the present occasion. “ Their young candidate,” he said, “ had every recommendation; he had imbibed pure freedom with his mother's

milk ; he was their countryman (though hitherto not resident), and one that was

“ ————— by the lore  
Of ancient Greece, to ancient freedom warmed.”

In short, the young candidate was praised to the skies as a statesman in embryo, and the Glentworth star evidently declined, when, with a passion for satire the speaker could not control, because wont to indulge, having established his own idol on its pedestal, he proceeded to demolish its rival by a process entirely uncalled for—the opposing candidate was stigmatized as a narrow-minded man, accustomed to look on his fellow-creatures as mere machines, from which he might extract pounds, shillings, and pence, when nailed to the desk of his counting-house. “ It was true, he came before them prepared to act an amusing drama ; but not, therefore, to take a benefit—he had got two lords as walking gentlemen, a clerk of his own to take notes, an Italian conjuror, and, better than all, a skeleton harlequin, well calculated to turn a summerset, frighten an old woman, and present an irresistible begging-box to the Treasury—but still, my friends, still, I say—”

Loud peals of laughter, from his own party, had

drowned the voice of the orator some moments, but they were not re-echoed from the general crowd; on the contrary, a low, but increasing, murmur was heard, like the muttering of distant thunder, the stillness of the vast body suddenly ceased, and it soon became a number of small parties, talking earnestly and generally loudly with each other—the words, “It’s not fair,” were heard on every side. Arthur seized the moment of a comparative lull, and, stepping from the window where he was standing, with an agility only to be met with in his profession, upon the landing formed by a bay window beneath, he took up the word uttered so repeatedly; and his loud, clear voice, accustomed to brave the tempest, instantly arrested all, and produced immediate silence, as he said—

“You say well, my friends, *it is not fair*, and ‘fair play’s a jewel,’ both by land and sea. I am neither lawyer nor orator, God knows; and my only pride is that of being a British sailor. The learned gentleman who addressed you is a deep thinker, whose talent I honour, and grieve that it is united to a temper so wayward, and a malignity so acute, that he could forget the generous and

entire forbearance of his opponents, and bring each personally forward, in a supposed situation likely to render the most respectable portion of the borough (by which I mean the religious portion—those who, more especially, whether they go to church or meeting, fear God and honour the king) inimical to us. I trust they will not be so influenced; and, when I warn them not to condemn a man whose character is above suspicion, and whose talents must bear comparison with the proudest in this land of intelligence, I tell *them* and *all*, that if they lose the opportunity of securing such a mode of honouring the borough, they will repent it to the last moment of their lives.”

Shouts of applause rang through the air, certainly not in consequence of the elegance of the harangue, but simple truth goes to the heart; to which we may add, that every word was heard by every creature—whatever had been the injuries of the orator, his lungs had sustained none; and, although he was succeeded for a short space by Glentworth, who spoke admirably the second time (as being more animated than at the first), yet it was not with equal effect. Indeed, he forgot that

he was not addressing the senate, and his speech was much too good for the occasion—he who is crossing the moors on a winter's evening, “when fast falls the snow,” should adopt a very different garment to that which he wears with impunity in a warm drawing-room.

We well remember hearing a very superior man, both as regarded elegance of mind and manners, and extensive learning and information, describe the mighty difference he experienced when he first rose to address the House of Commons, and when he had been called upon to speak to vast multitudes in the ancient city which he afterwards represented, and where he had been most happily successful in dispersing mobs of the most alarming description. “My emotions,” said he, “were absolutely distressing. I felt the vast difference between addressing my equals and inferiors, in a wide, undiscerning multitude, and the concentrated wisdom, learning, and integrity of a mighty country. I stood before six or seven hundred men chosen from among its millions, and to this hour I wonder how I spoke at all, for the whole mass of their constituents, not less than their own immense power, seemed to press on me palpably.”

The poll was successful beyond the wishes of the party, and the new member when chaired was cheered, even to the content of Arthur and Isabella, who, as the youngest of the party, may be supposed to have desired it the most. It is well known to our readers, that the latter throughout the whole business looked beyond the hour with a sobriety of reflection, more suited to her union, than her years. The grand affair concluded, all were anxious to depart, being under peculiar circumstances, and, although Lord and Lady Allerton did fulfil their purpose of visiting his uncle, it was but for a single day.

If invitations could have detained them, they must all have remained many days, for never was Yorkshire hospitality more warmly pressed; but, on the following, when all bills were paid, all petitions attended to, and many an aching heart relieved, all set out as they were best able, save the Count, who returned for a day or two with Mr. Granard, intending to call on many old friends, and peep at many places endeared by recollection, and sacred to sorrow.

