

ELLEN WOODLEY.

A NOVEL,

IN TWO VOLUMES.

By Mrs. BONHOTE,

AUTHOR OF

PARENTAL MONITOR.

OLIVIA; OR, DESERTED BRIDE.

AND

DARNLEY VALE; OR, EMILIA FITZROY.

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ELLEN WOODLEY.

CHAP. XVII.

MR. Alford's valet de chambre was extremely attached to him, he therefore observed the alteration in his master with real regret, commiserated his sufferings, and wished to relieve them; and although he had never owned to this faithful servant the cause

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of his dejection, he had no doubt from whence it originated. He knew the lovely girl to whom his master had long been secretly attached, he respected the sorrows he heard others ridicule, and by the most watchful attention endeavoured all in his power to soften and alleviate them.—He revered Mr. Woodley, admired his benevolent and amiable character, and with almost every other servant in the family was a friend and well wisher to the charming Ellen, whose sweetness of disposition and affability of manners made every one eager to oblige and serve her. It was this young man who ventured to send the letter to a peasant, which was delivered at the parsonage, and which, for a time, restored peace and tranquillity to the dejected and heart-wounded Ellen.

When

When this letter was returned, with one from Mr. Woodley to Sir Henry Alford, it occasioned fresh storms and discontents in the family. Edwin was again loaded with the most severe reproaches, and the innocent cause of this fresh disturbance unjustly abused; and both she and her father were threatened with singular and unceasing vengeance.

We will now return to the parsonage.—For a time, the letter which had been sent by Edwin, cheered the drooping spirits of Ellen. It introduced some faint rays of enlivening hope; and she could not help indulging at times, some flattering presentiments that there would come a period when she should again see her lover. But when weeks and months had elapsed

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and no farther tidings arrived, her heart sunk again into despondency, and all the flattering illusions vanished.

Mr. Woodley saw the alteration with alarmed tenderness,—with the most soothing attentions endeavoured to restore to his beloved child the peace of which he saw her deprived; and whilst he lamented the cause, he could not bring himself to condemn a weakness which proved so severe a punishment to itself. Truly sensible of his indulgent, his paternal fondness, she on her part endeavoured, as much as possible, to conceal the corroding anguish which preyed upon her health, and threatened to rob her of every outward charm.

She

She wandered about from place to place, in search of health,—but health had fled with Edwin.—She sought amusement from the same innocent pleasures in which she once had never failed to find it;—but pleasure and amusement had deserted the village, and travelled the same road. She worked,—she read,—but yet her thoughts were all constantly employed on one dear absent object,—and therefore she worked or read in vain.—Even her slumbers encouraged the dangerous passion, by presenting, in airy dreams, the captivating figure of her lover to her delighted imagination.—She sometimes ventured to steal a look at Myrtle-Grove,—but ah! how dull and cheerless was now the scene that once afforded

so sweet so enlivening a prospect!—
The willows waved their branches
with redoubled solemnity; and, when-
ever she sought their shade, whilst
they trembled o'er her head, con-
veyed to her ear the gratifying mur-
mur of sympathizing sadness. The
shrubs appeared to have lost their
beauty, — the fields their verdure.
All nature was strangely changed; and
the house, once the seat of festivity,
splendor, and cheerfulness, now
gloomy and forsaken, looked like the
favourite retreat of melancholy, or
the mausoleum of her lost regretted
Edwin. She cast her tearful eyes
around, then bent them humbly on
her parent earth, and breathed a fer-
vent wish that it would open and in-
close her from the world for ever.
Such

Such were the only wishes of the despairing Ellen, as she wandered, with slow and heavy steps; recollecting in her care-worn mind, the days that were gone,—and gone for ever.

CHAP.

C H A P. XVIII.

A ROUND this period of our history Valentine arrived at the parsonage.—He had finished his studies at Cambridge,—had taken orders,—and was to continue with his father 'till he could meet with a curacy. Mr. Woodley rejoiced at his arrival, and his sister welcomed him to his native village, with a gentle smile of pleasure,—yet so intermixt with woe, that the feeling heart of Valentine felt

felt such inexpressible anguish, he could scarcely support himself with any degree of fortitude during the first moments of an interview which his father's letters had taught him to dread. He had indeed been prepared, by those letters, to expect he should see his sister much altered; or he could not have concealed his surprise, at beholding the ravage grief and sickness had made in a form that was once so lovely. Valentine informed his father of various reports which had been circulated at Cambridge, respecting Sir Henry Alford, whom it was generally supposed, would be found guilty of the charges brought against him.— But these reports they carefully concealed from Ellen, who had already suffered a sufficient portion of sorrow,

from her unfortunate knowledge of the Alford family.

The young divine, who had been himself enslaved by the lively filter of one of his fellow collegians, knew how to pity the sufferings of his beloved Ellen. He dedicated the greatest part of his time in vain endeavours to amuse her sorrows, and if possible cheat her into a forgetfulness of their cause. He drove her out for airings,—accompanied her when she was able to walk,—and made it his unceasing study to amuse her, by diversifying the scene as much as possible. In hopes he should prevail upon her to speak of her own sorrows, he made her acquainted with his passion for the fair Matilda Grovenor, whose brother was his confidant and friend,
and

and by whom he had been introduced to his family. Ellen rejoiced he was so happy in his choice; and sighing, wished he might have no difficulties to encounter, from the cruelty of ambitious parents. Mr. and Mrs. Grosvenor had several children; they possessed an easy though not a very affluent fortune, and therefore could not do much 'till their death, notwithstanding which they were so charmed with the character and disposition of Valentine, they made no opposition to his proposals on account of his want of fortune,—a circumstance they could have wished otherwise. But as the young people promised they would not think of marrying, 'till they had an income to maintain them with decency, all preliminaries were easily settled; the
lover

lover was considered from that moment as one of their own children.

He had likewise been rendered dear to this amiable and worthy family, by one of those accidental circumstances which makes a more lasting impression upon the mind than years of intimacy often produce. He had, at the beginning of this acquaintance, and during his first visit to ———, fortunately saved the lives of Mrs. and Miss Grosvenor, who were in the utmost danger of being killed by a pair of vicious horses, whom the young lady was driving, and who had ran away with the Phæton in which she and her mother had been riding a few miles, for an airing. Matilda had dropped the reins, and given herself and parent up for lost, when

when Valentine, at the hazard of his own life, stopped the unruly animals, on the verge of a frightful precipice, which threatened them with instant destruction. This alarming and interesting incident rendered Valentine infinitely dear to the fair object of his love. She hesitated not to give him a decided preference; and Mr. Grovenor himself, declared his daughter ought in justice to give her hand to the intrepid and generous youth, who had preserved her's and her mother's life. From this period the want of fortune was considered as no obstacle to their future union, and Valentine was the happiest of men.

But the melancholy alteration he found on his arrival at the parsonage, deprived him of that happiness he had
just

just began to taste. He saw his sister, like the rose, which plucked from its parent stem, withers in the spoiler's hand,—his venerable father sinking to his grave, burthened with a load of grief, too heavy for his declining years; his cheeks furrowed with the traces of his tears, and his spirits sunk into a kind of childish despondency,—the sad effect of this trial on faculties, which 'till then had remained firm and unshaken against the buffeting storms of life. These melancholy scenes threw a gloom over Valentine's own fair prospects; and he who had lately thought he rested secure on the bosom of happiness, was instantly convinced there was no guard from misery on this side the grave.

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He wrote to his Matilda, informed her of the dangerous state in which he had found his sister, and of the apprehensions he had for the life of his father; and so earnestly and tenderly did he intreat her to pay a visit to the parsonage, that Mr. and Mrs. Grovenor readily gave their consent to her accepting the invitation. Matilda, accompanied by her brother, unexpectedly arrived a few days after the receipt of her lover's letter, at Mr. Woodley's, to the great joy both of father and son; who flattered themselves with a thousand enlivening and pleasant hopes, that the company of the gay and sympathizing Matilda would have a happy effect on the spirits of Ellen. They doubted not but she would be more communicative and unreserved with one of her own sex and age, than she

she could prevail upon herself to be with them; they likewise knew enough of the human heart to be convinced, that having the liberty of complaining without wounding that sensitive modesty which prevented her addressing them on a subject so interesting, was the most probable means of abating the poignancy of that grief which had too long been confined to her own unhappy bosom.

The young ladies soon became intimate. Matilda had the soothing art of prevailing with Ellen to talk of her own sorrows to her. She confessed the cause of that grief which preyed so rapaciously on her health, and threatened to deprive her of life. Matilda who knew how much her lover was distressed by the danger in which
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he saw his sister, determined to use her endeavours, and if possible sooth the sorrows and abate the sufferings of the helpless and self condemned mourner. But what she at first undertook from a desire to oblige the man she loved, she persevered in from affection and friendship to the sweet girl herself; for whom she soon felt a most lively and cordial attachment. In her life she had never met with a character so amiable, except that of her beloved Valentine, who possessed all the virtues of his sister; but they were happily united with that manly fortitude and superior strength of judgment which the difference of sex requires to render the character more perfect. He had the gentle softness of Ellen implanted in his heart, and he permitted it to direct many of his actions; but had likewise.

wise sufficient resolution to prevent its degenerating into weakness. He had a person equally captivating without being effeminate; and although he dressed in the plainest and most simple taste, his whole appearance bespoke the gentleman. Added to these good qualities, and native graces, he had the same purity of heart and nobleness of sentiment, which had been preserved uncorrupted, notwithstanding he had mixed more with the world; and he had brought from the great seminary of learning in which he had been placed, every improvement which was possible to be acquired, with a mind uncontaminated either by its vices or its follies. Though he had been obliged to confine his expences to what is called a very limited income in this age of polite extravagance and

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unthinking prodigality, he had, by his prudence and the good management of his finances, avoided every species of meanness; and as he had no vanities or vices to gratify, left Cambridge without being in debt, or having brought a single reproach upon his character.

C H A P.

C H A P. XIX.

ORLANDO Grovenor saw the drooping Ellen with surprise, and a kind of melancholy or chastened delight entirely new to his feelings. Though sickness had stolen the rose from a cheek on which it once was seen to revel,—though her eyes had lost their accustomed vivacity, and the dimpled smile was seldom seen to play about her ruby lips, enough of beauty remained to convince him it once was perfect,

perfect,—and though her elegant form was bending with weakness, and every feature retained the traces of languor and despair, he had never in his life beheld a figure that appeared so interesting, so truly feminine,—and the gentle softness of her voice and manner rivetted those fetters to which he yielded himself a voluntary captive.—Yet he knew she preferred another. On the first mention of his regard, the blushing Ellen confessed she had no heart to bestow;—and that for the generous youth who had early taught her love's distressing lesson, her bosom could never throb but in responsive sympathy.

Still Orlando dared to hope!—still he found himself unequal to the task of guarding his heart against the united
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influence of gentleness, modesty, and beauty, which he saw blended in his fair enslaver,—and whilst he pretended, or really thought himself actuated to persevere in his attentions, by friendship and a desire to amuse the sorrows of so sweet a sufferer, he was cherishing a growing passion in his bosom, which every interview served to increase and strengthen. When Ellen was unable to leave her apartment he was continually watching every one that came out of the room to make enquiries ;—whenever he saw the traces of her tears, his wretchedness was visible to all around ;—but when she smiled, all nature smiled with her, and Orlando's cheerfulness was instantly restored.

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As often as the poor victim to ambition and a hopeless passion could find an opportunity, she would steal from her sympathizing friends, and enjoy the sad luxury which grief is known to covet, in a solitary ramble through scenes rendered sacred by having been frequented in happier days ;—there the tear could flow unobserved, and the heaving sigh relieve her burthened heart without being reverberated by the sighs of those from whom she wished to conceal her agonizing feelings. On these occasions Orlando would follow her trembling footsteps, and beg he might not be excluded from the privilege which he claimed from friendship, of sharing her sorrows. Poor Ellen, to check those wishes which she saw, with unaffected regret, he determined to cherish,

rish, and in order to preclude all hope, would talk of Edwin, and her own unguarded weakness. Such conversation prevented Orlando's repeating a declaration of his love;—but though his tongue was silent, every word, look, and action, betrayed that he was, as much as Ellen, the slave of that blind god, who delights in fastening fetters on all mankind.

