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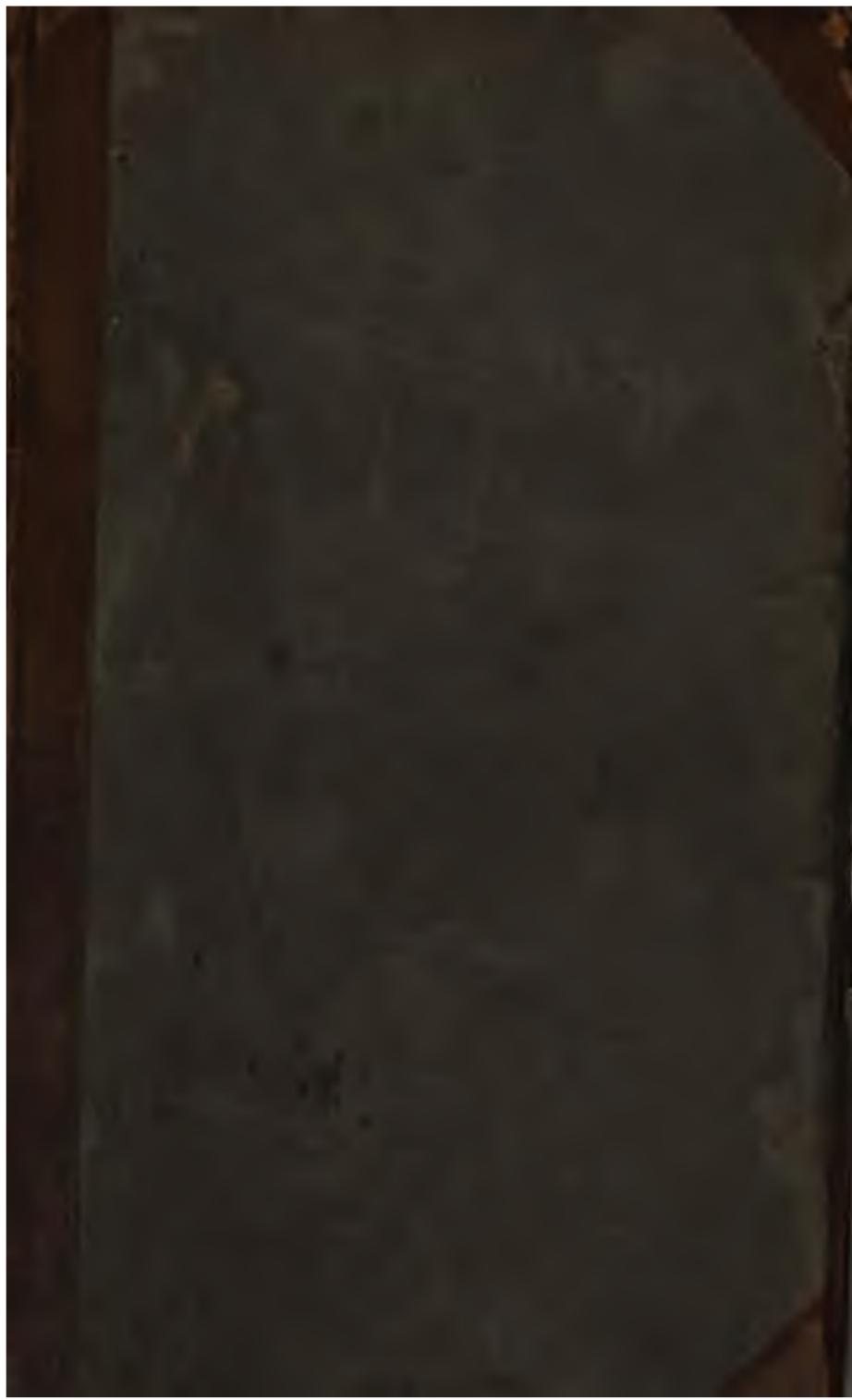
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STRIKING LIKENESSES;

OR,

THE VOTARIES OF FASHION.

A NOVEL.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

By LOUISA SIDNEY STANHOPE.

**Author of 'Montbrasil Abbey,' and 'The
Bandit's Bride.'**

If I lash vice in general fiction,
Is't I apply't, or self-conviction?

GAY.

V O L. IV.

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STRIKING LIKENESSES.

CHAP. I.

THE confusion at St. Antholine's, occasioned by the duel, had not subsided, when a fresh subject arose, in the disappearance of Lady Geraldine and Mr. Sunderland. The park, the garden, the shrubbery, were sought in vain; no vestige of the fugitives could be traced. The marquis was distracted—the marchioness raved—Lady Selina wept—Antonia, suspended between hope and fear, silently awaited the *dénouement*—Dauverne hastily paced the apartment; and the remainder of the assembled party looked as though they internally

ridiculed what politeness induced them externally to lament.

"Why do you stand here inactive?" exclaimed the marchioness; "why do you not pursue them? Let the horses be saddled, and every man take a different road. Degenerate girl! to forget her own dignity; to renounce the title of marchioness. If it had been with—" "Who?" questioned the marquis. The marchioness read displeasure in his countenance, and paused. Lady Selina raised her eyes, expressive of amazement and sorrow, and again reclined her head on the shoulder of her father. "They will come back," said Lord Westbrook, throwing his mask on the table: "'tis only a frolic, depend on it." "The reputation of a woman will not bear the test of a frolic," mournfully observed the marquis; "it is like a blot on the fair face of nature, it may be concealed, but it can never be erased."—

"Lord! I don't know," said the Duchess of Delaware; "peoples' memories are *short*, and the world is not *particular*." "If it was," replied the marquis, firmly, "many, who now sport in the zenith of fashion, would be despised; for morality, not rank—virtue, not riches, would be the criterion." "Indeed," rejoined her grace, contemptuously yawning; and turning to the viscount, continued in a low whisper—"Did you ever see such a picture? I vow I would give a hundred pounds to have them caricatured." He shrugged his shoulders with a well-counterfeited air of concern, and the duchess pursued: "It will do to talk of for these hundred years---well I declare I am prodigious glad: only look at the silly mama: 'pon honour, she thinks more of the forfeited title than she does of the runaway—and the renounced lover too! he stalks the room like a hero in romance; but he'll find

comfort," glancing significantly at Antonia. "Oh! my dear, dear friend," in a louder voice, "my thoughtless, cruel Geraldine! what a stroke have you aimed at the breast of sensibility!" The marquis turned on her a look of contempt. Dauverne continued racked with a thousand nameless sensations; fear was the most predominant—fear, lest his affianced bride should yet return, and defeat his new-created schemes of happiness.

"May it please you, my lord," said a servant, entering the room, and obsequiously bowing. "Proceed," exclaimed the marquis. "May it please you, my lord," and again followed a full stop. "For humanity's sake go on," said the marchioness; "of that we shall be better enabled to judge when the story is concluded." The servant bowed, and resumed—"At half past eleven o'clock, my lord marquis, one of her Grace the Duchess of

Delaware's grooms saw a lady and gentleman enter a post-chaise-and-four, which waited in a lane leading from the park, and then drive furiously away." The marchioness shrieked, and sank trembling on a chair. "Oh, the dolt!" exclaimed the duchess, "not to have given an alarm."—"Could you have had the barbarity to have defeated so exquisite a project?" whispered Bravenger. Her grace replied not, but her countenance, alone, beamed tenderness and compassion. But what pen can paint the rapture of Dauverne's soul? What language do justice to his feelings? Antonio was his own—Antonio, the sweet object of all his hopes, of all his anxious wishes, would now smile upon his love, would now reward his constancy. He sprang forward—he seized her hand—he saw no other being—joy beamed from his eyes—rapture animated his features. "Moment of ec-

stacy!" he articulated, "released from a galling bondage." He paused; for Antonia's countenance, from snow, flushed crimson—from crimson faded to its former tint. She trembled, she clung to the arm of Lady Selina, who starting gazed upon them. She alone had heard the exclamation—she alone could now trace the source of Dauverne's melancholy. The veil was lifted, and a thousand instances, before unthought of, recurred to memory—instances which served to confirm her suspicions, by placing the mutual affection of her friend and cousin beyond the shadow of a doubt. At this moment Dauverne quitted the room, to attend a summons from Sir Frederic Stanley; and Antonia, abashed and agitated, sought refuge in her own apartment.

"Geraldine gone! Geraldine left us! fled with the coxcomb Sunderland!" exclaimed the marquis, as on

the following morning he paced the library. "Strange perversity of taste! Unhappy girl! Nought but sorrow can result from such a union!" "Alas! alas!" articulated the marchioness, "cruel, unfeeling, disobedient creature! to take such a step without consulting me, or even hinting the intention... And yet," after a momentary pause, and her features brightened, "it might have been worse. Supposing, my love, like many young women of fashion, she had married into some untitled family; supposing she had disgraced us by running away with a *chaplain*, or—" "Caroline," sternly interrupted the marquis, "I could have pardoned her, had she run away with an honest man; but she has trusted her peace to a spendthrift and a gamester." "True," rejoined the distressed mother, "but he is honourable." "Thanks to his father," replied the marquis; "like many

others, he retains it in name, but drops it in actions." "Dear, how strange you talk! So you would not have cared, if she had ran away with such a man as your favourite Dr. Moreland."

"I should still have regretted the defeat of my project," answered the marquis, "though in her happiness I should have felt secure." "Well, but you know Selina remains."

The marquis looked at her with mingled amazement and contempt; he would have spoken, but the entrance of the Duchess of Delaware checked him; he bowed slightly, and hurried from the apartment. "What an unexpected occurrence is this!" said her grace, wishing, yet knowing not how, to offer condolence. "Unexpected certainly," replied the marchioness, "though if they loved each other, I see no very great cause for blame." "Loved each other!" repeated the duchess, with an incredulous smile.

" It must be a dreadful situation," pursued the marchioness, regardless of the remark, " to be attached to one man, and compelled to marry another. Poor thing ! if I had been so circumstanced I should have acted exactly the same." " Love," said the duchess, looking at the ring upon her third finger to conceal the risibility of her features, " is a strange passion." " It is indeed," replied the marchioness. " I am sure from my soul, I pity Dauverne : has your grace seen him ? I wonder where he is." " Oh, distracted, no doubt !" said the duchess. " Well, but my dear marchioness, have you any commands for the great world ? In an hour I'm off for London." " What, leave us so soon ?" questioned the marchioness. " Oh, yes !" replied her grace, with apparent regret: " when deprived of her society, how can I possibly exist in a place which every instant reminds me of my

"Sweet friend?" "I fear your grace's feelings are too acute for your peace," resumed the marchioness. "To be sure I cannot hold forth any thing to tempt you; I myself shall be expiring with the vapours in less than a week—doctors---long faces---wounded men---dissatisfied women—a desponding lover—a time-beatened building---and a whole family deranged, is the sum total of the catalogue. Heigh-ho! I wish you could take me with you."

"Take you: will you go?" "Oh! but the marquis." "Pshaw! when Lady Geraldine invited me to St. Antholine's, if I had said---Oh! but the duke. Come, my charming marchioness, show yourself at once a woman of spirit, and quit this detestable dungeon, this sink of pleasure." "Oh, fie, tempter! what forswear my allegiance, and desert my post!" "Pray," laughing, "hav'n't I done so before you?" "True, but---but---" "You

won't go then." "I can't." "Well, good bye!" And away tript this thoughtless member of a thoughtless community. When Sir Frederic Stanley, dispirited and repining at the unexpected rejection of Antonia, quitted the vicarage, he pursued the road to London, as the reader may recollect, for the purpose of taking a trip to India in search of that stranger to love---peace. But, fortunately for the baronet, though imagination may outstrip the winds, yet the fleetest horses require some hours to perform the journey of a hundred miles: and those hours, not only awakened reflection, but they curbed the head-strong passion of desponding love. Ere he had reached Shipston, he began to discover many charms which the world held out even for him; and ere he had reached Oxford, the once gay theatre of his studies, he acknowledged it was both pusillanimous and weak, to

shrink, like a timid girl, before sublunary difficulties, when nature and education had guarded man's lordly mind with the strength of fortitude and the boast of courage. On quitting his curricle at the Star inn, he accidentally met with two of his fellow collegians : the pleasure of meeting could not be followed by immediate separation, for Sir Frederic's disposition was too social to withstand the importunities of his friends. He passed the night at Oxford, talked of past times as the invigorating glass went round, and anecdote succeeded anecdote, till the juice of the grape effaced all painful remembrances. It was two in the morning ere the convivial trio separated ; and, when on his pillow, he dreamt---not thought, of Antonia. On the following morning he pursued his journey ; reached his lodgings in Bond-Street ; partook of a late dinner ; read the newspaper---threw it aside ;

half conned a new pamphlet---served it in the same manner ; commenced an air on his flute---fancied it out of tune, and left off in the middle ; and at length concluded his exploits by going to the opera ; yawned even when a Catalani warbled, and actually closed his eyes against the agile capers of the Des Hayess. A few days blunted his zest for aquatic excursions ; and though a whole fortnight effaced not the image of Antonia, yet so much was the impression weakened, that he could admit, nay, discover merit in lesser beauties.

Such was the state of affairs, when a letter from Dr. Mereland informed him of the Marquis of Allingthorn and his family having quitted Warwickshire. With them fled the necessity for absence, and in three days he again augmented the family circle at the vicarage. The sedentary employment of fishing, and the dull mo-

notony of a domestic life, fanned the expiring embers of passion, and recalled the primeval sources of imagined sorrow: again he fled, and again he conquered. He joined a party in an excursion to the Lakes, left all his cares among the flowery meads of Westmoreland, and returned to town primed for a new impression. Hearing of the intended masquerade at St. Antholine's, resolved, incog., to make one of the party;---intrusted his scheme to his old school-fellow Bravenger---through him gained an insight into the several characters---and the destined night, habited as an astrologer, made his *debut* amid the motley throng. As he passed down a close-embowered walk, he heard a voice exclaim---“ A thousand thanks, angelic girl, for this inestimable proof of confidence! Come, the chaise already waits, Cupid guides the reins, and ere our escape can possibly be

discovered, we shall be beyond the reach of pursuit. Charming Diana ! why so silent ?” Sir Frederic started. “ I was thinking,” replied the voice of Lady Geraldine, “ that is---heigh-ho ! perhaps I shall rue this step as long as I have being.” “ Sweet, incomprehensible, lovely, coward !” rejoined Sunderland ; “ how ill do these doubts requite my adoration !” “ Well, really,” with affected terror, “ I don’t think I can go ; it is such a step, Mr. Sunderland—I must positively resign it—indeed, nay, no persuasions, indeed I hav’n’t courage.” “ What stay, and by the cold phlegmatic Time be led a victim to the altar ! enable him to boast, that he has shackled her who holds the world in chains—her who subdues every heart save her stubborn lord’s ; and leave me, cruel Geraldine ! leave me to pine and die.” “ Poor Endymion !” affectedly drawled out her ladyship. “ Hear me, fair ty-

rant !” continued Sunderland; “ let pride perform what compassion will not: remember Dauverne adores Miss Forrester—remember, all his sighs, all his wishes, all his hopes of happiness, point to her as their object—remember, that indifference, neglect, aversion, will succeed the union of interest—that Lady Geraldine will live to be slighted, spurned, despised—” “ No, no, she will not,” interrupted Diana, proudly, “ for Lady Geraldine, believe me, possesses a spirit not easily subdued. Gently, gently, encroacher!” for he now regained her hand, and endeavoured to lead her forward. “ And so you really think my susceptible cousin loves the little Italian?” “ Loves her! by heaven, he idolizes, worships her; burns with a flame as ardent as that which consumes me. But we lose time, the carriage awaits. Come, sweet goddess, and by thy beauteous self I swear, a life of adoration

cannot repay the rapture of this moment!" Again with reluctance she drew back, but Sunderland was not to be foiled in his project; he vowed, he implored, he complimented:—Sir Frederic followed at a distance, nor rejoined the throng of gaiety, until he beheld these *votaries of fashion* drive furiously from Mr. Antholine's. Delighted at the prospect of his friend's happiness, yet unwilling to betray who he was, he joined Antonia, habited in her native garb of truth; and by the apparent science of his character, filled her ingenuous mind with amazement and doubt. It was chance which conducted him to the cloisters, at the moment our heroine was so grossly insulted by Lord Carberry. His blood boiled at the indignity---had she been a stranger, it was enough that she was a woman---that she was defenceless, to have claimed his interference: but to see the

being he had once tenderly loved, the respected possessor of his friend's affections, treated with barbarity and scorn; roused his impetuous passions, and filled his soul with fury. Both were alike unguarded---the terrified Antonia fled---the moment of contention was to be the moment of vengeance ---- reflection was banished---thought suspended. Sir Frederic hastened to the appointed spot in the park ; while the earl, fearful of interruption, fled to his holsters for weapons. Unseen he joined his antagonist ; each took their station ; each fired at the same instant. Stanley, as we have before particularized, was wounded in the shoulder; but Carberry spoke not---moved not---life appeared fled, and passion was disarmed. The horrid crime of murder darted athwart the brain of Sir Frederic, and conscience whispered *man is forbid to kill.* Worlds, had

he possessed them, he would have given, to have restored animation to the senseless object before him; his own blood flowed unheeded, for every thought was lost in the supposed departed Carberry.

While yet he stood dismayed, a heavy groan proclaimed that life still lingered in the wounded man; a second, far more piercing, succeeded--it fanned the flame of hope, for human aid might snatch the frail being from mortality. Now did he feel his weakness, for his limbs trembled as he repaired towards St. Antholine's; and, when he would have quickened his pace, a sickening spasm seized him, and compelled him to stop for breath. Carberry, expiring for want of assistance--Carberry, laden with sin, hurled by him into the awful presence of an incensed judge, again haunted, again impelled him forward. At that fearful moment the sound of approach-

ing voices met his ear; two figures, rendered indistinct from distance, paused at the extremity of the shrubbery: apprehensive of not being discovered, he again proceeded, and, as we have already related, joined Lady Selina and Antonia. "And did you really see them go?" questioned Dauverne, as his eyes, beaming rapture, rested on his friend. "Yes," replied Sir Frederic, who had summoned him to his chamber, merely to relate his knowledge of the elopement; "the barrier is removed; Lady Geraldine rewards the persevering *constancy* of Sunderland, and Miss Forrester will realize the blissful dreams of Dauverne." "Generous Stanley!" he exclaimed, rising to depart. "Faith, no!" rejoined the baronet, "believe me I have my schemes: if poor Carrberry does but recover, and my sweet Selina will but smile, I too shall bid fair for the land of happiness." "Hea-

"Even grant he may!" said Dauverne.
"From Selina there is nought to fear;
hourly would she inquire after Sir
Frederic, did not timidity check the
impulse."

"D---n this foolish doctor!" ex-
claimed the baronet, "to confine me
so unseasonably to my room." "Gent-
ly, gently, my good sir," said the sur-
geon, who had entered unobserved;
"remember warmth promotes fever,
and fever is of all things the most to
be dreaded." "How is Lord Car-
berry?" eagerly questioned Sir Fre-
deric. "I think better," replied
Mr. _____. "Is he out of danger?"
he inquired. "Not absolutely," an-
swered the surgeon, "though cer-
tainly there is much to hope. Lady
Selina informs me that a messenger
was dispatched to the Countess of
Carberry immediately after the *rencon-
tre*, consequently her ladyship may be
shortly expected; and from the ten-

derness of such a nurse, *much I trust may result.*" "If gratitude pervades the heart of man, *must result,*" exclaimed Dauverne, entering at once into the allusion of the surgeon.