The brothers lengthened their journey by an excursion to Scarborough, where Arthur had friends,



an indulgence Lord Meersbrook could not refuse, from perceiving how greatly he was already improved, and from being fully aware that, under the circumstances in which she was now placed, Helen, after the arrival of her sisters, would be more than ever engaged—to this it may be added that he had found the pleasure of receiving letters, written in the time borrowed from sleep, and often in affliction, but still “warm from the heart, and faithful to its fires.”

## CHAPTER LXXII.

When we quitted the bed-side of Lady Anne, Lord Rotheles, delighted with the prospects of his two remaining nieces, anxious to see his still languishing sister, and, particularly desirous to hear how the election progressed, determined to set off on the spur of the moment, and get through a couple of stages that very evening. His lady's thoughts being ever Londonward, she took care to throw no drawback on his wishes, further than to propose spending the first day or two at the Clarendon, whilst their own house was prepared, to which he gladly assented. To be near Sir Edward Hales was alone a subject of consideration with him, and he hoped to prevail on him and Mrs. Margaret to take up their abodes at Rotheles House, as soon as possible. As he had never been properly informed of the state of his sister, he allowed himself to believe that those who prophesied

her death some months before, had deceived themselves, and that her own account was the only one to be relied on, yet he had many surmisings.

His anxiety on this point increased the nearer he advanced to London, and he gave orders at Hounslow to call in Welbeck Street the first thing, in order to make particular inquiries. Helen presented herself at the door of the carriage, into which she was immediately admitted, and received affectionate, and, on the earl's part, *sincere* congratulations on the state of her love affairs; but she was evidently so low in her spirits, and her account of Lady Anne was so unsatisfactory, that the earl would not proceed farther without seeing his sister, and he alighted accordingly, and went into the dining-room, that she might be apprized of his coming.

The invalid was at the moment propped up with pillows, and Georgiana was feeding her with jelly. In the morning, accounts of a tolerably promising nature had been received from Mrs. Glentworth, but they were not sufficiently so to prevent her from experiencing much solicitude, and frequently wishing herself on the spot, and, so much was she absorbed by this subject, that when told her brother

was in the house, and earnestly desired to see her, she answered, "Bring Lord Rotheles here immediately; he very likely can tell me something about the election."

Agreeable to her present humour, and consistent with her unfailing spirit of "keeping up appearances," she addressed the earl in a cheerful tone, welcoming him to town, and telling him she expected him to give away both her daughters. "Only to think, Rotheles," she added, "Helen, whom I have sighed over many a time, fearing, pretty as she is, that she would live to become an old maid, with blue lips, and a whitey brown complexion, living on her hundred a year in a northern village, playing *tradrille* with the doctor's lady and the vicar's widow; instead of which, this very girl marries the handsomest young nobleman about town!"

Lord Rotheles made an effort to smile—to speak was utterly beyond his power. That the shadow before him was really the remnant of his sister, her voice and its subject convinced him, otherwise he might have exclaimed, "unreal mockery, hence," to the thing which hailed him "brother." Yet was there no deficiency in those observances, which

soften to the eye the ghastly character of that visitant, whose seal is on the features. The curtains of the bed were lined with the palest pink, the finest lace fell in soft folds round the pale face, and a rich velvet scarf was thrown over the counterpane, to divert the eye from noting deficiencies; yet Lord Rotheles saw alone that *death* in a palpable form was before him; the very voice seemed unearthly; he was shocked, bewildered, overcome, as he had never been before, and, sinking into the nearest chair, his bosom heaved with convulsive sobs, that seemed to rend his very frame.

Georgiana was exceedingly alarmed, and offered him water, salts, whatever she could think of, and the nurse eagerly began to chafe his hands for a short time, being exceedingly alarmed, whilst his old attendant, long accustomed to witness his complaint, was horror struck by the expression of his countenance. His lord had never been so ill as now, since several hours passed before he was able to speak, and his physician desired to have a consultation, which accordingly took place, but without any favourable results. The whole of the next day every person under the roof, with their kind neighbours, and the good old baronet, were indefatigable

in their attentions, and those of the latter appeared to yield the patient some comfort, for even when he could not speak, his eye surveyed him with apparent pleasure, and, when he could utter it, the name of Glentworth several times broke from his lips. As no one understood him so well as Georgiana, she was the person to whom Lady Anne from time to time applied for information. On this circumstance being mentioned, she observed, “It was rather odd he mentioned the name in kindness ; had he done it with a curse, it would have been no wonder, though *that* would not have applied to her son-in-law.”

“My uncle has no other feelings than kind ones, to any human being. I understood him to say, that Mr. Glentworth and he had been equal sufferers from some wicked man, but that he now forgave even that man, and trusted my brother would do the same.”

“I am glad he *did* say so—that he *could* say so ; it makes me happy.”

“And I think he wants to see Mr. Glentworth about his will, but Sir Edward said that was immaterial, *he* should do as well ; to which uncle assented.”