Mr. Woodley observed her conduct and sufferings, and felt that his own fortitude was unequal to the trial, which he feared would soon put his resignation to the severest test. The idea of her death was impressed so firmly on his mind, it was impossible to remove the alarming presage from his thoughts. “Ah!” he cried, in his moments of retired anguish, “my
be-

beloved child ! I that would gladly have died to procure you happiness, have, by my careless inattention, been the occasion of your misery ;—and therefore, the hand which would gently have smoothed my pillow,—the voice which would have soothed my soul, amidst the agonizing struggles of departing nature,—the eyes which would have watched my last hours,—will first be closed in death ; and the task which by the usual ordination of nature should have been imposed upon the child, will now fall upon the feeble, the aged parent. Ah ! my God ! in mercy spare me the insupportable anguish of following my Ellen to the tomb !—Spare my old age that one trial, and in every thing beside thy will be done !”

The alarming alteration which took place in the health and spirits of Mr. Woodley, in some degree awakened his daughter from her lethargy of woe; and though she had been unmoved by the soothing and admonitions of her friends, to remove her sorrows, she could not, for one moment, remain insensible to those which her unfortunate attachment had brought upon her venerable parent. She therefore determined to confine her grief to her own bosom, in order to restore the mind of her father to its usual serenity. She no longer made any excuse for absenting herself from the friendly circle assembled at the parsonage. She proposed going little excursions with her father and their visitors;—and if the fragile body had been equal to the
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the effort, she would perhaps have been thought to have obtained that victory over herself, for which all that knew her were tenderly anxious to see accomplished. But alas! whilst she endeavoured to restore peace to others, she was far, very far from enjoying it herself. This her friends saw, and trembled for an effort which they feared would hasten the fatal moment, which, without some fortunate and unlooked for change, every tongue foretold with faltering accents, and every feeling heart anticipated.

CHAP. XX.

HOW little are we, short sighted mortals, able to foresee the revolutions which are concealed in the bosom of futurity!—How little able to pronounce with certainty what the next hour will produce, or at whose breast death will aim his iron dart!—How often, whilst the eye of youth is watching the couch of declining age, is it first closed in darkness!—How often, in the prime and full vigor of life,

life, do we see the most healthy summoned to the grave!—Whilst those who have long struggled with a complication of infirmities, shall linger for many years, and survive every hope of their surrounding friends.

Ellen had accompanied her visitors to an adjoining village, in which a dance, amongst the rustic inhabitants, was annually held, and attended by the principal families in the neighbourhood. Valentine and his Matilda had expressed a wish to be partakers of the cheerful festivity of the evening. Ellen readily agreed to the proposal, and at their departure took leave of her father with unusual liveliness; who said, he should spend his evening in walking and reading, and feel a redoubled relish in his solitary

litary amusements, from knowing his children and friends would be more cheerfully, if not more happily employed.

The young party did not return home till it was past the hour Mr. Woodley usually retired to his chamber, and therefore made no attempt to disturb him; but promised themselves much pleasure in giving him an account of their excursion the next morning.—The next morning came, and the family assembled in the library to breakfast.—After waiting a considerable time, in expectation of being joined by the benevolent master of this once happy mansion, they began to be alarmed that Mr. Woodley did not make his appearance, in order to perform the duties of the morning,
being

in general very punctual to the hour. The tender and anxious Ellen requested her brother to enquire at the door of her father's apartment, if he was indisposed, and whether she might be permitted to attend him. Valentine instantly withdrew, — he tapped gently at the door, and receiving no answer to his repeated enquiries, ventured at last, with a trembling hand, to open it. But on entering the room, how was his soul impressed with terror, and every tender passion, agonized with horror, at seeing his dear, his indulgent and venerable parent lying on the floor, in a state of insensibility. Supposing him in a fit, he flew to his assistance, and attempted to raise him from the ground and place him upon the bed, before he alarmed the family, — but the at-

tempt was vain :—He found the body stiff and cold, and was too soon convinced life was fled,—and that the pure and exalted soul of his father had for ever left its earthly mansion. Valentine, in the midst of his agony and distress, recollected the dangerous situation of his sister, and though much shocked and agitated, summoned the female part of the servants to his assistance, with secrecy and caution, and sent a messenger to fetch a neighbouring surgeon with the utmost expedition :—But all help was vain. Mr. Woodley had paid the great debt of nature ; and the confusion this fatal accident occasioned in the family, could not long be concealed.

Ellen,

Ellen, on being told the distressing tidings, flew to her father's apartment; she threw herself on the bed by the body of her venerable parent, and begged they would leave her to die by the dear, the tender father, her folly had helped to destroy. She clasped her arms around him, and vowed she would never, never leave him more. A fainting fit succeeded the first torrent of agonizing sorrow in the unhappy mourner, and her surrounding friends took that opportunity of removing her from a scene which they apprehended would otherwise be attended with still farther alarming consequences.

Valentine, who staid some time in the room, observed a book lying on the table, in which he concluded his father:

father had been reading, when death had given his unwelcome summons.— It was a volume of Young's Night Thoughts, and the page was folded down to the following words, which appeared to have been the subject of his meditation at the moment he was called to appear before the awful tribunal of that God, whose commands he had ever steadily obeyed; and with whom it rested to reward him for those virtues which had been an honor to human nature, and undoubtedly secured him a distinguished and welcome reception, in the regions of eternal bliss.

“ And feel I, death ! no joy from thought of thee ! ”

“ Death, the great counsellor, who man inspires

“ With ev'ry nobler thought, and fairer deed !

“ Death, the deliverer, who rescues man !

“ Death, the rewarder, who the rescu'd crowns !

“ Death, that absolves my birth; a curse without it !

“ Rich

" Rich death, that realizes all my cares,
 " Toils, virtues, hopes; without it a chimera!
 " Death, of all pain the period, not of joy;
 " Joy's source and subject, still subsist unhurt;
 " One, in my soul; and one in her great fire;
 " Though the four winds were warning for my dust.
 " Yes, & from winds and waves, and central night,
 " Though prison'd there, my dust too, I reclaim,
 " (To dust when drop proud nature's proudest
 spheres)

" And live entire. Death is the crown of life:
 " Were death deny'd, poor man would live in vain;
 " Were death deny'd, to live would not be life;
 " Were death deny'd, ev'n fools would wish to die.
 " Death wounds to cure: we fall; we rise; we
 reign!

" Spring from our fetters; fasten on the skies;
 " Where blooming Eden withers in our sight;
 " Death gives us more than was in Eden lost.
 " This king of terrors is the prince of peace.
 " When shall I die to vanity, pain, death?
 " When shall I die?--When shall I live for ever?"

No sooner were the funeral ob-
 sequies performed, during the pro-
 cess of which Ellen was humoured in
 all

all her desires by her indulgent brother and watchful friends,—gratified in every sad wish of her heart,—permitted to pay frequent visits to the chamber where the body of her father was placed,—to talk of his virtues and lament her own sorrows, which undoubtedly in a great measure abated the poignancy of her feelings, than she became more composed and resigned;—no complaints were heard, and her health slowly amended. She saw the necessity of conquering a hopeless passion, and of exerting herself for her future support. Valentine settled his father's arrears with the utmost expedition, as he had notice sent him that the gentleman to whom the next presentation of the living had been promised, meant to take possession of it as soon as they could
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conveniently quit the parsonage. On inspecting Mr. Woodley's accounts, it was found that the utmost value of what he died possessed, amounted to no more than the poor pittance of six hundred pounds; four of which Valentine generously insisted should be settled on his sister, and secured for her use in the funds.

Orlando renewed his overtures to Miss Woodley, and openly declared his passion;—but she put a final end to his hopes by her resolute refusal; declaring, it was her determination to remain single 'till she could give her heart with her hand, which at present, she owned, with tears and blushes, it was not in her power to do. She likewise refused an invitation to accompany Orlando and his sister on their return, though she had:

had been solicited by Mr. and Mrs. Grosvenor, to consider their house as her home. She had determined not to be a burthen to any of her friends, and that she might not become so; had employed Mrs. Spencer to write to a sister she had in London, who had long been housekeeper, in a Nobleman's family, to procure her a place with some lady of fashion, either as waiting maid or humble companion.

Valentine meant to return into the neighbourhood of his Matilda; and if he could get curacies near Mr. Grosvenor, to remain there 'till his friend should give him the promised living; which he hoped would enable him to marry, and at the same time offer an asylum to his beloved Ellen. These matters

matters once determined, the brother and sister, with melancholy alacrity, prepared for their separation, and different destinations in the world;—and it was agreed, that Mrs. Spencer should remain with Ellen at a farmer's house, (who had offered to board them on moderate terms) 'till a place could be procured for her reception in town.

Before Valentine left E——, Ellen one evening led him almost imperceptibly to the humble spot which contained the sacred remains of their lamented father. “Let us, dear Valentine,” cried the lovely mourner, “before we are separated, pay one short visit to our father's grave.—Let us consider ourselves once more in his presence, and promise to retain for each

each

each other the same unabated tenderness and affection which he delighted to see us cherish. You are now the only friend and protector the merciless tyrant, death, has left me;—to part from you, with any degree of fortitude, requires this, perhaps whimsical, indulgence. Could my father be permitted to know what is passing in this lower world, I am sure he would not disapprove this little proof of affection to him, and attention to his precepts.”

Valentine's heart was full. — *He* could not speak. — *He* pressed his sister's trembling hand to his beating heart, and silently acquiesced with her request. They reached the spot which concealed the remains of their venerable parent. — They knelt on each

each side his grave.—They bent over it, and shed the purest tears of affection, which glittered like the dew drops of the evening on the with-bound turf,—and no doubt rose a grateful sacrifice to heaven, when exhaled by the rays of the morning sun.—They clasped their hands in each other's,—vowed to preserve the tenderest affection,—and never to forget the precepts and example of their virtuous and regretted father.

After having paid this sad tribute of duty and tender regard, they became more resigned, and returned to the parsonage with greater composure than they had felt from the moment which summoned Mr. Woodley from this world; and during the remaining part of the time they

they spent together, they determined, no complaints should interrupt the innocent enjoyment of those moments, become more precious from the idea that it would be long, very long, before they might again be indulged with each other's society.

C H A P.

CHAP. XXI.

WHEN the morning arrived which was to witness the separation of these worthy, — unprovided, — and distressed orphans, — its first dawn was seen with tears! — Sighs were heard in every part of the house, and the inhabitants discovered by their countenance the gloomy and comfortless feelings which had taken possession of their bosoms. The whole of this affectionate circle acknowledged

knownedged themselves unequal to a formal parting.

It was agreed not to take any particular leave; and when the chaise came up to the door, which was to convey Valentine and his friends from the parsonage, Ellen, accompanied by Mrs. Spencer, stole out of the back part of the house, and rambled into some adjoining fields. As soon as it was made known to Ellen that her friends were gone, she returned, and for some hours indulged herself, uninterrupted, in all the sad luxury of grief. She appeared at that distracting moment, deprived of every friend—of every comfort. She had no longer a tender and watchful parent!—Her brother might forget her, —Edwin had ceased to remember
such

such a being as herself existed.—It is true, “the world was all before her where to chafe,” and luckily she recollected, in the moment of trial, that “providence, if she deserved its care, would be her guide.” To her heavenly parent she addressed herself in the agony of her soul; and a ray of hope served to convince her she had not made her petition in vain. From this moment she no longer considered herself as an orphan and an outcast.—Her mind became resigned,—her spirits revived,—and her eyes resumed part of their former lustre.

After being only a few weeks a boarder at the farmer’s, Mrs. Spencer received a letter from her sister, in which she informed her she had fortunately succeeded in procuring a
place

place for Miss Woodley; and advised her, by all means, to be as expeditious as possible in making her journey to London, in order to secure it,—adding, it was to wait on Lady Lexington, who had an immense fortune, and was, by the generality of the world reckoned of an amiable disposition.—Young,—handsome,—gay,—and whimsical,—she was tenderly attached to the nobleman to whom she had given her hand,—and who, by the bye, it was supposed had married her more from necessity than choice;—his affairs being deranged by youthful extravagance, and his father's estate deeply encumbered with mortgages, and burdened with legacies to his younger children.

No

No sooner had Ellen received this welcome intelligence, than she began to prepare for her departure with the utmost alacrity. She was eagerly impatient to leave her dear native village. She had no longer a parent,—a brother,—a home,—and a circle of indulgent friends. The once cheerful scene was now become sad and cheerless!—Had Edwin been faithful,—had he loved her in the trying hour of adversity,—the village would have been left with regret.

