

ROMANCE

AND

REALITY.

BY

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THE IMPROVISATRICE," "THE VENETIAN BRACELET,"
&c. &c. &c.

Thus have I begun ;
And 'tis my hope to end successfully.
SHAKESPEARE.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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ROMANCE AND REALITY.

CHAPTER I.

“ Those first affections,
Which, be they what they may,
Are yet the fountain light of all our day.”

“ Though nothing can bring back the hour,
We will grieve not—rather find
Strength in what remains behind :
In the primal sympathy,
Which, having been, must ever be—
In the soothing thoughts that spring
Out of human suffering—
In the faith that looks through death.”

WORDSWORTH.

OF all passions, love is the most engrossing and the most superstitious. How often has a leaf, a star, a breath of wind, been held as an omen ! It draws all things into somewhat of relation to itself : it is despotic, and jealous of all authority but its own : it bars the heart

against the entrance of other feelings, and deems wandering thoughts its traitors. This empire, and even more than this, did it hold over Emily; yet for a moment its authority was lost, while old feelings and former affections came thronging in its place, as she caught the last red sunshine on the church windows, and saw the old avenue of lime trees, and the shady road, which wound through meadows where the hay was doubly sweet in the cool evening air. Familiar faces looked eagerly at the carriage as it drove rapidly by—it was soon in the avenue. Emily saw her uncle hurry down the steps—in another moment she was in his arms—a sense of security and sympathy came over her—tears, long restrained, burst forth; but the luxury of the moment's passionate weeping was interrupted by her aunt's eager and talkative welcome.

“ We are so glad to see you — thought you were never coming home — tea is ready — thought you would like tea after your journey — but have something of supper, too — you must want something more substantial than tea.”

It is curious how inseparable eating and kindness are with some people. Mr. Arundel

stopped a moment in the hall to look after the carriage, and Emily followed her aunt into the room.

“ Don’t you think him altered, my dear ? ” — Emily looked quite unconscious of her meaning — “ your poor, dear uncle — sadly broken ; but he would not let you be sent for. I have had all the nursing ; but he was resolved you should enjoy yourself. You will find us very dull after London. ”

Emily sprang out of the room — her uncle stood in the hall — the light of the open door fell full upon him. Pale, emaciated, speaking with evident difficulty, he looked, to use that common but expressive phrase, the picture of death. Her very first thought was, “ I must not let him see how shocked I am. ”

With one strong effort, she rejoined her aunt — even Mrs. Arundel was startled by her paleness. “ Come, come, child, ” said she, forcing her to drink a glass of wine, “ I can’t have you to nurse too. I dare say your uncle will soon be better : he has missed you so — I couldn’t go walking and reading about with him as you used to do. He will get into good humour now. I think he fancies a great deal of his illness ; but you see he has been moped. Not-

withstanding all I could say, he would not hear hurrying you home."

He now came into the room, and drew his seat by Emily. He talked so rejoicingly of her return, so gaily of her London campaign; but the cheerfulness was an effort, and the silence into which they gradually sank was a relief to the party, except Mrs. Arundel.

Affection exaggerates its own offences; and, in her perpetual self-reproaches for her absence, Emily never remembered that she could not really consider herself to blame for what she could neither foresee nor prevent; all that she dwelt upon was, that she had been, as her aunt expressed it, away and enjoying herself, while her dear, her kind uncle, had been ill and solitary. How vividly did she picture to herself his lonely walks, the unbroken solitude of his study!—no one to read aloud his favourite passages, or replace his scattered books! She gave a furtive glance at the chess-table—the little ivory men seemed not to have been moved since their last game. She was in a fair way of persuading herself, that all his altered looks were to be ascribed to her absence.

What eager resolutions did she make of leaving him no more! How attentive she

would be—how watch his every glance! She would prevail on him to walk—he must get better with all her care. How youth makes its wishes hopes, and its hopes certainties! She only looked on his pale face to read recovery. She now broke silence as suddenly as she had sank into it. Convinced that he required amusement, she exerted herself to the utmost to afford it; but her spirits fell to see how completely the exertion of listening seemed to exhaust him; and when he urged her to go to bed early, on the plea that she must be tired with her journey, she perceived too plainly it was to prevent her observation of his extreme weakness.

Emily went to bed, and cried herself to sleep; but she woke early. It is like waking in a new world, the waking in the morning—any morning, after an entire change of place: it seems almost impossible we can be quite awake. Slowly she looked at the large old-fashioned bed, with its flowered curtains—she recognised the huge mantel-piece, where the four seasons were carved in wood—she knew her own dressing-table, with its mirror set in silver; a weight hung on her mind—she felt a reluctance to waken thoroughly. Suddenly she recalled

last night—her uncle's evident illness flashed upon her memory — and she sprang as hastily from her pillow as if his recovery depended on her rising.

It was scarcely six o'clock, but she dressed ; and, stepping softly by her uncle's door—for all in his room was profoundly quiet—she bent her steps towards the garden ; and, with that natural feeling of interest towards what is our own, she turned towards the part which, marked by a hedge of the wild rose, had always been called hers. It was at some little distance : in younger days, it had been given as a reward and inducement for exercise — for Emily in winter preferred her own little niche by the fireside, or in summer a seat by her favourite window, where she had only to put out her hand and bring back a rose, to all the running and walking that ever improved constitution or complexion ; and though Mr. Arundel was never able to imbue her with a very decided taste for weeding, watering, &c., still, the garden, connected as it was with his kindness and approval, became a sufficient motive for exertion ; and our fair gardener bestowed a degree of pains and industry on the culture of her flowers, for the sake of shewing her uncle

the care she took of what he gave her, that not even an aloe on the verge of flowering—those rare blossoms it takes a century to produce, but only a summer to destroy—would have obtained for its own sake.

Nothing is so ingenious in its thousand ways and means as affection. As she passed along the various paths, something of neglect struck her forcibly—not but that all was in such order as did full credit to the gardener—but her accustomed eye missed much of former taste and selection. The profusion of luxuriant creepers were twisted and clipped, with a regularity that would have done honour to any nursery ground. There were more rare, and fewer beautiful flowers than formerly; and, thanks to the sunflowers and marigolds, yellow was the predominant colour. It was a relief to turn into the shadowy walk of the thick yews' unbroken green, which led to her own portion of the shrubbery.

In a former age, this walk had been the pride of the domain—each side being a row of heathen gods and goddesses. Jupiter with his eagle, Juno with her peacock, Time with his sithe, had much outgrown their original proportions; still the outline remained, and to

Emily these relics of sylvan statuary seemed like old friends : but the air grew very fragrant, and another turn brought her to her own garden. There, at least, she traced her uncle—not one of her favourites had been forgotten ; and never had the purple and perfumed growth of the heliotrope—that sanctuary of odour—been so luxuriant, while the bed of the rich crimson clove pink was like one of the spice islands, the very Manilla of the garden.

“ You see, Miss Emily,” said the gardener, “ we did not forget you. Master always would come here ; but he has not been round our garden these three weeks. Indeed, miss, he took no pleasure in nothing after you went. Why, Miss Emily, you look almost as bad as he does. Well, they say London is a sad place : nothing will thrive there.”

For the first time in his life, the old gardener turned away without waiting for his accustomed gossip with the young mistress, with whom he was very indignant for her sojourn in town,—winter he could have forgiven, but a summer in London !—every successive growth of flowers that passed by without Emily’s seeing and praising them added to the deepness of her offence. A few words of compliment to his

dahlia would have melted away his anger ; but her silence and non-observance of a plat where the campanella had been so carefully trained in capital letters forming her name,—this was too much, and he stalked off in one of those fits of dudgeon, the dearest privilege of an old and indulged servant. However, before he reached the next walk, his anger softened into pity, and he went on muttering,—

“ Poor thing—poor thing ; she’s thinking of her uncle. Well, well,—she won’t have him long to think of, poor child. He took no pleasure in nothing after she went.”

These words rang in her ears. She sat down on a little garden-seat, and wept long and bitterly. The self-reproach of a sensitive and affectionate temper is of the most refined and exaggerating nature. Unmixed grief requires and seeks solitude—its unbroken indulgence is its enjoyment ; but that which is mingled with remorse, involuntarily shrinks from itself,—it wants consolation—it desires to hear some other voice extenuate its faults,—and even while disowning and denying the offered excuse, it is comforted.

It was this feeling that, as Mr. Morton’s house in the distance caught Emily’s eye, made

her turn her steps towards it. Early as it was, she knew that its being the Sabbath would ensure his having risen; he was an old kind friend,—she would hear what he thought of her uncle's state, and return before she could be wanted for breakfast.

A winding walk through the shrubbery brought her to the little wicket which opened on the fields through which she had to pass. The first field was one of those spots which seem dedicated to peace and beauty: it had lately been mown, and the thick young grass was only broken by an occasional patch of the lilac-coloured clover. Perhaps, in times long passed, it had been part of a park, for it was as beautifully wooded as the choicest plantation, and with a regularity which was like the remains of an avenue—and older and finer beeches were not in the country; while the field itself was surrounded by a hazel hedge, the slight boughs now weighed down by light green tufts of the nuts. A narrow path skirted the side next the road, but it was little worn,—the nuts even on the lowest branches were ungathered; for, calm and beautiful as was the place, it was haunted with one of those evil memories which cling like a curse.

Two young men were travelling this road, bound by that early friendship which is one of the strongest of human ties; the one going down to marry the sister of his friend,—the other to witness his happiness. They stopped for a night at the little inn in the town; they supped in the most exuberant spirits—that contagious mirth which to see is to share; they had their jest on the waiter and for the landlady; they pledged the landlord in the best china bowl, which they said had never held such punch before—the green parlour rang with their laughter: suddenly their voices were heard in loud debate,—then the tones were lower, but harsher; this was succeeded by entire silence. They separated for the night, each to their several rooms; but the bowl of punch was left almost untouched. Next morning their rooms were both empty, though in each was their travelling bag and portmanteau, and the purse of the darker one, containing some guineas, was left on the dressing-table. Their places had been taken in the mail which passed that morning; but they were no where to be found. At length, half scared out of his very small senses, a boy came running to the inn, with intelligence that a gentleman was lying

murdered in the beech-tree field: all hurried to the spot, where they found the younger of the two stretched on the ground—a pistol, which had been discharged, in his hand. The cause of his death was soon ascertained—he had been shot directly through the heart: at a little distance they found another pistol, discharged also, and the track of steps through the long grass to the high road, where all trace was lost. In the trunk of a beech, opposite to the deceased, a bullet was found, evidently the one from his pistol. No doubt remained that a duel had been fought; and letters were found on the body, which shewed that the young men were the only sons of two distinguished families in the adjacent county. The one who was to have been married had fallen; of the survivor no tidings were ever heard, and the cause of their quarrel remained, like his fate, in impenetrable obscurity.

Enough of murder, and mystery, which always seems to double the crime it hides, was in this brief and tragic story to lay upon the beautiful but fatal field the memory of blood. The country people always avoided the place; and some chance having deposited the seeds of a crimson polyanthus, which had taken to the

soil and flourished, universal was the belief that the blood had coloured the primroses; and the rich growth of the flowers served to add to the legendary horrors of one of the most lovely spots in the world.

The history attached to it could not but recur to Emily as she passed, and her heart sank within her—not with fear, but at the thought, how much of misery there was in the world; and why should she be spared amid such general allotment? Often had she imaged the wretchedness which so suddenly overwhelmed two families—the despair of that young bride; but never came they so vividly before her as now. Fear and sorrow are the sources of sympathy; the misfortunes of others come home to those who are anticipating their own. She quickened her steps to gain the next field—a green sunny slope leading directly to the vicarage, which was also covered with sunshine: a blessing rested upon it; it was close by the church—one of Norman architecture—whose square tower was entirely hidden by the luxuriant growth of ivy. The church was visible, but not the churchyard, so that the eye rested on the sign of faith and hope, without the melancholy shew of human suffering and death

which surrounded it. The scene looked so cheerful!—the small white house overgrown with jessamine, more rich, however, in green than in bloom, the leaves overshadowing the flowers, the more delicate for their rarity; the garden, whose gay-coloured beds were now distinct; the quiet of the Sunday morning, only broken by the musical murmuring of the trees,—all was cheerfulness; and with one of those sudden changes outward impulses so mysteriously produce, Emily stepped lightly into the little garden. The old man was seated by the window, which opened to the ground, reading, and she was at his side before he raised his eyes.

“ My dear Emily, this is kind.”

“ Say selfish, rather,” almost sobbed his visitor, for the tone of his voice recalled her uncle, and with that came the full tide of recollection and remorse. Mr. Morton also remembered—what had been forgotten in the first pleasure of seeing his young favourite—all he had purposed of comfort. He took her hand, and kindly led her into the breakfast-room; he opened the Bible, and pointed to one passage—“ The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord !” Emily read

the passage like a death-warrant, and burst into passionate reproaches for having left her uncle.

Mr. Morton had been overruled, not convinced, by the tenderness which had kept her in ignorance, to be expiated by such bitter after-suffering. He knew Emily, and he felt it would have been more real kindness to have recalled her—it mattered not from what: any thing of pleasure sacrificed would have been a consolation. He did not attempt to give her false hopes—he said little of the ignorance which had kept her away—but he dwelt upon what she had still to do—the affectionate care which her uncle was yet able to enjoy and appreciate. “You must not suffer Mr. Arundel to be much by himself: that sunny terrace was just made for an invalid, and your arm will often tempt him to a walk. My sweet Emily, restraint on your own feelings is the best proof of love to your uncle.”

Few more words passed, and Emily turned homewards. Hope is the prophet of youth—young eyes will always look forwards. Mr. Morton had spoken of exercise and attention—they might work miracles: the bright, beautiful summer—surely its influence must be genial! She looked with so much reliance on the thou-

sand indications of existence around her—the murmur of the distant village—all its varying sounds, its voices, its steps—all blent into that one low musical echo which is, nevertheless, such certain sign of human neighbourhood. Every bough had its bird—every blossom its bee—the long grass was filled with myriads of insects. Amid so much of life, how difficult to believe in death! One loss teaches us to expect another, but Emily was unfamiliar with the realities of death: there was no vacant place in the small circle of her affections—she had never yet lost a friend.

Both Mr. and Mrs. Arundel were in the breakfast-room, and her aunt's shrill, dry voice was very audible. "Well, there is no advising some people to their good: Mrs. Clarke told me, she knew three persons cured of exactly your complaint, by taking a raw egg before breakfast."

"The remedy, my dear, was worse than the disease," said Mr. Arundel, turning away with an inward loathing from the yellow liquid, which, ever since Mrs. Clarke's call, had been duly presented every morning.

"Men are so obstinate; but I shall beat it up in your tea—I can't have the egg wasted:

or, there's Emily—I dare say it's very good for her."

Emily's preference of coffee, however, rendered this little plan for her good of no avail; so Mrs. Arundel, after a running fire of muttered remarks on some people's obstinacy, and other people's not knowing what was good for them, ended by eating the egg herself. Indeed, as she afterwards observed to her friend Mrs. Clarke, "she wanted strengthening quite as much as any of them." In truth, poor Mr. Arundel had suffered a complete martyrdom of remedies: ground-ivy tea, hartshorn jelly, rhubarb biscuits, &c. were only a few of the many infallibles that had nearly driven the complaisant apothecary out of his smiles, and Mr. Arundel out of his senses.

Though it was Sunday, Mrs. Arundel had always some household arrangements to make; and for the next half hour—excepting that twice every thing in the room had to be moved to look for her keys, which all the while were in her own pocket—Emily and her uncle were left to the uninterrupted enjoyment of conversation, whose expression was affection, and whose material was confidence. Ah! how pleasant it is to talk when it would be impos-

sible to say whether speaking or listening is the greatest pleasure. Still, Mr. Arundel saw, and saw with regret, that Emily returned not home the same as she went. The narrative of the young carries its hearer along by its own buoyancy—by the gladness which is contagious; but Emily's recital was in the spirit of another age—there lay a fund of bitterness at her heart, which vented itself in sarcasm; she spoke more truly, more coldly of pleasures than suited her few years—surely, it was too soon for her to speak of their vexation and vanity.

But the bustle and hurry which always preceded Mrs. Arundel's going to church—for which she was always too late—put an end to their conversation, and they hurried across the fields—her aunt only interrupting her account of how tiresome it was that Mr. Arundel would take nothing that did him any good, and of what a deal of trouble she had had with him, by incessant inquiries if Emily could hear the bell, which, near as they were to the church, no one could avoid hearing, if it were going. Most of the congregation were seated before they arrived, and Emily had no time to look round for familiar faces, ere Mr. Morton's

deep sweet voice impressed even the most thoughtless of his listeners with somewhat of his own earnest attention.

“It is good for me that I have been afflicted,” may be said in many senses, but in none so truly as in a religious one. It is our own weakness that makes us seek for support—it is the sadness of earth that makes us look up to heaven. Fervently and confidingly did Emily pray that day; and who shall say that such prayers are vain? They may not be granted; but their faith has strengthened the soul, and their hope is left behind: and if the feelings of this world did intrude on her devotion, they were purified and exalted by thoughts of the world to come.

Amid the many signs of that immortality of which our nature is so conscious, none has the certainty, the conviction, of affection: we feel that love, which is stronger and better than life, was made to outlast it. In the memory that survives the lost and the dear, we have mute evidence of a power over the grave: and religion, while it holds forth the assurance of a blessed re-union, is acknowledged and answered from our own heart. We stand beside the tomb, but we look beyond it—

and sorrow is as the angel that sits at the gates of heaven.

Many kindly greetings awaited Emily in the churchyard—the more cordial, perhaps, that the givers were inferiors; for, with the exception of the apothecary's lady, who was thinking that Miss Arundel, just from London, ought not to have come to church in a large straw-bonnet;—Mrs. Smith was one of those quick-eyed persons who take a pattern, or something like it, at a glance;—and the lawyer's feminine representative, an expansive and comely dame—one who looked little accustomed to act, still less to think, but with the scarlet-shawled (it was July), silk-bonneted air of one well to do in the world—and truly, as the husbands of these ladies could have witnessed, those have a thriving harvest who reap from human sickness and sin;—with these exceptions, the whole congregation belonged to the order of the respectable rather than the genteel—though that word is now so ramified in its branches as to include far more than our most speculative ancestors ever dreamed of in their philosophy. But those now assembled decidedly belonged to what a patriot from the hustings would call “that inestimable class of indivi-

duals"—or, as Goldsmith entitles them, "their country's pride"—from which we beg leave to differ—"the peasantry."

Not that we are in the least detracting from a body of people whose honesty and industry we are most ready to acknowledge when we find them; but, thinking as we do, that the watchword of the day, "amelioration," could never be better put into action than for the benefit of this very class—when we consider the want—and want is the parent of more crime than even idleness, that root of all evil, as our copy-books assure us—the ignorance, often almost brutality—the discontent, so sadly justified by toil, so unredeemed by aught of higher hope—the mornings of hard work—the weekly evenings of dispute—and the Sabbath evening of drunkenness;—truly, a country which considers such a race as "her pride," is deplorably in want of something to be proud of. Let any one who indulges in such mischievous (we say mischievous, where these reveries take the place of remedies) visions of rural felicity, spend a week in the house of any country justice. The innocence of the country is very much like its health—a sort of refuge for the destitute: the poet talks of its innocence, from not

knowing where else to place it—and the physician of its health, sending thither his incurable patients, that they may at least not die under his hands.

Few now assembled but had a remembrance of some of those thousand little kindnesses which daily occur in the common intercourse of life. How often had her intercession been asked and obtained! Not a cottage but she had been in the habit of visiting. And who does not know that notice is often more gratefully remembered than service?—the one flatters, the other only obliges us. All the children crowded round with mingled impressions of joy and fear, according as memories of gingerbread or the Catechism prevailed; for Emily had taken much delight—perhaps a little pride—in her school. Sancho Panza says, it is pleasant to govern, though only a flock of sheep. Mrs. Arundel, however, hurried home—the popularity of another requires strong nerves!—not but that she herself was kind in her own way, and charitable too; but the difference was this—the aunt gave and scolded, the niece gave and smiled.

Mr. Arundel had lain down some time. Mrs. Arundel remained in the parlour with the

medical and legal ladies—she for news, they for luncheon—while Emily stole softly to her uncle's room. Though the light fell full on his face, he was asleep—a calm, beautiful, renovating sleep—and Emily sat down by the bedside. The love which bends over the sleeping is, save in its sorrow, like the love which bends over the dead—so deep, so solemn! Suddenly he opened his eyes, but without any thing of the starting return to consciousness with which people generally awake—perhaps her appearance harmonised with his dream. Without speaking, but with a look of extreme fondness, he took her hand, and, still holding it, slept again.

Emily felt the clasp tighten and tighten, till the rigidity was almost painful: she had drawn the curtains, lest the sun, now come round to that side of the house, should shine too powerfully; a strange awe stole over her in the gloom; she could scarcely, in its present position, discern her uncle's face, and she feared to move. The grasp grew tighter, but the hand that held hers colder; his breathing had all along been low, but now it was inaudible. Gently she bent her face over his; unintentionally—for she dreaded to awaken him—her lips touched

his; there was no breath to be either heard or felt, and the mouth was like ice. With a sudden, a desperate effort, she freed her hand, from which her uncle's instantly dropped on the bedside, with a noise, slight indeed, but, to her ears, like thunder; she flung open the curtains—again the light came full into the room—and looked on a face which both those who have not, and those who have before seen, alike know to be the face of death.

CHAPTER II.

“And the presence of death was in the house, and the shadows of the grave rested upon it.”

“YOU had far better, Emily, go to bed, and take a little hot wine and water—the nurse can sit up. What,” in a lower tone, “is she here for?”

“I cannot—indeed I cannot,” was the answer.

“Well, you always were obstinate;” and Mrs. Arundel took her own advice, viz. the hot wine and water, and the going to bed, leaving Emily to that sad and solemn watch the living keep by the dead.

A week had now elapsed; and let even the most indifferent—those linked to the dead by no ties of love or kindred—say what such a week is. The darkened windows—the empty rooms, whose very furniture looks unfamiliar in

the dim, excluded light—the stealthy steps, the whispering voices—faces with a strange, because necessary, gravity—and, whether it be those bowed down with real affliction, or those whose only feeling can be the general awe of death, all differing from their ordinary selves. And, with one of life's most usual, yet most painful contrasts—while the persons are so much changed, yet the things remain the same. The favourite chair, never to be filled again by its late occupier—the vacant place at table—a picture, perhaps now with more of life than its original—the thousand trifles that recall some taste or habit—and all these things so much more deeply felt when no long illness has already thrown events out of their usual circle, already broken in upon all old accustomed ways. When he who is now departed was amongst us but yesterday—when there has been, as it were, but a step from the fireside to the deathbed—a surprise and a shock add to the sorrow which takes us so unawares. And then the common events that fill up the day in domestic life—the provision for the living made in the presence of the dead; in one room a dinner, in the other a coffin—that strange mixture of ordinary occurrence

and unusual situation. And yet 'tis well:—make that week the gloomiest we can—exclude the glad daylight—silence the human voice and step—yet how soon, amid the after-hurry and selfishness of life, will that brief space of mourning be forgotten! There is wisdom in even the exaggeration of grief—there is little cause to fear we should feel too much.

It was nearly one o'clock when Emily began her solitary watch; and as the last sound died along the passage, her heart died within her too. Who shall account for the cold, creeping sensation that, in the depth of the night, steals over us? Who is there that has not felt that vague, but strong terror, which induces us—to use a childish, but expressive phrase—to hide our head under the bedclothes, as if there was some appearance which to look for was to see?—when we ourselves could give no definite cause for our fear, which our reason at the very moment tells us is folly, and tells us so in vain.

Even grief gave way before this sensation in Emily. She had said to herself that she would pray by the dead—take a long, last gaze on features so dear; and now she was rivetted to

her chair by a creeping terror, perhaps worse for having no ostensible cause. The arm-chair where she sat seemed a protection; what did, what could she dread in moving from it? She knew not, but she did dread. Her sight seemed to fail her as she looked round the vast dim room: the old painted ceiling appeared a mass of moving and hideous faces—the huge faded red curtains had, as it were, some unnatural motion, as if some appalling shape were behind—and the coffin—the unclosed coffin—left unclosed at her earnest prayer—her limbs refused to bear her towards it, and her three hours' vigil passed in mute terror rather than affliction. Suddenly a shadow fell before her—and not if life had depended on its suppression, could Emily have checked the scream that rose to her lips: it was only the nurse, who, her own sleep over, was to share the few hours that yet remained. The relief of a human face—the sound of a human voice—Emily felt absolutely grateful for the old woman's company. It was oppressively hot, and the nurse, drawing back the heavy curtains, opened one of the windows. Though the shutters still remained closed, a gleam of daylight came warm and crimson through each chink and crevice—"and it has

been light some time," thought Emily; and shame and regret, at having wasted in fear and folly hours so sacred, so precious, smote upon her inmost heart. Seated in an arm-chair, with her back to the light, her companion was soon again sleeping; and Emily, kneeling beside the coffin, looked for the last time on her uncle.

Deep as may be the regret, though the lost be the dearest, nay, the only tie that binds to earth, never did the most passionate grief give way to its emotion in the presence of the dead. Awe is stronger than sorrow: there is a calm, which, though we do not share, we dare not disturb: the chill of the grave is around them and us.—I have heard of the beauty of the dead: it existed in none that I have seen. The unnatural blue tinge which predominates in the skin and lips; the eyes closed, but so evidently not in sleep—in rigidity, not repose; the set features, stern almost to reproof; the contraction, the drawn shrunk look about the nose and mouth; the ghastly thin hands,—Life, the animator, the beautifier—the marvel is not, how thou couldst depart, but how ever thou couldst animate this strange and fearful tene-

ment. Is there one who has not at some time or other bent down—with that terrible mingling of affection and loathing impulse, each equally natural, each equally beyond our control—bent down to kiss the face of the dead? and who can ever forget the indefinable horror of that touch?—the coldness of snow, the hardness of marble felt in the depth of winter, are nothing to the chill which runs through the veins from the cold hard cheek, which yields no more to our touch: icy and immovable, it seems to repulse the caress in which it no longer has part.

Emily strove to pray; but her thoughts wandered in spite of every effort. Prayers for the dead we know are in vain; and prayers for ourselves seem so selfish. The first period is one of such mental confusion—fear, awe, grief, blending and confounding each other; we are, as it were, stunned by a great blow. Prayers and tears come afterwards.

She was roused from her reverie by words whose sense she comprehended not, but mechanically she obeyed the nurse, who led her into the adjoining room. It was her uncle's dressing closet, and his clothes were all scat-

tered about. There is no wretchedness like the sight of these ordinary and common objects—that these frail, worthless garments should thus outlast their wearer! But the noise in the next room became distinct—heavy steps, suppressed but unfamiliar—a clink as of workman's tools—and then the harsh grating sounds: they were screwing down the coffin. She threw herself on her knees; she buried her head in the cushions of the chair in vain; her sense of hearing was acute to agony; every blow struck upon her heart; but the stillness that followed was even worse. She rushed into the next room: it was empty—the coffin was gone! The sound of wheels, unnoticed till now, echoed from the paved courtyard—the windows only looked towards the garden; but the voices of strangers, from whose very thought she shrank, prevented her stirring. Slowly one coach after another drove off; she held her breath to catch the last sound of the wheels. All in a few minutes was silence, like that of the grave to which they were journeying.

Emily suddenly remembered that one of the windows commanded a turn in the road. She

opened it just in time to see the last black coach wind slowly through the boughs, so green, so sunny: that, too, past—and Emily sunk back, as if the conviction had but just reached her, that her uncle was indeed dead!

CHAPTER III.

“ He seemed
 To common lookers on like one who dreamed
 Of idleness in groves Elysian. Ah, well-a-day !
 Why should our young Endymion pine away ?”

KEATS.

“ The fateful day passed by ; and then there came
 Another and another.”—MARCIAN COLONNA.

“ Do you know this Lord Etheringhame, of whom I hear such romantic histories ?” said Adelaide Merton to her brother.

“ Not I. There’s devilish good shooting in his woods ; but they say he won’t let a creature come near his grounds — he can’t bear to see any body.”

“ How very interesting !”

“ A great fool.”

“ It is a noble place.”

“ He is not married, Adelaide.”

“ Do you know,” said the lady, reining her horse closer to her brother’s, with whom, *faute*

de mieux, she was riding, "I have taken a strange whim into my head? Now, Alfred, do let us contrive an introduction to this most unsociable gentleman. I am dying of *ennui* at my uncle's, and it would be quite an adventure."

"You are mighty clever — always were, in managing your own matters — not so stupid as you think me. What do you want with Lord Etheringhame?"

"Want with him! Nothing but the pleasure of doing what nobody else could — gaining admittance into this inhospitable castle."

"Fine shooting," again muttered Lord Merton; "and if I knew Lord Etheringhame, he might ask me to shoot over his grounds."

Campbell talks of the magic of a name — yes, if the name be partridges.

"Well, Adelaide; but how do you mean to contrive it?"

"The very elements conspire for me," replied Adelaide, pointing to two or three raindrops on her habit. "We are now in the only permitted road of the Park; but young people are very thoughtless. These fine old trees, a good point of view, tempt us to diverge — we take this road," turning her horse into one

closely shaded by beech : “ this, after a few more turns, brings us to a kind of pavilion. By that time—I do like showery weather—yonder black cloud will oblige us with its contents. You insist on my taking shelter in the pavilion : there we find Lord Etheringhame. We are distressed beyond measure at the intrusion—so surprised at finding him there. Talk of my delicate health : your romantic gentlemen have a great idea of delicacy. Leave the rest to me.”

“ Be sure you turn the conversation on shooting.”

But the rain, which now began to fall in good earnest, somewhat hurried their proceedings. A smart gallop brought them to the pavilion. A gallop always puts people in a good humour ; and Merton helped his sister to dismount more amiably than she expected.

They entered ; and, sure enough, there was Lord Etheringhame. The intelligence of that purveyor of ringlets and reports, her maid, was true, that here he usually spent his mornings. Apologies, and assurances that apologies were needless—exclamations at the weather, filled up the first ten minutes.

The surprise was something of a shock ;

but people may be frightened into their wits as well as out of them; and the necessity for exertion usually brings with it the power—and really Lord Etheringhame succeeded wonderfully well. Conversation became quite animated; the beauty of the scenery led to painting; painting to poetry. It was singular how well they agreed. It was very true Adelaide had read little more than the title-page of the works they talked about; but where a person is predetermined to acquiesce, comparative criticism is particularly easy. Perhaps his constitutional timidity had done more towards banishing Etheringhame from society than his melancholy; perhaps that shame attendant on change of opinion, however justifiable, (we hate to contradict ourselves, it is so rude), also supported the claims of a seclusion which had long been somewhat wearisome: but here time had not been given him for thick-coming fancies—and he found himself talking, nay, laughing, with a very lovely creature, and secretly asking himself, where was the embarrassment of it?

But neither showers nor any other means of human felicity, ever last. The clouds broke away, and the sun shone most provokingly in at the windows—a fact instantly stated by Lord

Merton, who was getting very tired of a conversation which as yet had not turned on his sort of game.

Adelaide was too scientific to prolong her stay: she had made her impression, and never had she looked more lovely. The slight, finely turned shape was seen to advantage in the close habit; its dark colour was in good contrast to a cheek flushed into the purest and most brilliant crimson by exercise; while her bright hair, relaxed by the rain, hung down in that half-curled state, perhaps its most becoming. A lingering hope of the covies gave unusual animation to her brother's manner, when he hoped their acquaintance was only begun: here Adelaide interposed:

“Mamma would be so delighted to offer her thanks. I am such a spoiled child, that every thing is of consequence. You do not know what an important thing a cold of mine is. But really we are such quiet people, I am afraid to ask you where there is so little inducement, unless”—and here she laughed one of those sweet frank laughs of childish reliance—“unless you come to see ourselves.”

What could a gentleman say but yes—“such quiet people,” “only ourselves?” Why

a refusal would be downright rude : nothing like putting a person under an obligation of doing what they wish. Our recluse said, " He must do himself the honour of inquiring if Lady Adelaide had taken cold."

Off they rode, and left a blank behind. Etheringhame took up a book, and thought how much pleasanter it was to talk than to read. He walked out—looked at his watch—wondered it was not later—wished dinner were ready ; in short, was in that most uncomfortable situation — of a young gentleman who has nothing to do : went to bed, and spent a restless night.

" Very well managed," said Adelaide, as they rode that morning away from the pavilion.

" I am sure," rejoined Merton, " I would not have gone in but for your promise about the shooting. Not a word did you say, though : —you won't find it so easy to take me in again."

" Wait a little, my good brother, and when those manors are at my feet, you shall shoot over them till you have killed partridges enow for a pyramid."

A single " humph"—much the same sort of

reply as the swine made to the lady in love with him — was the fraternal answer ; and they proceeded homewards.

With all the pleasant consciousness of meritorious endeavour and successful pursuit, did Adelaide hasten to her mother's dressing-room, which only that very morning had been the scene of most ungracious recrimination, — the daughter complaining bitterly of a summer of life's most important, *i. e.* most marriageable time, being wasted in a neighbourhood whose only resemblance to heaven was, that there was neither marrying nor giving in marriage, — there was not so much as a widower in the county. Certainly, her uncle Mr. Stanmore's residence, where they were upon a visit, had but a poor perspective for a young lady with speculation in her eyes. The mother, in return, eloquent on the folly of flirtation, and the involvement of debt — said Edward Lorraine might have been secured — and the parties had separated in sullen silence.

Lady Lauriston was therefore proportionably surprised to see the young lady re-enter, all smiles, eagerness, and apologies. Her adventures were soon recounted — plans formed — and assistance promised. Lord Etheringhame's

noble descent and nobler fortune rose in vivid perspective.

The next morning Lady Adelaide was surprised by her visitor at her harp. The open window and the figure were quite a picture—and Algernon had an eye for the picturesque. The Countess, however, only allowed time for effect, and entered. Conversation was soon pleasantly and easily begun. Nothing like feminine facilities for discourse; and with little talent and less information,—but with a tact, which, commenced by interest and sharpened by use, stood in lieu of both,—Lady Lauriston was a woman with whom it would be as wearisome to talk as it would be to perambulate long a straight gravel walk and neatly arranged flowers; but the first approach was easy—nay, even inviting. Lady Adelaide was what the French term *spirituelle*—one of those epithets which, like their *bijouterie* and *souvenirs*, are so neatly turned. Both saw at a glance that the common topics of the day would have reduced Algernon to silence;—he could take no part where he was so profoundly ignorant. Each, therefore, aided the other in guiding the dialogue to general subjects of taste, blent with a little tone of sentiment.

Imperceptibly the morning slipped away. Mr. Stanmore came in. Lady Lauriston confessed the early hours they kept. Dinner was just ready, and Lord Etheringhame staid; and after, when the gentlemen were left to their wine *tête-à-tête*—for Merton was from home—the uncle unconsciously forwarded all their plans. A plain, good man, whose kindness was the only obstacle to his shrewdness, and who, if sometimes wrong in his judgment, was only so from leaning to the favourable side, Mr. Stanmore was rejoiced to see his neighbour, though but for a day, leave a seclusion which very much militated against the ideas of one whose utility was of the most active description. A man of less warmth of heart might have been too indifferent—one of more refinement too delicate—to touch on Lord Etheringhame's habits. A kindly intention is often the best eloquence; and whether the prosperity of an argument, like that of a jest, lies in the ear of him who hears, certainly Mr. Stanmore had not his arguments so frequently followed by conviction. But the repose of our recluse had lately been broken in upon by divers and vexatious complaints. Grievances to be redressed, leases to be renewed, and a few plain

facts of the mismanagement and even misconduct of those around him, stated by an eye-witness, brought forcibly forward the evil of his indolent solitude. Hitherto he had consoled himself by that most mischievous of axioms — It hurts no one but myself. He was now obliged to acknowledge that it injured others also ; — and when Mr. Stanmore proposed a ride round a part of the estate now in sad and wasteful disorder, it met with ready acquiescence from his guest.

The evening passed delightfully. Adelaide soon found that talking of his brother was a great source of pride and pleasure to Algernon, in whom she forthwith expressed great interest, but of the most subdued and quiet kind. The avowal that a gentleman is a young man whom every one must admire, never implies any very peculiar admiration on the part of the speaker ; still, the acquaintance was a bond of union between them. The character that Adelaide was now supporting was one of unbroken spirits and natural vivacity, with an under-tone of deep feeling which as yet had never been called forth. The liveliness was on the principle of contrast — the feeling on that of sympathy. For a love affair, a mixture of the two is per-

fect. Love is at once the best temptation for a hermit, and the best cure for a misanthrope.

All the evening he thought her most fascinating ; but when, on his departure, both Mr. Stanmore and Lady Lauriston pressed the renewal of his visit, she looked towards him with a sweet, sudden glance of hope—and then dropped her eyes with such an exquisite mixture of eagerness and embarrassment, he felt she was quite irresistible. Vanity is love's visier, and often more powerful than his master.

Lord Etheringhame rode home slowly and musingly. A thousand delicious sensations quickened the beating of his pulses ;—a beautiful face floated before him—a delicate voice sounded, fairy-like, in his ear ; all of imagination which had lain dormant sprang up again—like colours in a painting brought from some dusty corner into a clear, bright light.

We talk of the folly of dreams—the waking and the vain—we should rather envy their happiness:—analyse their materials—foresee their end—and what remains? Vanity and vexation of spirit.

Much it would have added to Lord Etheringhame's enjoyment, could he have known that his feelings were being calculated upon by a

beautiful coquette and a match-making mother ; that it was his castle that was more matter of conquest than himself ; and that his family diamonds were his fair mistress's only idea of domestic felicity !