“ I thought that woman would have taken care to wheedle him into getting the little he has to leave, long ago. Mind you don't let her come near me ; and yet I should just like to inquire how she approved of my daughter Mary's marriage, after seven years of unmerited suffering ? I should, I confess.”

“ Not now, dear mamma, *not now*,” said Georgiana, in piteous accents.

“ It must be now, or *never*,” said Lady Anne, sharply ; but to the great relief of her daughters, she did not mention such an intention again, though she was evidently busy in her own mind, calculating what it was probable Lady Rotheles might make by the effects her husband would leave. “ The furniture,” she muttered, “ is old, and out of fashion. I don't suppose Colonel Ellerton will buy it at all. If I could speak to him, I'm sure he wouldn't. The hounds and horses will go for something, though they are gone down sadly since he left off hunting. Then there must be debts : no one ever died out of debt who pretended to any style at all ! Time was, Rotheles had plenty of them ; but his godfather left him a capital legacy only ten years since, and I think he has been pretty

well off for a long time. She has a thousand a year secured, and not a single child to keep ; and now she will take the sweepings, and make a couple of thousands at least: no great things to leave a castle with, to be sure. I'll tell Mary to claim my picture by Lawrence ; neither she nor the heir has a right to it. A good deal of the plate is heirloom, or I would insist on the rights of my daughters."

Though the mind of Lady Anne was thus busy, whilst her afflicted brother was struggling for life, it is certain that she also felt much for his sufferings ; and as both Helen and Georgiana were up the whole night, her inquiries were incessant, and she sent many kind messages which had always a soothing effect on his mind, and it was observed that in every petition for mercy which either acute pain, or a proper sense of his approaching fate drew from his lips, he often coupled the name of her he termed his "beloved sister." The following morning he was much easier, and heard, with a faint smile, that his sister was delighted with the progress of the election, and had even proposed to be carried up to his room to read the letters she had received ; but he declined a visit which he was sure



would be her immediate death, and said—"He wished to see no one but his nieces and Sir Edward." Lady Rotheles was forbidden by the latter to ask him any questions, and told "that all his affairs were equitably settled," on which she flew down stairs and insisted on seeing Lady Anne, saying—"some conspiracy was on foot to deprive her of her rights, and she was determined to do herself justice. Lady Anne had been a thorn in her side while she lived, and was determined to injure her, even when she had ceased to live."

Helen wept, and clung around her. The nurse assured her that the physician had peremptorily insisted that no stranger should enter; but she persisted and forced her way to the bed of the invalid, who had heard all that had passed, and was perfectly prepared to receive her.

"Dear sister," she began (not aware that her words had been heard), "I think it strange that you should be denied to me, at a time when we have a joint interest in the disposition of Lord Rotheles's property, which he is probably giving entirely to strangers. Sir Edward Hales rules him in every thing."

"Thank God he is in such good hands! I

cannot think myself, that your niece Henrietta is the properest of all people to receive it, though she did cajole Lord Allerton, with your assistance, so adroitly."

"My niece! What has my niece to do with it?"

"More than *you*, for you have taken my complaint, and will die. Yes, die! probably before *me*! Foolish woman, why did you suffer yourself to go into a passion, which opens the pores, creates excitability, and will render the slightest infection fatal? Yes! I am unintentionally the avenger of my many injuries. Every word you speak, every breath you inspire, subjects you to becoming the awful spectacle you are beholding, ay, and soon, too. Georgiana, lose not a moment in giving the countess some drops—the antiseptic drops, which you all take to guard you from infection, and——"

But the countess was gone, and her carriage rolling down the street, ere Georgiana could reach either drops or water. As Lady Anne heard it, she said, with somewhat of a complacent smile, "I do wish old Palmer had been here to see how I sent that woman off! I have cured her for one while

of tormenting either me or her husband. Tell your dear uncle she is gone, Georgiana; and see if he continues easier."

Many were the messages passed on this eventful day between the invalids, and all spoke of Lord Rotheles as being easy in person and calm in mind; but exactly forty-eight hours after his severe seizure on beholding his sister, the last of the Earls of Rotheles breathed his dying sigh, whilst feebly grasping the hand of that venerable friend who was the "foe to his faults, but friend to his amendment," and who forgot his own infirmities in his anxiety to impart eternal truths, or bless, with heavenly consolations, that humble and contrite spirit which was, as he devoutly trusted,

"Not doomed to die, and go it knew not where."

## CHAPTER LXXIII.

When Lady Anne was informed by her weeping daughters that their dear uncle was no more, she appeared less surprised than sorry, saying only—“Poor Henry! how acute must have been the sufferings of so limited a time! He has died much in the same way that our father did, and at the same age.”