Indeed, she had still one faithful friend remaining,—the good Mrs. Spencer ; who saw her prepare for her departure with tender and anxious apprehensions. She loved her with the fondness of a real parent ; and
had,

had, to the utmost of her power, in the care of Ellen, supplied the place of that truly interesting character. Her youth,—beauty,—innocence,—inexperience,—and despondence, filled her bosom with a thousand alarming fears. From the world, this good woman knew her youthful charge had every thing to dread,—and little to hope. Her partiality for Edwin, she flattered herself, would secure the heart of Miss Woodley from being a second time enslaved;—but where was the friend to be met with who would guard her from the snares of the designing?—Where the protecting arm and generous being, who would defend her from the insults and bribes of the titled libertine?—A thousand times she cautioned her to be on her guard against every
one

one she met, 'till she was convinced of their worth and sincerity. She wrote to her sister, and entreated her, if she valued her peace, to be kind and watchful over her dear Ellen;—to advise her upon all occasions the same as she would a child of her's,—adding, she was the darling of her tenderest affections. Many tears were shed when they parted,—and when the coach drove away, which conveyed Ellen from the sight of her maternal friend, the latter breathed a fervent petition to heaven, for protection to the orphan daughter of the best of men.

Ellen was so much affected that for some miles she was almost insensible to her situation, and inattentive to her fellow passengers. She was,

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however, more collected, on being addressed by an elderly man, who told her he was sorry to see her so unhappy ; but hoped a little time would reconcile her to being separated from her mother or sweetheart, and enquired if she was going to London. Ellen answered in the affirmative; adding, she was so unfortunate as to have no parents. Mr. Spencer had indeed been a mother to her, without having any tie but that of generous affection. After this, Ellen insensibly entered into conversation, regaining more composure; and never having before been so far from her native village, her attention was caught by the new and various scenes which captivated her eye. Nothing material occurred during her journey; her beauty and sweetness so

so much pleased her companions, that they were polite and civil. When she arrived at the inn, at the close of her journey, she found Mrs. Nugent, Mrs. Spencer's sister, waiting to receive her, and that Lady Lexington had sent her coach to convey her to Albemarle-street, the place of her future residence. Mrs. Nugent kindly said every thing in her power to revive the fainting spirits of the trembling Ellen ; who, alarmed at the bustle and multitude of people by which she saw herself surrounded, was in the most terrified agitation. Mrs. Nugent insisted on her staying to take some refreshment at the inn, and then offered to accompany her on her first introduction to Lady Lexington. Ellen's heart was gratefully affected by the good woman's attentive kindness.

ness.—She gladly complied with her request; and presented to Mrs. Nugent her sister's letter, which she read and promised to comply with every entreaty it contained, as long as she chose to honour her with her confidence. Ellen felt revived by the consoling tenderness of her new friend; and when the carriage was ordered to convey her to the dwelling of her future protectress, had lost many of those alarming fears which so powerfully affected her spirits on her first arrival in the metropolis.

By Mrs. Nugent, who had for some years been housekeeper to a nobleman related to Lord Lexington, was Ellen Woodley introduced. The delicate simplicity of her appearance, her beautiful figure, and apparent modesty,

deftly, united to the pleasing character given her by her new and worthy friend, procured her a moft flattering reception.

She was requested, by her Ladyship, whom they luckily found difengaged, to compofe her fluttered fpirits, and given to underftand, ſhe would be confidered more in the character of a friend than a fervant ; and though ſhe would occasionally be called upon to aſſiſt in dreſſing her and making up her things,—ſhe would, when her Ladyſhip was without company, be admitted to make her tea and fit down to table;—but when her Ladyſhip was engaged, ſhe ſhould have her dinner in the houſekeeper's apartment.

A handsome salary was proposed and Ellen retired, her mind filled with delight and gratitude; and she parted from Mrs. Nugent with a heart lightened of a thousand contending fears and terrifying apprehensions.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXII.

IT may here be necessary to give our readers some account of the youthful pair, under whose roof our heroine was become an inhabitant. Lord Lexington, brought up in the highest style of fashion, splendor, and expence, was gay, profuse, thoughtless, and vain. Accustomed to have his wishes gratified as soon as known, he had no

idea that it was necessary to suppress them. Proud of his high birth and personal attractions, he had never considered, that to oblige others was a part of his duty. His will had been a law in his father's house, and he had determined that it should be so in his own. To amuse the present moment, at this period of his life, was his chief study ; yet he was lively, captivating, and when he was in the humour to please, could be a most entertaining companion. He had travelled for pleasure, and undesignedly, or merely to gratify his pride, picked up some knowledge of the different kingdoms through which he had passed.

Lady Lexington, whose form was elegant, and whose face, though not that of a perfect beauty was extremely pleasing,

pleasing, was the only child of an opulent West Indian. She had likewise been used to have every wish indulged. Her large fortune had brought her a number of admirers, amongst them was Lord Lexington; his person, birth, fortune, and connections, were approved by the father; a preference was acknowledged by the fair lady, therefore all preliminaries were soon settled,—and the young couple married, before it was possible they could be acquainted with each other's disposition.

The flattering sound of a title, the pomp, and all the paraphernalia of greatness, was at first highly delightful to the young bride. She looked up to her lord as the most amiable of characters; and her heart felt a thousand
D 5 grateful.

grateful sensations for the enviable consequence to which his partiality had raised her. But she soon discovered that something more than pomp and splendor was necessary to happiness;—that it was possible for discontent to be found in the bosom of affluence,—and that high rank, though it might be attended with adulation, or even respect, was not secure from misery and disappointment. Though married only two years, she had caught a habit of sighing, and was heard to acknowledge a similarity of tastes and dispositions could alone produce contentment. Indeed, she had some reason to be dissatisfied; for though Lord Lexington was a polite husband, and left his lady to please herself in the choice of dress and amusements, he was never heard to
 admire

admire the one, and seldom partook of the other. 'Tis true, they did not quarrel, but they seldom met at home, except they had company; or abroad, but by accident.

She spent many hours alone, not yet having acquired a sufficient degree of ton, to give up her taste for domestic pleasures; but at the time of Ellen's arrival she had been so heartily mortified at the total indifference of her lord, that she had determined to be as giddy and dissipated as her gay circle of friends; and if she could not find happiness at home, as she once fondly expected, to act like the rest of the thoughtless world, and endeavour to find it abroad. But she had been prevented adopting her new plan; by a slight indisposition, to which circumstance.

cumstance it was owing that Ellen found her alone, and in a humour to rejoice at seeing her at so convenient a crisis; and indeed it was particularly fortunate for our heroine, as it gave her an opportunity of spending for some days the whole of her time with her lady.

The sweetness of Ellen's disposition, her obliging manner, and entertaining conversation pleased Lady Lexington. She was delighted with her companion, made many enquiries respecting her education, commiserated her dependent situation, and promised to be her friend and protectress. Ellen's grateful heart was charmed at meeting a reception so much beyond her hopes; and she exerted every faculty to oblige and entertain her lady.

For

For some days Miss Woodley saw nothing of Lord Lexington, who was absent on a party of pleasure to one of our fashionable watering places ; and as her Ladyship appeared to avoid mentioning his name, Ellen did not venture to make any enquiries. She learnt however by the young girl who was appointed to attend her whenever she wanted any assistance, that his Lordship was seldom at home, except he had no particular engagement elsewhere ; mentioned him as a gay man, adding, that all the family, unless it was her Ladyship, were much happier when he was out, and had reason to be so, as he was very cross and very proud. Ellen said nothing, but was extremely sorry to hear so untavourable a character of the man to whom so amiable,

amiable a woman was united, and whose spirits appeared unequal to a contention with sorrow and disappointment.

One morning, as Miss Woodley was sitting in her Ladyship's dressing room, waiting her arrival to pour out the tea, the door opened, and in stalked a gentleman in an elegant but careless undress. Without looking at Ellen, he sat down, and throwing one leg negligently over the other, and taking out his snuff box, he enquired, but with no very tender accents, whether her Ladyship had got rid of the vapours, or the megrims, or whatever she chose to call them. Ellen, convinced by the manner of his entrance, and familiarity of his address, that it must be Lord Lexington, arose in the utmost

utmost confusion, and in the sweetest tones of humble modesty, begged his pardon for taking possession of that apartment, and said she would immediately call her Lady. She curtsied and withdrew. Lord Lexington stared,—he was struck with her figure and appearance,—wondered who and what she was,—and in an instant became very impatient to see his Lady, that he might have his curiosity satisfied.

Lady Lexington presently came into the dressing room, leaning on the arm of Ellen Woodley, whom, she introduced to his Lordship, as a young lady who was come to live with her in the character of a friend ; and with whom she acknowledged herself

herself much satisfied and pleased. His Lordship condescended to bow to Ellen, and to congratulate her Ladyship on so agreeable and useful an acquisition to her family. He then made some trifling and more civil enquiries after her health than he had done at his first entrance, and Ellen had the honour of making tea for this fashionable couple. The conversation was for a little time kept up with some degree of civility and good humour; but his Lordship very soon left the ladies to pursue as usual, their own amusement.

The moment he retired to his library, he rang for his valet de chambre, and eagerly enquired who the sweet girl was his whimsical wife had picked up to torment. Du Val
in-

informed him all he knew, which amounted to no more than that she was the daughter of a deceased clergyman, recommended to his lady by Mrs. Nugent, Lord Mercer's housekeeper. His Lordship dismissed his valet, was pleased at having so pretty a girl to chat with, and ordered the servants to acquaint Lady Lexington he should dine and spend the whole day at home.

This resolution of his Lordship's gave infinite pleasure to Lady Lexington, and she appeared in better spirits than Ellen had ever seen her. The whole family was in as great a commotion as if a large party had been expected. "Dress me to the best advantage, my dear Ellen," her Ladyship

dyship said “and make yourself very smart for you shall dine with us; and let us do all we can to entertain my dissipated Lord, and if possible make him less averse to his own house. Ah! could I reclaim the rover, and teach him to become the being I once thought him, I should be the happiest of my sex!”

Ellen, who would gladly have been excused, commended her Lady's good humoured intention,—promised to do her best,—and encouraged her to think that a little time would produce the change in his Lordship's conduct, which her tenderness led her to hope; and as Lady Lexington was in a way to increase her family, ventured to foretell that the appearance of the young stranger would renew and strengthen

strengthen his affection; and prove an auxiliary in producing the accomplishment of her wishes. Lady Lexington, thus tenderly soothed, and persuaded to hope the best, was in high spirits.

C H A P.

C H A P. XXIII.

WHEN the family met, all was harmony and apparent good humour. As soon as dinner was over Ellen arose to withdraw, but was detained by his Lordship, who desired his being at home might not prevent her staying ; if it did, he should consider himself as an interruption to the happiness they appeared to enjoy in each

each other's society. Ellen however took up her work, and placed herself by a window, determined to observe the behaviour of her lady, and if possible, discover what it was that could make Lord Lexington indifferent to a woman so amiable and accomplished. A few interviews fully explained the matter. With a disposition naturally good and sweet, was united a weak and frivolous mind, with a still weaker constitution; indulged in every caprice and wish from the earliest period of her life, her health had been sacrificed to her humour. Weak minds are most susceptible of fear, and Lady Lexington was in continual terrors lest a return of her disorders should renew sufferings, against which she had not sufficient resolution

to

to guard by an abstemious diet and a conformity to early hours.

This unhappy malady was not only a source of misery to herself, but at times a misfortune to those around her; she was fretful, peevish, and tired every one with a repetition of complaints. Lord Lexington soon grew weary of hearing them; and in consequence of being so, determined to be seldom at home. Ellen's becoming one of his family, was at first rather a restraint on his lady's giving way to her natural despondence; and at the same time she was an object too captivating to be avoided from motives of prudence by one to whom the practice of self denial was unknown; therefore, without forming any particular designs, or suspecting any danger, to an heart that had
flood

stood invulnerable against the beauties of all nations, Lord Lexington was too volatile, too much the man of pleasure, to be seriously in love. Ellen first caught his attention by her beauty, and unaffected simplicity of manners, — she blushed every time he addressed her, — she appeared a stranger to vanity or art; — all this was new to a libertine of the present age, who had spent the greatest part of his life with women of a different stamp, whose smiles could be bought, and whose fetters shaken off when he wished to be freed from them. Fortunately for Ellen he was too dilatory, too fashionably indolent, to put his designs against her in immediate execution ; and before he could prevail upon himself to lay a regular plan for her destruction, she was removed beyond his reach.

Ellen,

Eilen, who was far from suspecting that the beauty of her person would expose her to danger, was perfectly easy; and could she have lost all remembrance of Edwin, would have thought herself fortunate and happy in her present situation. But Edwin was ever present to her imagination; she concluded he had forgotten her, but it was not in her power to become equally indifferent. Luckily for her, Sir Henry Alford's family was not amongst the number that visited at Lord Lexington's; but she heard many distressing anecdotes and reports respecting the trial of Sir Henry, which was to come on during the next session of Parliament.