Oh, Life !—the wearisome, the vexatious—whose pleasures are either placed beyond our reach, or within it when we no longer desire them—when youth toils for the riches, age may possess but not enjoy ;—where we trust to friendship, one light word may destroy ; or to love, that dies even of itself ;—where we talk of glory, philosophical, literary, military, political—die, or, what is much more, live for it—and this coveted possession dwells in the consent of men of whom no two agree about it. First, let us take it in its philosophical point of view : the philosopher turns from his food by day, his sleep by night, to leave a theory of truth to the world, which the next age discovers to be a falsehood. Ptolemy perhaps bestowed as much thought on, and had as much pride in his solar system as Galileo.—Then in its literary, and truly this example is particularly encouraging : the poet feeds the fever in his veins—works himself up to the belief of imaginary sorrows, till they are even as his own—

writes, polishes, publishes — appeals first to a generous and discriminating public, then discovers that posterity is much more generous, and discriminating also — and bequeaths his works to its judgment. Of the hundred volumes entitled “The British Poets,” are there one dozen names “familiar as household words” (that true glory of the poet) among them? — Come we next to the military: the conqueror Alexander, in the danger and hurry of a night attack, when the flash of the sword and the glitter of the spear were the chief lights of the dark wave, dashed fearlessly on, encouraging himself with the thought, “This do I for your applause, oh Athenians!” It would be very pleasant to the warrior, could he hear the Athenians of our age call him a madman and a butcher! — The politician — oh, Job! the devil should have made you prime minister — set the Tories to impeach your religion, the Whigs your patriotism — placed a couple of Sunday newspapers before you — he certainly would have succeeded in making you curse and swear too; and then posterity — it will just be a mooted point for future historians, whether you were the saviour, the betrayer, or the tyrant of your country, those being the three choice

epitaphs kept for the especial use of patriots in power.

Or—to descend to the ordinary ranks and routine of life—we furnish a house, that our friends may cry out on our extravagance or bad taste;—we give dinners, that our guests may hereafter find fault with our cook or our cellar;—we give parties, that three parts of the company may rail at their stupidity;—we dress, that our acquaintance may revenge themselves on our silks, by finding fault with our appearance;—we marry; if well, it was interest—if badly, it was insanity;—we die, and even that is our own fault; if we had but done so and so, or gone to Dr. such a one, the accident would not have happened. A man accepts a bill for his friend, who pays it—the obligation is held trifling. “What’s in a name?” He fails—you have to pay it, and every one cries out against your folly. Oh, Life! what enables us to surmount your obstacles—to endure your disappointments—to believe your promises—but your illusions?

There is a pretty German story of a blind man, who, even under such a misfortune, was happy—happy in a wife whom he passionately loved: her voice was sweet and low, and he

gave her credit for that beauty which (he had been a painter) was the object of his idolatry. A physician came, and, curing the disease, restored the husband to light, which he chiefly valued, as it would enable him to gaze on the lovely features of his wife. He looks, and sees a face hideous in ugliness! He is restored to sight, but his happiness is over. Is not this our own history? Our cruel physician is Experience.

Lord Etheringhame, however, was enjoying himself. No illusions are so perfect as those of love—none, therefore, so pleasant. Like most imaginative people, Algernon was very susceptible to beauty. Perhaps it is with that attribute they so profusely endow their creations, and it comes to them with the charm of familiarity. And also, like most indolent people, he easily yielded to any impression: his character may be summed up by saying, he would have made an exquisite woman.

In the course of a few weeks the surprise excited in his household was raised to its height; for the housekeeper had orders to prepare a luncheon for a party coming to see the castle. The day arrived, and with it Lady Lauriston and her daughter. Enough had been heard of

its history, to know that the study would be rather awkward as a show-room in company; but a *tête-à-tête* is so confidential. With a little of mamma's assistance, Adelaide contrived to separate from the others, enter the room alone, and Lord Etheringhame was obliged to follow. "Constancy till death" is a common motto on glass seals — very proper substance for such an inscription; and before the picture of his late love, Algernon offered his vows to the new. Sympathy and confidence open the heart wonderfully; and Adelaide left that room the future Countess of Etheringhame.

Lady Lauriston was astonished and affected, after the most approved fashion. Mr. Stanmore was really surprised; and having some idea that it was a man's duty to marry, (he had had two wives himself), was very ready with his rejoicings and congratulations, which Lady Lauriston diverted most ingeniously from the lover, whose nerves she still considered in a most delicate state.

One disagreeable part of the business remained for Algernon, which was to write to his brother. Change of opinion is like waltzing — very much the fashion, and very proper; but the English have so many ridiculous per-

judices, that they really do both as if they were doing something very wrong.

It is to be doubted whether Lord Etheringham, after destroying some dozen sheets of paper, and pens the produce of a whole flock of geese, would not almost sooner have renounced his beautiful bride, than have had his letter to write—only that the former alternative was now the greater trouble of the two.

“After all,” said the unwilling writer, “I am only doing what Edward himself advised. I wish I had not been quite so positive when he was last here.”

All who hate letter-writing, particularly on disagreeable subjects, can sympathise with Lord Etheringham. It is very pleasant to follow one’s inclinations; but, unfortunately, we cannot follow them all. They are like the teeth sown by Cadmus; they spring up, get in each other’s way, and fight.

The letter was at length written and despatched;—then, as usual, came the after-thoughts of a thousand things left unsaid, or that might have been said so much better. Algernon started up;—man and horse were hurried after the epistle;—but time, tide, and

the post, wait for no one;—it was off by the mail.

Well, an obstinate temper is very disagreeable, particularly in a wife; a passionate one very shocking in a child; but, for one's own particular comfort, Heaven help the possessor of an irresolute one! Its day of hesitation—its night of repentance—the mischief it does—the miseries it feels!—its proprietor may well exclaim, “Nobody can tell what I suffer but myself!”

CHAPTER IV.

“ Thus death reigns in all the portions of our time. The autumn, with its fruits, provides disorders for us, and the winter’s cold turns them into sharp diseases ; and the spring brings flowers to strew our hearse, and the summer gives green turf and brambles to bind upon our graves.”

“ You can go no whither, but you tread upon a dead man’s bones.”

JEREMY TAYLOR.

IN all the slowness of sorrow, in all the weariness of monotony, had the last few months worn away: Emily recovered from regretting her uncle only to find how much she missed him. It is a wretched thing to pass one’s life among those utterly incapable of appreciating us; upon whom our sense or our sentiment, our wit or our affection, are equally thrown away: people who make some unreal and distorted picture of us—say it is our likeness, and act accordingly.

After the first grief, or rather fright, of Mr. Arundel’s death, and when broad hems and deep crape-falls had been sufficiently discussed to

have induced an uninitiated person to believe that people really died to oblige others to wear bombasin; Mrs. Arundel went back to her ordinary avocations—small savings and domestic inspections. To her the putting out of an extra candle, or detecting an unfortunate housemaid letting a sweetheart into the kitchen, were positive enjoyments. Intended by nature for a housekeeper, it was her misfortune, not her fault, that she was the mistress. She was one of those who, having no internal, are entirely thrown upon external resources: they must be amused and employed by the eye or the ear, and that in a small way. She never read—news was her only idea of conversation. As she often observed, “she had no notion of talking about what neither concerned herself nor her neighbours.” Without being vulgar in her manners—that, early and accustomed habits forbade—she was vulgar in her mind. She had always some small, mean motive to ascribe to every action, and invariably judged the worst and took the most unfavourable view of whatever debateable subject came before her. Like most silly people, she was selfish; and the constant fear of being overreached, sometimes gave a degree of shrewdness to her apprehensions.

Your weak animals are almost always cunning; and when any event, however improbable, justified suspicions, perhaps quite unjustifiable in the onset, then great was her small triumph — that ovation of the little mind : to borrow again one of her own favourite expressions, “ Well, well, I don’t set up for being so over clever; I’m none of your bookish people; but, thank Heaven, I have plenty of common sense ” — as if common sense were occasioned by the mere absence of higher qualities !

The secret of Mrs. Arundel’s character was, that she was a very vain woman, and had never had her vanity gratified. As an only child, she had enjoyed every indulgence but flattery. Her father and mother had been, after the fashion of their day, rather literary : the lady piqued herself upon writing such clever letters ; and the gentleman had maintained a correspondence with the Gentleman’s Magazine, touching the reign to which two brass candlesticks in the parish church belonged ; which important and interesting discussion arrived at every thing but a conclusion.

Her deficiency in, and disinclination to, all kinds of literary pursuits — the utter impossibility of making the young idea shoot in any

direction at all, occasioned such accomplished parents to undervalue, if possible, Mrs. Arundel's understanding. In short, as her mother justly observed, in a very clever letter to Mrs. Denbigh, her corresponding friend, "she was just fit to be married." And married she was, thanks to the affinities of landed property!

To prettiness—even with her most becoming cap, or her most indulgent mirror, she could make no pretension. Her ambition had hitherto been confined to being the best of wives,—so she scolded the servants—opened no book but her book of receipts—made soup without meat—decocted cowslips, parsneps, currants, and gooseberries, which, if not good wine, were very tolerable vinegar—bought bargains, for which no possible use could afterwards be found—worried her husband with petty economy, and yet contrived to combine all this with a very handsome share of personal expense; and as to her accounts, they would have puzzled the calculating boy himself.

While Mr. Arundel lived, the innate respectability of his character communicated itself in a degree to hers. Naturally of quiet and retired habits, the seclusion of his library, at first a refuge, soon became a necessity. At

home he had no society; his wife's conversation was made up of small complaints, or smaller gossip; his health was too delicate, his tastes too refined, for the run of county sports and county dinners—he was therefore thrown much upon his own resources, and his books became, what Cicero emphatically calls them, his friends and companions. But though they employed, they did not absorb; and he early saw the propriety of a check on many domestic theories, equally destructive of credit and comfort; and little manœuvres to avoid his disapprobation, or conceal from his knowledge, were the grand employment of his lady's most abstruse faculties; so that if Emily missed his society, Mrs. Arundel still more missed his authority.

The delightful feeling of opposition—obstinacy is the heroism of little minds—was past; she had, however, found a great resource in the society of a Mrs. Clarke. That perfect knowledge of our neighbours—which, in spite of the selfishness ascribed to human nature, is always so much more interesting than our own—only to be obtained by personal inspection, from which Mrs. Arundel was, in her present early stage of widowhood, debarred, was supplied by this

invaluable friend, with all the poetry of memory.

Pleasant was the sound of Mrs. Clarke's clogs deposited in the hall—a whole host of circumstantial details, inferences, and deductions, waited thereupon; or when the Doctor could be induced to stir out of an evening by the overpowering temptation of “my dear, poor Mrs. Arundel is all alone: it would be but kind if we stepped in to see how she is.”

“All alone, indeed! Hasn't she got her niece?”

“Ah! that puts me in mind that Miss Emily was saying you owed her her revenge at chess.”

“Did you tell cook to put by the leg of the turkey, to be deviled for my supper?”

“Talking of supper, poor Mrs. Arundel would keep a pheasant, sent yesterday, for our supper to-night. I can assure you she quite relied on our coming; and, to tell you the truth, I did not refuse. I am always glad when you go to the Hall—that old Port wine of poor dear Mr. Arundel's is quite a medicine to you.”

“Well, as you say, poor thing! she is very lonely—I don't care if we do go; though Miss Emily is not much company, except to play chess.”

Evening after evening was thus passed away — poor Emily tied to the chess-board with an adversary who seemed to look upon her as a machine to move the pieces, with which he could be cross when beaten; while the two ladies discussed such circumstantial evidence as the day had collected, and communicated their various fancies founded on the said facts. Can it be wondered at that Emily's thoughts would wander from scenes like these? Thoughts rarely wander without an object; and that object once found, they fix there with all the intensity which any thing of sentiment acquires in solitude or idleness.

Absence is a trial whose result is often fatal to love; but there are two sorts of absence. I would not advise a lover to stake his fortune or his feelings on the faith of the mistress whose absence is one of flattery, amusement, and that variety of objects so destructive to the predominance of one—at least not to trust an incipient attachment to such an ordeal; but he may safely trust absence which is passed in loneliness, where the heart, thrown upon itself, finds its resource in that most imaginative faculty—memory. The merits of that lover must be small indeed, whom a few lonely walks,

the mind filled with those dreaming thoughts which haunt the favourite path in the shrubbery, or under the old trees of the avenue; a few evenings passed singing those songs he once heard; or during a chain of those romantic plans which occupy the thoughts while the fingers are busy with lacework or satin-stitch needlework—why, a love-dream has no greater assistant;—again I say, a lover must have few merits indeed, whom a few such mornings and evenings do not raise into a standard of perfection; and till, from thinking how happy one might be with him, it seems next to an impossibility to be happy without him.

Every girl has a natural fancy for enacting the heroine—and, generally speaking, a very harmless fancy it is, after all. Certainly, the image of Lorraine was very often present to Emily. Occupation she had none but what she made for herself—objects for affection, none; and her uncle's death gave a shade of sadness to her sentiments, the best calculated for making them indelible; while the worst of her present mode of life—especially to one so imaginative, and whose feelings, though so timid, were so keen—was, that it passed in indolent melancholy, too likely to become habitual. One con-

sequence of her recent loss was, that any return of gay spirits seemed—as it ever seems at first to grief—sacrilege to the memory of the dead ; whereas the remembrance of Lorraine was so unallied to hope, that the sadness of her love was meet companion for the sorrow of her affection.

A long melancholy winter passed away, and Emily looked quite pale, and thin enough to justify her aunt's frequent and pleasant predictions, that she was either in a consumption or in love ; both which were duly ascribed to her London visit. Mrs. Arundel recommended warm milk from the cow ; and Mrs. Clarke turned in her mind the advantages of another lover.

Mrs. Arundel's lacteal plan came to nothing. Emily was “ as obstinate as her poor dear uncle,” and could never be persuaded or coaxed to rise on a raw cold morning— not for all the benefits of the milky way. Mrs. Clarke's sentimental system had its consequences.

It was one of those bright soft mornings,

“ Like angel visits, few and far between,”

when spring and sunshine take February by surprise—when one faint tinge of green is seen on the southern side of the hedge—when every

little garden has its few golden crocuses, and the shrubbery is overrun with thousands of snow-drops—the fair slight flower which so looks its name—that Emily was passing through the little wood, whose old trees and huge branches in winter gave warmth, as in summer they gave shade. The clear blue sky peering through the boughs—the sunshine reflected from the silvery stems of the birch—an occasional green old laurel, whose size was the only mark of its age—the warm air,—all seemed to bid a cheerful farewell to winter; and Emily loitered on her homeward path, lost in visionary creations, which perhaps took an unconscious brightness from the glad influences of sun and air—when her reverie was broken in upon by a strange step and voice. “The pleasure I feel at seeing Miss Arundel again will perhaps prove my excuse for thus trespassing on her solitary meditations.” A primrose kid glove put aside the branches, a breath of perfume *aux milles fleurs* came upon the air, and a very good-looking cavalier stepped forward; though, what with pre-occupation, surprise, and actual forgetfulness, it was some minutes before she recalled the identity of the stranger with that of Mr. Boyne Sillery.

Now this recognition was any thing but pleasant. In the first place, he had broken in upon the pleasures of hope—his interruption had destroyed a most fair and fairy castle; secondly, he was connected with any thing but the pleasures of memory. The conversation at Howell and James's rose to her mind—the knowledge of which, however, was not sufficiently flattering for her to display it; a civil answer was therefore necessary, though, it must be owned, the civility was chilling enough.

Mr. Boyne Sillery was, however, not to be deterred—though his companion was not inclined to talk, he was. He enlarged on the beauty of the country, ventured to hint that his fair companion looked somewhat paler than in London, apropos to which he recounted some deaths, marriages, and fashions, which had taken place since her departure; when, suddenly, Emily thanked him for his escort, muttered something about her aunt's not being at home, and disappeared through the little gate of the shrubbery.

With what eyes of shame does a young lady look back to a flirtation of which she was heartily tired! That evening she lingered some-

what longer than usual in her own apartment, despite of divers summonings down stairs, when, what was her surprise, on entering the room, to see her aunt, Mrs. Clarke, and Mr. Boyne Sillery, seated, in apparently high good humour, round the tea-table. Mrs. Clarke immediately bustled up, and left room for Emily between herself and the gentleman, whom she introduced as her brother; and, taking it for granted that the young people must make themselves agreeable to each other, forthwith directed her conversation entirely to Mrs. Arundel.

The young people, however, were not quite so agreeable as one of the party, at least, could have wished. Emily's coldness was neither to be animated by news nor softened by flattery: since Mrs. Danvers's ball, her taste had been sufficiently cultivated to see through the pretensions of affectation: moreover, she was past the season of innocent entire belief; and the thought would cross her mind, that the heiress of Arundel Hall was a more important person in Mr. Boyne Sillery's eyes than Lady Alicia's pretty *protégée*.

The evening passed heavily, and Emily extinguished her candle that night in the conviction that an equal extinguisher had been put

on Mr. Boyne Sillery's hopes, and, she could not help adding, his sister's, too, from whose fertile brain she conceived that the plan of capture, or, at least, the information of the heiress, had emanated. She was not far wrong there.

Mrs. Clarke was one whose whole life had been a practical illustration of the doctrines of utility. The eldest daughter of a large family, with neither fortune nor face meant to be one, Miss Sillery could not, at thirty, recollect a single opportunity which she had ever had of escaping the care of her mother's keys and her younger sisters. She had been saving and sensible to no purpose—in vain had the maternal side of the house eulogised her prudence, or the paternal her cookery—the house she was to manage with such perfection was not yet hers. However, as some Arabic poet says,

“ The driest desert has its spring ;”

or, as our own language less elegantly expresses it,

“ Luck knocks once at every man's door ;”

and the knock at Miss Sillery's door, and the spring in her desert, came in the shape of the Rev. Dr. Clarke ; of whom little can be said, except that he was a lucky clergyman with

two livings, who had the appetite of a glutton with the daintiness of a *gourmet*, and who had once, in a fit of delight at a haunch of venison done to a turn, narrowly escaped marrying the cook, when he fortunately remembered it would spoil her for her situation.

Distantly related to the Silleries, he paused there for a night on a journey—he hated sleeping at inns, the beds were so often damp; and they received him with that glad respect which poor relations pay to their rich ones. At dinner he was very much struck with the gravy to the wild ducks; a college pudding forced from him an inquiry: both were made by Miss Sillery. Some potted larks next morning completed the business: he finished the jar, and made her an offer, which was received with all the thankfulness due to unexpected benefits.

Henry VIII. rewarded the compounder of a pudding which pleased his palate by the gift of a monastery; Dr. Clarke did more—he gave himself. To say the truth, the marriage had turned out as well as marriages commonly do: she was fortunate in having a house to manage, and he in having a wife to scold; and certainly their dinners were as near perfect felicity as earthly enjoyments usually are.

Now it so happened that Francis was Mrs. Clarke's favourite: whether from having seen the least of him, or from the great difference between them—two common causes of liking—or because she felt some sort of vanity in her near relationship to so very fine a gentleman, are points too curious to be decided by any but a metaphysician. However, having his interest at heart, and some idea that his fortune must and ought to be made by marriage, she had sent the invitation and intelligence which led to Emily's meeting so interesting a companion in her morning walk.

To be sure, the *tête-à-tête* to which Mrs. Clarke's good management had that evening consigned them had been rather a silent one; still, as it never entered the elder lady's head that such a nice young man could fail to be a very Cæsar of the affections—to come, see, and conquer—she only remarked, as they walked home, “a poor stupid thing—but never mind, Frank, she'll make the better wife;” and forthwith she commenced enumerating a series of divers alterations and reformations (now-a-days, we believe, the one word is synonymous with the other), which were to take place when her brother was master of Arundel Hall.

There never was woman yet who had not some outlet for disinterested affection. Mrs. Clarke was as worldly in a small way as a country lady could be, and possessed as much selfishness as ever moral essay ascribed to a fashionable one; and yet her desire for her brother's success was as entirely dictated by sincere and uncalculating attachment to him as ever was that of heroine of romance who prays for her lover's happiness with her rival.

Mr. Boyne Sillery did not interrupt her: a plan, in which, as Byron says,

“ The images of things
Were dimly struggling into light,”

now floated before him, but in which it was something too premature to expect her co-operation—indeed, her absolute opposition was to be feared.

The next day a severe cold confined her to the house, with which piece of information he was duly despatched to the Hall: apparently, he found his visit pleasant, for he only reappeared at dinner-time, and then not till the Doctor had finished his first slice of mutton. The Doctor never waited—the warmth of a joint, like the warmth of a poet's first idea,

was too precious to be lost. This system of never waiting was equally good for his constitution and his temper; so that Mr. Sillery's late entrance only produced pity, and a recommendation for a hot plate, as the gravy was getting quite cold.

He was sent again the next day, to ask Mrs. and Miss Arundel to dinner. But Emily's excuse could not be gainsayed — she had that morning received news of the death of Lady Alicia Delawarr. At all times this would have been a shock — but now, how forcibly did it recall her uncle! Two deaths in a few short months! — the grave became familiar only to seem more terrible.

Lady Alicia's summons was awfully sudden. She had returned from the Opera, seemingly in perfect health: as she crossed the hall, Mr. Delawarr was entering his library; he stopped a moment, and fastened on her beautiful arm an exquisite cameo. To Delawarr his wife was a species of idol, on which he delighted to lavish offerings: perhaps her calm, placid temper suited best with his feverish and ambitious life; what to another would have been insipidity was to him repose. As usual, on entering the drawing-room she sank into an

arm-chair, when, missing her shawl, which she had dropped while holding out her hand for the bracelet, she desired her maid to fetch it, as she was cold. On the attendant's return, which was delayed by some trifling accident, she was surprised to see that her lady's head had fallen on one side, and one hand had dropped nearly to the ground, her weight supported only by the arm of the chair: she hurried forward, and the first look on the face was enough—it was deadly pale, and the features set as if by some sudden contraction.

Assistance was soon procured—but in vain; and Mr. Delawarr, who had himself been the first to enter, and had carried her to the sofa in her dressing-room, heard the physician pronounce that to be death, where there had been no thought of even danger. There she lay—so quiet, and looking so beautiful—for, to a face whose outline was perfect as a statue, the repose of utter stillness rather added to than diminished its beauty—the rich hair ornamented with gold flowers—the diamond necklace, catching the various colours of the room, and casting them on the neck—the slender fingers, so cold, so stiff, but glistening with gems—the crimson dress, whose contrast now

seemed so unnatural to the skin, which had the cold whiteness of marble; and, as if every mockery of life were to be assembled round the dead, a large glass opposite reflected her whole face and figure—while a canary, to which she had lately taken a fancy, awakened by the light and noise, filled the room with his loud and cheerful song. The bird effected what no entreaties could effect: Mr. Delawarr started from the ground, where he was kneeling beside the body, as if insensible to the presence of every one, and hurried to his library. He locked the door, and no one that night ventured to disturb him.

To say that Emily felt very passionate grief would be untrue; but her heart was softened by her own recent loss, though her regret was scarcely powerful enough to prevent the thought, that with Lady Alicia was lost the only link between herself and Lorraine. But the hopelessness of her attachment gave it a species of elevation; and love, driven from one place of refuge to another, only made an altar of the last.

There was something odd that day about Mrs. Arundel which very much puzzled Mrs. Clarke—surely her friend had put on a little rouge; and hair, on whose curl evident pains had been

bestowed, took off much of the precision of the widow's cap; moreover, there was a flutter in her manner—a little girlish laugh—less interest than usual was taken in the news of the village—no allusion was made to poor dear Mr. Arundel—and there was that fidgety mysterious air which seems to say, there is a secret longing to be told. There were two reasons why it was not told—first, Mrs. Arundel was not quite sure whether she really had a secret to tell; and, secondly, what with hoarseness, headach, and water-gruel, Mrs. Clarke was not in the best possible condition for cross questioning.

Well, a fortnight passed by, during which that lady did not see Mrs. Arundel, when her principles received a shock by the astounding news that Miss Barr, the glass of fashion, the milliner of the adjacent town, had sent to the Hall two caps—not widow's caps, but, as the young person, who called on her way home, said, “such light tasty things;” and a servant who had been there with a message brought back word that one of these “light tasty things” was actually on Mrs. Arundel's head.

Now, Mrs. Clarke was one of those to whom caps and crape were the very morality of mourning—she was not the only one, by the by, with

whom propriety stands for principle,—and this deviation of her friend at first excited surprise, then softened into sorrow, and finally roused into anger—which anger, under the name of opinion, she forthwith set out to vent on the offender, after having bestowed a portion of it on her husband, who encountering her, cold, cloak, and all, had raised her indignation by not being so much astonished as herself, and calmly replying,

“ Well, my dear, this said cap—I dare-say she is setting it at your brother.”

If there be two things in the world—to use a common domestic expression—enough to provoke a saint, it is, first to have your husband not enter into your feelings—(your feelings sound so much better than your temper)—and, in the second place, laughing at them. Now, Dr. Clarke’s not regarding a widow’s conduct in leaving off her cap as absolutely immoral, was not very tenable ground, for men are not supposed to know much about such matters; but this allusion to Boyne was a very respectable outlet for resentment.

“ Her brother, indeed, to marry such an old woman! She was very much deceived if there were not younger ones who would be

glad to get him; and really she did not think Dr. Clarke was at all justified in speaking so lightly of Mrs. Arundel — she could not bear such ill-natured insinuations.”

Amid a shower of similar sentences, the Doctor escaped, and his lady proceeded on her way.

People in general little know how much they are indebted to those matrimonial discussions. Many a storm has fallen softly on the offender's head, from a part having been previously expended on a husband or wife, — it is so convenient to have somebody at hand to be angry with; — and whether it was the quarrel with her husband, or the walk, that did Mrs. Clarke good, she certainly arrived at the Hall in a better humour than could have been expected. She was met at the door by Emily, whose slight confusion at encountering her was immediately interpreted mysteriously and favourably; and when the young lady evidently hesitated as she said, “ I have left my aunt and Mr. Sillery in the breakfast-room,” Mrs. Clarke was very near congratulating her future sister, who, however, disappeared too rapidly.

She found Mrs. Arundel in a lace cap, and a dress — black, it is true, but black silk ! Had

she bade farewell to her senses, decency, and bombasin together? All those delicate inquiries were, however, postponed by the presence of her brother; but, as we say poetically, "her thoughts were too great for utterance;" conversation languished; and but for discussing the merits of some black-currant jam, which had been sent for, as Mrs. Clarke seemed hoarse, it would have sunk into silence.

The visit was short and embarrassed; and she was scarcely out of the house, before severe animadversions were poured forth, on Mrs. Arundel's most improper dress, to Mr. Boyne Sillery, her companion home.

"Why, you see, my dear sister, it is quite unnecessary for a lady to lament one husband who is meditating taking another."

"Stuff!—you are just as silly as the Doctor: I should like to see who would put such nonsense into her head."

"I am glad you would like to see the individual—for, my dear Elizabeth, he is now walking with you."

"Why, you have never been so silly as to advise her to marry?"

"Indeed I have most strongly advised it."

"Good Lord! don't you know that her for-

tune is all at her own disposal, and would certainly go to Miss Emily at her death?"

"I do not see any reason why I should be so careful of Miss Emily's interests: I freely confess I prefer my own."

"Don't you see they are all one? Mrs. Arundel's property will be a very pretty windfall when you have been married a few years—not but that Emily has a handsome fortune—still, I don't see any necessity for being so disinterested: and pray, who has the foolish woman taken into her head?"

"Her choice will, I flatter myself, at least please you, as I myself am the fortunate man."

"I do beg you will not be so provoking—I am not in a humour for a joke."

"Joke, my dear sister?—marriage is a very serious piece of business."

"You don't mean to say that you are going to marry Mrs. Arundel?"

"Indeed I do. Now, to speak plainly—as I ought to do to a woman of sense like yourself—I am in debt over head and ears. Desperate diseases require desperate remedies. Miss Arundel has some silly fancy of her own: I remember she and Lord Merton flirted desperately. Besides, to tell you the truth, in town

I rather slighted her : women are d——d unforgiving. I like the aunt quite as well as I do the niece ; her fortune is at her own disposal, and your brother may as well benefit by it as another—I shall make her an excellent husband.”

Surprise is the only power that works miracles now-a-days ; it fairly silenced Mrs. Clarke for full five minutes. Vexation at what she thought her brother's throwing himself away—mortification beforehand at her husband—for Dr. Clarke had a love for ponderous and orthodox jokes, whose edge had worn off by long use—anger at Emily, whom she considered the cause of all this—wonder at Mrs. Arundel—together with a gradual awakening to the pecuniary advantages of the match—all crossed and jostled her mind at once. At last she gasped out—“ Are you sure Mrs. Arundel will have you ? ”

“ I suppose so. I made her an offer this morning, which she accepted.”

True enough : for the last fortnight he had been a constant visitor at the Hall ; and Emily, who naturally supposed she was the object of his attraction, gave his visits only one thought—and that was, how to avoid them. Lady

Alicia's death had, even more than usual, thrown her among her own reflections: once or twice, to be sure, her maid had said, "Lord, miss, you see if your aunt does not run away with your beau!"

A young man, in the country, is always disposed of, whether with or without his consent; and Emily considered it quite in the common course of things that Mr. Sillery should be set down to her account;—and as for the remark about her aunt, she held it to be an impertinence which it would be wrong to encourage by even listening to such an absurdity.

One morning, however, entering the breakfast-room rather suddenly, to her surprise she saw her aunt and Mr. Sillery seated, her hand in his, while he was speaking with great earnestness. Retreat she could not, without being perceived—and she stood one moment in all the embarrassment of indecision; when Mr. Sillery, who had seen her enter, rose—and, before she could speak, led her forward, and with the utmost coolness entreated her to plead for him. "Yes, dear Miss Arundel, join your persuasions with mine—implore our kind friend to make me the happiest of men."

This was really too good; and Emily hurried

from the room. At the door she encountered Mrs. Clarke; and the late conversation proved that the gentleman needed no eloquence but his own.

The next meeting between Emily and her aunt was awkward enough. Emily could not but feel how little respect had been shewn to her uncle's memory. Of course, she saw through and despised Mr. Sillery's mercenary motives; but equally saw that remonstrance would be vain. Mrs. Arundel, like most people who have done a silly thing, was rather ashamed to confess it, and yet glad to have it come out—we judge of others by ourselves—and had screwed her courage up for taunts and reproaches; and when Emily indulged in neither, but only quietly and distantly alluded to the subject, she felt rather grateful to her than otherwise.

At the vicarage—for Dr. Clarke's parish lay close enough to be always disputing with its neighbour about boundaries and paupers—at the vicarage the disclosure was made. After dinner, the Doctor was in high good humour at what he called his penetration—joked Mr. Boyne Sillery—was, or at least did his best to be, witty about widows—and really did remember a prodigious number of jests, respect-

able at least for their antiquity. Mrs. Clarke comforted herself by the moral reflection of, "Money is every thing in this world," and giving vent to her spleen by an occasional sneer; while Mr. Sillery bore it all with a tolerably good grace, and meditated how soon he should be able to manage a separation.

In a few days the news was whispered through the village. Nothing circulates so rapidly as a secret. One made one remark, and another made another;—some said, "how shameful!"—others, "how silly!"—but the sum total of all their remarks seemed to be the old proverb, "No fool like an old one!"

CHAPTER V.

“ Who loves, raves—’tis youth’s frenzy—but the cure
Is bitterer still ; as charm by charm unwinds
Which robed our idols, and we see, too sure,
Nor worth nor beauty dwells from out the mind’s
Ideal shape of such ; yet still it binds
The fatal spell, and still it draws us on.”

BYRON.

We shall find her such an acquisition to our circle.

Common Country Expression.

IT is said, when things come to the worst, they mend. General assertions, like general truths, are not always applicable to individual cases ; and though Fortune’s wheel is generally on the turn, sometimes when it gets into the mud, it sticks there. However, the present case is confirmatory of the good old rule ; for Emily’s situation was on the point of being greatly altered, by one of those slight circumstances which are the small hinges on which the ponderous gates of futurity turn.

The entrance to Fonthill—that truly cloud-capt palace, so fantastic and so transitory—was by two stupendous doors, which seemed to defy the strength of giants. A black dwarf came, and opened them at a touch: the mighty doors revolved on some small spring. These portals are the seemingly insuperable difficulties and obstacles of life, and the dwarf is the small and insignificant circumstance which enables us to pass through them.

A severe shower in the park, which wetted Frank Mandeville to the skin, gave him cold, and in a few weeks reduced the beautiful and delicate child to a skeleton. Half the doctors in London were summoned; Lady Mandeville never stirred from his bedside; when one of them said, “The child is being petted to death;—let him try his native air, run about, and don’t let him eat till he is hungry.”

His advice was followed. Norville Abbey, uninhabited since the first year of her marriage, was ordered to be prepared. Windows were opened, fires lighted, rooms dusted, the avenues cleared, the shrubbery weeded, with all the celerity of the rich and the wilful. Ah! money is the true Aladdin’s lamp; and I have often thought the Bank of England is the mys-

terious roc's egg, whose movements are forbidden to mortal eye.

The village and the bells were alike set in motion;—the butcher and the baker talked of the patriotism of noblemen who resided on their estates, and went up to solicit orders;—Mrs. Clarke wondered whether her ladyship would visit in the country;—Mrs. Arundel simpered, and hinted “she dare-sayed some time hence they would be delightful neighbours;”—Emily said that Lady Mandeville, whom she had seen in London, was a very lovely woman, and thought no more about her—except, one day, when she heard a carriage drive into the court, to be out of the way—and once, when she caught sight of a strange shawl, to turn into another path; for she had gradually sunk into that sickly and depressed state of spirits which dreads change, and nervously shrinks from the sight of a stranger;—when, one morning, her path was fairly beset by two fairy-like children, and Lady Mandeville stepping forward, said, laughingly, “My prisoner, by all the articles of war; I shall not let you go without ransom.” Escape was now impossible. They took the remainder of the walk together; and, her first embarrassment past,

Emily was surprised, when they reached the little shrubbery-gate, to find the morning had passed so quickly.

The next day brought her the following note from Lady Mandeville :—

“ In begging you, my dear Miss Arundel, to come to-day and dine with Lord Mandeville and myself, I only hold out, as your inducement, that a good action is its own reward. Hospitality is the virtue of the country ;—do give me an opportunity of practising it. To be the third in a matrimonial *tête-à-tête* is, I confess, rather an alarming prospect ; but we promise not to quarrel, and to make a great deal of yourself.

“ So do oblige yours truly,

“ ELLEN MANDEVILLE.”

Lady Mandeville, even in London, where only to remember any body is an effort, had always liked Emily ; and in the country, which her ladyship thought might be healthy, but that was all that could be said for it—such a companion would be inestimable ; and, to do her justice, she had other and kinder motives. A week’s residence had given her sufficient knowledge of the statistics of the county to

pity Emily's situation very sincerely. She foresaw all the disagreeables of her foolish aunt's still more foolish marriage, to one especially who was so friendless, and whose beauty and fortune seemed to be so singularly without their usual advantages.

Lady Mandeville was, like most affectionate tempers, hasty in her attachments. The person to whom she could be kind was always the person she liked, and was, moreover, the most perfect person possible. Perhaps there was a little authority in her affection—certainly it was a very creative faculty ; and long before Emily came, her new friend had sketched out for her a most promising futurity—a brilliant marriage, &c. &c. &c. ; nay, had communicated a portion to her husband, who, as usual, smiled, and said, “ Very well, my dear ; we shall see.”

Whatever the future might be, the present was most delightful. It had been so long since Emily had spoken to any one capable of even comprehending a single idea, much less of entering into a single feeling, that conversation was like a new sense of existence.

How irksome, how wearying, to be doomed always to the society of those who are like people speaking different languages ! It re-

semples travelling through the East, with a few phrases of *lingua franca*—just enough for the ordinary purposes of life—enow of words to communicate a want, but not to communicate a thought! Then, again, though it be sweet to sit in the dim twilight, singing the melancholy song whose words are the expression of our inmost soul, till we could weep as the echo of our own music, still it is also very pleasant to have our singing sometimes listened to. At all events, it was much more agreeable to hear Lord Mandeville say, “We must have that song again—it is one of my great favourites,” than Mrs. Arundel’s constant exclamation, “Well, I am so sick of that piano!”

One day led to another, till Emily passed the greater part of her time at the Abbey. Her spirits regained something of their naturally buoyant tone, and she no longer believed that every body was sent into the world to be miserable. Not that Lorraine was forgotten. Often did she think, “Of what avail is it to be loved or admired?—he knows nothing of it;” and often, after some gay prediction of Lady Mandeville’s, of the sensation she was to produce next season, she would weep, in the loneliness of her own chamber, over one remembrance,

which distance, absence, and hopelessness, seemed only to render more dear.

“Is it possible,” she often asked herself, “that I am the same person who, last spring, fancied a visit to London the summit of earthly enjoyment? I remember how my heart beat while reading Mr. Delawarr’s letter: what did I hope for? what did I expect?—no one positive object. But how little it took then to give me pleasure!—how many things I then took pleasure in, that are now, some indifferent, many absolutely distasteful! I no longer read with the enjoyment I did: instead of identifying myself with the creations of the writer, I pause over particular passages—I apply the sorrows they depict to my own feelings; and turn from their lighter and gayer pages—they mock me with too strong a contrast. I do not feel so kind as I did. I wonder how others can be gratified with things that seem to me positively disagreeable. I ought to like people more than I do. Alas! I look forward to next year and London with disgust. I would give the world to remain quiet and unmolested—to make my own life like a silent shadow—and to think my own thoughts. I wish for nothing—I expect nothing.”

Emily had yet to learn, that indifference is but another of the illusions of youth: there is a period in our life before we know that enjoyment is a necessity—that, if the sweet cup of pleasure palls, the desire for it fades too—that employments deepen into duties—and that, while we smile, ay, and sigh too, over the many vain dreams we have coloured, and the many vain hopes we have cherished—a period of re-action, whose lassitude we have all felt:—this influence was now upon Emily. She was young for such a feeling—and youth made the knowledge more bitter.

“ I do not think,” said a welcome though unexpected visitor, in the shape of Mr. Morland, “ that Miss Arundel’s roses are so blooming in the country as they were in town. Pray, young lady, what have you done with your allegiance to the house of Lancaster?”