Helen and Georgiana had of late loved their uncle dearly, having experienced from him more of paternal kindness than they could recollect receiving from any other person, and, but for the affectionate attentions of Mrs. Palmer and Mrs. Margaret Hales, would have been utterly unequal to continue those duties to their mother it was their earnest desire to pay. In the course of the night, she was found to be busily calculating the expence of Lord Rotheles's funeral, and detailing every particular of mutes, escutcheons, banner-men, feathers,

coaches, &c., in an anxious manner, and was heard to say repeatedly, "Two might just as well go as one; the appearance would be better, and it would not make twenty pounds difference. — But," she exclaimed, after a pause, "I will try; I must see poor Rotheles once more." And the dying bent over the dead, the skinny lips pressed the marble forehead, and a few icy tears dropped from the cheek in which some portion of life remained, on that whence it had fled for ever. In thus obtaining her desire, the whole person of Lady Anne rested on the corpse, and Williams, who was keeping watch, and was tall and strong, seeing the nurse at fault, took Lady Anne up carefully in his arms, and re-conveyed her and her innumerable wrappings, with the utmost tenderness, to her couch. When he had seen her take the restorative Helen offered, the faithful valet ventured to say,—

"Pray, take comfort, my lady, pray do. I'm but a servant, and perhaps I oughtn't to speak; but as I *do* know that my lord have been gathering up thousands on thousands for the young ladies, I can't forbear to tell 'ee."

"*Thousands*, Williams?" said Lady Anne, her eyes again relighting at the words, though her hands and arms were already marble.

“ Yes, *thousands!* my lady ; and they are all for *them*, I know, for my lord told me so. The countess has fretted herself to fiddle-strings, 'cause she wants *all*, and would do if the heap was as big as St. Paul's ; but my lord has done justice by her, only his main object was *your* daughters, my lady. He loved you dearly,—Oh! very dearly.”

“ Then why not give me the money instead of saving it? I would have had a house in Belgrave Square, or a complete—yes, a com——.”

The words ceased — the last energy was spent — Lady Anne was no more.

\* \* \* \* \*

For a time the poor girls insisted on applying the remedies for fainting, insisting she must revive, and their own servant joined in their opinion, for in fact the invalid had lived so much longer than could have been expected in her reduced state, that both her servants and those of Mr. Palmer seemed to doubt that she could die at all ; and the more immediate interest awakened for poor Lord Rotheles had made her comparatively forgotten. The nurse and valet knew better, and got them out of the room as soon as possible, the latter offering to call up Mrs. Palmer, “ who was so good a lady, she

would get up, he didn't doubt, though she had a cold, he believed."

"She could do mamma no good *now*, and undoubtedly ought not to be disturbed on *their* account," was the immediate answer; and after a time, having gazed once more on the brother and sister so singularly united in death, and remarked the likeness between their features, now more evident than it had been for years, being completely exhausted (for this was their third night of watching), both crept to their attic, and happily became soon buried in profound repose.

When the good neighbours knew what had occurred, they took care that all sounds which might startle or annoy the sleeping sisters should be suppressed; and Mr. Palmer gave up his usual visit to the city, that he might hold himself at liberty to console by his presence, or assist by his advice, two young creatures so painfully situated and so entirely beloved.

In the course of the forenoon, Lord Rotheles's man of business arrived in Welbeck Street, and finding from Mr. Palmer that he had already heard much of the disposition of the earl's property from Sir Edward Hales, did not hesitate to entrust him

with every thing material. He said that for many years past the great business of his lordship's life had been, in a quiet manner, to save up a fund from which to portion his nieces; that within the last two years, from the advice and assistance of Sir Edward Hales, he had made purchases which greatly facilitated his plan, and there could be no doubt, that by the time when the youngest attained her majority, about seven thousand pounds would be secured to each;—he had further devised to Helen and Georgiana, in reward for their especial attentions, a division of that personal estate whereby he had secured an income of a thousand a-year to the countess, whose fortune was very trifling (herself and niece being in fact regular watering-place fortune-hunters), but to whom he had bequeathed a third of what the sale of his effects might produce. He had well considered his old servants, various public and private charities, and even the gifts acceptable to good neighbours and friends—in fact, the gay, thoughtless young man, once foremost amongst fashionable sinners and sentimental sufferers, when time and trouble and sickness taught him to *think*, merged into the man of penitence, justice, and kindness. He became first upright and



regular, then pitiful, considerate, and generous—the heart that in his days of weakness misled him, in the days of humility and consideration consoled him—he lived to redeem his character, to benefit his family and his dependants, and the tears of many watered his grave. The “heart of flesh” may be remodelled, but the “heart of stone” is the same for ever, unmalleable, unsightly, and unfruitful.

Letters and newspapers came in abundantly; they spoke of the triumphant close of the election, and assured Lady Anne, “that her advice had been strictly complied with, and had answered in every particular;” but alas! the good news arrived too late; the “dull, cold ear of death,” long as it appeared to have been kept open for the very purpose of receiving this tale of triumph, had been compelled to yield, and there was nothing found likely to rejoice the hearts of the mourners, save in the belief that their sisters would soon be restored to them.

