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Title: *Lovers and Friends; or, Modern  
Attachments*

Place of publication: London

Publisher: Printed at the Minerva Press for A.  
K. Newman and Co.

Date of publication: 1821

Edition: 1st ed.

Number of volumes: 5

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LOVERS AND FRIENDS.

A NOVEL.

Printed by J. Darling, Leadenhall-street London.

LOVERS AND FRIENDS;

OR,

MODERN ATTACHMENTS.

A NOVEL.

IN FIVE VOLUMES.

BY  
ANNE OF SWANSEA,

AUTHOR OF

CONVICTION, GONZALO DE BALDIVIA, CHRONICLES OF AN ILLUSTRIOUS  
HOUSE, SECRET AVENGERS, SECRETS IN EVERY MANSION, CAMBRIAN  
PICTURES, CESARIO ROSALBA,  
&c.&c.

“I hold a mirror up for men to see  
How bad they are, how good they ought to be.”

VOL. 1.

LONDON:

Printed at the Minerva Press for  
A.K. NEWMAN AND CO. LEADENHALL—STREET.

1821.

INSCRIPTION.

WITH

SINCERE ADMIRATION OF HIS MUSICAL  
GENIUS,

AND

THE MOST PERFECT RESPECT FOR HIS

HONOURABLE CHARACTER,

*THESE VOLUMES ARE INSCRIBED TO*

JOHN EMDIN, ESQ.

BY HIS OBLIGED FRIEND

AND DEVOTED SERVANT,

ANN OF SWANSEA.

College-street, Swansea,  
July 10, 1820.

## PREFACE.

KING Solomon, the very wisest of all wise sages, past, present, and to come, declared, in his day, there was nothing new under the sun: how then can the weak brain of a modern author (ye sons and daughters of fire-eyed Genius, be not, I beseech you, offended; I only mean weak, when compared with the brain of king Solomon) pretend to lead the fastidious critic through paths untrodden before, or present to his lynx-like sight sentiments and incidents unheard of either in prose or verse? The difficulty of twisting, twining, and winding together, three or four volumes, of sufficient interest to attract public attention, is labour that requires an ingenuity few have genius enough to accomplish, and affords a weighty reason why prefaces are growing out of fashion; for an author finds his inventive faculties spun as thin as a cobweb in supplying the requisite number of pages for his story, without wasting his metaphors, sublimity, and brilliance, on a preface. Nor is it my intention to suffer my wit to evaporate in a preface, which is generally designed to trumpet the superior talents of the writer above his contemporaries, or to defy, or oftener deprecate, those terrific inquisitorial gentlemen, the Reviewers; I will only relate a short conversation that took place in my apartment the other day, and then dismiss my gentle or ungentle reader to the approval or condemnation of my story, as shall seem most just to his or her fancy.

“Lovers and Friends!” said Miss Sylphina Thistledown, with a most captivating lisp, glancing her soft, languishing blue eyes over the manuscript as it lay on my table—“it is really a dear enchanting title, and promises—”

“Pshaw!” interrupted her maiden aunt, Miss Mentoria Grizzle, “you are a simpleton, niece! the title promises a jumble of sickening nonsense, only fit to turn the heads of weak silly girls—Lovers and Friends! the title is really ridiculous.”

“Why, la! aunt,” lisped the fair Sylphina, “you no doubt have experienced the blessings of friendship, and have know the exquisite pleasure of listening to a lover.”

Miss Grizzle frowned, and craning her scraggy neck beyond its usual altitude, replied—“No, Miss Thistle-down; I thank my lucky stars I have always had discretion enough to prevent my being made the dupe of man’s artful views and flatteries; and as to friends, I never wanted any; because, niece, I always carried a sure and certain one in my pocket.”

“For all this,” resumed Sylphina, laying her white hand on my manuscript, the forefinger of which was circled with a garnet ring, a love-token given her by a smart ensign in a marching regiment, whose return, though absent far beyond his promised time, she still expected with all the credulity of inexperienced eighteen, to perform the vow he swore while placing it on her finger—a vow which he had since repeated to twenty romantic fair ones, with the same sincerity and the same convenient forgetfulness—“for all this, aunt,” said Miss Thistledown, “I shall be quite impatient for the publication of this work, because I have so much pleasure in reading a novel, and because I hope to find the hero a tall, handsome young man, and a faithful lover, and that the work will prove there may be friendship without the interference of money, and modern attachments as strong as any the days of my great-grandmother could boast.”

For the confirmation or disappointment of Miss Sylphina Thistledown’s hopes, I beg to refer the reader to the following chapters, by which, if he or she is not improved

and entertained, it is not my fault, as I solemnly declare it was my intention that they should have equally as much pleasure in reading as I had in writing, what I positively think a pathetic-comic-moral story.

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## LOVERS AND FRIENDS.

### CHAPTER I.

And, as he gaz'd,  
There flash'd upon his brain the memory  
Of a dark and fearful deed.

With how secure a brow and specious form  
He gilds the secret villain! DRYDEN.

*An Orphan—The Apartment of a Miser—An  
interested Marriage—A Woman of Fashion.*

“POOR child! poor child!” exclaimed Mrs. Milman, in a mournful tone, as she repeatedly kissed the blooming cheek of a beautiful girl, who was fondly twining its alabaster arms round her neck—“poor little innocent! thy prattle and thy playful ways have so won my heart, that I know not how to part with thee. But it must be so; for when the earl, and the countess, and their noble friends, arrive, this will be no place for thee, and no one can tell when I shall be at liberty to send for thee back to the castle.”

The warmth and earnestness of Mrs. Milman's caresses, together with the tone of unusual seriousness in which she spoke, communicated a degree of sorrow to the child's mind, who fixed her lovely eyes on her face, and as she repeated—“I must, however unwilling, send thee away,” she pressed her coral lips on Mrs. Milman's, and hastily replied—“No, no; pray do not send your own Cecilia away—I love you dearly, dearly—I will be a good child—I will never ride on Triton's back again—I will never slide down the banisters of the stairs: pray do not send me away—I will be very good—indeed, indeed I will.”

“I wish there was no necessity for sending thee away,” returned Mrs. Milman, affected even to tears by this innocent appeal to her feelings; “it almost breaks my heart to part with thee; but, alas! poor dear! it must be so.”

“And wherefore must it? who imposes the command?” asked a voice that made Mrs. Milman start, and utter a faint shriek.

Disengaging herself from the embrace of the child, she turned round in dismay—beheld the earl of Torrington, who had unexpectedly arrived two days sooner than he had appointed. Mrs. Milman curtsied and stammered, but without bestowing any sort of notice on the embarrassment that deprived her welcome to his castle of its appropriate respect.

Without appearing to regard her confusion, he passed by the worthy house-keeper, and strode towards the child, who was patting with its white dimpled hands the huge head of a rough Newfoundland dog, who, pleased with her caresses, folded her fairy form between his enormous paws, and licked her ivory neck with his immense tongue,

while, with tears rolling down her cheeks, she protested she would stay with her own dear Triton, and her pretty white pigeon.

The little Cecilia was a child whose beauty might well attract observation; yet it was not her transparent complexion, in which the rose and lily were delicately blended—her bright hazel eyes, nor the rich chesnut ringlets that shaded her neck and forehead, that arrested the attention of the earl, who, while his eyes were rivetted upon her, turned alternately red and pale. At length overcome, as it appeared, with some painful recollection, he reeled against the window-frame. Mrs. Milman, who observed the changes of his countenance, hastily drew an elbow-chair, into which he sunk, pale, trembling, and almost lifeless.

Mrs. Milman was flying to the bell to ring for assistance, when the earl struggling for composure, bade her fetch him a glass of water. In a voice faint and tremulous, he said—“I am only overcome with heat; the weather is oppressively sultry. I am not ill, Mrs. Milman; I am much fatigued, and too warm.”

Mrs. Milman hurried away for the water, while the earl, again gazing on the child, shuddered, and with clasped hands and elevated eyes murmured—“Mercy, Heaven! again the horrid scene renews upon my memory—and this child—what a wonderful resemblance!”

It was evident to the penetration of Mrs. Milman, as she presented the water, that something more than heat or fatigue occasioned the earl’s disorder, for he seemed well enough before he examined the features of the little Cecilia; but why the poor child’s innocent face should occasion such trembling and disorder, she could not conceive.

After sitting for some moments buried in thought, the earl approached the child, who, utterly unconscious of his presence, was sobbing on the neck of Triton. The earl parted, with a cold trembling hand, the rich curls that shaded her forehead, and exerted himself to sooth her; then turning to Mrs. Milman, who was actually amazed at this very extraordinary instance of condescension, he inquired—“To whom does this sweet girl belong?”

“I hope your lordship will pardon me,” returned Mrs. Milman; “I had no intention that she should intrude upon your lordship.—Come, Cecilia, my love, take your arms from about Triton’s neck, and come with me.”

“Remain,” said the earl, sternly—“remain and answer me, who are the parents of this child?”

“Alas, poor babe!” said Mrs. Milman, “she has no parents—at least, no mother; and as to her father, he——”

“Woman,” exclaimed the earl, with an impetuosity that made Mrs. Milman start, “answer me, who was her mother?”

“Her mother, my lord,” returned she, “was my sister, who unfortunately married a very worthless fellow, of the name of Delmore. Poor creature, she died in a month after this child was born; and her father having sent the motherless babe to me, went immediately, as far as I can learn, to the East Indies; and as I have not been able to gain any intelligence of him, I suppose he is dead also; and this poor child is now an orphan, with no friend in the world but me.”

As Mrs. Milman spoke, the child raised her eyes to the earl’s face, and placing her little hand on his, said—“Will you be Cecilia’s friend? Poor Cecilia has nobody to love her but mamma Milman, and Triton, and Whitewing.”



The earl was unusually affected—“I will love thee, and be thy friend, sweet cherub!” replied he, kissing her white forehead.

Cecilia smiled through her tears, and in an animated tone asked—“Shall I stay with mamma Milman, and Triton, and my pretty white pigeon?”

“You shall, you shall,” replied the earl, delighted with the smiles that dimpled her beautiful face—“you shall remain here; and I lament that the countess of Torrington having accepted an invitation to Ireland, will deprive lord Rushdale of so lovely a playfellow.”

“Dear me!” said Mrs. Milman, after having expressed her grateful sense of the earl’s permission to retain Cecilia—“dear me! I am quite disappointed, I had got every thing in such nice order against the arrival of the countess: the tenants too will be so vexed—they are quite impatient to see our young lord.”

“They must wait the pleasure of the countess,” replied the earl, coldly; “and when that may lead her into Cumberland, is more than I can even guess. Some business I have to transact with Wilson has brought me hither; that dispatched, I shall depart immediately. As to this little beauty, her countenance is a letter of recommendation to my favour.” Again he contemplated the features of the child with interest and emotion.—“It is my command she not only remains at the castle, but that she is considered in all things as my adopted daughter; and— but I shall leave orders respecting her with the steward.” He then pressed a kiss on the rosy cheek of Cecilia, who would hardly suffer him to leave her, so much had he won her heart, by promising she should remain at the castle with her mamma Milman, ride when she liked on the back of old Triton, and have pease whenever she asked for them, to feed her pretty white pigeon.

Mrs. Milman had never yet seen the countess of Torrington, whom report represented as very handsome, extremely haughty, and deplorably weak and vain. Her son Oscar lord Rushdale was about the age of Cecilia, and, as the countess had no other child, was likely, from her silly indulgence, to become the inheritor of all her follies and imperfections.

Torrington Castle was situated on a rocky eminence, beneath the sublime and romantic Skiddaw; it was a heavy Gothic building, and had belonged to the earls of Torrington since the chivalric reign of Richard the First, when that monarch bestowed it on its first possessor, as a reward for some particular act of valour. The architecture of the castle, though ancient, was extremely magnificent; the state apartments, lofty and extensive, boasted the richest adornments that the carving of the early age in which they were finished could bestow; the windows overlooked the beautiful lake of Derwentwater, and commanded, on all sides, as picturesque and sublime views as ever delighted the tasteful and enthusiastic eye of fancy and genius: yet, in preference to this lovely spot, attractive to every admirer of the magnificence of nature, the young and frivolous countess of Torrington had joined a party of her fashionable friends, who were going to spend the summer at Belfast; and at their instigation the visiting Torrington Castle, a plan which she had herself laid down, and talked of during the whole winter with rapture, was in an instant relinquished, and the excursion to Ireland acceded to, with very little opposition on the part of the earl, who though, in general, obstinately pertinacious in his arrangements and opinions, having a scheme of his own to pursue, suffered himself to be persuaded to give up his intention of passing the summer at his castle in Cumberland, and accompany his capricious lady to Belfast.

Mrs. Milman consoled herself for the disappointment of not seeing the countess of Torrington, with the permission granted her of retaining her orphan niece, and in the extreme good fortune of the child having so much interested the earl, who, previous to his leaving the castle, gave orders to his steward, Mr. Wilson, to pay every attention to Miss Delmore, and to be careful to procure her every advantage of education that the neighbouring town of Keswick could afford.

The earl of Torrington had been introduced to the acquaintance of his lady, the daughter of an apothecary at Oxford, by a very particular friend, a young East Indian, who, with eccentric and romantic notions, had fallen in love with her beautiful face, fondly believing it animated by a mind replete with every virtue. Circumstances of a complex nature had called this young enthusiast abroad, and while unwillingly detained at Calcutta, he received the melancholy intelligence that his only sister had lost her life by a shocking accident, and that the man who had even from childhood professed himself his bosom friend, had married the woman who possessed his devoted affection. The loss of his tenderly-beloved sister, the infidelity of his mistress, and the treachery of his friend, gave so severe a shock to the constitution of Edmund Saville, that he remained many weeks in a state of suffering that baffled every aid of medicine; and at length he recovered, to become a wretched misanthrope, with such a hatred to England, that he resolved never to return to a country where all his happiness had been wrecked—which he believed nourished only the hideous vices of falsehood and ingratitude.

Wilfred Rushdale was the only son of an eminent banker, and intended by his speculating father to fill, at no very remote period, the high office of lord chancellor. Wilfred, with specious rather than solid talents, received an education to fit him for the dignities with which his sanguine and too-partial father hoped to see him invested. From Eton, where his intimacy had first commenced with Edmund Saville, Wilfred Rushdale was removed to Oriel College with his friend, in whose unsuspecting and romantic mind his elegant exterior and imposing manners had created an attachment sincere and ardent; in the bosom of Wilfred every secret was reposed, and among others of less importance, his love for Emily Herbert, with whom he had become acquainted soon after his arrival at Oxford.

The parents of Miss Herbert were far from rich; the only portion of Emily was her beauty. Mr. Saville, a reputed wealthy East Indian, was a lover whose addresses were of too much importance to be rejected; and Emily, whose vanity was not a little flattered by a conquest so infinitely above her expectations, was instructed by her prudent parents to give him all proper encouragement. Saville was really in love, and too honourable to take an unfair advantage of the partiality she evinced for him; he publicly avowed his intention of making her his by the sacred bond of marriage, as soon as he became of age, and master of his fortune.

The eye of Rushdale acknowledged the graceful symmetry of Miss Herbert's person, and the faultless beauty of her face; but his own mind, strongly tinctured with vanity and error, was doubtful of the sincerity of her professions, which, at the very moment they breathed pure and disinterested love for Saville, were contradicted by the restless glances of her eyes, which seemed eager to obtain other conquests, and to demand even from him, the friend of her accepted lover, a homage warmer and more devoted than esteem and admiration.

Edmund Saville had just entered his one-and-twentieth year, when the death of his father rendered his presence at Calcutta, where the chief of his possessions lay, necessary. The parting of lovers has often been described; suffice it to say, with many a tender charge Edmund Saville exchanged vows of eternal love and never-ending constancy with the woman he adored, and consigned her to the guardianship of Wilfred Rushdale, of whose fixed and honourable principles he would have thought it sinful to doubt; he pledged himself to the parents of Emily to return with all possible expedition to England to marry her; and with deep and heartfelt agony he tore himself from her embrace, while with tears and distraction she vowed to love but him, and him for ever.

Rushdale accompanied his friend to Gravesend, from whence, relying on the affection and fidelity of Emily, and the honour and friendship of Wilfred, the generous, noble-minded Saville sailed with a prosperous breeze for the East Indies, impatient to conclude the business which, by investing him with a handsome fortune, would enable him to render happy the lovely girl who possessed his undivided affection. Miss Herbert wept bitterly, for a day, the absence of Edmund Saville, and lamented very sincerely the necessity that took him from England—his attentions had been so very agreeable—his presents so acceptable; but, the second day, as she listened to her father's sage remark, that Calcutta was a long way off, and that many things might happen to prevent his ever returning to England, she began to think the time very dull and tedious, without any one to flatter and make love to her; and that there was much truth in her father's observation, and that many things might really occur to prevent Mr. Saville from coming back, such as the loss of his fortune, his death—or he might change his mind; and that it would only be prudent in her to secure herself another offer, in case the present hope should fail.