“ What!” exclaimed Lady Mandeville, “ Mr. Morland among the rural philosophers, who talk of health as if it grew upon the hawthorns?”

“ My dear Ellen,” said her husband, who had his full share of love for the divers species of slaughtering,

“ Whether in earth, in sea, in air,”
that make up the rustic code of gentlemanlike

tastes, "I do wonder what you see in London to like."

"Every thing. I love perfumes: will you tell me the fragrant shower from my crystal flask of *bouquet de roi* is not equal to your rose, from which I inhale some half-dozen insects, and retain some dozen thorns? I love music: is not the delicate flute-like voice of Sontag equal at least to the rooks which scream by day, and the owls which hoot by night? Is not Howel and James's shop filled with all that human art can invent, or human taste display—*bijouterie* touched with present sentiment, or radiant with future triumph? Or your milliner's, where vanity is awakened but to be gratified, and every feminine feeling is called into action? Are not those objects of more interest than a field with three trees and a cow? And then for society—heaven defend me from localities, your highways and byways of conversation; where a squire, with a cast-iron and crimson countenance, details the covey of fourteen, out of which he killed five; or his lady, with the cotton velvet gown—her dinner-dress ever since she married—recounts the trouble she has with her servants, or remarks that it is a great shame—indeed, a

sign of the ruin to which every thing is hastening—that all the farmers' daughters come to church in silk gowns; a thing which the Queen will not allow in the housemaids of Windsor Castle. Then the drives, where you see no carriage but your own—the walks, where you leave on every hedge a fragment of your dress. Deeply do I sympathise with the French Countess, who (doomed to the society of three maiden aunts, two uncles—one of the farming, the other of the shooting species—and a horde of undistinguishable cousins) said, when advised to fish for her amusement, or knit for her employment, 'Alas! I have no taste for innocent pleasures.'

"I do think," returned Mr. Morland, "that the country owes much of its merit to being unknown. The philosopher speaks of its happiness, the poet of its beauties, on the very reverse principle to Pope's: they should alter this line, and say,

'They best can paint them who have known them least.'

Still, the country is very pleasant sometimes. I do not feel at all discontented just now," glancing first round the breakfast table, and

then to the scene without, which was quite lovely enough to fix the glance that it caught.

Spring and Morning are ladies that owe half their charms to their portrait-painters. What are they in truth? One, a mixture of snow that covers the fair earth, or thaws that turn it into mud—keen east winds, with their attendant imps, coughs and colds—sunshine, which just looks enough in at the window to put out the fire, and then leaves you to feel the want of both. As for the other, what is it but damp grass, and an atmosphere of fog—to enjoy which, your early rising makes you sick and tired the rest of the day? These are the harsh and sallow realities of the red-lipped and coral-cheeked divinities of the picture.

After all, the loveliness of Spring and Morning is like that of youth—the beauty of promise; beauty, perhaps, the most precious to the soul. Campbell exquisitely says,

“ 'Tis distance lends enchantment to the view :”

and let the heart be thankful from its inmost depths for that imaginative and self-existent faculty which first lends enchantment to the distance.

Spring, however, now and then gives us a beautiful day — to shew, if she does make a promise, she has a stock of sunshine on hand wherewith to keep it. Such a day was now shining on Norville Abbey. The gray mist, which imparts such indescribable beauty to an English landscape, was now illuminated with the morning light, and hung round the turrets a bright transparent mass of vapour, which you seemed to expect would every moment clear away, like those which, in the valley of St. John, opened and gave to view the enchanted castle. They never did clear away—still it was something to have expected.

One side of the building was completely covered with ivy: it was like a gigantic bower; and the numerous windows where the branches had been pruned, seemed like vistas cut in the luxuriant foliage. The rest of the walls were stained and gray, carved with all varieties of ornament; flowers cut in the stone, the cross at every angle, the winged heads representing the cherubim—niches, where male and female saints stood in divers attitudes of prayer—and arched lattices, whose small glittering panes seemed too thankful for a sunbeam not to reflect it to the utmost. The imagination must

have been cold, and the memory vacant indeed, which gazed unexcited on the venerable pile.

Religion was never more picturesque than in the ancient monastery. History, poetry, romance, have alike made it the shrine for their creations. The colour thrown over its remembrances is like the rich and purple hues the stained glass of the painted window flings on the monuments beneath.

The situation, too, was one of great natural beauty. At the back was a smooth turf, unbroken save by two gigantic cedars, stately as their native Lebanon, and shadowy as the winters they had braved. This sloped down to a large lake, where the image of the abbey lay as in a mirror—every turret, every arch, dim, softened, but distinct: beyond were fields covered with the luxuriant and rich-looking green of the young corn—for the park had not been preserved—till the varied outlines of undulating hedge, groups of old elms, distant meadows, and the verdant hills, were lost in the blue sky.

The view from the breakfast-room was of an utterly different and confined character. The thick growth of the fine old trees, and the un-

clipped shrubs, shut out all but the small portion of shrubbery, which was like one bright and blooming spot in a wilderness. The windows opened upon a broad terrace, against whose stone balustrade a few pots of early flowers were placed—not very rare, for the hothouse had been neglected; still there were some rose-trees, putting forth buds at least, some myrtles, some deep purple hyacinths. The steps led down into the garden, whose beds were rich in white and crimson daisies, hepaticas, and violets, whose breath perfumed the whole place. The turf was of that rich dark emerald which promises softness fit for the chariot of the fairy queen; and, spreading his magnificent plumage in the sunshine, which brought out a thousand new colours, a peacock stood gazing round, either for admiration, or with an Alexander Selkirk-looking feeling, which said, “I am monarch of all I survey.”

“I must say,” observed Lord Mandeville, opening the window till the room seemed filled with fragrance and sunshine, “a street sacred to Macadam’s dynasty of mud, and the blinds, bricks, and smoke of our opposite neighbours, are not quite equal to a scene like this.”

“ On to the combat, say your worst ;
And foul fall him who flinches first !”

replied Lady Mandeville. “ The exception proves the rule ; but there is such an argument in your favour, that for once I will give up the dispute—but, mind, it is not to be considered a precedent.”

So saying, she stepped upon the terrace to meet a beautiful boy, who came, glowing and out of breath, to ask for bread for the peacock. In sober seriousness, there is more poetry than truth in the sweet poem of Allan Cunningham—the Town and Country Child: witness the cheerful voices and the rosy faces to be met with in the smallest street and closest alley in London ; but if an artist had wished for a model for the children so beautifully painted by the poet, Frank Mandeville—two months ago pale and languid, and now Frank Mandeville bright-eyed and cheerful—might fairly have sat for both likenesses.

CHAPTER VI.

“ The schoolmaster is abroad.”—BROUGHAM.

“ Now, be sure you learn your lesson, you tiresome child.”

Juvenile Library.

“ THANK goodness, I am not a child,” said Lady Mandeville, turning over a collection of those juvenile tomes, which are to make the rising generation so much wiser than their grandfathers or grandmothers—catechisms of conchology, geology, mathematical questions for infants, geography, astronomy; “ the child may be ‘ father to the man;’ but the said father must have had some trouble with his offspring.”

“ I often wonder,” replied Lord Mandeville, “ how I ever learnt to read; and to this day I sympathise with the child in the song, who says,

‘ The rule of three doth puzzle me,
And practice drives me mad.’”

“I cannot but think,” rejoined Mr. Morland, “our present mode of education has too much of the forcing system in it. The forward child grows into the dogmatic youth, and it takes ten years of disappointment and mortification to undo the work of twenty. Nothing leads to such a false idea of self-importance as display. I dislike those rail-roads to information, because the labour of acquiring knowledge is even more valuable than the knowledge acquired. It is a great misfortune to children to be made of too much consequence.”

“It seems to me,” observed Lady Mandeville, “that we over-educate the memory, while the temper and the feelings are neglected, forgetting that the future will be governed much more by the affections than by the understanding. I would, both for his own happiness and that of those connected with him, a thousand times rather see Frank affectionate and generous, than like a little dictionary at my side for memory and correctness.”

“Never tell me,” said Lord Mandeville, “but that a child must be the better for reading anecdotes of generosity, kindness, and self-devotion. It would give me more pleasure to have Frank’s enthusiasm excited by such acts,

than to hear his name every Roman emperor from Augustus to Constantine."

"I feel convinced that one of Miss Edgeworth's stories for children is worth all the questions and answers that ever made history easy, or geography light."

"Do you remember," said Emily, "a little story called the Rival Crusoes? I cannot describe the effect it took on Frank as I was reading it to him: but, if I may venture a remark among you higher authorities, it seems to me it gave him a more touching lesson against overbearing temper, and of affectionate forgiveness, than all the advice in the world could have done."

"Her aunt," said Mr. Morland, "has the care of my Helen. My only injunctions were—educate her as little, and keep her a child as long as possible."

"And she is one of the sweetest girls I ever saw, because one of the most natural—loving birds, flowers, and fairy tales, with a taste at once so simple and so refined; and, to make my confession, I do not like her the less for being a most lovely creature."

"I wonder," exclaimed Emily, "whether she still wears her hair in those beautiful natural ringlets?—they always put me in mind of

that exquisite simile applied to Ellen Glanville, 'her curls seemed as if they had taken the sunbeams prisoners.'^{*} When I last saw her she was very eloquent in praise of a certain tortoise-shell comb. Turning up the hair is the great step to womanhood in a girl's life."

"What admirable theories of education," observed Lord Mandeville, "one might erect! only who would ever have the patience to execute them? Our only consolation is, that, do what we will, circumstances will do still more."

"Yet those circumstances may, and ought to be modified: but a truce to our present discussion—for here come the letters."

O for some German philosopher, with the perseverance of the African travellers, who seem to make a point of conscience to die on their travels, not, though, till the said travels are properly interred in quartos—with their perseverance, and the imagination of a poet to examine into the doctrine of sympathies! And to begin with letters, in what consists the mysterious attraction no one will deny they possess? Why, when we neither expect, hope, nor even wish for one, and yet when they

* Pelham.

are brought, who does not feel disappointed to find there are none for them? and why; when opening the epistle would set the question at rest, do we persevere in looking at the direction, the seal, the shape, as if from them alone we could guess the contents? What a love of mystery and of vague expectance there is in the human heart!

In the mean time, Emily sat picking to pieces a rosebud, from the first deep crimson leaf to the delicate pink inside. Oh! that organ of destructiveness! She had gathered it only an hour ago—a single solitary flower, where the shrubbery had run into too luxuriant a vegetation for much bloom—the very *Una* of roses among the green leaves,

“ Making a sunshine in the shady place ;”

and now she was destroying it.

Suddenly Lord Mandeville, who had been lost in the columns of the *Times*, exclaimed, “ Why, the Lauristons’ villa at Twickenham is for sale. What can have induced them to part with it ?”

“ The *Morning Post* explains the mystery. Do let me read you the announcement of Lady Adelaide Merton’s marriage.”

A flush passed over Emily's face, bright as the red leaves she had been scattering round, and then left her cheek even whiter than the hand on which it leant.

“ I am surprised—I really thought it was to have been a match between her and Mr. Lorraine : but, lo and behold ! she has married his elder brother, Lord Etheringhame. But this marriage of her last daughter accounts for the sale of the villa. No one knew better than Lady Lauriston the advantage of a distance from town, to which a young cavalier could drive down in an hour—dine *en famille*—spend an evening with all the amusement but none of the restraint of a London party ; and then the windows opened upon the lawn, and a warm evening often tempted a young couple to step out—and then moonlight, and that beautiful acacia walk, were terribly sentimental. That pretty garden has witnessed more than one offer ; but

‘ Othello's occupation 's gone.’

What will Lady Lauriston do without a daughter to marry ? She really must advertise for one.”

“ I should have been very sorry had Lorraine married Lady Adelaide Merton,” said Mr. Morland ; “ yet I always felt his admiration was

‘ The perfume and suppliance of a minute.’

He is too imaginative not to be attracted by beauty ; but he has a depth of feeling, a poetry of thought — no mere coquette would ever satisfy.”

“ I do not know any one who better realises my idea of a *preux* chevalier than Mr. Lorraine,” replied Lady Mandeville. “ He is so very handsome, to begin with ; and there is a romantic tone about him, which, to its original merits of fine taste and elevated feelings, adds also that of being very uncommon.”

“ I never yet knew a woman who did not admire him,” said Mr. Morland ; “ and I ascribe it greatly to a certain earnestness and energy in his character. You all universally like the qualities in which you yourselves are deficient : the more you indulge in that not exactly deceit, which, in its best sense, belongs to your sex, the more you appreciate and distinguish that which is true in the character of man. Moreover, Edward has a devotion of manner, which

every female takes as a compliment to herself; and a spirit of romantic enterprise, enough to turn your heads and hearts, like the love-charms of the Irish story-tellers."

"Why!" exclaimed Lord Mandeville, "you must have seen a great deal of him. How, Miss Arundel, did you ever withstand his fascinations?"

Most probably Emily did not hear this question; for she was in the act of opening the window, to walk on the terrace. Lady Mandeville alone caught sight of her face, coloured with the brightest carnation. What betraying things blushes are! Like sealing-wax in the juvenile riddle, a blush "burns to keep a secret."

She turned into the most shadowy walk—one whose thick laurels shut out all but the green winding path below. She wished for no companion to break in upon her thoughts. We use the phrase, "too confused for happiness;" but I doubt whether that confusion be not our nearest approach to it in this life.

Involuntarily her light step quickened; and the buoyant pace with which she reached the end of the walk was in unison with the rapid

flight fancy was taking over the future. Hope, like an angel, had arisen in her heart; and every flower of the summer sprang up beneath its feet. Youth is the French count, who takes the Yorick of Sterne for that of Shakespeare: it combines better than it calculates — its wishes are prophecies of their own fulfilment.

To meet Lorraine again, with all the advantages she really possessed, and with Lady Mandeville to set those advantages in a proper light — to have him not insensible to them — to be enabled to shew the perfect disinterestedness of her attachment, from his brother's marriage — all these happy conclusions were, in her mind, the work of a moment. We build our castles on the golden sand; — the material is too rich to be durable.

From that day a visible change passed over Emily. She played with the children as usual; but now it was as if she entered herself into the enjoyment she gave them. Still, she was sometimes abstracted and thoughtful; but now, instead of a look of weariness and dejection, she started from her fit of absence with a beautiful flush of confusion and pleasure; and the sub-

ject of the next spring, from which she had hitherto shrunk, was now entered into with all the eagerness of anticipation.

“How much Miss Arundel is improved!” said Lord Mandeville. “I do not know whether our coming here has done Frank or herself most good.”

Lady Mandeville only smiled.

CHAPTER VII.

Marriage and hanging go by destiny.

Old Proverb.

EVERY street in London was Macadamizing—every shop was selling bargains;—the pale pink, blue, and primrose ribands were making one effort for final sale, before the purples and crimsons of winter set in. Women in black gowns, and drab-coloured shawls hung upon their shoulders as if they were pegs in a passage—men in coats something between a great-coat and a frock—strings of hackney-coaches which moved not—stages which drove along with an empty, rattling sound—and carts laden with huge stones, now filled Piccadilly. All the windows, that is to say all of any pretensions, had their shutters closed, excepting here and there an open parlour one, where the old woman left in care of the house sat for her amusement.

Every thing bespoke the season of one of those migratory disorders, which, at certain periods, depopulate London. Still, one mansion, which the time ought to have unpeopled, was evidently inhabited; and in one of its rooms—small, but luxurious enough for a sultana in the Arabian Nights, or a young gentleman of the present day—were seated two persons in earnest conversation.

After a time, one of them—it was Mr. Delawarr—rose and left the room, saying, “I own the truth of your remarks—it makes good the observation, that a bystander sees more of the game than those who are playing;—and now let me remind you of the assistance you can render me; that will be a more powerful motive than all I could urge of your own ambition and advancement.”

Lorraine rose, and paced the room in an excited and anxious mood: he felt conscious of his own great powers, and of the many advantages he possessed for bringing them into action. But pleasures are always most delightful when we look back upon, or forward to them; and he felt an indolent reluctance to turn from the voice of the charmer—charm she never so wisely—and assume those enduring habits of

industry and energy which are as much required as even talent in an Englishman's public career. He only wanted the influence of a more powerful motive than the theoretic conviction of the excellence of such exertion ; but the necessity was even now on its road.

Noon and the post arrived together ; and they brought that letter which had given Lord Etheringhame such trouble in its composition, announcing his engagement with Lady Adelaide Merton. Lorraine was as completely taken by surprise as it was well possible for a gentleman to be. His brother's marriage had long ceased to enter into his calculations ; but if it were possible for any human being to be without one grain of selfishness in their composition, Edward Lorraine was that being ; and his first vague astonishment over, his next feeling was to rejoice over an event so certain to restore his brother's mind to a more healthy tone — to recall him to his place in society ; and never was a letter more frank or affectionate in its congratulations than the one he forthwith despatched to the Earl. He could not but feel curious to know how the conquest had been managed, and perhaps thought any other match would have been as good. Still, a young man is rarely very

severe on the faults of a very beautiful girl; and, moreover, it was a flattering unction to lay to his soul, that he, rather than the lady, had been the first to withdraw from their flirtation.

He then went to communicate the affair to Mr. Delawarr, whose equanimity being unsupported by affection, was much the most disturbed by the occurrence. His judgment, unbiassed by any brotherly partiality, drew no flattering conclusions for Lord Etheringhame's future, either as a brilliant or as a useful career—

“Unstable as water, thou shalt not excel;”

and he foresaw Lord Etheringhame would just be a puppet in the hands of his very lovely wife. These reflections he deemed it unnecessary to communicate, and finished the dialogue by exclaiming, “Well, Edward, I only wish you had married her yourself.” In this wish, however, his auditor did not quite cordially join.

Lord Etheringhame had many feminine points in his character: this his very letter evinced. Part of its most important information was in the postscript, viz. that Mr. Maynard had died suddenly; his physician said by his cook—the

jury, by the visitation of God. The borough he had represented was now vacant: it was his lordship's, and the seat was offered to Edward, and accepted. The grief into which Lady Alicia's death plunged Mr. Delawarr, made Lorraine's presence and assistance invaluable to one who had quite enough of business to justify his saying, "He had not a moment's time to himself;"—an assertion more pleasant than we are ready to admit. No thoroughly occupied man was ever yet very miserable.

March arrived, and with it the period fixed for the marriage, which had been delayed, and was now to be private, on account of the recent loss. Lady Lauriston and her daughter had spent a quiet fortnight in London: people cannot be married without a clergyman—the milliner and the jeweller are equally indispensable. They returned to Stanbury Park, whose owner made his niece a present of a set of pearls and a cookery book; and at last the day came when the ceremony was to be performed in the chapel of Etheringham Castle.

From a delay on the road, almost impossible in these days—but rapid driving does sometimes accomplish impossibilities—Edward only arrived that very morning in time to accompany

his brother, who walked up and down the hall, sipping his coffee at intervals, and having very much the air of a soldier who would retreat if he could.

Any great change is like cold water in winter—one shrinks from the first plunge; and a lover may be excused who shivers a little at the transmigration into a husband. It is a different case with the lady—she has always been brought up with the idea of being married—moreover, she must be very much taken up with her blonde—and, to conclude, a woman gains her liberty, but a man loses his.

Edward was the only one of the party sufficiently unoccupied to appreciate the propriety and the picturesque of the scene. Lord Lauriston, watching his lady in evident trepidation lest his conduct should not meet her approbation—Lord Merton, obviously tired of the forms, but subsiding into patience as he met his mother's eye—Mr. Stanbury, with a face full of congratulations and a mouth full of jokes, all equally checked by Lady Lauriston's glance—she, all dignified quiet, only touched by a most maternal sadness at parting with her daughter—and the daughter herself, no-

thing could be more perfect, whether in dress or demeanour.

After much hesitation, and consideration of the will yet unwritten, the property at his own disposal, Lady Lauriston consented that Adelaide should be married with her head uncovered. "No girl," said Mr. Stanbury, "in his time ever wore one of those frightful huge bonnets;" and it was finally arranged that his niece should not. A dress of the most delicate white silk, made open so as to display the collerette beneath, so favourable to the display of her exquisitely turned neck — the small ruff that encircled her slender throat, which rose white and graceful as the swan's — the beautiful hair, which descended in light ringlets like a summer shower, every drop filled with sunshine, whose profusion was restrained, not concealed, by the wreath of orange flowers; — and the blonde veil that fell to her feet.

She entered clinging timidly to her father's arm, and knelt in an attitude perfectly inimitable before the altar, while, from one of the painted windows of the little chapel, the most exquisite rose tint fell over her figure; it was as if her own rich blush had coloured the

atmosphere around. Her voice, throughout the whole response, was quite inaudible—just a whisper—fairy music; and, after the ceremony, she leant on her husband's arm with an air so different from that with which she had leant on her father's—she clung to the one, while she seemed to shrink from the other—gradually, however, drawing towards him, as if for support. When the rest crowded round with their congratulations, Edward felt greatly inclined to laugh as he offered his: their eyes met, and he was convinced the bride smothered a smile too; but whether the smile was mirth or triumph, would have been a difficult question to decide.

We must not forget the bridemaids, who were selected with as much judgment as the rest: young, pretty, well calculated to set off the scene, but slight and brunettes, they were admirably calculated also to set off the height and fairness of Lady Adelaide.

The breakfast was as stupid as such breakfasts usually are. The bride is all timidity—the parents sorry, of course, to lose their sweet child—and the bridegroom is a non-entity. Lady Etheringhame changed her dress, and looked almost lovelier still in her travelling

costume. She was now overwhelmed with affliction. Lady Lauriston implored Algernon to watch over the happiness of the dearest of her children. Adelaide was almost borne to the carriage—her mother retired to her own room, overcome with her feelings—and Edward thought it very ungrateful that the audience did not rise and clap the performance.

CHAPTER VIII.

“ Blessings be with them and eternal praise,
Who gave us nobler loves and nobler cares ;
The poets, who on earth have made us heirs
Of truth and pure delight by heavenly lays.”

WORDSWORTH.

EMILY'S time was now passing most pleasantly : she had been solitary enough during winter to give society that advantage of contrast which does so much towards teaching the full value of any thing ; she had just enough of annoyance from her aunt to make her feel thankful that she was not more exposed to it. She became attached to Lady Mandeville, with all the enjoyment and warmth of youthful affection—that age when we are so happy in loving those around us. Many sources of enjoyment were laid open ; and the future seemed as promising as those futures always are which we make for ourselves.

Lady Mandeville was one of those women for the description of whom the word "fascinating" seems expressly made. She had seen a great deal of society, and she talked of it delightfully; she had that keen sense of ridicule so inseparable from perceptions at once acute and refined; and, like most of those accustomed to every species of amusement, she easily wearied of it, and hence novelty became indispensable; and from this arose much of her fondness for society, and quickness in perceiving every variety of character. A new acquaintance was like a new book—and, as in the case of the book, it must be confessed she often arrived very quickly at the end.

Emily's very reserve—the necessity there was to divine the feelings she herself rarely expressed—made her, of all others, the most secure in retaining the friendship she had inspired. There was always something to imagine about her—and imagination is as useful in keeping affection alive, as the eastern monarch's fairy ring was in keeping alive his conscience. Moreover, Emily's very friendlessness gave Lady Mandeville a pleasurable feeling of protection—we like those we can oblige—and she felt as the

writer of a fairy tale, while laying down plans for her future destiny.

“ Pray, have you agreed to group for a picture ?” said Mr. Morland, who, with Lord Mandeville, entered the room just as Emily read the last line of the *Lady of the Lake* ; and it was a question De Hooge might have asked ; for one of those breaks of sunshine, so like reality in his pictures, came from the half-opened glass door, and fell full on the large old crimson arm-chair, where Lady Mandeville was seated with a little work-table before her, at which she was threading those brilliant and diminutive beads which would make fitting chain armour for the fairy king and his knights. The rest of the apartment was filled with that soft green light where the noon is excluded by Venetian blinds, or the still softer shadow of creeping plants ; and here, on the south side of the house, a vine had been trained, which, luxuriant and unpruned, seemed better calculated for foliage than for fruit : a green basket-stand, filled with pots of early roses, stood between the windows—and so near, that their crimson reflected on the face of the young boy who was asleep on the carpet : not so the elder one, who sat at Emily’s feet, his cheek

glowing with the excitement of the narrative, and his large blue eyes almost double their usual size with eager attention.

“ I have always thought,” said Lord Mandeville—“ and Frank seems to think with me—that no poet ever carried you so completely along with him as Sir Walter Scott: he is the poet, of all others, made to be read aloud. What is the reason I like to read Lord Byron to myself, but like Scott to be read to me?”

“ Because,” said Mr. Morland, “ the one is the poet of reflection, the other of action. Byron’s pages are like the glasses which reflect ourselves—Scott’s are like those magic mirrors which give forth other and distant scenes, and other and passing shapes: but this is a sweeping remark—and both poets often interchange their characteristics. Scott will excite pensive and lingering thought—and Byron, as in the *Corsair* and *Lara*, carry us along by the mere interest of the story.”

“ I think,” observed Emily, “ in the *Lay of the Last Minstrel* there is one of the most exquisite touches of natural feeling I ever met with. Sir William Deloraine uncloses the tomb of Michael Scott, while the monk, his early

friend, stands by ; when the body is uncovered, the monk turns away his face—

‘ For he might not abide the sight to see
Of the man he had loved so brotherly.’” *

“ I remember,” returned Lady Mandeville, “ another instance, where a single thought has produced the effect, on me at least, of a whole poem of images : it is from Byron. The Prisoner of Chillon is speaking of the younger brother who lies buried at his side : he says,

‘ For he was beautiful as day,
When day was beautiful to me.’”

“ And, while we are remembering, let me recall another passage from Scott that has always especially delighted me,” observed Lord Mandeville. “ The Minstrel is relating to the captive chieftain the battle in which his clan have been worsted : he softens the defeat by ascribing it all to his absence, and sinks the flight in the exclamation,

‘ Oh, where was Roderic then ?—
One blast upon his bugle horn
Were worth a thousand men.’”

* I find this remark previously made in the National Portrait Gallery ; and I am glad to observe the opinion confirmed by such authority as the author of those biographical sketches.

“Of all questions,” remarked Lady Mandeville, “I dislike being asked, ‘which is your favourite poet?’ Authors who appeal to the feelings are those of whom our opinions must inevitably vary most: I judge according to my mood.”

“Another odious fashion of conversation is that of comparison: I look upon them as if

‘Their souls were each a star, and dwelt apart.’”

“Are you an admirer of Wordsworth?”

“Yes—he is the most poetical of philosophers. Strange, that a man can be so great a poet, and yet deficient in what are poetry’s two grand requisites,—imagination and passion. He describes what he has seen, and beautifully, because he is impressed with the beauty before his eyes. He creates nothing: I cannot recall one fine simile. He has often expressions of touching feeling—he is often melancholy, often tender—but with more of sympathy than energy; and for simplicity he often mistakes both vulgarity and silliness. He never fills the atmosphere around with music, ‘lapping us in Elysium,’ like Moore: he never makes his readers fairly forget their very identity, in the intense interest of the narrative, like Scott: he never

startles us with the depth of our secret thoughts—he never brings to our remembrance all that our own existence has had of poetry or passion—the earnestness of early hope, the bitterness of after-disappointment—like Byron. But he sits by the fireside or wanders through the fields, and calls from their daily affections and sympathies foundations whereon to erect a scheme of the widest benevolence. He looks forth on the beautiful scenery amid which he has dwelt, and links with it a thousand ties of the human loveliness of thought: I would say, his excellence is the moral sublime.”

“The common people of England,” observed Lord Mandeville, “seem to me to have less feeling, taste, or whatever we please to call it, for poetry, than almost any other country. Look at the common songs of the Scotch—verse “familiar as household words”—what touches of exquisite feeling—what natural yet delicate thoughts! Look at those of the Irish peasantry—what fine and original imagery is to be met with! But the run of English ballads are as vulgar in expression as they are coarse or common in idea. No nation takes a higher poetical rank than our own—how, therefore, do you account for this?”

“ I am not one of those,” returned Mr. Morland, “ who deem it necessary to give a reason for every thing; and of all hypotheses, those which account for the various workings of the imagination are to me especially unsatisfactory. That a peculiar temperament is required for poetry, no one will deny; but what produces that temperament?—scenery and circumstances certainly do not. I, for one, am content to leave the question with the longitude and the philosopher’s stone.”

“ The poetical habits of a people do not lead to their producing great poets, else those among the Italians of the present day would be the first in the world. Their country is unrivalled in its loveliness—all their old associations are of the refined and elevated order—their taste for music is as exquisite as their taste for painting. Objects of beauty are constantly before them, for the picture or statue gallery is open to all—their churches are the noblest monuments of human power—the common wants of life are easily supplied—and then their indolent summer habits are so favourable to the train of imaginary creations. I have seen an Italian peasant, seated, perhaps, by one of the ruined fountains, half ivy, half water — or be-

neath an old tree, through which the moonlight was falling like rain—and he has sung some one of those divine airs whose popularity has verily floated on the wings of the wind. Gradually his voice has died away, and he has sat silent and absorbed, as if wholly given up to the quiet enjoyment of the soft summer night. Ought not that man to have been a poet?”

“ The feeling for poetry is not the power, and I firmly believe its source lies not without, but within.”

“ Nothing struck me so much as the extreme beauty of the women. To take one instance out of many—look at the young peasants who plait the Leghorn straw: brought up from infancy to that most feminine employment, which requires the utmost delicacy of touch, their hands and arms are as white as those of the heroines of romance always are; the outline of their face is perfect—the finely formed nose, the ivory teeth, the high, intellectual forehead—and such eye-brows—to say nothing of their large dark eyes, either of a deep purple blue, or a radiant black; and then their hair, so profuse, so exquisitely dressed, put up into those rich masses of shade, and falling into one or two large ringlets that Berenice might have envied.

I have often seen one of those girls, with her classically-turned head, bending over her work, who might have served as a model for ‘ a nymph, a naiad, or a grace.’ ”

“ Do you remember,” said Lady Mandeville, “ the first *fête* after our arrival? Oh, Emily, it was matter for severe study! Their exquisite coquetry—each peasant had her lover, who was treated with that perfection of ‘ beautiful disdain’ which does so much in a love affair. And then their dress—the fine plaited *chemisette* close round the throat—the long gold earrings, those indispensables of their toilette—the black velvet boddice, shewing the figure to such advantage, laced with gold and coloured silks—the full petticoat—the apron trimmed with gay ribands; all put on so neatly, and with such a fine taste for harmony of colouring. I always think national costumes invented for the express advantage of travellers.”

“ I must own,” replied Mr. Morland, “ the pleasures of travelling seem to me quite ideal. I dislike having the routine of my existence disarranged—I dislike early rising—I dislike bad dinners—I dread damp beds—I like new books—I like society—I respect my cook, and love my arm-chair; so I will travel through

Italy in a chapter—and am not quite sure but these engravings are more picturesque than the originals.”

“ And I,” replied Lady Mandeville, “ delight in its difficulties: a bad dinner is a novelty, and a little danger is an enjoyment for which I am thankful. There are two readings of content—and mine would be, monotony.”

“ Blessed be that amiable arrangement of fate, which gives such variety of tastes! I knew a lady who made a pet of a dove—I knew another whose passion was for grasshoppers. I’ll tell you a story, at which I laughed at first, and afterwards philosophised upon. You know the frightful *goîtres* which so disfigure the inhabitants of the Valais; but they themselves consider them to be personal advantages of no small attraction. In my youth I was a little touched with those vagrant habits you have been advocating; and one day I found myself in a small mountain chapel, where a Swiss pastor was encouraging content among his congregation, by dwelling on the many levelling circumstances of humanity—the sickness or the sorrow which brought the happiness of the wealthy to a level with that of the poor. Taking it for granted I was as ignorant of his

language as he was of mine, he looked upon my appearance as quite a case in point: 'Observe this young stranger—rich, free to do his own pleasure, healthy; but, to counterbalance these advantages, Providence has denied him a *goître.*'"

CHAPTER IX.

“ Nobody dies but somebody’s glad of it.”

Three Courses and a Dessert.

WE differ from our ancestors in many things—in none more than in cases of sentiment. Formerly, it was your susceptible school-girl, “ your novel-reading miss”—now, women only grow romantic after forty. Your young beauty calculates the chances of her Grecian nose, her fine eyes, and her exquisite complexion—your young heiress dwells on the claims of her rent-roll, or the probabilities of her funded property: it is their mothers who run away—their aunts who marry handsome young men without a shilling. Well, the prudence of youth is very like selfishness, and the romance of age very like folly.

Mrs. Arundel was arrived at the romantic age; and Emily, on her return from a fortnight’s stay at Norville, was somewhat sur-

prised to hear from her own lips that her marriage with Mr. Boyne Sillery was to take place immediately. So soon! and was this all? A few months, and her uncle's memory seemed to have utterly passed away. Alas! oblivion is our moral death, and forgetfulness is the second grave which closes over the dead. In the same spirit with which a drowning man catches at a straw, Emily hoped that perhaps Mrs. Clarke might be induced to listen to arguments against such indecorous haste, and that her influence might prevail on the impatient gentleman and yielding lady to let the twelve months pass—and then, thought Emily, “I shall be glad it is no worse.”

This hope was not a very promising one; for she could scarcely flatter herself that her opinion would have much weight: she well knew Mrs. Clarke entertained a very mediocre estimate of her understanding; she had never asked her for a receipt, nor offered her a pattern,—those alphas and omegas with her female accomplishments. But, however deficient in these sciences of the spoon and the scissors, there was a sweetness, a gentleness about Emily which it was impossible to dislike; Mrs. Clarke, therefore, always spoke of her only pityingly. “Miss

Arundel might have been made a great deal of, but she had been so badly brought up."

The morning was raw and comfortless, as if Winter, just awakened from his sleep by an east wind, had started up in that unamiable mood which is the mood of most when untimely disturbed in their slumbers; and March, which, the day before, had seemed softening into April, was again chilled into January. Emily's health and habits were equally delicate; and a wet, cold walk was to her sufficiently distasteful, without the visit at the end: however, she summoned her resolution and her cloak, and set forth. She walked up the neatest of gravel-walks, edged by box, where there was not a leaf out of place, and a turf whose silken smoothness seemed unconscious of a tread: as Mrs. Clarke justly observed, "It was such a comfort to have no children to run over it." She paused on the cleanest of steps; a lad in pepper-and-salt livery opened the door; and she entered the hall and an atmosphere of most savoury soup, where she seemed likely to remain—for the boy stood debating between his right hand and his left, evidently quite undecided whether he was to shew her to the drawing or dining-room. This mental debate was,

however, decided by the appearance of his mistress, who had just taken a peep to see who her visitor was,—her morning costume rendering such a precaution very necessary.

“ Bless me, Miss Emily, who would have thought of seeing you in the rain? Do come in. Doctor, go on with your soup, my dear—it will do you no good if you let it get cold. Do take off that wet cloak—are your feet damp? Don’t mind the Doctor—he is only an old married man—and there is no fire in the drawing-room.”

With a shiver at the thought of the cold blue best room, always in papers and brown holland, Emily took the offered seat by the fire, almost glad she was wet, as it delayed her explanation. But time has a most feminine faculty of opposition—always hurries if we hesitate—and the Doctor finished his soup, and went out to hear the complaint of a man who applied to the justice because his wife insisted on giving him mint tea for breakfast. Mrs. Clarke arrived at the end of her apologies for being caught such a figure—but she had been so busy the whole morning pickling walnuts;—and Emily, finding speak she must, in a few words explained the object of her visit,

and entreated Mrs. Clarke to use her influence in persuading her aunt to delay the marriage.

“ Delay is all I ask—she is her own mistress—and if she can reconcile to herself the prudence and propriety of such a step, let her marry, and I am sure I hope she will be happy; but do implore her, for the sake of my uncle’s memory—for her own sake, not to use such disreputable haste. If there is no affection—and there can be none—let there be some decency observed.”

Consternation and surprise had kept Mrs. Clarke silent; but at last she burst into a series of ejaculations—“ Going to be married, and her husband not dead seven months? Disgraceful! I thought what would come of leaving off her caps. And so you saw the white silk bonnet she means to be married in?—A fine price she has paid for it, I dare say. She never consulted me; but she is very much mistaken if she thinks Dr. Clarke will countenance such proceedings—he shall not marry them.”

“ If you did but know how grateful I shall be if you can but prevail!”

“ Ah! Miss Emily, it is all your fault. If you had but married him yourself—I am sure I thought you would, when I asked him down—

I had planned it all, I do assure you—you would have made such a nice couple.”

Emily felt any thing but inclined to thank her for this arrangement; however, in spite of Mrs. Opie, it is not always proper to say all one thinks; so she only observed, “You must not blame me—it was my misfortune, not my fault.”

“True, true. Poor dear! it was too bad of your aunt to take Francis from you—and so I shall tell her. Going to be married, indeed! and a widow only seven months! I wonder what will become of all her nice new mourning! What shameful waste!”

Before they parted, it was settled that Mrs. Clarke should call on Mrs. Arundel, and join her persuasions to those of Emily. Mr. Boyne Sillery had, excepting one short visit, been away for the last fortnight; and during his absence, she might probably be more open to conviction.

Emily returned home, and passed perhaps one of the most wretched days of her life. Great misfortunes have at least their dignity to support them; but the many and small miseries of life, how they do gall and wear away the spirit! The contrast with the elegance and

cheerfulness of Norville Abbey, and the vivacity and kindness of Lady Mandeville, compared with the coldness, the talking-at-you style of conversation in which her aunt's dislike found its narrow and acrid channel, was too much to be borne. Strange, that one whose opinion we neither respect nor admit should yet have power to wound!—not stranger, though, than that it should have power to please. One may live to be indifferent to every thing but opinion. We may reject friendship which has often deceived us; renounce love, whose belief once found false, leaves us atheists of the heart; we may turn from pleasures which have palled— from employments which have become wearisome: but the opinion of our kind, whether for good or for evil, still retains its hold; that once broken, every social and moral tie is broken too—the prisoner then may go to his solitary cell—the anchorite to his hermitage—the last link with life and society is rent in twain.