Louisa was, indeed, already with them called thither by the death of her uncle, who, sooth to say, claimed the tenderest tears of all, before any learned the extent of their obligations. Whilst Mrs. Pen-

rhyn was with them, Mrs. Palmer advised Helen to open Lady Anne's writing-desk, as she thought it probable that certain directions might be found there likely to be of use. When Lady Anne gave her the casket, she had intimated as much; beyond that she did not expect any thing in the form of a will, seeing that Mr. Granard had left the property on which she lived to be equally divided amongst her daughters.

Accordingly, they did find, in her own handwriting, directions which ran thus:—

“If I should die, bury me in the new cemetery, and get Mr. Palmer to choose the proper place; being the first woman of rank that is laid there, I expect he will be able to get the vault cheap, as my funeral will get into the newspapers, and cause many others to be buried there.”

To a hundred pound bank-note was attached a slip of paper, saying—

“This is to buy Count Riccardini another horse, and to beg his pardon sincerely for all the foolish things I said of him formerly. He is a good man—continue to love him.”

These “symptoms of honesty,” as Mr. Palmer called them, were exceedingly grateful to the hearts

of her daughters ; and so much does death halo its object, that, could a stranger, at this hour of awakened feeling, have heard the three daughters talk of “ poor dear mamma,” they would have regarded the deceased as a faultless personage. Helen most positively refused to open the money-drawer until Mr. Glentworth’s arrival, saying, “ she knew that Lady Anne would not be pleased if she did ;” and deeply, though momentarily, did blushes crimson her cheek as she recollected the way in which mamma had been willing to stock that drawer at the expense of her own friends and the lovers of her daughters ; but silence sat on her lips.

In the dark hour, the hearse arrived, which removed the remains of their beloved uncle. The good baronet and his sister contrived to be with them at the time ; and he informed them that his own grandsons had received directions from him to cross the country to Worcestershire, and attend the funeral, and he could not doubt Lord Allerton would contrive to be there also, as the near neighbour and relative of the deceased. “ You will be surprised to hear,” he added, “ that the Countess is actually setting out to Baden-Baden to-morrow by the advice of her physician. My sister’s maid

went to the Clarendon about an hour since, with our kind inquiries, and saw her, as she says, really looking shockingly."

So said Georgiana when she heard it; but she comforted herself with the belief that the Countess was not a woman to be killed by conceit; she, however, related what had occurred with the utmost simplicity to the infinite, inward amusement of Mr. Palmer, who maintains "that his unparalleled friend, Lady Anne, had not her match in the world for sending off a 'troublesome customer' with a flea in her ear, which not all the waters of all the Badens will ever wash out again."

In the middle of the following day, the Glentworths arrived at the house of mourning, and saw, by a glance at the darkened windows, "death had been busy there," but they little thought how busy, having left Keenborough before the time when the letter announcing Lord Rotheles's violent illness reached that place. Isabella knew but little of her uncle, but that little was endearing; and Mr. Glentworth, who had only learned from his sister how far they might be said to be associated with each other, remembered with pity the appearance of flutter and abstraction visible in his lordship's man-

ners, when he performed the part of father at the time of his marriage, and felt thankful, that by naming him in the trusteeship of his affairs, he had proved personal esteem to himself, and either utter forgetfulness or christian forgiveness of his father. He warmly expressed these sentiments, saying "he would certainly pay the last duties to one he esteemed so highly," and Mr. Penrhyn expressed the same intention.

"You forget, indeed, you forget," said Helen, "dear mamma must be buried as well as uncle."

The two gentlemen looked at each other; there was confession in the countenance of each; they *had* forgotten Lady Anne: but the entrance of Mr. Palmer (who had seen the travelling chariot at the door) set all to rights. He had himself arranged every thing for the interment of his neighbour, with such due regard to the economy she recommended, and the observances she loved, that nothing remained undone; and it appeared very possible to attend the funeral of Lady Anne at an early hour on the Monday, and reach Rotheles Castle, so as to attend that of its late lord on Tuesday noon.

This important point adjusted, they were re-

turning to the carriage, when Mr. Palmer said impressively, "You must be detained a moment."

"Helen has no money, and refuses help from me, in the belief that her mamma has left plenty for present use, but will let no one open the drawer but Mr. Glentworth : here is the key."

"That is exactly what my wife would do under the same circumstances. Lady Anne certainly merits well at the hands of her sons-in-law."

"True ; but she meant you *all* to pay for the education of your wives."

"Here are thirty sovereigns, in the first place ; put *them* in your pocket, Helen ; and here is one of the hundred-pound bills I sent her when I went away."

"The other is in this drawer, and labelled, 'to buy Count Riccardini a horse.'"

"I am very, *very* glad of that," said Glentworth, "though it proves my suspicions were too just. Here are also bills amounting to three hundred and fifty pounds."