She frequently received the most tender and affectionate letters from her
brother,

brother, who had fortunately met with curacies in the neighbourhood of Mr. Grovenor's family. He lamented his want of power to offer his beloved sister a comfortable home, but encouraged her to cherish hopes that he should soon be able to afford her a peaceable asylum from the dangers and storms of an inclement world, on whose capricious bounty he lamented the necessity of her being thrown. In the mean while he requested her to draw upon his purse for what her own would not afford. He recommended to her resignation, and forgetfulness as to what had past,—hope and fortitude for what was still to come. Matilda Grovenor and her brother Orlando were frequently mentioned in Valentine's letters; the former promised to love her as a sister, and the latter en-

treated to be remembered as a friend.

For some months matters remained thus circumstanced, and Ellen though not happy, became resigned and perfectly reconciled to her situation. She had not found a state of dependance so irksome as her timid imagination had led her to expect ;—she began to look forward with hope ;—she relied on her brother's promise, that she should one day find beneath his protecting roof a safe and happy home, where she could live in peaceful obscurity, 'till called upon to join her dear and ever regretted father, in that unknown world to which Edwin and his haughty parents must one day be summoned ; and though she determined to banish every aspiring and ambitious wish in respect
to

to the occurrences of this life, she thought it could be no crime to cherish the sweet hope of being more upon an equality with Edwin Alford in the regions of immortality.

One afternoon, whilst indulging herself with these consoling reflections, she was sent for to attend her lady, who had determined on making that evening a number of fashionable visits to families not at home, for which friendly purpose Ellen had assisted to dress her; but unluckily being seized with a sudden indisposition, she declined going out, and being in a whimsical humour, she sent for Miss Woodley, and requested she would dress herself with all possible expedition, in a suit of her cloaths, get into the carriage, and make visits in her

E 2

name.

name. Lady Lexington was infinitely entertained at seeing Ellen look surprised and alarmed at this proposal; “my dear girl,” said she, laughing, “there is nothing in these visits but mere form; you will only have to stop at a number of doors, and leave a card at each. I am not able to go out, but I know, as his Lordship refused to take the carriage in order to accommodate me, he will be displeased at his return, if he finds it has not been used.”

“But suppose,” cried Ellen, in trembling accents, “suppose any of the families should be at home.” “Psha!” exclaimed Lady Lexington, peevishly, “the girl is foolish; if I had not been certain of their being all engaged, I should not have proposed going

going the tiresome round. 'Tis only a parcel of my city acquaintance, that I am obliged to visit in this way, in order to please my father; but I always take care to go when I know they are out, by which means I keep well with all parties.—Call Morland,—you shall put on these cloaths, for I wish to undress,—you are so exactly my size, I know they will fit you, and we are so much alike, 'tis impossible the deception should be discovered as you sit in the coach.”

Ellen, with the utmost reluctance, was obliged to submit, and was very soon elegantly equipped for this whimsical expedition. Lady Lexington, as she saw Ellen unwilling to comply with her request, thought it best to give her no time for reflection; she

even assisted to dress her, endeavoured to laugh her out of her fears, and poor Ellen was hurried into the carriage before she well knew where she was, or what she was about. Three footmen jumped up behind the coach with flambeaux, and she stopped at several doors in such terror, that had she been called upon to speak, she could not have pronounced a word to have even saved her life.

Unfortunately, just as she began to acquire some little degree of courage, and to cherish hopes that she should get home undiscovered, the carriage drove up to a door, round which a number of servants and a croud of people were assembled. Lady Lexington's carriage was no sooner announced, than the door was opened
by

By some of the attendants belonging to the family, and two gentlemen, who had the moment before been set down, and who were going into the house, returned to hand her Ladyship out of the coach. Ellen, on seeing them approach, drew back in the utmost terror ; both held out their hands and stood waiting some moments ; at length one of them, rather surprised at the unaccountable shyness of her manner, requested, that her Ladyship would permit him to have the honour of conducting her to the company. Ellen was still silent,—she dared not betray her lady,—and to get out would be to expose herself to ridicule,—yet she had neither power nor courage to bid the coachman drive on ; at length the conflict became too great to be longer supported, and she sunk to the bottom.

bottom of the carriage, in a state of happy insensibility. The gentlemen who were personally strangers to Lady Lexington, were extremely alarmed at seeing her situation ; they instantly conveyed her into the house, the mistress of which was summoned to attend her, and the circumstance of her fainting being mentioned before the whole party, several ladies and gentlemen accompanied Lady Stamford in going to the relief of her sick friend.

An alarming period of time elapsed before the terrified Ellen shewed any signs of returning life ; and when she did recover, I must leave my readers to imagine, for it is not in my power to describe, the surprise of the company at beholding a perfect stranger, instead
of

of Lady Lexington;—or the astonishment of the half-recovered sufferer, at finding herself surrounded by a large circle of gentlemen and ladies: She had hardly ventured to open her eyes before she closed them again, and fainted a second time, at discovering Lady Alford and her son amongst the number of those whom compassion or curiosity had brought to her assistance. But she was soon brought to a more perfect sense of her own situation, by hearing Lady Alford exclaim, she knew the creature.

On enquiries being made, and finding she really came in Lord Lexington's carriage, it was the general opinion of the company that she was a kept mistress of his Lordship's, whose vanity he had weakly indulged with.

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the use of his name and carriage. and who had been brought by mistake to the wrong house. This opinion was no sooner hinted than it was adopted as a certainty. Several of the ladies withdrew, amongst that number Lady Alford would have been one of the first, had not Edwin refused to leave the room.

To see Miss Woodley, and to find her suspected of being the kept mistress of a married man, was such a shock to his heart, such a stroke of misery and disappointment to his desponding soul, as nearly provoked him to madness.

When Ellen was sufficiently recovered to make some faint acknowledgments to Lady Stamford for her
care

care and humanity, Mr. Alford attempted to approach the sofa on which she rested; but he was prevented by his mother, who, entirely thrown off her guard by passion, violently exclaimed, “if you attempt to speak to that artful abandoned wretch, and expose your folly before this company, I will never again acknowledge you for my son. Are you not satisfied that she is totally unworthy your farther notice,—that she is become insensible to shame,—and even at this moment, triumphs in secret at seeing you still the dupe of her vile arts?”

This horrid address called forth a modest blush into the cheek of the half recovered Ellen; it awakened all the dignity of virtue in her soul. With the assistance of Lady Stanford she :

she arose from the sofa, then addressing herself to that lady, she with trembling accents begged her to excuse the trouble she had undesignedly occasioned her; adding, she wished to explain the reason of her being brought to her house, but found herself unequal to the task. To Lady Lexington she begged leave to refer her for a farther explanation. “You will then find, Madam,” added she, “that your humanity has been bestowed on one who is more unfortunate than culpable.”—“To you, Madam,” turning to Lady Alford, “I will not pretend to make any excuses for the interruption I may have given to your pleasure this evening; I neither designed nor wished to interrupt it; and be assured, Madam, however appearances

pearances may be against me, the daughter of Mr. Woodley is at this moment as innocent, as free from guilt, as she was when the protection of her venerable father guarded her from silent suspicion, or the personal insults of unfeeling pride."

At this instant a servant announced the carriage waited. Edwin, who from the moment he had heard the sound of Ellen's voice, had lost all his suspicions, seized her hand to lead her out, which she modestly withdrew. "Excuse me, Mr. Alford, if I entreat you will desist shewing me any more of these flattering attentions, for which I have suffered already such degrading humiliations.—Forget me,—obey your parents,—and may you be ever happy!"

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She attempted to leave the room, but her faltering steps and trembling limbs, convinced the company of her inability. Edwin pushed away those that were going to assist her, and with his arm encircling her waist, vowed no being on earth should prevent his attending Miss Woodley, and protecting her from every insult. Ellen thus compelled to accept his assistance, no longer attempted to oppose him. As he led her out he tenderly addressed her in the following words :
“ What a meeting has this been ! You talk to me of happiness, Ellen, yet I see you are miserable ; how then can you think of my being otherwise ? I will not however lose this precious moment, without repeating that I adore you ; and though I find you thus cold and cruel, I love you more
than .

than ever. You are never absent from my thoughts ;—I doubt not, I never doubted, your being possessed of every virtue. To-morrow I will see you at Lord Lexington's, and request an explanation ;—to-night I will guard you home, though the sword of my father was aimed against my bosom to prevent me."

"Oh ! no, no," cried the agitated Ellen, "if you do not wish to kill me, to destroy my fair fame forever, return to your mother, and quiet her apprehensions, nor expose me farther to the company. I am now quite well ; I must return alone, or you will rob me of every friend." Edwin, to quiet her alarms, agreed to her going by herself ; but bade her expect to see him

him in the morning. He prest her to his bosom at parting, and vowed to justify her spotless character to the whole world; whilst the tear which fell upon his hand, convinced him he had still an advocate in her bosom.

C H A P.

C H A P. XXIV.

WHEN the coach drove from the door, a shower of tears gave relief to the feelings of our heroine; and before she reached Albemarle-Street, she became tolerably composed. To find that Edwin still loved her was a healing cordial to her wounded spirits. On her arrival she found Lady Lexington had gone early to bed; she withdrew directly to her chamber, and immediately formed the

re-

resolution of leaving Lord Lexington's house before any of the family were stirring. She sat down and wrote a few lines to her lady, and after giving her an account of what had so unfortunately happened the preceding evening, entreated her forgiveness for leaving her family so abruptly; promising at some future period to explain her reasons for withdrawing herself from her protection. After thanking her for the indulgence with which she had been treated, she referred her to Lady Stamford for a more explicit information of the unfortunate circumstances which had compelled her to seek peace and security in the bosom of retirement.

Ellen rose very early, and before any of the family, except some of the
menial

menial servants were visible, she, seated in a post chaise, was some miles on her way to the farm house she had left on her coming to London; in which house she knew the good Mrs. Spencer still resided, having been rendered incapable of changing her situation by some severe attacks of the gout.

Lady Lexington was mortified, vexed, and astonished at the contents of Ellen's letter. She very soon informed her Lord of what had happened, and had she not been wholly occupied by her own reflections, the chagrin painted on his countenance when he found Miss Woodley had left his family, would not only have reconciled her to, but rendered her thankful for the loss of her companion. He roughly blamed her folly for giving way to
every

every trifling complaint, and for sending the poor girl on so foolish an errand; and vowed that a woman with a constitution so whimsical, was not only a plague and misfortune to herself, but to all those with whom she was connected. He was going to say more, when Lady Stamford, who was eager to have the mystery of the preceding evening explained, as soon as announced, was ushered into the apartment.

Lady Lexington mentioned her sudden indisposition, and adding a few flattering compliments easily made her peace; and it was agreed, after talking over the whole affair, that if Mr. Alford came to enquire for Miss Woodley, her Ladyship should see him, and inform him of her flight. When
Lady

Lady Stamford put an end to her visit, Lord Lexington retired to his library, cursing his wife's vagaries, and blaming himself for not securing the prize when it was in his power; thinking he might as well have realized the report, as be censured for a nominal intrigue.

When Mr. Alford arrived, he was immediately introduced to Lady Lexington;—to her he confessed his passion for her lovely friend, and by her he was told of her sudden flight, and acquainted with every circumstance that had occasioned so much confusion at Lady Stamford's. Edwin lamented her obstinate cruelty in refusing him an interview, and obtained a promise from her Ladyship, of informing him if ever Miss Woodley
fa-

favoured her with a letter. Edwin, who had passed a sleepless night and waited with the utmost impatience for the moment in which he expected to see Ellen, thus unexpectedly disappointed, returned to his own house in a state of mortified despondence; and never did the ambitious and torrid more earnestly wish for wealth and power, than this generous and disinterested lover, did, that fortune had placed him more upon an equality with the humble, unassuming, suffering Ellen Woodley.

He determined to pursue every probable step to discover the place of her retreat; but his designs were prevented by the distresses in which himself and family became involved.

Ellen,

Ellen, after a dull and tiresome journey, arrived safe and well at the honest farmer's; who was equally surprised and rejoiced at her return. She found Mrs. Spencer slowly recovering from a long and painful illness; but the company of Ellen, the tender attentions of her beloved child, as she always called her, did more towards her recovery, than all the medicines from her apothecary. Ellen wrote her brother an account of what had happened, and she very soon received an answer, in which he commended her conduct, and wished her to remain in the village till some change happened in his affairs, that would enable him to provide for her. He promised to practice the most rigid œconomy on her account, by which means he could allow her twenty pounds a year, which
he

he hoped would for the present satisfy the farmer for her board; whilst the interest of her own little fortune would sparingly supply her wardrobe. The farmer readily acceded to the proposal, —her village friends were delighted at her return, —the new rector, who was a young unmarried man, very soon paid her the most flattering and respectful attentions, —and Ellen, indulged with the society of her maternal friend, found herself happier under the humble roof of Mr. Addington, than she had ever been when surrounded with pomp and splendour, in the more lofty dwelling of Lord Lexington.