Mr. _____ was well acquainted with the family history of the earl: he had been the intimate friend of the late Captain Powersly, and had witnessed the dawning virtues of Cecilia, ere her tender mind had experienced sorrow: he knew her heart---he knew her sufferings; he condemned the neglectful husband---he pitied the neglected wife. But Dauverne was impatient to receive from the rosy lips of Antonia the envied acknowledgment of love: every instant was an age, and, with a breast glowing with hope, with a countenance elated with the certainty of success, he nodded significantly to his friend, and hastened from the apartment. As he descended the stairs he beheld Antonia enter the library---

she was alone---the moment was propitious: he followed, he closed the door; his hand trembled as he took her's, while the vivid tints of her varying features betrayed her no less agitated. "The necessity for reserve is past," he exclaimed; "the cruel bonds of authority are broken, and the mind is no longer captive."

Antonia spoke not; her eyes sought the ground, and her cheeks glowed with internal emotion. "This moment, loveliest, most adored of human beings," pursued Dauverne, "completes my bliss, or plunges me into despair. Say, my Antonia, may I indulge Hope's pleasing visions? May I believe the accents which last night, like the harmony of heaven, breathed in my ravished ear?" A brighter blush mantled her cheeks; a struggling sigh burst forth from her bosom; but still was she silent---still did her eyes bend beneath his ardent gaze.

"Say," he continued, in a voice broken by the impassioned feelings of his soul, "will you, Antonia, who know the waywardness, the impetuous sensations of this heart," pressing yet closer to it the trembling hand he held, "mould it to your pleasure---will you accept it forever, ever make it all your own?"

It was the dearest gift the earth could offer. Superior to vain prudery and trifling reserve, Antonia acknowledged its power, and accepted its control:---her own was a pledge resigned; but while her lover, grateful for the treasure, poured forth his thanks, she remembered the Marquis of Allington-thorn, and trembled, lest his displeasure should o'ercloud the project for felicity. She remembered him her guardian---she knew not that in England the law is the refuge of the oppressed: she pictured the exercise of arbitrary power, and the possibility of

being compelled to return to St. Eustacia, to shroud her hopes of happiness with the impenetrable veil.

Dauverne saw the sadness which stole over her features, saw the tear which trembled in her eye. "Why this sorrow, my Antonia?" he inquired—"why this appearance of regret? Hide not a thought from me; tell me what envious circumstance saddens a moment like this?" "Should the marquis deny his concurrence, should he restore me to St. Eustacia," faltered Antonia, "too surely——" "Fear not," interrupting her, "the marquis loves his ward—the marquis will approve my choice. Yet should he reject my overtures he cannot separate us. In this happy land, power is circumscribed by justice; and the king, the puissant, the mighty ruler of thousands, dares not infringe the law. Secure in the possession of your heart, I can defy the malice of parties, the

machinations of individuals." Antonia smiled, the glow of delight succeeded fear, and when Dauverne left her to acquaint the marquis with his proposals, when exulting she sought the friendly arm of Lady Selina, not a being could the wide world produce more rich in peace, more secure in happiness. It was no longer a crime to confess her predilection; it was no longer a crime to receive his assiduities: she might now pass in review the fleeting moments which marked love's infant passion, when, at the vicarage, she listened to his praise, she acknowledged his merit: she might now proudly boast of his preference, might now gratefully return his affection.

Dauverne found the marquis in his study; with the caution of innate delicacy, he spoke of the power of love; he confessed, that though affianced to Lady Geraldine, his heart was enslav-

ed by another object—he dwelt on the struggles of honour. The marquis attentively surveyed him; but when he pronounced Antonia to be the cause of those struggles, the marquis started—scarce could he credit the reality of his senses: yet no angry frown, no discordant passion clouded his brow; his hands were clasped as if in thankfulness, and when emotion allowed utterance, he ejaculated—“Mysterious heaven!—wonderful revolution!—awful instance of retributive justice!” Dauverne grasped his hand: “Explain your words, my lord,” he exclaimed, “what am I to premise?” “Joy! joy!” articulated the marquis, as he leant trembling on the shoulder of his nephew. His countenance was pale—his features appeared convulsed—his heart seemed swoln with the internal conflicts of his soul. “Take her,” he resumed, after a momentary

pause, "but be careful of your trust—let not misfortune reach her—let not the breath of misery blast her hopes: treasure her as you would your own peace, your own honour. All-seeing Power!" raising his eyes in awful import, "in the sacred covenant of marriage let one Antonia find bliss!" "One Antonia," repeated the astonished Dauverne. "Yes, one Antonia," rejoined the marquis. "Her mother was alike lovely, was alike pure; she was happy until she married, and then the bitterness of affliction broke her heart." Shuddering, he resigned the supporting arm of Dauverne—he paced the chamber. "And when she died," he continued, suddenly stopping, "when nature's last slender ligament was breaking, she intrusted her orphan to my protection—she bid me watch over her with no common care—she bid me guard her against the influ-

ence of refined sensibility, against the dangerous insinuations of man." "Her mother then was widowed," interrupted Dauverne: "the tenderness of a father, my Antonia never knew." "I have called Antonia an orphan," said the marquis, mournfully—"Forrester was no more, e're her mother ceased to be. Carefully have I fulfilled my charge; carefully have I watched her happiness; and to your affection I now confide her, without one painful apprehension, without one discordant thought. And yet I wish to see her; I wish to learn from her own lips, that love, not interest, guides her actions.—Pardon me, Dauverne," for his cheeks flushed with momentary displeasure, "I speak of possibility, not probability. Miss Forrester, I am proud to say, is the counterpart of her mother; and that mother approached as near as weak mortality could the standard of

perfection. Your virtues I have not to learn, but virtues will not always ensure affection. Go, my young friend, send Antonia hither; from regard; not curiosity I would read her heart."

Antonia trembled as Dauverne conducted her to the study; for diffidence holds a strong prerogative o'er the female mind, and stamps her nameless graces on the features of modesty. In vain he sought to assure her, in vain he whispered confidence; for the first time, since she knew him, she dreaded to see her guardian, and sighed, yet knew not how to defer the interview.

"Fear not, Antonia," said the marquis, meeting her at the door, and perceiving her agitation, "'tis not a censor but a friend who claims your confidence; be seated and compose your spirits. Often have I sought to convince you that my actions were disin-

terested, my affection unbounded; believe me, and I call the eternal judge of our most secret thoughts to witness, that if on earth my soul can be sensible of pleasure, it is in the prospect of your happiness! May I believe what I have heard?—may I believe, that love, pure, lasting, unbiassed by ambition, sways the free-born mind?" "Yes, heaven knows it does," murmured Antonia, and then blushed at what she had articulated.

"Oh, happy, auspicious destiny!" resumed the marquis, gazing fondly on his trembling ward. "Dauverne has told me all; Dauverne has filled my breast with peace, my heart with gladness. Wonderful concatenation of events! — strange coincidence of circumstances! The child of Forrester—the orphan of the sainted Antonia, will yet become the Marchioness of Allington." He clasped her fondly to his bosom—he pressed his lips to her burn-

—could he tarnish his own fame?—could he say to the world—*in me behold a villain?*—could he bear the scorn of irony, the malice of derision? No, no, impossible! What then was to be done? Antonia must bear the imputation of guilt; Antonia must be wretched; her fair prospects of felicity blasted; her spotless character destroyed; shrinking she must hide her head, or bear the shafts of malignancy, hurled unpitying by the hand of envy. “Dreadful! dreadful!” he murmured, striking his clenched hand against his forehead. “Ungrateful, wretched girl! — barbarous, unfeeling man!” burst from the lips of the marchioness. “The whole house shall witness your infamy—Dauverne—Selina,” calling. “Forbear;” interrupted the marquis, starting with frantic eagerness and grasping her arm; “forbear, ^{your} mistaken woman, you know not what you say; Antonia is innocent, chaste as the angels.

in heaven. Antonia knows not guile." "Off, off," struggling; "I will have vengeance; the hypocrite shall be unmasked; the shameless mistress of your pleasure shall be defeated; I will no longer be that tame blind fool you have know me; I will expose your practices, my lord; the whole world shall judge the story; I will," and she burst into tears, "I will have a sepe-rate maintenance; I will no longr be hated, scorned, despised. Let me go, the air is poisoned; let me go, or my shrieks ——" "Stay, madam," inter-rupting her, "I command you to stay; qualify this unlicensed rage, this un-becoming folly, and when you have learnt to be rational, I may perhaps ob-tian attention." "*Rational,*" with a contemptuous smile, "pardon me, my most *rational* lord, for so abruptly in-terrupting the *rational* intercourse of two *rational* souls."

Pale, trembling, Antonia leant against a sofa, her eyes fixed on the trailer, and the powers of exertion suspended. "Caroline, if you have mercy, spare me," implored the marquis. "Antonia merits your pity, your tenderness; she is injured, by me she is injured, though she knows not to what extent. From the moment of existence she was licensed to curse me, for e're she awakened to the light of Heaven the blow was aimed. She is not what she would seem—she is—" he paused, for a convulsive sob checked the concluding sentence. Antonia sprung forward—she took his hand—she could not speak, but she looked imploringly in his face. "Proceed," said the marchioness, with a smile of incredulity. "Gracious Father!" ejaculated the marquis, "how can I act?—what can I say?" "Nay, say what you please my lord," she haughtily

replied: "Miss Forrester and myself pass not another night under the same roof. I am no longer to be deceived; my eyes are opened, and either your ward or your wife must be resigned."

"Nature, nature shall be no longer violated," exclaimed the marquis in horrid accents: "a father's arms shall shield his child. Hear me, Caroline, when in the awful presence of my Maker I proclaim Antonia to be my daughter."

The marchioness uttered an exclamation of horror and amazement.—"Your daughter!" she repeated, and sunk trembling on a sofa.

The marquis heeded her not; his whole thoughts, whole attention, was directed towards his now acknowledged child: her hands were clasped together—her eyes fixed, and wildly resting on vacancy: sobs swelled her bosom, yet tears brought not relief; a suffocating sensation seemed to assail her,

and powerless, cold as marble statuary,
she sunk into his arms.

"Antonia—my child—my darling,
suffering child!" exclaimed the nearly
distracted marquis, "speak to me;
call me father; say you do not curse
me. Not one word—not one look.
Ah, merciful heaven, spare the senses
of this dear, this injured girl! Fly,
fly, Caroline, and procure assistance—
save from impending fate this sweet
relic of a murdered saint!—save my
child, and I will kneel to bless you!"
In agony he folded her to his bosom;
he pressed her hands in his—they were
cold and lifeless; he kissed her pale
lips; he strained her to his beating
heart. "Antonia! Antonia!" he
murmured, as tears of anguish streamed
down his cheeks. He saw not
Dauverne or Selina—he saw not the
marchioness weeping at his side—he
saw none other than Antonia expiring
—he thought of none other than An-

tonia dead. Suddenly she started, she struggled, and several heavy sighs announced the recovery of her senses from a temporary annihilation.

The sobs and agitation of the marquis recalled to memory the scene so lately retraced: "My father!" she ejaculated, shrinking from his arms and dropping on her knees—"ah, God! my father!" The marquis would have raised her, but still she retained her station, and in broken accents articulated—"Bless me! my father, bless me!" Again the marquis strained her to his bosom; again he would have acknowledged her his daughter, but his feelings too highly wrought, refused articulation, and all was lost in a burst of tears. Dauverne, scarce crediting what he heard, gazed on Antonia with an emotion that defies description; while Selina, hailing at once the tender kindred of sister, sprung to partake the embraces of the

same parent. "The mystery is revealed," after an interesting pause, exclaimed the marquis, gazing with grateful fervour on the unity of his offspring—"the secret of so many, many years, is disclosed, and my heart already feels lightened. Oh, dreadful anticipation of evil! fearful hours of supine inanity! when each succeeding moment teemed with danger, each trivial circumstance threatened discovery. But it is past; Selina in the friend of her bosom receives a sister, and for you, Dauverne," extending the hand of the blushing Antonia, "take her not from a guardian—but from a father; take her as a dear invaluable legacy, and be in one my son and nephew." "As the first, best gift bounteous heaven can bestow, as the source of comfort, as the soul's soul of joy, I receive her," exclaimed the enraptured Dauverne, snatching her hand and eagerly pressing it to his

lips. "Oh, Antonia!" for she smiled sweetly upon her lover, "poor must be the adoration of my whole life to convey my sense of gratitude!" "But her mother!" said the marchioness, starting from a reverie, "Antonia is younger than Selina," and again the embers of jealousy were fanned. "True," replied the marquis. "From you, Caroline, I confess, I have much to hope; pardon must be extended ere I can unfold the tale: but not one reflection, not one thought, must sully the chastity of a departed angel. Her only fault was love—her greatest affliction, credulity; never did her virtue slumber—never, for a moment, did she forget the dignity of her sex." "And yet she became a mother," resumed the marchioness, "and a man already married was the father of her child." "To exculpate the character of one parent, the other's must be blackened," rejoined the marquis, af-

ter a painful pause. " But be it so, Antonia's hovering spirit demands reparation, and it shall receive it. She thought me ingenuous—she found me designing ; she thought me pure as the hosts of heaven---she found me dark as the fiends of hell ; she thought me honourable—she found me a—villain."

He started from his chair ; his whole form trembled with agitation, and with quick and heavy strides he paced the apartment ; while the marchioness, with an hysterick sob, repeated *villain*, and again hid her face in her hands. " Yes," he wildly continued, " a deceitful, vile, infamous, damned villain—a villain, who stole the happiness, crept into her heart, rifled the precious pledge of her chastity, and bent her, ere nineteen summers had matured her charms, to the deep, cold grave. And yet she breathed not a reproachful murmur, she uttered not a complaining sigh ; she even blessed me—she

even bid me hope for pardon—she even bid me seek for peace. Yes, yes, Antonia, well do I remember the scene; well do I remember the pale, cold relic of departed beauty.. They thought me mad because I cursed the light—they thought me mad,” and his eyes darted frenzy—“ No, no, no, I was not mad—I am not mad—for to be mad is to be happy.”

Long was it ere his distraction yielded to the force of argument, or the tenderness of endearment. Antonia clung to his bosom; the marchioness hung over him; Selina knelt at his feet: the paroxism subsided to a state bordering on insensibility, and for many minutes he lay exhausted and powerless. At length feebly rising, and extending his hand to the marchioness—“ Caroline,” he said, “ it is a string which will not bear vibration; the recollection harrows and renders me deaf to reason; yet of this be as-

sured, there no longer exists a rival in my affections—Antonia unconscious injured you, exert the powers of mercy and love her child."

The marchioness hesitated. "My child," firmly rejoined the marquis. She now took from him the hand of the trembling girl and kissed her burning cheek. "Yet ere we part," he continued, "promise me, all alike, promise me the discovery of this day shall extend no further. Antonia must retain the name of Forrester—Antonia, in the eyes of the world must alone be known as my ward." "Must I restrain the feelings of my heart?—may I not call her sister?" questioned the disappointed Selina. "No," answered her father, "you must feel but not call her sister:—I must feel but not call her daughter. My character demands the deception; my character would be blasted, was the real unvarnished truth to be divulged."

"Soon," exclaimed her lover, gazing tenderly on her, "my Antoina will bear the name of her father—soon shall we gratefully hail her a Dauverne." A smile of inexpressible sweetness chased the cast of sadness from her features, and every discordant thought yielded to internal pleasure. But the marchioness was not satisfied; she wished to hear more of this unknown rival; she wished to make a thousand inquiries relative to her situation, her appearance, her manners; she wished to hear, how and when he had first beheld her, and under what circumstance, under what name, he had stolen into her confidence; she wished to hear the tale related, but delicacy was imimical to the request; she dreaded to see him again relapse into frenzy; she dreaded to convey imagination back to the scene of past sorrows; but though she remained silent, her countenance indicated doubt and uneasiness; her

countenance betrayed the strong struggle between curiosity and tenderness. The marquis saw it, he read her thoughts—"Caroline," he exclaimed, "you would dive into my soul; you would read its deepest sorrows." "Yes, my love," interrupting him, "I would indeed read—I would indeed share them." "A few days and all shall be divulged," rejoined the marquis; "a few days, and to the perusal of her daughter, I will entrust Antonia's memoirs. The packet has long been written—it is sealed and directed to Miss Forrester. In the hours of melancholy I have penned it, with the sole view of vindicating the fame of departed excellence; and though that vindication must cast an indelible stain upon my honour, yet in the tenderness of Antonia's heart I rested confident, that pity would not be withheld, when in her contrite father, death should have silenced the powers to plead. In

every action, in every word, in every look, I traced the same spirit which animated the mortal form of her angelic mother—I saw Antonia, long since dead, revived, moving, breathing in her innocent child. Judge then the state of my feelings, when that injured unconscious child wrung my heart by diving into withheld confidence—when on her knees she tore open the still bleeding wounds of memory by asking for her mother—when on the silent grave she wept over her sacred dust, and blessed her father though stigmatized by the name of villain. Oh, agonizing where the feelings of that moment! nature struggled within me—nature urged the discovery, when powerless, senseless, I sustained her in my arms; when, in imagination, the grave resigned the rich treasure of her beauteous parent.” “Was she so very lovely,” fearfully questioned the mar-

chioness. "Look at Antonia, Caroline, and you behold her."

The marchioness sighed — Lady Selina pitied her mother, and timely changed the discourse by speaking of Lady Geraldine. Dauverne recapitulated the conversation he had held with Sir Frederic Stanley; and the route of the fugitives no longer admitted the shadow of a doubt. "Heaven grant they may be happy!" exclaimed the anxious father. "I see no cause for fear," remarked the marchioness, "Geraldine is very good-natured, and Sunderland I am sure is very subservient." Lady Selina shook her head. "But may not the death of subservience be the birth of tyranny?" inquired the marquis. "Geraldine, self-willed and unbending, will not submit to control; and Sunderland, a true follower of the new school, feels too much his own consequence to resign

man's boasted prerogative. I fear, if not aversion indifference will succeed."

" Nay, do not anticipate evils," said the marchioness; " I prophesy they will make an accommodating contented couple ; and I am sure, my love, if we look around, that is more than always results from the trammels of Hymen."

Antonia spoke not; Dauverne was also silent; internally they prayed for her happiness, though, with secret, heartfelt joy, they blessed the fiat, which in the form of Sunderland had removed the obstacle—had given them to each other. In the evening the Countess of Carberry arrived at St. Antholine's. Immediately on the receipt of the letter, informing her of the *rencontre*, and the danger of the earl, she quitted the Priory, and with the most unabating expedition prosecuted the journey. Every idea of his unkindness, every idea but of his danger was forgotten; she remembered only

the once tender, once indulgent lover ;
she remembered only the chosen of her
heart, the husband of her affections ;
she saw him snatched from the world,
she saw the thread of existence se-
vered.—

“Cut off even in the blossom of his sin,
No reck’ning made ! but sent to his account
With all his imperfections on his head.”

“Ah ! dreadful ! dreadful !” she sighed, as imagination outstripped the rapidity of four horses, and conveyed her into the awful presence of departing nature. Again her father, again her mother died ; again the wounds of memory were lacerated—again vanished the slender relic of that bankrupt, peace. But what was the loss of father, what was the loss of mother, compared to the present ? Her father lived and died in honour—her mother lived and died in innocence—her husband lived and died in profligacy. No apprehensions, no cares for her parents,

extended beyond the confines of this world ; but for her husband hope trembled---sickened---died. "Oh ! God !" and again her clasped hands and streaming eyes were raised to heaven, " let the prayers of his wretched wife ascend to the throne of thy mercy ! let them efface the fearful record of his sins. How is the earl ? How is my unfortunate Carberry ?" she inquired, as she sprang from the carriage into the arms of Lady Selina. " We hope better," replied her friend : " the ball this morning was extracted, and if fever can be prevented there is little to fear."