While these thoughts were fluctuating in the mind of Miss Herbert, a very material change had taken place in the firm of Rushdale and Co., which considerably lowered the aspiring projects of Wilfred. Through the villany of one of the partners, the bank had stopped payment, and, after an ineffectual struggle to recover its credit, totally failed. This misfortune was followed by the sudden death of Mr. Rushdale, who, in the agitation occasioned by the failure of his house, burst a blood-vessel, and almost instantly expired.

The funeral of his father, and the arrangement of the very little property that had been secured to his mother, for some days so fully occupied the time of young Rushdale, that he had scarcely bestowed a thought on Oxford, to which his now-reduced finances did not allow his return; and he was going to the house of a distant relation, a solicitor, under whose instruction he was trying to make up his mind to study the law, when, in crossing Oxford-street, he had the good fortune to preserve an aged man from being run over by a hackney-coach.

Though he had received no injury, the old man was so terrified and so amazed at his narrow escape, that he was near fainting, and unable to walk without assistance, there being no coach within call; nor did any persons offer their service on this occasion; Rushdale was therefore constrained by humanity to conduct him to his lodging, which, he said, was close by, in an adjoining court. The dress of the old man was an entire suit of snuff-coloured clothes, clean, though threadbare, and of an old-fashioned cut; and when they entered a decent-looking house, Rushdale was astonished to find that the person who leaned on his arm lodged up three pair of stairs. With the assistance of the woman of the

house he was conducted to his garret, which exhibited a scene of deplorable poverty, beyond any thing Wilfred had ever seen or imagined.

Having laid him on his miserable-looking bed, Rushdale considered that a little wine, or some other cordial, would be necessary to recruit the spirits of the poor trembling wretch; but doubting, from the appearance of every thing in the room, whether he had the means to procure himself this comfort, he slid a guinea into his hand, and wishing him better, was departing; but the old man grasped his hand, and with much earnestness entreated that he would call in upon him the next day; he then added, in a whisper—“Take back your guinea, young gentleman; I do not want pecuniary assistance; but, mum for that—not a word—mum!”

Rushdale surveyed the old man and the miserable garret with looks of wonder, but feeling his curiosity excited to learn why a man, whose circumstances were above want, lived in a garret, with all the appearance of the most abject poverty, together with a wish to hear what he had to communicate, induced him to promise that he would look in upon him the next day; and he left the old man to compose his spirits with what, he said, would do him most good—an hour’s sleep.

A variety of engagements entirely obliterated the remembrance of the old man, and his request to see him again, from the memory of Wilfred Rushdale during the day; but being under the necessity of spending the evening with a family party, the dull, uninteresting conversation that took place between his mother and her maiden sister constrained him to seek amusement in his own thoughts and reflections. Among the variety of remembrances that hurried through his brain, the old man and his garret were not forgotten; and while he recollected the rejection of his proffered guinea, it appeared very probable that the person whom he had assisted was some money-hoarding miser, who, preferring the accumulation of wealth to every comfort and indulgence, deprived himself of the decent necessities of life, to scrape together, by privation and parsimony, a fortune, for some prodigal heir to dissipate in a third of the time that he, by savings and denials, and lucky speculations, had amassed it together. The next morning, however, he had entirely forgotten the old man, and would certainly have broken his engagement, had not a heavy shower of rain, in which he was caught in Oxford-street, reminded him of the necessity of shelter: he was just stepping into a fruit-shop, when he observed he was at the corner of the court where the old man lodged; the rain continued to pour, and he hastened down the court, at once to satisfy his curiosity and escape a wetting.

Having mounted the three flights of stairs, he tapped at the garret door, and was told to come in. On entering the room, he beheld the old man, his head cased with a striped worsted nightcap, and his skeleton limbs buttoned into what had once been a great-coat, but now resembled most a harlequin-jacket, from the variety of colours with which it was patched. He was sitting on a low stool, shivering before a grate, where, between two bricks, was burning a handful of fire, upon which was standing a saucepan of gruel, which he was cooking for his breakfast. To Mr. Rushdale’s inquiry after his health he said—“Bad enough, bad enough: have been unwell a long time—cramp, or something like it, in my stomach.”

“That is occasioned by cold,” replied Rushdale, surveying the cheerless, miserable apartment; “you should get a more comfortable lodging, and have medical advice.”

"I like my lodging very well—have lived here some years—shall not change it; and as to medical advice," continued the old man, "that is all picking of one's pocket; doctors are all thieves—mix up a little chalk, and soot, and crumbs of bread, into pills—shake together a little brick dust and water, call it a draught—all rogues, I tell you—do you no manner of good—know nothing in the world, with their dog Latin, but how to ease you of your money—set up their carriages at the expence of the fools they persuade to swallow their filthy potions."

While the old man was thus vehemently exclaiming against the whole tribe of Galen, his gruel boiled into the fire; snatching it off, in his rage and hurry he scalded his fingers.—"Plague confound it!" resumed he, blowing his fingers, "this comes of prating about doctors: there is a full farthing's worth of oatmeal quite lost—too much, too much, these dear times—besides almost putting out the fire; then there is the salt—nothing but loss after loss—enough to bring a man to absolute ruin and want!"

Mr. Rushdale stood amazed—his imagination had never pictured any thing so wretchedly penurious. Half-laughing at the ludicrous displeasure of the old man, he said—"You had better eat the remainder, before some other accident deprives you of it."

"Shan't, shan't," replied the old man, in a tone of peevishness—"can't afford such extravagance; must go without breakfast—the fire has devoured that meal for me; what little is left must serve for dinner."

"For dinner!" repeated Rushdale—"surely you jest—you cannot mean to take that slop for your dinner?"

"Yes, but I do though," returned the old man, "and a good dinner too—wish I may never want such: better take this slop, as you call it, than enrich a parcel of insolent butchers, poulterers, and fishmongers—a parcel of cheating, imposing knaves! And, after all, what should a man pamper his carcase with dainties for—why should he fatten himself, truly, for no mortal purpose but to feed worms?—But this has nothing at all to do with what I wanted to say. Your kindness to me yesterday, when I had like to have been run over by the coach, has brought my mind to a decision. I have long been turning it about in my mind to whom—you must understand, young gentleman, that I—but open the door and look out, there may be somebody listening atop of the stairs, for folks are very curious to hear what does not concern them. Look out, look out."

Determined to humour the old wretch, who looked the very image of famine, Rushdale opened the door, and having ascertained that no person was listening on the stairs, the old man resumed—"If I was to be overheard, I might be robbed and murdered."

"Robbed!" repeated Rushdale, smiling—"that is surely a groundless fear."

"Perhaps not so groundless," returned the old man; "poor as you may fancy Jonathan Blackburne, he may be found worth—but no matter for that, '*a still tongue makes a wise head*,' and there is no occasion for me to—plague take the fire! it is just out." He then fanned the embers with a thin board, while Rushdale impatiently waited his communication.

The fire giving signs of reviving, he resumed—"I know young men, like you, think nothing of imposing upon old fellows, such as me. But will you answer a question or two with truth and sincerity? Are you married?"

"No, thank Heaven!" said Rushdale, smiling.

"What is your name?" asked Mr. Blackburne.

"Wilfred Rushdale," was the reply.

"Are your parents living?" demanded the old man.

"Only my mother," replied Rushdale.

"And what are your prospects in life?" inquired Blackburne, holding his shrivelled hands over the embers.

Rushdale explained, without reserve, his late disappointment, owing to the failure of the bank—confessed his patrimony was very small, and expressed his intention of studying the law.

"Confound the law, and all its advocates!" exclaimed Blackburne. "Study the law! study the devil!—study how to plague and cheat men out of their property—study how to thrive on the ruin of your neighbours! Lawyers are worse, ay, a hundred times worse, than the plague we read of in the Bible—the locusts, I mean, that devoured every green thing from the face of the earth; lawyers, I say, are worse than these, for they swallow up not only the land, but houses, goods, chattels, and cattle. Study the law!—curse the law!—it is the black art—it is legerdemain—it is the profession of Belzebug!"

Blackburne having raved himself out of breath, was obliged to pause; but when Rushdale would have said something about the necessity that prompted his intention, the old man suddenly resumed—"You did me a service yesterday—you saved my life; and one good turn deserves another. Look'ee, young man, I have taken a sort of a kind of liking to you, and if you come into my plans, there will be no occasion for you to juggle, and cheat, and empty other people's pockets to fill your own."

"And pray, sir," asked Rushdale, every instant more astonished at the conversation of Blackburne, "what is your plan?"

"Come a little nearer," said Blackburne, beckoning with his long skeleton finger—"come a little more this way—no need of letting all the town into our affairs; there may be listeners—hark! did not you hear a creaking noise on the stairs?"

"I heard no sound whatever," replied Rushdale.

Having listened a moment, Blackburne bade him open the door, for he was positive he heard somebody on the stairs. Rushdale obeyed; but no person appearing, the old man resumed—"It was the wind, I suppose; but it sounded very like the creaking of shoes, and people are so apt to be inquisitive;" then applying his mouth close to Rushdale's ear, he whispered—"My plan is to make you heir to a pretty round sum of money, if you are not fool enough to stand in your own light."

Not supposing that this round sum could possibly amount to more than a couple of hundred pounds at most, Rushdale asked—"Have you no relations of your own, who have juster claims on your property? Remember, sir, I am but newly introduced to your acquaintance—a stranger; surely your own family have higher claims—your relations—"

"Confound my relations!" interrupted Blackburne, with angry impatience; "yes, confound them all! though I have only one living, that I know of; and she, the hard-hearted jade! shall never be the better, if I can prevent it, for a shilling of mine—she has used me worse than a Turk. It is many years since she heard of me, and she shall never hear again, but to her mortification. Relations! confound them! they never were of the smallest service to me—they drove me on the world, and left me to struggle through it how I could. I was determined to make money, and I succeeded; but I worked hard for it in a hot climate, where I gained a few odd pounds by the sweat of my brow; then I

married an ugly yellow witch, who would give me her property whether I would or no. Well, after some years of toil and torment, thank Heaven! my wife died, and left me my own master again, and well enough off too; but no matter for that—what I have I came honestly by, and that is more than many can say in this great overgrown city; and I shall dispose of it according to my own fancy, but not to relations—no, no—I shall leave it as I please, and to whom I please; my money is my own. Young man, are you inclined to be Jonathan Blackburne's heir?"

"To that question I cannot reply," returned Rushdale, "till I am informed of the conditions."

"Conditions!" repeated the old man, drawing up his shrivelled face to an expression of scorn—"talk to me about conditions! I do not believe there is a man in the kingdom but would jump mast high to accept my conditions. Who would be blockhead enough, do you think, to demur and boggle about the conditions that were to give him—but no matter for that—" Here the old man was seized with a fit of coughing that nearly strangled him, and Rushdale was apprehensive that he would expire, and not only disappoint the curiosity he had so highly inflamed, but destroy the hopes he had raised by the sketch he had given of his life, which had led him to believe he was indeed possessed of considerable property.

At length the old man was sufficiently recovered to say—"I shall certainly go off in one of these fits shortly, so the sooner I get my worldly concerns settled the better. Give me that cup of water." Having swallowed a little, he continued—"You must know, young man, I have a sister at Oxford, married to a mixer of pills and spreader of plassters—an apothecary, of the name of Herbert; perhaps you may have heard of him—a mean, shabby rascal; but not half so bad as his wife, who, though she was born of the same mother as myself, shall never inherit one penny from me—no, no; the flinty-hearted jade suffered her mother to die in a workhouse, and turned me adrift upon the world, where, but for good luck, I might have ended my days on the gallows: but no matter for that—I have been prosperous, though she shall have nothing from me, to whom she gave nothing but ill usage and neglect."

"But consider, sir," said Rushdale, "we are enjoined to forgive injuries; and who can tell but Mrs. Herbert may be sorry—"

"Confound her sorrow!" interrupted Blackburne; "she will no doubt be sorry when she finds that I am worth—but no matter for that, what I am worth is nothing to her; I have made up my mind never to forgive, so never mention her name in my hearing again. You have been at Oxford, do you know the apothecary?"

Rushdale answered in the affirmative.

"They have a daughter," resumed Blackburne.

"They have," replied Rushdale; "and Miss Herbert is as beautiful as an angel."

"Confound her beauty!" replied old Blackburne; "what is a beauty good for? to sit three parts of the day before a looking-glass, and lisp, and loll, and study looks to deceive men with. Beauty! a fiddlestick's end! all the same thing if she was as ugly as sin; beauty! nonsense! flimflam! all vanity, conceit, and folly; beauty is but skin deep, and often covers a wicked heart; only boys and fools look after beauty—a wise man seeks for something more solid; but no matter for that—a good heart is better than beauty. When Emily Herbert was a mere infant, as one may say, she followed me into the street, where her unnatural vixen mother had thrust me, and with tears as big as pease rolling down her

cheeks, she gave me her bread-and-butter and a penny; that penny prospered with me, for she gave it with all her heart—that penny was a lucky one, it grew into—but no matter for that—Emily shall be pounds the richer for her charity. Young man, will you marry her?”

More and more astonished, Rushdale answered— “Your proposal, sir, is extremely tempting; no man who has had the happiness of Miss Herbert’s acquaintance would refuse her. But—”

“But what?” asked Blackburne, impatiently. “Confound all buts and ifs, say I! Am I to be disappointed, after having settled the whole affair in my own mind? I have set my heart upon the match; confound all buts and ifs, and such tormenting words! tell me at once, plainly and honestly, will you marry my niece, Emily Herbert?”

“My hesitation, sir,” replied Rushdale, “does not proceed from any wish of my own to disappoint your intention; but perhaps you may not have heard that Miss Herbert is already engaged to a gentleman now in the East Indies.”

“I am glad he is so far off,” said Blackburne; “he cannot push his nose in, to set aside my wishes. Emily engaged! nonsense! folly!—Confound her engagements! if she is not an idiot, a worse than driveller, she will break through fifty engagements to be mistress of the fortune I can give her; but no matter for that. But let me understand about this engagement, if you please.”

Rushdale complied with the old man’s request, and related the offer made by Saville, and Miss Herbert’s promise of remaining unmarried till the settlement of his affairs at Calcutta enabled him to return to England and claim her hand.

“She is an idiot if she waits his return,” said Blackburne— “Wait for what?—the chance of winds and waves, and, what is even more uncertain still, the constancy of man, who seldom knows his own mind for a week together—wait for a husband from the East Indies! nonsense! nonsense! I know nothing about this Mr. Saville—I have made up my mind to her marrying you. But then if she is such a fool as to prefer constancy to wealth, why she may wait for this Mr. What’s-his-name from Calcutta, and I can leave my money to build an hospital. But the girl will never be such an idiot—she will accept my offer, as she ought, with joy and thankfulness—Though, now I think of it, you have not given me your answer. Tell me at once, young man, will you marry my niece?”

There were other reasons that ought to have prompted Wilfred Rushdale’s rejection of this marriage, besides the friendship he had so warmly professed for the absent Saville; but the unfortunate failure of his father’s banking-house, and the consequent poverty to which he was so suddenly and unexpectedly reduced, silenced every scruple raised in his bosom by conscience; honour and generosity were stifled, and, overcoming every objection, he declared himself ready to accede to Mr. Blackburne’s wish, provided Miss Herbert could be persuaded to resign Saville, and honour him with her hand: “and if the more material point was satisfactorily—”

“Emily Herbert will know her own interest too well to disappoint my wish,” said Blackburne; “she must be sensible that *‘a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush;’* and as to the other point, I understand you there too—you want to know what money I will come down with to defray the expences of matrimony; am I right? I was always a famous hand at guessing—a hint is as good to me as a thousand words. I don’t dislike you for being wary—just like myself in that particular, it was always my maxim to *‘look before I*



*leaped*—saves a deal of trouble and vexation. Go down to Oxford directly, tell Emily to put the man at Calcutta out of her head, and prepare to marry you; and in order to turn the scale in your favour, say you will settle fifty thousand pounds upon her.”

The eyes of Rushdale fixed on the starved, ragged object before him, the inhabitant of a wretched garret, who was sitting with his long skinny hands extended over a few dying embers; he could scarcely believe the old man was in his senses, when he talked of giving away so much money—a sum more than sufficient to procure him every indulgence and comfort his age and infirmities required.

“Ay,” continued the old man, observing the perplexity of Rushdale’s countenance, “I guess your thoughts—you think me mad; but no matter for that—I promise you, young man, I am as much in my senses as you are, though no doubt I shall increase your amazement, when I tell you I can double fifty thousand pounds if I choose, and not leave myself destitute after I have done. It is not all gold that glitters, neither are all poor that wear a ragged jacket.”

“And is it possible, with the command of so much wealth,” asked Rushdale, “that you can prefer to live in this wretched garret—to wear this scanty clothing—to feed on such insipid diet? what enjoyment can you have of wealth, while you deny yourself even necessary food and raiment?”