In this happy though humble security, we must for the present leave her, in order to return to the Alford family, in which a sad reverse of fortune

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tune had taken place. Edwin, who from the time he had been compelled to leave Myrtle-Grove had been deaf to the voice of pleasure, blind to the charms of beauty, and insensible to all the flattering distinctions which accompany rank and affluence, was, at the very instant he found his own heartfelt sorrows renewed by his accidental meeting with Ellen, her unaccountable flight, which he imputed to indifference, and the additional distress he felt at hearing she was become an orphan, called upon to console and invigorate the minds of those unfeeling parents, who had so long been indifferent spectators of his misery.

Sir Henry -Alford's conduct had been so strictly and carefully investi-

Vol. II. F gated,

gated, such undoubted proofs had been produced of his cruelty and injustice, that it was for some weeks supposed he would not escape with life. The fortune, however, which he had taken from a number of oppressed and injured people, was now forfeited to the just laws of his native country; and whilst he complained of the rigors of persecution, the world in general condemned the lenient hand of mercy which spared his life.

The estate which he possessed before he went abroad, was deeply mortgaged to pay the expences which had attended his trial; the agonies he suffered during the lingering contests,—the mortification given to his pride, avarice, and ambition,—the coldness and contempt with which he was
treated

treated by those in power,—had such an effect upon his mind, as made the few friends he had yet left, apprehensive that the loss of reason would follow the loss of character and fortune.

He was averse from being left a moment by himself;—his sleep was frequently disturbed by the most alarming effects of a hurried and distressed imagination.—He would often run from his sofa, and rush into the arms of his attendants,—calling upon them to save him from that ghastly spectre, which had entered his apartment, and stood grinning at his agonies.—At other times he would start from the soundest sleep, and with an aspect of terror, exclaim, “There!—did you not hear that groan?—

F 2

Ah!

Ah ! that piercing cry !—it once before reached my ear, but it could not reach my heart.—Hark ! those groans have long been familiar to my ear ;—but there was a time, when they could not affrighten me from my purpose. I refused food to the famished soul of the poor Indian.—I spilled innocent blood, in order to obtain that wealth, which the hand of justice has now wrested from me ;—and my peace of mind has been sacrificed to that ambition, which brought so many, by my unfeeling cruelty, to want, misery, and death. My son,—I have deprived my only son, of happiness,—and he, no doubt, could curse me to my face, and will be heard to execrate my memory, when I am mouldering in the grave. I would have corrupted the purity of his nature,—

I even wished and assisted to ensnare him in the baneful labyrinths of vice.— I have deprived him of the lovely object dearest to his heart,—and insulted worth and piety, in the form of his exemplary preceptor, whose grey hairs I sent with sorrow to the grave.— Too eager to obtain wealth, I have forfeited happiness, —and ambitious of aggrandizing my son, I have, like a tyrant, robbed him of health and peace.”

These soliloquies were generally attended with increasing despondence; and so greatly did his horrors impress themselves upon the minds of his attendants, that it was with the utmost difficulty many of them could be prevailed upon to continue in the family. The black servants were all prohibited

his apartment, as the sight of them threw him into the most alarming agonies. He would even kneel at their appearance, as if they were sent from the grave to warn him of approaching death, and intreat them to intercede with his offended God in his behalf.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXV.

LADY Alford and her son mutually lamented the misery to which ambition had brought them. Edwin often recollected the peaceful serenity, the unaspiring contentment which he had seen in the dwelling of his worthy tutor; and was more than ever convinced that all his precepts were founded on truth. Yet such was the delicacy of his feelings, since adversity and disgrace threatened him

ruin,—that notwithstanding he had been informed of Ellen's having returned to E——, he had not sent her a single line.

The ever-to-be-regretted Mr. Woodley and his daughter had been treated with insult and contempt. Valentine still remained,—he was the guardian of his sister;—but how could he apply to him, when his own father's name was execrated by almost all ranks of people?—Could he have raised Miss Woodley to rank and affluence, with what transport would he have solicited her hand, and led her to the altar! But situated as he was, though perhaps they could forgive, he concluded they could not so easily forget the injustice they had met with.

To

To add to the mortification of Sir Henry and his Lady, the throng of visitors forsook them in the moments of distress. The door which once had resounded with the thundering rap of consequence, and all the fashionable clamor and bustle of impatient guests, was silent! A few formal, cold enquiries after their health was all they received. The sycophants were withdrawn to pay their court and adulation at more fortunate and more brilliant shrines. Not one real friend remained, that would enter into the gloomy house of grief.

The physicians recommended change of air, and advised Lady Alford to prevail with Sir Henry to retire into the country.—With some difficulty they succeeded. Myrtle-Grove

F 5. still:

still remained unfold, though many of the farms, and a great part of the land had been disposed of.—To that sweet spot they determined to retire.

Sad and unpleasant had been the journey of the Alford family, when they went to town ; but more sad and cheerless was their return to the country. Captain Heartly, an officer who had served under Sir Henry Alford, during his residence in India, and had received many favours from the unfortunate Baronet, arrived in London a few days previous to their intended departure. He kindly offered to accompany them to the Grove. His proposal was accepted with joy by all the parties. Even Sir Henry's spirits were revived at seeing the honest veteran, to whom he could,

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unreproved, complain of the cruelty of fortune.

Ellen was told by Mrs. Spencer of her lover's arrival, and the reasons which compelled the family to withdraw from the great world. Valentine wrote to her on the same subject, and cautioned her against encouraging any flattering hopes,—as an union taking place between her and her lover, was more unlikely than ever;—it being now become absolutely necessary that Mr. Alford should marry a woman of fortune.

Notwithstanding these prudent cautions, the intelligence of Edwin's being again become an inhabitant of the Grove, operated like enchantment upon :

upon the mind of Ellen. Her heart throbbed with unfeigned delight. Hope enlivened the bosom which had long been the mansion of despair ; and the whole face of nature seemed to wear a different aspect. Edwin was come!—she might again hear the sound of that loved voice, which alone could charm her ear ;—at least she could sometimes steal a look at him when chance threw him in her way.—He was deprived of fortune ; therefore more upon an equality with herself.—She had not loved him for being rich ; therefore his reverse of fortune only served to endear him more to her heart. — Should he still love (and how could she doubt his sincerity) her tenderness would soften his distresses.—He had not now so many attend-

tend-

tendants,—if she was ever to be his wife, she would herself attend him!—
Oh ! how delightful—to make Edwin Alford happy, and render him indifferent to the rigor of fortune !

C H A P.

CHAP. XXVI.

THE morning after she heard that the Alford family were arrived, she arose an hour or two earlier than was her usual custom. She joined in conversation with her former innocent cheerfulness ; her cheek was suffused with a modest blush that rivalled the blooming tint of an opening rose, — and her down-cast eyes beamed with timid delight. Mrs. Spencer, with a thousand tender fears, and maternal anxieties,

ieties, saw, in this sudden change, the dawnings of delusive hopes. — A walk was proposed, and readily agreed upon; Mrs. Spencer intended talking seriously to Miss Woodley, on the painful subject so necessary to be discussed. They had walked only a few paces from the house, before they were met by Mr. Wallis, the young divine, who had succeeded Mr. Woodley. Happy to meet with Ellen, he requested leave to attend her in her morning ramble. His request was too polite to be refused, and they proceeded together.

Ellen, in consequence of the intelligence she had received, was in high spirits; and Mr. Wallis, charmed with the unusual liveliness of his lovely companion, exerted himself to amuse
and

and entertain her. They walked on till they came to a little plantation of trees and shrubs, amongst which some of the honest villagers had placed a seat. Mrs. Spencer being rather fatigued with the exercise of walking, requested to sit down. Ellen seated herself by her friend, whilst Mr. Wallis amused himself with gathering a nosegay of wild flowers. When he had done so, he threw himself on the grass at the feet of Ellen, presented her the flowers, and was rewarded by a smile of sweetness.

At this instant, Mr. Alford, who was going with eager steps, and an agitated heart, to call upon Miss Woodley, made his appearance. He had stopped unobserved, at seeing the party; but when he discovered how

Ellen:

Ellen was engaged,—heard her laugh, appear in such uncommon spirits,—and saw a lover at her feet, on whom she smiled, and from whom she even accepted a nosegay,—jealousy took instant possession of his mind.—It was not to be borne!—the baneful sight was the destruction of his happiness. Too much enraged to suppose it possible he could be mistaken, pride and indignation urged him to go forwards. Ellen, at sight of Mr. Alford, gave a loud scream, and made an attempt to approach him, when the following words reached her ears.

“Cruel girl! well may you be both shocked and confused at seeing me here. This moment of agony has amply revenged on me the affront you lately received, and all the wrongs
of

of which you might complain. Yet, to desert me,—to listen to another's vows, at such a time, at the very instant I was eagerly flying to lay myself and sorrows at your feet!—False girl! well may you tremble! (for Ellen, unable to stand, would have sunk upon the ground, had not Mr. Wallis caught her in his arms). That man will soon be able to console you for the pangs you so well feign to feel at sight of one you have irreparably injured. Adieu! Madam, never more shall the sight of Edwin interrupt the pleasure of those moments dedicated to a happier, if not a more deserving lover." Saying this, he ran off, and was out of sight in an instant. So sudden, so unexpected had been his appearance, so strange and unaccountable the manner of his address,

none

none of the party made any attempt to detain or undeceive him.

Ellen had heard too much.—Distressed and terrified, she left Mr. Wallis to take care of Mrs. Spencer, and flew back to Mr. Addington's. Mr. Wallis was extremely surprised at this strange scene which had occurred;—from his venerable companion he requested an explanation, and formed his resolutions accordingly; for though the youth admired Miss Woodley, he was too poor and too prudent to think of marrying a young girl as indigent as himself.

Mrs. Spencer, alarmed on her dear Ellen's account, hastened home as fast as possible. She found her fair charge in a situation that demanded her

her tenderest attention. Absorbed in grief, and distracted with a thousand fears on her lover's account, she for a long time was insensible to the soothing voice of consolation ; and the next morning the good woman was under the necessity of dispatching a messenger to Valentine, requesting his immediate attendance.

In this uncomfortable situation we must for the present leave our heroine, in order to take a peep at what was going forwards at Myrtle-Grove. Edwin had returned in a state little removed from phrenzy. On entering the house, he ran into the room where Lady Alford was sitting at work, who on seeing her son so soon returned, and observing the strange and alarming alteration in his countenance, started
up,

up, and eagerly enquired into the cause.

“Make no enquires,” he replied, “rest satisfied, Madam, that you have at last obtained your cruel purpose.—Ellen is lost, and I am doomed to misery. I will no longer endeavour to contend with adversity. In the loss of Ellen I am deprived of all that served to make life desirable.”

At this instant Captain Heartly entered the room. — Lady Alford was in tears. Edwin was walking with folded arms across the room. On being asked by the Captain what occasioned their distress, her Ladyship informed him that Edwin had vowed to die, because he had seen a rival with Miss Woodley.

“Die!”

“Die!” exclaimed the honest veteran, “Die for a woman! very heroic truly! fye on such childish stuff! No, no, my young spark, you were never sentenced to die so ignoble a death. I have, myself, at different periods of my life, been the slave of fair, black, and brown; but never found myself in the humour to have recourse to a pistol, because they jilted me, or preferred a coxcomb to a soldier. Fire and sword, man! never mind the butterfly sex, who are as uncertain as the wind, and as rapacious as hawks; a toy will buy their smiles, and a more brilliant bauble tempt them to break a thousand tender vows.”

Poor Edwin received but little consolation from this well meaning harangue, and sat stupidly absorbed in
his

his own distracting reflections. Sir Henry had passed a more uncomfortable night than usual ; therefore there was no talking to him on the subject. Lady Alford was infinitely distressed and her terrified imagination saw every thing to dread in the resolute despair and unshaken constancy of her son.

CHAP.

C H A P. XXVII.

THE next morning, just as the family had assembled in the breakfast room, a gentleman was announced, who requested to speak with Mr. Alford. It was Mr Wallis, who was immediately desired to walk in. Edwin no sooner saw him enter the room, then he fiercely enquired what had procured him the honour of a visit? adding, "I do not recollect ever seeing you but once before, and
in

in that moment I saw enough to make me wish we might never meet again. If what I have said," cried he, with indignation, "requires any farther explanation, I shall not condescend to give it, unless you call upon me to settle the account with my sword."