The daughters being together above, Mr. Palmer exclaimed, "So, then, with more than four hundred pounds in this desk, we had an execution in the house for seventy-three, poor Helen being alone,

and almost frightened to death, and the nakedness of the land exposed to two young men — and all this managed by a proud woman in her perfect senses. I can't understand this. 'Tis an inexplicable page in the book of human nature !”

“ Now I think ‘ he that runs may read it.’ Pride is always inconsistent, and, nine times out of ten, united to meanness, bordering on dishonesty. Extravagance demands her food from avarice, and Lady Anne was providing for some expected triumph, and hoarding up with one hand what she meant to throw away with the other. But we will say no more ; the ladies are coming down stairs. I must hurry Isabella away.”

And if the young mother soon forgot, in the beauty of her smiling boy (by degrees recalling her to memory, and at length fondly clasping her neck), that faded remnant of her once beautiful but never tender mother, shall we not rejoice in her joy, and own her happiness is well founded ? She had omitted no duty, even in all the confusion of her late engagements, and she had been grateful for the only kind attentions she ever could remember to have received, and for ever blotted from her mind the many mortifications heaped on her innocent

childhood and unoffending youth, wisely and gratefully accepting the blessings she enjoyed as far more than equivalent for the affection denied.

All things were conducted with propriety, and both funerals were duly attended ; after which, the poor girls, who had so long “ borne the burden of the day,” removed from their miserable dwelling to one or other of their sisters, drinking the waters of consolation at the well-spring of life, and renewing those sweet memories which render early affection as permanent as it is lovely. Arthur was not long before he ventured to visit Georgiana, who might, perhaps, look upon him, and think of his sad case. “ In truth ’twas strange and wonderous pitiful ;” yet it is certain she did not the less rejoice

“ That Heaven had made her such a man.”



## CHAPTER LXXIV.

“ Time,” says an old writer, “ is so precious a cordial, we can only receive it by drops ;” but we may add that, as it never ceases to dispense its restoring influence, four of the brightest months in the year cannot pass over the young, the hopeful, and the healthy, without imparting a most benignant influence, adding brilliance to beauty, and activity to intelligence.

It is the latter end of August, when the weather is settled, the trees in full foliage, the second crop of grass springing green as the emerald, and the waving gold of harvest becoming every hour of a richer tint ; when roses and woodbine have succeeded to the May bloom in our hedges, and the gardens are bright with magnolias, acacias, and catalpas. And where can all be seen in more perfection than Meersbrook ! standing half way up a gentle eminence, looking round on a small but

beautiful park, well stocked with deer, and watered by a meandering stream, seen to glance in silver sheen from point to point, where the thicket opens, or the tall trunk of some bold elm throws off intruding parasites.

This paradise is now fully peopled, for the dear, aged owner has determined on celebrating the double marriage of his grandsons, precisely as his own was exhibited sixty years ago, with the exception, that the brides be permitted to run away, after the ceremony, wheresoever they please. Arthur, we beg his pardon, Sir Arthur James Hales, would be miserable, if he could not, as soon as possible, take Georgiana to Portsmouth, where, at this moment, rides the renovated Thetis, in all her glory. We rather think Lord Meersbrook and his bride will make a shorter trip, but in the same direction, as the object in question has great interest for them both.

“It is not in mortals to command success;” but surely, if ever one “deserved it,” good Mrs. Margaret Hales did, for her provisions, for feeding, not only “my brother’s tenantry,” but all others who chose to come, were admirable; and her memory, though she protested “she was but a child when her bro-

ther was married," whatever might be its slips since, was undoubtedly accurate now. The church lying at a very little distance from the house, through a gravelled pathway, always used by the family, she caused the whole to be inclosed with green boughs, closed above with garlands of flowers, for which purpose the whole village was astir, with her at the head of them, about five in the morning; after this she had tables spread in the park, barrels placed at proper distances, under the care of old servants and steady farmers, and stacks of loaves distributed in profusion. The pleasures of children were especially cared for, and twelve of the prettiest girls in the parish being selected to strew flowers before the brides, were appointed to be mistresses of the ceremonies, and to "keep them in order, as well as make them merry," in which act of instruction, Arthur declared the dear lady intended him to receive a lesson.