“That is no concern of yours,” replied Blackburne, his eyes glaring angrily upon him; “what have you to do with my mode of living? trouble your head with your own business. Live according to my own fancy; I hate fine clothes, all foppery and frippery; I detest gluttony and drunkenness. If I kept house, I must be pestered with a parcel of lazy, idle, vagabond servants; and I should have a troop of pretended friends, who would eat and drink up my substance, borrow my money, and abuse me as soon as my back was turned: I hate such tricking, deceitful ways; choose to live by myself—trust no man—keep no servants, to listen, and peep, and spy into my concerns, and perhaps, as a reward for feeding and clothing them, rob and murder me at last. As it is, I eat what I like—gruel all the week, and three pen’orth of something hot from the cookshop on Sundays; drink nothing but water—the best as well as the cheapest beverage in the world—keeps the head cool and clear, and helps digestion. I go to bed as soon as it gets dark—that saves the expence of candles, and rise as soon as I can see; wash my own linen and patch my clothes myself: find the good of living in this way—save my money; invite no friends, to eat, and drink, and gormandize, and devour me; keep no servants to waste my substance, which, thanks be to Heaven and my own industry! amounts to—but no matter for that. I feel I am going—shan’t live much longer to enjoy my honest gains, for, go when I will, nobody will say that I got a single penny by cheating and knavery—no, no—I shan’t live long, and I wish to settle my affairs, to prevent my jade of a sister from claiming a farthing of my property. So away with you directly to Oxford. If Emily Herbert consents to take you for her husband, it will be the best day’s work she ever did in her life; if she refuses, why I wish her joy of her East India lover; and I hope he will have a fortune to give her, for not a sixpence of mine shall fall to her share. But I know the girl will have more sense than to refuse a proper-looking fellow like you, and fifty thousand pounds at least; but if she should be such a fool, you shall not be a loser; I will give—that is—I mean, I will pay the expences of your journey to Oxford. But, I charge you, give no direction to the Herberts where to find me—I will neither hear from

nor see them; Emily is the only one of the family whom I can bear to think of, and her I will never behold till I know whether she is deserving of my favour. So now good-day to you," continued he, almost pushing Rushdale out at the door—"good-day to you; let me hear how you succeed as soon as possible."

When Rushdale returned home he retired immediately to his own chamber, where he shut himself in, that he might, alone and undisturbed, meditate on the strange adventure he was engaged in. The miserable garret he had just visited, and its equally miserable inhabitant, were still present to his mind's eye; his memory, with undeviating exactness, repeated the conversation of old Blackburne, whom at some moments he was inclined to believe insane, so incredible did it appear to his judgment that a being, seemingly half-starved, and actually covered with rags, should possess a sum exceeding a hundred thousand pounds. Again he considered that he had frequently heard of men such wretched slaves to avarice, that, while they possessed wealth in abundance, lived in the extremest penury, denying themselves even the bare necessities of life, and committing every meanness to add to the riches they had not the soul to enjoy: it was possible that Jonathan Blackburne might be one of those miserly characters. The liking he had so suddenly taken to him was not more extraordinary than his inflexible dislike of his own nearest relations; at any rate, the proposal of marrying him to his niece carried with it too many real advantages to be rashly declined. The person of Emily Herbert was all that youthful fancy could imagine lovely; of the virtues of her mind, her amiable qualities, or the strength of her understanding, Rushdale did not trouble himself to think, neither did he suppose that her passion for Saville was so firmly rooted, but that already it had undergone some waverings; absence, he concluded, must have cooled its fervours, and that, like himself, she would, without scruple, sacrifice any former attachment to secure the immediate possession of wealth. If old Blackburne's fortune was the mere coinage of his distempered brain, Rushdale foresaw, by carrying his proposal to Miss Herbert, he should involve himself in an awkward predicament; Saville, too, his confiding friend—would it not be dishonourable to solicit affections, request the hand already vowed to him? But then, to lose the chance of gaining at least fifty thousand pounds, and that too at a period when his father's failure had reduced his affairs to so desperate a state—it was a lucky interference of fortune not to be rejected. Emily certainly was, like the rest of her sex, vain, weak, and mutable, and would no doubt accept his hand; but if she should refuse, he could easily justify himself to the unsuspecting Saville, by saying his proposal of marriage was merely designed to put her fidelity to him to the proof. Such were the thoughts that passed rapidly through the brain of Rushdale, and filled him with perplexity and uneasiness. At length, on the reflection that he had nothing to lose, but much to gain by the trial, he resolved to set off the following morning for Oxford; but as interest, not love, actuated his motives, he prudently resolved not to tie the knot till he had secured the promised fifty thousand pounds.

The estimate that Rushdale had made of the character of Miss Herbert was perfectly correct; she had often heard of her uncle Blackburne, from a person who had known him in the West Indies, where he was possessed of extensive plantations and numerous slaves; her mother, too, had been informed of his arrival in England, with money enough to pay off the national debt, but could never find out his habitation, nor obtain the least intelligence of him afterwards; yet though she said he was always a strange out-of-the-way kind of character, and confessed herself not a little offended at his

having concealed himself from her inquiries, she was by no means sparing of arguments to convince Emily of the great uncertainty of Saville's return, and the folly of disobliging her uncle, who no doubt had plenty of money, as well as plenty of whims, which might induce him to give the whole of his property to a stranger.

The vanity and inconstancy of Emily's nature required but little persuasion to make her break the promise solemnly pledged to Saville, who might by that time have forgot her, and made up his mind to remain at Calcutta; she longed to look down upon all her acquaintance—to keep a carriage—to glitter in diamonds—to be followed by a smart footman. The person of Wilfred Rushdale, if not strictly handsome, was extremely pleasing; he was tall and well proportioned, had expressive eyes and very fine teeth: he was not quite so handsome as Saville, for whose return, should she, influenced by her promise, wait, she would then be only mistress of a moderate fortune, which was all he had ever led her to expect; and, to be certain even of this, she must remain single no one could tell how many months. She therefore prudently resolved to follow the advice of her parents, and take the fifty thousand pounds and the husband provided by her uncle. But not deficient in art, however destitute of sensibility, she considered it necessary to affect reluctance, to talk pathetically of her vows plighted to poor Saville, and to consent to be Mrs. Rushdale, in obedience to the command of her parents.

Rushdale, who considered no evil so terrible as poverty—no happiness so great as the possession of wealth, was not over nice in scrutinizing the motives that influenced Emily's transfer of affection from Saville to himself; and perfectly satisfied with having made so successful an approach to fortune, he hurried his intended bride and her mother to London, fearful that old Blackburne would die, or, what was to him equally as bad, change his mind respecting the disposal of his wealth.

Having placed Mrs. and Miss Herbert in convenient lodgings, he hastened to communicate his success to old Blackburne, who expressed much satisfaction at his expedition, but peremptorily and absolutely refused to be reconciled to his sister, or to see her or his niece. After having raved himself out of breath in repetitions of his dislike to Herbert and his wife, he remained for some moments looking over a dirty sheet of paper, which contained a long and very ill-written column of figures, with which being at last satisfied, he deliberately folded it together, and turning to Rushdale, said—“All right, all right! Go directly to a lawyer—pity people's affairs cannot be properly settled without these robbers—But, do you hear, don't offer to bring him here—I detest the whole cheating, tricking tribe. Have a deed drawn up to secure to my niece fifty thousand pounds, for her own proper use and disposal, in case of your death—ay, very true, I see what you are going to say; but I shall answer no questions—I shall only tell you that I have lodged the sum of fifty thousand pounds in the bank of Drummond and Co. for this express purpose. Go, young man, get every thing ready for your marriage on next Tuesday, when I think I shall surprise you a little more.”

“But recollect, sir,” returned Rushdale, “matrimony is a very serious consideration—a very expensive state; and before I take so important a step, I ought to be satisfied that I shall not be plunging myself into difficulties and involvements. I should be certain—”

Old Blackburne laughed—“Glad to see you cautious and wary,” said he; “true, very true, you ought to be certain what you are about; marriage is, as you say, a troublesome, vexatious state, and a man ought to have weighty inducements to tie himself

for life to that most tormenting of all animals—a woman. Well then—but, now I think of it, how am I to be certified that I may trust you? To be sure you have not the look of a rogue; but there is no trusting to faces.”

Rushdale would have pledged what he did not possess—his honour; he would have sworn, for oaths were, in his opinion, of no consequence; but Blackburne interrupted his protestations by saying—“Keep your breath; what is honour? nonsense—a mere puff of wind! and as to oaths, place no sort of reliance on them, because I have often found that *‘he that will swear will lie.’* Shan’t trust you till the deed is ready for me to sign; and mind that it is drawn up in a way that will make Emily entirely independent of you, which is but right, as she has given up a good offer to oblige me, and as I know very little of your principles. There, I have said all I intend just now—only not a hint of the settlement to Emily. You need not trouble yourself to call again till it is ready for my inspection.”

Rushdale was not sorry to quit the miserable residence of Blackburne, though not exactly pleased with his abrupt dismissal, or satisfied to marry a woman he did not love, upon such an uncertainty respecting the property he was to gain by the match; but as he was anxious to bring the affair to a speedy conclusion, his first step was to ascertain whether Blackburne had really fifty thousand pounds in the bank of Messrs. Drummond and Co. Being entirely satisfied on this point, he had the settlement drawn up by his own relation, agreeable to the old man’s instructions; and having prepared Emily to accompany him to church the ensuing Tuesday, he repaired, full of joyful expectation, to the garret of Jonathan Blackburne, whom he found looking even worse than at his last visit.

“I must have this marriage concluded directly,” said the old man, after he had satisfied himself that the deed was proper in all its forms: “and now,” continued he, with a significant nod of his head, “now you shall see, after giving fifty thousand pounds to my niece, what I will do for you.”

The pulses of Rushdale beat violently—he was now to ascertain his fortune.

Blackburne slowly drew from the rags that composed his bed, an old black leather portfolio; it was crammed with papers, from the midst of which, with great deliberation, he counted bank-notes, to the amount of ten thousand pounds, into the hand of the delighted Rushdale.—“Ten thousand pounds,” said the old man, with a deep sigh—“ten thousand pounds is a prodigious sum to give away, especially upon an uncertainty; for how am I to be sure but you may abscond with the cash, leave Emily in the lurch, and laugh at me for a credulous old fool? But if you should be such a villain, such a robber, the money will never prosper with you; it will melt like butter in the sun; it will fly away like chaff before the wind; it will be a curse to you, and it will not be the ruin of me after all; I shall still have—but no matter for that. As soon as you are married, bring your wife here; but on no consideration let that viper her mother come into my presence, to disturb me with her canting and whining. I know her—she is a lump of deceit—her heart is harder than a flint-stone; she can never deceive me, and I am determined not to see or forgive her. There, there, now go and bespeak the parson, and prepare for your marriage; I do not expect to see you again till you bring your wife in your hand.”

Rushdale could scarcely believe his senses; he looked at the notes, and tightly grasped them, to convince himself that he was awake. Arrived at home, he began to consider that he was now possessed of ten thousand pounds to begin life with, and that no

earthly power could compel him to marry Emily Herbert, whose family connexions were all persons not only in trade, but vulgar, ignorant, and ill-bred, with whom it was quite impossible he could ever associate, or be on terms of friendship. While his mind fluctuated between the right and possibility of appropriating the money to himself, and the injustice of deceiving and defrauding Jonathan Blackburne, by breaking off the match, the preponderating consideration, that the old miser had still a larger sum to bestow upon him, determined him, to fulfil his engagement and marry Emily, whose person he admired, though her beauty had made no impression on his heart.

More eager to ascertain what addition Blackburne designed to make to his gift than to put on matrimonial fetters, Rushdale hastened the preparations of Emily, who, as well as her mother, was discontented at being denied admission to Mr. Blackburne, and at the idea of being married without any sort of pomp or parade. By her uncle's express desire, she was kept in ignorance of the munificent settlement made upon her, and she felt not a little anxious and uneasy respecting her promised fortune. If Rushdale, to make himself master of her person, was deluding her with false hopes, she was about to bring ruin on herself—she was sacrificing her prospect of future independence by giving up Saville; and for what? to marry a beggar! for she was informed of the failure of Rushdale's father. A thousand times Emily was on the point of retracting the promise she had given to Wilfred Rushdale, and insisting on her mother returning immediately with her to Oxford; but the dread of being turned into ridicule by her young acquaintance, joined with the entreaties of Mrs. Herbert, who was quite certain her beautiful Emily was born to be very rich, prevailed, and she became a wife, with a mind agitated by the most painful apprehension that, in deceiving Saville, if she had not devoted herself to absolute poverty, she had, in all probability, confined herself to what she abhorred even to think of—the middle rank of life.

The coach that conveyed her to church having set down her mother at their lodgings, was ordered to the habitation of old Blackburne; and on their way thither, Rushdale endeavoured to prepare his bride for the scene to which he was about to introduce her—an apartment next the sky, dirty and deplorable, furnished with a wormeaten mutilated table, two low three-legged stools, a wretched bed, without curtain, or other covering than a quilt, made of various-coloured cloths, most awkwardly patched together; and the master of this miserable garret a ragged, cadaverous, mean-looking old man. Several times, on mounting the flights of stairs, Emily asked how much higher they were going? But when she entered the dismal apartment, she was near shrieking, for Rushdale's description had fallen short of the real wretchedness that every where met her eye.

Old Blackburne gave her two or three hearty kisses, said she was a good-looking girl, and declared himself much pleased to see her—a compliment Emily returned him with her lips, but not with her heart; for never had she seen a more disgusting object; and before she had sat a moment on one of his stools, she wished herself a hundred miles off.

The certificate of their marriage being presented to him, he rubbed his hands, wished them joy, and said he should now die in peace, having accomplished the desire nearest his heart—"I determined to choose a husband for you myself; and now, my girl," continued he, pinching her cheek, "now you shall see what you have got by obeying your old uncle."

Emily's looks began to brighten, as, unfolding a skin of parchment, he said—"In the first place, take that," presenting her the settlement—"that, my girl, gives you two thousand five hundred pounds a year, independent of your husband; and secures fifty thousand pounds to your children, let him sink or swim."

Almost out of her wits to find herself mistress of so much wealth, Emily tried to express her gratitude.

"Wont hear a word," interrupted Blackburne, "wont hear a single word about thanks; when you gave me your only penny, you was not as high as this table, and the tears rolled down your little cheeks to see my ill-usage—good child! good child!—shewed a feeling heart, kind and charitable—followed me into the street, and gave me a penny, all the money you had in the world, and your breakfast into the bargain; and at that time, with a sore back and an empty stomach, I swore a solemn oath never to speak to your mother, or forgive her, to my dying day; but if I should ever have the luck to make a fortune, I would not forget you. I have made a fortune—I am worth—but no matter for that—all in good time; my hoardings and scrapings I shall give to this young man, for he saved my life; and I hope he will make you a kind and loving husband, and take care not to waste in riot and extravagance what I laboured hard for many a long year to gain."

His cough now seized him with unusual violence, he became black in the face, and, struggling for articulation, uttered a few indistinct words, that to Rushdale and Emily sounded like—"Under the bed," to which, with much eagerness of gesture, he repeatedly pointed; and while in the utmost terror they gazed upon him, ignorant what to do for his relief, his head fell back against the wall, and, after a few convulsive gaspings, he expired.

The concern and terror of the new-married pair at this sudden and shocking termination of the old man's existence, did not operate to the prevention of their searching under the bed, where they found in the black leather portfolio, securities on the Bank of England for one hundred thousand pounds, East India bonds to the amount of sixty thousand more, and, stuffed into a canvas bag, twenty thousand pounds in bank-notes, and about three hundred guineas. In the portfolio they found a will, drawn up and signed by Jonathan Blackburne and three witnesses, in which he bequeathed the whole of his possessions to Wilfred Rushdale, provided he married his niece, Emily Herbert; but in case she refused to become his wife, he left to his niece, Emily Herbert, one shilling only; the sum of fifty thousand pounds to Wilfred Rushdale; and the residue of his fortunes to various public charities therein specified. The will concluded with a positive command that the testator should be buried as privately as possible, and that no memorial whatever should be placed over his grave.

Rushdale and Emily congratulated each other, though not with perfect sincerity, for they both regretted that they were shackled; Rushdale was almost frantic with joy at finding Jonathan Blackburne's fortune so far above his expectation, while his bride, though now certain of moving in the splendid style she had so much delighted to contemplate, was not pleased to think that the whole of her uncle's wealth had not devolved unconditionally on her, who, if she had not been married, might have aspired, with such an immense fortune, to the very highest rank of nobility: but the knot was tied, and her only consolation was to reflect that diamonds, carriages, and smart footmen, were

now attainable; and, though only plain Mrs. Rushdale, she should be able to vie in splendour with any countess.