"Well said, my hero!" cried Captain Heartly, delighted with the spirit of Edwin, "had you disputed for any thing of more consequence than a woman, Seapoys and Marattahs! I would myself have been your second."

Mr. Wallis, who came with no hostile intentions, and from what had occurred the preceding day, was prepared to meet an unwelcome reception, addressed himself to Lady Al-

ford. He began with informing her of his name and situation; of his accidental meeting with Miss Woodley; of his having walked with her, and being surprised at her feet by Mr. Alford; a circumstance which had, he was sorry to find, given rise to suspicions in his bosom he wished to remove. He then mentioned how much Mr. Alford had distressed Miss Woodley, by the unjust and cruel language in which he had addressed her, without waiting for an explanation of appearances ;—and the effect it had on his lovely neighbour, having been informed that morning she was very ill, and that her brother had been sent for.

There was something so honest, so unembarrassed in Mr. Wallis's manner and address, as instantly removed suspicion

picion from the mind of Edwin, who felt himself reproved, gratified, and distressed. He arose and embraced his new acquaintance most cordially. He then begged his pardon for having received him so unlike a gentleman. He next entreated Lady Alford's leave to call upon Ellen, in order to make his peace, if she could be persuaded to pardon the folly and rudeness of his conduct. Lady Alford hesitated,—Captain Heartly, softened by the agonies which he saw his young friend struggled to conceal, bade him beat a quick march; and at the time he made his own peace, to include his mother in the treaty. “Swords and pistols!” cried he, raising his voice, “your Ladyship would not attempt to prevent Edwin's seeing the

lafs, who you find is really ill, and a good girl into the bargain?"

Her Ladyship gave her consent with reluctance, and with a thousand tender injunctions to her son, that he would be careful of his own health, and not forget in his anxiety for Ellen, that he had a mother whose happiness depended on him; adding, he was the only object on which her hopes were rested. Edwin promised never to forget her indulgent tendernefs, and instantly departed with his new acquaintance.

When the two gentlemen arrived at Ellen's lodgings, they were ushered into the parlour by the honest farmer, and received by Valentine, who was sitting in all the helpless agony of solitary

itary despair. No sooner did Edwin see his friend, than he threw himself into his arms, which were instantly opened to receive him; he next tenderly grasped his hand, and intreated his forgiveness for all the sorrows he had brought upon him and his family. "Forgive me, my friend, my beloved brother," cried the agitated youth, "lead me to your injured, suffering sister, that I may tell her, I will die as I have lived, only and ever her's. I know she will pardon my injustice, and forgive the wretch who dared to insult her angelic purity with the most cruel reproaches."

Valentine was in an instant softened to compassionate the anguish he saw his friend endured. His unfeigned repentance had a claim upon his tenderness; and the interest

which he had formerly made himself in his friendship, revived with increasing energy at this distressing interview. He pressed him again to his bosom; but earnestly requested he would not attempt to see his sister, whilst his visits were forbidden by his parents.

Edwin now informed his friend that he had obtained Lady Alford's consent to visit his dear Ellen; adding, he had every reason to hope she no longer meant to oppose his wishes. He then acquainted Valentine of the unfortunate change in his affairs, and of the gloomy despondence into which his father had fallen.

Valentine very soon withdrew, and in a few minutes returned, leading his trembling

trembling sister. But when Edwin saw her—saw her so pale, weak, and emaciated, he could scarcely believe it was the same Ellen,—the same lovely maid, who had enslaved his youthful heart. He fell at her feet,—grasped her extended hand,—and when his emotions would give him leave, uttered the most pathetic complaints for the change which grief, sickness, and anxiety had occasioned. He then tenderly enquired if she could ever forgive the unfortunate wretch who had robbed her of health, and bereaved her innocent bosom of peace.

It was some minutes before the fair invalid could make any reply to this ardent address, from a lover who had suffered equally with herself. She

requested him to be seated,—to be composed. She smiled on him thro' her tears,—and he read in her still expressive eyes, that the pardon he solicited, was already obtained; though her faltering tongue had been unable to pronounce the honeyed sounds. Ellen soon became sufficiently composed to enter into conversation with her lover, and to quiet all his apprehensions.

C H A P.

C H A P. XXVIII.

TIME now fled as swiftly as before it had been thought to creep; and had not Valentine and Mrs. Spencer made their appearance, and reminded them it was time to think of taking some refreshment, it is not very probable that they would have recollected any thing so trifling as corporal nourishment, and even night might have stolen upon them unobserved. Before Edwin took his leave.

he promised his gentle enslaver to see her every day; and softly whispered in her ear, his hopes that his parents would no longer oppose their union.

At his return to the Grove he so well pleaded his cause with Lady Alford, and gave so interesting an account of his lovely Ellen's sufferings, that all prejudice against her former favourite was subdued. Captain Heartly became so warm an advocate in behalf of these singular lovers, that he vowed he would conquer Sir Henry's obstinacy, and recommend his sending for young Woodley immediately; having a presentiment that he would prove as good a physician to
his

his old friend, as Edwin was likely to be to his sister.

The next day Sir Henry was attacked on all sides, to favour the wishes of his son. Edwin pleaded love in defence of his conduct, nor failed to describe the beauty and merit of the lovely object who had occasioned his apostacy from duty. Lady Alford acknowledged that it was her first wish to call Miss Woodley daughter. The Captain swore it would be downright cruelty and oppression any longer to oppose the wishes of two young people apparently formed to make each other happy, (Sir Henry groaned.) “ I say happy,” replied the honest soldier ; “ What, because they are not to have more money than they know how to spend, you think they

they cannot be happy!—Are they not sincere and innocent? (another groan) are they not unambitious? (groan) what would you wish them more?—Here you sit, fretting and repining for the loss of what you will never want; and would obstinately deny yourself that portion of happiness which providence is still willing to bestow.”

“ Lady Alford’s jointure will at all events provide decently for some of Edwin’s sons; and unless you provoke me to return to India, I will take care of some of the girls, for the sake of their fair mother; and if I like her future conduct, as well as I do her present character, I will adopt her for my daughter, and give some of my money into this same old Woodley’s family, of whom I have heard so much. It will

not there be abused for having once belonged to an adventurer; and perhaps will wear better than if I kept it in my own pocket. What say you, old friend? methinks I have pleaded as well in the cause of love, as your Erskines or Mingays could have done in those of law and justice."

"You have conquered," said Sir Henry, "we have had enough of pride, ambition, and misery. If my son can be content with a small fortune, he will possess a treasure I could never find, — amidst the unbounded wealth my unfortunate ambition once went such guilty lengths to obtain. Ah! had I been as eager to be rich in virtue and good actions, as I was to be distinguished for the unsatisfying pleasure :

pleasure of affluence and splendour, my days had been passed in peace, amidst the smiles of a contented family; and my nights secure from those horrors that now haunt my pillow. Had I been satisfied with the blessings thrown in my way, I had not been thus wretched in my old age."

"Oh! say no more, my dear Sir," cried Edwin, throwing himself at his father's feet; "cease to reproach yourself with so much severity. Be assured you will yet be happy! the virtues of my lamented preceptor will entail blessings on his descendants, and on those with whom they are connected. Permit them to come here, they will bring peace and contentment to Myrtle-Grove. You have made me happier by giving me your
consent

consent to marry Miss Woodley, than you could have done had you procured me all the wealth of India."

Sir Henry embraced his son, and it was mutually agreed that Captain Heartly should accompany Edwin the next day on his visit to Ellen, and invite the amiable brother and sister to the Grove.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXIX.

MATTERS thus happily settled between Mr. Alford and his parents, a mutual and cordial intercourse once more took place. Ellen recovered but slowly ; but the tender attentions of her lover, the care of her watchful friends, and the best advice the country afforded, at length conquered every consumptive habit, and restored peace to those hearts which were interested in her happiness.

Lady.

Lady Alford paid her frequent visits during her stay at the farmer's, and the more she saw of her the more she admired the sweetness of her disposition and her other inestimable qualities; and in a little time Ellen received from her Ladyship all the tender attentions of a fond and partial mother.

Valentine, on his first introduction to Sir Henry, was most cordially received. The humbled Baronet made many apologies for the injustice of his conduct, which he assured him he sincerely repented of. He requested him to forget what had passed, and even, thanked him for having so generously given his consent to unite their families, whilst his affairs remained in so alarming a situation ; adding, that he hoped
 enough

enough would remain to place them in a state of independence.

Valentine, in return, assured Sir Henry, that as to fortune, it never was to him an object of such consequence as to inspire him with a wish of more than a sufficiency to accommodate him and his sister with the necessaries of life. If they ever had more than enough for that purpose, he hoped, and trusted they should apply it to its proper use, in endeavouring to make others happy. But if he thought that fortune would by her smiles rob them of those principles, which had been so carefully implanted in their minds by the best of fathers, he had much rather that both his sister and himself should remain in their present humble and dependent station.

“ Ah!”

“ Ah !” exclaimed the penitent Sir Henry, “ why could I not think and act as justly ?—I had then been happy !—then, the midnight hour had not been fraught with terrors,—or the scratching of an harmless mouse mistaken for the approach of a spectre. Ambition first warped my mind from the pleasant tract of rectitude and benevolence,—and fordidness closed it against every generous sentiment. I plundered the innocent, — I persecuted the guiltless,—I murdered the parent, and robbed the orphan. Now I am plundered and justly persecuted in my turn.”

“ If the loss of my fortune would restore my mind to peace, my enemies would be welcome to take it ;—but they will revel on the spoils of my dis-
membered

membered and ruined fortune, whilst my peace remains unrestored. Ah! why did I not sooner recollect there would come an evening, after which I should see no morning!—your good father, in imitation of the example of his blessed master, whose precepts he had steadily and uniformly endeavoured to follow, said every thing in his power to bring me to a more just way of thinking; but I would not listen to the voice of truth.”

From the time Sir Henry opened his mind to Valentine, that good young man took the utmost pains to reconcile him to himself; and he succeeded so well, that he was often summoned from his bed in the middle of the night, to talk of pardon and forgiveness to the terrified sufferer. His
 approach

approach enlivened and gave hope to his despairing soul; and banished terror and despondence from his mind. He was the only friend and comforter on whom he relied for support, or from whom he received consolation.

C H A P.

CHAPTER. XXX.

THE suit carried on against Sir Henry Alford, was long before it could be finally decided. His guilt was clearly proved.—He had received many bribes,—and plundered with merciless cruelty, the sable natives of the East. He had claimed as his own right, that which belonged to the East India company. He was therefore stripped of all his ill-gotten wealth; and when the litigation was just brought

brought to a conclusion,—when he began to cherish hopes it would soon terminate, and put an end to his anxieties, fears, and troubles,—he was suddenly summoned to appear before a more awful tribunal than any to be found on earth; without having time to look into or settle any of his worldly affairs.

This melancholy and unexpected event involved Lady Alford and her son in fresh troubles. Captain Heartly again at this time proved himself a real friend. On inspecting the affairs of the deceased, he found them so involved by a long and ruinous trial, that it was necessary all the estates should be sold; and as little would remain but Lady Alford's jointure, which was but small, (her fortune being only
three

three thousand pounds,) he advised that the young couple should be married; but that Edwin should go with him to India, and leave the two ladies to live together till they returned.

Ellen would not listen to so alarming a proposal. She declared, if her lover went back to that horrid land of temptation and terrors, she should not be able to survive the separation; and on those terms, dear as he was to her heart, she would not give him her hand. Lady Alford and her son were averse to the proposal. Valentine disliked the design of again separating the lovers, and told the Captain, he had rather see his sister happy, than either rich or great.

With

With some difficulty, it was settled with the creditors, that the Alford family should remain at Myrtle-Grove, paying only a moderate rent, till the estate could be advantageously sold. In fact, no purchaser had offered, that would give the price set upon it. Captain Heartly was prevailed upon, at the united request of his friends, to give up his design of returning to India, and agreed to reside in old England the remainder of his days.

He had acquired a comfortable fortune, but he was chiefly indebted to the friendship of Sir Henry Alford, for his success in the world ; and as he was neither forgetful, nor ungrateful, he determined to make all the return in his power to the family of his departed friend ; who had been his pa-

tron, when he himself was poor, necessitous, and almost unnoticed.

After the funeral was over and all matters of business settled as well as circumstances would admit, it was determined that the lovers should be united in a few months. Valentine divided his time amongst his friends, happy in the choice he had made of a fair and virtuous companion for life;—rejoicing in the prospect of felicity which awaited his sister,—and in daily expectation of a living from the friend who had given him a promise to provide for him, and who had for some time succeeded to his father's title and estate.