How soothing, how unexpected was this answer ! It was like the shouts of reprieve to the ear of the condemned ; it was like the bliss of certainty effacing suspense and sorrow ; it was like the delightful calm which succeeds a boisterous tempest ; it was like the oil of mercy descending on the

broken heart. The countess could not speak her thanks; tears of joy stole down her cheek, and sobs of gratitude swelled her bosom. "Fie! fie! Cecilia," exclaimed Lady Selina, leading her into the house; "surely my information merits a different greeting: if a tale of sorrow claims the drops of sympathy, surely a tale of joy demands a smile." "My heart is so full," murmured Lady Carberry, and again she paused, and again her head sunk on the shoulder of her friend. "Well, I believe time is a better specific than all my reasoning," resumed Lady Selina, for her own eyes had caught the infection. "'Tis an old-fashioned remedy to be sure," she continued, with an effort at cheerfulness, "but certainly preferable to philosophy. Come, Cecilia, now I must announce your arrival; for if I defer the intelligence, Antonia will quarrel with me for keeping you so long to myself."

The earl, as Lady Selina had said, was certainly considered better, though still many dangerous symptoms prevailed, and threatened at times to defeat the efforts of skill. The pain under which he laboured appeared excruciating; and the languor and debility which always succeeded the paroxysms, were nearly as alarming. But though so often wreathing under the pressure of bodily anguish, yet his senses never wandered; the horror of delirium seized not his brain; he was cool, collected, submissive. Sometimes, in accents of remorse, he spoke of the countess; sometimes, when Lady Selina, led by the hand of pity, approached his couch, he would breathe a sigh of regret for the past conduct which excluded him the comfort of her attendance. What then were his feelings when he saw her approach; when he saw the forgiving being he had injured, firm in fortitude, watch over

him; support his aching head upon her bosom, sooth him in the accents of tenderness, administer to his wants, share his cares, enlarge his comforts ! Fashion had not banished the sweet impulse, gratitude : his heart, though volatile, was not really depraved : the prevalence of example, and the force of habit, had led him away from the paths of rectitude : but the powers of virtue are unbounded, and the so long abandoned, the so long neglected Cecilia, felt, thought with fervent rapture she might yet be happy.

"Well, but, my dear Sir," exclaimed Sir Frederic, as Mr. _____ rose to conclude his visit, "when may I be absolved from this severe penance ? 'Pon my soul, it is a most tantalizing, cruel situation ! I would rather be in the mites of Danmora than feel the sun and not see his rays." "A little patience, a little temperance, and a little moderation, will soon unloose the

bars," replied the surgeon, smiling. "But don't you know, my good Sir, that too much light will confound the senses, as much as too much darkness will condense them?" "Patience, temperance, and moderation," repeated Dauverne, glancing good-humouredly at his friend: "I think those are qualities in which we do not all alike excel." "True," rejoined the surgeon, "but necessity must sometimes triumph over inclination." "Ah! but nature will prevail," exclaimed Sir Frederic, as Mr. _____ quitted the apartment; "and by heavens if the restriction is not presently withdrawn, the spark of mutiny will blazon forth, and upset the citadel." "No, no," said Dauverne, laughing, "there is a little goddess reigning over that said citadel, who in a moment can reduce it to submission." "Well, but will Miss Forrester, will my sweet Selina, take compassion, and visit the poor caged devil?" questioned

Sir Frederic ; " will they condescend to visit one who will most duly appreciate the honour ? " " Selina is very timid, very retiring," replied Dauverne, " though in spite of all her blushes, I do think a little persuasion will draw her here this evening." " Then for mercy's sake enforce it," eagerly resumed the baronet : " think of the torturing perplexity of doubt ; think of your own Antonia, and learn compassion." " You are so impetuous, and so changeable, my dear Stanley, that I am actually afraid to recommend." " Nay," said Sir Frederic, exultingly, " a recommendation is unnecessary : thanks to Lord Carberry for the possession of an invaluable secret." " But will you always retain the same opinion ? " again questioned Dauverne : " will you always consider that said secret invaluable ? Will you always be alike grateful ? In short, will you shut your eyes against the al-

lurements of beauty? And——” “Yes,” interrupted Sir Frederic, “in all but Selina.” “And,” again resumed Dauverne, extending his hand, “will you be as exemplary in matrimony as you are in friendship?” “I won’t take my own conduct as a standard in any thing,” he replied; “your’s shall be the model, mine the imitation.” Dauverne smiled, while his friend continued—“I will be tender, indulgent, affectionate, for I feel that in promoting her happiness I shall ensure my own. Her peace shall be alike sacred; the deposit is surely equal; for if the wife is enjoined obedience, the husband is bound to honour.” “Selina must be happy,” exclaimed Dauverne—“with such sentiments, the powers to bless are unbounded.”

The following morning Antonia receiving a letter from the Vicarage: the subject was sad, for it announced the death of Mary, Mrs. Moreland

had witnessed the awful scene, and described it with pathetic fervour. She dwelt on each lingering instant of repentance, on each pious supplication for mercy—she dwelt on the tears, the agitation, of the Magdalene; when, to the eager solicitations of her friends, she pronounced her seducer to be the vile, the unprincipled, the insinuating Sunderland. “Sunderland!” repeated Antonia, as the letter dropped from her hand. “Ah! heaven! the husband of Lady Geraldine, the destroyer of poor Mary!” Lady Selina heard the exclamation, was intrusted with the secret, and together they wept at this new “feather which graced the cap of seduction.”

“The unfortunate Mary is no more,” wrote Mrs. Moreland; “a premature delivery, brought on by remorse and sorrow, has opened the cold grave ere half her days were numbered. Her deep humility, her pious de-

votion, her fortitude, her resignation; in bearing unmurmuring the most excruciating agony, evinced to the world, and to her forgiving father, that she was hastening to that abode. "Whither the poor, the prisoner, and the mourner, fly for relief; and lay their burdens down." 'Never, never,' she would exclaim, in reply to my most soothing arguments, 'can the charm of innocence return; never can my heart lose its deep sense of guilt, or picture happiness. No human benevolence can erase the degradation; no parental affection, no parental forgiveness, chase from my perturbed bosom the pang of despair. Ah, no! the earth's deep surface can alone hide the blush of shame; can alone yield a resting place to repentant guilt.' Gradual has been her decline, slow but sure the fever which preyed upon her vitals: she hailed the harbinger of death; she felt its approach; she felt that the little

innocent publisher of her shame would never partake the light of existence—she felt that the endearments of infancy, the kiss of filial gratitude, would never sooth her to peace, would never awaken her to gladness. True was the dire prognostic! She heard not the rapturous sound to a mother's heart; she heard not the piercing cry of her babe. Alas! no: it had already paid to the transgression of its parent the forfeiture of existence. Mary heard the sobs of her father, turned her eyes upon him, motioned her lips as though she would have spoken, and died. Deep were the sufferings of William: he saw the pride of his age, the comfort of his heart, nipped in the glow of youth, the bloom of beauty. Had the hand of heaven awarded the blow, had disease severed the thread of existence, he could unrepiningly have bowed to the decision; but it was a villain who had rifled the sweets—a villain who

had doomed the slender span of her parent's life to sorrow; had doomed the memory of a beloved child to disgrace. Ah! fatal instance of refined sensibility—fatal instance of the *indulgence of custom*, and the *license of education*! Man, born to be the guard, the protector, of weak, timid, sensitive woman, steals her guileless heart, leads her blindfolded to the brink of destruction, and triumphs as he hurls her to its base. Unhappy sex! the slaves of tenderness, the victims of credulity. How many thousands live to proclaim, that wretchedness treads upon the heels of infamy, and marks her her eternal sacrifice! How many thousands drag through a life of misery! How many thousands die in penury and woe, because they have renounced the guidance of virtue, and yielded to the allurements of seduction! But alas! here ends not the sorrow; calamity extends beyond the

hapless victim, and the dissipated, the unprincipled, the detestable libertine, shines in the circles of gaiety, is caressed, courted by society; though through him the parental heart is bleeding—through him the dignity of virtue blasted—through him the pride of innocence disgraced!—Morality fearfully shudders at the strides of dissipation; morality fearfully shudders at the practices of this enlightened century, which canels at the shrine of fashion the enjoined laws of heaven—which encourages, promotes vice, by admitting, receiving into society those who through the crime of adultery have obtained increased rank—those who have sacrificed husbands, children, to criminal passion—those who have dropped the veil of prudence, the safe-guard of virtue, have exchanged a life of honour for a life of lawful prostitution. Mary lies buried by the side of her mother,” concluded Mrs.

Moreland; "and a plain white rail denotes the dust which there lies slumbering."

Infamous, unprincipled Sunderland," exclaimed Lady Selina, "what a prospect for Geraldine! At the moment he poured the tale of pretended passion in her ear, he knew that an unhappy girl, who had too fatally listened to his protestations, labouring beneath the pangs of despair, the prey of unavailing remorse, bore the unconscious burden of silent living witness of disgrace. And yet, 'tis a glow of indignation passed over her countenance, "that same man in support of his honour, slightly unadverted on at a gaming-table, will draw a trigger, will fight himself into repute. Strange force of modern education! strange privilege of modern custom!"

The necessity for a longer continuance at St. Antholine's was now fled; the marchioness complained of its so-

litude ; the marquis silently listened to her murmurs :—it was cold, it was comfortless, it was dreary : every instant reminded her of her dear friends, and mocked her with the recollection of past pleasure. The charming Duchess of Delaware, by her easy manners and refined vivacity, had rendered it *bareable*; but now that she was gone, and with her so many choice spirits, it was become a perfect dungeon, a perfect antidote to gaiety. When the wind blew it was magnified into a hurricane, and her delicate nerves were unhinged with affected tripidation ; when the sun shone, it was so faint and so watery, that she trembled with all the symptoms of an ague ; the trees cast so profound a gloom, that it bore the appearance of a mausoleum rather than a human habitation ; and the hollow sound of the sea was like the dismal roar of wild beasts.

Lady Selina smiled at her mother's

complaints—she was happy, for Sir Frederic had augmented their circle below.

Antonia much wondered at the marchioness—she thought it a Paradise, for Dauverne rambled with her through its recesses. In the hope of returning to her favourite haunts, and secure in the certainty of her rival's dissolution, the marchioness had most graciously extended her pardon to her lord; and though she condescended to acknowledge Miss Forrester as his daughter, yet the name of her dead parent never passed her lips, fully believing, notwithstanding his solemn assertions, that the child of illicit love could not be born in the world, without branding with indelible disgrace the name of its mother: his feelings consequently were spared the pain of interrogatories, though the memory of the departed Antonia was internally

stamped with frailty; not to say prostitution.

Lord Carberry slowly continued to recover: the variable countess never quitted his side; no allurements, no intreaties, could draw her from her station: he appeared fully sensible of her attachment, fully grateful for her assiduity; while she enjoyed the distinguished pleasure of a benevolent heart; the gratification of returning good for evil...of returning slight with tenderness...neglect with attention. The sorrows of her past life were forgotten in her hopes of the future; no inauspicious fears darkened the prospect; all was established on the firm basis of gratitude; and with esteem, with thankful pleasure, she looked up on Sir Frederic Stanley as her first, her best friend: but for him the same thoughtless career would have been pursued, the same maddening folly.

continued--but for him the privilege to think would have been neglected, the force of reason despised--but for him Carberry had still been cruel, heedless, and unkind; but for him remorse had never been awakened, or the promises of reparation produced.

Strange inconsistency of human foresight! what had threatened as the heaviest affliction promised to prove the dearest blessing, promised to compensate for the past agonies of suspense, for the past moments of despair. Such are the wonder-working ways of heaven! such the awful import of its mysteries! Man from a dungeon's depth may be raised to bliss; man from a throne's exaltation may be hurled to penury!

In consequence of the danger which still threatened a removal, the marquis and his family's intended return to the Grange was necessarily post-

poned : hospitality forbid their quitting St. Antholine's while the earl continued to linger ; and the marchioness, with the most restless impatience, awaited the permission of the surgeon.

CHAP. III.

ERE the surgeon had pronounced the gladsome intelligence that the Earl of Carberry might be removed without danger, Lady Selina had left Sir Frederic Stanley nothing to fear; the secret once so artlessly revealed had been again repeated; and the baronet, divested of every doubt, thought not of Mahala—envied not Dauverne. His once casual impression was magnified into a lasting flame; he had *studied well her character and disposition*, had weighed all in the balance of inclination, and found her necessary to his peace: and now, with his usual warmth of disposition, anticipated the day which was to crown his hopes and close his liberty. Selina smiled upon

the ardour of her lover, while the marquis with thankful gratitude witnessed the happy prospect of two of his children—he thought of the third, and shuddered; yet transient was the sensation, for he remembered, that but for the step Lady Geraldine had taken, his last-born, his newly-acknowledged, his tender Antonia, had been a prey to sorrow, had been, like her mother, a child of calamity; and Dauerne, his nephew, whom he loved almost as his son, had been sacrificed to a false principle of honour, had doomed his days to sadness and regret.

Nearly a fortnight had elapsed since the evening of the masquerade, and no accounts had yet been received of the fugitives. The marchioness, vapoured to death, was more than ever dissatisfied with St. Antholine's, found out a thousand new miseries, and eternally vented her disapprobation in complaints and murmurs: she concluded herself

the most unfortunate of women, and vehemently protested she would rather go a pilgrim to Mecca, than vegetate six months in such a dungeon. Lord Garberry, carefully attended, carefully soothed, and carefully watched by his amiable Geoilia, was now permitted to quit his apartment. From his strong sense of gratitude for her attentions, the most pleasing conclusions might be entertained; and the morning appointed for his removal to the Priory was to emancipate the marchioness from the horrors of solitude, or rather, was to exchange the Gothic irregularity of St. Antholine's for the more modern elegance of the Grange: there, in compliance with the wishes of Dauverne and Sir Frederic Stanley, Doctor Moreland was to tie a double knot; and from thence the whole party were to proceed to St. James's Square, where, the ensuing winter, the lovely brides were to be initiated into the

mysteries of the *haut ton*. Neither anticipated pleasure from this arrangement; they would rather have shrunk into domestic retirement, into that sphere they were so well calculated to adorn, than mingle in a circle they could not but despise;—a circle who hourly exchanged *propriety* for *fashion*—*comfort* for *notoriety*; but the Marquis of Allingthorn judged it necessary; their rank in life required some sacrifices to appearance, and their's was the province to submit.

The evening previous to their quitting St. Antholine's, Antonia and the marquis visited the grave of her mother; no longer did the wildness of despair flash from his eyes—no longer did the bitter sob of agony swell his bosom: they had given place to the deep gloom of melancholy, to the settled unbending calm of resignation. He started not at the shriek of the screech-owl—he shrunk not at the

ideal phantoms of his own creation—
he passed through the cypress grove—
he paused at the gate of the church-
yard, because his companion, trem-
bling and dismayed, clung to his sup-
porting arm: “Fear not, my child!”
he exclaimed; “tenderly loved off-
spring of my Antonia, fear not! We
approach a spot sacred from the dust—
it covers—a spot impressive but not
appalling. The hovering spirit of
sainted excellence smiles upon us—
smiles upon the virtues of her child—
smiles upon the sacrifice mistaken
honour has made to nature: for, now—
the affections of a father may not be
disguised; the warm unabating off-
spring of paternal love withheld—I
may gaze upon my beloved daughter
without rousing suspicion, without
awakening the insidious flame of jea-
lousy... The tenderness of Dauerne
will repay her for all the pangs my re-
serve has occasioned—will ensure her

the blessings of peace: and when this mortal scene shall have closed upon me; when memory shall have lost its pangs, and affliction its despair, Forrester shall have given a daughter to perpetrate the name of Allingthorn."

"Ah! there is the unrevealed mystery," articulated Antonia, as a transient tinge suffused her features: "my mother's fame requires a disclosure of the occurrences of former years."

"In your ear she shall have it," rejoined the marquis. "And the marchioness?" questioned Antonia.

"Never," he firmly replied. His daughter started. "Can I say," mournfully pursued the marquis, "you, Caroline, was the wife of interest—Antonia the wife of love?—Can I say, your affection was my bane; my antidote to peace—her's the sole soother of sorrow, the expeller of woe?—Can I say, but for you the grave had not closed upon felicity, neither had the

pang of repentance wrung my soul?—Can I say, when with the throes of anguish you gave to my affection a second daughter, you, and that daughter—you, and the first born of your love were alike forgotten, were alike lost in the ungoverned violence of a passion which mocked the curb of reason, and the incitements of honour? No, no! I can acknowledge myself a villain—but I cannot humble her pride—I cannot mortify her vanity—I cannot aim this finishing stroke to her peace.” “And the purity of my mother,” murmured Antonia, as her eyes rested on the inscription, “the spotless purity of my mother must remain suspected.”

The marquis started—he grasped her hand—he looked imploringly in her face. “Urge me not,” he exclaimed; “think of the wreck and shudder. Heaven knows the new fallen snow is not more unsullied—

heaven knows the sanctified inhabitants of Paradise are not more guileless than was Antonia—” “ If I doubted it,” interrupted the weeping girl,” not all the promised blessings of existence could awaken me to joy.” “ You shall read the tale of her wrongs,” resumed the marquis: “ it was penned for the perusal of her child, but the marchioness must not see it. Placed in a cabinet at the Grange, it is directed for *Miss Forrester*, to be opened when I am no more; but circumstances have changed the original intention: thrown off my guard I have acknowledged myself your father, and secrecy no longer shall be preserved.”

Antonia gratefully raised his hand to her lips as again he proceeded— “ My conduct can admit of no palliative; I have not sought to gloss it over; I have stated the plain unvarnished fact, though sensible that in some scenes, I must be condemned, in

"others hated—" "Oh, no!" interrupted Antonia, as her eyes beaming with filial regard rested on the agitated features of the marquis. "I shall pity, but never, never hate." "Forgiving girl!" he articulated, leading her from the grave, "to the tie of nature do I alone feel grateful for this clemency."

Antonia's feelings defied description when the peaceful groves of the vicarage first broke upon the view; when in passing, she beheld the infant group assembled at the garden-gate to hail the expected travellers. Little Rosa waved her hand; while Percival, in the joy of his heart, threw his hat in the air. Daiverne traced the traitor tear which stole down her glowing cheek, as her eyes wandered over the well-remembered scenes of former sorrows—as she gazed upon the meandering Avon, by the side of whose

purling stream she had often wandered a prey to listless dejection—to hopeless love. Every new recess, every fresh opening prospect, called forth the exercise of memory; and presented Dauverne, the affianced husband of Lady Geraldine—Antonia, the guilty trembling admirer of his perfections. Ah, how changed was now the scene! Every doubt had vanished: the romantic ardour of first beaming love no longer swelled with perturbation her conscious bosom: Dauverne, the undisguised partner of her choice, was seated by her side; their affection sanctioned by the approbation of a newly discovered father. The sable garments of old William, as he threw open the park-gate, recalled her ideas—she thought of Mary and sighed—she thought of the betrayer of her peace, the destroyer of her life, and shuddered. Dejection marked the features of the

aged sufferer ; grief had worn his form, shame had preyed upon his repose ; he seemed tottering on the verge of eternity without a staff to sustain his helplessness. A smile would have hailed their return, had not remembrance chased it. When last they parted he had a daughter, now he could only see her grave. He thought of her tenderness, of her past affection, of her past virtue ; the fearful lapse of innocence was forgotten, for death had silenced the power of reproach, and her indiscretion was effaced in the vile arts of her seducer. A thousand times he cursed him ; a thousand times he prayed for pardon ; and when Dr. Moreland, stationed at his side, endeavoured to reason and argue him into composure, " Yes, yes," he would exclaim, as with the back of his hand he wiped away the scalding tear, " I know the duty of a Christian—tis strong : but the feel-

ings of a father—stronger." Mary had screened her sorrows in the grave, Mary, in the heart-breaking conviction of guilt, had escaped the trial of the world : the green sod pressed upon her bosom—the cold earth yielded her repose : but William, the aged, the infirm, the dejected William, remained to suffer. "Ah! can the murderer of a good man's peace—can the destroyer of a woman's honour partake of happiness?" sighed Antonia, as the carriage proceeded through the park. "Can the author of accumulated wretchedness—can the unprincipled Sunderland find repose? Will not the stings of guilt pursue him?—will not the pangs of memory blast his hopes?—will not his age be turned to sadness, his prospects closed in despair?" "No," exclaims *Fashion*, "the doctrine of *false philosophy* holds forth an antidote—thousands have trod the same path, yet thousands persevere in

the tract, as society expels them not her circles." "Man," says the *voluptuary*, "is born for enjoyment." ~~Man~~, says the *libertine*, "is born for sensuality. The curtain of futurity is impervious to the human eye: let zealots picture the future—we think only of the present." Dangerous, mistaken principle! the growth of satirize, of murder, and impiety; the parent of ingratitude, guilt, and woe; of every ill incident to the human race; of every fatal snare that threatens its destruction! Let reason check the gigantic strides of its influence—let it look around and controvert its power. Is there a God?—Can man behold the varying seasons, the regular system of creation, and dares he question? Is there a heaven?—Can man examine his own insignificance, can he acknowledge the mercies daily vouchsafed, and dares he doubt? Chance placed us not here—chance

averts not the impending accident which hourly threatens to sever the slender thread of existence—*chance* makes not the sun to shine upon us, or the moon to illumine the night—*chance* enlivens not spring's soft verdure with refreshing showers—*chance* nips not with a timely frost the destructive locust which banquets on vegetation. Ah, no! in every particle, in every minutia of matter, we may behold a God—we may praise his bounty. Man may live an atheist—but he *dare*s not die one!