At nine, the good baronet (who breakfasted in bed) came down stairs, in full dress, his flowing white locks being confined by a ribbon behind, and *crêpe* in front; his ruffles, of fine Dresden, and his embroidered waistcoat, shewing what ladies could do in days past; for, being deemed too pre-

cious for use, the vest was still in high preservation, and well became the wearer, whom Georgiana thought she could never admire enough. Mrs. Margaret did not wear any ancient costume; but she was well-dressed, as became her person and her years, and formed, with Mrs. Palmer, a not unpleasing variety to the five fair sisters. Of these, we have only to say, that Lady Allerton's presence being indispensable, in the eyes of both Helen and Georgiana, they had waited until she had presented her lord with an heir, and could "grace their solemnities" with her presence. Mrs. Penrhyn and she were the finest women present, as *blondes*; but Mrs. Glentworth was allowed, in grace, and form, and intelligence of countenance, to surpass all others, to the evident satisfaction of him who was now their only uncle, Count Riccardini, who called her his own dear Margarita, and seemed almost to believe she was the daughter he had lost. The two fair brides were, of course, the observed and admired of all; and it would have been indeed difficult to find "two fairer roses, growing on one stem," or two such brothers, to pair with them, as Frederic and Arthur; for the latter, after so long a rest from the changing climates and toils of his profession,

had become handsomer than he had ever been before.

Many noble families, resident in Kent for the summer, many old families, attached to it as the land of their fathers, came, from far and near, to witness these interesting nuptials; and never had the village church been so crowded, by the great and the gay, as at this double union, which wanted not the crowning honour of being administered by a bishop, two of whose fair daughters, with those of a neighbouring nobleman, officiated as bridesmaids. The good old baronet gave Helen to her bridegroom, and Mr. Glentworth performed the same office for Georgiana, who, on this day, again received the ring, which tied her, in a double sense, for better and worse, to the family she entered, as it was agreed, that she should know no other home during the life of the present possessor. On their return from church, when Sir Edward had taken possession of his great chair, each bridegroom, leading up his bride, knelt before the venerable grand-sire, and received his blessing, as he had himself received such benediction; but at this moment, his remembrance of the past was but too vivid, and he was affected even to tears; perhaps the mar-

riage of his son, rather than his own, was uppermost, for, throwing his arms round Lord Meersbrook, he said, in a faltering voice, "Only be like *him*, Frederic—*like him*, and you must be happy!"

The wedding party strolled in the park, bidding all welcome, and charming all, by their beauty and their smiles; five such handsome sisters, in such handsome dresses, gave room for diversity of opinions; but not one couple excited so many comments as Mr. and Mrs. Glentworth, it being pretty generally agreed that Isabella had been compelled to marry by her mother, "who was a very austere lady, and ruled her children with a rod of iron." That she was younger than the two brides, was not, however, allowed to be possible; and, in truth, she did not look so, for, with the tact of affection and well-judging propriety, she always contrived to dress to her husband's age, yet, so decidedly without the parade of doing it, that he was insensible of the compliment, though gratified by the effect, until it was pointed out, on this day, as one of her good qualities, by the Count, who added, "She have more of the abilities of her mother than any of her sisters; they are all good, I love them moche; but, as say the Bibel, she 'excelleth them all.'"

“I really think she does,” said Glentworth, drily; “but not in consequence of her likeness to Lady Anne, of whom the less we say the better.”

“Bah! bah! we must not be severe; she leave me one hundred of pounds for my horse, and, what is better, I him get again; so I forgive, in my heart, all the peccadilloes.”

“I am glad of that; how did you get him again?”

“I go with the bill in my hand, and say, ‘Will you take this for my Hector?’ and he say, ‘Yes, with all of his heart!’”

“I dare say he spoke the truth; he rode the poor beast six months, pulled him down woefully, and sold him for thirty pounds profit. My dear Count, I give you credit for many things, but not for making a bargain.”

The Count shrugged, hummed a few bars of a favourite *arietta*, and went off, perfectly happy, thinking only, “*he* did not cheat me, I cheat myself. The best thing of the two, *moche*. I shall soon forgive myself, I dare to say; but I might be long time in forgive him.”

A wedding may be very pleasant to visitors, but it can rarely be called a happy, much less a gay day, to those immediately concerned; for either a

sense of the mutability of all human affairs, an extreme solicitude to please the object of our choice, or, perhaps, the impression left by past afflictions, which have threatened to sever us from it, leaves a sense of fear and anxiety, incompatible with present enjoyment. The general cause of depression to a bride, on that most awful day, arises from her leaving the paternal home, withdrawing herself from those dear and tender arms, which have hitherto protected her from every evil, bestowed on her every indulgence, read her wishes in her eyes, and never disappointed them, save to ensure her happiness. No wonder such brides weep and tremble at the unknown world on which they are entering; no wonder they look inquiringly to him, whom they have promised to obey, as if to read how much he will demand.

From emotions of this nature, Lady Anne Granard's daughters were all most happily exempt; and although the sweet seriousness of shrinking modesty, and of devout gratitude to Heaven, overspread their countenances, Helen and Georgiana were truly happy; and each, after rising from their elegant and abundant *déjeûné*, prepared to set out, with their future partners, in



all the confiding hope which is love's most precious gift. If Helen clung to her sister Mary somewhat too long, and poor Georgiana hung round Isabella's neck, till Arthur gently removed the twining arms, and whispered a soft claim in her ear, there was nothing to regret for either, although it is certain that, as they drove off, the feelings of the poor Count were so much excited, that he rushed into the park, and hid himself in the nearest coppice, till he had found the relief of tears and prayers.