Emily was pained, more than she would have admitted, by the various signs of dress and decoration scattered around; but the worst was as yet unseen. Passing along the gallery, there was one door open— one door which she never saw without a shudder— one door which she

had never entered—the one through which her uncle's coffin had been carried.

“No, no—impossible!” exclaimed she aloud. With an effort she entered the apartment, and saw that her glance through the open door was right. A great empty room, it had been so convenient for Mrs. Arundel's dresses, which were all laid out in different directions: a large glass, evidently used in trying them on, stood in the middle; and on the very bed where her uncle had died was spread out a crimson silk pelisse, and, on the pillow above, a blonde cap and flowers.

Emily's indignation was at first the uppermost, the only feeling. She hurried from the place; but her own chamber once gained, anger only gave bitterness to grief. She reproached herself for having forgotten her sorrow; every lighter thought that had crossed her mind—every hope in which she had indulged, seemed like a crime; and her aunt's unfeeling levity was forgotten in her own melancholy remembrances. All was, however, recalled by a message from Mrs. Clarke, who requested she would join her in the drawing-room.

Sick at heart, her eyes red with crying, Emily obeyed the summons, and heard the voices of

both ladies considerably louder than should be permitted to any debate which is not to end in blows.

The first words she caught, on her entrance, were, "I'll tell you what, ma'am, if you will make such an old fool of yourself, Dr. Clarke shall have no hand in it; he won't marry you."

"Dr. Clarke may wait till I ask him; and I tell you, once for all, I will not be dictated to by any body;—clever as you think yourself, you shall not manage me. And pray, Miss Emily, what brings you here?"

"A wish, madam, to at least endeavour to save you from taking a step so inconsistent with the respect you owe my uncle's memory. Surely Mr. Sillery can wait till——"

"Yes," interrupted Mrs. Clarke, "he can wait very well. He is not so old as to make a few months so precious."

Emily saw such an argument was not a very convincing one; and approaching Mrs. Arundel, urged, in the most conciliating tone, every consideration that was likely to either touch or soften her. "I only ask a few months of respect to the opinion of the world—to the memory of the dead. You say you find them solitary;—I will not leave home again—nothing of

attention on my part shall be wanting for your comfort—and if Mr. Sillery visits here, he shall meet at least with civility from me.”

“And if you can take him from your silly old aunt, you have my full consent,” cried Mrs. Clarke.

This was too much ; and snatching her hand from Emily, Mrs. Arundel said, “Settle it all your own way ;” and left the room, which shook with the door she slammed after her.

“She’ll repent it, Miss Emily ;—never mind, she’ll repent it ;” and with this consolatory prediction, Mrs. Clarke also departed.

Emily saw no more of her aunt that evening. She was told Mrs. Arundel was engaged with a gentleman. Who it was, her niece could easily guess ; and, mortified and harassed, she retired early to her room. Her maid’s face was evidently full of news, but Emily was in no mood to listen ; and the girl was dismissed, as discontented as the possessor of untold information could well be.

Early the next morning she was awakened by the noise of wheels in the court-yard. Surprise at such an unusual sound made her unclose the window a little to discover whence it proceeded ; and she was just in time to see

Mr. Boyne Sillery hand her aunt into a carriage, jump in himself, when it drove off with a rapidity which scarcely allowed her to observe that a large imperial was on the top, and her aunt's servant, with a huge bandbox, on the dickey.

Emily rang her bell. It was answered by the housemaid, with a great white satin bow, by way of favour, in her cap.

“What carriage was that?”

“Lord, miss! don't you know that mistress is gone to be married this morning?”

“Married! Where?”

“Lord love you, miss! we did think you were to be bridemaid, till mistress told us not to call you.”

“But where is Mrs. Arundel gone?”

This the girl did not know.

Emily soon learned that Mr. Boyne Sillery's late absence was in the way of business. He had been residing at the little town of C——, and there her infatuated aunt was to be married. A lady's-maid from town, recommended by Mr. Sillery, had been her only *confidante*, as she was now her only companion.

Emily wandered up and down the house disconsolately. How large, how empty, how

miserable, every thing looked ! She thought of writing to Mr. Delawarr, who had been named as her guardian, to Norville Abbey ; but her head swam round — she could not see the paper before her. The noise from the servants' hall was rendered more acutely painful by her headach ; for her aunt, partly with a view of annoying her niece, whom she disliked—as we always dislike those we have used ill—had left orders for a general regale. Most of the establishment were new. Mr. Arundel had pensioned off his few more ancient domestics ; and his wife was not one whose service was a heritage. There was hence little to restrain their mirth or their intemperance. Loud bursts of laughter sounded through the hall. Emily rose to ring the bell, but sank down quite insensible.

Something she remembered of partial revival, of motion in a carriage, of being conveyed to bed ; but it was not till after some hours of stupor that she revived sufficiently to recognise her French bed at Norville Abbey, and Lady Mandeville bending anxiously over her pillow.

Ill news travel fast ; and Mrs. Arundel's marriage was like the sun in the child's riddle, for it went “ round each house, and round each

house, and looked in at every window." Norville Abbey was soon enlightened, like the rest; and Lady Mandeville immediately set off to rescue her young friend from "the solitude which comes when the bride is gone forth." She had been more amused with the accounts of Mrs. Arundel's wedding than Emily might have quite liked; but her favourite's illness put mirth to flight. All Lady Mandeville's kindness and affection were called forth; and Emily might have said with another invalid, "It is worth while to be ill, to be so petted and nursed."

CHAPTER X.

“ At Zara’s gate stops Zara’s mate ; in him shall I discover
The dark-eyed youth pledged me his truth with tears, and
was my lover ? ”

LOCKHART.

THE first great principle of our religious, moral, civil, and literary institutions, is a dinner. A church is built, a rail-road opened, the accounts of a vestry inspected, a revolution occurs, a subscription is made, a death is to be celebrated, a friend to be supported—all alike by a dinner. Our heathen brethren are to be converted—we dine for their salvation ; our musical, theatrical, and literary brethren are to be relieved—we dine for their benefit ; for the some-half-dozenth time the French patriots alter their government—we dine for the conservation of their charter ; Mr. Pitt dies—his memory is preserved by fish and soup ; laws govern the kingdom, and a young gentleman qualifies himself to become their minister by a course of meals in the Temple Hall ; and what are cabinet councils to cabinet

dinners?—where the Duke of Wellington once trusted his *aide-de-camp*, he now relies on his butler, and the decisions of his cook are as important as the movements of his army.

In social life, to owe such a one a dinner is the most imperative of obligations—gambling debts always excepted. An Englishman talks of the Magna Charta and roast-beef in a breath; his own constitution and that of his country are indissolubly united. As a great orator once observed, “the security of your laws, the sanctity of your church, the bond of society, the cement of your religious, political, and moral obligations, nay, the actual existence of your country—its vital interests depend, gentlemen, on its dinners.” (I quote from memory, and may be mistaken as to the form, but I am sure I have given the spirit of the speech.)

It was to attend one of these rational institutions—a dinner on the opening of a canal—that Lord Mandeville set forth, with a mouthful of patriotism and public spirit; and Lady Mandeville, and Emily still languid with recent illness, were left *tête-à-tête*.

Night came; and the wind and rain, which beat against the window, only added the advantage of contrast to the curtained, carpeted,

and lighted boudoir ; and every gust served as an excuse for shrinking still farther into the warm crimson cushions of the arm-chairs they had drawn almost into the fire. They had no new books ; Emily was still too weak for work or music ; and it was just the most confidential and conversational evening in the world.

Confidence is made up of confession and remembrances ; we all love to talk of the days of our youth ; and, almost before she was aware, Lady Mandeville was engaged in a sort of autobiography of herself. It would do, she said, as well as reading aloud, to send her patient to sleep.

“ I am going to enact the heroine of a narrative, though sadly deficient in all the necessary requisites. Save one, I have never had a misfortune happen to me—I have never been in such extremes of poverty that I have been obliged to sell even the ruby cross hung round my neck by my mysterious mother—or the locket which contained two braids of hair, one raven black, the other golden, the first love-pledge of my unfortunate parents—I have never had a fever, during which my lover watched every look of my benevolent physician—I have never been given over, and then after a profound sleep re-

covered — my hair has always come easily out of curl — I never played the harp — and have always been more inclined to laugh than to cry. My father, Lord Elmore, lived in a large old-fashioned house, and in a large old-fashioned manner. By large, I mean liberal: he was only less indulgent to his seven children than my mother, who I believe never said “no” in all her life. It was not the system of indulgence practised by Dandie Dinmont’s ‘gude wife,’ who gave ‘the bairns their ain way, because, puir things, she had naithing else to gi’e them.’ But my mother, I suppose, thought, as she gave every thing else, she might as well give that too.

“ I pass over the dynasty of white frocks and blue sashes. Sometimes I learnt my lessons, sometimes I did not; but really that which was no matter of necessity often became matter of inclination; and I arrived at the dignity of fourteen, and my sister’s *confidante*. Ah, the interest I took in her anxieties! the sympathy I gave to her sorrows! it was almost equal to having a lover of my own.

“ It was a provokingly happy union — both families equally anxious it should take place: only, my father insisted that Isabel should be

eighteen before the marriage ; and they did manage to arrange some little jealousies and quarrels, which agreeably diversified the delay. The year of probation passed, and my sister married. Even now, I remember how I missed her. I cried the first three nights I curled my hair by myself. However, September came, and with it my second brother ; and his companion for the shooting season was the young, handsome, and lively Henry O'Byrne, descended from kings whose crown was old enough to have been made of the gold of Ophir. I—who considered a lover as the natural consequence of being fifteen, and indeed was rather surprised I had not one already, and who held half-a-dozen blushes proof of the state of my feelings—lost my heart with all the ease imaginable ; and Henry made love to me, because, I verily believe, he considered it a proper compliment, which every lady under fifty expected. A declaration of love was to me tantamount to an offer—though, to tell you the plain truth, I very much doubt whether it was meant to be so taken by my Milesian lover. My father—I really do not know how he could venture on such a liberty—one day actually said he wished I would not walk quite so much on the terrace

by moonlight with Mr. O'Byrne;—child as I was, he did not like it. 'Child as I was!' This was adding insult to injury. I threw myself at his feet in the most approved manner—implored him not to sacrifice the happiness of his child to ambition—talked of a cottage and content—of blighted hopes and an early grave. I am not quite sure whether my father laughed or swore; I rather think he did both. However, he sent for my mother to try and convince me: instead, she endeavoured to comfort me by dwelling on the imprudence of poverty, and the miseries of an injudicious attachment; till, overcome with the picture of the privations I should have to endure, and the difficulties I should have to encounter, she fairly wept over the hardships of my imaginary future.

“Dinner came; but O'Byrne's place was vacant. My large tears dropped into my soup—my chicken went away untouched—I refused even my favourite apricot jelly.

“The evening, however, brought consolation, in the shape of a real, actual love-letter, sent through that most orthodox channel—my maid. I could not help reading it aloud to her. 'The barbarity of my father,'—'eternal constancy,'—how well these phrases looked on bath-post!

“ Ah, my dear Emily, to you is closed one of the sweetest sources of youthful felicity. You have no father with a proverbially flinty heart,—no guardian to lock you up! It is impossible for you to have an unfortunate attachment; and—young, rich, pretty—I think you can hardly console yourself with even an unrequited one. How ill-used I did think myself!—what consequence it gave me in my own eyes! Three weeks passed away,—I caught two sore throats by leaning out of an open window, watching the moon shine on the terrace where we used to walk. I threatened my mother with a consumption. I sat up at night reading and re-reading his letter, and gazing on a little profile which I had drawn with a black-lead pencil, and called his—Heaven knows there was no fear it would be recognised!

“ Three weeks passed, when, taking up the paper, and turning—as a woman always does—to the births, deaths, and marriages, what should I see but—‘ Married, on Thursday last, at Gretna, Henry O’Byrne, of Kildaren Castle, in Connaught, to Eliza, only daughter and heiress of Jonathan Simpkin.’ The paper dropped from my hand. I knew my red-haired rival well—she had dined at our house with

old Lady Driscoll, who patronised her, and had there met my faithless lover. Alas! I had been weighed in the balance with a hundred thousand pounds—and found wanting! How wretched I resolved on being! I braided the hair I no longer took delight in curling; I neglected my dress—that is to say, I only wore white muslin; and my kind mother, who had been as angry with me as her gentle nature was capable of being, could now be as angry as she pleased with him. Her surprise at the infidelity was even greater than mine, and her sympathy was great in proportion. I talked of the perfidy of men, and said I should never marry.

“ Six months went by, and, to tell you the truth, I was getting very tired of my despair, when one day a young man, a cousin with whom in my white-frock days I had been a great pet, came to stay in our house. He seemed touched with my melancholy—I confided my sorrows from confidence—he proceeded to consolation.

“ I do not know how it was, I thought my ringlets did not merit neglect—that a girlish fancy was but a foolish thing. Lord Mandeville agreed with me; my father laughed at me, and said I ought to be consistent, that no

heroine ever fell in love with the consent of her family; but my mother said, ‘ Poor dear child, do not tease her.’

“ Well, my sister was married at eighteen—so was I, and the spoiling system has still continued. I know there is such a word as a contradiction in the dictionary, but my knowledge is all theory. I have a husband *comme il n’y en a point*, to whom I have made a wife *comme il y en a peu*. I have two of the prettiest children in the world—(don’t answer, Emily—that smile is quite flattering enough); and I sometimes think whether, like the ancient king, it would not be prudent to make an offering to destiny, and throw my set of emeralds into the lake.”

Emily could not but deprecate the emeralds being destined to any such preventive service; and Lady Mandeville soon afterwards left her to meditate over her narrative, one phrase of which certainly dwelt on her mind. “ Young, rich, pretty—it is quite impossible for you to have an unfortunate attachment!”

The more imaginative love is, the more superstitious it must be: the belief of omens being past—that desire of the unattainable so inherent in our nature, and which shews itself in so

many shapes—now, as far as regards prophecy, it takes another form, and calls itself presentiment; and Emily lay awake much longer than was good for her complexion, building that aërial architecture called *châteaux en Espagne*, on the slight foundation of a single sentence.

I do not think imagination an indulgence at all to be permitted in our present state of society: very well for poets and painters—it is their business, the thing of all others not to be neglected; but in the common construction of characters and circumstances it is an illusion quite at variance with the realities on which we are to act, and among which we are to live. In a young man it unfits him for the rough career of life, as much as stepping within the castle's enchanted boundary unfitted Sir Launcelot for his encounter with the giant. The sword of action hangs idly in the unnerved hand. We will suppose he possesses talent and feeling—without them he could not possess imagination;—he starts on his forward path, where, as in about ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, he has to make his own way. Conscious of his abilities, he will overrate, perhaps not themselves, but their influence. He will read the novel, till he becomes to himself the very

hero of its pages. In history, he will dwell only "on marvels wrought by single hand," till he deems they say, "Go and do thou likewise." Every thing is seen through an exaggerated medium. He prepares himself for great difficulties, which he is to vanquish—gigantic obstacles, which he is to overcome. Instead of these, he is surrounded by small impediments, which seem below his ideal dignity to encounter. His most favourite acquirements are useless, because none of them have been called into action by his own peculiar circumstances; and he reproaches Fortune, where he should accuse Fiction.

Few books have been more dangerous to a young man of this temperament, in middle life, than *Vivian Grey*. No romance is so hazardous as that of real life: the adventures seem so possible, yet so exciting. There is something so pleasant in this mastery of mere mind: the versatility of manner, the quick eye of the hero to the weakness of others, appear so completely in the power also of the reader; his vanity adds force to his imagination, and our youth rises from the perusal convinced of the hardship of his particular situation, shut out from the diplomatic and political career, for which his now

unemployed and undervalued talents so eminently qualify him ; and the chances are, that the earlier half of his life is filled with disappointment and bitterness.

A woman may indulge this faculty with more impunity, because hers is generally a passive, not an active feeling, and principally confined to the affections ; all the risk of beau-idealising a lover too much, is, that of never finding one, or being disappointed when found.

Edward Lorraine had more materials for a hero than many of his compeers ; still, his most admiring friends would have been rather at a loss to recognise him under the traits with which he was invested by Emily Arundel. Alas ! the heart worships in its idol the attributes which itself has first created. Illusions are the magic of real life, and the forfeit of future pain is paid for present pleasure.

CHAPTER XI.

“ On n'auroit guère de plaisir, si l'on ne se flattait jamais.”

ROCHEFOUCAULD.

“ Behold, they speak with their mouths, and swords are in their lips.”

Psalm lix.

THE end of a journey is its pleasantest part. So thought Lord Mandeville, as the postilions gave their whips an extra crack, in order to drive up the avenue in style. They had the credit of their horses as much at heart as their own. To-night, however, whipmanship was somewhat wasted;—a small, heavy rain had made the road so soft, that the ringing wheel and clattering hoof were inaudible. This was a great mortification to the postboys, to whom noise, if not speed, was at least speed's best part.

“ How late they are, and how stupid we are!” said Lady Mandeville, glancing reproachfully first at Mr. Morland, who, having taken what he called a most constitutional walk, was now in a large arm-chair, sleeping off the effects of

heath and hedge,—and then at Emily, who was sedulously employed in working a large red cross on the flag destined for Frank's favourite toy—a miniature frigate.

“Do you know,” added she, “what is the great torment of the idle? To see others industrious.”

“I must say,” replied Emily, smiling, “considering Lord Mandeville has been absent but two days, your impatience for his return is very flattering.”

There was something in this speech that made the hearer laugh outright—one of those provoking laughs which shew it has touched some train of thought you know nothing about. I cannot agree with those romantic philosophers who hold ignorance to be bliss at any time; but ignorance, when your listener laughs at what you say, without why or wherefore, is enough to enrage a saint. By the by, considering what an irascible race they were, the reputation of the saints for patience has been very easily acquired.

The truth is, another visitor was expected with her husband. Lady Mandeville had erected a little romance in her own mind, of which Emily was already the heroine, and the

anticipated guest was to be the hero. She had calculated probabilities, dwelt on the chances of association, the idleness of the country, the necessity of an attachment to give interest to the ride, and novelty to the walk ; besides, she had recalled not one suspicious blush only, but many. The feminine part in the drama was therefore cast.

Now for the gentleman. Many a heart is caught in the rebound. The brilliant coquette, who had led captivity captive, could have inflicted no deeper wound than a little wholesome mortification ;—a little preference from another would be especially flattering. Then the pretensions of her *protégée* were any thing but undervalued. Emily certainly was never seen to greater advantage than just at present. The sweetness of feeling, rather than of temper, was a charm of all others to be appreciated in the domestic life they were now leading. Unrepressed by her natural timidity, her mental stores developed themselves in a small circle where they only met with encouragement. There was an extreme fascination to one palled with the brilliancy, and tired of the uniformity of society, in the freshness, the simplicity, so touched with romance, that made the poetry of Emily's cha-

racter. Moreover, Lady Mandeville took a personal interest in her favourite. The merit we are the first to discover, almost seems as if it were our own, and that, like a newly-found country, it was to bear the name of the first finder.

A bustle was now heard in the hall; the door was thrown open; Mr. Morland lost his nap, and Emily her needle, in the surprise of Lord Mandeville's entrance with Mr. Lorraine. Timidity does as much towards concealing, as resolution does towards repressing, emotion. Lady Mandeville was the only one of the party who observed that Emily's usual blush deepened with twofold crimson — that her hand trembled as she eagerly resumed her work, to the great danger of the symmetry necessary to be observed in the red cross of St. George.

It is worth while to leave home, if it were only to enjoy being of so much consequence on your return. Lord Mandeville arrived with all the interest of absence and news. A Russian prince, whose carriage was lined with sable, and whose vehicle and self had been seized at the custom-house, he having refused to quit his shelter, on the plea of dreading the irregularity of our atmosphere; — the breaking off

of Mr. Delorme's marriage, on which the gentleman had observed, that it was very impertinent in Miss Lumleigh to offer him such polite attentions, knowing that her father was going out of parliament, and that he, Mr. Delorme, only married on patriotic principles, to strengthen his party ;—two other marriages ; one in consequence of smiles feminine, the other in consequence of frowns masculine—curious, that hope and fear should lead to such similar results ;—the inferences of half-a-dozen separations ;—details of divers dinners, balls, and breakfasts ;—a little gold Napoleon set as a brooch—Oh, conqueror of Europe ! to think of thy pedestal being a pin !—a bracelet of an Indian snake fastened by a locust ;—and three new novels. These passed away the evening ; and it must be owned Lord Mandeville well deserved his greeting.

Lady Mandeville's face, like that of Cooper's Water-witch, wore its most "malign smile," when she next morning perceived that her predestined lovers were walking on the lawn together ; and that, when Emily entered the breakfast-room, her curls were just enough relaxed by the air to droop their gracefulest. The soft sunny ringlet, just dropping into a succession

of light rings, is very becoming ; and, moreover, she had a colour one shade more delicate than a most luxuriant rose she had gathered for Mr. Morland ; one of whose dogmas was, that the freshness of the morning should communicate itself to our feelings. “ Our early tastes are our unsophisticated ones. Give me, therefore, flowers in the morning, and perfumes at night.”

“ Your garden is beautiful,” said Lorraine, as he intentionally took his place by Emily’s side.

“ The flowers in it are very common ; but we have been so long away.”

“ Your tone of apology is unnecessary : the commonest flowers are the most beautiful. Take the three I can most readily think of—the rose, the violet, the daisy—the field-daisy, remember ; and, as the blacking advertisements say, ‘ Warren against all the world,’—where will you find their equals ?”

“ They possess,” replied Mr. Morland, “ the two greatest of charms—the association of memory and of imagination : they are the flowers that our childhood has loved, and our poets have sung. Flowers have much to be grateful for.”

“ Our poets all seem to have been peculiarly

alive to their beauty ; and human love and human sorrow

Have written every leaf with thoughtful tears."

" I am going," said Mr. Morland, " to make a bold assertion — that, with all his feeling for natural beauties, Wordsworth has none for flowers: he strings quaint conceits together about them. What does he call the daisy?"

" A little Cyclops with one eye," answered Emily.

" And the shield of a fairy, &c. Look at Burns's poem to the daisy! There are no pretty odd epithets in that ; but a natural gush of feeling, hallowing for ever the object which called it forth."

Edward Lorraine. — " Who cares for the exotics, whose attractions are of the hothouse and the gardener? Their ruby leaves are writ with no gentle thoughts ; they are essentially of the drawing-room, and have no more sentiment about them than the Sèvres cups and saucers to which they are companions. Now there's the rose — ' spring's sweetest book ' — why, a whole world of blushes are on its leaves. Then, again, the lily ; whether it be

' The lady lily, fairer than the moon,'

OR

‘ The naiad-like lily of the vale,
Whom youth makes so fair, and passion so pale.’ ”

Mr. Morland.—“ Or

‘ The lily, a delicate lady,
Who sat under her green parasol.’ ”

Emily.—“ My favourite flowers are violets—

Those early flowers, o’er which the Spring has leant,
Till they have caught their colour from her eyes,
Their sweetness from her breath.”

Edward Lorraine.—“ Whether it is that your gardener has not been here, with his ‘ cruel curtailments,’ like Mr. Hume, — but how very luxuriant is the growth of this myrtle ! it is

Green as hope, before it grieves
O’er the lost and broken-hearted —
All with which its youth has parted.”

Lady Mandeville. — “ Apropos to myrtle ; is there any truth in the report that Lord Merton is about to marry Miss Dacre ? ”

Here Emily coloured the least in the world. A woman has always a kind of sentimental consciousness about any one who has ever made love to her. I often think she pities the man she refuses, more perhaps than his case quite requires. Well, it ought to be a comfort that a person is not so unhappy as we suppose.

Edward Lorraine.—“ He told me that his mind was divided between Miss Dacre and Miss Manvers.”

Lady Mandeville. — “ His mind divided ! Verily, that is making two bites of a cherry. What are the rival claims of these rival heiresses ? ”

Edward Lorraine. — “ They are as equally balanced as those in the ancient apologue. I will only be malicious by inference. I believe, were such acts of faith permitted, Lady Lauriston would recommend him to marry both.”

Lord Mandeville now interrupted the conversation, by inviting Lorraine to walk round with him and see his improvements—a tax regularly levied on every new-comer by all country gentlemen. From the park to the pig-sty, all must be duly appreciated ; for, by some process or other, the proprietor amalgamates their merits with his own. The walk, however, this morning, was something more than an inventory of ditches and drains. Mandeville was theoretic in his future views—which is very good, in talk at least : and, besides, there was not too much to see. The estate which came with the title was small ; and though he himself would gladly have settled at the Abbey,

and extended the boundary of its domains, and devoted the rest of his days to building and planting, corn laws and the country, yet to this there was a very adverse influence.

We all know, either from experience or observation, that Janus would be a very appropriate marriage deity, inasmuch as he has two faces, which look opposite ways. Lady Mandeville was, as I have said, compounded of all the elements of society: its love of excitement—its necessity of variety—its natural gift of language—its grace inherent and its grace acquired—its vivacity and its vanity. She liked talking—she looked very pretty when she talked; she liked strangers—every stranger was a new idea; and her mind was of that order which requires collision to bring out its sparkles. She read as an amusement, rather than as a resource—and, moreover, thought the information almost thrown away which was not communicated.

Again, she was accustomed to look at things on their ridiculous in preference to their sentimental side. She loved her husband most entirely; but she thought it a great deal pleasanter to spend the morning, while he was away, in gay visits or a drive round the ring,

than to sit with a work-basket in a large lonely saloon, with the pictures of their ancestors looking as if they had indeed lost all sympathy with the living. Besides, a call, in an adjacent street, on one whose milliner is not the same, and whose friends are similar to your own—thus giving ample room for praise and its reverse—such a call is quite another thing from one in the country, which involves, first, a journey through wilds that “seem lengthening as you go;” and secondly, a luncheon, which it is your duty to eat. Alas! when, in this world, are the agreeable and the necessary united! Then your neighbour is a person whom you see twice a-year—you have not a taste or opinion in common—the news of the one is no news to the other—conversation is a frozen ocean, and

“ You speak,
Only to break
The silence of that sea.”

Now these were not mornings to Lady Mandeville's taste. As for the dinners, she had only one comfort, that of abusing them after;—an unspeakable consolation, by the by, in most cases! I cannot see why a taste for the coun-

try should be held so very indispensable a requisite for excellence ; but really people talk of it as if it were a virtue, and as if an opposite opinion was, to say the least of it, very immoral.

Lady Mandeville's was essentially a town nature. She was born to what she was fit for ; she was originally meant to be ornamental, rather than useful. In short, she exactly resembled a plume of ostrich feathers, or a blond dress ; now, these are best worn in the metropolis. The inference from all this is, that though Lord Mandeville often talked of settling at his country seat, he never actually settled.

The walk was ended, for the domains were not very extensive, and the gentlemen returned home. They afterwards rode out ; and Emily felt very happy in the mere consciousness that the cavalier at her bridle rein was Edward Lorraine.

That vague, self-relying, uncalculating happiness, how delicious it is—that which we never know but once, and which can have but one object ! Emily quite forgot how wretched she had been. She recalled not the once agony of his presence—the despondency in his absence. She never looked at him ; she scarce spoke, but

she heard his voice, and she saw his shadow fall by her side.

Curious, that of the past our memory retains so little of what is peculiarly its own. The book we have read, the sight we have seen, the speech we have heard, these are the things to which it recurs, and that rise up within it. We remember but what can be put to present use. It is very extraordinary how little we recollect of hopes, fears, motives, and all the shadowy tribe of feelings; or indeed, how little we think over the past at all. Memory is that mirror wherein a man "beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was." We are reproached with forgetting others: we forget ourselves a thousand times more. We remember what we hear, see, and read, often accurately: not so with what we felt—that is faint and uncertain in its record. Memory is the least egotistical of all our faculties.

CHAPTER XII.

“ ’Tis he !

What doth he here ?” — BYRON.

“ WHAT ! loitering still, Emily ?” said Lady Mandeville, when, on entering the breakfast-room, she found her and Edward Lorraine employed, apparently, in looking over some scattered drawings—in reality in talking. Emily, happy without thinking it at all necessary to analyse, and so destroy her happiness ; and Edward, if not exactly thinking, yet feeling, it a very pleasant thing to have a most absorbed listener, who was not the less agreeable for being young and pretty. He was engaged in turning the leaves, occasionally referring to his companion. Edward possessed one great fascination in discourse. He had the air of truly valuing the opinion he asked.

“ Nous ne nous aimions pas, mais notre indifférence
Avait bien les symptômes de l’amour,”

thought Lady Mandeville. “ I must disturb

the study of one branch of the fine arts for the sake of another. You must leave the picture for the mirror—be most devout in the sacrifice you offer to the Graces to-day.”

“What conquest,” replied Emily, smiling, “do you meditate for me?”

“What conquest? What a young-lady question! None: this is an affair of glory, not of sentiment. Mr. Lara Trevyllian dines here to-day. You must dress for his suffrage, not his heart. Most persons are born with a genius for some one thing: Mr. Lara Trevyllian is born with a genius for two;—he piques himself on his knowledge of gastronomy, and his knowledge of women.”

Edward Lorraine.—“I should be more inclined to defer to his knowledge of the science than of the sex.”

Lady Mandeville.—“Ah, now—to use an expression of his own—‘you men never will allow any merit to each other.’”

Edward Lorraine.—“It was not with a view to detract from his powers of feminine analysis that I spoke; but because I think that either man’s or woman’s character stand in a relative position to each other, like the covered statue of Isis, whose veil mortal hand hath not

raised. We never see each other but through the false mediums of passion, or affection, or indifference—all three equally bad for observation.”

Lady Mandeville.—“ I differ from you ; but truly, I cannot sacrifice myself to my opinions. It is too late in the day to dispute ; for haste and perfection no toilette ever yet united.”

Edward Lorraine. — “ Unhappy is he who relies on female friendship ! You sacrifice my argument to a curl. Well might the old poet say :

‘ Oh, take, if you would measure forth the worth of woman’s
mind,
A scale made of the spider’s web, and weights made of the
wind.’ ”

The party was very small, and the fire very large ; therefore the half hour before dinner was not so dull as it is generally said to be. By the by, that half hour has always seemed to me to be peculiarly ill treated. Some evil-disposed person has called it stupid. An invidious epithet is always remembered and reapplied ; and that one half hour will go to its grave with its appellation of stupid ; no exceptions made in its favour—no pleasant reminiscences, not even a single flirtation, brought, like a solitary wit-

ness, to give it a good character. Alas! a cruel and striking epithet is

“ One fatal remembrance, one shadow that throws
Its bleak shade alike o'er our joys and our woes.”

Now, really the half hour to-day was rather agreeable: we should have said “very,” of any other of the forty-eight. Lord Mandeville and Mr. Morland were deciding, to their mutual satisfaction, that a neighbouring gentleman, on whom they had been calling that morning to suggest an improvement in an adjacent road, was certainly the most singular mixture of silliness and stolidity they had ever encountered. Now these qualities do not often go together—the frivolity of the one interfering with the heaviness of the other: stupidity is the masculine of silliness. But the Rev. Dr. Clarke had at once vague and stubborn ideas respecting his own dignity and his own interests; the one he supported by disdain, the other by selfishness; and in his own mind identified both with church and state. The little boy, who, in the hurry of a game of marbles, forgot to take off his ragged cap to him, he foresaw would come to the gallows; and the farmer, whom hard necessity forced to delay the payment of his tithes, he

denounced as committing sacrilege, and as nothing better than an atheist. Surely the time passed in expatiating on the reverend Doctor's faults was rather profitably passed than otherwise.

Edward Lorraine and Emily were a little out of the circle, carrying on one of those conversations, "low-voiced and sweet," whose nothings have often a charm which defies the writer, but which the reader's memory may perchance supply. Lady Mandeville and Mr. Lara Trevyllian were seated together on the sofa. He had just arrived from London, and was detailing its novelties with a novelty essentially his own.

The days of description (personal and panegyric) are passing rapidly away. No one now ushers in a new character by dwelling on "his large blue eyes, beaming with benevolence," or with "raven curls on a brow of marble whiteness." All that is necessary is to state that Mr. Trevyllian had *l'air bien distingué*; which means, that he was slight, pale, well dressed, and that his manners united much grace with more nonchalance.

The essence of Mr. Trevyllian's existence belonged to a highly polished state of society. His habits, tastes, opinions, feelings, were all

artificial, and in this consisted his most striking peculiarity; for it was singular how a character, which was so much an acquired one, could yet be so original. He possessed great knowledge, both that acquired from books—for he had read largely,—and that acquired from observation—for he had seen much of society. His reasoning, rather than his imaginative faculties, were developed. He soon exhausted pleasure, and then reasoned upon it: he soon exhausted it, because he wanted that colouring enthusiasm which creates more than half of what it enjoys; and he reasoned upon it, because his activity of mind, not having been employed on fancies, remained entire for realities.

His perception of the ridiculous was as keen as it was investigating. He set forth absurdity, cause and effect; and the absurdity grew doubly absurd from having its motive placed by its side. He possessed self-appreciation rather than vanity; he was too suspicious to be vain. Vanity seeks for, and believes in, praise; he would certainly have doubted the motive or the sincerity of the praise he was offered—and disbelief takes refuge in disdain.

It may be questioned whether he was generally popular. There were two reasons against

it: first, he was not always understood—and whatever people in general do not understand, they are always prepared to dislike; the incomprehensible is always the obnoxious. Secondly, he often and openly expressed his contempt of the selfishness, meanness, and littleness, that enter so largely into the composition of the present: now, a general compliment is utterly thrown away, but a general affront every one individualises. Yet no person could be more delightful in conversation: it was amusement, to whose service various powers paid tribute; there was observation, thought, mirth, and invention. Mr. Trevyllian was witty, though certainly not what is so often called wit: he made no puns—he gave no nicknames—and was not particularly ill-natured.

One sweeping censure, in passing, on our now-a-days style of conversation. Its Scylla of sarcasm, its Charybdis of insincerity, which, one or other, bid fair to engulf its all of originality or interest. Ridicule is suspended, like the sword of Damocles, in every drawing-room—but, unlike that sword, is over every head: hence every one goes into society with the armour of indifference, or the mantle of deceit. None say either what they think or

what they feel. We are the Chinese of conversation; and, day by day, the circle grows less and less. A flippant, vapid discourse, personal in all its bearings, in which "who peppers the highest is surest to please," and from which all intellectual subjects are carefully excluded—who shall deny, that if dialogues of the living were now to be written, such would be the chief *matériel*?

Books, works of art, the noble statue, the glorious picture, how rarely are any of these the subjects of conversation? Few venture to speak on any topic that really interests them, for fear they should be led away by the warmth of speaking, and, by saying more than they intended, lay themselves open to the sarcasm which lies, like an Indian in ambush, ready to spring forth the moment the victim is off his guard. Take one instance among many. Beyond the general coarse and false compliment which it is held necessary to address with a popular author, and which is repaid by an affected and absurd indifference, what vein of conversation is afterwards started? Assuredly something which interests neither: the mind of the one receives no impressions—that of the other puts forth no powers. The natural

face may be a thousand times more attractive, still a mask must be worn. No one has courage to be himself. We look upon others, and our eyes reflect back their images. It is the same with the mind. Even thus in society do we mirror the likeness of others. All originality being destroyed, our natural craving for variety asks some stimulant, and we are obliged to relieve the insipidity by bitters and acids. Who would dare to be eloquent in the face of a sneer? or who express a sentiment which would instantly be turned to shame and laughter? Ridicule is the dry-rot of society.

But to return to Mr. Trevyllian. Though more original, it is not to be supposed he was more natural than people in general. On the contrary, his character was essentially artificial—the work of man's hands—one that belonged to society and education. His manners and opinions were equally polished. His reading had been extensive—so had his observation; but both his reading and his observation had a worldly cast. As to feeling, he had as much as most have, perhaps more — though generally people have more than they get credit for; but he had no sentiment. Sentiment, by the by, is one of those ill-used words which, from being often

misemployed, require a definition when properly applied. Sentiment is the poetry of feeling. Feeling weeps over the grave of the beloved—sentiment weeps, and plants the early flower and the green tree, to weep too. The truth is, Mr. Trevyllian was deficient in one faculty—that of the imagination.

“ A primrose by the river’s brim
A yellow primrose was to him,
But it was nothing more.”

He would have said, “ Why, what should it be but a simple and pretty flower ?” Now, an imaginative individual finds out likenesses to human thoughts, connects its soon perishing with the speedy decay of hopes that open when the heart has a spring like the year ; or some loved face has left on it the memory of its smile, and hence its green birth is “ a divinely haunted place.”

The same lights and shadows which imagination flings over the primrose, it flings also over every other reality in life ; and it may be doubted whether these were not “ hidden mysteries” to Mr. Trevyllian. He was luxurious in his habits, and fastidious in his tastes, upon principle. He held that enjoyment was a duty owed to

yourself. It may be questioned whether making pleasure a duty will add either to its flavour or its longevity. However, he was an alchemist of happiness, and considered a delight an experiment.

Mr. Trevyllian affected *la gastronomie*: he studied it as a science; thus vanity assisted luxury—for what professor of any science but has the pride of art? Nothing could be more eloquent than his disdain—unless it were his pity for the uncultivated palates that rejoiced in tender beefsteaks—mouths that champed at raw celery like horses at a bit—people who simply boiled their pease, and ate apples and pears, or, as he sweepingly phrased it, “other crude vegetables.”

Dinner arrived, and with it soup, salmon, and silence. A person who talks at the commencement of the course must either have no feelings of his own, or no regard for those of others. At length light observations leaped up on the sunny tides of the French wines, and the more solid remark might be supposed to come with the sherry, bringing with it something of the gravity of its native Spain; while the wisdom floated in with the Madeira, which, having been twice round the world, must have

acquired some experience by the way. Conversation commenced by Lady Mandeville's refusing some lampreys,—a dish, *en passant*, greatly resembling stewed adders.

Mr. Trevyllian.—“What! a negative? Ah, you ladies terribly neglect the sources of happiness! But you have so many within yourselves, that you may well slight some of those to which our unfortunate sex is obliged to have recourse.”