In the evening, Lady Selina and Sir Frederic, Antonia and Dauverne, walked to the vicarage. The marchioness was fatigued with the journey—the marquis had already retired to his library. “With what increased beauty does the landscape glow!” exclaimed Dauverne, pressing the hand of his companion; “what a painter is peace of mind—it casts over every

shade the most vivifying rays, and robs even the haunts of melancholy of its dejection—it peoples the groves with the imagery of fancy and stamps on every object the impression of joy."

"It does indeed," replied Antonia, as faithful memory retraced the pangs of past difficulties—"I always thought it pleasing, but now I find it charming." "We smile at the effusions of the poet's brain when led on through the regions of enchantment," rejoined Dauverne; "yet surely there exists not a more able enchanter than imagination!" "An enchanter, whose influence I trust will never be withdrawn!" ardently exclaimed Antonia.

"An enchanter, whose——" and the blush of native diffidence suffused her cheek, and checked the power of utterance—"Ardency will tincture our lives," concluded Dauverne, grateful for this tribute of tenderness, "and stamp them with the glow of happy-

of those rare instances——” “Hush ! hush ! hush ! interrupted Sir Frederic, laughing, “you forget, Selina, that I, a rueful and discomfitted knight, through him was introduced into the watch-house.” “Nay, that takes not from his merit,” said Lady Selina, archly. “Nor adds to mine,” rejoined Stanley. “What plea is half so strong as affection ?” said Antonia: “Mr. Penrose loves his only child, and Mahala cannot be happy unless she is the wife of Captain Powersly—” “Sir Charles Powersly, if you please,” interrupted the baronet. “Ah,” then as heretofore, he will be a conqueror,” exclaimed Dauverne. “Pardon me,” bowing to Selina and Antonia, “but the heart is a powerful auxiliary.”

They had now reached the lodge; William perceived not their entrance; his head rested on his hand; a bible lay on the table before him, open at

the book of Job. "Yes, we shall meet again, Mary, we shall meet again in heaven." He looked up, started, and arose from his seat. "How are you, my old friend?" inquired Dauverne, extending his hand. William fixed his eyes upon Mary's spinning-wheel, still stationed in a corner of the room, and shook his head. "Come, come," said Dauverne, struggling with his own feelings, "the book you have been studying teaches submission and resignation." " 'Tis my only resource," articulated William, placing his spectacles on the table. "Here I fly for comfort; and there," raising his eyes to heaven, "my claims are not disregarded." "Poor fellow!" murmured Sir Frederic, turning hastily to the door. Lady Selina could not speak; and Antonia drew her veil over her face to conceal her tears. "Heaven is all-sufficient!" pursued Dauverne—"heaven chasteneth those it loveth." "But

friendship repeated and the smile of welcome renewed. "What think you of my little folks?" exclaimed Mrs. Moreland; "are they not almost grown out of knowledge? It is, you will allow, an excusable inquiry from a mother."

Stanley held up his head; Ellen smiled; Percival looked fondly in Antonia's face; while little Rosa, fearful of being overlooked, articulated— "And I too!" "Yes, and you too!" repeated our heroine, taking the interesting child in her lap. "In goodness I hope they are improved," observed the doctor; "that to the heart of a parent is the first consideration."

"With such examples before their eyes," said Dauverne, "with such instructions, such precepts, how can they fail being everything an anxious affection can desire." "Nay," an-

swered the doctor, bowing; "I assure you I sought not a compliment."

"Upon my soul, my dear uncle," exclaimed the baronet, "'tis no compliment. Had I fifty children, and you would but be troubled with the charge, I should feel perfectly secure in their welfare, morals, and behaviour."

"Fifty children!" repeated the astonished Percival, "what would cousin Stanley do with fifty children? for you know, papa, you have often said he can't keep himself out of mischief."

"Well said, my boy," replied Sir Frederic, laughing, "but if fifty children will not bring a man to his senses, a whole ocean of physic won't save him."

"Your cousin means to be very steady and very good," said the doctor, with forced gravity.

"And never get into the watch-house again?" innocently questioned Ellen.

"Hush! hush! that's

an old story," - answered Mrs. Moreland. " But this day revived I assure you," exclaimed Lady Sévigné : " Sir Frederic has candidly confessed all his errors, and that you know is universally allowed to be the first step towards amendment." " Will you go and see the robins, dear Miss Forrester ? " whispered Rosa, as she hid her rosy face on the bosom of Antonia. " I wonder if they will know you again; they used to eat out of your hand." " Their memories are not so strong as yours, my dear little girl," rising at her request. " Oh, but Daphne will," exclaimed Percival, seizing her other hand, " for we have talked to her of Miss Forrester, just as you used to do to Werter of his master."

Antonia blushed; Dauverne looked grateful for this involuntary discovery. " Children are not to be trusted with secrets," said the doctor, archly.

"Where are you going, my love?" asked Mrs. Moreland. "To see Daphne and the robins," replied Antonia. "What say you, Lady Selina, have you any objection to the visit?" and they left the doctor, Duvernoy, and Sir Frederic in the parlour. "How happy did the knowledge of your engagement make me, my sweet friend!" said Mrs. Moreland, lingering behind with Antonia. "Long has your heart been unveiled to my inspection; long have I perceived the secret beat of inclination. You were too guileless to conceal its feelings--too unacquainted with the world to suspect its source. My good man has often trembled for your peace: has often joined me in the fears of affection. And though, for her own sake, I cannot but lament the unadvised, rash, improper conduct of Lady Geraldine, yet do I rejoice at an enlargement which ensures the happiness of two beings, formed for the

comfort and felicity of each other."

"Ah, my dear madam," articulated Antonia, as her cheeks flushed at the remembrance of past hours, "your friendship will form an excuse for a proceeding which in the eyes of impartial hearers must at best be reckoned indiscreet. I yielded my heart to a being affianced to another—I rashly trifled with my own peace of mind; and but for the imprudence of the intended bride, must have passed through life a prey to secret, rueful sorrow." "You are too severe a judge," resumed Mrs. Moreland; "remember the temptation; remember your own inexperience: a novice, young and artless, transplanted from the romantic soil of a monastery into the great world, exposed to every allurement, and guarded only by internal virtue, purity, and truth. Besides," she continued, smiling, "we were the first aggressors; we incau-

tiously laid the foundation, ere Mr. Dauverne had presented himself before you, by praising his actions, and teaching you to reverence a man gifted by Nature with every grace to captivate the heart." "Heaven knows it was his merit," said Antonia, fervently: "the united attractions of beauty, wit, and grace, would have been resisted. But the hero of poor William's story—the hero of the doves—the hero of a thousand, thousand unvarnished relations, could not but subdue the prudence of eighteen, and break down the barrier of indifference." "Ah, Miss Forrester! Daphne knows you," exclaimed Perceval, as the animal caressed the hand which stroked her. "Look, look, mamma, she seems as though she would say—I am glad you are come back." "To be sure she does," observed Ellen; "supposing I was to go away, would not you know me?"

when I returned?" "Well, and what then?" replied the blooming boy. "I'm not Daphne!" "True," said his sister, "but you have a name to-morrow, and so has Stanley, and so does Rosa, and so have I; and so has Daphne!" "And the robin too!" lisped the delighted Rosa, running towards the filbert-walk. "Are you going to be my cousin?" inquired Stanley, as he took the hand of Lady Selina. "Will you acknowledge me as such?" "Oh, yes! that I will!" "What, i and papa be your uncle, and mamma, your aunt?" questioned Ellen. "Yes, to be sure," exclaimed Percival, smiling as though superior to the ignorance of his sister; "and cousin Stanley her husband!"

Lady Selina and Antonia laughed merrily while Mrs. Moreland, striving to appear serious, attempted to repel the loquacity of her children; but the excess of spirits, arising from the joy

of again beholding their favourite, rendered the effort vain, and with the license of unbounded mirth, they persisted in their artless inquiries. A summons from the gentlemen now recalled them to the parlour, and taking an affectionate leave of the friendly inmates of the vicarage, they returned to the Grange. In the morning Lady Selina and Antonia visited Cheltenham. Sir Frederic possessed not sufficient effrontery to accompany them, and Dauverne remained behind in compliment to his friend. "I must make poor Sir Frederic's peace," said Lady Selina, laughing: "he has given Mr. Penrose such a specimen of his behaviour, that I fear the good man will tremble for his little favourite," "His little favourite will soon convince him from whence the errors spring," replied Antonia; "remember he has not had time to discover the intrinsic merits of the baronet's

educated at St. Eustacia." Antonia smiled; she pressed the hand of her fair panegyrist; she would have replied, but the chariot stopt at the white gate which led to the dwelling of Mr. Penrose. "Ah, my dear little girls!" exclaimed the good quaker, taking a hand of each, "ye are welcome to Cheltenham!" "And Mahala?" inquired Antonia, "where is Mahala?" "Yonder is the gipsy," pointing to the parlour. "Dost thee know," looking archly at Lady Selina, "she does what she pleases with her old father."

Antonia was already in her arms—Antonia had already marked the animated expression of joy which beamed from her interesting features, which declared by silent impressive gesture the heart was happy. "And so thee too art going to be married," said Mr. Penrose, seating himself by the side of Antonia. "Ah! I thought

how like a brother thee lovest Percival Dauverne, when thou heard'st how anxious he had been about thy safety. Nay, don't thee blush. Thomas Sunderland, my hopeful ward, has done the only good action in his life, by taking unto himself that daughter of vanity who condemned my plain dealing, and flounced because I was the first person who ever told her what she was." "I fear," rejoined Lady Selina, "they will torture and make each other's heart ache." "Nay, nay, don't thee fear there, my little friend: their hearts, if they have any, are in their own keeping I warrant. But is it true that thee too art going to be married? and to that scapegrace," laughing, "who once flew on the wings of love to give *me* the meeting?" "You are too severe," said Lady Selina. "I hope so," replied the quaker: "convince me that I am prejudiced, and no one will more re-

tiful features of the interesting quaker. Captain Powersly, immediately succeeding the melancholy duty of attending his mother to the grave, returned to his station; and in a little more than three weeks, enriched with new victories, with new trophies of bravery, again visited his native land. The smiles of his sovereign—the gratitude of his fellow citizens—the acclamations of the populace—and the exultation of patriotism, affaced not Mahala. The new badge of honour with which the liberality of his king rewarded his exploits, was hailed as a new offering to love; and the morning after his presentation at court, Sir Charles Powersly, with a lover's haste repaired to Cheltenham. Mahala received him with every delicate demonstration of affection; and without farther delay, he acknowledged to Mr. Penrose their long and secret attachment, and claimed from his indul-

gence the greatest of all rewards—the hand of his daughter. Thunderstruck, amazed, distressed, the good quaker hastened to his child; he found her in an agitation which betrayed not ignorance; she looked imploringly in his face, and rose from her seat.
 “Charles Powersly tells me that he loves thee,” exclaimed Mr. Penrose.
 “So he has said,” articulated Mahala. “Charles Powersly tells me that thou lovest him.” “So I have said,” she again faltered. “Fie, fie, daughter!” “And why fie, father?” “To tell a man thou lovest him.” “My dear mother did so before me,” artlessly rejoined Mahala. “Yes, but thy mother was a quaker, and thy father was a quaker also.” “And yet,” she smilingly answered, “it is the self same thing.” “How so, my child?” “My mother married a man of worth.” “Flatterer! flatterer!” interupting himself. “And I,” throw-

happy. Sir Charles Powersly was now engaged in an expedition. Mahala counted the hours of his absence, for the period of his return was to be the period of bliss—was to be the period which was to silence every doubt—the period which was to confirm her, his chosen, tender bride. In the evening Lady Selina and Antonia returned to the Grange. Sir Frederic smiled at the peace-offering of the good quaker, and promised to accompany them in their next visit to Cheltenham. “Antonia,” said the Marquis of Allingthorn, as on the following morning he summoned her to his study, “I have long promised to intrust you with the memoirs of your unfortunate mother. Yet ere to your inspection I resign this packet,” and he held one sealed in his hand, “assure me, on your sacred word and honour, that no other eye shall peruse the contents. To you, my daughter, I will appear in my own

character—to the world I must still wear the stamp of virtue. Ah, how will you blush when you unfold my actions! how will you weep the delusion of a murdered saint!" "The character of my father shall be inviolate," murmured Antonia, as her hand grasped the portentous packet; "shall be screened with the strictest care; shall be guarded with the most profound secrecy. No eye save my own shall behold this paper—and in my heart shall be buried the knowledge of a parent's woe." "But Dauverne—your husband?" questioned the marquis. "Yes, even from him," and the idea called up the fainting blush, "even from him shall the secret be withheld." "Think not, my excellent, my too generous girl," and he folded her affectionately in his arms, "think not I would impose so severe a restriction. Confidence is the bond of love; unfold not my disgrace to

CHAR. IV.

"PAINFUL is the task, Antonia, for a parent to recite to his child the unpardonable errors, nay more, the fatal sins of his youth: but the *manes* of your departed mother call aloud for exertion; and, to justify her spotless fame from the foul breath of calumny, will your self-condemned father tear aside the veil, which for years has hid the anguish of a contrite heart. Born to rank and affluence, unbiassed by the voice of control or the finger of restraint, I ever followed the impulse of inclination, plunged into the destructive vortex of extravagance, nor paused, until necessity pointing to the ravages of a princely fortune, checked my career, by threatening to expose to

the world my maddened folly. Creditors were solicitous, duns were importunate; the gaming-table, at which already so much had been squandered, promised no redress; and I had not, although educated in the school of *fashion*, acquired the finishing stroke of effrontery requisite to meet unabashed the condolences of *my friends*. I found it necessary to retrench, or by some decisive step save the disgrace of an exposition. Matrimony was the alternative; and at the age of twenty-three, with a heart uninfluenced, save by the general charms of the sex, I led to the altar Lady Caroline Dormer, the rich heiress of the Earl of ——. To speak of her appearance, her manners, or attachment, is unnecessary; you know her, Antonia.

“The versatility of nature by this marriage was not repelled; I became a Benedict—but not a Jaffier. In little more than a twelvemonth, my hopes of

a son were defeated in the birth of Geraldine; and when the marchioness gave being to a second daughter, I joined a party of friends in a trip to Italy. We landed at Leghorn, purposed remaining there a few days to visit its environs, and from thence proceeded to Florence.

"The morning succeeding our arrival, listless, unable to sleep, I left my bed: the weather was uncommonly fine; my companions had not yet risen; and to pass the lingering moments of languid solitude, I quitted the hotel, and walked through the city. Calm for the last time were my feelings—uninfluenced for the last time was my heart. Painful retrospection! till then, though a slave to error, I was not to vice—till then though not innocent, I knew not the extreme of guilt. In passing the cathedral I paused; for the mellow pealed organ, rising in saéred swell, proclaimed man's gratitude for

the return of day. It was the hour for the matin service. At the moment my soul seemed to imbibe the fervour of religion—was it indeed the fervour of religion? or, was it not rather the propelling power of destiny, which in that short interval irrevocably sealed my doom? I looked at my watch—it was still early; I entered the holy edifice. My eyes were attracted by the blaze of splendour which surrounded the worshipped image of the virgin: but how insufficient are the most perfect features formed by the art of man to retain the attention! Alas! they beheld the senseless image no longer; they fixed on a living virgin prostrate at its feet, whose zeal, whose beauty, whose innocence, whose matchless charms might have turned proselyte the heart of bigotry. In vain would I describe the sensations of that moment—I stood entranced, my senses were suspended.

Not Petrarch, when he first beheld his Laura, could have imbibed a more violent, a more lasting flame. I had no eyes but for the fair vision before me—Caroline and her children were forgotten—I thought not of my own shackles, or the injury aimed at the peace of this fascinating foreigner—I thought alone of the possibility of improving this transient, this casual glance into a nearer, a more tender interest. You tremble, my child; you see at once the seeds of vice, bursting, spreading their poisonous venom in a father's heart! Ah, Antonia! look at yourself, and behold the attraction. Your mother's form was alike commanding; her features alike faultless: remember till then that heart had acknowledged no attachment—till then interest had been the only sway of its actions. Yet what am I writing?—whither am I wandering? In vain I would exculpate a conduct

which can admit of no palliative; in vain I would entreat you to respect a being who has ceased to respect himself. The offering of true devotion veils the senses against mortal things: your mother perceived not the interest she had awakened; nor, till she prepared to depart, did she appear conscious of surrounding observers. She quitted the church; I followed her at a respectful distance, nor returned to my hotel until I had marked her dwelling.

I laughed with my companions at the raillery which my early rising excited, agreed to every renewal of gaiety, every increase of pleasure, which youth, health, and dissipation could desire; though to me each scene was vapid, for my whole thoughts, my whole soul, was absorbed with the morning's adventure—with the image of the bewitching, the beautiful Italian. In the expectation of again be-

holding her, in the evening I repaired to the cathedral: my hopes were not disappointed: she was indeed there, though not, as in the morning, alone. An elderly lady was her companion, whose enthusiastic fervour, raising her whole thoughts to Heaven, left her sweet charge disregarded; my ardent gaze was consequently not observed; and when they again quitted the church, I followed their footsteps without creating suspicion. Their dwelling was small but neat: no signs of grandeur marked its appearance: it was surrounded by a garden, and its whole aspect denoted peace, competence, and content. "Who is that elderly lady?" I inquired of a woman who stood at the door of a neighbouring residence. "Signora Della Piazza."— "And the young person by whose arm she is supported?"— "Her niece, Antonia di Rosalva." "Have they long been residents at Leghorn?" "She

looked at me with scrutinizing earnestness. ‘Your pardon, Signor; but why so minute in your inquiries?’ I feared to betray my too greatly excited curiosity, and with an appearance of unconcern evaded the question. I lingered around the garden; I gazed on the envious walls which screened her from my view. Antonia had been seen but to be adored--her image was engraven on my heart, never, never to be effaced. For three successive days I beheld her at the hours of devotion; and on the fourth, dejected and unhappy, I left Leghorn for Florence. But not all the combined beauties of that famed city; not the meandering Arno, the delightful villas, the rich vineyards, the mountains cloathed with olive trees, the paintings, the statuary, the architecture, could for a moment occupy my thoughts, or draw them from the humble unadorned dwelling of Signora

Dilla Piacca. I passed through the grand-duke's palace; I entered the tribunal; I gazed on the celebrated Venus of Medici, the justly denominated standard of female beauty, with an inattention, a supineness which astonished my companions: I heard their raptures unmoved, thought of Antonia and sighed. Wretched, melancholy in the midst of gaiety, existence seemed a burden. I cursed the conduct which had hurled me into an engagement destructive to my repose—cursed the innocent bar to the realization of my romantic wishes. Yes, my daughter, the feelings of a father restrained not the violence of passion: Geraldine and Selina were alike renounced, were alike alienated from my love. A thousand schemes passed in review before me—and once—ah! how your cheek burns! how detestation, scorn, contempt, occupy every avenue to your bosom!—once; the

cool deliberate plan of seduction was decided on—once the infernal scheme of leading on to destruction the object of my supposed adoration, of robbing her of her purity, her peace of mind, her honour, was proposed. I thought the sensibility of the heart might be converted to my own deep designs—I thought the steadiness of virtue might be weakened by the force of flattery. Remember, in my intercourse with the world I had mingled with the designing ; remember I had mingled with those who had bartered their fame for gold—their peace for dissipation. My ideas were tinctured with the false reasoning of the voluptuous ; I fancied that the reign of pleasure was the reign of happiness. Pretending an immediate summons to England, I left the party to prosecute their intended tour ; and quitting Florence, returned incog to Leghorn, took a lodgings in its environs, and buried the rank of

Marquis of Allingthorn in the humble appellation of *Mr. Forrester*."— "Ah, God! my mother!" murmured Antonia, as tears streamed down her pale cheeks; and her hands trembled as she grasped the important packet—"my poor, deluded, injured mother!" Long was it ere she could again peruse its contents. Too true had she heard the name of villain denounced against Forrester; but yet, and a heavy sigh succeeded, he was her father.