Lady Alford discharged a number of her servants,—retrenched the expences

pences of her table,—parted with all the carriages except the coach,—and made so material an alteration in many other expensive articles, that she found her income equal to every demand made upon it by the present establishment of her household. She was able to live in a genteel style, and to keep up a confined, but respectable set of acquaintance.

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C H A P.

CHAP. XXXI.

THE lovers were now happy. They were no longer obliged to conceal their mutual affection.—No stern parent forbade their loving each other.—No obstacles threatened them with being again separated. Ellen spent the chief of her time at the Grove. The mornings were generally dedicated to study, the afternoons to amusement. Sometimes they rode on horseback,—at others wandered through

through the beautiful gardens and extensive plantations, with minds and hearts in most perfect unison. They contemplated the beauties of nature with grateful delight.—They often visited the poor cottagers, and as much as in their power relieved their distresses; and wherever they appeared, were welcomed with the genuine smile of unaffected respect.—No longer was the tongue of envy employed against the lovely Ellen. Her virtue, sweetness, and sufferings, had silenced the malignant railer; and made every one rejoice that her truth and innocence were likely to receive their merited reward. Even Frederick Dennison was often heard to declare, that to see Miss Woodley happy, would gratify one of the first wishes of his heart.

Captain Heartly purchased an estate near the Grove, with a very good dwelling-house on the premises; to which he added two spacious wings, and built proper offices, and in which he now determined to end his days. At this period of our history the Captain was only in his forty-fifth year,—had a good person,—was a sensible and cheerful companion,—and what was still more interesting in his character, had proved himself a brave soldier,—a humane conqueror,—and a generous enemy.

Whilst he was superintending the progress of his workmen, he began to think a country life would be vastly dull, without an agreeable female to enliven the scene. He had never been accustomed to live alone, or in
fe-

seclusion from the world ; neither had he for many years thought seriously of marriage. He now began to think a wife not so terrible an object as he had once considered it. He was subject to frequent and rather violent attacks of the gout ; and to be shut up by himself, when labouring under that painful disorder, would be shocking !—He must therefore either marry, or emigrate once a year to the gay regions of the metropolis, and that would strangely derange his plan.

He had promised to be a friend to the son of Sir Henry Alford. If he married, could he justly perform his promise ? — For some time these jarring and perplexing reflections tormented and distressed him. At length a lucky thought reconciled them, and

restored his mind to its usual serenity. Lady Alford was still a fine woman, of an amiable disposition, which had been severely tried in her union with his friend, Sir Henry. The uncomplaining tenderness with which she had attended him, during his long confinement and melancholy despondence, and the indulgence she had shewn to his hypochondriacal fancies, had sufficiently testified the sweetness of her temper; and exclusive of all these recommendations, he had secretly admired Miss Villars, before she was engaged to his friend, but was not then in a situation that could authorize him to encourage the most distant hope, that had she been at liberty she would have accepted the offer of his hand. The wheel of fortune had turned in her disfavour. He was now
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in respect of wealth, much her superior. It might do,—at least he would run the hazard of declaring himself her lover.

He very soon began to dress with greater elegance and exactness. His old regimentals were all thrown aside; and new cloaths made up in the modern taste. He paid particular attention to her Ladyship on all occasions; and her will appeared in every thing to direct and rule his own.

Our young lovers first took notice of this alteration in their friend, the Captain. They observed with pleasure his increasing attention to her Ladyship; and secretly wished he might obtain her heart and hand. Sir Edwin Alford had always loved and respected

H 5. " Cap-

Captain Heartly ; he had been indulgent to his wishes in his infant years,—he had found him a steady and sincere friend in the hour of distress,—and to call *him* father, who had proved himself one already in his conduct towards him, would gratify his heart.

It was not long before this brave son of Mars mustered up sufficient courage to declare his passion, and begin his campaign under his new commander. Lady Alford had long seen his partiality, and affected neither dislike or displeasure. She knew the goodness of the Captain's heart ; and the generosity of his proposals in her humiliating change of fortune, convinced her of the sincerity of his attachment. A few faint denials were
suc;

ceeded by encouraging smiles, and she promised to give him her hand as soon as she could do so without incurring the censure or ridicule of the world. When the young people were made acquainted with what had passed, they congratulated her Ladyship on an event which afforded them mutual satisfaction. Peace and happiness might now be said to reside at Myrtle Grove; and though the great and bustling world was in a manner shut out, and all the former scenes of luxurious extravagance had given place to frugality and good management, more real felicity had never been known in that noble mansion.

CHAP. XXXII.

IN about half a year after the death of Sir Henry, Sir Edwin Alford led the blushing but unreluctant Ellen, to the altar. The bride was dressed with simple elegance; and without one expensive ornament might justly be said to rival the fairest of the fair in beauty. Valentine performed the sacred ceremony; and Captain Heartly gave the hand of Ellen to her exulting, triumphant lover. On this occasion
the

the hospitable doors of Myrtle-Grove were again thrown open, and a general joy prevailed in the village. Matilda Grovenor was present on this happy day. Orlando was likewise invited; but for reasons that require no explanation, did not accept the invitation.

Lady Alford agreed to remain with her son till he gave her hand to Captain Heartly. By the generosity of their mutual friend, the Captain, who purchased part of the furniture at the Grove, and by Lady Alford's resigning half her jointure, the new married couple had an income of about four hundred pounds a year; and a prospect of one day possessing more than double that sum. The young Lady Alford was perfectly happy, and satisfied with what

what appeared to her an ample provision ; and she supposed Sir Edwin would still enjoy many of the indulgencies to which he had ever been accustomed. To have deprived him of one would have destroyed her peace, and therefore she determined steadily to practise the most rigid œconomy on her own part, in order to atone as much as possible for her want of fortune. Mrs. Spencer, who had been taken into the family from the time Miss Woodley married, as house-keeper, was a very useful assistant; and to the end of her life proved a steady and faithful friend.

Sir Edwin Alford, from the hour he led his Ellen to the altar, became possessed of a treasure he prized beyond the wealth of worlds. She was his first.

first and only choice, and for some years he was the fondest, happiest, and most indulgent of husbands,—the humane, useful, and respectable country gentleman,—who paid his bills with exactness, and laid out his money amongst his honest and industrious neighbours.—He was treated with unfeigned respect by all ranks of people; and envied for the happiness he appeared to enjoy, by many whose fortunes were more affluent.

The Dowager Lady Alford, at the end of eighteen months after the marriage of her son, gave her hand to Captain Heartly, and removed to a very good house prepared for her reception, which was fitted up in a handsome style; and in which she enjoyed more real happiness than she ever

ever experienced, amidst the glare of splendor, and furrounded with every luxury in the gay regions of pleasure.

From the time of Lady Alford's departure, every thing wore a different aspect at the Grove. Sir Edwin's family increased very fast. In six years he became the father of five children.—A large house, without often being enlivened with company, however elegantly furnished, will be found dull and gloomy.—A numerous family cannot be supported without great expence.—They were obliged, on account of their children, to add to their number of servants when they wanted to reduce them. The gardens and plantations went to ruin, because they could not afford to keep them up. Sir Edwin began to think seriously of retiring.

tiring into one of his own farms ; and only waited for some one to purchase the Grove, before he put his design into execution.

Valentine agreed to assist Sir Edwin and his sister in educating their children, in order to save the expences of sending them to a public school. The offer was gladly accepted; and in this instance Sir Edwin's limited income was of real benefit to his family, as they could not have found a more careful, or a more able preceptor, than their uncle. What rendered this task more easy to Mr. Woodley was his having received the presentation of a living from his friend, at only ten miles distance from the Grove, which had enabled him to
give

give his hand to Miss Grovenor, and placed him above dependence.

But, alas ! how vague and uncertain are the fairest prospects of mortal happiness !—How many lucky circumstances must concur to secure its continuance, even for a few fleeting years ! Sir Edwin Alford on a sudden became low spirited, unsocial, and discontented ;—fretful and out of humour, he would leave his Ellen to wander by herself, and after being absent several hours, return more gloomy than he went out. The source of his discontent was occasioned by his numerous family. He was puzzled how to provide for them ; and notwithstanding all his endeavours to subdue his pride, it was often severely wounded, when he recollected scenes of former splendor ;—and he
now

now sighed in secret for the loss of that wealth, which a few years before he saw wrested from him without a single regret. 'Tis true, he still resided in the noble mansion, once occupied by his father.—It had belonged to his family for many generations,—but it was not his own. He could not give it to his children,—he must resign it to any one that chose to purchase it; and therefore this beautiful, this once-loved domain, was become the most detestable spot on earth.—To leave it he was determined, for he found it impossible to live upon his income without making farther reductions in his family expences; and how to make that alteration, mortified and distressed him, —for he had already parted with his carriage.

Myrtle-

Myrtle-Grove was no longer the scene of festive hospitality. There remained the appearance of grandeur in the splendid furniture, but the reality was removed ; and the poor and scanty dinner which often appeared on those tables, once loaded with every luxurious rarity, was taken away, untouched by one who wanted delicacies to please and gratify his sickly appetite.

Lady Alford observed the alarming alteration in her husband, with meek and silent anguish. She was convinced that some secret grief preyed upon his spirits ; and trembled for the effect it might have upon his health. She once ventured to request being made acquainted with the cause ; but

was

was peremptorily, and rather unkindly commanded to make no enquiries, as it was not, nor would ever be in her power to remove his anxiety. This answer put a final stop to any farther solicitations; and she was as careful to conceal her uneasiness, as her husband had been to prevent a discovery of the source of his discontent. Whenever she wanted money for the necessary expences of her family, she dreaded asking a supply, as it generally threw an additional gloom over the brow of Sir Edwin. To no one did she venture to complain. To have told her husband's mother would have appeared as if she wanted to tax her for a greater share of her income. To her brother she could not tell her griefs, lest she should make him uneasy; and she

she knew he had already suffered many hours of sorrow on her account. She sometimes imagined, her present unhappiness was a punishment for her former disobedience ; and she determined to submit with fortitude to the trials with which she was surrounded.

Thus, submissive to the dispensations of a wise unerring providence, she yielded without murmuring to a thousand mortifying inconveniencies ; and, though honoured with a title, and living in a fine habitation, encountered more troubles, and worked harder for her young family, than many of the farmers wives who lived in the village. Her children were educated with tenderness, but had fewer indulgencies

gencies than thousands, whose bread depends on the labour of their parents; and it was often mentioned with surprise, how very meanly and plainly dressed the young gentlemen and ladies at the Grove always appeared.

CHAP.

C H A P. XXXIII.

ONE day, as Lady Alford was standing by a very fine India cabinet which was in her dressing room, and by which she had placed a little boy about four years old, whilst she was looking for some lace which had been given to her by her mother-in-law a few weeks before, the child, having taken out some of the drawers to play with, espied a string at the back of the cabinet, which he pulled
with

with all his little strength, and by so doing, drew out a piece of wood, which curiously and artfully concealed some false drawers that had never before been discovered by any one of the family. “Look here, dear Mama,” cried the fortunate little fellow, “what a great many pretty drawers I have found! do, pray look! here is one quite full of gold money! and another with shining things, like those on grandmama’s cap when she goes to the ball.” Lady Alford, whose attention had been wholly engrossed by her own employment, did not at first attend to the child’s joyful exclamation; but on hearing something fall upon the floor, she turned her head.—Astounded at what she saw, she hurried to the cabinet, and eagerly opened some of the drawers which still remained

shut, in which she likewise saw there was treasure concealed. Impatient to communicate this surprising discovery to Sir Edwin, she hastily, but with trembling hands, replaced the drawers, closed the cabinet, and went in search of her husband.

She found Sir Edwin sitting in a pensive attitude, by a small fire in his library, the shutters of which were closed to exclude the cheerful rays of the sun ; and the room appeared as gloomy as its discontented inhabitant. Lady Alford exclaimed gently on her entrance, “ Why will you, my dear Edwin, thus persist to indulge melancholy and reflection ? I am come with a determination to drive away the foul fiend. I will no longer be robbed of your loved society. You must quit
this

this dreary apartment, and go with me; our dear William has made the most fortunate discovery. I am sure it will both surprise and delight you; and will, I trust, dispel that melancholy and dejection which has of late deprived my nights of rest, and my days of peace. Sir Edwin was surprised and confused at this address, and more so by the unreserve with which Lady Alford acknowledged her distress on account of his melancholy, which she had never, since forbidden by him, ventured to mention. Eager however for an explanation, he immediately agreed to accompany her. He took her hand, and as he led her back to her dressing room, told her, neither time, nor any circumstance, however unpleasant, could for one moment deprive her of his affection; as he loved

her with a far more lively and tender passion than he had done even when he led her to the altar.