Though sorry he was married, Rushdale thought Emily looked handsomer than ever; and he felt so grateful for the fortune he had obtained through her affinity to old Blackburne, that he resolved to make her, if not a fond, a very polite husband; and as they returned home to give orders for the funeral of the wretched miser, whose privations had so suddenly enriched them, he was so profuse of compliments to his wife's beauty, so attentively-tender in his behaviour, that she actually forgot to lament that he was not a duke.

Mrs. Herbert proved herself to be exactly the character old Blackburne had so frequently described—selfish and unfeeling; for when told of the death of her brother, and satisfied that she had not been mentioned in his will, she astonished Rushdale by the execrations she poured on his memory; and so offended him, by accusations of having worked on the miserly old fool, by false representations, to insist on Emily marrying him, that they parted in enmity, Mrs. Herbert declaring she would never again enter a house of which Mr. Rushdale was master.

Mrs. Rushdale's opinion respecting her uncle's disposal of his fortune did not differ very materially from her mother's, whose anger and departure she regretted for a few hours; but the certainty that, let Rushdale have used what arts he might to gain her uncle's fortune, he had made her a partaker of it, restored her to perfect complacency and good-humour. In the delightful hurry of giving orders to jewellers, dressmakers, and milliners—in receiving and paying her bridal visits—she forgot all suspicion and uneasiness: she heard her husband admired by all her female acquaintance, and she persuaded herself that he was quite as handsome as Saville, with whom, as she reflected on his serious, sentimental turn, she felt quite certain she should not have been happy; and that Wilfred Rushdale, being, like herself, gay, volatile, fond of splendour and amusement, was much more likely to contribute to her happiness as a partner through life.

The magnificent establishment, the shewy carriages, and the beauty of Mrs. Rushdale, soon introduced her to the highest circles of fashion, where she was followed, courted, and admired, even at the moment when scandal whispered that the failure of old Rushdale enabled his son to live in the first style of elegance and fashion. The vanity of Mrs. Rushdale received perpetual incense from daily papers, where the columns were filled with accounts of her splendid entertainments, the unrivalled elegance of her costume—even her horses and dogs were honoured with public notice and approbation; every where, and by every gentleman, except her husband, Mrs. Rushdale was admired. But a very few weeks served to convince Mr. Rushdale that mere beauty soon grows insipid, and that a wife, ever eager for adulation, is a wearying companion. But the inattention of her husband occasioned no sorrow to Mrs. Rushdale, whose morning levees were crowded with admirers, who never appeared in public but to receive homage from noblemen, who declared her a divinity; to a woman so followed and flattered the coldness of a husband could occasion no regret—Mrs. Rushdale was too much a woman of the *haut ton* to bestow a thought upon the man she had vowed to love, honour, and obey; her only regret was, that she had not married a nobleman—that she was plain Mrs. Rushdale. But, even in this circumstance, fortune aided her wishes; for in about eighteen months after her marriage, the failure of male heirs in a very distant branch of his family elevated

Wilfred Rushdale to a peerage, and gave to his vain, frivolous wife, the ardently-desired title of countess of Torrington.

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## CHAPTER II.

Far from the world, its pleasures, or its pains,  
'Midst rocks and floods, I'll rear my hermit cell,  
Enthron'd in solitude, where nature reigns,  
And calm religion may delight to dwell.

In the deep glen I'll watch the rushing wind  
Whirling in rage the autumn-tinted leaf,  
On summer flown shall muse my pensive mind,  
And sigh to think my faded joys as brief.

Though pleasure's roses strew my path no more,  
Tranquillity may bless my solitude;  
For here, upon this wild, this wave-beat shore,  
The step of falsehood never will intrude.

In these lone groves my matin hymns may rise,  
My vesper-pray'rs may breathe to be forgiven;  
And I may hope, when death has seal'd mine eyes,  
To wake, releas'd from ev'ry woe, in heaven.

*A Recluse—Scandal of a country Town—Traits  
of a good Heart—St. Herbert's Island.*

THE beautiful little Cecilia, conformable with the strict orders given by the earl of Torrington to his worthy steward, Alexander Wilson, esquire, had been carefully educated, as far as the very limited erudition of a village schoolmaster was capable of affording her instruction; for so fondly was the lovely, interesting, giddy little romp beloved by every domestic retained in the castle, that they all resolutely opposed the dear child being sent to Keswick to a boarding-school, to fret, and pine, and be made unhappy among strangers. At eight years old, Cecilia could read in Mrs. Milman's folio Bible, she could spell tolerably, she could also scrawl her own name, and her aunt's, and Mr. Wilson's, in letters large, unequal-sized, and crooked; and these were the utmost extent of her literary attainments.

Mr. Wilson had, every year since their marriage, been taught to expect that the earl and countess of Torrington would visit their Cumberland estate, and he was very apprehensive that the earl, who had left such particular injunctions with regard to Miss Delmore, would not consider her beauty and her engaging manners an equivalent for her total want of education; he was aware that she had sense far above her years; he knew that her temper was sweetly affable, her spirit quick, and her disposition generous, compassionate, and forgiving. But though nature had been thus abundantly kind in bestowing on her a beautiful person, and a mind organized to receive the highest cultivation, he foresaw the excessive and imprudent indulgence she met from every

individual at the castle would actually ruin her, and that she would grow up a self-willed and ignorant young woman: this conviction gave the worthy Wilson great uneasiness, and he was determined to write to the earl of Torrington respecting her deficiencies in learning, and obtain his positive command for her being sent to a boarding-school.

But Mr. Wilson's attention to Cecilia's improvement was for that time suspended, by an application being made to him by a lady for a cottage ornée, built beside the ruins of St. Herbert's Hermitage, provided he would put it in habitable repair, and make such other additions as she would point out, if he would give her the meeting on the island on an appointed day. Cecilia was present when Mr. Wilson informed Mrs. Milman of this most singular desire of a lady to live in such a sequestered spot, where, in winter, she would be exposed to the melancholy devastations of the season, and be deafened with the hoarse sounds of roaring winds and rushing waters.

Mr. Wilson having named the day on which he was to meet the lady, Cecilia so earnestly entreated to go with him to the island, that he complied, on her promising to learn that evening the multiplication table—a task she had for near a month evaded, and thrown aside, on some frivolous pretence or other. When Mr. Wilson came in to supper, to his astonishment she repeated the table, without making a single mistake; and then more than ever convinced of her capacity for learning, he lamented the great injury their mistaken fondness was doing her.

When the day arrived, Cecilia did not fail to remind Mr. Wilson of the promise he had given to take her with him to St. Herbert's Island. Her favourite Triton, always her constant companion, was now grown very old, and Mr. Wilson objected to his going with them to the island; but, accustomed to attend Cecilia in all her rambles, Triton impatiently resisted the effort made to confine him to his kennel; but finding his strength fail him, and that he was likely to be made a prisoner, he set up a piteous howl, which so affected the kind heart of Cecilia, that she flew to liberate her favourite, whose rough neck she fondly clasped with one arm, while with the other hand she untied the strings of her bonnet, and threw it on the ground. Having soothed and repeatedly kissed old Triton, she turned to Mr. Wilson with tears in her eyes, and in a tone of displeasure said she would stay at home with Triton, as Mr. Wilson did not approve of his going with them—“For, poor dear fellow!” continued she, the tears rolling down her cheeks, “he would fret himself quite sick if I was to leave him; and I know he would not eat a morsel of dinner if I did not feed him.”

Mr. Wilson was not proof against Cecilia's tears, or accustomed to oppose her wishes; and, to the great joy of old Triton, he was permitted to make one of the party.

The day was bright and serene, the air, that gently curled the bosom of the water, wafted with every breath the perfume of the flowers that reared their glowing heads in luxuriant profusion on the romantic margin of the lake, where the sun, resting its golden beams on the rich and varied foliage of the woods, and gilding the many-tinted summits of the fantastic rocks, presented to the delighted eye an enchanting prospect, at once grandly majestic and sweetly pastoral.

Mrs. Doricourt, the lady who wished to engage the cottage, was already on the island, attended by two servants, when Mr. Wilson and Cecilia arrived; she was dressed in deep mourning. Her figure was tall and elegant; she appeared to be about the age of thirty; her features were fine; she had dark expressive eyes, and a mouth rendered particularly beautiful by a pensive smile, which sometimes hovered for an instant over

her serpentine lips. While engaged in pointing out to Mr. Wilson her wishes respecting the additions to the cottage, her eyes frequently wandered to Cecilia, who was seated on the root of an evergreen oak, with the head of old Triton on her lap, the thick curls of which she had stuck full of primroses and violets.

Her plans being arranged with Mr. Wilson, Mrs. Doricourt advanced towards Cecilia, and inquired if she was the daughter of the steward? Being informed of Cecilia's orphan state and dependent situation, Mrs. Doricourt said— "I cannot presume to interfere with, or alter the arrangements of the earl of Torrington; but, had this lovely child been less nobly or fortunately adopted, I should have been inclined to offer her my protection; as it is, I trust I shall very often be favoured with her company. Tell me," continued she, taking Cecilia's passive hand, "will you come to-morrow, and spend the day with me at Keswick?"

Cecilia turned her sunny eyes on Mrs. Doricourt, and, with a smile of pleasure dimpling her coral mouth, replied— "I think I should like to come to see you very much indeed; only—" She paused.

Mrs. Doricourt seated herself beside her on the root of the tree, and inquired what she meant to say by "only?"

Cecilia looked at Triton, and then asked Mrs. Doricourt if she loved dogs?

Mrs. Doricourt having answered in the affirmative, inquired what she meant by the question?

"I will tell you," said Cecilia, "Mamma Milman took me one day to Keswick to visit Mrs. M'Millan, and as soon as we entered her parlour, she ordered my poor Triton to be turned into the street; and it snowed very fast, and the wind blew so cold: now don't you think it was very cruel and hard hearted of her? I am sure I did; and I thought she looked so proud, I could not abide her; and I would not stay with her, though mamma Milman took me there to learn to dance, and speak French, and play upon the music."

Mrs. Doricourt kissed the rosy cheek of the interesting child, at the same time assuring her she was very partial to dogs, and that she hoped she would bring her favourite Triton with her whenever she paid her a visit, assuring her that she might depend on his being treated with all possible respect and attention.

This assurance effectually won the heart of Cecilia, and, all smiles and gaiety, she wandered over the island with her hand locked in that of Mrs. Doricourt, whose pensive countenance was often brightened with a smile, while listening to the remarks, or witnessing the sportive gambols of the innocent being, whose every look and bounding step evinced happiness.

Mrs. Doricourt, as well as Mr. Wilson, had come prepared to spend the day on the island, and during the repast of which they partook in the ruinous Hermitage, he deplored the very backward state of Cecilia's education, and his own wish to place her at a boarding-school, where the indulgence of all her little whims would not be allowed to impede or retard the more important cultivation of her mind.

Cecilia having given Triton his dinner, and made him a bed to sleep upon, had leisure to attend to Mrs. Doricourt, whose voice and manner fascinated and compelled her silent attention. Mrs. Doricourt had discovered in the countenance of Cecilia a strong resemblance to a dear and lamented friend, and she grew every instant more interested by her playful smiles and ingenuous replies; for on being asked if she loved reading, she said she loved to listen to Abraham the butler, when he sung the "*Yarmouth Tragedy*," or the

*“Wealthy young Squire of Tamworth,”* much more than she did to read in the big Bible to her mamma Milman; and to play with Triton, and feed her pigeons, better than to mark or darn muslin.

The soft voice, and gentle, though dignified, manners of Mrs. Doricourt, entirely won the heart of Cecilia, and she joyfully accepted her invitation of spending the next day with her at Keswick.

Mr. Wilson had seen a good deal of the world, he had spent the best part of his life with persons of high rank, and he was satisfied that Mrs. Doricourt was, in every acceptation of the word, a perfect gentle-woman; her conversation was polished, her language correct, and the various observations she made on the surrounding objects convinced him that she possessed strong sense, and a mind very highly cultivated by education. The references she had given him, placed it beyond doubt that she was a woman of character and large fortune, and he gave immediate orders for the cottage, and the whole of the island, to be modelled according to the plan she had herself laid down.

The cloud of melancholy that hung on the fine countenance of Mrs. Doricourt had not escaped the observation of Mr. Wilson, and he wondered what unfortunate event could have driven a handsome woman, in the very prime of life, to the strange resolve of retiring from society, and selecting a residence on an island so many miles remote from other habitation. But, while lost in conjecture as to her motives for preferring such absolute solitude, he sincerely rejoiced in the chance that had introduced Cecilia to her notice, and whom he resolved should go to Keswick the next day; for he encouraged a hope that, through Mrs. Doricourt’s influence, this darling child would be induced to seek the means of improving the graces and talents so liberally bestowed on her by the partial bounty of nature.

When Cecilia returned to the castle, she could talk of nothing but Mrs. Doricourt—her voice, her eyes, her beautiful smile, and the pleasure she expected in her visit to Keswick; and the last request she uttered when retiring to rest was, that she might be called very early in the morning, that she might get ready for her visit to Mrs. Doricourt.

Cecilia rose with the sun, and having got Triton’s paws washed, and his rough coat brushed, she counted the hours with no little impatience till Mr. Wilson’s gig drove to the door; she then entreated that he would allow Triton to ride between them, because he was grown old, and would be fatigued with running after them.

“Pshaw!” replied Mr. Wilson; “what is the use of taking Triton?”

“Why you know, sir,” returned Cecilia, “Mrs. Doricourt was so good as to invite him; and why should not the poor fellow partake the pleasure of the visit? Besides, as he is got old, I should not like to neglect or treat him with disrespect, particularly as he was your gift to me.”

Mr. Wilson was affected; he kissed Cecilia, and assisted himself to place Triton in the gig, observing that her attention to Triton was a lesson of humanity and gratitude, that, while it did honour to her own heart, would never be forgotten by his.

Mrs. Doricourt was in elegant lodgings, in a retired part of Keswick, attended by her own servants, who had lived with her many years—all middle-aged persons. In one of her apartments was a fine-toned pianoforte, which she touched with exquisite skill, and accompanied with a voice of such melting harmony, that

“One might listen and believe  
A warbling seraph sung.”

She was also a proficient in painting, and was finishing a drawing she had made of the ruins of St. Herbert’s Island, when Miss Delmore and Mr. Wilson were announced.

Mrs. Doricourt received them with graceful elegance, and a pleasure that dispelled for a moment the pensiveness that overcast her fine features, and gave a transient gleam of the radiant light that had once illumined her dark eyes, and of those fascinating smiles that now but rarely hovered over her lips.

Cecilia sprang to her arms with artless demonstrations of joy, and seeing Mrs. Doricourt pat the head of Triton, she said to Mr. Wilson— “There, sir, you see Triton was expected as well as me; and I am sure the ride will do him good, and that he is quite glad I brought him.”

Mr. Wilson having business of his own to transact, took his leave, with a promise of calling for Miss Delmore in the evening, and left Mrs. Doricourt delighted with her animation as much as with the sweet and tender disposition she evinced.

Mrs. Doricourt took pains to divert her, and to win her regard; in which intention she so well succeeded, that in the short space of one hour Cecilia forgot how recently she had been introduced to Mrs. Doricourt, and was as much at home as at Torrington Castle. The sound of the pianoforte, and the singing of Mrs. Doricourt, rivetted the attention of the volatile child; her eyes sparkled—her cheek glowed with a brighter tint of carnation—she appeared enchanted; and when Mrs. Doricourt closed the instrument, she said she should never ask Abraham to sing her “*Nancy of Yarmouth*,” or the “*Tamworth Squire*,” again.

Perpetually on the move at Torrington Castle, and with difficulty persuaded to give half an hour to her book or her needle, Cecilia now sat silently and attentively watching the strokes of Mrs. Doricourt’s pencil; and when she placed the finished drawing before her, she exclaimed— “Oh, how beautiful! This is St. Herbert’s Island. What a delightful thing to be able to draw trees, houses, and water!”

“Should you like to learn?” asked Mrs. Doricourt.

“Oh yes,” replied Cecilia, eagerly; “but,” shaking her lovely little head, “I fear I should never succeed, for mamma Milman says I am so wild and so giddy.”

“When we particularly wish to attain an accomplishment,” said Mrs. Doricourt, “our application keeps pace with our inclination. Will you be my pupil?”

Cecilia blushed, and kissing Mrs. Doricourt’s hand, replied— “And would you indeed take the trouble to instruct an ignorant child? I am sure I could learn any thing from you much sooner than from Mrs. M’Millan, who behaved so barbarous to my poor Triton, or than I did from Mr. Angus, who first taught me to read, and when I came to a hard word, used to cough, and blow his nose, and tell me to go on. But I fear I shall be very stupid.”

“Fear nothing, my sweet girl,” said Mrs. Doricourt, placing a pencil in her fingers; “but let us, without loss of time, commence your first lesson.”

Contrary to her expectation, Mrs. Doricourt found Cecilia patient and docile, never expressing a word that indicated weariness, and evincing a taste and capability that promised the attainment of perfection.