Lady Mandeville.—“What! still retaining your Utopian visions of female felicity? To talk of our happiness!—ours, the ill-used and oppressed! You remind me of the ancient tyrant, who, seeing his slaves sink under the weight of their chains, said, ‘Do look at the indolent repose of those people!’”

Mr. Trevyllian.—“You take white sauce, Miss Arundel? I was sure you would. That preference of white sauce to brown is a singular proof of female inferiority.”

Lord Mandeville.—“Inferiority! I thought, Mr. Trevyllian, you had been a devout believer in the perfection of the fairer world.”

Mr. Trevyllian.—“And so I am. I quite agree with the eastern sage who said, ‘the rose was made from what was left of woman

at the creation.' I do not conceive that their excellence is much impaired by this neglect of mental cultivation."

Lady Mandeville.—"Nay, now, you do not rank gastronomy among the sciences born 'of the immortal mind?'"

Mr. Trevyllian.—"Indeed I do, and as one of the highest and most influential. There are three things the wise man sedulously cultivates—his intellect, his affections, and his pleasures. Who will deny how much it brightens the intellect? When does the mind put forth its powers? when are the stores of memory unlocked? when does wit 'flash from fluent lips?'—when but after a good dinner? Who will deny its influence on the affections? Half our friends are born of turbots and truffles. What is modern attachment but an exhalation from a soup or a salmi? And as to its pleasure, I appeal to each one's experience—only that the truth of experience is so difficult to attain. It is one of those singular prejudices with which human nature delights to contradict itself, that while we readily admit the enjoyment given by the fair objects which delight our sense of seeing—the fragrant odours which delight our sense of smelling—we should

deny that given by the exquisite flavours which delight our sense of tasting."

Mr. Morland.—"The rights of the mouth are as little understood as those of the people. There is a great deal of natural incapacity in the world."

Edward Lorraine.—"There still remains in us so much of the heavy clay of which we were originally compounded. We are ourselves the stumbling-blocks in the way of our happiness. Place a common individual—by common, I mean with the common share of stupidity, custom, and discontent—place him in the garden of Eden, and he would not find it out unless he were told, and when told, he would not believe it."

Lord Mandeville.—"We soon live past the age of appreciation; and on common minds first impressions are indelible, because they are not the result of reflection, but of habit."

Mr. Morland.—"It is very difficult to persuade people to be happy in any fashion but their own. We run after novelty in little things—we shrink from it in great. We make the yoke of circumstance a thousand times heavier, by so unwillingly accommodating ourselves to the inevitable."

Mr. Trevyllian. — “ Herein, Lady Mandeville, is the superiority of your sex so manifest. Women bend to circumstances so easily and so gracefully.”

Lady Mandeville. — “ Because we are so early taught to yield to strong necessity. They who are never accustomed to have a will of their own, rarely think of opposition :

‘ We do content ourselves with discontent.’ ”

Mr. Trevyllian. — “ Discontent for what ?—because, however harsh or rough may be the ways of life, the fairest and smoothest are reserved for you. Ours is the fever of politics, the weariness of business, the bitterness of contention : while to you is left the quiet of home, where you rule—or the gaiety of amusement, where you conquer.”

Lady Mandeville. — “ This is truly a man’s logic, ‘ making the worse appear the better reason.’ ”

Mr. Trevyllian. — “ Then look at the fund of good spirits you possess. Take, for example, a wet day, such as this has been. Debarred from the air and exercise, we have wandered from room to room in gloomy silence, or in sad discourse—our health and our vivacity equally

impaired; while you were as buoyant in step, as bright in eye, and as gay in words, as if the sun had been shining. Nay, I even heard you laugh—laugh during an east wind!—let no woman talk of her evil fate after that.”

Lady Mandeville.—“ I may be silenced, but am not convinced. Power, wealth, and love, are not these the great enjoyments in life, and have you not retained these to yourselves? The power you have arrogated—the wealth you have engrossed—and of love you have only left us its constancy and its sorrow.”

Mr. Trevyllian.—“ Too many charges at once. I will reply to the last first; indeed, that will be an answer to all—for through love our power is at your feet, and our wealth is in your hands. As for constancy, it is the veriest falsehood poet or novelist ever invented, either to heighten a sentiment or turn a phrase, when he ascribed it as the especial merit of your sex. We are a thousand times more constant. A woman has so many things that divide her heart with her lover. Alas! the diamonds we give are our rivals—they take up the thoughts we want to engross. Then the horror to think how soon the affection inspired by oneself is merged in that inspired

by your children ! The husband dies—the wife piously submits to the Divine will—Providence supports her wonderfully through it—her child dies of the measles or hooping-cough—and the mother goes to Hastings and dies too.”

Lord Mandeville.—“ What is the reason that many die of the loss of a beloved object before marriage, but never after ? The lover cannot survive the mistress, nor the mistress the lover : but the husband or the wife survive each other to a good old age.”

Mr. Trevyllian.—“ Curiosity is its own suicide ; and what is love but curiosity ? Marriage enables us to make proof of the happiness which was but an idea before. With love, knowledge is destruction ; and as for the individuals, who can expect them to die of a disease that is extinct ?”

Edward Lorraine.—“ No sin in love is so great as inconstancy, because it unidealises it. The crime of sacrilege is not in the mere theft of the golden images from the high places—it is in afterwards applying them to base and common uses. Love and faith both require the ideal to make them holy.”

Lady Mandeville (whispering Edward).—“ We never understand the full heinousness of a crime unless we commit it.”

Mr. Trevyllian.—“ There is something absurd in vowing constancy in love. Love depends on impulses and impressions: now, over neither of these have we any control. The only security is, that we soon exhaust our impulses, and grow callous to impressions; and the attachment has then become a habit, whose chains are, of all others, the most difficult to break.”

Edward Lorraine —

“ And custom lie upon you with a weight
Heavy as frost, and deep almost as life.”

Mr. Trevyllian.—“ Some author or other well defines love to be ‘ an egotism in two persons ;’ and I recollect three lines which contain the whole essence of love-making :

‘ O moi que j’adore,
O toi qui m’adore,
O nous que nous nous adorons!’ ”

Mr. Morland.—“ In this exaltation of constancy there is something of that self-deception which attends all our imaginings of every species of virtue. We make them so beautifully perfect, to serve as an excuse for not attaining thereunto. ‘ Perfection was not made for man.’ ”

Mr. Trevyllian.—“ Only that truth is like the philosopher’s stone, a thing not to be dis-

covered, it were curious to observe how practice and theory accord. The omnipotence and unity of first love are usually and eloquently insisted upon. No person pleads guilty to more than a second, and that only under peculiar circumstances. Now, I hold that love-affairs in the human heart are like the heads of the hydra; cut one off, another springs up in its place. First would come passing attractions—innumerable; then such as a second interview have made matter of memory—these would task the calculating boy himself; next, such as further, though slight, intercourse has deepened into a tinge of sentiment—these would require slate and pencil to cast up. Again, such as wore the name of friendship—these might be reckoned for as the French actress said, upon being asked if she could enumerate her adorers: *Aisement; qui ne sait compter jusqu'au mille?* Encore, attachments thwarted by circumstance, or such as died the natural death of absence—these would be not a few; to say nothing of some half-dozen grand passions.”

Lady Mandeville.—“ Now, in spite of your knowledge of our sex—a knowledge, as I once heard you say, founded on much study, and

more experience—I think you are confounding vanity and love.”

Mr. Trevyllian.—“ I own I see little difference between them.”

Lady Mandeville.—“ On the contrary, I hold that vanity is to love what opium is to the constitution,—exciting, but destroying.”

Edward Lorraine.—“ I must own I allow to this ‘ religion of the heart’ a more exalted creed than you seem inclined to do. Love is of all others the principle in our nature which calls forth ‘ its higher and its better part.’ Look at the disinterestedness of love, the sacrifices it even delights in making! Think how lightly are all worldly advantages held when thrown into the balance with affection.”

Lady Mandeville.—

“ Puisqu’il a peint Didon,
Virgile avait aimé.”

Mr. Trevyllian.—“ Pardon: Mr. Lorraine is under the influence of hope, not memory: he paints the passion he expects to inspire.”

Mr. Morland.—“ What an interesting subject for conversation are these varieties of *la belle passion!* Sentiment meets with a deal of sympathy.”

Lady Mandeville.—“ As far as words go.”

Mr. Trevyllian.—“ Does sympathy often go much further ?”

Mr. Morland.—“ Look at the daily papers : to what eloquence do they attain when an affair of the heart becomes an affair of the police !”

Mr. Trevyllian. — “ My way hither lay through the county town, where I stopped to take ‘ mine ease at mine inn,’ of which I soon grew tired enough. One does many rash things from idleness. The assizes were being held, and I demolished a fragment of our great enemy, Time, in court. The case being tried was what is called, *par distinction*, an interesting case. A man, in the desperation of a refusal (common people take those things strangely to heart), had stabbed the obdurate fair one with his knife. She was herself the prosecutrix. The counsel denounced the crime : he should have denounced the criminal’s taste. As the evidence proceeded, one thing was in his favour—that, after stabbing the woman, he ran and fetched the doctor : ‘ a manifest proof,’ as the judge observed, ‘ of his good heart.’ Well, the jury could not agree, and accordingly were shut up to their dinnerless discussion—a method of proceeding, by the by, enough to produce

affectionate unanimity between the rival queens themselves. When —

‘ Hark ! there are murmurs in the crowded hall !
A sound—a voice—a shriek—a fearful call !’

The prisoner had hurried verdict and catastrophe—he had stabbed himself. Heavens ! the sympathy he excited ! ‘ Such strong feelings’—‘ ruin of his happiness’—‘ blighted affections’—in short, there was not a man in the court who would not have asked him to dinner, nor a woman who would not have married him.”

Edward Lorraine.—

“ An equal sympathy they both confessed.”

Lady Mandeville.—“ An equal sympathy do you call it ? Come, Emily, we must teach them to value us higher—we must leave them, that ‘ distance may lend enchantment to the view.’”

CHAPTER XIII.

“ Alas ! what differs more than man from man ?
 And whence that difference ?—whence but from himself ?

* * * * *

“ There is a bondage that is worse to bear
 Than his who breathes, by roof, and floor, and wall
 Pent in,—a tyrant’s solitary thrall :
 ’Tis his who——

—— must bear

His fetters in his soul.”

WORDSWORTH.

A DAY when the south wind brought with it sunshine and showers — when one half hour down came the glistening rain so quickly, that the sun had not time to hide his face — and the next, the blue sky had its azure deepened by the relief of the broken white clouds ; while the garden was flooded with golden light — at the point of every leaf hung a clear, bright rain-drop — and the turf shone like an emerald with the moisture. The air was soft and warm, and fraught with that peculiar sweetness which tells that the serynga (our English orange-flower) has expanded, and that the lilacs are in full blossom.


Edward Lorraine was seated at an open window: when the soft warm rain came down, it beat the other way, and the eye followed it driving through the sunshine, like a fairy shower of diamond or amber, till it seemed to melt on the green and distant hills into a mist, silvery but indistinct.

Mr. Morland was amusing himself with the County Chronicle, and Edward was absorbed in his book: Lady Mandeville and Emily were seated at a small work-table. Lady Mandeville, who had not been in the room ten minutes, was very industrious; but it must be owned that Emily's eye wandered more than once to the opposite window: Edward was so very intent on the page before him. At length he closed the volume—leant, as if meditating on its contents, for a few minutes—and then rose and approached the work-table.

Edward Lorraine.—“ I am so fascinated with what I have been reading, that I am under the absolute necessity of talking about it :

‘ Happiness was born a twin.’ ”

Lady Mandeville.—“ And we are to enjoy your happiness without knowing in what it consists: disinterested sympathy, at least.”



Edward Lorraine.—"Have you read the tale I have just finished, Di Vasari?"

Lady Mandeville.—"Oh, we can enter into your enjoyment. Emily and I read it about a week ago;—read it during one half the day, and talked of it during the other."

Edward Lorraine.—"The story itself is one of intense interest—one of passion and poetry. But even this has less attraction for me than the strong peculiarities of the man's spirit. I knew him, and can so well imagine the strength and bitterness of his mind when some of the passages were written."

Emily.—"You say you knew the author. What was he like?"

Edward Lorraine.—"That is to say, was he handsome? Yes, in a peculiar and un-English style. He had high, sharp, and somewhat Jewish features, dark eyes, clear, keen, and penetrating, with something almost ferocious in their expression :

‘ And in his eye the gladiator spoke.’

If I believed in transmigration, I should have said that in his former stage of existence he had been a Bengal tiger; and somewhat of its likeness still lingered in his face."

Emily.—“ Did you know much of him ?”

Edward Lorraine.—“ I never saw Mr. Thompson—(I wish, in order to interest you, he had had a more characteristic name)—but once. I had read in the very Magazine which contains Di Vasari, viz. Blackwood’s, a tale called the Life of Charles Edwards—it struck me so much, that I grew curious about the author. I met him soon afterwards at a supper.”

Lady Mandeville.—“ Could he talk ?”

Edward Lorraine.—“ Wonderfully! Singular opinions singularly maintained! A flow of words, very felicitous, and yet such as no one else would have used. Not so much a love of, as a positive necessity for, contradiction seemed a part of his mind: add to this, extensive and out-of-the-way reading, and a ready memory—and if your imagination be very vivid, you will form some faint notion of his discourse.”

Lady Mandeville.—“ I should like to judge for myself. You must introduce him.”

Edward Lorraine.—“ Your command makes the impossible easy; but this is very impossible indeed. The subject of our discourse is dead. He died, as I have since heard, of a harassed mind, and a worn-out constitution. His history is one of the many brief and bitter pages in

human life. A spirit superior to its station—talents of that imaginative kind, which so constantly exaggerate their influence—tastes poetical in their luxury—aspirations the most undefined and aspiring; gird all these in by narrow circumstances, and a lower class in life,—you will then have the whole of his dark and discontented existence.”

Mr. Morland (laying down the *County Chronicle*).—“ I know few states that more excite our sympathy in theory than this contest of ‘ low want and lofty will.’ But unless we could pre-arrange existence, how are we to alter it? Nature and Fortune have long been at variance. A workman uses for each task those tools most appropriate to the work. Not so with Life: in at least seven cases out of nine, people are placed by fortune to fulfil a destiny for which they are eminently unfitted by nature. But go on with your detail.”

Edward Lorraine.—“ I am not aware of his birth, parentage, or education; but, when quite a lad, he left home, after the old fashion of adventures, and went to South America. There he stayed some twelve or thirteen years. I am afraid that his expedition to find El Dorado was as bootless as Sir Walter Raleigh’s. Home

he returned, and committed that worst imprudence, an imprudent marriage. Imprudence in this world is punished even more rapidly than crime; and I believe his folly was its own punishment. He became a reporter to a newspaper, published some admirable tales in Blackwood's Magazine, and wrote for divers other periodicals. Night after night he attended the gallery of the House of Commons, recording what any merciless orator might choose to declaim. Or else, grinding down the last colours of his mind for an 'article in time'—till mind and body both gave way, and he died, I have heard, at about five-and-thirty, leaving behind him some of the most original tales in our language, scattered through different publications. Not a dozen persons remember his name; and pages full of passion and beauty are slumbering in productions, which, however influential in their day, not one person in a thousand binds, nor one in ten thousand reads when bound. Genius should offer up its morning and evening sacrifice to luck."

Mr. Morland.—“When we consider how many authors, and popular ones, whether living or dead, now crowd our shelves and memories, we ought rather to rejoice when a writer,

be his merit what it may, is forgotten. We have no patriotism towards posterity; and the selfish amusement of the present always has, and always will, outweigh the important interests of the future,—or else a law would long ago have passed, for every century to consign the productions of its predecessor to the flames. Readers would benefit by the originality this would produce; and writers would no longer have to complain that their predecessors had taken all their best ideas:

‘Pereant qui ante nos nostra dixerunt.’”

Edward Lorraine.—“Where shall we find a literary Curtius, to leap, volumes and all, a voluntary offering into this gulf of oblivion?”

Lady Mandeville.—“This is so like a man’s scheme,—always expecting others to be more disinterested than himself!”

Edward Lorraine.—“This tale, by the by, of Di Vasari, is written in a style in which our literature is less fertile than in its other branches.”

Lady Mandeville.—“One at this moment occurs to me, and one quite out of my ordinary course. You and Emily, and even Mr. Morland, are decidedly ‘romanticists.’ I must own

I prefer a gayer and lighter species of reading. Of pictures I like portraits—of books I like novels—novels of modern life, times, and manners: even if very bad, they amuse. I am not sure if laughing *at* them be not as pleasant as laughing *with* them.”

Edward Lorraine.—“ But what is the tale ? ”

Lady Mandeville.—“ Do not be impatient. Cannot you see that this dwelling on my opposite tastes shews how very admirable the story must be which could carry me so completely out of them? I insist upon telling you how I came to read it. Mandeville had dined out: Emily, most unkindly, had not a prescience of my loneliness, and stayed at the Hall. I got tired, very tired of myself. At last I saw a little volume lying on the table—took it up in that worst of moods for an author—*faute de mieux*, opened it carelessly—read a few pages, and grew so interested, that I let the fire quite, the lamp nearly, out; and when Henry came home, I am not sure whether I did not take him for one of his ancestors stepped from a picture-frame. Moreover, I could not sleep till I had finished it. There is the very book.”

Edward Lorraine.—“ My old favourite

Inesilla. How well I remember reading it! It was in the summer, as I walked to and fro in an avenue, over which the elm boughs met; and below, large, old, unpruned laurels grew almost over the walk. It took a wonderful hold on me. I believe, for weeks after, I looked with suspicious eyes on every pleasant-spoken elderly gentleman who addressed me."

Lady Mandeville.—"Do you remember the effect produced by the black hollyhock, hanging gloomily over the sepulchral white marble vase?"

Emily.—"I like Inesilla herself so much."

Edward Lorraine.—"It is the only beautiful English tale I know in which the supernatural agency is well managed. Our common ghosts are essentially vulgar."

Lady Mandeville.—"Sent on errands to reveal a murder or a money deposit."

Edward Lorraine.—"Here the spiritual agency is so terrible and so solemn. Every day, and every hour, we are trenching upon the mighty and mysterious empire of the unknown; the shadows of old superstition flit dimmer and more dim before her eyes. We lay ghosts, not with holy word and crucifix, but with Abernethy and Dr. Hibbert. But let us grow as actual

as we will—let us admit nothing but facts, and not these till they have been first denied—still vague, ay vain, beliefs will spring up in our hearts—midnight, despite all reasoning, will be haunted with ‘a shadow and a thought.’ So long as the soul knows this is not her own home, she will have visitings from another, and there will be that in our thoughts of which we can give no account—a fear and hope, which we sometimes will deny, and which will never be more than a dream. It is this fine and mystical sense which Inesilla succeeds so well in exciting. Then the human interest is admirably kept up. Our superstition is awakened through our affection.”

Emily.—“I think it opens so beautifully: the feeling of happiness—sunny, confiding happiness—contrasts powerfully with the after-desolation.”

Edward Lorraine.—“Altogether, I know no tale of stranger and wilder beauty.”

The day wore on, and, when evening came, the party were arranged to Lady Mandeville’s satisfaction as regarded her guests: whether it was so very delightful to herself, may reasonably be questioned. An elderly neighbour had had the cruelty to come out without his wife, his con-

stant partner at cards; and Mr. Morrison was one who would as soon have thought of going without his dinner as without his rubber. This rubber had therefore to be made up by the Mandevilles themselves and Mr. Morland. Miss Arundel and Lorraine were at the other extremity of the room, by the piano,—an occasional song serving as the excuse for what was a *tête-à-tête* in all but the embarrassment. Certainly that evening Edward was a little in love—to be sure he had nothing else to do.

Now the letters arrived at Norville Abbey in the evening: a great misfortune this—for, on an average, there is not one pleasant letter out of ten, and it is miserable to pass the night ruminating on the other nine. One really wants the spirits of the morning to support the coming in of the post. There was one letter universally disagreeable—it came from Mr. Delawarr, and entreated Lorraine's instant return to London. Regrets came flattering enough to the fortunate or unfortunate receiver of the epistle; even Emily ventured to say she was "very sorry," but it was in such a low voice that no one heard it. "You must come and see us again," said Lord Mandeville; "unless we are in town before you can escape."

Early the next morning, the wheels of a departing carriage rolled off, unnoticed, as its occupier supposed, by all. One ear, however, heard every sound; and either a very gentle hand, or a very light wind, slightly stirred a curtain. Poor Emily! she only caught sight of the postilion. Why, with all our deep and unutterable sympathies with love, are we inclined to laugh at half its disappointments?

CHAPTER XIV.

“ Happiness

Is the gay to-morrow of the mind
That never comes.”

“ I GIVE my most cordial approbation,” said Lord Mandeville: “ I think Emily Arundel is a very sweet creature—a little too visionary.”

“ Nay, it is that,” replied his wife, “ which makes her so interesting: she is just a heroine for a romance in five volumes; and I shall never forgive her, if something a little out of the common run of, brought out one season and married the next, without an interesting embarrassment, does not happen to her.”

“ My dear Ellen, beware how you encourage this tendency in your pretty *protégée*—to invent a life rather than live: with all your penetration, I think you are hardly aware of the strength and intensity of Miss Arundel’s character. At fifteen, her poetry of feeling (you

see I do my best to please you with a phrase) would just give piquancy and freshness to her entry into life; but at twenty, it is grown into a decided mental feature—and nothing would surprise me less than to see her throw herself away on a worthless fortune-hunter, under some mistaken fancy of affection and disinterestedness.”

“ No fear of that; I have a match for her in perspective—one that I am much mistaken if both she and you would not highly approve.”

“ And I am much mistaken if she has not some floating fancy of her own.”

“ But suppose we both agree in our choice?”

“ Well, suppose what you please, only be cautious how you act upon your suppositions.”

“ In the meantime, I have your consent to ask her to accompany us to Italy?”

“ A very cordial yes to that.”

Emily gladly accepted the offer. But for Lady Mandeville's friendship, her position was at this moment very awkward: to live alone at the Hall would have been too independent—a residence with her aunt was put out of the question by her marriage—and Lady Alicia's death prevented her deriving that advantage from Mr. Delawarr being appointed her guardian,

which, perhaps, her uncle had anticipated. To be sure, an heiress is never at a loss for friends; but the very thought of strangers made Emily cling more closely to Lady Mandeville's protection. Her ladyship was very tired of Norville Abbey, and a little female diplomacy had been exerted for some time, to convince her husband that—whether put on those un-failing arguments, health or spirits—a little change was indispensable, as Hortense says of her drawing-room's Sevres china, and or-molu, "*C'est plus qu'utile, c'est nécessaire.*"

After many demurs—turnip-fields and covies, the ash coppice and pheasants, put into the balance against "Raphaels, Correggios, and stuff"—it was finally agreed they should travel for the next season, on condition that the following one was to see them quietly settled in the Abbey again, taking care of the county interest during that seventh year of such importance to our constitution, where the phœnix parliament dissolves into its original elements, again to be collected and re-vivified by the process called purity of election.

Like most fair tacticians, Lady Mandeville, contented with present advantages, left the future to take care of itself: besides, after a year

on the continent, Norville Abbey would offer contrast enough to be quite delightful.

Arrangements were soon commenced and soon ended. Emily took leave of Mrs. Clarke, who gave her divers small commissions, and many ingenious hints how the custom-house officers might be evaded. The Doctor recommended her to learn to make milk coffee, a thing never met with good in England—and, as he justly observed, she might marry a man who was fond of it.

“And I can say, from experience,” added his wife, “there is nothing like seeing to things yourself.”

Her last visit was to Mr. Morton: the old had died around him, the young were departing, and regret deepened into anxiety as he bade her farewell.

“Come back, my child, as kind, as affectionate, and with hopes only less visionary because realised in their happiness: be humble, be thankful, and, my child, may God bless and keep you!”

It was the last evening of all, and that Emily gave to her saddest farewell—to her home. She retraced the walks of her childhood; the shrubbery, with its luxuriant growth of roses, now in

the full beauty of summer ; the fruit-garden, where every tree and walk had a remembrance — those iron links of affection. The wind was high, and at every step a shower of fragrant and coloured leaves fell over her like rain : her fancy asked of her feelings, Do they weep to bid me farewell ?

Nothing exaggerates self-importance like solitude ; and, perhaps because we have it not, then more than ever do we feel the want of sympathy : hopes, thoughts, these link themselves with external objects ; and it is the expression of that haunting desire of association, those vine-like emotions of the human heart which fasten on whatever is near, that give an interest like truth to the poet's fiction, who says that the mournful waters and the drooping trees murmur with his murmurs, and sorrow with his sorrows.

It was now the shadowy softness of twilight — that one English hour whose indistinct beauty has a vague charm which may compensate for all the sunshine that ever made glorious the vale of Damascus ; and as she emerged from the yew-tree walk, the waving wind and the dim light gave the figures cut in their branches almost the appearance of reality, and their

shadows flung huge semblances of humanity far before them : a less excited frame of mind than Emily's might well have invested them with the idea of something actual and ominous. It was a relief to reach the broad open turf before the house. The room into which she meant to go fronted full west. The sun had set sometime, and his purple pageantry, like that of a forgotten monarch, had departed ; but one or two rich clouds, like faithful hearts, retaining the memory of his gifts to the last, floated still on the air. The middle window of the oriel before her, just caught and reflected back the crimson light and colour. The ground below looked bright and warm compared with the shade around.

One of those fancies which will, despite of reason, link some peculiar object and feeling together, now crossed Emily's mind : she took a little branch of geranium — it was all leaves, for whose lingering fragrance she had gathered it — and planted it in the most sheltered spot, by the steps : “ If it flourish, I shall flourish ; if it perish, so shall I.”

The window was open, and she entered the room. How dreary it looked ! The carpet was taken up, the chairs ranged in formal order

round the wall, the fire-irons removed, and the grate so bright and so cold ; the curtains were down, all the little ornaments put away, no flowers in the stands, and the pictures covered up : from want of sufficient material, the face of her uncle's portrait was still visible : she thought it looked upon her sadly and kindly, forgetting that such was its habitual expression. A movement in the passage roused her ; hastily she sprang down the steps, and in an instant was hidden in the thick foliage of the path which led to the village, where she was to meet Lady Mandeville and the children.

Little did she know the terrors she had left behind her. The foot in the passage was that of the old gardener, who, now residing in the house with his wife and daughter, had been sent by the said female authorities to close the shutters against damp, thieves, and other evening annoyances. He just caught sight of Emily—the white dress was enough ; and, without pausing on the incongruity of a ghost in a large straw bonnet, he rushed back to the kitchen : those spiritual securities, candles and company, enabled him to return ; there was no trace of any earthly thing ; the supernatural conclusion was soon drawn, the room pro-

nounced to be haunted, and henceforth only to be entered in couples.

A ghost-story is an avalanche, increasing in horror as it goes; and, like an avalanche, one often brings on another. It was remembered, that Emily was the last of a house which had for years and years been connected with every tradition in the county: the grandfathers of the parish could recollect when the old hall had rung with the cheerful song and shout of a gallant band of relatives, all bearing the name of Arundel, and when the echoes of the morning were awakened by baying hounds and the ringing horns of the young hunters: but one grave had been filled after another—one name after another crowded the funeral tablets of the church; and the once flourishing race had dwindled down to one slight girl.

Omens, predictions, and legends, now multiplied around every fireside: one, in particular, was revived. The lands of the Arundel estate had belonged to a monastery; but when the crosier bowed down before King Henry's anger, these domains were assigned to one of his favourite followers, Sir John Arundel. But the abbess, descended from an old Norman family, and inheriting all the spirit of her

race, resigned not so easily the sway for which youth, beauty, and the world, had been sacrificed. She refused admittance to the messengers; defied the authority which attempted to dispossess her; and pursued her usual course of rule and faith, as if neither had been gainsayed.

“As bold a Neville as ever buckled on spur or sword! She denies my right, and appeals to the pope,” said the haughty monarch, throwing down her scroll. “Read ye ever such a bead-roll of curses? Come, Sir John Arundel, they say you fear neither man nor devil; let’s see if you fear woman? Clear me out this convent, and keep its candlesticks for your pains.”

The knight needed no second command: he ordered a band of his stanchest followers to horse—men who had fought by his side in Flanders, and there learnt more reverence for Sir Captain than Sir Priest. They staid a short while in the hostel of the village; for mine host’s Canary smacked, as the jesting soldiers said, of a monkish neighbourhood. When Sir John mounted again, he somewhat regretted the delay; for the night was falling—and, besides, it gave time for the daring prioress to

hear of his coming, and perhaps prepare, however fruitlessly, to oppose it.

As he rode up the hill, he saw lights gleaming from the convent, and a sound of music floated upon the air. To his great surprise, the gates were all unbarred. Not a creature was visible: all were evidently assembled in the chapel, whence issued both the light and music.

The doors of the chapel were unfastened, though closed. In they went; but even Sir John and his reckless soldiers paused a moment on the threshold, and two or three even doffed their steel caps. Chanting—though, it must be owned, some of them rather tremulously—their choral hymn, the nuns, closely veiled, knelt on each side,—but for their sweet voices, like figures carved, rather than life. The prioress alone was unveiled, and standing on the steps of the altar, which, added to her long flowing garments, gave her the appearance of almost preternatural height. In one hand, even as her forefathers had grasped the sword, not less boldly did she hold a torch; in the other, even as they had held their shield, she held the cross. For a moment even Sir John Arundel quailed before the dark eye that

met his own so fearlessly. She saw her advantage, and seized it. At a glance, her nuns ceased their hymn, and a deep silence succeeded the voice of singing, and the clanging steps of armed men.

“ Not for pity, nor even for time, cruel and grasping man! do I now speak ;” and her clear distinct voice sounded unnaturally loud, from the echoes of the arched roof and hollow tombs. “ Turn the golden vessels sacred to thy God to purposes of vain riot and thankless feasting, even as did the Babylonian monarch ; — take the fair lands, from whose growth the pilgrim has been fed and the poor relieved — take them, as the unrighteous king of Israel took the vineyard of his neighbour, by force ; — but take also the curse that clings to the ungodly. I curse the father who shall possess — the race who are to inherit. Thy young men shall be cut off by the sword ; and sickness, worse than an armed man, shall take thy maidens in the bower. In the name of the faith thou hast deserted — the God thou hast outraged — the curse shall be on thy race, till it be extinguished, even as this light.”

She dashed down the torch she held, descended from the altar-steps, and left the chapel

before any of her opponents were sufficiently recovered from their dismay to stop or molest her passage. All the nuns were either not so fortunate or so resolute. Certain it is, that one of them, and a namesake too, Bertha de Neville, a few weeks after, married this very Sir John Arundel. The legend went on to state, that the nuptial merriment was disturbed by the sudden appearance of a pale spectral figure, who entered, as it contrived to depart from the banquet-hall unobserved, and denounced the most awful curses on bridegroom and bride. A similar appearance was said to have attended the christening of their first child.

Years passed away; and the story of the White Prioress was one of those which belong of right to all ancient families. A ghost only pays an old house a proper attention by an occasional visit. And now that Arundel Hall was, for the time at least, deserted—and Emily was the last of her race, just, too, on the eve of her departure for foreign parts, together with the apparition seen by the gardener—such an opportunity for aught of superstitious record might never occur again. Traditions, omens, appearances, prophecies, came thick and three-fold; till, what with inventions and remem-

brances, not a grandfather or grandmother, not an uncle or aunt of her race, had ever, by common report, remained quiet in their graves.

Early as it was next morning, not a cottage-door but sent forth its inhabitants to take a farewell look at Miss Emily. Many a little sun-burnt face ran beside the carriage, and many a little hand, which had since sun-rise been busily employed in selecting her favourite flowers, threw nosegays in at the window. Emily eagerly caught them, and her eyes filled with tears, as, at a turning in the road which hid the village, she threw herself back on the seat. How many years of youth and of happiness—how many ties of those small kindnesses, stronger than steel to bind—how many memories of early affection, was she leaving behind!

At that moment the beautiful answer of the Shunamite woman seemed to her the very morality of happiness and certainty of content—“I dwell among mine own people.” How many familiar faces, rejoicing in our joy, sorrowing with our sorrow—how many cares, pleasant from habit—sickness, whose suffering gave a tenderer character to love—mirth, the mirth of the cheerful hearth or the daily meal—mirth, like home-made bread, sweeter from its very home-

liness—the sleep, sound from exercise—the waking buoyant with health and the consciousness of necessary toil—the friends to whom our childhood was a delight, because it recalled their own! “I dwell among mine own people:” a whole life of domestic duty, and the happiness which springs from that fulfilment which is of affection, are in those words.

Emily might have revolved all this in her own exaggerated feelings, till she had convinced herself that it was her duty to have staid in her native village and solitary home, but for Lady Mandeville, who, though very willing to make all due allowance for her young companion’s depressed spirits during the first ten miles, was not prepared to extend the said allowance to twenty.

Our sympathy is never very deep unless founded on our own feelings;—we pity, but do not enter into the grief we have never known: and if her Ladyship had expressed her thoughts aloud, they would have taken pretty much this form: “I really cannot see so much to regret in an empty house, a village where there is not a creature to speak to, some old trees, and dirty children.”

Politeness, however, acts the lady’s-maid to

our thoughts; and they are washed, dressed, curled, rouged, and perfumed, before they are presented to the public; so that an unexpressed idea might often say to the spoken one, what the African woman said to the European lady, after surveying the sweep of her huge bonnet and the extent of her skirt, "Oh, tell me, white woman, if this is all you!" It is amazing how much a thought expands and refines by being put into speech: I should think it could hardly know itself.

We have already recorded Lady Mandeville's thoughts; but she spoke as follows:—"When at Rome, Emily, you must get a set of cameos. You are among the few persons I could permit to wear them. It quite affects my feelings to see them strung round some short, thick throat of an heiress to some alderman who died of apoplexy; clasped round an arm red as if the frost of a whole winter had settled in the elbow; or stuck among bristling curls, as if to caricature, by contrast, the short, silly, simpering face below. 'The intelligible forms of ancient poets'—'the fair humanities of old religion'—the power, the beauty, and the majesty,

'That had their haunts in dale or piny mountain,
Or forest by slow stream or pebbly spring:'

it is enough to bring them back to our unworthy earth in the shape of furies, to see their images put to such base use. None but a classical countenance should venture on cameos."

"I am," replied Emily—personal adornment is the true spell that would almost wake the dead—"so very fond of emeralds: there is something so spiritual in their pure green light, and one associates with them the romantic fiction of mysterious virtue being in their 'mystic stone.'"

"My sweetest Emily," returned Lady Mandeville, a little alarmed, "never be picturesque or poetical at your toilette;—in matters of grave import, never allow vain and foolish fancies to interfere;—never sit at your looking-glass as if you were sitting for a picture;—indulge in no vagrant creations of your own. What Pope said of fate is still truer of fashion—

'Whatever is, is right.'

"But suppose any prevailing fashion is to me peculiarly unbecoming?"

"It will be less unbecoming than singularity. A peculiar style, especially if that style suit you, will make a whole room your enemies: independence is an affront to your acquaint-

ance. Of all deferences, be most implicit in that you pay to opinion.”

“How little liberty, even in the affair of a ringlet, does a woman possess!”

“Liberty and power,” said Lord Mandeville, who, after riding the first stage on horseback, now entered the carriage, “are in the hands of women, what they are in the hands of a mob—always misused. Ah! the Salic law is the true code, whether in morals or monarchies.”

“He cannot forgive,” said his wife, “the turnip-fields and the three covies which he has left behind. But I will not have your murderous propensities interfere with Emily’s well-doing. While we are travelling, the mirror of the Graces may remain partially covered; but on our return, it must be unveiled in its own peculiar temple, Paris. Be assiduous in your studies for a few weeks, and you may lay in a stock of good principles for life.”

“Nothing,” said Lord Mandeville, “can be more perfect than a Frenchwoman when she is finished. From the Cinderella-like slipper to the glove delicate as the hand it covers—the shawl, whose drapery a sculptor might envy—the perfumes—the fan, so gracefully carried—the *bijouterie*, which none employ with such

effect—all is in such exquisite keeping. I always admire their management of their bonnet. A young Frenchwoman will come in, the said bonnet put on as if a morning had been devoted to its becoming position: she will take it off, and not a curl will be displaced—put it on again with all apparent carelessness, but as gracefully as ever.”

“Remember,” said Lady Mandeville, “the previous study. I recollect, when we were last in Paris, I expressed to that pretty Mde. de St. Elve the very same admiration. Truly it was ‘the carelessness, yet the most studied to kill.’ We were at that time quite confidential. ‘You see,’ said she, ‘the result of my morning.’”

“It is a pity,” replied her husband, “but a fair exchange could be effected—that the Englishwoman could give her general neatness, and the Frenchwoman her particular taste.”

“Ah,” observed Lady Mandeville, “but the strength of a feeling lies in its concentration. The Englishwoman diffuses over a whole day what the French reserves for a few hours. Effect, there is the summing up. In great, as in little things, the French are a nation of actors—life is to them a great melodrame.

I remember some verses written by one of their *gens d'esprit et de société*, an hour before his death, in which he calls on the Loves and Graces to surround his couch, that he may die with the murmur of their kisses in his ears! This is something more than 'adjusting the mantle before they fall.' It is also taking care that the trimmings are not tumbled.'”

Mile after mile flew rapidly; and soon came upon the traveller's ear that deep murmur, like the roar of the mighty ocean, which, even at such a distance, tells us that we approach London. Gradually the hedges and fields give way before long rows of houses; and a few single domiciles, with plats of turf cut into patterns, and bunches of daisies dusty and dry as if just dropped from the wreath of a figurante, are what the orientals call so pleasant and rural, so convenient for stages and Sunday. Soon one straight line succeeds another; and we know the wilderness of streets is begun, which, in another century, will end heaven knows where.