"A thousand sensations swelled my heart, as I hailed the dwelling of Signora Della Piacca—it seemed to expand, to glow with unnamed rapture, for I breathed the same air with Antonia. On my pillow, numberless schemes were formed to introduce me to her notice: I felt that peace, nay, life itself hung upon her smiles: imagination never slumbered, and my dreams realized what my waking hours devised. But love, timid, fear-

ful to offend, shrunk abashed in her presence; and two whole days were passed in procrastination. On the evening of the third, as I rambled on the beach, accident was propitious to my wishes: I heard a shriek, and arrived in time to rescue Antonia from insult. She trembled — she could hardly stand: I threw my arm around her waist—I attempted to support her, though, heaven knows, my own emotion was far more palpable. She looked up—she beheld a stranger: she blushed, and withdrawing herself from my arms, articulated her gratitude. The timid glance, the averted eye, the heaving bosom, disclosed each moment a multitude of charms, and stamped me her slave for ever. ‘ You still tremble,’ I exclaimed; ‘ why disdain my support? — why shrink so fearfully from me?’ — ‘ You are a stranger, Signor,’ she replied, and then blushed with modest diffidence. ‘ True, but I could

wish to be considered a stranger no longer. Say, lovely Signora," endeavouring to take her hand, "what shall I do to be regarded as a friend?" She quickened her pace, but spoke not: at length coming in sight of the residence of her aunt, and deeply blushing—"indeed," she faltered, "I will trouble you no further: yonder is our cottage; and your presence cannot be requisite." "Then in safety my presence ceases to be desired."—"I did not say so," she replied. "True, but your words imply it."—"Then my words, Signor, belie my heart." "Thank you, sweet maid! May I conclude that your heart is grateful, but your timidity checks its utterance?" Again she blushed, and bowing gracefully, opened the wicket which led to the cottage. I snatched her hand. "Stay, beautiful Antonia!" She started, and viewed me with astonishment: I recovered myself— "Stay, and tell me if to-

now I may here inquire after my acquaintance?' Her grateful heart was not formed for denial; she did not say so, yet she feared to own what she dreaded an impropriety. 'My aunt leads a very retired life,' she answered, 'she never leaves her home but to visit church. Indeed, Signor, I am grateful, but—' 'Yes,' timidly, 'I shall soon return to my convent, and then—' 'Your aunt!' I repeated, interrupting her, 'the assertion conveyed a dagger to my beating heart, 'your convent!' She saw the eagerness of my inquiry; she looked as though she feared she had said too much; and with palpable trepidation closed the gate, and hurried from me. I paused till I could see her form no longer, and then, heaving a heavy sigh turned towards my lodgings; but vain was the attempt: as one spell-bound, I remained rivetted to the spot, for my soul,

faithful as the polar star, acknowledged no other allegiance, and sighed alone for its divinity. I gazed at the cottage; I saw her once at a window; my heart bounded, for love, delusive love, whispered, indifference urged not the station—I kissed my hand; she retired, and I saw her no more.

"For a whole fortnight I constantly visited the cathedral—watched every opportunity of ingratiating myself into her affections, and at length gained, what I coveted more than kingdoms—gained her peerless heart. She wept as she confessed her love; for her aunt, her only existing relative, bigotted in her religious tenets, had destined her for the veil. 'And till I saw you, Forrester,' sobbed the artless innocent, 'I thought it not a severe decision.' Father of Heaven! how could I betray such confidence—how could I sully such purity? 'A severe decision!' I repeated—'My Antonia become a

nun; my Antonia waste her sweetness in retirement; renounce society, renounce the being who adores her—who exists but in her presence!.. Ah, no! If to you my peace is dear, blast it not by such a sacrifice; exert the privilege of action, break the bonds of restraint, and fly with me to England. There, for I marked not the change in her countenance, ‘the law is a safeguard to the oppressed; there the power even of the church is circumscribed; there the sacred altar teems not with reluctant victims.’—‘To England!’ repeated the alarmed girl, ‘quit my friends, my country!—Oh, Forrester, Forrester!’ and a burst of tears checked utterance. ‘Yes, with a husband, my timid, tender Antonia, whose office shall be to guard your peace, and with his life to watch and protect you.’ She mournfully shook her head. ‘Say,’ I pursued, ‘what prospect can be half so dreadful as this cruel sepa-

sation? — what plea can be urged against this scheme for happiness?' — 'Gratitude, prudence, nay, a thousand,' replied the beautiful Italian; 'What,' and a transient blush suffused her cheek, 'fly to a foreign land with a stranger? Ah! what would my aunt—what would the Lady Abbess—what would the sisters of St. Eustacia think?' 'You doubt my honour then.' 'No, no, but I value my own.' 'Lovely reasoner! you tear yourself from my sight; you return to the convent; you doom me to despair.' 'To-morrow,' and her eyes sought the ground, 'for the first time I quit Leghorn with regret—for the first time I enter the gates of St. Eustacia with reluctance.' 'To-morrow, prophetic Heaven! to-morrow, Antonia!' She sobbed. 'For the sake of humanity, pause,' I rejoined, trembling with dismay and apprehension; 'take not the veil—let not the

persuasions — let not the threats of fanatics prevail. To the very altar I will pursue to save you ; and if I see you enrol yourself with the vow of celibacy ; if I see you forswear the world and all its tender ties ; mark me, wildly, ‘ for by yon bright luminary, now gilding the starry concave of Heaven, I swear I also will renounce it.’ She shuddered—she looked fearfully towards me—she saw my distraction—she was softened ; and ere we parted, soothed my perturbed soul, by sacredly promising never to drive me to the exigence. She entered the cottage, and several hours passed in silent unavailing woe.

“ It was midnight ere I returned to my lodgings ; melancholy and desponding I paced my chamber, one moment fanning the flame of unhallowed desire, the next struggling to regain my self-command. To live without Antonia was impossible—to

live with; Antonia would stamp my conduct with the blackest dye of villainy. I was married—she was virtuous—what then remained? Long and painful was the conflict; inclination banished honour; for the dangerous sophistry of my argument was—that Antonia, wedded in a foreign clime, would never know me as any other than Forrester; that policy might occasionally conduct Allingthorn to Caroline, but that love, almighty love, would weave a roseate bower for Antonia, and sanctify it with the bliss of Paradise. Such ever is the result of fallacious reasoning; for when once we leave the path of rectitude, how easy is it to reconcile ourselves to vice! I fell into the snare I had laid for myself; my dreams pictured felicity, for my nightly visions teemed with love and Antonia.

“The next morning, big with my fatal project, I boldly approached the

dwelling of my hapless victim. Alas ! it was deserted. I saw not my love, disappointment clouded my hopes, for with her aunt she had indeed returned to her convent. ‘Gone, Signora di Rosalva gone !’ I exclaimed, in accents of regret. ‘Which is the direct road to St. Eustacia ?’ slipping gold into the hand of Ursula. The old domestic viewed me with astonishment and doubt. ‘Pardon me, Signor,’ endeavouring to return my gift, ‘I have lived many years with Signora Della Piacca, and am not to be purchased.’ ‘Purchased !’ I repeated, ‘you do me injustice. At matin prayers I first beheld her lovely niece, and before the whole world would I acknowledge my prepossession. I come not to pamper with a servant—I come openly to address her aunt, and implore her concurrence.’ ‘It won’t do, Signor,’ she replied, ‘my young lady is destined for the cloister, and Signora Della Piacca

is too devout a Christian to rob her God.' 'Cruel ordination!' I exclaimed with well feigned surprise. 'Antonia destined for the vow; Antonia destined to wear her bloom, to waste her sweetness in monastic retirement. Gracious Heaven, avert the mandate; snatch the tender novice from the unnatural sacrifice!' 'It is indeed a pity!' sighed Ursula. 'No, no,' vehemently, 'it is a sin!' Ursula smiled, and, ere we parted, not only pointed out the road to St. Eustacia, but promised to keep my visit a secret from her mistress. In the evening I repaired to the convent: the sun was setting as I paused before the holy edifice, and tinged the surrounding landscape with golden splendour. The trees nodded in the balmy breeze, laden with the fragrance of blossoming flowers, and the water gently undulating, washed o'er its pebbled bed: the sky was cloudless and serene:

birds warbled from their leafy bowers, and the rich carpet of nature, variegated with herds of goats, brousing peacefully on its herbage; presented a scene pleasing and diversified.

"No zealous devotee ever with more eager rapture hailed the promised haven of his pilgrimage! I gazed on the heavy walls which enshrined the object of my adoration, and sighed for an eagle's eye, to penetrate to its very altars.... Antonia mingled in each idea—dwelt in each pictured scene; she lived—she moved—she spoke in the landscape before me. Suddenly my thoughts recurred to England; the fair shores of Italy vanished into smoke— they fixed on Caroline and her children—an agonizing death-like sensation succeeded, and again my lips murmured—'Antonia.' I took my station at the grate—I watched with eager anxiety; every voice, every approaching step reached my heart, and flush-

ed my cheeks with scarlet. But disappointment blighted my hopes, and repelled my wishes---I saw her not : the shades of night contracted the landscape; its blue vapours enveloped the hills, and wrapped the world in darkness. I cast a lingering look on the frowning turrets of St. Eustacia, and returned dissatisfied to Leghorn.

For three successive days, alike in vain I visited the monastery—I dared not write—I dared not speak, lest my passion, betraying its object, should increase the difficulty of access. On the fourth, as I was about quitting my station at the grate, a vision of light burst upon my view, and repaid the long hours of solicitude—it was Antonia ; she leant upon the arm of a nun, whose dark eyes rested intently on her ; she had been weeping—her cheeks were more than usually pale—her auburne ringlets shadowed her white forehead, and her eyes rested on the ground; as

though she dared not encounter the scrutiny of her friends. She looked the messenger of heaven—she might have passed for the Madonna of Guido. I articulated her name, but she heard me not: lost in the melancholy of her own reflections, she raised not her eyes, until she had nearly reached the grate; and then, a start of surprise and a glow of pleasure denoted that she beheld me. I placed my hand upon my heart in token of my feelings; she smiled, waved her hand, and again proceeded. Comparatively happy, I retraced my steps to Leghorn. I had seen Antónia, though but for a moment, and my heart felt lightened; I passed the night in planning a transcript of my feelings, in murmuring, imploring, vowed; but how to get it conveyed to the hands of Antónia was a new difficulty, a difficulty which not all my invention could surmount. It was day-break ere I retired to rest;

my pillow was full of thorns, sleep extended not her oblivious antidote o'er my senses, and with the sun I arose, and again beat my steps to St. Eustacia. Antonia alone approached the grate, her expressive features denoting apprehension. ‘For heaven’s sake, Forrester, retire !’ she said, in a low trembling voice, ‘if you excite suspicion we are lost.’ ‘Retire !’ I reproachfully repeated, ‘renounce the only remaining blessing in existence—the privilege of gazing on your prison.’ ‘Ah, no, my Antonia, extort not so vast a sacrifice ; rather let us embrace the present moment to strengthen those vows we have before exchanged.’ ‘Go, go, Forrester !’ for the sound of approaching footsteps faded the carnation of her cheeks. . . . ‘No,’ impetuously, ‘not, though they drag me to the foot of the inquisitorial throne, will I go until you repeat your love, until you bid me live.’ ‘Live for An-

'tonia!' in a voice of terror, she articulated and fled. ' *Live for Antonia!*' I a thousand times repeated. ' Yes, yes, fair saint! for not till I have lost the privilege to breathe can this consuming flame be extinguished.' In the darkness of night, in the solitude of reflection, in the hours of restless perturbation, *live for Antonia* breathed in the soft music of the spheres, turned remorse to joy, suspense to exultation.

"Thus passed the period of my residence at Leghorn—my family concluded me examining the romantic beauties of Italy—my friends imagined me long since returned to England. At this crisis, death, propitious to my wishes, closed the earthly pilgrimage of Signora Della-Piacca; Antonia was summoned from her convent to witness her parting struggles, and was again exposed to the danger of my persuasions. Young, unacquainted with the

world, a stranger to its artifice and to its sorrows, a slave to love, and a victim to sensibility; threatened on one side with a cloister's fearful solitude, and tempted on the other by a being whom her pure heart imagined perfect; could she be condemned, even by the most circumspect, in yielding to the propelling powers of inclination? I, like the insidious serpent alluring on to death, shrunk not even at this masterpiece of villainy—I led the confiding, palpitating Antonia to the foot of the altar, and in the name of Forrester—married her."

The packet dropped from the nerveless hand of the injured offspring of this untoward union—she sunk back in her chair—she hid her burning face upon her bosom—she thought of her mother's wrongs, her father's infamy, until every hope of happiness fled, and despair and sorrow succeeded. Dauverne was forgotten in this new tu-

mult of her feelings. "Ah! where can I hide from the prying eye of curiosity the knowledge of my disgraced existence?" she exclaimed, raising her streaming eyes to heaven. "Ah! where can I hide the burning blushes, where can I pour forth the tears of misery, wrung by a parent's disgrace?" Again she seized the packet; again she mournfully proceeded—"Dreading the aroused vengeance of St. Eustacia's community, in thus being robbed of a youthful sacrifice, we precipitately quitted Leghorn, and, attended by Ursula, sailed for England. Every object was new to my interesting companion; every object excited her surprise, and called forth her admiration: prosperous was the voyage: love unfurled the swelling sails, and wafted us to the port of happiness. On the deck my arm supported her steps—in the cabin my assiduities were received with tender delicate affection:

she asked a thousand questions relative to the new world she was about to enter, and smiled as she lisped the broken accents of imperfect English. Ah, happy, transient moments! when, with my lovely scholar, I leant over the side of the vessel, and traced the progress of its rapid course; when her soft eyes, raised from the ruffled surface of the briny flood, wandered o'er the vast expanse, and rested with glowing ceaseless ardour on her husband. We landed at Falmouth, and proceeded immediately to a village near my family estate, as the retired neighbourhood of St. Antholine's promised every desired security.

"The marchioness I knew detested its solitude, and never but at my particular request entered its walls; against this intruder, I consequently imbibed no apprehension. There, in a neat dwelling bordering the domain, I purposed erecting my Paradise--

there I purposed depositing my Antonia, and trusting every other event to my own circumspection. Her heart was formed for retirement; the situation gratified her most romantic hopes; and soda was the white-washed cottage decorated by the taste of its elegant mistress. The plea of business accounted for the frequency of my absences; and every week I stole from the society of my love, was passed in purgatory with Caroline. Antonia, in the innocent unguarded fervour of her heart, would welcome my return—Antonia was happy. Frequently in the stillness of night, when she thought me slumbering, would she articulate her thanks to heaven for the husband it had given her; frequently would she express her gratitude in mild and fervent prayer—tacit reproofs to conscious guilt! Ah; how different were my feelings! I possessed Antonia, but I possessed not

peace ; my life exhibited a scene of perplexity and apprehension : I loved her with the same ardour, with the same unabating adoration, yet I dared not unburden the heavy weight on my conscience—I dared not blast the fair fabric of her happiness—I dared not say, Autonia, I am a betrayer—I dared not look into my own heart, and claim the source of comfort. My dreams were tinged with my waking reflections : often in an agony I would start, trembling at the discovery of my dreaded secret ! Once struggling with the horrid vision, I disturbed my sleeping companion ; she saw my agitation, she heard the heavy sighs which swelled my bosom : ‘Caroline,’ I exclaimed, as I broke the shackles of sleep, “tear not my Autonia from me.” She grasped my hand ; she soothed my perturbation ; she spoke not her own apprehensions, but she forgot not the name of *Caroline*. I was at the Grange

when my Antonia became a mother. Ah, how long did the hours appear until unsuspected I quitted the marquessess, and returned to my beloved retirement! I sprung from my horse—I rushed up the stairs—I had before been a father, but I never before had experienced such strong, such unaccountable sensations. Tears of tenderness arose to my eyes as I reached the door of her apartment; I entered—I beheld my Antonia nursing at her breast the innocent pledge of her affection: she extended the tender cherub towards me; I folded them both in my arms—I would have spoken but I could not, my heart was too full for utterance—I could only weep.

“Antonia recovered her strength: days, weeks, months succeeded, and still was I unsuspected. One evening as we rambled from the cottage, my boasted security was put to flight in the accidental appearance of a ser-

vant who had lived some years with the marchioness, and who instantly recognizing me touched his hat. ‘Ah, Jameson?’ I exclaimed, thrown off my guard, and for the moment forgetful of my assumed character, ‘how long have you been in the country?’ ‘Two days, my lord.’

‘The appellation recalled recollection: I saw Antonia start—I saw the mantling blood rush to her cheek; I raised my finger to my lip in token of silence; Jameson understood it and passed on; but your mother’s alarmed suspicions required all my foresight to allay; the address of *my lord* filled with unknown terror, and her artless searching questions pierced the conscious bosom of her betrayer. Under some trifling pretence, I quitted her at the door of our cottage, and repaired in search of Jameson. I found him—learnt that from St. James’s-square he had been summoned to attend

tend a dying parent—entrusted him with as much of my secret as I judged necessary—bribed him to my interest; and returned if not satisfied at least secure. Antonia was weeping; this fatal *rencontre* had filled her with a thousand apprehensions; art lulled them all, and tenderness once more restored her to peace. Alas, short was the duration! necessity impelled me to return to London; I tore myself from the arms of love, quitted the domestic retreat of humble retirement, and returned to grandeur and to Caroline. On the sixth morning succeeding my arrival in town, Jameson, now my confidant and assistant, called at the post-office for letters left in the name of *Forrester*. I eagerly seized one directed in the well-known hand of my Antonia, pressed the superscription to my lips, and with a lover's haste broke open the seal. Ah, read the contents, my child! read the cruel

agonizing contents, and judge my feelings. ‘ I have discovered all,’ wrote this injured, this hapless woman, ‘ yet do I not reproach—yet do I not breathe invectives. Oh, fatal credulity!—oh, barbarous treachery ! My child, my poor, unhappy, disgraced child ! My senses are bewildered; my head is bound as though a fillet pressed upon my temples ; yet my heart, oh, cruel and too loved source of all my sorrows, is stubborn and will not break ! Forrester—Allingthorn—both one. Is it a dream?—is my honour sullied?—is my fame polluted?—is my little innocent the illicit offspring of unhallowed love?—is the once happy, once thankful Antonia sunk to an object of pity, an object of scorn?—is she a mistress—a concubine ? Write, tell me all ; I am composed, I can bear it ; but do not come, for in the eyes of my God, before the sacred ensignia of my religion, I have vowed to re-

nounce, to tear myself from the man who has undone me—the man who was once my proudly acknowledged husband—was once my dearest balm of existence—was once the soother of all my cares, the promoter all my pleasures : who henceforth must be not my detestation but my bane—who henceforth must be a stranger to the suffering Antonia.'