Having employed a full hour at the pencil, Mrs. Doricourt again placed herself at the pianoforte; and as she played and sang, she observed the eyes of Cecilia filled with tears. Mrs. Doricourt caressed her tenderly, and inquired the cause of her emotion. Cecilia threw her arms round Mrs. Doricourt's neck, and sobbed on her bosom. Mrs. Doricourt waited the subsiding of this agitation, and then drew from Cecilia a confession that music filled her with joy, though, at the very moment she was most pleased, it brought tears into her eyes.—“But I will tell you,” said she, smiling through her tears, “why I feel so much affected. Mr. Wilson wants to put me to school to Mrs. M'Millan; and indeed I should like to learn music, and dancing, and French, and all the rest that they say young ladies ought to learn, but that Mrs. M'Millan is so cross; and I can never forget how cruel she was in ordering my poor Triton to be turned into the street, in the bitter snow and wind.”

Mrs. Doricourt folded Cecilia to her bosom—“We must contrive,” said she, “to have you instructed, without sending you to this Mrs. M'Millan, who has so unfortunately prejudiced you against her. But come, I have not yet introduced you to my dogs; and I have my favourites as well as you.” She then took Cecilia by the hand, and led her to a small room, where before the fire lay a Russian stag-hound, of a size exceeding that of Triton; and on a cushion near him, two little Spanish dogs, with long silky hair, as white as milk.

Mrs. Doricourt informed Cecilia that Ulric, the stag-hound, had saved her life, and though a ferocious-looking creature, was particularly gentle and good tempered. With this assurance Cecilia ventured to approach and stroke his black shining head, and suffered him to lick her hand, while she protested she should always love him for having saved the life of her dear Mrs. Doricourt. Cecilia had never seen such dogs before, and she was in raptures with the little Spanish animals; but when, at the command of Mrs. Doricourt, they picked up her handkerchief, and fetched various articles from the adjoining apartments, her surprise and exclamations of delight were unbounded; she kissed Medor and Fidelle a thousand times, declaring they were the most clever and beautiful little darlings in the world.—“But, though I admire you above all the dogs I ever saw,” said she, “I do not love you as well as my own dear Triton. Poor fellow, he is grown old now, and nearly helpless; but he is so sensible, he understands every word we say; and he used to carry me about on his back. No, no—though Medor and Fidelle are handsomer than my Triton, I do not love them half so well.”

“You are a darling child,” said Mrs. Doricourt, fondly kissing her; “and your attachment to Triton, grown old and helpless, proves to me that your heart is formed of the tenderest and noblest materials.” She then led her to the dinner-table, where every thing had been provided to gratify a youthful appetite.

When evening and Mr. Wilson came to take her back to Torrington Castle, Cecilia kissed Mrs. Doricourt many times, and said—“How very short this day has been! I never was half so happy at Keswick before, I am very, very sorry to leave you.”

“Then stay with me, sweet Cecilia,” replied Mrs. Doricourt, returning her caresses.

“But my mamma Milman, and my poor Triton, and my pretty white pigeons, what will become of them?” said Cecilia, hesitating between her wish to remain at Keswick and apprehension for her favourites.

Mrs. Doricourt assured Mr. Wilson, with so much earnestness, that she should feel particularly gratified by Cecilia being permitted to remain with her, that he gladly consented to her staying, being convinced that Mrs. Doricourt's accomplishments would stimulate Cecilia to improvement; though he was not a little surprised that Cecilia, who never before could be prevailed upon to sleep from Mrs. Milman, now appeared happy to remain, and was satisfied with Mrs. Doricourt saying that Triton should stay with her, and with Mr. Wilson's promise that Mrs. Milman should call upon her in the morning, and that her pigeons should be taken care of.

Weeks and months passed away, and Cecilia, contented and happy, remained the cherished and fondly-beloved guest of Mrs. Doricourt, making only short visits to Torrington Castle. Mrs. Milman and the kind-hearted Wilson beheld her rapidly improving in every elegant accomplishment, yet still the same affectionate, artless, animated creature, bestowing on every object of her infant love the same fond regard as when she saw them every hour; but at the very moment Mrs. Milman joined her friend Wilson in grateful praise of Mrs. Doricourt, who had effected such a wonderful change in her darling child, she could not forbear feeling a sort of resentment against her, because she behaved to her with a distance that forbade familiarity; and though she always received her, when she called to see Cecilia, with politeness, it was evidently with the cold reserve of a superior.

Alexander Wilson, esquire, the land-steward of the earl of Torrington, was a man of good fortune; he was a widower, without children; Cecilia possessed his warmest affections; even from babyhood she had been his plaything, his darling pet, and he had formed secret projects, that led him to hope the earl of Torrington's intentions in favour of Miss Delmore might not mar a design he had formed of marrying her to a nephew of his own, three years older than herself, the expences of whose education he had taken upon himself, intending him for the church, several good livings being in the gift of the earl of Torrington, with whom, he flattered himself, he had sufficient interest to get his nephew preferred to any other applicant. For the attention Mrs. Doricourt bestowed on Cecilia he was sincerely grateful, and was at much pains to contradict an idle report prevailing at Keswick, that she was deranged in her intellects.

"For what but an unhappy insanity," said Mrs. M'Millan, severely piqued at hearing that Mrs. Doricourt, for her own amusement, was educating Miss Delmore, and by this officious display of her abilities and accomplishments, depriving her of a pupil—"what but insanity can persuade the unfortunate woman to prefer a residence on that lonely spot, St. Herbert's Island, to living at Keswick, where she can visit and be visited? what, I say, but insanity, can make her decline society? for I understand she keeps her carriage, and Mr. Dougle the banker informed me that she was very rich: it is evident to me that she must be absolutely mad."

"Very true, madam," replied Mrs. Murray—"your observations are perfectly just, and agree exactly with my own; for said I to my cousin Montrose—'This Mrs. Doricourt, James, is certainly mad; for no woman in possession of her senses would have refused to receive sir Archibald and lady Macintosh, and lady Jane and lady Margaret Douglas, when they called upon her.' Could she be in her senses, when she sent her old butler to inform them that it was not her intention to see company; that she came into Cumberland with the intention of living in the utmost privacy?"

"And then, I am told," said Miss Gilchrist, "that she looks quite wild, and is as pale as a ghost: there is not the smallest doubt but she is mad, and I much wonder that her relation, Mrs. Milman, and her guardian, Mr. Wilson, suffer Miss Delmore to be with her."

"They ought to be ashamed of themselves," resumed Mrs. M'Millan, "to suffer the poor dear little innocent to remain with a mad woman, who, in some of her terrible frantic fits, may do the child an injury. I wonder, when the affair comes to be properly represented to the earl of Torrington, what he will say; I suspect he will not altogether approve Wilson's saving scheme of getting the child educated gratis; for what can an insane person teach her?"

"As to the earl not approving," rejoined Mrs. Murray, "I suppose he will not interfere: no doubt he leaves the child to the disposal of her mother."

"You are mistaken in this business, madam," returned Mrs. M'Millan: "the housekeeper at Torrington Castle is not the child's mother; she is her aunt, her mother's sister."

"See how the artful impose upon the innocent," replied Mrs. Murray. "My dear madam, your own virtue and goodness render you unsuspecting of the vices of others. Mrs. Milman is tolerably good-looking, and, I dare say, is not above five-and-thirty."

"But what has Mrs. Milman's age or good looks to do with Miss Delmore?" asked Mrs. M'Millan.

"Every thing," returned the loquacious Mrs. Murray. "Bless my soul, you are not used to be so dull of apprehension, Mrs. M'Millan! Have you never heard it whispered among your Keswick friends, that the earl of Torrington, just by way of killing time, had a little love affair with his rosy-cheeked housekeeper, and that this little girl was their child?"

"Why no—I really do not recollect ever hearing this report before," said Mrs. M'Millan; "but, now you mention it, I see nothing improbable in the story; and though Mrs. Milman has always affected great fondness for the little girl, she may not in reality be sorry to get rid of her."

"Certainly, certainly," rejoined Miss Gilchrist; "and as Mrs. Milman affects propriety and reputation, she may be glad to have the living memento of her frailty removed out of her sight; though how she can reconcile it to her conscience, to trust the poor unfortunate child to the care of a mad woman, I cannot imagine."

"Unfortunate!" echoed Mrs. M'Millan, with a significant toss of her head—"your inexperience in life leads you into a mistake, Miss Gilchrist: these love-children, as they are called, have always the best luck; most people consider this child as particularly fortunate. When the earl was at the castle four or five years ago, he gave Mr. Wilson strict orders to procure Miss Delmore every possible advantage of education, and Mr. Wilson spoke to me about admitting her into my select establishment, which, though her birth is suspicious, and my pupils are, one and all, the daughters of persons of the very first consequence, I should not have objected, because it might have been injurious to my interest to offend the earl of Torrington; but the little vulgar thing insisted on a great ugly Newfoundland dog remaining with her, and cried and raved because I ordered the ugly beast to be turned into the street; nor could all my persuasions prevent her returning home with her mamma Milman, as she calls her, who most shamefully indulged her whims and ill-temper."



"And now this mad Mrs. Doricourt has completely deprived you of a pupil," said Mrs. Murray: "well, never mind—all's well that ends well; we shall see."

"That matters may turn out well," rejoined Miss Gilchrist, "is, I suppose, the reason why Mrs. Milman has consented to the little girl residing with Mrs. Doricourt; for, should the countess of Torrington visit the castle, which is every summer expected, she perhaps might not be exactly satisfied to find the earl's adopted daughter under the same roof with her."

"The countess of Torrington," said Mrs. M'Millan, "is, if report may be relied upon, a very vain, thoughtless, fashionable wife."

"Yet, fashionable as she is," replied Mrs. Murray, "and whatever latitude she may allow her own inclinations and caprices, she might perhaps object to the earl's indulging his, and make uneasy comments, and be suspicious of the motive that instigates the generosity of her lord to this orphan, as she is called."

"At any rate," said Mrs. M'Millan, "when the countess comes into Cumberland, it shall not be my fault if she does not inquire into his motives; not that the earl's intrigues are any thing to me, only I should like to be satisfied who the child really belongs to; and besides, I think it would be an act of humanity to remove her from this mad woman."

Mrs. Doricourt was not ignorant that her very retired habits had created much surprise, and that she was considered by the curious gossiping ladies of Keswick as a person of "*bewildered brain*;" but this knowledge had not the effect of altering either her plans or her conduct, having made up her mind to form no acquaintance, and to live in absolute retirement. Every day her fondness for Cecilia increased, and in forming her mind she found all the amusement she either wished for, or was capable of tasting; reading, music, drawing, and short rides at the base of the towering Skiddaw, or on the margin of Derwentwater, fully occupied her hours; and she had the pleasure to behold Cecilia, under her tuition, making rapid improvement, and repaying her attention with gratitude and the truest affection.

The cottage was now finished according to Mrs. Doricourt's plan, and the day appointed for her removal from Keswick, previous to which Miss Delmore was to return to the castle, and remain with her aunt till her own birthday, the tenth of May. Mrs. Doricourt, at an early hour of the morning, quitted Keswick, and took possession of her new habitation on St. Herbert's Island. It was the month of May, when the trees were putting forth their leaves of tender green, when the romantic banks of the silver-bosomed lake were covered with bright verdure, and the whole island, laid out in groves, lawns, gardens, and shrubberies, wore the enchanting livery of spring, and was perfumed with her fairest flowers.

The cottage, finished in the Italian style, had tasteful verandas all round it, profusely entwined with passion-flowers, jessamine, clematis, and honeysuckles, designed at once to ornament and keep off the winter storms. A breakfast-parlour, a handsome well-stocked library, and a boudoir furnished with fanciful elegance, comprised one wing of the cottage; a conservatory, filled with rare and beautiful exotics, a dining-parlour, and an apartment appropriated solely to the private studies of Mrs. Doricourt, made up the other wing: the rest of the cottage was formed into chambers for repose and servants' offices. A garden, elegantly and usefully laid out, extended to the edge of the lake, where Chinese bridges, painted boats, and a gilded yacht, added to the beauty of the scene. An extensive hothouse and greenhouse were constructed at the back

of St. Herbert's Hermitage, and temples, groves, and clumps of ornamental trees and flowering shrubs, had now transformed the island into another Eden—so charming, so picturesque, that while Mr. Wilson admired the accuracy with which Mrs. Doricourt laid down her plans, he was ready to worship the taste that inspired, and the liberality that promoted the cultivating and beautifying a spot which had for many years been considered only as waste ground.

It was the anniversary of Cecilia's ninth year when she paid her first visit to Mrs. Doricourt at the Hermitage; already she could converse in French, Italian, and German, with grace, correctness, and fluency; she could draw tastefully, and her proficiency on the pianoforte astonished Mrs. Doricourt, who was herself a scientific performer. Her genius, her beauty, but, above all, her sensibility, her sweetness of temper, and her affectionate heart, had so endeared her to Mrs. Doricourt, that she impatiently counted the hours of her absence. Early on the tenth of May, the yacht, decorated with silken streamers and garlands of flowers, was dispatched to the opposite side of the lake to wait the arrival of Cecilia, while, on the steps of a Chinese bridge, Mrs. Doricourt watched the light vessel, as it returned with a freight precious to her eyes and her heart.

Having welcomed Cecilia with joy and tenderness, Mrs. Doricourt had leisure to notice Mr. Wilson, who received her thanks for the minute attention he had paid to her wishes, in finishing the cottage and laying out the grounds.

"Why, this is an enchanted island!" exclaimed Cecilia, as her delighted eyes wandered over groves, cascades, bridges, and temples; "certainly I am in fairy land."

"No, my love," replied Mrs. Doricourt; "the change which so short a time has effected on this island has been performed by natural means, and will prove to you what human industry can perform, when directed by a little judgment."

Mr. Wilson would have expatiated on her uncommon taste, but, for the ear of Mrs. Doricourt, compliments and flattery had no longer charms; and immediately changing the subject, she led the way to the house, where she again congratulated Cecilia on having entered her ninth year.

After breakfast, she invited Mr. Wilson and Cecilia to the library, where the globes, telescopes, and a solar microscope, were objects of admiration; and the shelves of books, well selected and judiciously arranged, promised an inexhaustible fund of entertainment. But among all the handsome decorations of the library, none more attracted Cecilia's notice than marble busts of the poets, finely executed, and placed over their works.

When Mrs. Doricourt believed Cecilia had sufficiently examined the library, she presented her with a superb box of ivory inlaid with gold, containing every material for drawing. Cecilia was all smiles and acknowledgements; but, fondly kissing her, Mrs. Doricourt said she expected her thanks in a set of views from the surrounding country, to fill up the vacant pannels in the breakfast-parlour.

"Never," replied Cecilia, "never can I be sufficiently grateful for your goodness."

"I will not hear a word on this subject," said Mrs. Doricourt, "for, believe me, I consider myself the person obliged; your society, my beloved child, has, I really believe, preserved me from becoming in reality what the liberal-minded gentlefolks of Keswick represent me—a mad woman; and can I ever repay my sweet Cecilia for the preference she has given me to younger and gayer companions?"

"I never had, never can have companions," returned the grateful Cecilia, "whose society can be so dear, so valuable to me as yours; for have you not condescended not only to instruct me, but to join even in my pastimes? I have given up nothing, while you have generously laboured to inform my mind, and gratify every wish of my heart."

Mrs. Doricourt affectionately pressed her hand; and to silence Mr. Wilson's grateful effusions, she invited them to see the house built for Triton and Ulric, who, now firm friends, had taken possession of their new habitation, where the ease and comfort of these faithful animals had been in every point considered. Triton, from age and infirmity, could scarcely crawl, or in any way provide for his own wants; but, still sensible to the kindness of Cecilia, he would listen to her voice, and lick her hand with unabated affection: the worn-out Triton, her playfellow, her constant companion, was an affecting object to Cecilia, who, while she caressed, shed tears over her favourite.

"Come," said Mrs. Doricourt, "Triton's comfort shall be attended to, and I will have no tears to-day."

When Cecilia entered the boudoir, she was struck with the singular beauty of the apartment. The windows, opening to the floor, had elegant draperies of rose-coloured taffeta, and gave to the enchanted eye the white foam of a distant cascade, bounding from the craggy ledges of an immense high rock, and dividing into little pellucid rivulets, that were seen sparkling beneath the dark foliage of a thick grove; the majestic Skiddaw was seen towering to the right above the turrets of Torrington Castle; while the beautiful Derwentwater, bearing on its glittering bosom green islands and the gay pageantry of yachts and boats, presented a prospect of unrivalled beauty.

From the windows Cecilia turned to admire the interior. She was particularly struck with a marble bust, exquisitely sculptured, that stood in a niche, surmounting a trophy formed of various musical instruments. Beyond this was an arched recess, containing a magnificent Egyptian couch, embroidered with the flower of the lotus in gold, and supported by the fabulous sphinx. The niche on the other side the recess had a gauze curtain drawn before it: Cecilia paused for an instant before the curtain, but with a delicacy and self-command above her years, she repressed the curiosity she felt to see what it concealed. Mrs. Doricourt read in her countenance what was passing in her mind, but she suffered her to admire the paintings of several Italian masters that formed the pannels of the room. Her examination of these being finished, she turned again to the marble bust, the face of which was equally remarkable for beauty and pensiveness; the long neck was particularly graceful and elegant. On this model of female loveliness Cecilia gazed with an undefinable emotion, that filled her bright eyes with tears.