The entrance to London by the great north road, is the one by which I would bring a stranger. First, the road winding through the fertile country, rich in old trees and bright green fields, and here and there a substantial

brick house, well closed in with wall and hedge;—a few miles farther, the dislocating town of Brentford, driven through at the risk of the joints of your frame and the springs of your carriage, which George II. pronounced so beautiful—it was “so like *Yermany*.” So much for taste, and the doctrine of association. Those fit gates for a summer palace, the light and airy arches which lead to Sion House, passed also, the country begins to take an air of town—houses and gardens are smaller—single blessedness is rarer—turnpikes more frequent—and terraces, places, and crescents, are many in number;—then the town of Kensington, small and mean, looking a century behind its neighbourhood.

The road now becomes a noble and wide one. On foot, and by daylight, the brick walls on either side are dreary enough; but at night they only give depth to the shadow, and the eye catches the lighted windows and the stately roofs of the houses they enclose. To my own individual taste, these are the most delightful of dwellings, close upon the park for drives, close upon the streets for dinners, enclosed, large, and to themselves, having as much of rural felicity within their walls as I at least desire; that is

to say, there are some fine old trees, lilacs and laburnums in full blossom, sweeps of turf, like green carpet, and plenty of delicate roses, &c. A conservatory is the aristocracy of flowers.

Just where the road is the widest they met the mails, the gallant horses sweeping along

“As if the speed of thought were in their limbs,”

and every step accompanied by a shower of fiery sparkles. The lamps that glance and are lost—the cheerful ringing of the horn—the thought that must rise, of how much of human joy and sorrow every one of those swift coaches is bearing on to its destination:—newspapers that detail and decide on all the affairs of Europe—letters in all their infinite variety, love, confidence, business—the demand of the dun, the excuse of the debtor—delicate bath and coarse foolscap—the patrician coat-of-arms, and the particularly plebeian wafer—the sentimental motto and graceful symbol, side by side with the red patch stamped with a thimble: but any one of these thoughts will be more than enough to fill the brief moment which the all but animated machine takes in passing. How different from the days when “the coach,” one, and one only, was eight days coming from

York, and its passengers laid in a store of provisions which, in our rapid days, would supply them half way to America!

“London, my country, city of the soul!” exclaimed Lady Mandeville, as she caught sight of the brilliantly lighted arches of Hyde Park Corner, and the noble sweep of the illuminated Park in the distance, while Piccadilly spread before them in the darkness like an avenue of lamps. “I have heard that a thorough-bred cockney is one of the most contented animals in the world: I, for one, to use a favourite modern expression, can quite ‘enter into his feelings.’”

“Do you remember,” replied her husband, “Lorraine’s quotation to St. James’s Street?—

‘For days, for months, devotedly
I’ve lingered by thy side,
The only place I coveted
In all the world so wide.’*

And though I like the country, as an Englishman and a patriot ought to do, I own I feel the fascination of the flagstones.”

“Emily, I accuse you of want of sympathy with your friends—I declare you are asleep:

* Kennedy.

you will make a bad traveller ; however, I shall rely upon your amendment.”

Emily was not asleep, but she was oppressed by that sense of nothingness with which the native of a great town is too familiar to be able to judge of its effect on a stranger. She had been accustomed to live where every face was a familiar one—where every one’s affairs had, at least, the interest of neighbourhood—and where a stranger had all the excitement of novelty. Here all was new and cold : the immensity was too great to fix on a place of rest—the hurry, the confusion of the streets bewildered her. She felt, not only that she was nobody, but that nobody cared for her—a very disagreeable conviction at which to arrive, but one very natural in London.

That journey is dreary which does not end at home ; and I do not know whether to despise for his selfishness, or to pity for his situation, the individual who said, that he had ever found

“ Life’s warmest welcome at an inn.”

It was paying himself and his friends a compliment.

CHAPTER XV.

A most delightful person? I said "yes:"
To such a question how could I say less?
And yet I thought, half pedant and half fop,
If this you praise, where will eulogium stop?

THE day after their arrival, the Mandevilles being engaged to a family dinner, where they could not well take a stranger, Emily accepted the invitation of a Mrs. Trefusis, with whom, to use the lady's own expression, she was "a prodigious favourite." And to Mrs. Trefusis' accordingly she went, and was received with that kind of manner which says, "You see I mean to make a great deal of you, so be very much obliged." At dinner Miss Arundel was placed next a gentleman; her hostess having previously whispered, "I think you will have a treat."

When a person says, "Were you not delighted with my friend Mr. A, B, C, or D?—I placed you next him at dinner, as I was sure

his wit would not be thrown away upon you"—the "you" dwelt on in the most complimentary tone—is it possible to answer in the negative? Not even in the palace of truth itself. You cannot be ungrateful—you will not be undeserving—and you reply, "Mr. — is a most delightful person." Your affirmative is received and registered, and you have the comfort, perhaps, of hearing your opinion quoted, as thinking him so superior—while you really consider the gentleman little better than a personified yawn.

Emily was not yet impertinent or independent enough to have opinions of her own, or she might have differed from her hostess's estimate of Mr. Macneil. Mrs. Trefusis valued conversation much as children do sweetmeats—not by the quality, but the quantity: a great talker was with her a good talker—silence and stupidity synonymous terms—and "I hate people who don't talk," the *idéale* and *morale* of her social creed. It was said she accepted her husband because he did not ever allow her to slip in an affirmative. An open carriage and a sudden shower drove her one day into desperation and Lady Alicia's; unexpected pleasures are always most prized; and half an hour's

lively conversation with Miss Arundel, rescuing her from the double dullness of heavy rain and Lady Alicia, excited a degree of gratitude which constituted Emily a favourite for a fortnight at least. She had as yet had no opportunity of acknowledgment, and she now expressed her partiality by placing her next Mr. Macneil at dinner.

In every man's nature some one leading principle is developed—in Macneil this was self-satisfaction. It was not vanity—that seeks for golden opinions from all ranks of men; it was not conceit—for that canvasses, though more covertly, for admiration; but Macneil was vain *en roi*—he took homage as a right divine—and, whether in love or law, learning or literature, classics or quadrilles, there existed for him a happy conviction that he was the perfection of each. At college he used to drink porter of a morning while reading for his degree, to repress, as he said, the exuberance of his genius (query, is genius, then, incompatible with examination and a university?) He married for the pleasure of stating how very much his wife was in love with him. Great part of his reputation rested on always choosing the subject his auditor was most likely to know nothing about.

To young gentlemen he talked of love—to young ladies, of learning; and we always think, what we do not comprehend must be something very fine: for example, he dilated to Emily on the music of Homer's versification, and the accuracy of Blackstone's deductions.

As they went up stairs, Mrs. Trefusis whispered, "Did you ever meet so entertaining a man? he never stopped talking once all dinner." He had, certainly, some natural advantages as a wit: he was thin, bilious-looking, and really was very ill-natured—and half the speeches that have a run in society, only require malice to think them, and courage to utter them. Still, it is difficult to affix any definite character to Mr. Macneil. He had neither that sound learning which industry may acquire, nor that good sense which is unacquirable; and as for wit, he had only depreciation: he was just the *nil admirari* brought into action.

On arriving in the drawing-room, Emily gladly sought refuge in a window-seat; her hearing faculty was literally exhausted; she felt, like Clarence,

"A dreadful noise of waters in her ear."

Luckily, it was a period when none are expected

to talk, and few to listen. Is it not Pelham who wonders what becomes of servants when they are not wanted ;—whether, like the tones of an instrument, they exist but when called for? About servants we will not decide; but that some such interregnum certainly occurs in female existence on rising from table, no one can doubt who ever noted the sound of the dining and the silence of the drawing-room.

Women must be very intimate to talk to each other after dinner. The excitement of confidence alone supplies the excitement of coquetry; and, with that peculiar excellence which characterises all our social arrangements, people who meet at dinner are usually strangers to each other.

Very young people soon get acquainted; but then they must be very young. Few general subjects have much feminine attraction: women are not easily carried, not exactly out of themselves (for selfishness is no part of the characteristic I would describe), but out of their circle of either interests, vanities, or affections. A woman's individuality is too strong to take much part in those abstract ideas which enter largely into masculine discussion. Ask a woman for an opinion of a book—her criticism

will refer quite as much to the author as to his work. But, while on the subject of this "silent hour," what an unanswerable answer it is to those who calumniate the sex as possessing the preponderance of loquacity! Men do talk much more than women. What woman ever stood and talked seven hours at or about a schoolmaster, as has been done? What woman ever goes to charities, to vestries, &c. for the mere sake, it seems to me, of speaking? But "if lions were painters" is as true now as in the days of Æsop. Goëthe said of talking, what Cowper said of domestic felicity, that it was

"The only bliss that had survived the fall."

Mrs. Trefusis was quite of this opinion. The present quiet was as dreadful to her as to a patriot. She moved from place to place, from person to person. To one lady she spoke of her children — hinted that the measles were very much about — and mentioned an infallible remedy for the toothache. The blonde of one lady threw her into raptures — the *bérét* of another. She endeavoured to animate one of her more juvenile friends by mentioning a conquest she had made the evening before, which

conquest Mrs. Trefusis made herself for the necessities of the moment. All in vain, the drawing-room seemed, as some one says of the mountain-tops, "dedicated to immortal silence."

An able general is never without a resource, and Mrs. Trefusis opened the piano; and the could-nots and would-nots, and colds and hoarsenesses, made for a few moments a very respectable dialogue, which ended with Emily's sitting down to the instrument; and Emily did sing most exquisitely. She had that clear, bird-like voice which is divided between sadness and sweetness, whose pathos of mere sound fills the heart with that vague melancholy which defies analysis; and her articulation was as perfect as her expression. Some one said of her singing, that it was the music of the nightingale, gifted with human words and human feelings.

A shadow fell on the book from which she was singing; and at the close she turned round to receive the painful politeness of Mr. Macneil. Heaven help me from the *soi-disant* flattery of those who compliment as if it were a duty, not a pleasure, who make a speech as if they expected you to make a curtsy at the conclusion; and while giving you what they politely inform

you is your due, yet nevertheless expect you to be grateful for it. Mr. Macneil was one of this class—a Columbus of compliments, who held that your merits were new discoveries of his own, and you were to be surprised as well as pleased.

But individual excellence was too unworthy a theme long to engross Mr. Macneil; and from Miss Arundel's singing, he proceeded to singing in general, which, he observed, was a very pretty amusement—asked if she had heard Lalande—avowed that, for his part, Italian music was all he thought worth listening to—which, considering Emily had just finished an English ballad, was a delicate compliment indeed; and walked off, nothing doubtful of hers, in all the fulness of self-satisfaction.

A Miss Martin was now entreated to favour the company. She was an heiress, therefore a beauty, and in both these qualities considered she ought to be simple and timid. The first of these was effected by a crop curled in the neck *à l'enfant*; and the second by being twice as long as any body else in crossing a room—there were so many little hesitations; by looking down sedulously, (old Mr. Lushington once said to her, “ I hope you find the carpet

entertaining !”); by a little nervous laugh, and such interesting ignorance. Her mother, moreover, was always saying, “ Really, my sweet Matilda is so timid, it is quite terrible.”

Three armies might have been brought to combat with half the encouragement it took to bring the timid Matilda to the harp. One gentleman was entreated to stand before, another behind—to say nothing of the side couples—as the fair musician could not bear to be looked at while she played dear mamma’s favourite air. “ Dear mamma” was an enormous edifice of white satin and diamonds, which one laments over, as one does over a misapplied peerage, that ever some people should possess them.

It is very provoking to have all one’s associations, whether from history or fairy land, destroyed. A countess ought to be young and beautiful—a duchess stately and splendid—your earl gallant and graceful—your baron one touch more martial, as if he had five hundred belted vassals waiting at his call; and as for diamonds, they ought to be kept as sacred as a German’s thirty-six quarterings, to which nothing ignoble might approach. Happy were the beauties of Henry or Richard, when fur,

jewels, satins, were especial to their order, and the harsh, dull, dry laws themselves arrayed their defence and terrors against the meaner herd, who but imitate to destroy, and copy to profane.

Mrs. Martin seemed as if just glittering from a diamond shower-bath, or rather, as if, when interred (we cannot call it dressed) in her satin and blonde, her attendant had caught up her jewel-box, and thrown its contents at random over her. In truth, it was just such a barley-sugar-temple look as well suited the daughter of a sugar baker. Her father had been a *millionaire*.

It is the fashion in the present day, from the peer to the prince, to affect the private gentleman. Good, if they mean in the end to abolish all hereditary distinctions; but wrong, if they mean still to preserve those "noble memories of their ancestors." We do now too much undervalue the influence of the imagination, which so much exalts the outward shew by which it is caught. We forget there is no sense so difficult to awaken as common sense. Kings risked their crowns when they left off wearing them; thrones were lost before, to some bold rival who fought his way sword in hand; but

Charles was the first monarch dethroned by opinion. The belief in the right divine, or "that divinity which doth hedge a king," disappeared with their gold crown and sceptre.

"You are not going yet, Charles?" said the hostess to her handsome nephew. "It is so early. Whither are you going?"

"To bed. I am sitting for my picture, and must sleep for a complexion."

"And you, Mrs. Lorraine?"

"Oh, I have five other parties to go to."

"Well," said Mrs. Trefusis—a little vexed that hers was breaking up so soon; and philosophy, ill-nature, and truth, are the three black graces, born of disappointment—"I always feel inclined to address you inveterate party-goers with the man's speech at his wife's funeral: 'Ah, why, my dearest neighbours, make a trouble of a pleasure?'"

She was not far wrong. Perhaps pleasure is, like virtue, but a name. Still, pleasure might be a little pleasanter; for surely there can be no great enjoyment in stepping from carriage to drawing-room, and from drawing-room to carriage—turning friends into acquaintance from the mere fact of meeting them so seldom, and annihilating conversation—for the flowers of

wit must indeed be forced ones that spring up in five minutes. However, there is many a wise saw to justify these modern instances. Sages bid us look to the future—and we go to parties to-day for the sake of to-morrow saying we were there. The imaginative gods of the Grecians are dethroned—the warlike deities of the Scandinavians feared no longer; but we have set up a new set of idols in their place, and we call them Appearances.

CHAPTER XVI.

“ Full many shapes that shadows were.”

COLERIDGE.

“ These forms of beauty have not been to me
As is a landscape in a blind man’s eye ;
But oft in lonely rooms, and mid the din
Of crowds and cities, I have owed to them,
In hours of weariness, sensations sweet,
Felt in the blood, and felt along the heart,
And passing even unto my purer mind
With tranquil restoration.”

WORDSWORTH.

IT is not of much use making up your mind very positively, for it is a thousand chances whether you ever do exactly what you intended. The Mandevilles had resolved to pass through London as quickly as possible ; but once there, unavoidable business prolonged their stay. This, to Emily at least, was very delightful— for the morning following her dining with Mrs. Trefusis, Edward Lorraine came to breakfast. One great peculiarity in a woman’s attachment

is, its entire concentration in the present. Whatever she was engaged in, if Edward was present, was the most delightful thing in the world. And, moreover, it was very satisfactory to hear him reiterate his intention of joining them in Italy. Besides, this wilderness of brick was still all novelty and amusement to one who knew so little of it.

Among the many universal propensities in human nature, the love of sight-seeing is about as universal as any. Now, sight-seeing gratifies us in different ways. First, there is the pleasure of novelty; secondly, either that of admiration or fault-finding—the latter a very animated enjoyment. London against the world for spectacles; and yet it is a curious fact, that those who live among sights are those who go the least to see them. A genuine Londoner is the most incurious animal in nature. Divide your acquaintance into two parts; the one set will never have seen Westminster Abbey—the other will be equally ignorant of St. Paul's. That which is always within our reach is always the last thing we take; and the chances are, that what we can do every day, we never do at all.

Emily, who came up with all the curiosity

of the country, would have liked to have seen much more than she did; but young ladies are like the pieces of looking-glass let into chiffonniers and doorways—only meant to reflect the actions of others.

“Very well,” said Lady Mandeville, in answer, one day, to a wish she was expressing; “when we are at Rome we will study architecture—there you may explore the Colosseum; but to go on a course of ‘amusing and instructive rambles’ through London!—pray leave that to the good little books you read in your childhood.”

Emily was silenced. One evening, however, Mr. Morland, who was one of the governors of the British Institution, proposed their going to see the gallery lighted up. Lady Mandeville agreed; and Emily was all smiles—a little brightened, perhaps, because Lorraine was to join their party.

The effect on entrance is very striking: a crowd, where the majority are females, with gay-coloured dresses, and their heads unbonneted, always gives the idea of festival: figures animated with motion, and faces with expression, are in such strong contrast to the beautiful but moveless creations on the wall.

At first all is pleasant confusion—all catches, and nothing fixes the eye—and the exclamation is as general as the gaze; but, as in all other cases, general admiration soon became individual—and Emily was very ready to pause in delight before Lorraine's favourite pictures. Whether their selection might have pleased Mr. Morland, who was a connoisseur, admits of a question—for the taste of the young is very much matter of feeling.

“Is not this little picture a proof of the truth of my assertion the other morning, that a glance out of a window was enough to annihilate a cavalier's peace of mind for a twelve-month?”

It was “a lovely female face of seventeen”—the beauty of a coquette rather than that of a heroine—a coquette, though, of nature's making. She leant on the casement, some gathered flowers in her hand, speaking well for the simple and natural taste that loved them; the face downcast, and pensive; the long lash resting almost on the cheek, with the inward look of its dreaming mood.

“There is something very suspicious in its present seriousness. It is to be doubted whether the lover (there is a lover unquestionably in

the case) will not have the softened affection of to-day visited on his head in the double caprice of to-morrow.”

“ ‘A Dutch Girl, by Newton.’* Calumniated people!” exclaimed Lorraine; “and yet calumniated they deserve to be: instead of quarrelling among themselves, what patriotic phraseology is best suited to a newspaper, they ought to be voting the ‘Golden Fleece’ to Mr. Newton, for thus redeeming their share of female fascination.”

The next was a “Florentine Girl, by Howard;”—a dark and passionate beauty of the South—large black eyes, that turned all they touched into poetry—flowing luxuriant ringlets, that were confined but with jewels, and knew no ruder air than that of palaces—with a lute, whose gentle science answered the chivalric songs of the brave and high-born.

“These two portraits seem to me,” observed Lorraine, “to realise two sweet extremes of

* I have here taken what, I trust, will not exceed an author’s allowed, poetical license. The British Gallery is only lighted up during the exhibition of the old masters. My excuse is, that I could think of something to say about the moderns; while I had nothing to remark touching the ancients.

womanhood. Under the first I would write Wordsworth's lines—

‘ A countenance in which did meet
Sweet records, promises as sweet ;
A creature not too bright or good
For human nature's daily food—
For transient sorrows, simple wiles,
Praise, blame, love, kisses, tears, and smiles.’

“ Under the fair Florentine I would inscribe Byron's lines ; hers being

‘ The high Dama's brow, more melancholy —
Soft as her climate, sunny as her skies,
Heart on her lips, and soul within her eyes.’ ”

“ Oh, do look at this picture ! ” exclaimed Emily.

The pretty moral of one of M. Bouilly's pretty tales— that “ *Ce qu'on possède double le prix quand on a le bonheur de le partager* ” — is especially true of delight. Both drew near to admire. It was a small, antique-looking room, such as is to be found in many an old English mansion—its Gothic architecture lightened by modern luxury. In a richly carved arm-chair, and as richly wrought in its brocade covering, sat a beautiful and evidently English girl : her aristocratic loveliness was of the most pure and lofty kind—her dress

“ Such as bespoke a lady in the land,”

and one also of show and ceremony ;— the soft white satin robe, in its fashion about a century back, was looped with jewels ; and the hair, lovely in itself, spared not the adornment of gems ;— flowers stood beside, in an alabaster vase—exotics, that say, “ our growth has been precious.” A lute leant against the ebon stand ; but the face of the lady wore the expression of deep and touching sorrow.

“ The Bridemaid, by Parris ; ”— she who has that day lost the companion of her childhood— who looks on her lute to remember the songs they sang together— who turns from the flowers which were the last they gathered— and who sits alone in her solitary apartment, to think that that morning has broken one of affection’s nearest and dearest ties— the love between two sisters— which can never again be what it has been, in unreserved confidence and entire companionship. The beholder turned away, as if it were unkind to “ leave her to her sorrow.” Portraits seem singularly beautiful by lamp-light— the softness gives them an air of so much reality. Landscapes are better by day— they require sunshine to bring out their own sunny greens.

Mr. Morland now took them across the

room, to look at some works of a favourite artist.

“If there be any thing,” said Mr. Morland, “in the doctrine of sympathies, Mr. Webster must have been the very worst child that ever figured in those stories of wilful urchins, whose bad ways are held up as a warning in the story-books that delighted our youth. He is the Sir Thomas Lawrence of naughty children. Look at this ‘Shooting a Prisoner.’ Can any thing exceed the mirthful, mischievous, or—let me use a nurse’s common phrase—audacious expression of the boys’ faces, unless it be the half-inclined-to-laugh, the half-resolving-to-cry face of the girl, who sees the little cannon pointed at her poor doll?—Here is another picture which ought to be engraved for the benefit of the national schools. A young culprit has been caught in the fact of robbing an orchard, and brought back to his master, who stands over him with an iron face of angry authority;—the very apples, as if anxious to bear witness against him, are tumbling from his satchel. But—O the moral of example, the efficacy of fear!—only observe the utter dismay, the excess of dread, on the face of a younger boy, who is seated on a form, with a fool’s-cap on.

He looks the very epitome of fright: I do not think he could eat one of those apples, if it were given him."

"I should think," said Lorraine, "the juvenile models, required to sit equally picturesque and patient, must be very troublesome."

"A curious dilemma," replied Mr. Morland, "has just occurred to me. I called one morning at Collins's, then painting his exquisite picture of the 'Young Crab-catchers.' Every one must recollect the round-faced sturdy child in the front. I need not say it was taken from life. For the first sitting or two, the little urchin behaved with most exemplary patience. At length, his awe of strangers having vanished, and the dignity which he evidently attached to his position having lost its attraction with its novelty, he became weary and restless. Still, the good-natured artist contrived to keep him in tolerable content; and, with a view of exciting his interest, endeavoured to make him understand that the boy on the canvass was himself, and asked him, 'Now, shan't you like to be put in this pretty picture?' To the painter's no small dismay, the child, on this question, set up one of those bursts of crying, the extremity of whose sorrow is only to be equalled by its vociferation,

and at length sobbed out, ‘ If you put me in the picture, how shall I get out, to go home to my mother ? ’

“ What a pity ! ” exclaimed Edward, “ that one forgets one’s childish thoughts ; their originality would produce such an effect, properly managed ! It is curious to observe, that by far the most useful part of our knowledge is acquired unconsciously. We remember learning to read and write ; but we do not remember how we learned to talk, to distinguish colours, &c. The first thought that a child wilfully conceals is an epoch—one of life’s most important—and yet who can recall it ? ”

“ Of all false assertions,” answered Mr. Morland, “ that ever went into the world under the banner of a great name and the mail-armour of a well-turned phrase, Locke’s comparison of the mind to a blank sheet of paper appears to me among the most untrue.

“ Memory is a much stranger faculty,” added Edward, “ than hope. Hope I can understand ; I can divide its mixture of desire and fear ; I know when I wish for any thing—and hope is the expectation of wishing. But memory is unfathomable and indefinite. Why do we so often forget what we the most desire to re-

member? and why, without any volition of our own, do we suddenly recall things, people, places, we know not why or wherefore? Sometimes that very remembrance will haunt us like a ghost, and quite as causelessly, which at another time is a blank. Alas for love! whose very existence depends on a faculty over which we have so little control."

"It is a curious fact," replied Mr. Morland, "that those events which are of the greatest consequence are not the best remembered; the stirring and important acts of our manhood do not rise on the mind half so vividly as the simple and comparatively uninteresting occurrences of childhood. And another observation is, that we never remember any thing accurately, I should rather say exactly, as it happened."

"For my part," exclaimed Edward, "I am often tempted to liken our mental world to a shadow flung on water from some other world—broken, wavering, and of uncertain brightness."

"Well, well, as they said to the lover of the beautiful Indian queen, when he was turned into a dog, 'your misfortune is irreparable, so have patience.' In this world we must live for the present at least; but I own I think it is made up of odds and ends."

“ ‘ Quand on n’a pas ce qu’on aime,
Il faut aimer ce qu’on a, ’ ”

said Edward; “ a doctrine of practical philosophy which I hope Miss Arundel has been practising. I doubt the polite disclaimer of weariness which she has smiled, and is about to say.”

He was quite wrong; Emily would have listened to him with delight, even if he had spoken Sanscrit. When have the words of a loved one dropped other than honey?

“ That woman’s heart is not mine,” said a modern philosopher; “ she yawned while I demonstrated to her the 48th problem in Euclid.” This, we own, was expecting a great deal; but not more than love has a right to do. You do not love, if there is not some nameless fascination in the lightest act. What would be absurd, ridiculous, nay disagreeable, in another, has in the beloved a fairy spell. Love’s is the true alchemy, turning what it touches to gold. The most remarkable instance of its devotion I remember was in a village clerk. During the life of his first wife he regularly dined every Sunday at the Squire’s; she died, and he married again. After that, he always, on the Sunday, in spite of the united attractions of beef, ale, and pudding, dined at home — “ His wife,” he said, “ was so lonely.”

Now, I do call the giving up a good dinner, week after week, an act of very romantic affection. This, however, is digressing; and we return to our party. Mr. Morland was pointing Emily's attention to two portraits—one of his nephew, a Mr. Cecil Spencer, the other of his daughter.

“ I expect you, Miss Arundel,” said he, “ to take a great interest in my family penates. You have my full consent to fall in love with my nephew, if you will admire my daughter.”

“ To tell you the truth, I like her most,” replied Emily; “ I do so very much prefer portraits of my own sex. We really look best in pictures.”

“ That is because an artificial state is natural to you; but do you like them? Young M'Clise is such a favourite artist of mine.”

“ I never saw,” said Lorraine, “ any thing so like as this is to Cecil Spenser: it has caught him just as he used to sit in the club window, as if it had been the Castle of Indolence. We called him *le beau fainéant*.”

“ Cecil's indolence is the result of circumstance, not nature; so I have hopes of him. All he wants is motive. I wish, on the continent, where he now is, he may have an unhappy attachment, or be taken prisoner by the

Algerines. It would do him all the good in the world.”

Helen Morland's picture was placed in the best light. The young painter had done his loveliest. It was that of a child; her eyes, full of poetry and of light, gazing upwards on a star, which seemed mirrored in their depths with that earnest and melancholy expression so touching in childhood — perhaps because our own heart gives a tone of prophecy to its sadness. The hair hung in dark, clustering ringlets, parted on a forehead,

“ So like the moonlight, fair and melancholy.”

“ Do you not observe in this picture a likeness to Miss Arundel ?” said Lorraine.

“ Nay,” replied Emily, “ do not at once put a stop to the admiration I was going to express. What I was about to say of the portrait, I must now say of the painting, with which I am enchanted.”

“ And you think very rightly,” returned Mr. Morland : “ M'Clise is an exquisite painter : he has a fine perception of the beautiful, and a natural delicacy of feeling, which always communicates itself to the taste. I could wish him to illustrate the poetry of actual life—the grace, the beauty, which is seen so often — and with

just one touch of the imaginative given it, from passing through the colouring of his own mind."

"I was very much struck," said Edward, "when Spenser was sitting to him, to mark his devotion to his art. Enthusiasm is the royal road to success. Now, call it fame, vanity—what you will—how strange and how strong is the feeling which urges on the painter or the author! We, who are neither, ought to marvel less at the works produced than at the efforts made. Their youth given to hopes, or rather fears—now brightening and now darkening, on equally slight grounds—

'A breath can mar them, as a breath has made:'

hours of ceaseless exertion in solitude, of feverish solicitude in society; doomed to censure, which is always in earnest, and to praise, which is not. Alas! we talk of their vanity; we forget that, in doling forth the careless commendation, or as careless sneer, we are bestowing but the passing thought of a moment to that which has been the work of an existence. Truly genius, like virtue, ought to be its own reward; but it cannot. Bitter though the toil, and vain the hope, human exertion must still look to human approbation."

“ Artists,” observed Mr. Morland, “ are generally an enthusiastic, unworldly race ; jealous of praise, as the enthusiastic almost always are ; and exaggerating trifles, as the unworldly always do. But society is no school for the artist : the colours of his mind, like those of his pictures, lose their brilliancy by being exposed to the open air. Sir Joshua Reynolds said ‘ a painter should sow up his mouth ’ — a rather inconvenient proof of devotion to his art. But it is with painting as with every thing else — first-rate excellence is always a solitary one.”

“ It is curious,” replied Lorraine, “ to remark the incitement of obstacles. Under what difficulties almost all our great painters and poets have laboured !”

“ I have,” returned Mr. Morland, “ a favourite theory of my own, that early encouragement is bad for any of the imaginative pursuits. No — place difficulties before them ; let the impediments be many in number. If the true spirit be in the possessor, he will overcome them all. Genius is the Hannibal of the mind. The Alps, which to the common observer seemed insurmountable, served only to immortalise his passage. The imagination is to work with its

own resources; the more it is thrown on them, the better. Making as it were a mental Sim-
plon, is only opening a road to inferior artists
and common-place poets.”

“ West is a great instance in your favour. Do you recall a most delightful incident in his early life? He was, as you know, a member of the Society of Friends—their doctrines forbid any cultivation of the fine arts. When his extraordinary talent developed itself, a meeting of their society was held to debate on the propriety of its exercise—and their judgment was, that so evident a gift of Heaven ought not to be neglected. Young West left the assembly with their blessing and sanction.”

“ What a beautiful story!” exclaimed Emily.

“ It has only one fault,” answered Mr. Morland, “ that, like many other beautiful stories, it is not true. I questioned one of his nearest relatives about this very circumstance, which he declared not to be a fact.”

It was now getting late, and Mr. Morland summoned them to depart; for he was a constitutionalist in the best sense of the word. It was his own constitution to which he attended.

CHAPTER XVII.

Oh, so vulgar!—such a set of horrors!

Very common expression.

“But passing rich.”—GOLDSMITH.

IT was just the end of July, and one of those tremendously hot weeks, which, once in a summer, remind our island that heat is as good for grumbling as cold. It passed as weeks do when all is hurry, confusion, and packing—when there are a thousand things to do, and another thousand left undone. It is amazing how long such a week seems—events lengthen the time they number: it is the daily and quiet round of usual occupation that passes away so quickly; it is the ordinary week which exclaims, “Good gracious! it is Saturday again.”

The human heart is something like a watch; and Emily’s advanced not a little in its usual pace, when, one morning, Lady Mandeville, on her return from a drive, said, “I have been

accepting an invitation, in spite of all our good resolutions against that unnecessary waste of time—visiting. I often think, one makes resolutions to have the pleasure of breaking them ; but this is really an urgent case : if we do not see the new Countess of Etheringhame this season, it admits, I think, of a question whether we shall next. I met her this morning, and she asked us in the name of charity. London is so empty, she is fearful of taking cold.”

“ I have heard that Lord Etheringhame was a man of the most recluse habits—what magic has turned him into the most dissipated ?”

“ ‘ The power of grace, the magic of a name.’ ”

His beautiful wife knows no rule but her own will, and no will but her own. Lord Etheringhame is the very man to be governed : his temper is discontented—he calls it sensitive ; his habits self-indulged—he calls them refined ; he has literary tastes—he calls them talents ; he is indolent to an excess—he calls it delicacy of feeling, which unfits him for the world. He married with some romantic notion of domestic bliss, congenial tastes, moonlight walks, &c. Lady Etheringhame’s reading of connubial felicity was different : first, the old Castle was

abandoned for Park Lane—the moonlight walk for a midnight ball—and for congenial tastes, universal admiration. All this was very disagreeable to allow, but still more disagreeable to resist; and Lord Etheringhame is a cipher in his own house: the cipher gives value to the other figures, still it is a cipher after all.”

“ Well, Lord Etheringhame has all the milk of human kindness—to say nothing of the water,” remarked Lord Mandeville; “ but I do wish he was just master of some honeysuckle villa, and his brother in his place; though Lorraine’s career will not be the less distinguished because he has to make it for himself.”

Evening came, and with it the assemblage of Lady Etheringhame’s few friends: few as there were, there were quite enow to draw from every one the exclamation of, “ I could not have believed there were so many people in town.” The Countess came forward to meet them, looking more beautiful than ever. But it was not now that Emily envied her beauty;—no philosopher like a girl in love, to feel, for the time being, utter indifference to all possible pomp and garniture.

Emily looked round the rooms, though, with

sufficient anxiety : often did a sudden flush on the cheek involuntarily avow the deception of the eye ; and more than once did the ear become quick, as it does when hope lends its charm to the listener : but it was in vain — and her spirits took a tone of despondency she would fain have entirely ascribed to fatigue ; — when Adelaide approached. Now, the fair Countess had a little feminine pique to vent, and a woman's unkindly feelings are very unkind indeed ; and that spirit of universal appropriation which belongs to insatiable vanity broke out in the following speech, aimed at Miss Arundel, though addressed to Lady Mandeville. “ I dare say you expected to meet an old favourite of yours — by the by, he is almost always here — Lorraine ; but, though I used the strong persuasion of your ladyship and his old friend Miss Arundel being expected, some rural whim seized him, and so he would for a few days from town.” The Countess cast one look, and, in the deeper paleness of Emily's cheek, saw that her shaft had entered, and passed smilingly on. Another moment, and she was receiving as much pleasure as could be put into words from the flatteries unsparingly offered by the young Count Alfred de Merivale.

Once Emily was again startled into the belief of Lorraine's presence; a second and nearer glance shewed her mistake—it was his brother, whose likeness was as strong in feature as it was opposite in expression. The government of the mind is absolute, but nothing in its whole dominion does it modify as it does the face.

They left early, yet the evening had seemed interminable; and considering that Emily was niched between an inlaid table, on which stood a shepherd in a yellow jacket offering a China—Chinese I mean—rose to a shepherdess in green and pink—and a tea-pot, all exquisite Dresden specimens—and an old lady, of whose shawl and shoulders Emily had the full benefit, while her neighbour discussed with an elderly gentleman the vices and follies of the rising generation; and considering, also, that such conversation was more edifying than amusing, it is not so very wonderful that Emily found the evening somewhat dull. On their return home, however, she was greatly consoled by Lady Mandeville's reading aloud a billet from Edward Lorraine, regretting that unexpected business, which he had to transact for his brother, obliged him to go down to Etheringham Castle; and expressing his hope and expectation that in a

few months he should meet them on the Continent.

The next morning she had to see Mr. Delawarr as her guardian; some forms were necessary to go through; and accordingly to his residence she and Lady Mandeville drove—rather before their appointment. They had to wait a short period in the drawing-room. What a cold, uninhabited look now reigned through the magnificent apartments! There were no flowers—none of those ornamental trifles scattered round, which speak so much of pretty and feminine tastes—no graceful disorder—chairs, sofas, tables, all stood in their exact places. “I should never have thought,” observed Lady Mandeville, “of missing Lady Alicia, unless I had come here.”

The hurried track of the multitude soon effaces all trace of death; but here the past seemed preserved in the present. All was splendid, but all was silent; and a thousand monuments had not so forcibly brought back the dead, as did the loneliness of her once crowded rooms. Neither sat down, and neither spoke, but walked about the apartment with soft and subdued steps, as if in the very presence of the dead, before whom the common

acts of life seem mockery. It was a relief to both to be told Mr. Delawarr waited in the library: they afterwards learnt he had never entered the drawing-room since his wife's death.

Nothing could be kinder or more affectionate than he was to Emily; still, there was an obvious change in himself. His general manner was colder, and more abrupt; he hurried the interview—he entered on no light or common topics of conversation—and at once avowed that his time was precious, and, almost before the door closed on his visitors, had earnestly resumed the business in which he was engaged on their entrance. “A statesman should have no feelings, no interests, no pleasures, but in the service of his country. Such,” said Lady Mandeville, “is the definition I once heard of a patriot. Mr. Delawarr bids fair to be that most inestimable but unattractive personage.”

Every preparation was now made: one day more and they were at Dover, and the next they embarked on board the steam-packet. Water has long owned man's power, and now “bodiless air works as his servant,”—a dominion frail, perilous, subject to chance and change, as all human power must be, but still a mighty and glorious influence to exercise over

what would seem to be least subservient to man's authority,—the elements. Yet a steam-boat is the last place in the world for these reflections: the ridiculous is the reality of the sublime, and its deck is a farce without spectators.

Lady Mandeville always lay down the moment she got on board ship; but Emily, who did not suffer at all, sat in the open travelling carriage, and indulged whatever of sentiment she or Lord Mandeville might feel at parting with the white cliffs of Albion. Their attention was, however, too much taken up with their fellow-passengers: a whiskered, cloaked, and cigared youth, with every thing military about him but the air;—a female in a dark silk, and plaid cloak, her face eloquent of bandboxes and business—an English milliner going over for patterns, which, with a little additional trimming, would be the glory of her future show-room.

But their chief attention was attracted by a family group. The father, a little fat man, with that air of small importance which says, "I'm well to do in the world—I've made my money myself—I don't care if I do spend some—it's a poor heart what never rejoices." The

mother was crimson in countenance and pelisse, and her ample dimensions spoke years of peace and plenteousness. Every thing about her was, as she would have said, of the best; and careful attention was she giving to the safety of a huge hamper that had been deposited on deck. Two daughters followed, who looked as if they had just stepped out of the Royal Lady's Magazine—that is, the prevailing fashion exaggerated into caricature. Their bonnets were like Dominie Samson's ejaculation, "prodigious!"—their sleeves enormous—their waists had evidently undergone the torture of the thumb-screw—indeed they were even smaller—and their skirts had "ample verge and space enough" to admit of a doubt whether the latitude of their figure did not considerably exceed the longitude. Two small, mean-looking young men followed, whose appearance quite set the question at rest, that nature never intended the whole human race to be gentlemen. Blue-coated, brass-buttoned, there was nothing to remark in the appearance of either, excepting that, though the face of the one bore every indication of robust health, his head had been recently shaved, as if for a fever, which unlucky disclosure was made by a rope coming in awkward contact with his hat.