" Scarce had I concluded this incoherent epistle when it fell from my enervated hand ; the infamy of my conduct appeared in its true light. I shuddered, but not at my own dishonour ; alas, no ! it was at the agonizing apprehension of losing my victim. I loved my poor betrayed Antonia more than my own soul—I loved her with the same romantic ardour, as when I first beheld her kneeling before the figure of the virgin ; as when I first heard the sweet accents of returned affection falter on her lips. To lose her was death ; to picture separation,

distraction. What was the world, what was Caroline and her children compared to Antonia? My first impulse was to throw off all restraint, to fly to my love, to acknowledge my faults, to claim her compassion, to broach her into forgiveness. But I knew not the soul of the being I had injured—I knew not the powers of virtue betrayed—I knew not the exertions of piety insulted. Heretofore Antonia had been lovely, tender, all to be desired in woman; I had yet to find her firm, inflexible, unbending.

"I carefully concealed the fatal letter, and hastened in search of the marchioness. 'Caroline,' I exclaimed, throwing open the door of her dressing-room, 'I must go; I must this instant leave London.' 'Impossible, my lord,' in a voice of astonishment, 'to-night royalty graces our circle, and the presence of the master of the *fête* cannot be dispensed with.' 'It is a claim

stronger than pleasure which over-
whelms me,' I replied, in accents of
impatience; 'a claim which cannot be
renounced—say I am ill—say I am—'
'Dead,' interrupted the marchioness,
playfully taking my hand; I shrank
from the touch, threw myself upon a
chair, struck my clenched fist against
my forehead and muttered—'Would
to heaven I was!'

"The words were scarcely uttered
before my unguarded folly restored re-
collection; I saw the eyes of the
marchioness fixed with important sad-
ness on me; I saw her lip tremble
with wounded sensibility. 'Pardon
me, Caroline, the danger of a beloved
friend hastily announced has unhinged
my mind, and rendered me scarcely
sensible of what I do.' The plea was
admitted. 'Well, but who is this
friend, my dear Allingthorn, who
would rob me of my husband's pre-
sence?' 'One,' hesitating, 'to whom

I owe much; who in Italy soothed the listlessness of time, and the length of absence.' She kissed my forehead, called me flatterer, and resumed her serenity. 'But has he not a name?' after a momentary pause. 'Yes,—Forrester.' 'And where does he reside?' 'He has but recently landed from Italy, and is now near Falmouth. 'Well, to-morrow, my love, I will spare you, but to-night indeed you must not go.'

'Compelled to yield I returned to my study, summonsed Jameson, ordered him immediately to prepare for the journey, and wrote the following lines to my hapless complainant:—
 'Antonia, my timid tender love, why breathe such cruel doubts;—why betray such apprehensions? Your Forrester is unchanged; for I love the sweet mother of my cherub, with the same fervour, the same unabating adoration with which I received her

blushing to my arms. To-morrow I will fly to tell you so. Preserve your spirits, preserve your health; let me see you happy and affliction cannot reach me. Your letter has filled me with dismay: I have read it over and over, till the characters swim before my sight—till even your dear name is illegible. It is a cruel story, my love, forget it altogether:—henceforth I will own no secret—henceforth I will acknowledge all my faults and supplicate your clemency. Farewell, my Antonia! look at our darling, and think of her father. Farewell! and believe me when I swear, you never was dearer than you are at this moment to the heart of your own devoted Forrester.' I impatiently awaited the morrow: the gaiety of the evening was poison to my distempered brain: I hid the anguish of my feelings beneath the smile of complacency, hailed my illustrious guests, joined

in the laugh of conviviality, but thought of Antonia. Long and sleepless was the night! with the dawn I arose, quitted London, nor paused until I reached my retirement. A foreboding gloom prevailed—no breeze was stirring—no cheerful sun-beam enlivened the aspect: the ocean roared in dull monotony, and nature seemed to droop in sympathetic sadness. Antonia, supported by the arm of Ursula, was in the garden; our little darling playing on the grass-plot with some fresh gathered flowers. I threw open the gate; she turned her head, saw me, snatched her cherub from the ground, and hurried to the house. I followed her—panting she entered the parlour. ‘Ah! why this petrifying coldness, my Antonia? Wife of my heart! Mistress of my soul! Ah, God, my Antonia!—and I attempted to clasp her in my arms, but struggling she shrunk from me. ‘Go, go;

she murmured, ‘Forrester—Allington-thorn :—the mask is removed, the spell is broken—no longer husband, no longer defender of my honour, but seducer, murderer of the heart-broken Antonia. Go, henceforth I know you not; henceforth,’ and a cold shivering crept over her, ‘I must learn to hate you.’ ‘To hate me! to hate me, Antonia! Oh, recall that cruel sentence!...’ ‘Never, never, never,’ interrupting me. ‘Change it to pity; kill me—not with despair: look at our smiling infant—look at our tender babe! You weep, my love; see the father of that infant kneeling—see him imploring mercy and compassion.’ A sob of convulsive anguish agitated her bosom. Again I sought to fold her to my heart, but again, with the force of virtue, she repulsed me. ‘Yes, yes, little wretch, I see you,’ she wildly articulated, as she gazed on her unconscious innocent. ‘I see a poor

unhappy alienated child ; an unconnected, wretched, helpless being ; a recorder of a mother's shame, of a father's infamy ; a—and she hid her burning face in her hands—‘bastard.’ I groaned—I shuddered—I cursed the meddling fool who had betrayed the secret—I cursed my own folly, my own villainy : in vain I wept—in vain I supplicated ; the mandate was passed—the mandate could not be revoked. Antonia tottered towards the door ; she took her child in her arms ; she paused, looked fearfully at me, and sobbed. ‘Forrester, farewell !’ she articulated, in low hurried accents, and hastened to her own apartment. I stole softly up the stairs ; the door was closed—I attentively listened—I scarcely dared to breathe, lest I should betray my situation—I heard her sobs, but not her murmurs : once, with involuntary tenderness, she pronounced my name, and ended with a prayer for

pardon. It was the cold stern fiat of fate—the knell of departing hope: Antonia had pronounced my doom—Antonia had cast me off for ever: she had vowed in the bitterness of her heart to receive me no more, and that vow, as she fondled her unconscious child, was again repeated. I could no longer conceal my anguish; my smothered grief threatened suffocation; I returned below, and heard from Ursula the fatal cause of this discovery. Tantalizing was the garrulity of age; the tedious minuteness of untaught simplicity! I heard enough to execrate the effects of my own folly and her curiosity; I heard enough to refute all hopes of comfort, to convince me that joy, alas! was fled.

“The studied style of ignorance suits not the tale; I will deck it in my own language, my beloved daughter, and recite it with my own comments. The antique appearance of St. Antholine’s

excited the curiosity and admiration of Ursula ; she had frequently spoken of it to her mistress, and often in their walks led her towards the cloisters, whose moss-grown ruins and nodding turrets, inspire the mind with ideas sublime and contemplative. The housekeeper, who had frequently seen these unknown visitants, pleased with the elegant appearance of the interesting foreigner, (for who could behold Antonia and not feel pleasure?) the fatal evening succeeding my departure, invited her to see the interior of a building she seemed so much to admire. Little dreaming the shock which awaited her feelings, she followed her conductress into the vestibule. ‘ How grand ! how romantic,’ exclaimed my Antonia, as she gazed upon the waving banners and colossal figures which lined its sides. ‘ And yet,’ remarked the housekeeper, ‘ my Lady Marchioness has been at St. An-

tholine's but once since her marriage. She says this self-same vestibule gives her the horrors; and during the whole time of the marquis's residence in Italy, she never once visited the family seat.' 'Has the Marquis of Allingthorn been in Italy?' questioned Antonia, sighing at the mention of her native land. 'Yes, madam; he returned from Leghorn about two years ago.' 'From Leghorn,' repeated Antonia. 'He went with a party of friends,' rejoined the communicative domestic, 'when the marchioness was confined with Lady Selina.'

"During this apparently trivial discourse they had proceeded to the library, where a full length portrait, taken at the period of my marriage, attracted her attention. 'Mercy save us! it is my master,' said Ursula, receding a few paces. Antonia spoke not, but as her eyes rested on the picture, her features became pale with

internal conflicts. Again Ursula expressed her astonishment, but Antonia, fearful of betraying her suspicions, raised her hand as a signal for silence. She threw herself upon a chair, complained of faintness, as an excuse for perturbation, begged for a glass of water, and then turning fearfully articulated: ‘The Marquis of Allingtonthorn came from Leghorn two years ago?’ ‘Yes, madam.’ ‘What is the name of the marchioness?’ ‘Caroline.’

“Again the faintness returned—she leant from the window for air: every doubt was removed—every fear was confirmed; and with difficulty she concealed her distraction. No sooner had she reached her own dwelling; no sooner had the necessity for restraint vanished, than the so long smothered anguish burst with accumulated violence: with the pathetic plaints of despair she hung over her babe; and

when the paroxism was over, when her strength was exhausted, sunk fainting upon the carpet. In the moments of recovery, while yet enfeebled, trembling, and dismayed, she formed the fatal vow of never more acknowledging her betrayer, confirmed it as she knelt before the crucifix, and two days after, apprehensive of my return, dispatched the letter I have before inserted. Firm in her principles of virtue, with the most unshaken perseverance she resisted all my entreaties for a second interview; and for a whole week, during my continuance beneath the same roof, confined herself to her apartment.

" The morning of my intended return to London, in reply to my urgent request of seeing her but for a moment, she wrote me a pathetic farewell; acknowledged the anguish the determination had occasioned; told me that she forgave me, though in this world we never more could meet; and hinted

at the conclusion, that if Heaven restored her to health, and lengthened her days of sorrow, they should be passed at the convent of St. Eustacia, in the ceaseless offering of prayer for my restoration to peace, pardon, and happiness.

"Terrified at the possibility of danger, for her life was dearer to me than all the world beside, I dispatched Ursula, imploring her for my sake to guard it—for my sake to call in assistance. She wept as she received my message; but the reply was—'No; no,' she would have no physician; the complaint lay upon her heart, and medicine could not reach it. I left Jameson for the sole purpose of sending me a daily account of my Antonia's health, and, with a mind tortured by remorse and woe, returned once more to my family. To describe my feelings, my beloved girl, is impossible! Suffice it to say, a whole month passed

in this cruel state of anxiety and fear ; at the expiration of which period, a letter from Jameson, informing me of the increased illness and danger of my adored Antonia, turned by comparison the past to pleasure. Again I pleaded the illness of my friend, and, without the loss of a moment, hurried into Cornwall. Ursula was weeping in the parlour. ‘ How—where is my Antonia ? ’ I inquired, with breathless impatience. She started, looked up, and, with a fresh burst of tears, articulated—‘ Indeed you must not see her.’ ‘ Not see Antonia ! ’ I exclaimed, almost frantic at the prohibition ; ‘ who shall prevent it ? Not see my Antonia ! Time has been when my arms were a sure refuge from danger.’ ‘ She is very ill,’ murmured Ursula ; ‘ alas ! alas ! ’ and she laid her hand upon my arm, ‘ that I should live to see my beloved mistress expire ! ’ I heard no more—I pushed from her

feeble grasp, hastened up the stairs, and entered the chamber of Antonia. 'Papa!' lisped our little cherub. I heeded her not; I had no eyes, no thoughts, for any being save her hapless mother. Ah, how thin, how changed was that form, once the model of perfect symmetry! No longer did the roses of health blossom on her fair cheek; no longer did her azure eyes emit the rays of happiness! Languid and heavy they closed against the light of day, and her emaciated hand, supported by the sofa, pressed her aching forehead. I threw myself before her—I clasped my arms around her waist—I could not speak—my breath was short and convulsed, but my attitude was imploring. She looked at me for a moment with tenderness; but recollection returned, anger flushed her cheek, and, with her almost exhausted strength, she pushed me from her. Desperate, I madly strained her to my

heart—I strove to kiss her lips—she struggled; she turned away her face—her head sunk on my shoulder—she became passive, for she had fainted. For two hours we could scarcely preserve life; and when recollection was restored, she beckoned me to her, extended her hand, pointed to her child, and wept; I snatched you from the floor, my daughter, and bore you to your hapless mother. ‘Forrester,’ after a painful pause, articulated the murdered saint, ‘I die; imbitter not my last moments. Not as a husband—not as a lover—but as a friend, I implore you to protect my orphan; guard her carefully from danger, and shelter her infancy in St. Eustacia’s cloister.’ ‘A nun! our child a nun!’ I fearfully questioned. ‘No, *her infancy*,’ repeated Antonia; ‘happiness attends not monastic gloom: let the choice await her own election. First, let her visit the world; but, when exposed to

its allurements, guard her from credulity; from, and she raised her eyes to Heaven, 'the snares which have entrapped her wretched mother.' I promised all she could desire—I promised beneath the name of guardian to bury father, though in actions never to resign it. The mind of my Antonia was restored to peace: she felt the sweet serenity of conscious virtue; and for three days lingered a patient uncomplaining sufferer. The weak efforts of man availed not; the powers of medicine were essayed in vain; on the fourth, whilst slumbering, she died. Oh, moment of agony! never to be effaced—when I gazed on the pale wan features of my Antonia; when I kissed her livid lips, and strained her stiffened form to my bursting heart; when in the horrors of despair, and the anguish of reproving conscience—cursed existence—I tore my hair, and called for retribution. For many days I knew not what pass-

and: I sat the image of distraction—my eyes fixed on vacancy—my recollection suspended.

" It was night when the powers of memory returned — when the wind howled over the new-made grave of my Antonia. I eluded the vigilance of Jameson, escaped from the cottage, and hurried to the church-yard. I threw myself on the cold damp earth — I hid my face in the dust : the hours of night passed unheeded ; for the anguish of my swollen heart found relief in floods of unavailing sorrow. Ursula survived her mistress but a few days ; her age sustained not this last, this bitter shock to her feelings : she was interred in the same church-yard.

" A whole fortnight elapsed ere I could assume sufficient fortitude to part with my child ; and then, to the arguments and persuasions of my faithful Jameson, I resigned her. In the name of Allingthorn, I wrote to the

Lady Abbess of St. Eustacia, informing her of the death of my Antonia ; of the wish she had expressed for her orphan to be educated under her immediate inspection, and concluded with stating, that at the age of eighteen, empowered as her guardian, I should claim from her hands my ward.

" In this separation Antonia died again : Jameson, with his little charge, left England, but never more returned. The packet in which he embarked at Leghorn, bound for his native land, foundered, and every soul perished; consequently my heart was the only memorial of past sorrows. Antonia, Jameson, Ursula, were no more, and every apprehension of discovery ceased.

" Such, my daughter, is the crime, which for so many years has imbibited existence—has blasted the energies of youth, and the blessings of health. The veil of mystery is removed—every secret is revealed : the virtues of your

angel mother need not encomiums—the actions of your father forbid extenuation. Love was the source of all—love, innocent and pure in the art of your mother—designing and destructive in the heart of your father. Honour shrunk beneath the impelling force, and inclination wrought despair.

“ Had I, when first the matchless charms of Antonia were disclosed to my view, shrunk from the temptation, withdrawn myself from the possibility of a second *rencontre*, remembered my engagement in England, and preserved inviolate my faith, happiness, life, character, had not been wrecked; Antonia had been spared the anguish of a broken heart; and I, though a stranger to love, had been a stranger to sorrow. The first step to error should be carefully avoided; for when we have once passed the boundary of virtue, instantly do we enter the confines of vice: our safety lies in avoiding temptation,

not in baffling its incitements. Ah, too fatally have I been convinced of the truth of this doctrine ! too fatally have I been convinced, that sorrow succeeds guilt—that vice is followed by despair ! Farewell, my child ! precious relic of my lost Antonia; farewell ! Let the fate of a father be cherished as a salutary warning against yielding to the weakness of nature, and when virtue execrates the actions of *Forrester*, let pity call to mind the repentance of ——— Allingthorn."

CHAP. V.

"Unhappy mother!" articulated Antonia, as the packet trembled in her hand; "unhappy, injured, heart-broken mother! severe were thy trials; blameless thy conduct; virtue decreed and a husband was resigned, though peace, though health, though comfort expired. Life to thee was as a wearied pilgrimage — betrayed where most trusted—wronged where most secure. Ah! in this world nothing remained to tempt thee; Heaven chastened thy contrite spirit, and kindly called it to itself. And my father too! the victim of his own passions! the slave of unhallowed sinful love! pardon and uphold him! Let the long, long years of eternal regret, of eternal remorse, ob-

literate the sins of his youth—let life glide on in comfort—let his age be cheered with peace ! ”

Long was it ere she could relinquish the melancholy pleasure of weeping o'er the manuscript ; long was it ere she retired to rest. The dead of night was passed, the clock had tolled two, yet still was she waking : in imagination she beheld every incident she had been perusing—she beheld her unsuspecting mother, kneeling before the sacred image of the virgin—she beheld her father, like the midnight murderer, stealing to her side, and aiming the dart of death : she started, she shuddered, for the force of fancy had realized the picture. “ Ah, God ! ” she ejaculated, “ sin triumphs—my mother falls.”

Again she wept—again, with clasped hands, she offered at the throne of grace prayers for a father's pardon : sleep suspended not the power of

sorrow : her dreams were tintured with the sufferings of her parents—she saw her mother, a helpless stranger in a foreign land, exposed to the accumulated anguish of despair, regret, and shame—she saw her weep o'er her unconscious babe, and spurn from her arms her guilty betrayer—she saw her refuse the alleviating powers of medicine, and yield to the deep, the settled anguish of despair—she saw her dying—she saw her last sad efforts, when to a father's care, to a father's humanity, she bequeathed her orphan—she saw her dead—she saw the stiffened form, once warm in youth, in hope, in beauty, in happiness, consigned to its deep still sanctuary.

" Well might sister Benedicta warn me against mankind," she sighed, as she started from her uneasy slumber ; " well might she say with the powers to please, with the open ingenuous freedom of the lion, is mingled the

guise of the serpent. Yes, dear friend of my youth ! tender, disinterested guide of my inexperience ! mankind are alike deceitful—alike baneful—alike deadly."

Dauverne arose to her imagination — Dauverne, her destined husband, decked in the garb of his own purity, his own candour, his own virtue : he seemed to grow on the doubts which had injured his faith, by pervading the mind of his trusted bride. Dr. Moreland too ! the excellent husband, the affectionate father, the sincere friend ! Dr. Moreland, the mild, the unassuming, the humble minister of his master's laws—Dr. Moreland was classed in the dark suspicions. "Ah, no ! the world is not so bad," she mentally ejaculated, as she sought to recall the distrust which had escaped her ; "the world possesses beings, whose probity, whose honour, whose integrity, might put to flight the prejudices of the misan-

thropy; might confirm, even in this enlightened age, that virtue, in defiance of fashion, dissipation, and temptation, asserts her power, and reigns unsubdued in the conscientious breast."