Mr. Wilson remarked, that it resembled Cecilia in all but the pensiveness that characterized the countenance.

"Your observation is just, Mr. Wilson," replied Mrs. Doricourt; "the features and the form of the neck are indeed strikingly alike. The pensive cast of the countenance was not the natural character—no," continued she, sighing heavily—"I remember the original, lovely and animated as Cecilia. That bust is the perfect resemblance of a dear friend now no more."

A tear stole down the cheek of Mrs. Doricourt, but she instantly wiped it off; and perceiving that Cecilia was weeping, she drew her towards the veiled niche.—"Are you not anxious to see what that curtain conceals, my Cecilia?" asked Mrs. Doricourt.

"No, madam," replied Cecilia, "for I am certain you do not wish me to peep behind the curtain; and you are so good, so very indulgent to me, that I should be the most ungrateful creature in existence if I encouraged curiosity in opposition to your will, which I am certain is always guided by reason."

Mr. Wilson declared Cecilia was a little angel, and that his and Mrs. Milman's obligations to Mrs. Doricourt could never be expressed or repaid.

"I am infinitely more than repaid," said Mrs. Doricourt, "for all I have done for this sweet child, in beholding her uncommon self-command.—But come, my love, your forbearance deserves reward. Take hold of that tassel."

Cecilia obeyed; the gauze curtain drew back, and discovered an inimitable bust of herself, and beneath it a superb harp, decorated with wreaths of beautiful flowers. An exclamation of joy and surprise burst from the lips of the delighted Cecilia.

Mr. Wilson was loud in admiration of the excellent likeness preserved in the bust, which he at once declared was his little favourite.

"This harp, my Cecilia, is yours," said Mrs. Doricourt; "I have often heard you express a wish to play on that instrument, and your uncommon proficiency on the pianoforte assures me you will be no mean performer."

Cecilia, speechless with gratitude and pleasure, could only press Mrs. Doricourt's hand to her lips, while Mr. Wilson, more delighted with the bust, wondered who in that part of the world could have chiseled such a beautiful and correct resemblance of Cecilia; "the statues and vases at the castle," continued he, "were all brought from Italy, in the late earl of Torrington's time, who was a great admirer of the fine arts, and I never heard of any person at Keswick, or in any part of Cumberland, that worked in marble."

"Most likely not, my good friend," replied Mrs. Doricourt; "for as I never boasted my abilities in sculpture, there was no possibility of it being known that I am a chipper of marble."

"You, madam!" exclaimed Cecilia, with a look and tone indicative of amazement, "and were these beautiful busts chiseled by you?"

"They were," replied Mrs. Doricourt; "and I trust, at no very distant period, to see you, my Cecilia, capable of chipping a block of marble into the resemblance of some dear friend."

"That dear friend will be yourself then," said Cecilia, again and again kissing the hand of Mrs. Doricourt. "I am the most fortunate child in the world," continued she, smiling through her tears, "to be loved and instructed by you, who are mistress of so many accomplishments. But indeed, indeed I will be observant of all your commands—I will obey all your wishes."

Mrs. Doricourt drew forth the harp, and, with a gracefulness all her own, played several of Cecilia's most favourite airs, which had, as she intended, the effect of composing the strong emotion that agitated her unsophisticated bosom; and while she admired the superb instrument, again repeated that she had sent for it from London, to present to her on her birthday.

Cecilia was now able to express her thanks with a firm voice and in animated terms; and while her dimpled fingers flew over the strings, her eyes sparkled, and her cheek glowed, not because she could call so rich a gift her own, but from anticipating the pleasure she should feel when able to play on an instrument she had many times heard Mrs. Doricourt say she preferred to any other.

Mr. Wilson, with a feeling very like awe, surveyed the apartment, and its interesting and still-beautiful mistress; and while he remembered all her wonderful attainments, he more than ever felt his curiosity excited to learn what extraordinary circumstances, what misfortunes, had occurred to drive a woman so eminently gifted from that world she was formed to adorn.

Cecilia's birthday passed, to her and Mr. Wilson, on the rapid wings of delight; for Mrs. Doricourt exerted herself to entertain them; and never did a creature of mortality possess in a higher degree the power of fascinating the senses, or of commanding respect.

When Mr. Wilson returned to Torrington Castle, he bore to Mrs. Milman an account of Mrs. Doricourt, her cottage, and the Eden she had created on St. Herbert's Island, so surprising and enchanting, that she more than ever felt mortified at her distant politeness to herself, while she loudly condemned her strange, unsocial determination to receive no visitors.—"You, Mr. Wilson," said she, with an air of pique, "you are a very fortunate man, to gain admittance to this wonderful woman."

"Truly I think so," replied he; "but it is a favour I should never have obtained, had not a man of business in this part of the world been absolutely necessary to the management of her affairs; and but for her extreme fondness of Cecilia I should certainly never be admitted to her presence, but when it was for the direct purpose of settling accounts."

"Her partiality for Cecilia," resumed Mrs. Milman, "might have extended to some little notice of me; but it is no matter—I suppose I am not good enough—the housekeeper of the earl of Torrington is too humble a person to be admitted to her presence."

"You know," replied Mr. Wilson, "she has declined the visits of the first families in Keswick; and do not let pique, my worthy woman, deprive you of gratitude; remember what she has done for your niece, and be satisfied with the knowledge that she enjoys Mrs. Doricourt's love and favour, and that you do not want it."

Mrs. Milman blushed—she felt the justice of Mr. Wilson's reproof, and confessed her great obligations to Mrs. Doricourt on Cecilia's account; adding—"How greatly the earl will be surprised when he finds her so clever! I declare I hope the family may come down to the castle next summer; and who knows, as the countess has no daughter, but she may take as great a fancy to Cecilia as Mrs. Doricourt has done?"

Mr. Wilson joined in Mrs. Milman's wish to see the earl and countess of Torrington at the castle, but from a very different motive. He knew that the countess was a vain, frivolous woman, on whom genius and talent would be lost, and whom beauty was very likely to displease; but from the earl he expected a compliance with his wishes—an approval of the plan on which he had dwelt for some years, with anticipations bordering on anxiety.

"I have no doubt," said Mrs. Milman, "when the countess comes down, she will be curious to see Mrs. Doricourt."

"Nothing more likely," replied Mr. Wilson; "but I am certain her curiosity will not be gratified; Mrs. Doricourt is very rich, and in her notions very independent. It is a pity, nay, it is a great loss to society, that this charming woman resolves to seclude herself, her conversation is so improving, her manners so graceful, and her accomplishments so wonderful."

"Bless my soul!" interrupted Mrs. Milman, laughing; "I really fear, Mr. Wilson, you are in love with this wonderful Mrs. Doricourt."

“Never fear,” replied Mr. Wilson; “I am heart-whole, I promise you; I am not so silly as to fall in love where I can never hope to meet a return; but still I say she is a charming woman, and it was a blessed day for Cecilia, Mrs. Milman, when I took her to St. Herbert’s Island to meet Mrs. Doricourt.”

“Indeed, my good friend, it was,” returned Mrs. Milman; “and a blessed thing it will be for your nephew too, if he has the good luck to get Cecilia for his wife.”

“True, true, my dear woman,” replied Wilson, rubbing his hands, an action indicative of his pleasurable feelings; “and I am doing every thing that money can accomplish to make him worthy of her; he shall have an education, Mrs. Milman, fit for an archbishop; and who knows,” added he, proudly, “but I may live to see him one?”

“No one can tell, to be sure,” said Mrs. Milman, “to what they may rise in life; nor can any one tell who Cecilia may marry, for they say there is a fate in these things; but if she has your nephew for a husband, to be sure her lot in life will be a lucky one.”

“Yes, yes—pretty well,” returned Mr. Wilson; “his father has made a tolerable handsome fortune, and has only three children; Solomon, the eldest, is my godson, and I have taken care about his education, being determined he shall be a great scholar; and if the earl does not oppose my wishes, why Solomon Scroggins and Cecilia Delmore will be a pair unequalled in England.”

Several days had passed with Cecilia in uninterrupted happiness at the Hermitage; for Mrs. Doricourt, judicious in the arrangement of all her plans, took care that her studies should be so varied, that her lessons always came in the shape of amusement. But this felicity, so pure, so perfect, met a check in the death of poor old Triton, and introduced into the bosom of Cecilia its first sorrow; worn out with age, the faithful animal expired with his head on her lap, as she sat, at the close of day, with Mrs. Doricourt, beneath a group of trees, watching the last rays of the setting sun, as they glittered on the loftiest peak of the Skiddaw mountain. The tears of Cecilia fell in torrents on the inanimate form of her favourite, for whom she grieved most sincerely, though convinced he had lived to an unusual age, and had suffered much, from being nearly blind and destitute of teeth; but she felt consoled, on the assurance Mrs. Doricourt gave her that he should be buried on the spot where he had died, and that a marble urn should be placed near his grave, to honour his memory, and commemorate his faithful qualities.

Cecilia saw the bones of poor old Triton laid beneath the pensile branches of a drooping willow; his grave was raised into a bank, a cypress was placed at each end, and the turf was thickly planted with violets. From the window of her bed-chamber Cecilia could see this spot, particularly endeared to her from containing the remains of her early, faithful friend, and thither her eyes were directed every morning when she first rose from her bed; for poor old Triton, though dead above a month, had not yet failed from her memory. She recollected Mrs. Doricourt’s promise of raising an urn to his memory, but as this tribute of regard had never been mentioned since he had been laid in the earth, Cecilia began to fear it had escaped her recollection. But in this instance Cecilia’s impatience to see her favourite’s memory honoured made her unjust to Mrs. Doricourt, with whom a promise was always held sacred. One morning, as usual, she had opened her window, and as her eyes were directed towards Triton’s grave, she was agreeably surprised to see something white gleam through the dark foliage of the surrounding trees. Having hastily dressed herself, she flew to the spot, and with tearful gratitude beheld a beautiful but simple urn, bearing a tablet, on which was inscribed—

"Beneath this violet-sprinkled turf reposes  
TRITON,  
A native of Newfoundland,  
Remarkable for strength, fidelity, and gratitude."

Cecilia's tears flowed copiously as she read this just tribute to departed worth; she kissed the tablet, and repaired to the breakfast parlour, to thank Mrs. Doricourt for this new proof she had given of her attentive kindness—"The estimable qualities of my poor Triton," said Cecilia, "are now honoured indeed—they will not sink unremembered to oblivion; and while I sit beneath the shade of his urn, I shall reflect with gratitude to Heaven, that I have still a friend unequalled in goodness as in accomplishments."

The evening of this day turned out dark and rainy, and as they could not take their accustomed walks about the grounds, Mrs. Doricourt introduced Cecilia to the apartment where none but those conducted by herself were permitted to enter. But if the taste with which every other apartment of the cottage was fitted up had delighted Cecilia, this astonished her: it was a room of octangular form; the richly-stuccoed compartments were curved into ornamental arches, each containing a beautiful statue; several elegant busts were placed on brackets, blocks of marble lay on the floor, with various mallets and chisels, and among these an unfinished bust of the Lesbian poetess.

"The statues to your right hand, my Cecilia," said Mrs. Doricourt, "are all the works of eminent Italian artists, and are considered inimitable specimens; that Ganymede feeding the Eagle, the Apollo, and Ceres, and that unfinished figure, are my labours."

"Oh how beautiful!" said Cecilia, in a tone of mingled admiration and astonishment; "surely you are yourself a goddess, for what mortal skill could produce such inimitable figures?"

"Alas, my love!" replied Mrs. Doricourt, "you greatly overrate my little abilities; with the assistance of similar implements," pointing to the mallet and chisel, "many ladies now living have greatly exceeded me as a sculptor. You, my Cecilia, from never having seen any thing of the kind before, conceive these specimens more excellent than they really are; at present you are charmed and astonished—you look up to me as a being of superior talents and attainments; but the charm will cease, and you may hereafter learn to behold with cold indifference, perhaps to despise, the genius you at the present moment so warmly admire."

While Mrs. Doricourt spoke, her countenance expressed the mingled feelings of sorrow and disdain. Cecilia's sensibility was wounded; her heart assured her she never could be so unjust, so ungrateful; her look was sorrowful, and a tear swelled in either eye.

Mrs. Doricourt repented the unkind expression that had escaped her lips—an expression not the impulse of a naturally-suspicious mind, but prompted by the painful remembrance of past neglect and ingratitude; she fondly pressed Cecilia to her bosom, she prayed her to forgive the unkindness of her speech, and assured her that she did not suspect, did not believe she would ever cease to love her.

"Oh, never, never, but with my life!" said Cecilia, fervently; "in my sight, in my heart, you will always be revered, always considered the first and dearest of women."

Mrs. Doricourt sighed; she had heard such protestations before, and she had been taught the misery of their insincerity—"I brought you hither, my love," said she, "to

shew you in what way I employ the hours when you are absent. But I have still more wonders for you—there yet remains an apartment you have not examined.”

Mrs. Doricourt pressed a panel; it slid back, and they entered a passage that received light from a glass dome.—“We are now,” continued Mrs. Doricourt, about to enter St. Herbert’s Hermitage.” As she spoke, she unclosed a low Gothic door. Cecilia no longer beheld heaps of rubbish and fallen stones; from the naturally arched roof a chandelier, made to imitate a branch of coral, threw a soft tremulous light over the rugged sides, that now glittered with spars and shells; the ground was inlaid with different-coloured marbles, and led to an altar covered with richly-embroidered white satin; at the back appeared a superb painting, by Raphael, of the Annunciation; a large silver crucifix stood on the altar, which had several other costly adornments.—“I have before informed you, my love,” said Mrs. Doricourt, “that I profess the Catholic faith, and that my domestics are of the same belief: this is my oratory; at this altar I pour forth my supplications to that merciful Being, who will bless and receive all, of every persuasion, who seek and serve him faithfully. To-morrow, my Cecilia, is the twelfth of August; that day with me is always a solemn fast; I shall spend the whole of it at the foot of the altar, in prayer and meditation. If the weather, my love, should continue so unfavourable as to prevent your going, as we intended, to the castle in the morning, you must contrive to amuse yourself with your music, your pencil, and your books; for we shall not meet during the whole of the day; and Ulric, Medor, and Fidelle, will be your only companions, as they are mine when you are absent.”

“I wish I was a Catholic,” returned Cecilia; “I should then be permitted to fast and pray with you.”

“The earl of Torrington is a Protestant,” said Mrs. Doricourt, “and he might not be pleased to find your religious belief differed from his own; and I, my beloved Cecilia, should be extremely sorry to incur his displeasure, by leading you from the church in which he worships, especially when I feel a perfect conviction that every denomination of Christians is acceptable in the eyes of infinite goodness and wisdom.”

Cecilia heard and acquiesced in Mrs. Doricourt’s sentiments, though she could not help saying—“A whole day—dear me, how long and tedious I shall think the hours! But shall I not see you before I go to bed?”

“No, my love,” replied Mrs. Doricourt, “not before Thursday morning.”

Though Cecilia was very fond of the dogs, she did not promise herself much entertainment in their company, and during the evening she often thought of the dulness of the following day—“How I shall wish for Thursday morning!” said Cecilia, as she kissed Mrs. Doricourt, and received her blessing previous to retiring to rest. “If the weather had been fine,” thought Cecilia, “I might have gone to see mamma Milman; but, oh dear, what a dull day will to-morrow be!” In the midst of her regrets Cecilia’s eyes closed, and in the morning when she awoke the sun was darting its bright rays through her window curtains.

Agreeable to Mrs. Doricourt’s arrangement, the yacht was prepared, and Mr. Baldwin, Mrs. Doricourt’s butler, saw her safe to Torrington Castle.

Cecilia’s affection for her first friend, Mrs. Milman, was undiminished; she loved her as a relation, and respected her for the care she had taken of her helpless infancy; but she had neither the sense, the education, nor the elegance of Mrs. Doricourt; and having ascertained that all her friends at the castle were well, she felt the hours drag away even



more heavily than if she had remained at the Hermitage, where her music, her pencil, and her books, would have beguiled the time. She thought unceasingly of Mrs. Doricourt, and of her wonderful attainments; she described to Mr. Wilson and Mrs. Milman the apartment full of statues and busts; she spoke also of the oratory, and of the piety of Mrs. Doricourt, who at that very moment was on her knees, fasting and praying.

"That is what these Papists call penance, I suppose," said Mrs. Milman.

"No," replied Cecilia, "that cannot be, for Mrs. Doricourt is too good, too pious, to have any sins to repent; and penance is a punishment for sin."

"She is indeed a most amiable, a most wonderful woman," said Mr. Wilson.