All are now comfortably settled. Mr. Glentworth has bought a house in town, and leased one in the country, which pleased his lady's fancy; his *début* in parliament was all his friends expected and his lady desired; and, if she has become somewhat more of a politician than suits her age, let it be remembered, that in her case, it is both wise and affectionate to dress her mind, as well as her person, in autumnal hues. Mr. Penrhyn is now in possession of his paternal estate, and his wife enjoys her carriage, and all other comforts consistent with a fortune on the increase, and a husband whose affections do not decrease. Lady Allerton is the delight of her lord, and a blessing to his

tenantry, for her own early wants have taught her how to think and feel for others. Helen has realized that which her mother died in the act of desiring; she has got a beautiful house in Belgrave Square, fitted up after her own excellent taste, and adorned with many little ornaments of her own making, produced by her admiring lord, who, having acknowledged Judy as an old acquaintance, wished to provide for her in his household; but Helen, being of opinion, that a life of movement, which includes the pleasures of gossip, would make her happier, she is allowed a weekly stipend, which renders her richest of the rich, in her own estimation.

Georgiana actually sailed with Sir Arthur the first voyage he made after their marriage, but he would not permit her to brave the blasts of winter; and in Meersbrook she finds not only every comfort and indulgence, but sufficient employment to prevent her from suffering too severely the anxieties inseparable from her situation, as the wife of a sailor. Lord Meersbrook and his lady are so frequently visitors to their aged relatives, and so glad to bring her back with them for a few days, when

she can visit Louisa and Isabella, that the affections of the sisters as such are most happily in the same state of delectable exercise that they have been blest with since their childhood. Of late she has become more stationary, from believing that her presence has a happy effect on the dear, aged relatives she loves so entirely, and who are still able to exercise the rites of hospitality, and receive an old friend with a warm welcome. Need we say, with how much especial delight Georgiana receives Mr. and Mrs. Palmer, when the shortness of the journey tempts them to visit those they esteem so highly, and her they love so dearly? Every one of the sisters, and their husbands no less, receive the worthy couple with delight; but it will be concluded that there is a double tie, which unites them to Lady Meersbrook and Lady Hales.

The Countess of Rotheles still continues abroad, but is said to be really in a declining state; and Mr. Palmer frequently prophesies that she will die before Georgiana is of age, thereby sparing her husband's executors trouble. He often chuckles over the idea of Lady Anne's frightening her to death, and wishes heartily he had witnessed the

“diamond cut diamond” scene between them. Mr. Glentworth has not long since received an accession of fortune from the death of poor Lady Osmond; and neither himself, nor any other of the husbands we have mentioned, perhaps, (Sir Arthur least of all,) are anxious on the subject of Lord Rotheles’s kind and wise provision for their wives; but it is certain every one of the ladies will have great pleasure in presenting their partners with a certain property, for it is sweet to give as well as to receive.

Count Riccardini has a home in a village near Exeter, agreeable to his intention; but, being in perfect health, and capable of great activity, he finds it impossible to remain for any length of time in the village, where there are, nevertheless, a number of inhabitants to whom he is almost an idol. No little party can be happy without the Count; he is the soul of a rural *fête*, and the leading speaker in every description of charity-meetings; from the humble cottage, where poverty and sickness have established their appalling reign, he is never long absent; and his gifts, ever wisely chosen and kindly given, have restored many a sinking son

of industry to his family, and bade a languishing mother behold her children once more rejoicing in her love. Like the man of Ross, in a thousand instances, he “the medicine makes and gives,” which relights the languid eye, and fills the falling cheek; and from his peculiar and feminine love for children, often is he enabled to arrest the destroying angel, and restore, as if by miracle, the expiring babe to its transported mother. Having, however, been successful in such a case, it is generally found necessary, to his own feelings, to set out forthwith, and visit the Glentworths, in order to see that “the beloved Bambino,” “the noble boy,” the distinguished “Castello Riccardini,” is in health; on which occasion, every niece, and no less every nephew, lay hold of him by turns, as a prize too precious for escape; and half the year elapses before he can return to his Devonshire home, and the simple, but loving subjects, who hold him as their sovereign.

Courteous reader, farewell! if thou hast not learnt from these pages that “honesty is the best policy,” that simplicity and integrity are true wisdom, and affection, love, and tenderness, the

sweetest and most hallowed joys of life, (and more especially of *woman's* life,) it is no fault of ours; and we must resign thee, with a pitying sigh, to that numerous, and, in our opinion, contemptuous class, who follow the example of "Lady Anne Granard;" and with similar pretensions, but inferior powers, live only to "Keep up Appearances."

THE END.

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