As soon as they entered the room, Lady Alford carefully locked the door, and opening the cabinet, took away the board which the child had so fortunately removed, and enquired of her husband if he had ever seen those drawers, or had heard either his father or mother mention them. He replied, he had never observed them though he had opened the cabinet many hundred times, and had frequently amused himself by looking it over, when a boy.

Ellen's heart exulted with joy.—
“Then open them now, my dear Edwin!—see and examine their contents.”

rents." He did so, and was almost rendered speechless with surprise. Of five drawers, long and deep, three were filled with broad pieces of gold; the other two contained a large quantity of the finest diamonds, curiously wrapped up in cotton. Lady Alford requested her husband to inform her how this cabinet came into his family. He replied it was given to his mother by an old Indian of some distinction, who, on hearing her admire it for its beauty and antiquity, requested her acceptance of it. He likewise added, that he recollected something of a long story which he at that time heard of the hardships and persecutions which the Indian, or some of his family, had sustained; and of their having been deposed, by the arts and machinations of their enemies. And

as he was much reduced from his former affluence at the time he gave the cabinet to his mother, he concluded he was unacquainted with the treasure it contained.

At the bottom of one of the drawers they found a paper, which contained the following words, written in English, and in very legible characters.

“ Stop, child of error, and before
 “ you venture to touch a treasure
 “ which may be dangerous to possess,
 “ correct your heart of its frailties, and
 “ correct with care whatever has been
 “ faulty in your conduct. If you have
 “ suffered adversity, learn from your
 “ past sorrows to bear prosperity with
 “ humble fortitude ; and never to
 “ despair

“despair in the moments of af-
“fliction.”

Sir Edwin was struck with surprise ;
—his heart felt reproved ;—and he
almost trembled, whilst the gentle
Lady Alford entreated him to pro-
ceed.

“ May the mortal, into whose hands
“ this cabinet shall fall, and whose
“ chance it shall one day be to dis-
“ cover these hidden treasures, be
“ poor, innocent, and virtuous !—
“ May his hand be never lifted up
“ against the life of an Indian !—and
“ may his soul be as free from guile,
“ as the souls of that persecuted race
“ originally were !—then it may prove
“ as great a blessing, as it has been a
“ curse to a whole guiltless family,
“ who

“ who were, all but one, barbarously
 “ murdered by European treachery,
 “ and the sordid desire of possessing
 “ wealth to which they had no
 “ right.”

“ If it falls into the hands of an
 “ European, may he make so gene-
 “ rous and so good an use of it, as in
 “ some degree to atone for the crimes
 “ of his guilty brethren,—who fought
 “ to obtain it by stratagem, cruelty,
 “ and murder ;—who could not be-
 “ lieve in the true God, the God of
 “ that great and pious king, from
 “ whose country they came to trample
 “ on all laws, human and divine,—
 “ whose avarice tempted them to
 “ brave the unseen dangers of a deep
 “ and stormy sea,—who fought not for
 “ honour, but for profit,—who robbed
 the

“ the innocent,—and enriched them-
 “ selves in the spoils of ruined and
 “ defenceless families.”

“ Happy was once the owner of
 “ this wealth, and possessed of a
 “ princely fortune, which was unjustly
 “ wrested from him. He likewise
 “ had other and more valuable trea-
 “ sures;—they were the treasures of
 “ his heart ! He had a wife, whom he
 “ tenderly loved;—he had sons who
 “ were the delight of his life, the so-
 “ lace of his cares;—for they were
 “ virtuous,—they were brave and ge-
 “ nerous,—they were obedient and
 “ guileless.—They died in fight of
 “ their aged father, defending his
 “ rights.—He buried them with his
 “ own hands,—and embalmed them
 “ with his tears as he wept over them

“ in the bitterness of anguish. He
 “ had a daughter, lovely and cheerful
 “ as the child of health;—her skin
 “ was black as jet,—her teeth rivalled
 “ in whiteness the snow upon the
 “ mountains,—her eyes sparkled with
 “ innocent cheerfulness,—she sung
 “ in the gaiety of inexperienced
 “ youth, the praises of an Indian
 “ Chief, who had fought and won
 “ her virgin heart, and who was, at
 “ the time of our distress, sent on a
 “ distant expedition against the ene-
 “ mies of his country.—The arrow
 “ which pierced his noble bosom, and
 “ summoned him to the land of spi-
 “ rits, was not so dreadful as the
 “ knowledge of our sufferings would
 “ have been to his soul.—Death spared
 “ him that misery!—My daughter!
 “ my Orra!—the darling of her mo-
 “ ther,—

“ther,—the delight of my old age,—
 “was torn from my arms, into which
 “she fled for security on the approach
 “of danger. The lawless,—the in-
 “human ravagers, tore her forcibly
 “from my embraces, and sold her to
 “slavery and dishonour. Merciless
 “invaders!—unfeeling conquerors!—
 “whose dreadful depredations spread
 “blood and terror through our
 “tribes. Had you only taken my
 “gold I would not have cursed you.
 “My wife!—my Fatima!—unable to
 “survive her children, and support the
 “dreadful idea of her daughter’s fate,
 “who died in slavery, fell a victim to
 “distress and misery. She left me,
 “as if alone in the world;—desolate
 “and solitary have I been since her
 “eyes were closed. From that mo-
 “ment I determined to conceal all that
 “re.

“ remained of my ruined fortune, in
 “ this cabinet. I will never dis-
 “ cover it to any one, lest it bring
 “ death and destruction upon others
 “ as it did upon me and mine. Here
 “ shall it remain, till discovered by ac-
 “ cident. May it then fall into the
 “ hands of the innocent child of want,
 “ —the benevolent,—the virtuous,—
 “ or the merciful!—then will it be pro-
 “ ductive of pleasure,—and perhaps
 “ the means of restoring happiness to
 “ a worthy or desponding heart.

“ Once more I warn thee, mortal,
 “ whoever thou art, into whose hands
 “ this wealth shall fall, use it not un-
 “ worthily!—Let it not introduce
 “ pride and luxury to your dwelling.
 “ —Let it not inspire your soul
 “ with the sordid desire of getting
 “ more; or tempt you to delude the
 “ blooming

“ blooming virgin from the serene
 “ and pleasant paths of virtue.—Let
 “ it not make you insensible to the
 “ miseries of your fellow creatures.—
 “ Let it not fill your mind with vain
 “ pride,—or with hopes that it will
 “ secure you from the trying ills of
 “ life.—On the contrary, consider it
 “ as a legacy bequeathed by a son of
 “ misery ; on whose grey hairs it
 “ brought sorrow, and spread deso-
 “ lation around his dwelling. Con-
 “ sider this awful truth, and let it
 “ make you humble, just, and
 “ generous. Above all, let it teach
 “ you to shew mercy to your fellow
 “ creatures, though they may be of a
 “ different faith or complexion from
 “ yourself.—Peace will then inhabit
 “ your bosom, and hope will support
 “ you in the hour of death.

“ Omiah.”

On

On reading this paper the eyes of Lady Alford were suffused with tears. “Gracious Heaven!” she exclaimed, “how wonderful are thy dealings with thy erring creatures! My dear Edwin, the history this paper contains is not more melancholy than instructive. I almost tremble at the idea of possessing wealth so awfully bequeathed.”

Sir Edwin was not much less affected.—He read over the paper several times, and examined the contents of the drawers as often, before he could convince himself that what he saw was real. But as the gold did not disappear at his touch, and as the diamonds continued to glitter before him, he was convinced of their reality. Clasp ing Ellen to his bosom, he congratulated

gratulated her on this fortunate discovery. He told her she had given him a fortune that had exceeded his most ambitious desires. "This treasure," he cried, "has fallen into such hands as the late owner wished, and therefore the contents of the paper, which we may venture to pronounce his will, are exactly fulfilled;—for thou art innocent,—thou art virtuous,—thou art the best, the most exemplary of women!—"Till you and your son discovered this hidden treasure, we were poor indeed;—for know, my dear Ellen, it was the narrowness of my income, which I found so inadequate to support the necessary expences of my family, that preyed upon my spirits. I trembled at the idea of seeing you exposed to greater difficulties, and my children to poverty; and I
had

had even formed the design of going abroad, for a few years, that I might be enabled to make a more ample provision for my Ellen and her lovely children."

"Cruel design!" cried Lady Alford, "unkind Edwin!—to suppose that whilst blessed with your love, a larger portion of wealth was necessary to my happiness. Since authorised to call you mine, Heaven is witness to the truth of my assertion, 'till I saw you discontented, I had not one wish ungratified. In respect to my children, my only desire has ever been to see them good and virtuous. The rest I leave to Providence. Are you still determined," she added, endeavouring to smile through her tears, "to leave
me,

me, and, like a thousand others, go in search of what you do not want?"

"No," replied her delighted husband, "that design is given up for ever.—Never! never will we part 'till death divides us!—Half of this treasure shall be settled upon my Ellen,—a fourth part of it upon the lucky little fellow by whom it was discovered. We shall now be able to add to the number of our necessary enjoyments, and yet have it amply in our power to relieve and provide for the worthy and unfortunate; and by so doing fulfil the desire of our unknown benefactor.

"These diamonds," he continued, "will raise an immense sum of money;—we will purchase Myrtle-Grove,

Grove,—we will provide for all we love,—we will, my sweet Ellen, endeavour to deserve the smiles of fortune;—we will often read the paper we have found, and by strictly observing its precepts, shall find it the most valuable part of our treasure.”

C H A P.

C H A P. XXXIV.

THE next day, Captain Heartly and his Lady, and Mr. and Mrs. Woodley, were invited to spend the day at Myrtle-Grove. An elegant dinner was provided upon the occasion. After the party had dined, Sir Edwin conducted his mother into his Lady's dressing-room, and requested the rest of the company to follow them. He there informed them of his good fortune, and of the lucky incident by which

which it was discovered. He read them the paper which had been found, adding, that every injunction it contained should be fulfilled to its utmost extent. Never were joy and surprise more visible than in the eyes of his surrounding friends, who, for some moments, were too much agitated, by what they saw and heard, to express what they felt. At length Captain Heartly exclaimed, with honest exultation, “Swords and pistols! this is a most lucky event!—let the will be obeyed!—keep its precepts in mind, and the deposit will wear well!—why, Madam,” addressing his Lady, “your son may be, for ought I know, the richest commoner in England, notwithstanding all that has been done to strip him; and what is far better, he can enjoy his wealth without having his

his conscience burthened with a single crime to obtain it."

Her Ladyship examined the cabinet with a kind of grateful transport, —blessed the venerable giver who had presented it to her,—and congratulated her son on being restored to that affluence which he had been brought up in expectation of possessing.

Mr. Woodley, who was the exact representative of his worthy father, partook, with his Matilda, in the general joy. Sir Edwin promised to purchase him the first good living that could be bought, in order to enable him to keep a carriage of his own. To this the young divine made no other reply than telling him, when he wanted an addition to
his

his income, he would remind him of his promise.

It is not to be doubted but that fortune, when given to those disposed to use it properly, and to employ it for the good of others, as well as their own private use and convenience, must be a real blessing.—Yet wealth, rank, or power, are by no means absolutely necessary to happiness.—Contentment is seated in the mind. It is not gold will buy that inestimable jewel;—neither is it confined to the superior stations of life. Indeed, the sons of grandeur are more, much more exposed to the mortifying trials of human nature, than those children of mediocrity, who are placed by providence in the humble vale of obscurity; who, having neither artificial
wants,

wants, nor ambition, escape the pangs of disappointment, and being free from the suggestions of pride, are preserved from the most painful, as well as the most tormenting inmates of the human mind.

Sir Edwin purchased Myrtle-Grove, and several of the estates, from his father's creditors. His extensive benevolence, his amiable disposition, and undeviating rectitude of conduct, made every one his friend. Easy of access, he never refused listening to the tale of misery ; and, happy to relieve distress, never refused his assistance to suffering worth.

Lady Alford, endued with every virtue that could adorn and add charms to female beauty, was a pattern
of

of excellence, conjugal sweetness, and fidelity. This happy and exemplary pair had the heartfelt satisfaction of living to see several of their children married into some of the noblest families of the Kingdom ; and by copying the example of their virtuous parents, adding consequence and dignity to rank, rendered the name of Alford as distinguished for virtue, as it had been in many of its descendants for honor, and a firm attachment to their King and Country.

T H E E N D.