"Let her be ever so amiable," rejoined Mrs. Milman, "she is but a human creature; and every body that lives commits sin. But, mercy upon us, Mr. Wilson! what a foolish notion, to suppose that going without meat all day, and making motions upon their forehead and breast, and sprinkling water upon themselves, will do away sin!"

"As this is a subject, my good friend," said Mr. Wilson, "that we are neither of us competent to speak upon, we had better introduce some other."

"Oh certainly," replied Mrs. Milman. "I am but an ignorant woman, to be sure, but, for all that, I have more sense than to kneel down to images and pictures, and worship them, as they tell me Papists do."

"You are told wrong, Mrs. Milman—very wrong, depend upon it," said Mr. Wilson; "Catholics certainly do not worship images or pictures, for that would be idolatry. But we will talk, if you please of something else."

Cecilia young as she was, could perceive that Mr. Wilson was anxious to change the conversation on her account, and with much warmth and earnestness she replied—"My dear Mrs. Doricourt does not kneel to pictures and images; she prays to the same God that we do, though she is a Catholic."

### CHAPTER III.

Thoughtless of beauty, she was beauty's self,  
Recluse, amid the close embowering woods:  
As in the hollow breast of Appenine,  
Beneath the shelter of encircling hills,  
A myrtle rises far from human eye,  
And breathes its balmy fragrance o'er the wild.

THOMSON.

. . . . .

What is called the great world, contains but few worthy characters; fashionable society abounds with beings who despise and insult innocence, who, glorying in their vices, employ their thoughts solely in plans of seduction, ambition, and profligacy. *Extract from a Letter.*

*Fashionable Gallantries—Female Inconstancy—  
A Return to England—Introduction to a Woman of Quality.*

As Mrs. Milman beheld the growing beauty and graces of Cecilia, she became more and more impatient of the long absence of the earl and countess of Torrington, whom she anxiously wished to visit Cumberland; for, much as she felt indebted to Mrs. Doricourt, she was half inclined to think her a little deranged; and she could not bear that Cecilia should be shut up continually at the Hermitage, which she often protested was as bad as any nunnery. But Mrs. Milman's anxious wishes were fated to be disappointed; for a fancy had seized the countess of Torrington to spend some time at Paris; and when there, she was persuaded by her dear friend, the duchess de Valencourt, to make the tour of Italy, Switzerland, and Germany.

The duchess de Valencourt was a little lively brunette, far inferior to the countess of Torrington in beauty; yet she threw such bewitching glances of invitation from a pair of large black eyes, that the very vulnerable heart of the earl of Torrington was not proof against their artful languishments. The duchess had a decided antipathy to John Bull; she could not endure his vulgar roast beef and ale; she detested his blunt honest sincerity; she despised the prudery and reserve of his females, who, in the midst of their boasted land of liberty, were as absolutely slaves as the wives of the grand sultan.—“No England for me,” said the lively duchess; “I will live a life of joy and freedom, among people with whom a little harmless *gaieté de coeur* is not considered a blemish on the reputation.”

The countess of Torrington secretly approved what the duchess openly professed—she was as much as enemy to English formality as herself. The earl had no objection to freedom, in its most extensive sense; he was enchanted with the *gaieté de coeur* of the little duchess; she was a charming widow, whom the French revolution had released from a tyrannic husband, and emancipated from narrow prejudices. The countess

declared her an enchanting creature; the earl was of the same opinion, and he fell in with her wishes, without a dissenting word. The duchess was the most dear and particular friend of lady Torrington, and he was too kind, too polite a husband, to conceive the cruelty of separating such congenial souls; therefore he consented to accompany them to Italy, as the duchess sportively said, in search of adventures.

The countess of Torrington having no other child than Oscar lord Rushdale, on whose existence the perpetuating the family honours depended, he was considered of too much consequence to be left behind; proper instructors were therefore engaged to travel in his suite, and the young lord began a tour, as many lords before him have done, without a capacity for observation; he was then a mere child, and would have considered a top or a drum more worthy of notice than broken marbles or ruined temples.

The servile respect paid by needy foreigners to wealthy Englishmen has been too frequently described to render further comments on the subject necessary, suffice it to say, the style in which they travelled, and the money they squandered, procured the earl and countess of Torrington such obliging friends and flatterers, that, despising the plain honest sincerity of their native country, they engaged an elegant villa that overlooked the Bay of Naples, where they remained till a circumstance occurred, fortunate in its consequence, but at that time extremely vexatious to the earl, which determined him not only to return without delay to England, but to spend the ensuing summer at his long-neglected castle in Cumberland.

Miss Delmore had just entered her seventeenth year, when the joyful order arrived to prepare for the earl and countess of Torrington, who, with a party of friends, intended to be down the following week. Mrs. Milman was almost out of her wits with anticipating the pleasure of presenting Cecilia to the countess of Torrington, and, busily employed in preparation, did not remark that the certainty of the noble family's arrival in Cumberland did not afford Mr. Wilson the same degree of pleasure that it did her, Mr. Wilson had a scheme projecting in his brain, which the earl's arrival at the castle would unavoidably postpone; and, like many other persons in similar circumstances, he had a favour to ask, of the attainment of which he had never for an instant permitted himself to doubt, while it was not exactly in his power to prefer his request; but now, when the presence of the earl would afford him the so-often-desired opportunity, he felt diffident of success, and his apprehensive fancy raised many impediments to oppose his wish.

Cecilia was now a young woman, beautiful, engaging, sensible, and highly accomplished; his nephew, Solomon Scroggins, was, according to all the accounts he had received from his family, a prodigy of learning; he had obtained several prize medals for his Greek and Latin orations, and he was declared to understand Hebrew better than any young man at college. On the very day that Mrs. Milman received the earl's letter, he had determined to write one to his nephew Solomon, to invite him into Cumberland, with the intention of introducing the young people to each other, that they might, by personal acquaintance, be made sensible of each other's talents, and fall in love, which he was certain would be the result of their meeting; Cecilia Delmore, the perfection of beauty, elegance, and accomplishments—Solomon Scroggins, the *ne plus ultra* of learning and comprehension, whose head was stored with the dead and living languages—for these young people to know each other, was to a certainty to love—consequently to marry. But all this delightful scheme was put to the rout by the arrival of the earl. While abroad, he

might consent to the match, and think the niece of Mrs. Milman very fortunately disposed of; but when he came to see her, and to be acquainted with her various elegant acquirements, he might be inclined to dispute her aunt's right to dispose of her hand, and arrogate to himself the privilege of choosing her a husband.

Mr. Wilson having read the earl's letter, returned it, without making a single observation.

"Why, bless me, Mr. Wilson!" said Mrs. Milman, folding up the letter, "you are as mute as a mackerel! What in the world are you thinking about? for I can see by your looks, as well as by your silence, that you are not glad to hear the family are coming down."

"You impute my silence to a wrong cause, Mrs. Milman," returned Wilson. "I rejoice as much as you do to hear the family are coming to the castle; they have been long absent, spending the money among foreigners that would have done so much good in their own country; though, to be sincere with you, I wish they had come into Cumberland a few years sooner, or staid away a year or two longer."

"Why, your words are a downright riddle," said Mrs. Milman. "But, dear me! I must dispatch a messenger to let Cecilia know the good news. The sweet child is buried alive at the Hermitage; I warrant she will be glad enough to hear that the earl, and the countess, and lord Rushdale, are coming down."

"I wish, from my soul," replied Mr. Wilson, in a tone of unusual gravity—"I wish, from my soul, she may have no reason to be sorry."

"Sorry!" echoed Mrs. Milman; "why surely you can never think, Mr. Wilson, that quitting that humdrum Hermitage, and being introduced to gay company, can make a girl of Cecilia's age and lively turn sorry? But perhaps you are thinking—"

"Yes," interrupted Wilson, "I am thinking, and my reflections just now are not the most agreeable."

Mrs. Milman turned round to hope that nothing had happened to vex him, but Mr. Wilson had left the apartment.

"Very odd behaviour, upon my word!" said Mrs. Milman, smoothing her apron and settling her frills—"very odd indeed, to take himself off in this way!" But Mrs. Milman was too full of business to dwell upon Mr. Wilson's abrupt departure, and her head was too intently occupied in chimerical fancies respecting Cecilia's advancement in life, to bestow more than a passing thought on Wilson's strange behaviour. Cecilia, in her opinion, was the most beautiful creature she had ever seen, and she thought it not only possible, but very probable, that she might marry a lord. She knew that her friend Wilson designed that his nephew, Mr. Solomon Scroggins, should be her husband; but then, who could tell whether the earl of Torrington would approve the match? or who could be certain whether Cecilia would like young Scroggins; or that Providence, so careful of her infancy, might not elevate her to high rank?

While the head of Mrs. Milman was thus projecting and rejecting, the lovely object of her solicitude was more than content—she was perfectly happy in retirement with Mrs. Doricourt, who, though always pensive, was an entertaining as well as an instructive companion. Mrs. Doricourt had been abroad, and by her animated descriptions she made Cecilia acquainted with the manners, customs, and amusements of foreign countries; she had won her affections by the mildness, the humanity, and generosity of her disposition; to Mrs. Doricourt's unwearied kindness she owed the cultivation of her

talents and the polishing of her manners, and she loved her with an affection that united gratitude, respect, and admiration. Yet Cecilia, though very amiable, was not a "*faultless monster*;" she was not entirely free from the imperfections inherent in human nature; she had heard and read of the *haut ton*, and she had a strong curiosity to see and know something of the characters that give laws to fashion, and become models of imitation to those in less elevated situations. Cecilia had been told, as long as she could remember, that she was beautiful; she was not conscious of vanity, but yet she had a wish to prove what impression her charms would make on persons of rank, with whom Mrs. Milman had often assured her a handsome exterior was an unfailing recommendation; and while the note dispatched by Mrs. Milman, announcing the arrival of the earl and countess at the castle, heaved her bosom with joyful palpitation, she wondered to hear Mrs. Doricourt sigh heavily, and to behold her pale, agitated, and almost fainting. Cecilia flew to support her; she anxiously inquired if she was ill? but, unable to speak, Mrs. Doricourt burst into tears. Weeping appeared to relieve her emotion; and being restored to composure, she proposed a walk. It was a mild evening at the latter end of May; the moon had risen, and as its bright beams played on the branches of the trees, the path before them was checkered with silver. Mrs. Doricourt seated herself on a rustic bench, from whence they had an expanded view of the romantic Derwentwater and its emerald islet; not a breath of air ruffled the glassy bosom of the lake, where the moonbeams seemed to sleep in tranquil splendour.

"Oh, what a heavenly night!" said Cecilia; "how sweet, how soothing, to inhale the perfume of the flowers! What can exceed the beauty of those rocks, their craggy points silvering in the moonlight! Not a leaf stirs, not a sound disturbs the calm repose of nature."

Mrs. Doricourt sighed—"And yet, my Cecilia," replied she, "even here there are hearts which do not partake the sweet tranquillity of the scene; yours, for instance, my beloved girl, throbs with the expectation of emerging from these shades to mingle with the world. But I will not cast a sombre shade over the sunny future that your youthful inexperienced fancy assuredly pictures—no, I will not unnecessarily destroy the magic delusions of hope; for, alas! our happiness seldom survives beyond its expectation."

Cecilia pressed the hand that clasped hers to her lips—"I will not deny," said she, "the wish I feel to see the earl of Torrington, to whose adoption of me in my helpless infancy I owe so much. Should I not be wanting in gratitude if I did not ardently desire to pay him my personal thanks? for did he not extend his generosity to the cultivation of the mind of the poor orphan whose destitute situation excited his pity? and though your goodness, my beloved, my respected friend, has rendered the earl's generosity unnecessary, still my heart assures me my obligations to him are still the same. But yet I protest, and believe the assurance of the creature whose mind you have formed, having paid the duty that I owe the earl, I have no wish to remain at the castle; its festivities will not seduce me to forget the Hermitage, or prevent me making it my particular request to be allowed to return to you, in whose affection I am honoured, and in whose society I place my utmost expectations of happiness."

Cecilia's expressive eyes glittered with the holy drops of grateful tenderness; Mrs. Doricourt pressed her fondly to her bosom—"Do not suppose, my love," replied she, "that I blame the wish that impels you to the presence of the earl of Torrington—no; on the contrary, I approve—I applaud it, because I know it is excited by the best, the most

virtuous motives: but I dread lest the poison of adulation should be poured into the ears of my unsophisticated Cecilia—I tremble lest she should imbibe a taste for empty parade and frivolous amusement; and, worse than these, I fear, when she returns to this retirement, she may bring a heart subdued by a passion whose baneful influence will unfit it for the calm, rational pleasures found in these groves and shades, and that she will sigh for the society of one dearer than me, her early friend.”

Cecilia smiled—it was the bright emanation of a heart, pure, sincere, and convinced that no passion, no subsequent attachment, would ever render her insensible or indifferent to Mrs. Doricourt’s society.—“I understand you,” said she, gayly—“you fear that my inexperience will cause me to fall in love with some one of the beaux who are invited to spend the summer at the castle: but on this account, my beloved friend, have no apprehension, for really I do not think I have at all a susceptible heart, or an ear to be gratified with flattery. Have you forgot last winter that I captivated the bonny Scot, Archibald Ramsey, esquire, with singing “Jamie of Dundee”—a youth whom the ladies of Keswick call an Adonis?—Don’t you remember that he sent me a valentine all painted over with little chubby Cupids, shooting clumsy arrows at red blotches, which we were instructed, by the doggerel underneath, were bleeding hearts? Have no fears for your Cecilia’s peace; having remained insensible to the flames and darts of Mr. Ramsey, there is not the smallest danger that I shall suffer my head or my heart to be disturbed by unmeaning flattery, or, while rambling by your side through the paradise your taste has created, I shall sigh for any entertainment Torrington Castle can boast.”

Mrs. Doricourt knew that Cecilia was sincere and ingenuous; she was certain that she spoke exactly as she felt; but she was also certain that neither the person nor the education of Mr. Ramsey were likely to raise an interest in a bosom refined as Cecilia’s; she was now on the eve of being introduced to beings of a different order—to men of polished manners, deeply versed in all the arts that fascinate the senses, and steal the affections of confiding youth and innocence.

Mrs. Doricourt was by nature romantic—a disposition that peculiar circumstances had increased, nourished, and confirmed; she was also unhappily inclined to look on the dark rather than the bright side of events; no wonder then that she dwelt on the earl of Torrington’s assumption of the rights of guardianship over Cecilia with feelings of apprehension. In seclusion, and under her immediate care, this darling child’s life had glided unmarked by a single, unpleasant occurrence; but now she was to quit her protection, to leave the peaceful shades where her childhood had passed away so happily, where the death of old Triton had been the only sorrow that had ever assailed her bosom; she was now to be made acquainted with persons of rank, whose pursuits and pleasures were far dissimilar to any she had ever known; she was about to be associated with women of fashionable morals, and men of profligate habits, in whose estimation religion and virtue were of no value. By such an intercourse Mrs. Doricourt saw the dreadful possibility of her darling Cecilia’s innocence being ensnared, her happiness destroyed for ever; and, after the total wreck of her peace, small would be the consolation her unaltered friendship, or the asylum of her youth, would afford to a heart betrayed and despoiled of self-approbation and respect.

Such were the reflections that harassed the mind of Mrs. Doricourt, from the moment she heard of the earl’s intention of passing the summer at Torrington Castle; but when the time arrived for Cecilia’s quitting the Hermitage, she did not suffer her own

uneasy feelings to damp the joyous expectancy that tinged her blooming cheek with a deeper crimson; she repeatedly pressed her to her agitated bosom, and bade her remember, should any unforeseen circumstance occur at the castle to render her stay there unpleasant, the Hermitage was her home, and that in her she had a faithfully attached friend, whom no event should ever induce to forsake her.

Cecilia with equal affection returned her embrace, assured Mrs. Doricourt that she would write every day while she remained at the castle, and then, with a tearful eye, pronounced her adieu.

Stationed on the Chinese bridge, Mrs. Doricourt waved her hand to Cecilia, till the yacht that conveyed her from the island doubled a rock; and when she could see the child of her affection no longer, she returned to the house, to indulge in tears of regret, and pray for her happiness.

On quitting the yacht, Cecilia found Mrs. Doricourt's carriage waiting to convey her to the castle: this was a fresh instance of kindness, and designed by Mrs. Doricourt to impress the frivolous countess of Torrington with a conviction that Cecilia was not destitute of other friends, to whom her welfare was of consequence. The Hermitage was now no longer visible, a thick wood concealed it from her view, and Cecilia sunk back in the carriage, a thousand hopes, fears, and anxieties throbbing wildly in her bosom, as she was rapidly whirled from her fond, indulgent friend.

At the entrance of the long chesnut avenue that led to the front of the castle, while the carriage waited for the opening of the gates, Mr. Wilson appeared at the window. Having exchanged salutations, he informed her that he had hastened to meet her, to prepare her for the company she would find at the castle.—“It is very probable,” said Mr. Wilson, “you will see sir Cyril Musgrove before you reach the castle, for I heard him ordering his groom to bring out the horses.”