In the morning Dauverne met her as she descended to the breakfast-room: he started at her swollen eyes and colourless cheeks: she smiled at his apprehensions, at his eager inquiries; and, with a candour all her own, acknowledged that a secret uneasiness had robbed her of repose. "A secret uneasiness," repeated Dauverne, alarmed without knowing why. "Not of recent date," she rejoined; "one which Antonia Forrester must not reveal; but which——" "Antonia Dauverne will not disguise," he concluded, taking her hand. "Antonia Dauverne," she timidly articulated, and a modest blush suffused her cheek, "will know no secrets, will admit of no restrictions." "Sweet girl!"^{if} how

shall Dauverne, a debtor in every thing but love, express his gratitude?"

"Father," said Antonia, as she restored the manuscript—"father," and again she paused. The marquis saw her agitation; he saw that her lips in vain motioned to declare her feelings, and leading her to a sofa he seated himself by her side. "Recover yourself, my beloved child!" he said; "yield not to the too dangerous impulse of sensibility. Let me see the daughter of my Antonia happy, and the world admits not a greater blessing; let me see the smile of cheerfulness illumine her features; let me see her heart restored to peace, and without a murmur, I quit the transitory scenes of life—I close my eyes for ever."— "Ah, no, live my father!" articulated Antonia, reclining her head upon his shoulder; "live to share that peace, to promote that happiness!" He folded her to his bosom, he affectionately

kissed her. " My niece, my daughter, wife of my excellent Dauverne! you have perused the statement of my sins, yet do you not curse me; generous, mild, compassionating girl! you have seen the injuries, the sufferings of your departed mother, yet do you pardon her betrayer." " Yes, yes," exclaimed Antonia, " I have wept the woes of my mother—I have pitied the delusions of my father.—I have gratefully thanked Heaven for taking her spotless spirit to itself—I have ardently implored its mercy for the forgiveness of his transgressions."

The marquis raised his eyes in fervent gratitude. " Ah, may the warning voice of conscience," he ejaculated, " check the mad career of vice!—may youth learn wisdom ere experience interrupts the strides of folly!—may the guileless heart, uninfluenced by the dangerous incitements of passion, resist the persuasive tempter—

sin, and pass the fiery ordeal of the world, with native purity, innocence, and honour ! ” The marchioness, languid and dissatisfied, entered the drawing-room a few moments previous to the arrival of Dr. and Mrs. Moreland, who called to pay their respects to the family on their return to the Grange. The constant theme of the insipidity of the country was fully discussed : the marchioness mentally wondered at the spiritless taste of Mrs. Moreland; while Mrs. Moreland alike condemned the refined discriminations of fashion. Each externally polite, but internally decisive, maintained their several opinions ; and when the prescribed rules of ceremony admitted of a retreat ; when the good vicar and his Margaret returned to their own peaceful, comfortable, social dwelling, the marchioness, in a voice of astonishment, exclaimed—“ What a singular pair is this said parson and his wife ! I

protest I wouldn't for the universe possess such trite ideas." "Say not singular, Caroline," replied the marquis; "I hope for the honour of human nature, the world contains many as irreproachable, though none superior to Dr. and Mrs. Moreland." "The marchioness would imply the world of fashion," observed Dauverne. "Granted," rejoined the marquis, "there indeed they would be singular; for, regardless of opinion, they perform every sacred duty; they defy the prevalence of custom and the ridicule of wit; they persevere in the unshaken steady path of morality, and laugh to scorn the vain ribaldry of the dissolute; they pity the delusions of mankind and pray for their amendment; they see the rapid increase of dissipation with regret, the wreck of innocence with pity; they——" "Hush! hush! my love," interrupted the marchioness, affectedly yawning, "this

panegyric will really put me to sleep. They are very good sort of people in their way, no doubt; but if society consisted of such precise conscientious characters, what a drowsy humdrum assemblage it would be: we should have no operas, no plays, no balls, no routs, no card-playing, nor any one entertaining harmless employ; we should always be preaching upon morality, philosophy, divinity, and such abstruse studies; while fashion, politics, and the chit-chat of the day would be completely out of vogue. Well, think as you please, but Heaven preserve me from the infection of such goodness, and such manners!" — "Pardon me," rejoined Dauverne, who wished to justify the actions of his esteemed tutor; "but the gloomy, saturnine, unsocial disposition you have drawn, belongs not to the parties. Dr. Moreland allows of every innocent amusement; he pictures not religion

in the garb of melancholy, forbearance, and self-denial; he terrifies not his adherents by passing condemnation on every cheerful pursuit. Ask him, and he will tell you that plays, balls, routs, cards, moderately enjoyed, are salutary to the spirits, and beneficial to mankind, as it promotes their intercourse with each other. Ask him, and he will tell you, it is like a medicine, which, administered with caution, invigorates the mind, and restores health to the human form; but which, taken too largely, saps the current of existence, corrodes the vitals, and terminates in death. Alas! how often, from the love of gaming, do we see the unhappy votary of folly, extravagance, and vice, maddened by the frowns of fortune, stripped of his estate, and rendered desperate, grasp for relief the instrument of destruction, and close for ever that life his own actions had made worthless! How often——"

"What a pity," interrupted the marchioness, laughing, "it isn't the Reverend Percival Dauverne! such powers would have ensured a bishopric." Pon honour, the doctor himself to his assembled congregation, could not have delivered a more impressive sermon."

Dauverne, hurt at her frivolity and inattention, seated himself by the side of Antonia; while the marchioness turning unconcernedly to the window, exclaimed in a voice of delight — "Hah, a chariot and six!" "Well, and what of that, Caroline?" inquired the marquis. "Possibly," resumed the marchioness, "some compassionate being, who pities our solitude, and kindly intends us a visit." Lady Selina at the word *solitude* smiled at Antonia, for Dauverne and Sir Frederic were present. "I think we are all alike indebted for the compliment," gravely observed the marquis.

" Nay, my love, you must acknowledge, we are quite as retired here as when at St. Antholine's; a husbaud you know is nobody." The marquis bowed. " And the rest of the party," raising her glass to examine the approaching strangers, " are already so engaged, that unless it is a *sermon*, it isn't in nature to obtain a monosyllable. A new chariot, six roans, three cut-riders; I don't remember the equipage—whose can it be?" " Patience, and we shall soon know," answered the marquis, who quietly retained his seat on the opposite side. " Lord! you have no curiosity," and still she gazed from the window. " Well, heaven grant the honey-moon may be over ere Geraldine pays us a visit, for of all things under the sun, lovers are the most—" " It is Lady Geraldine," interrupted Sir Frederic, looking over her shoulder. " Oh, mercy!" rejoined the marchioness, " and the

honey-moon scarce half expired.” “Geraldine,” repeated the marquis, starting. “Yes, to a certainty Geraldine. What shall I say?—how shall I look?—must I be angry?” importuned the marchioness. “And yet, my love, we must not scold her; for I vow I should have done the self-same thing.” Lady Selina, astonished at the behaviour of her sister, silently awaited the arrival; while Antonia gazed with amazement, not to say disgust, on the apathy of a *fashionable mother*. “Such confidence, for one so young, is extraordinary!” said the marquis, as he hastily paced the apartment. “No letter, no one acknowledgment of error, no one supplication for pardon.” “Say not *confidence*,” repeated the marchioness: “I tell you it is only the *care* of good breeding, the polish of *life*. Why, if the daughter of a mechanic had eloped, she could have but wept, have knelt,

and entreated; surely then, the daughter of an English marquis must be superior to such common-place practices. To a certainty, Geraldine will be quite the rage next winter—the talk, the gaze, the envy, the admiration of the whole world—it will be *la manteline à la Geraldine*, and *le chapeau à la Geraldine*. Lord!" with a self-satisfied air, "she'll eclipse all the modern *elegantes*." "Enviable distinction!" mournfully remarked the marquis, "to have her follies recounted, and her extravagance enumerated; to squander for one night's splendour a competence for thousands; to injure her constitution by the mad orgies of fashion; to outvie her contemporaries in dissipation; to leave a name, not immortalized by virtue, but stigmatized by impropriety."

The marchioness smiled incredulously; she replied not, for the carriage had stopped, the step was let

down, and a laugh in the anti-room proclaimed the approach of the visitors. "Silly wretch!" exclaimed the well-remembered voice of the bride. "I protest you have all the antics of a fresh imported monkey." The door was thrown open, and the groom of the chamber announced—Lady Geraldine Sunderland. Undaunted, unabashed, negligently hanging on the arm of her lord, this modern belle made her *début* in the character of a wife. She led him up to the marquis, and with a playful smile—"There, papa, receive my offering: blest with the stamp of novelty, I give you a son, whom, if Art had not made a beau, Nature intended for a— a— a— what shall I say, love?" playing with the glass which suspended from his neck, and looking archly in his face. "By the bye, Selina," suddenly turning, "how is Juno and her puppy?" Sir Frederic and Dauverne burst into a

loud laugh ; the marquis in vain attempted to conceal the risibility of his features. Sunderland cast a half angry glance at his bride ; and turning by way of saying something—“ Ah, my dear marchioness ! how have you been this age and a half. London is so stupid, nobody to be seen; ‘pon my soul, I’d bet a thousand one might run a race in Bond-street.” “ Lord & but you had every one with you you know,” simpered the marchioness : “ just married, how could you possibly think of Bond-street ” “ There’s a something in variety,” resumed the bridegroom, spitefully glancing at Lady Geraldine, as though he would pay her for the last compliment, “ necessary to a man’s existence ; an angel would exhaust one’s constancy.” “ An angel will never try yours,” exclaimed Lady Geraldine. “ Granted,” rejoined Sunderland. “ Bless me, how witty ! worthy to be compiled in the first new

dictionary of vamped up phrases. Well, do tell mamma what else you saw, for she loves curiosities, and *travellers* you know are privileged.” “ Faith ! I saw that lovely, captivating, entrancing Duchess of Delaware !” “ Heaven, what a specimen of matrimony ! thought Antonia. “ Did you ? ” eagerly questioned the marchioness ; “ did you see that divine, that charming woman ? ” “ Ah, Lord, yes ! ” exclaimed Lady Geraldine, laughing, “ and a *divine* employment she has got.” “ What is it ? ” again inquired her mother. “ Why she has got to nurse, not Beddingfield, but Beddingfield’s papa : the old don has followed her to London, and now poor Laura is immersed in the *joys of matrimony*.” “ Isn’t it the duty of a wife to attend her husband ? ” significantly asked Sunderland, “ It is a duty,” pointedly observed the marquis, “ with which fashionable life dis-

penses." "Certainly," said Dauverne, smiling, "the only way to be independent of each other is to marry. Remember, my sweet Antonia," in a low whisper, "I am speaking *only* of *fashionable life*." "Thank heaven the circle is confined!" fervently replied Antonia, "for not to be empress of the universe would I be a member of its absurdities." "And where is Lord Westbrook?" questioned Lady Selina. "I assure you; more agreeable than ever," answered her sister. "Nay," rejoined Selina, "I did not say how is, but where is Lord Westbrook?" "In London no doubt," said Sir Frederic Stanley. "Oh, no indeed, not in London; he is with Bravenger at Brighton, and has kindly promised to pass a month with us at Waterland Park." "I wish we could prevail upon the lovely Miss Forrester at the same time to favour us with her society," whispered Sun-

derland, approaching and taking her hand.

Antonia withdrew it, and coldly bowed. " You know not," he undauntedly continued; " what an obligation it would confer ; and 'pon honour, there is not a created being who would more duly estimate the condensation ! " Mary, the betrayed, the injured heart-broken Mary, rushed cross her mind, and with a start of horror and disgust she turned from the practised seducer. Not a shadow of compunction, not a shadow of regret, could she trace in his features ; he looked around, as though the censure of the world was as much despised as the upbraiding power of conscience. " Now that I have insured the heiress," he mentally planned, as he gazed on the superior attractions of Antonia ; " now that the eighty thousand charms of Geraldine are my own, and the mask of adulmentation is no longer neces-

sary, what glory, what rapture, what renown, to snatch this sweet girl from the rusticity of education—to convince Carberry of my superior powers to please—to show her to the world as my envied mistress!" "Come, girls, are you for a stroll?" proposed Lady Geraldine; "I protest I am tired of sitting."

Lady Selina and Antonia arose. "Where are you going?" inquired Sunderland, starting from his reverie. "I won't tell you." "Oh! but you must; remember *obey* and tremble." "Not I indeed, I vow I never said it." "Then we are not married." "With all my heart," carelessly. "What, would you resign me?" "Resign you, oh, Lord, yes!" laughing, "and give any body a thousand pounds to take you off my hands." "Come, come, this *bardinage* is quite absurd; indeed, my dear Geraldine," playfully taking her hand, "you are

such a madcap, that if your sister and Miss Forrester did not thoroughly know you, from the picture you have sketched, they'd be afraid to encounter the galling fetters of Hymen."

"No wonder," said her ladyship; "girls, don't marry; for liberty's sake don't marry. Men, believe me, are little better than monsters, for this once obsequious being, this Sunderland, this husband, who was ever so submissive, and so tender, now absolutely, in spite of all my frowns, will assert his own opinion." "Could your ladyship possibly expect otherwise?" inquired Sir Frederic Stanley. "Indeed I did not expect about it." "I believe you," exclaimed Lady Selina, "or you would never have intrusted your peace to Mr. Sunderland." The bridegroom bowed. "Silly child, how you talk! you were always so sentimental and so romantic; my peace indeed! my peace be assured is in my

own keeping." "And yet you have a husband," observed the amazed Antonia. "The very reason," said Dauverne; "husbands are—" "Hush! hush! my *moralistical* cousin," interrupted Lady Geraldine, gaily taking his arm and hurrying forward; "come; I must monopolize a little of your conversation: remember you owe me gratitude for my *disinterested* behaviour. "Most certainly I owe you eternal gratitude," exclaimed Dauverne, tenderly glancing at Antonia: "but how, my fair cousin, can you possibly constitute it *disinterested*?" "Have I not relinquished the title of marchioness?"

Dauverne smiled. "Heavens!" exclaimed Sunderland, as he strolled by the side of Antonia, never "till this moment, have I properly appreciated the delights of the country!" "The country, Mr. Sunderland," replied Antonia; "I thought the country was

your aversion?" "I assure you, Miss Forrester, you injure my discernment: green fields and shady bowers are so soothing, so tranquillizing to the feelings: the gaiety of the metropolis perverts the taste—the serenity of domestic quiet refines it." "It does indeed," said the unsuspecting girl. "How calm, how beautiful is the surrounding scene!—The sun sports upon the Avon, and spreads o'er nature's carpet her enlivening beams. Ere I quitted Italy I thought the world could not have produced ~~so~~ charming a spot as St. Eustacia; but Warwickshire to me is even more attractive." "It is a perfect Arcadia!" exclaimed Sunderland, apparently imbibing the same enthusiasm, "a Paradise! an Elysium! and its inhabitants, like the fabled Houries of another world!" "One would suppose you a Mahometan," observed Lady Setina, who had overheard the conclusion.

ing sentence. “ Nay, suppose me what you please,” rejoined Sunderland, “ believe me ‘tis of no moment—I was merely apostrophizing the observation of Miss Forrester.” “ Of me, Mr. Sunderland ?” questioned Antonia. “ That is—I was commenting on a scene which you had pointed out, as enchanting.” “ The scene before you,” said Sir Frederic, “ pointedly fixing his eyes on Lady Geraldine, “ ought to be *enchanting*.” “ What a strange being is Stanley !” pursued Sunderland, as Sir Frederic and Lady Selina lingered behind. “ Alas ! he knows not, he can ill imagine, the misery attending a disappointment of the heart.” Antonia started—the wan form of Mary flitted before her—she fixed her eyes reproachfully on Sunderland, and articulated—“ Dreadful !” “ Ah, dreadful indeed !” repeated the deceiver, “ to know one’s-self for life wedded to wretchedness ; to know one’s

self a miserable enslaved being ; to see perfection without the power to claim it." " Whose lot would you picture ?" asked Antonia, who understood not the illusion. " My own." " Your own, Mr. Sunderland," she replied, in accents of amazement. " Alas ! Miss Forrester," and he threw a pensive-sadness over his features, " I am deceived ; Lady Geraldine is not the woman to make me happy. Blest, envied Dauverne !" Antonia looked proudly, looked indignantly at him—the humble dwelling of old William appeared in sight, she pointed towards it, and ejaculated—" Mary." Sunderland for a moment looked confounded ; but instantly recovering his confidence : " Mary," he repeated, " you speak in enigmas, Miss Forrester, I do not understand you." " Can you possibly require a solution ?" questioned Antonia— " can your eye rest on yon little residence,

and your heart not feel remorse? Visit the grave of your victim, and let it be awakened—hear the curse of her father, and refrain from the pursuit of vice." "Here is surely some misconception, some false accusation; or ——" "No, no," interrupted Antonia, "the moment of dissolution is not the moment of disguise. Mary, in the awful struggles of departing nature, confessed the story; branded with eternal disgrace the name of Sunderland; and taught the innocent fearfully to shun him."

She awaited not a reply, but hurried her pace to overtake Lady Geraldine and Dauverne. "Do you know, my love," said her ladyship, taking the arm of Sunderland, "your quizzical guardian, old Penrose, is still at Cheltenham?" "Well, and what of that?" he replied in accents of tenderness. "In your presence, my sweet Geraldine, is it in nature to pi-

ture anything so opposite as age and moroseness?" "I shall never forget," rejoined the bride, smiling at his compliment, "our visit to old Surly; bluff was the order of the day: never before, I actually believe, were the wife and daughter of an English marquis treated with so little respect."

"Mr. Penrose," exclaimed Antonia. "Say no more, child," interrupted her ladyship, "you we all know were quite fascinated. In the name of mystery," archly, "was it with Jonathan or Obadiah?" "With the humanity of Mr. Penrose, and the excellence of his daughter," firmly replied Antonia. "Ah, true, little Mahala! The world asserts, that Sir Charles Powersly means to share with her his honours. How will the humility of the spirit cope with the vanity and wickedness of the flesh?" "Well started, Geraldine," exclaimed Sunland, laughing, "I wonder whether

old primitive will hail his daughter lady." "It is of little consequence, provided the actions are correct, what may be the appellation," remarked Dauverne. "There you and I differ, my meek cousin," said Lady Geraldine. "Affection," continued Dauverne, regardless of the interruption, "sanctions the petitions of love, and no doubt happiness will result."

On the succeeding morning, Lady Selina received a letter from the Priory, announcing the happy effects of a meeting which once threatened such a fatal termination. "Thank heaven! my invalid is better," wrote the Countess of Carberry: "each day with improved health I trace the promises of restored felicity; each day, with the most assiduous attention, does he seek to expunge from memory the force of former unkindness. In his affection it is forgotten—in his smile it has expired: I only felt misery when

I thought him ungrateful—I only murmured when I knew him estranged. But it is past—the anxious moments of uncertainty—the keener convictions of despair are fled, and have given place to joy. Yes, my first loved, Selina, yes, my esteemed Antonia, Carberry will be all my own—will be my defender, my protector, my husband : the so lately bereaved Cecilia will no longer be an object of pity; will no longer be a neglected widowed wife. And yet in this world happiness is incomplete ; in this world happiness exists not without alloy—my mother slumbers in the grave—my mother is unconscious of my felicity.—She shared my sighs, but she shares not my exultation. Pardon, all seeing Providence, the being who would arraign thy wisdom ! pardon the murmurs which memory calls forth ! My mother expired in innocence—my mother is happy—my mother has paid the sure sad

debt of nature, and rests on the bosom
of her God. I hear the voice of Car-
berry—he calls his Cecilia—he bids
her lay aside her pen, and prepare for
pleasing intelligence—he gives me a
letter. Ah, 'tis the hand-writing of
my brother! Pardon me, my beloved
friend, in thus so abruptly quitting
you.—Powersly is in the Downs; he
writes in the assured language of hap-
piness. In a few days he flies to
Cheltenham to claim his bride; in a
few days his fate and the fate of Ma-
hala will be united. May heaven
smile on the compact!—may destiny
prove auspicious! may the cemented
union of affection continue until death!
—may no untoward circumstance
blight the promised bud of felicity!—
may time glide on in an uninterrupted
course of delightful tranquillity!—
may their confidence, their friendship,
their love, terminate but with exist-
ence! Sir Charles purposes bringing

to us his lovely Mahala, as soon as she shall have become my sister; and when the call of duty again summonses him on service, she will return to her excellent father."