The wind was fair; and Lord Mandeville having gone to the head of the vessel, where he was engaged in conversation, Emily was left to watch the shore of France, to which they were rapidly approaching, when her meditations were interrupted by a coarse but good-humoured voice saying, "I wish, miss, you would find me a corner on them there nice soft cushions—my old bones aches with them benches." Emily, with that best politeness of youth which shews attention to age, immediately made room in the carriage for the petitioner, who turned out to be her of the crimson pelisse. "Monstrous pleasant seat," said the visitor, expanding across one side of the carriage. Emily bowed in silence; but the vulgar are always the communicative, and her companion was soon deep in all their family history. "That's my husband, Mr. H.: our name is Higgs, but I calls him Mr. H. for shortness. Waste makes want, you know—we should not be here pleasuring if we had ever wasted. And those are my sons: the eldest is a great traveller—I dare-say you have heard of him—Lord bless you! there isn't a hill in Europe, to say nothing of that at Greenwich, that he hasn't been up: you see he's a stout little

fellow. Look, miss, at this box—it is made of the *lather* of Vesuvius, which he brought from Mont Blanc: he has been up to the very top of it, miss. I keep it for *bones-bones*.”

So saying, she offered Emily some of the peppermint-drops it contained: these were civilly declined, and the box good-naturedly admired, which encouraged—though, Heaven knows, there was not much need—the old lady to proceed. “We always travel in the summer for improvement—both Mr. H. and I think a deal of larning: the boys have both been to grammar schools, and their two brothers are at the London Universary—only think, miss, of our city having a universary—Lord, Lord, but we do live in clever times.”

Mrs. H. paused for a moment, as if overwhelmed with the glories of the London University; and conversation was renewed by Emily’s inquiring “what part of the Continent they intended visiting?”

“Oh, we are going to Italy—I want to see what’s at the end of it; besides, the girls mean to buy such a quantity of pearls at Rome. We intend giving a fancy ball this winter—we have got a good house of our own in Fitzroy Square—

we can afford to let the young ones see a little pleasure."

"May I ask," said Emily, "what is Mr. Higgs's profession?"

"Indeed!" exclaimed his offended spouse, "he's not one of your professing sort—he never says what he doesn't mean—his word's as good as his bond through St. Mary Within, any day—professions, indeed! what has he ever professed to you?" Emily took her most conciliating tone, and, as unwilling duellists say, the explanation was quite satisfactory. "Bless your silly soul! his business you mean. You are just like my girls—I often tells them to run for the dictionary: to see the blessings of edication! Our childer are a deal more knowing than ourselves. But Mr. H.'s business—though I say it that shouldn't, there isn't a more thriving soap-boiler in the ward. Mr. H. wanted to go to Moscow for our summer *tower* (Moscow's the sea-port which sends us our tallow)—but I said, 'Lord, Mr. H.,' says I, 'what signifies making a toil of a pleasure?'"

"You are," said Emily, "quite a family party."

"I never lets Mr. H. leave me and the girls

behind — no, share and share alike, says I — your wife has as good a right to go as yourself. I often tells him a bit of my mind in the old song — you know what it says for we women — that, when Adam was created,

‘ We wasn’t took out of his feet, sir,
That we might be trampled upon ;
But we was took out of the side, sir,
His equals and partners to be :
So you never need go for to think, sir,
That you are the top of the tree.’ ”

“ Well,” replied Emily, “ I wish you much pleasure in Italy.”

“ Ah, miss, it was my son there that put it in our noddles to go to Italy first. Do you see that his head’s shaved? — it’s all along of his taste for the fine arts. We’ve got his bust at home, and his hair was cut off to have his head and its bumps taken : they covered it all over with paste just like a pudding. Lord ! his white face does look so queer in the front drawing-room — it’s put on a marble pillar, just in the middle window — but, dear, I thought the people outside would like to see the great traveller.”

But all conversation was put an end to by the Calais pier, and all was now the bustle

and confusion of landing; but, even while in the very act of seeing with her own eyes to the safety of the portmanteau which contained her husband's flannel waistcoats, Mrs. Higgs turned round to Emily to say, "We shall be monstrous glad to see you in Fitzroy Square." What is the popularity of a patriot compared to that of a listener?

At Calais they landed and spent the night—Emily, at least, passed it half awake: she was too young, and had led too unvaried a life, not to feel in its utmost extent the excitement of arrival in a foreign country, a strange language, another clime, a complete change of daily habits—it was opening a new leaf in the book of life.

CHAPTER XVIII.

“ I am a great friend to travelling : it enlarges the mind, suggests new ideas, removes prejudices, and sharpens the appetite.”

Narrative of a Journey from Hampstead to Hendon.

WE travel for many acquirements—health, information, amusement, notoriety, &c. &c. The advantages of each of these acquisitions have been eloquently set forth from the days of Ulysses, who travelled to seek his native land, to those of the members of the club who travel to seek any thing else. But one of its enjoyments has never received its full share of credit—albeit the staple of them all—we mean the good appetite it invariably produces. What are the periods on which the traveller dwells with the most satisfaction—the events he recalls with most dramatic effect—the incidents which at once arrest the attention of his hearers? Why—“ That delicious breakfast in the Swiss valley. We had travelled some miles before eight o’clock,

when we stopped at one of the *châlets*; we had coffee of our own; the peasant girl put the whitest of cloths on a little table in the open window, from the vine of which we picked the finest bunches of grapes ever seen—the dew was yet on the fruit. They gave us some such eggs, cream like a custard, and a Neufchâtel cheese; some brown, but such sweet bread. We never enjoyed a meal so much.” Or else it is—“Do you remember that night when we stopped at the little village at the foot of the Appenines—cold, wet, hungry, and quarrelsome. In less than ten minutes our dark-eyed hostess had such a blazing wood fire on the hearth—by the by, what a delicious odour the young green pine-branches give in burning! Half an hour saw us seated at a round table drawn close to the fire, with the very best of tempers and appetites. We had prevailed on the pretty Ninetta to forget in our favour the national predilection for oil and garlic. Our turkey was broiled, as our chestnuts were roasted, by the wood ashes; and a flask of such fine wine—the vineyard whence it came must have been summer’s especial favourite.”

I know a traveller who carried these pleasures of memory to the utmost. Instead of a

journal or a diary, he kept a regular entry of the bills of fare at the different inns. Our travellers passed hastily through France, talked about Rousseau, and read Childe Harold on the banks of the Lake of Geneva. Emily was enchanted with the costume of the peasantry; and Lady Mandeville admitted it would be pretty in a fancy ball, but cautioned her against acquiring a taste for the picturesque in dress.

For the Swiss girls to produce a good effect, they must be seen at a distance. The small waist, the slender ancle and diminutive feet, are missed sadly in the proportions, somewhat ponderous for our ideas of grace, which these mountain nymphs possess. Your pictures of costume are rather corrected than correct. People and places are usually flattered in their portraits. One great reason why we believe so devoutly in the beauty of Italy, is that we chiefly know it from plates. I remember seeing an architectural view—on one side stood a noble old house, the spire and roof of a church, a mass of fine-looking buildings, a distant view of a colonnade, and a broad open space with an equestrian statue. I did not at first believe that it could be Charing Cross whose effect was so imposing; and it was not till North-

umberland House and St. Martin's Church were identified, that my confession was fairly extorted, of how little justice one does to the beauty of London.

The Simplon, Napoleon's magnificent monument, was next passed. They stopped at the most memorable places, and at last arrived at Rome, where a princess vacated her palace for their accommodation and so many louis-d'or a-month. Rome, once the mistress, is now the caravanseray of the world. Two Italian Counts made Emily an offer; and so would a Russian Prince, only he employed a French Marquess to translate his sentiments, who translated so well that he made them his own; a negative, therefore, served a double purpose.

Their principal visitor was a young Englishman, a cousin of Lady Mandeville's, who, having nothing else to do with his time, kindly bestowed much of it on them. With her ladyship he was not very popular when any one more interesting was by; she said he was indolent, and wanted sentiment. With Lord Mandeville he was a great favourite; and, though his lordship did not pique himself upon it, he was no bad judge of character.

Cecil Spenser had the usual qualities of most

young men, and one or two which they have not: he had every advantage in life, except the advantage of something to want. But experience was just beginning to be useful. The small exertions into which the chances of travelling had forced him had been good, because they interrupted his habits, and shewed him that such interruptions could be pleasant. The comparison of other countries with his own startled him into reflection; and reflection to a mind like his was never yet without its results. He began, for the first time in his life, to think of a future career, and to feel how selfish and unworthy a part was that of mere indolent indulgence.

In his present frame of temper, Lord Mandeville was an invaluable friend. The younger brother of a good family, he had commenced life with a pair of colours, while his own tastes were literary and secluded. But a strong mind shapes itself to its necessity; and the young Henry had earned for himself independence and distinction, when, by a succession of deaths, he became heir to the Mandeville estates and peerage. The theories of his youth had been mellowed by observation before he had an opportunity of putting them to the test of expe-

riment. He knew what action was, because he had acted himself; he had read much, and seen more; and the feelings which in earlier days had warmed to enthusiasm, now become moderate and consolidated, were in subjection to the principles which stimulated by shewing the benefits of his exertions. He saw in Cecil Spenser a warm and generous temper congealed by indulgence into selfishness; and a mind of great natural powers, which had lain utterly waste, because nothing required from it a harvest. To awaken in his young countryman a desire of information, to direct his attention to many paths of honourable toil, for which his station and talents were eminently fitted, was a task whose utility was only equalled by its interest. How duly do we appreciate the merit we ourselves discover and direct!

CHAPTER XIX.

“ The serfs are glad through Lara’s wide domain :

* * * *

There be bright faces in the busy hall,
 Bowls on the board, and banners on the wall ;
 Far checkering o’er the pictured windows plays
 The wonted faggots’ hospitable blaze ;
 And gay retainers gather round the hearth,
 With tongues all loudness, and with eyes all mirth.”

BYRON.

“ I AM an Englishman, and I hate the French,” is the common expression of our cosmopolite feelings — the French being a generic term for all foreigners. Fashion may court the *attachés* to an embassy for the sake of their presence and perfumes at a party ; — revolutions may occasion an interchange of deputations from the Rotunda to Mesdames les Poissardes — those political nereids who preside over the fish-market, and assist any “ glorious cause” that may be in hand : — but these moments of fashion and favour are few and far between,

and not very sincere at the best of times. The hatred which is so very cordial among near neighbours still subsists;—the voice of the first gun that peals in defiance over the deep waters at once awakens it; and we return to our old conviction, that one Englishman can beat three Frenchmen any day!*

Now, believe we can do a thing, and it is three parts done. For my own simple self, I confess to being very much behind my age. From Cressy to Waterloo, our island watchwords have been Enmity and Victory; and I see no reason why one century should be so much wiser than its predecessors. This national feeling is never more evinced than on the Continent: they herd together after their kind, and Englishman meets Englishman as if they encountered in the deserts round Timbuctoo.

Though Lady Mandeville's influence had been sufficient to induce her husband to go abroad, it was more than it could manage to make him enjoy it. Cecil Spenser's society—who soon shewed he could understand and enter into his views—became a source of great

* “ One Frenchman can beat two Portugee,
And one Englishman can beat all three.”

gratification, and his young countryman was almost domesticated at the *palazzo*. Lord Mandeville, however, was not long in discovering that his friendship was not the only attraction: he was content to share it with Emily Arundel. Aware that a strong and serious attachment is one of the great influences in man's destiny, he was glad that the lot was cast, as he thought, so fortunately.

Emily was a great favourite with him; and he had always viewed the attachment, at whose *dénouement* between her and Lorraine, Lady Mandeville meant to preside, as a somewhat foolish romance. He saw more clearly than his wife—who would only see what she liked—the entire indifference of the gentleman; and felt glad, for Emily's own sake, that a present lover should put an absent one out of her head, which seemed to him a natural consequence.

Here he, too, was wrong: he judged of one by the many. Emily's generally quiet manner and extreme gentleness gave the idea of a soft and yielding temper. There was no outward sign of a feeling which had been heightened by imagination and nurtured by solitude, till it had become the reigning thought of the present, and the sole hope of the future. The

heart entirely engrossed by one, is the last to suspect it can be the object of preference to another. Vanity, the great enlightener on such subjects, is here lost in a more powerful feeling. She never thought of Mr. Spenser in any other character than as a pleasant acquaintance. Moreover, he was the nephew of Mr. Morland, with whom Lorraine was a favourite.

Love is most ingenious in its associations. Events are like the child's play, "Here we go round by the rule of contrary;"—and Miss Arundel's indifference was the great charm with her over-flattered countryman. Rich and highly connected, Cecil had been so much accustomed to have love made to him, that it was an agreeable novelty to have to make it.

Lady Mandeville, who had as much penetration as her husband had judgment, saw at once how matters stood. Clearly perceiving Emily's indifference, she contented herself with a sort of armed neutrality, general carelessness, and occasional sarcasm.

There are many gentlemen who never drink any but sample wines, and never go beyond their first order to a wine-merchant. This would be a very excellent plan to pursue in love affairs; for the beginning is their best

part—its only fault is, that it is impossible. In the pleasant little comedy of Charles the Second, the Page complains to Rochester of the many miseries his passion entails upon him. “Your own fault,” says the lively Earl; “I told you to skim over the surface like a swallow—you have gone bounce in like a goose.” Authors now-a-days are held responsible for all the sentiments of their various characters, no matter how much they differ. I therefore give Mr. Howard Paine great credit for the above philosophical remark.

Winter was now setting in, and the bright charcoal burnt on the hearths of the larger rooms was as comfortable as it was cheerful—even “the glad sun of Italy” is not the worse for a little occasional aid.

Lord Mandeville and Cecil were one morning pacing the large saloon, whose walls, inlaid with a many-coloured mosaic of marble, and floor of white stone, were sufficiently chilly to make the fire very acceptable. To this end Cecil’s attention was frequently attracted. In a large black oak arm-chair, whose back and sides were heavy with rich and quaint carving, her small feet supported on a scarlet cushion, which brought out in strong contrast the little

black-satin slippers, sat Emily Arundel. On one side, a hand which looked modelled in ivory, with one tinge of the rose, was nearly hidden in the profusion of long auburn ringlets—that rich auburn brown—lighted with sunshine from the head it sustained. From the other side, the clustering hair had fallen back, and left distinctly to view the delicate outline of the face—the cheek, with that earliest pink of the almond-blossom, too fair to be so frail—and the long, dark lash, which, though it hid, yet gave eloquent sign of the eye beneath, for it wore the diamond glisten of tears;—and the *studio* of no artist, even in that city of painters, could have shewn a more graceful, yet more simple attitude than the one with which she now bent in absorbed attention over the book on her knee. She reached the last page, but still, quite lost in the interest of the story, she never moved, till the book falling to the ground, Cecil took the opportunity of picking it up; and, addressing her, remarked, “Your book has been very fortunate in rivetting your attention.”

“It is such a beautiful story.”

“Why, Emily,” said Lord Mandeville, “you have been crying over it.”

He opened the volume ; — it was Margaret Lindsay.

“ You need not blush so deeply about it ; for I own I think it one of the most touching stories I ever read. I wonder very much, that in these days, when literature circulates as generally as money, an edition of Margaret Lindsay has not been printed for circulation among the lower classes. An appetite for reading is eagerly cultivated ; but the necessity of proper and wholesome food has not been even yet sufficiently considered. Knowledge is the *sine quâ non* ; but it is forgotten that moral is, to say the least, as useful as historical or scientific knowledge.”

“ May I,” replied Spenser, “ hazard an opinion, or rather an impression—that I doubt the great advantage of the biographies of eminent men, who have arisen by their own efforts, being sedulously held up as examples to the lower classes. If great talents really exist, these very instances prove that example was not necessary to call them into action ; and if they do not, the apparent ease and the high success which attended those objects of their emulation, are calculated rather to cause delusive hopes than a beneficial effect. Our self-

estimate is always a false one, and our hopes ever prophesy our wishes. It seems to me a dangerous thing to dwell so much on those who have 'achieved greatness.' We see how they scaled the mountain, and immediately give ourselves credit for being able to go and do likewise. We forget that a great man does not leave behind him his genius, but its traces. Now, there is no disappointment so bitter as that whose cause is in ourselves."

"I entirely agree with you. In our march of mind we have been somewhat hasty;—we have borne too little in remembrance the Scripture truth, which all experience has confirmed, that the tree of knowledge 'was the knowledge of good and evil.' The beautiful order of the physical can never be extended to the moral world. In diffusing knowledge, there are two dangers against which we should endeavour to guard—that it be not turned to a wrong use, or made subservient to mere display. The last is the worst;—discontent is the shadow of display, and display is the characteristic of our age. Take one of its humblest instances. Our young people go to their divers amusements, not for the purpose of enjoyment, but of display; they require not entertainment, but compliment."

“ Do let me tell you an instance, just to illustrate your theory. A little girl was asked ‘ why her fine new doll was quite thrown aside — always kept in some dark corner : did not she like it ? ’ ‘ My doll ? ’ said the little creature, ‘ I hate my doll ; she is better dressed than myself. ’ ”

“ A case in point. We all hate our dolls, because they are better dressed than ourselves. The worst of display is, that, like other misfortunes, it never comes single. Satiety and mortification are the extremes of vanity, and both are equally attended by envy, hatred, malice, and all uncharitableness. If the human mind were like a pond, and could be filled at once, knowledge, like the water, would be its own balance ; but as it must be done gradually, it ought to be done carefully — not one part filled to overflowing, while a second is left dry, or a third to stagnate. ”

“ But surely you would not confine knowledge to the higher classes ? ”

“ Certainly not. Knowledge, when only the possession of a few, has almost always been turned to iniquitous purposes. Take, for example, many of those chemical discoveries which now add so much to our amusement and

comfort : it is not to be doubted that divers of these were known of old, and used as engines of fraud and deceptive power. The pursuer of science was formerly as eager to conceal, as he is now desirous of blazoning his discoveries. No : I would circulate information as widely as possible ; but it should be rather practical than theoretical. There are many books which we do not wish children to read till their judgment is matured. The ignorant are as children. I would with them use similar caution."

" Does it not appear to you that this fashion of universal education arises out of the fallacious system of universal equality ? We give rather out of our abundance than our discretion, too little remembering that, if knowledge is power, it is what all cannot tell how to manage. Apollo would have been wise if, before he trusted his son with the reins of his chariot, he had given him a few lessons in driving."

" True," replied Lord Mandeville. " Now, the steps I would take in giving the lower classes education, would be, first, to furnish them with religious, and secondly with practical, information. From religion, and that only, can they learn the inherent nature of good

and evil. In the sorrows that have afflicted, in the judgments that have befallen, the highest and mightiest, they will learn the only true lesson of equality—the conviction that our destinies are not in our own hands; they will see that no situation in life is without its share of suffering;—and this perpetual reference to a higher power ought equally to teach the rich humility, and the poor devotion. Secondly, I lean rather to giving practical than scientific knowledge. I would distribute books on farming, gardening, and a cheap, simple cookery would be a valuable present: for works of mere amusement, travels plainly written, especially such as, in the wants and miseries of other countries, teach us to value the comforts and advantages of our own;—tales, of which Margaret Lindsay is the very model—piety, submission, and active exertion, placed in the most beautiful and affecting light.”

“ Since I have thought at all on the subject, it has seemed to me that aught of amusement for the poor is most selfishly neglected: ‘merrie England’ is certainly a misnomer. We have *fêtes*, balls, plays, &c. for the middle and higher classes, but nothing of the kind for the lower: even fairs—the last remains of ancient festivals

—are being rapidly put down. Pleasure is, in one class, a satiety — in another, a want.”

“ Your expression of selfish neglect is a true one. Much may be said against the excesses of fairs; still, I think they might have been restrained, instead of suppressed. One great source of amusement — one peculiarly adapted to those who must be attracted by the eye — is too much forgotten : I mean dramatic representations, adapted to the lower classes, and supported by the higher. They might, in the country especially, be made a means of equal entertainment and improvement.”

“ It is now the custom with many writers to represent the former state of the people of England as one of unmitigated oppression. ‘ The land groaning beneath the tyranny of its feudal lords,’ is a favourite figure of speech ; and I doubt not, in many instances, justified. Great power is almost always a great evil. Now, the advantage of experience is, that it teaches to separate the bad from the good ; and we have too much lost sight of the latter ; for kindly feeling and strong attachment must have been generated in the simple fact of amusement being in common. The vassals or tenants collected in the hall for Christmas mask-

ing and mumming—the peasant gathering that May-day called out upon the green, drew together ranks whose distance, in our day, occasions forgetfulness on one side, and discontent on the other. The presence of superiors is at once a check and an encouragement. Look to the French for a proof that festivity and inebriety are not inseparable.”

“ Alas! my dear Spenser, how much easier it is to plan than to perform! Here are we framing schemes of national improvement, at some hundred miles distant from our country. However, I lay ‘ the flattering unction to my soul’ that my present will be my last absence from home.”

Lady Mandeville now entered the room from a drive; and flinging down her furred mantle, and drawing an arm-chair to the hearth, prepared to narrate the news of the morning. “ As usual, Mde. de Cayleure is the gazette extraordinary of her acquaintance: she is a living instance of the doctrine of attraction—all species of news seem to go naturally to her as to their centre.”

“ I do wonder, Ellen, what pleasure you can take in that woman’s company. A conversation such as hers, always ‘ seasoned with personal

talk,' must necessarily be ill-natured. A discourse that turns entirely on persons, not things, will only admit praise as a novelty or a discovery. General praise is an insipidity; and faults, foibles, and ridicules, are brought forward, if it were only for the sake of variety."

"Nay, now, I am sure Mde. de Cayleure is very good-natured."

"Lively when she is amused, and obliging when not put out of her way; but good-natured I utterly deny. Good-nature is one of our calumniated phrases — calumniated because misapplied."

"You know I never contradict one of your definitions. I am too well aware that I have no chance in an argument, Mandeville, with you."

This was a satisfactory termination to the dialogue.

Cecil Spenser left the room for his morning ride, his reflections divided between Lord Mandeville's words and Miss Arundel's looks. The first person he met was Mr. Trevor — a young man who, having a great stock of idleness on hand, was always most happy to bestow some of it on his friends.

"Ah, Spenser," said he, "I have been the whole day looking for you; you have left all

the trouble of our excursion on my hands. However, I have prepared every thing;—so, to-morrow we start for Naples.”

To own the truth, Cecil had utterly forgotten all about his engagement; and never was memory more disagreeably refreshed. His first thought was the pleasantness of breaking his promise—his second was the necessity of fulfilling it. The pleasant and the necessary are two distinct things. He knew that to Mr. Trevor a companion was an absolute want; and he also knew that companion he had offered to be. As to excuse for now refusing, he had not even the shadow of one; so, with not a little discontent, he went that evening to the Mandevilles, where it somewhat reconciled him to hear that they also intended visiting Naples almost immediately.

Emily looked very pretty, and bade him good bye in a sweet low voice; and Cecil devoted part of that night to wondering what effect his absence would have on her. But I very much doubt whether the knowledge of her perfect indifference would have been any consolation;—and entirely indifferent she was. Her memory reverted—her imagination referred, only to Edward Lorraine.

A woman's love is essentially lonely and spiritual in its nature—feeding on fancy, rather than hope—or like that fairy flower of the East, which floats in, and lives upon, the air. Her attachment is the heathenism of the heart: she has herself created the glory and beauty with which the idol of her altar stands invested. Had Emily known Cecil Spenser before she knew Edward Lorraine, in all probability she would have fallen in love with him. However, our affections are the last things we can give away; for this best reason—they are gone before we are aware. First impressions are very ineffaceable things.

CHAPTER XX.

“ Sa femme ne manquera pas d’adresse pour le faire revenir de sa première résolution, et l’obliger à faire sa volonté avant qu’il s’en doute. Un tel triomphe est le chef-d’œuvre d’une femme.”

Les Sympathies; ou, l’Art de juger par les Traits du Visage des Convenances en Amour et en Amitié.

THE room was panelled with Italian landscape — the vineyard hung its trellised wreath as it does in pictures and plays — a river,

Like a fairy thing,

Which the eye watches in its wandering,

wound through one department; a temple, whose graceful arch, and one or two columns yet entire, told how beautiful the shrine must have been ere its pillars were broken and its divinity departed, occupied a second; while a fair city, its spires sunny in the distance, gave variety to another; a scroll of oak leaves, in gold, marked the divisions—and another oaken

wreath fastened back the blue satin folds of the windows, which opened upon a conservatory filled with the rarest exotics — and a small marble fountain in the midst showered its musical and diamond rain over the rich cactuses around — those gems of the world of flowers, as if their native soil had dyed their leaves with the glorious colours which wait impatiently for daylight in its mines: one, more than all, seemed the very flower of a fairy tale — a huge green snake, with a head of flame — a serpent king, with its crown of rubies — its red hues coloured like fire the water below.

Around the room was scattered all that makes luxury forgotten in taste: the little French clock, where a golden Cupid sat swinging, and the lapse of time is only told by music — the beautiful Annuals, those Assyrians of literature, “gleaming in purple and gold,” and opened at some lovely scene or lovelier face — the cut-crystal glass, with one rose bending over the side — the alabaster vases carved as in snow — glittering toys, and china coloured with the rainbow, and diminutive enough to be Oberon’s offering to his fairy queen — a fan, whose soft pink feathers cast their own delicate shade on the face reflected in the miniature mirror set

in their centre — a large cashmere shawl, with its border of roses, thrown carelessly on a chair— a crimson cushion, where lay sleeping a Blenheim dog, almost small enough to have passed through the royal ring in that most fairy tale of the White Cat:—all bespoke a lady's room. Looking the very being for the atmosphere of palaces, sat its beautiful mistress by the small breakfast-table, and with a smile that did not always of a morning grace her exquisite face — and yet she was only *tête-à-tête* with her husband—which smile, however, would have been easily understood by any one who had heard the conversation between Lady Lauriston and her daughter the night before. It ended with, “as if Algernon could refuse me any thing. His brother's influence greater than mine! You shall see, mamma. He wants so much to go back to that stupid old Castle, that one word of our leaving town, and I may make my own conditions.”

“Be cautious, my dear love! Men do not like to be interfered with, even by a wife, in politics!”

“Politics! as if it were to me other than matter of affection. It is all for the sake of our dear Alfred.”

“ Ah, Adelaide, what talents you have !”

Our principal actions are the result of our smallest motives. Now Lady Etheringhame had divers minute influences of dislike towards Lorraine. First, he had not been sufficiently miserable at her marriage with another; secondly, he had not courted her since; and third, last, and worst, she saw that Edward thoroughly appreciated the motives and manœuvres of her marriage; in short, no food could possibly be extracted from him for her insatiable vanity.

The death of Mr. Eskville had left the seat of the borough of A. at Lord Etheringhame's disposal; and it had been long understood that the said seat was, immediately on its becoming vacant, to be filled by Lorraine; but Lady Lauriston thought it a pity her son should miss such an opportunity of getting into Parliament. The plan was suggested to Adelaide, and, as we have seen, met with her ready concurrence; with her first cup of coffee, therefore, she commenced operations.

“ I must shew you, Algernon, a new purchase of mine” -- so saying she drew towards them a small table, in the middle of which was set a china plate, or rather picture — “ I bought it

for that drooping tree in the midst: it is so like one in the park."

"Ah, Adelaide, I duly admire the painting; but how much more beautiful the reality!"

"Now, don't you grow quite angry in your defence of rural innocence. It is my misfortune, not my fault, that the felicity of the country is, to my mind, like the merriment of Christmas, more heard of than seen."

"But, Adelaide, the death of Mr. Eskville makes it absolutely necessary that I, at least, should go to the Castle."

"Nay, that is presuming on my good nature. Trust you at Etheringhame without me! No, no, that old chestnut avenue is too dangerous a rival!"

"If you would but go with me!"

"If you would but stay with me!"

"But every body has left town. Why, autumn will be here soon."

"We can spend a delightful one at Brighton."

"But, Adelaide, I must see about this vacant borough. I must keep up my interest."

"O that tiresome borough! There, mamma kept me up last night talking about its divers advantages. It is well you named it, for I had

utterly forgotten that I had faithfully promised her to ask you to give it to Alfred. I need not tell you that I assured her you would."

"My dearest Adelaide, you promised what is utterly out of my power."

"Oh, you wish to make a favour of it, do you? Well, I will beg so prettily"—and joining her beautiful hands, and laying them on his arm—"Pray do; I have quite set my heart upon it."

"But the borough is as good as Edward's; it has always been considered his."

"Yes—I do not doubt it—he will rule you in that as in every thing else. If I had known my wishes were in opposition to Mr. Lorraine's, I should have known it was in vain to express them."

"My dearest Adelaide, how can you say so?"

"You know it is the truth—that every body laughs at the absurd authority your brother has over you. Much as it has mortified me, I should never have mentioned the subject; but to find myself so completely a cipher when opposed to him, I must own I do feel it."

"But, Adelaide, this is my brother's great step in public life: a borough—"

"Excuse my interruption; but it must make

much difference to him, when you know Mr. Delawarr could and would bring him into Parliament any day."

"I believe you are right in that: still, he would prefer coming in on the family interest."

"So, for a mere preference, you will disappoint poor Merton of his only chance, and refuse my earnest petition?"

"Well, my love, I will ask Edward about it."

"So you will not venture to act till you have first asked leave! Now—for shame—do be yourself! I will not have you so idle! Do shew Mr. Lorraine you are not quite the passive tool in his hands he takes you to be."

"But, my dear Adelaide"—

"Ah, there is Lorraine's phaeton at the door! I wonder is it to this tiresome borough you owe such an early visit? Well, love, we shall tell him you intend nominating Merton."

Edward was in the room before an answer could be made: the little Blenheim waked at his step, and jumped up to caress him. I would sooner take a dog or a child's judgment of a person's nature than that of a grand jury. Lord Etheringhame cast a deprecating look at his wife, as their visitor stooped down to caress the dog; but Adelaide was too diplomatic to

lose that only irreparable loss — present opportunity.

“ We are arranging our return to the Castle : may we hope to number you among our visitors ? ”

Algernon — O the pleasantness of self-deception ! — immediately hoping that this was a tacit renunciation of her project, added his entreaties — Lorraine accepted. Alas ! he took the borough so much for granted, that he never even thought about it ; and the conversation for the next half hour turned on indifferent topics. Just as he was departing, Lady Etheringhame said :

“ We are not quite disinterested in hoping you will come to Etheringhame : we want you to help us to canvass. Algernon has promised to do all he can to bring in my brother for Avondale.”

Edward turned to Lord Etheringhame, and read in his over-powering confusion confirmation. To hold our surprises in perfect subjection is one of the first lessons of society ; and he now, with those helpful auxiliaries, pride and anger, controlled his to perfection.

“ So Lord Merton is to be our family representative ! ” (though society controls the expres-

sion of surprise, it gives full license to that of contempt). "I really must call on Lady Lauriston to congratulate her on the attainment of her object. Many failures only increase the satisfaction of final success."

Lady Etheringhame glanced at Lorraine, half in anger, half in defiance, as she replied :

"Nay, Merton must thank me. It would have been hard if Algernon had denied my first request," turning to her husband with such a very sweet smile.

Edward now rose from his seat, but paused for a moment, so that he completely fronted his brother. Perhaps never face was more completely made to express energetic disdain than his own : the finely moulded brow, slightly but sternly knit—the mouth, so scornful in its curve—the dark eyes filled with that flashing and overpowering light which is from the kindled thought and feeling within—the pale cheek, which we so unconsciously associate with the idea of intellect,—all gave full force to his parting words.

"While congratulating, I must not forget to congratulate you, Algernon, on thus carrying your principles into action. I know how deeply you are impressed with the responsibility of

him who possesses the power of sending the representatives of his country to Parliament. Lord Merton is equally calculated to understand and support its interests, whether we consider his habits or his talents. I congratulate you on your clever and high-principled representative ;” — and Lorraine left the room, in the comfortable conviction of having crowded as much annoyance as could be well comprised in a parting speech : and considering that, only the day before, Lord Etheringhame had expressed his wonder to Edward, whether Merton was most fool or brute, and intimated no little disgust at his dissipation, so unredeemed by aught of refinement — his selfishness, so undisguised by even the thin veil of common courtesy — his utter want of information — his stupidity — and also that, in the course of conversation, with that flattery by which a weak mind seeks to ingratiate itself, he had been most theoretically eloquent upon the principles and talents requisite in a member of the House, to which is intrusted the destinies of the country ; and all which, at the time, he meant his brother should apply to himself. Considering all this, it may be imagined that Lord Etheringhame’s reflections were more true

than agreeable. He was roused from his reverie by Adelaide exclaiming :

“ I am sure you have had no trouble about the matter. Could any thing have been more satisfactorily arranged ?”

Algernon did not agree with her in his own mind : nevertheless, he said nothing. It was less troublesome to think than to speak ; and his indolent indulgence was now more than a habit.

Ordering his horses in an hour to be at Mr. Delawarr's door, Edward walked thither, too excited for solitude, and impatient for a listener to whom he could express his indignation, and who would join in his contempt. He knew Merton's ignorance, but he also knew his vanity ; he would be sure to speak ; he asked no better revenge than a reply—and arrayed in his own mind a whole battalion of arguments, and a light-armed troop of sneers. “ Nothing is more imaginative than anger,” thought he, as, arriving at Mr. Delawarr's house, he laughed to himself at the ideal eloquence in which he had been indulging. A carriage was at the door ; and as he crossed the hall, he saw—and though they say seeing is believing, it was an evidence he felt inclined to doubt—Mr. Rains-

court coming from the library, and also bowed out in the most cordial manner by Mr. Delawarr himself.

Mr. Rainscourt, the head of the party most decidedly opposed to his, with whom on catholic questions, corn bills, free trade, reform—those divers points in the debatable land of our British constitution—he had not an opinion in common; political enemies (and no enmity is so bitter as a political one) from their youth upwards, between whom there had been war “even to the knife,”—who had fought a duel (and even that had failed to reconcile them); what was there in common to them now?

Surprises are like misfortunes or herrings—they rarely come single. Edward entered the library; and even Mr. Rainscourt’s appearance was forgotten, in the relief of an attentive listener to an angry detail of his disappointment. The interest Mr. Delawarr took in his words was evident enough to have satisfied the most fastidious: still, though the dark brow was sedulously knit, and the pale lip compressed, Lorraine thought he read a passing gleam of exultation—an expression which, though instantly subdued, betrayed that Mr.

Delawarr was pleased, not vexed, by the occurrence. The narrative ended by Edward's saying, " My vexation for my brother is a thousand times greater than my vexation for myself. If he had acted on the belief, that

‘ Sparta has many a worthier son than me,’

I should myself have been the first to approve his conduct. But to see Merton, whom he both dislikes and despises, in my place—and that merely from irresolute indolence—makes the loss of my seat in the House nothing, when compared with the loss of my confidence in my brother.”

“ A very small loss indeed, it being only what you ought never to have had. Etheringham has the misfortune to be a beautiful talker; he dreams of glorious impossibilities, and sets them forth in elegant language; but, weak and self-indulged, he has neither the energy which resolves, nor the industry which acts. He is about as useful as one of the handsome pictures of his ancestors, among whom I most devoutly wish he were at this moment. Luckily, his very indolence is, at this crisis, almost equivalent to his active support. I can insure you a seat; and as for

Merton, he may be easily gained over. He is a fool, therefore obstinate ; but vain, and therefore manageable.”

“ Give me but the luxury of answering to one of his prolix, contradictory speeches, and

‘ If there’s a hole in a’ your coats,
I rede you, tent it,’ —

I only ask the revenge of a reply.”

“ For all that, he must be on our side : enmities are like friendships—useless encumbrances ; individual feelings have nothing to do with general proceedings. I do not know what private life was given us for, except to get in the way of our public one. But I forget you are yet in ignorance of the step I have decided on taking this morning.”

Mr. Delawarr drew his chair nearer, and began his narration. It had been a fine study for either actor or painter to have watched those two faces during the progress of that detail. The outline of Mr. Delawarr’s countenance was handsome, though now thin even to harshness ; the forehead was high, but narrow ; lip and cheek were equally pale ; and it is in the varieties of colour that lies the expression of the feelings, in which species of expression it was entirely wanting : its character was cold,

severe, and possessing an energy that was of the mind alone. The large clear gray eyes seemed rather to penetrate into you, than to have any decided meaning themselves; they caught your thought, but expressed not their own. It was a schooled, worldly, set countenance; one from which, without being at all aged, youth had utterly departed. Early years seemed not to have left a single trace. Truly of such a one might it be said—

“ The mother that him bare,
If she had been in presence there,
Would not have known her child.”

The face, on the contrary, opposite to him, was bright with all the colours and emotions of youth. The fair wide forehead was a throne spread by the imagination for intellect; the clear dark eyes flashed with every passing idea—the thoughts and the feelings spoke together. The sweetness of the smile softened, but relaxed not, the decision of the mouth.

At first the countenance of his young companion was eloquent of the workings of the mind within. Surprise, incredulity, indignation, disdain, rapidly succeeded each other. Suddenly, by a strong effort, the listener seemed to repress his feelings, and force his thoughts within; and

it must have been a close observer who saw any thing beyond an air of quiet attention. Something might have been traced of scorn touched with sorrow, but even that carefully subdued.

Mr. Delawarr finished his narrative by saying, "And now, Edward, is your time for action: you will dine with me to-day, and be introduced to Mr. Rainscourt as the future member for H——."

Lorraine rose from his seat, and with that studiously calm manner which strong emotion so often assumes, where the cool word masks the warm feeling, and simply and quietly declined the invitation. Nothing makes a person so irritable as the consciousness of wrong.

"Just as vacillating as your brother," exclaimed Mr. Delawarr, pettishly. "What am I to understand by this silly refusal?—what political romance may it please Mr. Lorraine to be now enacting?"

"One he learned from yourself, and one grounded on all your own previous life."

"My dear Edward, a minister is but Jove, and Fate is mightier than he. I did not create circumstances, therefore cannot control them; and to what I cannot alter, I must yield. I can excuse the impetuosity of youth, which imagines

to will is to do: so a truce to fine sentiments—keep them for the hustings—look to realities, and dine to-day with me. Every thing changes about us, and we must not be behindhand with the age.”

Here he was interrupted by Edward:

“ If I had not looked up to you, honoured you, held you as the proof how all that is noble in theory could be made admirable in action, I could listen more patiently; but can it be Mr. Delawarr whom I hear say, that consistency is a prejudice, and conduct to be ruled by convenience? Opinions may change with the circumstances on which they were founded, but principles never. Either your whole past life has been a lie, or else your present conduct. The high and warm feelings of your youth, matured by the convictions of manhood—all that a whole life has held to be right—cannot, surely, in the experience of a few days, be utterly wrong. By your present change you declare, during so many years I have been either a fool or a hypocrite. By this abandonment of your old opinions, what security is there for the stability of your new? False to your party—still falser to yourself—on what does your future rely? Convenience is the only bond between

you and your new friends—convenience, that most mutable of rules, varying with all the changes of passion or of interest. Apostate to your creed, deserter from your party, traitor to yourself—again I say, look to your future. Principle cannot support you—that you have pronounced to be but prejudice; your talents—you have admitted their inadequacy to meet the times; your character—you have turned upon yourself. Delawarr, shall the history of that country, whose past has instructed, and whose future has inspired—shall it have no higher name for you than the slave and victim of expediency?”

The colour that for a moment had stained the sallow cheek of the hearer passed in an instant: brow and lip had been carefully moulded to a sneer—and a short, bitter laugh prefaced Mr. Delawarr's answer. “Truly, my dear Edward, this display of eloquence is quite needless; we are aware of your capabilities. Do not be too exorbitant, but tell me at once, what do you want besides the borough?”

Lorraine had left the room. His feelings were infinitely bitter. Mr. Delawarr had been his political idol; and of all excellencies we hate to lose those founded on the imagina-

tion. "A glory had vanished from the earth," as glories can vanish only in youth. The good faith of Mr. Delawarr had made respectable in his eyes even the very points on which they differed. And now all human nature was lowered in the conduct of one individual. None are so disinterested as the thoughtless and absorbed. Edward lost all consideration of himself, while dwelling on his brother's weakness and Mr. Delawarr's recantation. But—and we note this as a proof of a well-constituted mind—though he almost doubted the existence of truth in this world, he never doubted its excellence.

Mr. Delawarr, it must be confessed, took the matter much more coolly. Habits are the petrifications of the feelings, and his habits were those of business. A resolution is never shaken by a conviction. He had wilfully blinded himself to the subtle spirit of self-aggrandisement which urged his conduct. He saw the need of instant action, and took refuge in that common resource of the destitute, a well-sounding phrase. At such an important crisis he had no time to weigh nice scruples or fantastical definitions of honour. Conscience always acts on the conciliatory system. Mr. Delawarr was vexed at

losing a young man of his talents; but, when vexation softens not to sentiment, it hardens into anger. Besides, it was one of those cases in which it is a personal satisfaction to be angry. Muttering something to himself of "high-flown notions and ingratitude," he sat down to answer a letter.

Edward's horses were at the door: he hastily ordered his servant home, threw himself on his horse, and never drew bridle till he found himself on the wild but beautiful common of Barnes, which, at five, seems to have left London fifty miles behind. Nothing like a gallop on a beautiful Arabian in all desperate cases. If you have been refused by an heiress, when a Jew has advanced ten thousand pounds on the speculation—if you have been jilted by a beauty, after dancing with her for a week—if you have been thrown out by a petition to the House, after your election has cost your last acre—and then deliberate between a pistol and a gallop, I advise the latter.

Lorraine had ridden off a large portion of his irritation, but not all his regret. He threw the reins on the neck of the beautiful and panting creature, that had sped on as if by some instinct of his will, and rode slowly over the

solitary heath. He was in that mood of all others when the mind fastens most readily on some chance object for its train of thoughts, when strong internal excitement gladly vents itself on any outward impulse. He had unconsciously paused on a slight ascent, on whose side stood the remains of a small but ancient well: its square walls were in ruins, and a few large but broken stones, some jagged and bare, others with little tufts of grass or a single yellow wild flower springing from them,—all spoke neglect and decay. The clear spring itself dripped over one fragment with a low murmur, whose monotony had all the sweetness of custom. The ear heard it, till it listened for the sound like a familiar thing. The well was filled with weeds, and the water wandered away, wasting its little current over too large a space, but still marked by a growth of brighter and fresher green. “And thus it is,” thought Edward, “with all the works of men: whether for beauty or usefulness, how soon they perish! One generation builds, that another may neglect, or destroy. We talk of the future—we look to it—we act for it. The future comes—ourselves are forgotten—our works are ruins.”

The sound of the bubbling water grew more distinct, as the ear became accustomed to its music: it reminded him of one very like it in Etheringhame Park. Both might have made the delight of either antiquary or poet. It wanted nothing to complete the likeness but the large old beech, under whose shadow he and his brother had passed so many mornings.

But it was a bad time for the recollections of boyhood. Lorraine's life had hitherto been one of enjoyment: it was as if fate had, in one day's disappointments, avenged the serenity of years. His brother, whom he had loved with the excusing, relying affection of a woman, had sacrificed his interest and betrayed his confidence, in the indolent irresolution of selfishness: the attachment of a life had been given up to avoid trouble. Then, the friend to whom he looked up—the model in whose steps he proposed to follow—whom he had admired with all the enthusiastic admiration of youth—this friend had degraded himself in his eyes for ever, denied his opinions, falsified his principles, and in a few hours placed the future in direct opposition to all that the past had held high or honourable. It is hard, very hard, for the heart to part with, at one struggle, those it

has most loved and revered. A mist rose to Lorraine's eyes, only to be dissipated by another gallop.

Some twenty years after, it might be questioned whether he would have felt much. With regard to Lord Etheringhame, Edward made no allowance for domestic necessities. I remember once reading a somewhat unnecessary volume, in which a gentleman (single, I am sure,) remonstrated on the exclusion of females from power. He might have spared himself the trouble! Few women but have some lover, husband, brother, or son, over whom they contrive to exert a very fair portion of authority.

As to Mr. Delawarr, another twenty years would have taught his youthful opponent, that political opinions are, like most others, subject to change. A century or two ago, the best blood in the kingdom was spent in defence of the right divine of kings—and it was called heroic conduct; now it is to be shed in defence of the rights of the people—and that is very heroic conduct too. I wonder what will be heroic conduct a century hence. Again: the Swiss guards of Louis XVI. were cut to pieces fighting under orders—every one talked of their bravery and their devotion; the Swiss guards

of Charles X. have done precisely the same thing, and their own country talks of hanging the survivors. Ireland, last year, was to be paradise, if that Peri, emancipation, was but sent there; now it is a wretched, degraded, oppressed country, unless the Union be dissolved! What ever will it be the year after? So much for any certainty of right in this world!

CHAPTER XXI.

- “ As our life is very short, so it is very miserable. * * ”
- “ How few men in the world are prosperous! What an infinite number of slaves and beggars, of persecuted and oppressed people, fill all corners of the earth with groans, and heaven itself with weeping prayers and sad remembrances! * * * ”
- “ Our days are full of sorrow and anguish, dishonoured and made unhappy with many sins, amazed with fears, full of cares, divided with curiosities and contradictory interests, made airy and impertinent with varieties, abused with ignorance and prodigious errors, made ridiculous with a thousand weaknesses, worn away with labours, laden with diseases, daily vexed with dangers and temptations, and in love with misery.”

JEREMY TAYLOR.

JUSTICE has never been done to the merits of a wet day in summer—one of those days of wind and rain which fills the air with fragrance, for every full-blown flower has its sweet life fairly crushed out; when there is a good excuse for a fire—a fire being one of those luxuries for which, in England, we always expect a

reason ; when it is cold enough to make warmth pleasant, yet without freezing one side while the other is burning. It was just such a day as this when Lorraine went to take a farewell dinner with Mr. Morland. Alternate showers of rain-drops or rose-leaves had been blown in gusts against the windows all the morning ; but now the curtains were drawn, a warm red blaze came from the bright fire, and a softer and clearer light from the lamp, whose pure pale transparency is so prettily and fancifully compared, by an American writer,* to a gigantic pearl illuminated. A mahogany table, like a dark mirror, was drawn close to the fire — Mr. Morland had an old-fashioned predilection for its polished surface ; on it stood three or four rich cut-glass decanters, “ breathing of the sweet South,” and a dark slender bottle, common enough in shape, but round which lingered the fragrance of burgundy. Two large arm-chairs were drawn on each side the fireplace, in which sat Mr. Morland and his guest.

Mr. Morland. — “ After all, I do not so much regret the delay this occasions in your entrance into public life — you are still too young.

* Neale.

Edward Lorraine.—“Are you not now speaking rather after the fashion of common prejudice? I am young, it is true; but I have out-lived the pleasures of youth. I——”

Mr. Morland.—“But not its feelings. You are still credulous of good—still enthusiastic of impossibilities; you believe that the world may be set right—nay, that you are one of those predestined to assist in so doing.”

Edward Lorraine.—“I will not deny that I do think there is great room for improvement, and that very likely I am deceived in my own self-estimate—a common mistake, even with the most experienced; still, I am not prepared to admit, that a cause can be injured by the devotion and industry given to it by even the humblest individual.”

Mr. Morland.—“I was thinking more of yourself. Have you not felt Mr. Delawarr’s conduct very severely?”

Edward Lorraine.—“I have: I put my own personal interests quite out of the question; but I cannot forgive a man that I so respected and admired, for being the one to shew me that my respect and my admiration were given to an acted part—not the real character.”

Mr. Morland.—“Your own are my best

arguments. Truly, you seem well prepared for the disappointment, the falsehood, which will meet you at every turn of your future career. Mr. Delawarr has taken a step imperative to his own interests, and for which most convincing reasons may be assigned. I never knew any debatable point not maintained on both sides by unanswerable arguments; and yet you are angry that he has not thrown every advantage aside to enact your *beau-idéal* of patriotic excellence."

Edward Lorraine. — "At this rate, then, your own interests only are to describe your circle of action?"

Mr. Morland. — "Not exactly; they must be a little rounded at the extremities, where they come in contact with those of others."

Edward Lorraine. — "Then you would have had me act in direct opposition to all I have been accustomed to regard as good and admirable, and accepted Mr. Delawarr's offers?"

Mr. Morland. — "Not exactly; the young man who acts in early life contrary to his feelings, will, in after-years, act contrary to his principles of right. I only wish you to draw from it a moral of instability—to see the necessity, if you mean to carry your theories into

action, of arming yourself with the indifference of experience.”

Edward Lorraine. — “ We should, then, never act, if we were so indifferent to the result.”

Mr. Morland. — “ And all the better for yourself if you never enter the gladiatorial arena of public life: you will sacrifice time, health, and talents; you will be paragraphed—probably pelted; you will die of an inflammation, or a consumption; and leave it a debatable point to historians, what was the extent of the injury you did your country.”

Edward Lorraine. — “ Nothing is so fortunate for mankind as its diversity of opinion: if we all thought alike—with you, for example—there would at once be an end to all mutual assistance and improvement.”

Mr. Morland. — “ Do not be alarmed; there are plenty of restless spirits who will always be happy to take upon them all the affairs of the world. Atlas was only an ingenious allegory.”

Edward Lorraine. — “ This infinite variety in men’s minds—the innate superiority of some, the equally innate inferiority of others—has always seemed to me the great argument against the system of universal equality. There is no natural Agrarian law. Distinctions, from that

universally admitted claim of a child to the acquisitions of a parent, become hereditary; they must first have been personal."

Mr. Morland.—"Of all the vain theories that philosophers ever set afloat is that of equality—especially mental. One man spends years in thoughtful study, and Columbus sets forth and discovers America; another man passes the same period, and then the learned doctor sends an elaborate essay to a society, stating that the last ten years of his life have been devoted to a laborious comparison of geese and turkies, which has produced in his mind the conviction that the goose is a calumniated bird, the turkey being infinitely more stupid."*

Edward Lorraine.—"A complete caricature on ornithological research; but do you know, I have often thought the pursuits of science the most satisfactory of all to the pursuer. The scientific man is better able to measure his progress than the literary man, and is less liable to the fluctuations of opinion."

Mr. Morland.—"Generally speaking, though they are even a more irritable race. The subject on which we centre our whole attention

* Foreign Literary Gazette.

acquires an undue importance. Devotion to one single object necessarily narrows the mind. The indifference of others is matter of angry surprise; and the benefactor of mankind would often fain become its tyrant. We are violent in proportion to our self-exaggeration."

Edward Lorraine.—"After all, philosophy consists in making allowances, and they, by the by, are made from affection and feeling, never from reason."

Mr. Morland.—"As if we ever exercised our reason on our own account."

Edward Lorraine.—"Oh, yes, a little—sometimes when too late."

Mr. Morland.—"The phrases 'literary seclusion'—'the charms of books and solitude'—what poetical licenses they are! The fine arts, like Mother Carey's chickens, appear in stormy weather. Look, for example, at the artists of Italy's most gifted epoch—they kept a sword by their pallet, painted in light armour, and dressed their own dinners lest they should be poisoned."

Edward Lorraine.—"At present we avoid warfare—'the good swords rust;' but we are not more peaceably disposed than our ancestors—look at the gauntlet to be run by a

successful author. Ingenuity is racked for abuse, and language for its expression: every body takes his success as a personal affront. I think the late invention of steel pens quite characteristic of the age."

Mr. Morland.—"I am most entertained at the egotism of our modern school, of periodical literature especially. Now, egotism may be divided into two classes; that of our feelings, which may come home to some one or other of its readers, as all feelings are general; and that of action, which cannot interest, as actions are not general, but individual. One editor politely informs his readers how much he eats, another how much he drinks, a third is eloquent on the merits of his coffee; and here is a little penny publication, whose conductor occupies two pages out of four, in stating that he dips a pearl pen into a silver inkstand, and writes in a satin dressing-gown."

Edward Lorraine.—"Blackwood laid the first foundations of the eating and drinking school. The novelty of the plan could only be equalled by the humour of the execution. But in literature people ought not to be allowed to follow a fashion. A new idea is no sooner started, now-a-days, than it is run even to

death. I think the good old Elizabethan plan of monopolies should be revived in favour of literature. An eminent author, in our time, is a species of mental Alexander; he erects a vast empire, out of which fifty small powers parcel little kingdoms and minor principalities."

Mr. Morland.—"Your notion of an author's property in his own works is similar in spirit to the old French marquise in Marmontel, who prefers a husband to a lover, because 'I could then go with my contract in my hand and give *un bon soufflet* to any one who endeavoured to take him from me.'"

Edward Lorraine.—"How full of wit, point, and, what is best expressed by a phrase of their own, such exquisite *tournure*, some of the short French stories possess! Hook is, I think, the only English author who possesses their analysis of action—that bird's-eye view of motive, and the neat keen style whose every second sentence is an epigram: he is Rochefoucault illustrated; and he unites, too, with his vein of satire, the more creative powers, the deeper tones of feeling, that mark our English writers."

Mr. Morland.—"I give him credit for one very original merit. Do you remember Charles Summerford's letter in Maxwell?—it is the

only love-letter I ever read without thinking it absurd. It is equally passionate and natural."

Edward Lorraine.—“What is the reason, that in repeating the expressions of lovers they always seem exaggerated, though, perhaps, we have used the same expressions ourselves?—surely memory ought to recall their truth.”

Mr. Morland.—“And so it would, if those expressions were still used to or by ourselves. They only appear to be exaggerated from being put in the third person. It is curious how much people take for granted in these affairs of the heart.”

Edward Lorraine.—“Nothing, in matters of sentiment, seems too difficult for credit.”

Mr. Morland.—“We easily believe in the feelings ourselves inspire; but, instead of a reason, I will tell you a story. I had a house-keeper who had two lovers—one the favoured, to whom she was engaged. After a while she learnt he had a wife and two children at Paisley; this led to a dismissal. She went into hysterics, and spoilt my soup for a week, at the end of which she consoled herself with the other. Just as she was on the point of marriage, it came out that the wife and two children was an invention of the intended, to

drive his more successful rival from the field. She made excellent gravies, and, as I took an interest in her fate, I remonstrated on the folly of marrying a man who had acted so basely—‘But you see, sir—if you please—it was all for love of me,’—and she actually did marry him.”

Edward Lorraine.—“I am thoroughly convinced a little extravagance rather recommends a lover to his mistress. All women are naturally romantic. Perhaps the even tenor of their lives makes them peculiarly enjoy excitement. One unaccountable action would do more for you than all the flattery that the court of Louis the Fourteenth ever embodied in a phrase.”

Mr. Morland.—“You are theoretic, my young friend; rely upon it, that no general rule ever held good in love.”

Edward Lorraine.—“No general rule ever held good in any thing. Imagination is to love what gas is to the balloon—that which raises it from earth.”

Mr. Morland.—“And we know the usual fate of such aërial adventures—a fall to earth, which, if it does not unfit us, at least disinclines us from any more such ‘skiey enterprises.’ And what, after all, are our greatest efforts in life but ascents in a balloon?—and then de-

scents, which either leave us in the dust—a ludicrous spectacle to the bystander; or else, by good luck, we have broken a limb, and the accident becomes terrible, so that we are pitied, instead of laughed at. Not much difference between the two.”

Edward Lorraine. — “Is there nothing in being loved—nothing in being admired—nothing in those benefits which one individual may confer on his whole race?”

Mr. Morland. — “Love is followed by disappointment, admiration by mortification, and obligation by ingratitude.”

Edward Lorraine. — “What, then, are those watchwords of the heart—patriotism and philanthropy—mere sounds signifying nothing?”

Mr. Morland. — “Just so, when reduced to practice. I do not say with Sir Robert Walpole, that every man has his price; but I do say, that every man has his motive. One man wants money, the next power, the third title; a fourth desires place for its distinction, a fifth for its influence; a sixth desires popular applause; a seventh piques himself upon his eloquence, and will display it; an eighth upon his judgment, to which he will have you defer; a ninth is governed by his wife; a tenth adopts the

opinions of his club; the eleventh those of a favourite author; the twelfth acts upon some old prejudice which he calls a principle. There are a round dozen of motives for you. Now, you do not call any of these patriotism?"

Edward Lorraine.—“ One would think you were a believer in the old classical fable of the golden, the silver, the brazen, and the iron ages; and that we were living in the harsh and heavy days of the last.”

Mr. Morland.—“ I believe one half, which is quite enough to believe of any thing. I deny that the silver and golden ages ever existed; but allow the actual existence of the brass and the iron.”

Edward Lorraine.—“ I desire to be loved—passionately, entirely, and lastingly loved. I desire active, high, and honourable distinction. If I thought as you think, I should at once enter La Trappe; or, like the Caliph Vathek, build a palace for the five senses.”

Mr. Morland.—“ And find discontent and weariness in either. I see you, Edward, young, ardent, and heroic, full of genius and ambition; and I see in you just another sacrifice to that terrible necessity which men call Destiny. One by one your generous beliefs will sharpen into

incredulity — your warm feelings turn to poison, or to a void ; their empire divided between bitterness and exhaustion. Where is the good you exalted ?—a scoff even to yourself ; where is the love that you trusted ?—like the reed on which you leant, it has entered into your side, and even if the wound cease to bleed, it is only because it has hardened into a scar ; where is the praise you desired ?—gone to another, or if still yours, you know its emptiness and its falsehood. You loathe others ; but you look within yourself, and see their counterpart. All do not think this, because many do not think at all ; but all feel it, though they do not analyse their feelings.”

It was now late : slowly, and somewhat sadly, Edward rose, and bade his friend good night —he said it somewhat more affectionately than usual. He knew him to be an old and a disappointed man, and he deemed rightly, that to argue with such a mood was to pain, not to convince. Yet, as he rode home, more than once the reins dropped on his horse’s neck, and he thought mournfully, “ are such things sooth ?” I know not. I own I think they are. I have this very moment laid down the most eloquent, the most beautiful avowal of belief in

a happier and better doctrine. Let me quote the very words.

“ No: man must either believe in the perfectibility of his species, or virtue and the love of others are but a heated and objectless enthusiasm. * * * To the man who finds it possible to entertain this hope, how different an aspect the world wears! Casting his glance forward, how wondrous a light rests upon the future! the farther he extends his vision, the brighter the light. Animated by a hope more sublime than wishes bounded to earth ever before inspired, he feels armed with the courage to oppose surrounding prejudice, and the warfare of hostile customs. No sectarian advantage, no petty benefit, is before him; he sees but the regeneration of mankind. It is with this object that he links his ambition—that he unites his efforts and his name! From the disease, and the famine, and the toil around, his spirit bursts into prophecy, and dwells among future ages; even if in error, he luxuriates through life in the largest benevolence, and dies—if a visionary—the visionary of the grandest dream.”*

* Conversations with an Ambitious Student in ill health. New Monthly Magazine.

Alas! I do not—I cannot think with the writer. My own experience—my whole observation forbid it. The worst sufferings of human nature are those which no law can reach—no form of government control. What code can soothe the burning pain of disease, or rouse its languor? What code can alleviate the bitterness of death, dry the tears of the mourner, and force the grave to give up the loved and the lost? What form of laws can control the affections, those busy ministers of sorrow? Can they console them when unrequited—alter them when misplaced—or recall them when departed for ever? Alas! they are of no avail. Can the law blunt the cutting edge of ridicule, or soften the bitter words of unkindness? Can the law give us grace, wit, beauty, or prevent our feeling their want, or envying their more fortunate possessors? All the law can do, is to give us hard bread, which we must earn with our toil, and then steep with our tears. Yet more, the law can guard our life—life! that possession which, of all others, man values the least; but it can give nothing that endears, or exalts it—nothing that confers on it either a value or a charm. The first records of our young world were those of tears and blood; its

last records will be those of tears and blood also. I hear of the progress of civilisation, and I marvel how it can be called happiness. We discovered America, and that word is now synonymous with a brave, enlightened, and free nation; but to make way for that prosperity, a whole people have perished from the face of the earth. Our ships have gone through the silent seas, and a new continent rose before their prows in fertility and beauty. We have emptied on it our prisons—and the untrodden wood echoes to the oath and the axe of the convict.

Or, to come home again. The wealth of the world, its power, its intelligence, pours into London. We have the enjoyments of riches and of mind—our sciences and fine arts take every day some step to perfection; but none of these are happiness. Wealth, that mighty source of heart-burnings, who shall distribute it? To take from industry is to give a premium to idleness. And yet how hard, that one man should possess millions, while to another a penny is a welcome gift! How are we to help this? “Is it my fault,” the rich man may say, “that I, or my father, or my grandfather, have been more prudent or more

fortunate than you or yours? If you take that which is mine to-day, where is your security but that another may take it from you again to-morrow?" And yet poverty—how bitter it is! first its disgrace, and then its want. I never, even in an advertisement praying for that charity which is too often denied, read the words "who have known better days," without a sympathy even to pain. And yet what statute can guard against extravagance, improvidence, or idleness? And even this property—the hinge on which all our social institutions turn, for whose sake we both make and break laws—does that give happiness? Ask the sick, the sad, or the dying, though their home be the palace, and their clothing the purple.

Then we have intellectual enjoyments, the works of genius, those of the fine arts. There was Mr. Canning, the eloquent and the patriotic, died, not three years ago, of a fevered mind and a worn-out body—worn out by the scoff, the obstacle, the vain excitement, the exhausting exertion. Genius—was Byron, whose life was divided between disappointment and resentment, was he happy? What is Genius but an altar richly wrought in fine gold, and placed in the most sacred and glo-

rious part of the marble temple? but there the living victim is offered in sacrifice, and the wreath of flowers left to wither. The fine arts, they which add so much to the adornment of their time—it is a sad page in life in which their annals are written. How few among the statues which stand in grace and power, till they seem the incarnation of the diviner part of our nature—how few among the pictures which shed their dream-like beauty on our walls—how few of these but are the fruit of lives passed in toil, in want, in the heart-burning of hope whose fulfilment comes not, and of cares that eat away the very soul! Look at the many diseases to which skill is of no avail—look at the many crimes, and crimes committed, too, by the educated, who have been trained from their youth upwards in good. Or look only within your own heart, and see there the germ of every sin and every sorrow;—and then tell me of the perfectibility or the happiness of humanity. In another world, “the wicked may cease from troubling, and the weary be at rest;” but not in a world like ours—the weak, the erring, and the fallen. We forget we are living under a curse; and who can recall that curse save the God who pronounced it?

CHAPTER XXII.

“ Ah, whence yon glare
That fires the arch of heaven? — that dark red smoke
Blotting the silver moon ?”

* * * * *

“ And what were earth and stars,
If to the human mind’s imaginings
Silence and solitude were vacancy ?” — SHELLEY.

THERE is something sublime in being out of humour with the whole world. Discontent against an individual is called anger; that against the many, misanthropy. There is a great deal of poetry in an epithet. Lorraine indulged in the latter mood of mind for a week. His brother called — he was denied: a first conciliating note from Mr. Delawarr was unanswered — the second met a cold but bitter reply. Both grew angry, and public dispute ended in private dissension.

It is a curious fact, how violent people get upon political questions, particularly if they are

such as do not concern them. A sedate-looking gentleman, who lives in Finsbury Square perhaps, and whose money is in the funds, raves about the corn laws : another, in a black coat, forgets to make his Sunday sermon, in the composition of a speech at a meeting for the abolition of West India slavery. But from the affairs of our next-door neighbour, to those of church and state, we take an intense interest in those of others. S——, when he came from Brussels, at the time of the revolution, was asked what it was like. “ Like ? ” said he, “ why, like a vestry meeting.” We talk of vanity, discontent, patriotism ; but the real first cause of the passion for politics is the love of talking, inherent in masculine nature.

In the mean time, Edward found that love and politics had been adverse influences on his destiny. His brother’s most unlooked-for marriage altered all his prospects as regarded his succession to the Etheringham title and estates : his difference with Mr. Delawarr closed the principal avenue of his political career. His future path in life must be cleared by himself.

The energy with which he set about the task shewed he was equal to it. He had inherited a

handsome property from his mother. True, he had been extravagant, but not irretrievably so. He looked into his affairs. Two years of resolute economy, and his property was free. In two years there would be a general election. Two years of travel and study would equally benefit his fortune and his mind; both would be strengthened to meet the demands of public life.

There are epochs of change in every one's career; and it is in meeting these changes that a man shews his energies. Lorraine's plan was promptly laid down, and its execution was as prompt as its design. His affairs were investigated with that resolute industry which so soon finishes the business it begins. The sale of part of his property cleared the rest. A large portion of his income was put aside to accumulate. Horses, pictures, wines, *bijouterie*, German *meerschaum*, and Turkish hookahs, were alike brought to the hammer. His solicitor remonstrated on the loss in such a sale.

"Don't you see," replied his client, laughing, "I am selling my habits with them?"

Satisfied with the present, full of anticipation for the future, Edward took his seat on the mail—the best conveyance in the world for

good spirits. It was a bright clear night, with a fresh and buoyant wind. Alas! for the safety of two respectable linen-drappers, and the partner of a great tea-house, inside — for Lorraine drove the first forty miles.

“What a pity he should be a gentleman — such a waste!” observed the coachman, when he resigned the reins.

Spain was the country he had decided upon visiting—Spain, as a poet regularly begins,

“Land of the vine and the olive.”

It is curious how much of its romantic character a country owes to strangers; perhaps because they know least about it. Edward's motive for visiting it was, simply, that he had never been there before. Leaving vines, olives, the white walls of Cadiz, and the dark eyes of its ladies, to be recorded in his diary, if he kept one, he travelled perfectly alone — sometimes on foot, sometimes on horseback — through a considerable part of the country bordering on the sea-coast; when, finding the residence of a Spanish nobleman, to whom he had letters of introduction, marked on his route, he paused at a little village to make inquiry of his way.

The village was pretty enough for a scene in

a play. It was literally hidden in a grove, or thicket rather, of orange-trees, at that most beautiful season of their year, when one branch is bowed down with its weight of golden fruit—on another the orange is still of a bright green; while the more shaded boughs are yet in the first luxuriance of their peculiarly odoriferous and delicate flowers—perhaps one of the softest and most beautiful whites in nature. There were but a few cottages, each of them covered with a luxuriant vine, whose glossy verdure reflected back every ray of the setting sun.

It was a saint's day, and the peasants were all out of doors. There were two or three groups of dancers, and the rest were either gathered in a ring round them, or scattered on the grass beneath a few large old chestnut-trees, that must have seen many such generations. The peasants themselves were, as a painter would have said, excellent accessories to the scene: the women were, many of them, pretty; and their profuse black hair, bound up with that simplicity, which is the perfection of good taste.

Uniformity in costume is very picturesque. To name a familiar instance:—how well a family of sisters dressed alike always looks! Each separate individual may be bad; still, as a

whole, the effect is creditable. We do not seem sufficiently aware of the beauty of uniformity, or else it is interfered with by our personal vanity. The truth is, that general taste is always good; because, before it becomes general, it has been compared and corrected: but as for individual taste, the less we have of it the better.

The arrival of a stranger produced the effect it always does where such an occurrence is rare. Novelty is pleasure, and pleasure puts people into a good humour. All were ready to crowd round with some little offer of assistance; and when it was discovered that he spoke Spanish, their delight knew no bounds.

People take a traveller's understanding their language as a personal compliment. Edward, besides, was very handsome—a letter of recommendation all the world over; and he possessed that fascination of manner, the secret of whose fairy gift is, ready adaptation of itself to others.

Both himself and his horse fared exceedingly well. One gave him green figs, another oranges: the grapes were yet scarcely ripe; but a little boy, who seemed just to have stepped out of a picture by Murillo, climbed the roof of his father's cottage, and brought from the

southern side a sunny-looking bunch, which would not have disgraced Aladdin's garden of rubies.

Hospitality is the virtue of an uncivilised state, because it is then a useful one. It is a wise moral dispensation, that those virtues are most prevalent which are most wanted. A man asks another to dine with him in London, and spends on the said dinner just twice as much as he can afford; while the odds are, that his visitor will be discontented with his reception, envious of his host, and console himself next day by abusing entertainer and entertainment. A man wanders through a desert — is half starved — falls in with an Arab tent, whose owner gives him some goat's milk and dates — he comes home, and raves about the hospitality of the desert. The difference is this: in the one case the dinner was needed, and in the other it was not. We must want a thing before we can value it. Hospitality is, therefore, the virtue of uncivilised, as benevolence should be that of civilised life.

The crowd which had surrounded the traveller gradually dispersed, and Lorraine was left almost alone with a very fine-looking old man, whose free gait bespoke a life of active

exertion; and a deep scar on one cheek, evidently a sabre-wound, indicated that it had been of a military nature.

Edward's attention was at first rivetted on two dancers engaged in their graceful national dance, the bolero. What a blessing to a people is a climate that encourages out-of-door amusement! The man was dressed in a brown jacket, without collar, and a crimson sash; a small cloak, managed with the grace of custom, hung on one shoulder, and on his feet he wore the hempen sandals; and perhaps, from its classic association, a sandal is good, as far as pictorial effect is concerned. With a profusion of coal-black hair, a very dark skin, and a bold but fine outline of feature, the youth was a good specimen of the Spanish peasant.

But his companion was beautiful. A rich, flushed colour—large black eyes—teeth that shone from their brilliant whiteness—a slender shape—and most minute feet, in such little shoes of Cordova leather—a silver chain round her neck, to which hung a medal of the Madonna—a dark-brown boddice and short skirt, relieved by a lacing of scarlet riband—long black hair, bound in one large plait round the head, and fastened by a silver bodkin. Such were the

picturesque couple who were now performing the evolutions of their dramatic dance, with that exquisite ear for time which makes the gracefulness of dancing.

At the conclusion, Edward turned to his companion, with some remark on the beauty and air of happiness that pervaded the scene. "Your lovely little valley looks as if even a rough wind had never disturbed its tranquillity."

"And yet I remember when for every cottage there stood a smoking heap of ashes; and that little stream"—pointing to a bright brook that ran, touched with the lingering daylight, like a line of amber—"that little stream ran red as the blood which coloured it. Look at the trees, Senhor—they'll witness to the truth of what I am saying."

Lorraine looked, and saw, in spite of the luxuriant foliage, indelible marks of the ravages of fire. The trunks were scorched, and the bark destroyed, in many places; and here and there stood leafless branches, black and charred;—one immense but lifeless bough was directly over their heads.

"Quiet as our valley seems now," said the once fierce Guerilla, "I can remember being

lighted home by the blaze of our whole village. It was midnight when I came down the hill; yet, by the firelight, I could see every tree for miles round. I could even distinguish the faces of the officers, who, at the head of the French troopers, were across the plain yonder. It had been well for them if the light had not been quite so strong."

"Your friends — your relatives — had you any?" asked his hearer, hesitatingly.

"Two orphan children; Minora — she that has just been dancing — and her brother. She was then but a little creature, yet so thoughtful, it was as if her dead mother watched and helped her. I never feared to leave Pedro, then a baby, with her. I came home, and saw my cottage, perhaps from being fired the last, burning the brightest of all. Well, the Virgin does work miracles for her servants. I ran down the steep, shouting my children's names from sheer misery — when I heard a low, little sweet voice whisper, 'Father.' I saw my pretty Minora, and her brother holding her hand, both frightened out of their senses, but safe and well. At the first alarm they had run out, and found safety in an old hollow oak-tree, which they had, in play, called their house. They little

thought what a home it would be to them. From that hour I took my knife and my musket. Six months afterwards, there was not a Frenchman in the province."

"What did you do with the children?"

"Ah, Senhor, there's a secret. Why, in the wood you will have to pass to-night there's a cave—muleteers will sometimes bring across the line more than custom-house officers think of—and that cave was a safe hiding-place. Well, the good turn it did in concealing those children may balance its other accounts. I took them there—stole to them with provisions whenever I could: they never lived half so well before. You see my Minora's eyes are pretty bright; but for half a year they never saw sunshine."

It was much later than Edward had supposed; but still the extreme beauty of the evening induced him to pursue his journey. He mounted again, and departed, with a thousand good wishes and directions as to the right path. He offered no reward for the kindly treatment he had received; but the two children, whose hearts he had won by a little notice, and who now, with all the earnest gratitude of childhood, insisted on shewing the best path

through the grove — the children came back, radiant with surprise and pleasure at the parting gift of the English traveller.

It is worth while to travel, if it be only to enjoy the excitement of some entirely new species of natural beauty. Late as it was, Edward reined up his horse to gaze around him. The plain where he was riding was one immense thicket of the gum cistus, whose frail white leaves, just veined with the faintest pink, fell in showers at the least movement of the passer-by. What a prodigality of blossom! — for the gum cistus, born and withered in an hour, is the most ephemeral of flowers. Behind was a range of mountains, composed mostly of huge masses of granite; and the small sparkles on its surface glittered in the moon, which shone directly against them. Before him was a dense shade — the wood through which he had to pass; and over all was a sky so clear, as to be rather light than colour.

The thickets gradually gave way to an open space, where the soft grass seemed unusually fragrant, perhaps from the quantity of thyme that grew among it. Soon a few gigantic trees, of the fir and cork kind, stood forth, like the advanced guard of an army; and Edward was

presently in the lone and shadowy depths of the woods : the dark recesses, only visible when a withered tree let the moonlight through its leafless branches, or the white stem of a cork-tree, from which the bark had been stripped, contrasted the sombre trunks around. A young man with much less of poetry in his temperament than Lorraine possessed, would have felt all the romance of his nature rise in such a solitude.

But whatever romantic fantasies the traveller might have felt disposed to indulge, his visions were all disturbed by realities. A cry, as if of sudden terror, rose upon the air. Edward listened attentively, and fancied he discerned the plunging of horses. Without hesitation he rode to the spot, and distinctly heard a voice, apparently in tones of entreaty and lament.

A sudden turn in the road brought him to the objects of his search. Two mules stood by a tree, at whose foot lay a man, either dead or insensible ; and kneeling beside was a young cavalier, muffled in a large riding cloak. To dismount and offer his assistance was the work of a moment. Fear seemed almost to have deprived the kneeling youth of articulation : he

muttered, rather than spoke, "that his servant was dying," and seemed to abandon himself to all the helplessness of despair.

Edward saw at once that the man had only fainted: he raised his head, loosed his collar, and from his spirit-flask bathed his temples, and succeeded in pouring a few drops down his throat. The patient revived, opened his eyes, but evidently knew no one, and again sank back, if not quite insensible, quite helpless.

"My God! what shall I do?" exclaimed his young comrade, wringing his hands.

Bestowing a true English ejaculation on what he denominated the want of presence of mind in foreigners,—“Do! why, lead the mules to the nearest place of habitation, and I will endeavour to support your servant on my horse—he is both strong and quiet.”

Silently but eagerly the stranger went to the horse's head, while Edward raised his companion to the saddle.

“I will lead the mules,” said the cavalier: “but where shall we go? Have you travelled any distance?”

“No. They told me at yonder village that Don Henriquez de los Zeridos' was the only

habitation near. I am an English traveller, and am going there with a letter of introduction. Will you accompany me?"

"I live there," said the stranger, hastily turning the mules in that direction.

Saving one or two inquiries, or a confused expression of thanks, the young guide pursued his way in silence, till they came to a gateway, which he opened, and, approaching a large but desolate-looking house, sought to attract the attention of its inmates by throwing up pebbles at a window where a dim light was to be seen.

After a few moments' pause, a head was put out of the lattice, and the querulous tones of an old woman inquired the meaning of such an intrusion.

"It is me, Xarifa. Pedro has been taken ill. Do not disturb Donna Margareta. A stranger waits with me in the yard."

Another short delay followed. At last the door was opened. Edward carried the unfortunate Pedro into a large hall, where stood an elderly female servant, and a negro evidently only half awake. His companion turned to him, and, for the first time, the lamp-light

shewed a face of the most perfect beauty. For a moment she stood irresolute, and then said, coldly and calmly, "This is Don Henriquez's house, and I am his daughter."

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.

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