"I wonder," said Sunderland, who had heard the conclusion of the letter, "if the sect of simplicity will excommunicate old Penrose! 'Tis a heinous offence, to yield his innocent lamb a victim to a profane alien, from the pure training of their own flock." "Not they," replied Lady Geraldine, "if he was a poor member possibly they might; but his riches will purchase him an exception from the rigour of conscientious decisions." "Oh, fie, fie, what a railer!" exclaimed the marchioness. "Nay, it's true believe me," rejoined her ladyship. "What is it gold will not do?" "With worldly men it will do everything," observed Dauverne, glancing at Sunderland; "with the conscienti-

ous its powers are limited." "And pray of whom may the conscientious consist?" inquired Sunderland, with an air as though he understood not the illusion. "Those," replied Dauverne, "who act uprightly; who, in preference to the leaders of extravagance, folly, and licentiousness, follow implicitly the impulse of honour, and the direction of truth." "Are you satisfied, my love?" asked Lady Geraldine, nodding significantly. "Oh, faith, yes! as much as I can possibly desire. Do you know," addressing the marchioness, "I wish to go to Bath this winter." "No, no, no," warmly exclaimed Lady Geraldine, "I won't hear a word about it—I have promised my dear friend, the Duchess of Delaware, to be in London, and I cannot change my arrangements." "Your arrangements," repeated Sunderland, "you forget, Geraldine, mine are to take the lead. Now, my dear

Madam," again turning to the marchioness. "Now, my dear mamma," interrupted Lady Geraldine. "Hush! hush! How can I possibly judge the cause? state your complaints one at a time, and I will be the mediatrix." "My complaint," resumed Sunderland, "is, that I wish to go to Bath, and Geraldine wishes to go to London." "My complaint," eagerly stated the half angry bride, "is, that I wish to go to London, and Sunderland wishes to go to Bath." "Men are strange, capricious, obstinate beings!" said the marchioness, gaily: "'tis as well quietly to give them their way, for in the end we know we must submit." "Must submit," repeated the incensed beauty, "indeed, Madam, I—" "Geraldine," interrupted her mother, "remember till now you never had a husband." "True, true, child," exclaimed Sunderland, exultingly, "remember your duty," Lady

Geraldine bit her lip, her eyes flashed fire, and she cast on her lord and master a look which seemed to say—Would I had died, ere to you I sacrificed my freedom ! “ Be pacified,” resumed the marchioness, reading the displeasure of her daughter, “ we must compromise matters. Come now,” addressing Sunderland, “ coolly and dispassionately tell me what is in favour of this trip to Bath ?” “ My wishes.” “ And pray,” turning to Lady Geraldine, “ what is in favour of this trip to London ?” “ My wishes.” “ Well, I see no law against both being pleased.” “ How? how?” eagerly questioned the parties. “ By each following their own course.” Lady Geraldine smiled. “ What a separation so soon ?” inquired Sunderland. “ It is indeed a novel species of advice from a mother,” observed the marquis. “ Oh! my love, it was only started to keep peace. I warrant

they'd be alike tired of the excursion, and gladly meet half way ere a fortnight had elapsed." "I don't know that," muttered Lady Geraldine. "Faith! I believe we should," said Sunderland. "Come, let us be friends." "Well, here's my hand," recalling a smile, "and since you acknowledge yourself in the wrong—" "Pardon me, there you are mistaken—" "Why, Lord!" interrupted her ladyship, "you know you are very silly." "And you," retorted Sunderland, "know you are very tiresome." "And you," rejoined the bride, "know you are self-willed." "And you," concluded the bridegroom. "know you are domineering."

Thus passed the lingering hours, which were to intervene, ere the fiat of destiny was to seal irrevocably, the fates of Lady Selina and Sir Frederic, of Antonia and Dauerne. Constantly

they saw before their eyes a terrifying spectacle of matrimony, yet were they not dismayed—it was a union of interest on one side, of caprice on the other ; love lighted not the torch, esteem sanctioned not the offering—how could happiness be found where happiness was never sought after?—how could peace result from the foundation of impropriety, impudence, and folly ? Lady Geraldine, indifferent to all but the voice of pleasure, sighed for the moment which was to restore her to its allurements, while Sunderland, influenced by no other call, saw, as he could not conquer the prejudice, and subdue the honour of Antonia, the approach of liberty with unfeigned satisfaction. Every necessary arrangement was formed ; the writings were completed ; the settlements adjusted ; the plans premised.

The Marquis and Marchioness of Allingthorn, Sunderland, and Lady Geraldine, immediately after the cere-

mony were to repair to St. James's Square. Sir Frederic was to conduct his bride to Stanley Park; and Dauverne and his Antonia were to visit an estate which had been his mother's in the north of England. The evening previous to this long talked of, long wished for day, with hearts light as were their prospects, Lady Selina and Antonia visited the vicarage. "We were just speaking of you," said Mrs. Moreland, meeting them at the hall-door; "we were just, shall I say? lamenting to-morrow's desertion." "Ah, to-morrow we shall lose Miss Forrester?" exclaimed Percival, kissing her hand. "That we most certainly shall," observed the doctor. "But we shall see Miss Forrester again," lisped Rosa. "No, never, my child." "Never," repeated Percival and Ellen at the same moment, "never, papa," and a cloud of sorrow pervaded their features. "Foolish!" exclaimed Stanley, in a

voice of importance, "Miss Forrester is going to be married." "And what is to be married?" asked Rosa, looking eagerly in her face. Lady Selina smiled: while Antonia, raising the little inquisitor in her arms, kissed her blooming cheek. "Yonder comes cousin Stanley and Mr. Dauverne," exclaimed Ellen, gazing from the window. "Ah, how fast they walk! now they have reached the garden-gate." And the succeeding instant ushered them into the parlour. "How could you possibly discover our route?" inquired Lady Selina. "How could you possibly leave the Grange without us?" asked Sir Frederic. "Old William was our director," said Dauverne, "though sympathy's impelling powers would have conducted us hither." The conversation became general; sometimes the artless prattle of the children would call the truant blush into the cheeks of the intended

brides, by their illusions to the morrow : and when they arose to depart, when already they had bid adieu to Mrs. Moreland and their young favourites, the doctor shook them heartily by the hand, and with an arch smile exclaimed—" I will not say farewell, for in the morning I shall see you."

CHAP. VI.

CHEERFUL was the peal of the village bells, as the destined morning for solemnizing the double marriages dawned;—sweetly did they float upon the breeze, now dying as though in distance, and now returning in full and mellow swell! The vapours of night were dispersed; the sun shot his genial rays through the empurpled clouds, and decked the face of creation in the bright garb of cheerfulness. Lady Geraldine hailed the epoch as a release from solitude—Sir Frederic and Dauverne hailed it with rapture—Lady Selina and Antonia with triplidation.

It was on the stroke of nine when the party assembled in the breakfast-

room. The marquis had relinquished his native gloom, and looked with satisfaction and delight upon his children: the marchioness was unusually gay, and smiled with gracious condescension on the intended brides. "So, notwithstanding all my warnings, and all my complaints," playfully exclaimed Lady Geraldine, "you will be married? Foolish girls! If I was single—heigh-ho!" "Well, and if you was single," asked Sunderland, "what then?" "Why then, Don Abomiligue, I would maintain my independence; I would flutter around the flame but never burn' my wings." "No, no, Geraldine, you would be like the moth in the fable." "Not I indeed." "Oh! but you would." "Oh! but I would not." "I say yes." "And I say no." "How beautiful Miss Forrester looks to day!" observed Sunderland, gazing on the blushing girl. "Beautiful, Mr.

Sunderland," repeated Lady Geraldine.

"The cerulean tint of her eye," pursued the beau, "mocks the face of Heaven with its brightness." "Cerulean," again repeated the astonished bride. "Yes, there's such a softness, such a celestial expression! I always admired blue eyes!" "Blue, Mr. Sunderland," a third time reiterated the pouting Geraldine. "Yes, blue," he replied with an affected indifference; "there's something so devilish vixenish in black." "A truce! a truce!" exclaimed the marchioness. "Upon my honour," she continued, "these young people put me in mind of a kitten and a puppy; fighting till they kiss, and kissing till they fight."—"Well, thank Heaven," said Lady Geraldine, "to-morrow I shall have another resource?" "What than kissing?" demanded Sunderland. "Yes," she petulantly replied, "or fighting?" "And pray what may it

be?" questioned the marchioness. "Why, to-morrow," said the exulting beauty, "I shall be surrounded by my friends; and Lord Westbrook has promised——" "The devil he has," interrupted Sunderland, "what has he promised?" "Are you jealous?" laughing; "has that demoniac passion gained admittance into your mellifluous bosom?" "Faith, no! never was jealous but once in my life; and that was three summers ago at Brighton, when the Prince admired Carberry's Eclipse in preference to my Spitfire. "Jealous of a horse!" exclaimed Sir Frederic Stanley. "And why not?" resumed Sunderland. "'Tis a passion you know," observed the marchioness, "which any thing may excite." "In a sensitive breast like Sunderland's," sarcastically concluded his *idolized* Geraldine. "Come, come, who knows but you may have a spice of the same in-

firmity yourself," rejoined Sunderland; "human nature is fallible; a pair of *blue eyes* for instance," glancing significantly at Antonia, "may transform the wild equilibrium of your ideas into the raging, foaming, ungovernable delirium of prejudice and passion." "Nay," she archly retorted, "a monkey may occasion the transition—but a husband, never. I have often heard the Duchess of Delaware ask, what was the most obnoxious of all domestic animals? and now," folding her arms and affectedly sighing, "I am sure I could tell her." "And I have often heard Lord Carberry say," retorted Sunderland, "that an angel before wedlock sinks into a mere woman after." "Neither the Duchess of Delaware or the Earl of Carberry are oracles," observed Sir Frederic. "Yes they are in the world of fashion, my dear Stanley," replied Dauverne. "Her grace married the title,

not the man; and his lordship married the person, not the mind. Of course, the one detests the incumbrance; and the other seeks variety, for he has neither steadiness or discrimination to value virtue." "Yes, henceforth he will value both," said Lady Selina; "henceforth, gratitude will create esteem, esteem will re-kindle love; henceforth, Cecilia, the injured gentle Cecilia, will be happy!" "I hope so," fervently ejaculated Dauverne. "I cannot doubt it," rejoined her ladyship. "His heart——."

At that instant the carriages were announced; Dauverne snatched the hand of Antonia and led her forward; a timid blush suffused her features, and bent her eyes to the ground. "Courage!" whispered the enraptured lover as she sprung into the chariot; but still she trembled, and when she reached the foot of the altar—when she beheld her esteemed friend, Dr.

Moreland, with the opened page in his hand, she clung to the arm of the marquis, as though from him she would claim support. "Banish these vain terrors," he said, in a low voice. "Antonia, my beloved child, let me see you less agitated! recall your wonted firmness. Look at Selina, and from her example imbibe composure." Antonia faintly smiled; she turned her eyes from her father to her sister; a calm serenity shone o'er her features—she looked impressed with the solemnity of the sacred covenant into which she was about to enter; but not, like herself, abashed, terrified, dismayed. "Beholders might suspect," resumed the marquis, "that the hand was reluctantly given—that the heart signed not the compact."

Antonia started—instantly her countenance brightened—instantly the air of confusion vanished: she seemed as though she would confute the possibi-

lity of such a suggestion ; and when she resigned her hand—when she sealed the irrevocable vow, her eyes beamed an expression which seemed to say —To your care I transfer all prospects of earthly comfort ! Dauverne thanked her with a smile of rapture ; with a smile which replied—That deposit shall be the dearest treasure of my life ; shall be valued ever as the first best gift of indulgent heaven ! In a voice strong and impressive, Dr. Moreland performed the immutable ceremony ; and, in the spirit of true devotion, proclaimed the duties of the marriage state. No supine inanity marked his diction—he seemed to feel every syllable he uttered, for in the welfare of his pupil and favourite, of his nephew and niece, he was alike interested ; and when the badge sparkled on the finger of each ; when the book was closed, and the ceremony concluded, he congratulated them

with friendly warmth—with almost paternal affection. Sir Frederic Stanley and Dauerne, with their brides, from the church-door, immediately commenced their respective excursions; while the Marquis and Marchioness of Allington, Sunderland, Lady Geraldine, and Dr. Moreland returned to the Grange; and in less than an hour, bidding adieu to the worthy divine, the assembled party quitted Warwickshire for London.

To follow Lady Geraldine and Sunderland through the intricate mazes of dissipation, would fill whole volumes—would shock the senses of the ignorant, and yet call not a blush to the cheeks of their contemporaries. With avidity they plunged into the extravagancies and licentiousness of the times. Their superb mansion, was the morning lounge and evening rendezvous for

the fashionable and the dissolute masquerades, balls, routs, concerts, alternately succeeded each other, and crowned with notoriety the names of these her insatiate followers.

Sunderland keeps his mistresses and his racers; games with the votaries of fortune, and drinks with the votaries of Bacchus. Lady Geraldine smiles at the glaring infidelities of her husband; listens with complaisance to the insidious flattery of Lord Westbrook, and despises as *plebeianish* the opinion of the world. The papers teem with the names of the honourable Mr. Sunderland and his lovely partner. In Hyde Park, their's is the most superb equipage; at St. James's, her attire is the most magnificent: their entertainments are ever marked as being the most extravagant; and their conduct as being the most conspicuous.

In the systematic pursuits of the day,

they are likewise the most forward; and while the *refinements* of custom lead the husband to grace the ring of *pugilism*, inclination, and Lord Westbrook, leads the fair wife to the haunts of gaiety, and the *innocent recreations* of fashion. The marquis beholds with horror their hasty strides to destruction; in vain he essays to save his self-devoted daughter; his remonstrances are unheeded, his arguments despised, his interference ridiculed; and even their *most intimate friends* scruple not to affirm, that the Fleet will close the career of the honourable Thomas Sunderland, from whose almost impervious labyrinth the *generosity* of his lady, in the *bequest* of Viscount Westbrook, gained by the fist of Doctors Commons, can alone release him.

The Duchess of Delaware, once more restored to liberty in the convales-

cence of his grace, pursues the same tract; conceals beneath the specious smile of dissimulation the enormities of the heart; and nominally retains the appellation of virtue. She is visited by most, courted by many, despised by all; though the circles of the *haut ton*, through respect to a certain *feel-*
low feeling, considerately throws a veil of oblivion over the vices of a *lady of fashion*. Lord Carberry still fans the hopes of his amiable countess with the promises of amendment: they continue at the priory, for the languor and weakness occasioned by confinement has left him unequal to the noisy, unsteady bustle, ever the attendant of a town life. Cecilia, in the hours of affliction, gentle and uncomplaining, enjoys his society; thinks not of past sorrows; pictures peace, for the extent of happiness lies not beyond his affection.

Lady Powersly, on a visit to her reverend and excellent father, at Cheltenham, impatiently awaits the return of Sir Charles, who now commanding a seventy-four gun ship, rides triumphantly o'er *British ground*, and echoing his thunders on the hostile shores, impresses the united foes with the strength and valour of his country. She repines at the stern mandate of duty, prays most fervently for the mild influence of peace, and supplicates for her hero the protection of Heaven.

Mr. Penrose seconds the petitions of his child; for though a follower of the professed disclaimers of war, he values bravery, reverences true courage, and, with the patriot sensations of loyalty, feels secure in the happiness of his daughter, as that happiness is intrusted to the care, discretion, and generosity of a *Trafalgar hero—a French thrasher*.

On the ceremony of marriage, Mahala resigned the sect of her forefathers; but though she has exchanged her unadored garb, still does her heart retain its excellence—still do her manners retain their native simplicity.

Dr. and Mrs. Moreland, a pattern for domestic virtue, piety, and excellence, persevere in the arduous task of instructing their children; and, in the infant buddings of future worth, already do they reap a recompense, for Stanley, Ellen, Percival, and Rosa, following the bright path of their example, promise every thing the parental heart can wish.

A second victim in the person of old William evinced the fatal consequence of seduction; for ere the chilling blast of winter had stript the yellow leaves from their parent

boughs, removed from the humble shelter of beneficence, his aged form quietly reposed by the side of Hannah and Mary.

The Marquis of Allington, since the partial acknowledgment of his daughter, has in part recovered from the deep and settled gloom which once almost marked him a misanthrope; though an habitual melancholy, occasioned by the remembrance of Antonia, and the constant concomitant in the breast of honour, for one deviation from rectitude, still pervades his countenance, and stamps his every feature with the deep unvarying colour of regret.

In the unprincipled career of Sunderland, and Lady Geraldine, he experiences a never-failing source of uneasiness; and not the mild virtuous, and persevering correctness of his

remaining children, can erase the apprehensions for their future fate.

The marchioness, who lightly skims the surface, and sees not beyond the present hour, satisfied in the acknowledged elegance, and superior attractions of this daughter of her own heart, exultingly listens to the report of fame; and smiles as she hails her beloved, her beautiful Geraldine, the avowed leader of fashion and notoriety.

Sir Frederic and Lady Selina Stanley, happy in the affection of each other, possess not a wish ungratified. He wonders at past versatility, as he can now discriminate, between the cursory glance of beautiful features, and the more lasting impression of affection founded on esteem. He has studied well the disposition of the being whom Heaven has given him; and gratefully ac-

knowledges, that were he at liberty to range throughout the world—to admire and select, his choice would rest on the partner of his fate—on her who loved him in spite of his errors; who confided to him her peace notwithstanding his characteristic inconstancy.

To say Dauvergne and his Antonia were happy is unnecessary. Can affection like their's, formed on esteem—can hearts like their's impelled by sympathy—can conduct like their's, dictated by conscience, promise less than happiness, point to less than felicity? If they knew a care, it is in the certainty of separation—in the mutability of sublunary bliss—it is in the known, the irrevocable mandate which severs the tenderest connexions, which widows the most devoted hearts; yet they imbitter not the present hour of enjoyment by the anticipation of future,

have defied temptation, she might have recovered peace, she might have passed whole years in its solitude, alive only to the emotion of friendship.

"The lady abbess, by incontrovertible arguments, and pious injunctions, would have extirpated the fatal seeds of passion, would have robbed her heart of its sorrows; while sister Benedicta, the tender confidant of her youth, the beloved repository of her secrets, would have been the assuager, the sympathizer, the comforter."

"And her child?" questioned Dauverne. Antonia replied not.

"Her child," he continued, gazing intently on her, "had never visited the Vicarage—I had never visited St. Eustacia."

"True," murmured Antonia, throwing her arms around his neck, and

hiding her blushing cheek upon his bosom, "her child had never been a wife."

"*Whatever is is right,*" exclaimed Dauverne, after a pause of rapture.

Antonia silently pressed his hand; and a sweet smile betrayed that she acceded to the declaration.

Having brought Striking Likenesses to a conclusion, the author thinks it necessary to observe, that her aim has been to lash the general follies and vices of the age, not, in the guise of fiction, to expose living characters to public censure. Should any of her readers see themselves reflected in the mirror held to their view, may they improve by the hint, and in the room of folly substitute wisdom! Yet gratefully can she add, that Albion's happy isle, though it has cause

to blush at its Earl of Carberrys Viscount Westbrooks, Tom Sunderlands, Duchess of Delawares, Lady Geraldines, &c. &c. may yet proudly boast of its Doctor and Mrs. Morelands, Sir Frederic Stanleys, Mr. Penroses, Powerslys, Dauernes, Countess of Carberrys, Lady Selinas, and Antonias.

THE END.

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