Cecilia declared she would not encounter him for the world; she then dismissed the carriage, and proposed to Mr. Wilson their walking through the shrubbery to the servants' offices.

Mr. Wilson informed her there were a great many guests at the castle, among whom was a foreign count, who did not appear to be much of a favourite with his own valet, who, in very broken English, had that morning been calling him every thing but a gentleman.—“The person of the earl of Torrington,” continued Wilson, “is much altered since I last saw him; but his sentiments towards you are unchanged; he has made many inquiries respecting you, and has expressed much impatience for your arrival.”

Just as they reached the door that opened into the shrubbery, two gentlemen passed through, the one a tall, elegant youth, the other a proud-looking, high-shouldered man, in the habit of a clergyman. The youth bowed with graceful affability; his companion did not touch his hat, but he gave a consequential nod.

“That youth,” said Mr. Wilson, “is lord Rushdale, the heir of Torrington; the other gentleman is his lordship's tutor, the reverend Mr. Oxley; whatever learning and piety he may possess, he certainly has not much politeness. Lord Rushdale is a very fine young man, but his tutor, the reverend Mr. Oxley, looks as proud as Lucifer; don't you think so, Cecilia?”

“Really, sir, I did not notice them,” replied she.

“They noticed you, however,” said Wilson, “for they both stared as if a pretty-looking female was as wonderful a sight as a mermaid or a unicorn; but that is quality

breeding, I suppose. But I hope, Cecilia, *'evil communication will not corrupt good manners;'* for, dearly as I love you, child, I would sooner follow you to the grave than see you transformed into the likeness of one of those half-naked ladies at the castle."

Cecilia blushed and smiled, and expressed a hope that the example and precepts of her friends would not be lost upon her.

"I hope so, from my soul," replied Wilson; "for in my eyes these fine ladies are odious creatures. I wonder they don't blush at their own indecent appearance; but I need not speak of blushes—through a plaster of red and white paint no blush could possibly be seen."

Cecilia knew that Mr. Wilson's notions respecting female dress were rather precise; therefore she made some allowance for prejudice, while at the same time his account raised her curiosity, and gave her no very exalted opinion of the characters she was to meet.

Mrs. Milman was too busy to add her communications to those of Mr. Wilson, but observing Cecilia looked flurried, she insisted on her taking a glass of wine and a biscuit, to recruit her spirits after her walk, telling her at the same time that the earl had rung twice within the last half-hour, to inquire if Miss Delmore was arrived.

Covered with blushes, and trembling she knew not wherefore, Cecilia was ushered into the presence of the earl of Torrington, who was waiting her arrival in the library, whither he had retired under pretence of writing letters, but in reality to prepare and strengthen his mind to meet the lovely creature, who, even in infancy, had occasioned his conscience many retrospective pangs.

The heart of Cecilia swelled with emotions, such as a child would feel for a parent from whom she had long been separated; impelled by gratitude, she would have knelt before the earl, to thank him for the various advantages his bounty had procured her; but preventing her intention, he caught her up, and pressed her in his arms; then holding her at a distance, he gazed on her face, with a scrutiny that filled her with confusion and terror; for, while his look indicated admiration, there was a wild expression in his eyes like insanity. At length releasing her hand, he said—"Offer me no thanks; towards you I have not been actuated by the generous motives you attribute to my conduct; it was neither humanity nor compassion that influenced my feelings when I adopted you; no, I will not add hypocrisy to the catalogue of my offences; it is more than probable that your orphan state would have been disregarded by me, had not your infant features resembled a person whose death—I cannot trust myself to speak on this distressing subject; many years have elapsed since that event; but remembrance still survives to torture me."

Cecilia wished that his adoption of her had been actuated by better motives; she felt her heart's enthusiastic warmth chilled by this acknowledgement; she had been taught to consider the earl as the most noble, the most generous of human beings, and while her eyes glanced over his really fine form, she lamented that he had himself disclaimed the virtues with which her youthful fancy had delighted to decorate him, and, unable to command her regretful feelings, she burst into tears.

The earl's emotions, though not subdued, were calmed; he perceived that he had distressed the mind he intended to assure; again he took her hand—"Nay, do not weep," said he; "in my justice, in my honour you might safely confide, even though the resemblance that first attracted me had vanished; but it is now more perfect than in childhood, and renders you an object of more interest to me than ever; yes, yes, you are



now the exact counterpart of her who once—oh, memory! torturing memory!—the same look of angel innocence, the eyes, the hair, the fascinating smile—all, all remind me of her. Oh, Edith! lovely, injured Edith! could my deep sorrow recall thee from the grave!—Thou art happy, and I—but no more of this weakness.”

The earl took two or three turns across the library, with the evident intention of subduing his agitated spirits; he then turned to Cecilia, who, nearly fainting, was sending many an anxious sigh towards the Hermitage, and her now-more-than-ever beloved Mrs. Doricourt. Perceiving the alarm he had occasioned, the earl gently seated her on a couch, and then, in a steady voice, said—“I am extremely sorry my agitated feelings have so distressed you; compose yourself, my sweet girl, and bind this assurance on your heart: in the earl of Torrington you shall find a father, a protector, and a friend.” He then made inquiries relative to her acquirements, her amusements, and her friends.

Of her acquirements Cecilia spoke modestly, though she acknowledged all her obligations to Mrs. Doricourt; and dwelt with grateful pleasure on her expanded genius, her wonderful accomplishments, her beauty, and her benevolence of heart.

The earl replied, that the account he had received from Wilson of Mrs. Doricourt, was such as in less enlightened times might lead him to believe she was not of “*earthly mould*.” he expressed himself much indebted to her for the notice she had bestowed on his adopted daughter—“I am told,” continued the earl, “she has declined the acquaintance of all the neighbouring gentry, and admits no visitors. But the improvements she has made on the island are, according to Wilson’s description, astonishing; this excites my curiosity, and, joined to my obligations to her on your account, will urge me to solicit an interview.—But come, Miss Delmore, I must now introduce you to the countess of Torrington, who will no doubt consider you an agreeable addition to her guests.”

The earl led the way to the dressing-room of the countess; but the moment chosen for Cecilia’s introduction was most unlucky; they found the countess in the midst of trunks and packages, in a temper not exactly amiable, owing to an accident having happened to her waiting gentlewoman, whose hand had been terribly bruised, and two of her fingers broken, by the sudden falling to of the door of the antichamber.

“Emily,” said the earl, “I have brought Miss Delmore, whom I am anxious to introduce to your notice.”

“You have chosen a very unfortunate time, my lord,” replied the countess, without raising her eyes from a casket, out of which she was selecting ornaments, “I am so distressed and so busy.”

“You cannot be too busy to receive Miss Delmore,” replied the earl, “who comes to offer you congratulations on your arrival at the castle.”

The countess levelled her eyeglass at the blushing face of Cecilia; its youthful beauty was by no means pleasing to her envious mind.—“Who did you say, my lord?” returned she—“Miss Delmore?—Oh, I recollect—the young woman you have adopted—the housekeeper’s daughter. Oh, very well, child, I am glad to see you; you come very opportunely, for Smithson having unfortunately disabled her hand, I was really at a loss for some decent-looking person to assist me to dress.”

The earl frowned; Cecilia coloured highly.

“There, child,” continued the countess, “take the things out of that imperial; be careful how you proceed; but I suppose you are accustomed to this sort of business, as I

understand Mrs. Milman is a clever, notable woman. Why, how you stare! Don't you understand me? In that imperial you will find a blue satin robe, on which you must run this chinelle trimming; and be expeditious too, or I shall be under the necessity of putting off the dinner to seven, instead of six o'clock."

The earl was amazed; anger deprived him of utterance. Cecilia, more collected, with a look of dignity replied—"I am really sorry, madam, that I cannot on this occasion render myself useful; I am totally unacquainted with trimming dresses, and should, I fear, rather retard than expedite your toilet, having never yet officiated as an attendant."

"Really," said the countess, drawling, and again applying her glass to her eye; "I humbly entreat your pardon, Miss, for the error I have committed; I ought to have considered that a young lady, attired in French cambric and Brussels lace, could not possibly submit to assist at the toilet of the countess of Torrington."

The earl, darting a furious look at her, sternly commanded her silence—"Subdue your arrogance," said he, "and reflect whether insult and rudeness become the rank of the countess of Torrington."

He then supported rather than led Cecilia from the dressing-room, who had no sooner quitted the presence of the countess than she fainted. The earl bore her in his arms to the library, and, terrified by the death-like paleness of her lips and cheeks, called loudly for restoratives, when, with the assistance of Mrs. Milman, she returned to recollection.

Cecilia's first words were—"Oh, my friend, my beloved mistress! truly did you prophesy that I should regret the groves that cherished my infancy. Take me, take me back to the Hermitage; restore me to my more than mother; let me instantly return to Mrs. Doricourt; she will not insult, she will not deride the creature of her bounty."

Mrs. Milman wept, and lamented over her dear child; her repeated inquiries of what had happened to distress her, at length roused the earl, whose pride forbade exposing the conduct of the countess to a domestic. Cecilia being recovered, he ordered Mrs. Milman to withdraw—an order she very reluctantly obeyed.

On Cecilia's tearful and agitated request to be permitted to return immediately to the Hermitage, the earl put a negative; but he let his refusal wear the form of entreaty; he was shocked at the gross, unfeeling conduct of his wife, he was offended at the insult she had offered to the daughter of his adoption, and he was bent on compelling her to apologize for her rudeness, and obliging her to solicit Cecilia to remain at the castle.

Cecilia cast a tearful eye on her dress, and said it was Mrs. Doricourt's pleasure that she should wear her presents, which certainly were too expensive for her pretensions—"but in the indulgence of my too-partial friend," continued she, "I have ceased to remember my humble birth."

"You are the daughter of my adoption," replied the earl, "and, as such, are entitled to the habiliments of a gentlewoman. But I entreat you, sweet Cecilia, forget the behaviour of the countess, who, little accustomed to disappointment, was out of temper at the accident that had befallen her favourite attendant; remain at the castle, and, I promise you, the countess shall apologize, and request your company."

The answer of Cecilia, which would have declined the promised condescension of Lady Torrington, was prevented by the entrance of lord Rushdale and his tutor. Mr. Oxley looked surprised; the earl of Torrington was seated on a couch with a young female, over whom he was bending with looks of tenderness. Mr. Oxley begged pardon

for intruding, and would have retired with his no less astonished pupil; but the earl, quitting the side of the abashed Cecilia, bade them remain; he then presented them by name to Miss Delmore—"To your attention, Oscar," said the earl, addressing his son, "I particularly recommend Miss Delmore; she is my adopted daughter, with whom you are already well acquainted from Wilson's letters; consider her, I command you, as your sister, and let her always experience from you the kindness and friendship of a brother."

Lord Rushdale's expressive eyes sparkled with pleasure; he raised the white hand presented to him by his father to his lips, and with a warmth of manner that evinced the sincerity of his heart, he promised to be all the earl had enjoined to the lovely sister he felt proud to acknowledge.

"How different," thought Cecilia, "is lord Rushdale to his arrogant, unfeeling mother!"

Mr. Oxley's bow, on his introduction, was stiff and haughty; he had learned Cecilia's pedigree, and, though the *protegee* of the earl of Torrington, he could not bring his pride to forget she was only the niece of the housekeeper; though he would have been highly offended if any person had hinted that his father had been many years paid for responding amen, and giving out the psalms in the humble capacity of a parish clerk: but this was a piece of family history he wished to consign to oblivion, as well as having himself been the Draco that gave laws to a little school in a country town. Some lucky chances had introduced him into the church; he had married the daughter of a vicar, with a little money; and the son of the parish clerk, the master of a paltry school, had grown into consequence with himself—he was, in every sense of the word, a high priest; but having buried his wife, and failed to persuade his parishioners to tremble at his nod, or admire his denouncing doctrine, he sold the living he had bought, and engaged to put the finishing stroke to the education of lord Rushdale.—Mr. Oxley's bow to Cecilia was that of a proud superior, who condescended to notice a person of no consequence—a nobody; for he was one of those selfish high priests who do not throw even a bend of the body away: he had a lowly humble bow for a bishop, or any other person who boasted rank or possessed extensive interest, but to the untitled and the poor he was stiff, austere, and unbending; like the countess of Torrington, when actuated by no sinister motive, he was haughty and repellent; vain of his person, though possessed of little attraction, he believed that, once adorned with lawn sleeves, he should be irresistible; to attain this dignity, this crown of his ambition, he believed was in the compass of possibility, from the ascendancy he flattered himself he had gained over the mind of his pupil, lord Rushdale, and from the favour in which he was held by the countess of Torrington, to whose vanity he had unceasingly sacrificed truth, and made liberal offerings of flattery.

Hitherto Mr. Oxley had not wasted a thought on the insignificant niece of the housekeeper; but when he perceived that lord Rushdale's reception of her was so unequivocally warm, he found it would be politic to descend from his stilts, and become, in this instance, an imitator of his pupil. The beauty of Cecilia had not escaped the notice of the reverend Mr. Oxley, for, though a vehement advocate and stickler for the observance of all the outward forms of propriety, report whispered he sometimes threw aside the cloak of austerity and self-denial, which he conceived necessary to his views of promotion, and in private indulged those passions which he publicly reprobated and condemned—the reverend Mr. Oxley was suspected and accused of violating, in his own person, the commandments of temperance and chastity, while he thundered eternal

reprobation as the reward of those who made even an accidental deviation. The Hebe bloom and grace of Cecilia could not be viewed without inspiring admiration, and as the reverend gentleman was apt to indulge in speculations, he thought, if the earl would only make it worth his while, her beauty would undoubtedly render the matrimonial pill palatable.

The earl of Torrington, though possessing a fine person, good health, high rank, and immense wealth, had never been able to purchase happiness; like a shadow, it had eluded his grasp, though he had unceasingly sought it under every alluring form that the enchantress Pleasure holds out to her deluded votaries. A recent disappointment had severely mortified the vanity of the earl, and taught him that wealth and splendour presented no shield to ward off the barbed arrows of falsehood and ingratitude. Disgusted with foreign manners and fashionable levity, his thoughts reverted to persons with whom he had been intimate in early life, whose unsophisticated hearts he had reason to believe enshrined the pure essence of sincerity, of friendship, and affection; but the recollection of those beings, beloved, since lost to him beyond recall, filled his bosom with regret, embittered by the conviction that he, by his own act, had cast these treasures from him; he remembered with agony that a form of loveliness, relying on his faith and honour, had yielded up to him her heart, replete with every virtue, and that he,

“Like the base Indian, threw a pearl away,  
Richer than all his tribe.”

While his mind rankled with discontent and mortification, the earl of Torrington beheld the clear unclouded skies and verdant shores of Italy with eyes abhorrent of their beauties; he peremptorily insisted on returning without delay to England—a command strongly opposed by the countess; but neither violence, tears, nor entreaties, had power to change the resolution formed by rage and disappointment. Having hastily recalled lord Rushdale, who was absent on a tour of pleasure through Calabria, the earl gave orders to his domestics to prepare for a return to England; and with a coolness that marked decision, he replied to lady Torrington’s avowed preference for Italy, that if her infatuation for foreign countries and foreign friends outweighed her sense of propriety, duty, and obedience as a wife, that a separate establishment could immediately be formed; that he had determined on a return to England, and had also made up his mind to spend the ensuing summer at his neglected castle in Cumberland.—“I have no wish,” said the earl, “to tyrannize over your inclinations; you are at perfect liberty either to be the companion of my voyage or remain where you are; but, once separated, remember, Emily, we unite no more.”

To remain at Naples would assuredly have been most agreeable to the inclinations of the countess of Torrington, for as yet she had found no diminution of the flattery and attentions of the count del Montarino, who, captivated by her beauty, but more by the luxuries the earl’s princely establishment afforded him, found it extremely convenient to be her adoring slave, and make the impassioned love he affected to feel for her, the secretly breathed reason for professing himself the friend of the earl of Torrington, and living constantly beneath his roof.

The count’s extravagances and vices had nearly swallowed up the whole of his possessions, and such had been the infatuation of the earl, so completely had the artful

duchess de Valencourt held him enslaved, that, having no eyes but for the witchery of her blandishments, the count's very particular attention to his wife had passed absolutely unobserved; nay, so far from dreaming of dishonour, he had felt grateful to him for the amusements he had so continually planned, which, engaging the frivolous mind of the countess, had left him at liberty to pursue, unrestricted, his amour with the duchess, on whom, with lavish generosity, he had expended large sums in the purchase of gems, to adorn her person and gratify what he, in the day of his debasement, called her delightful whims. And what was the expenditure of paltry gold, compared with the entrancing recompence he received, when enjoying the dimpled smiles of the woman whose coral lips vowed she adored him, that she existed but for him and love? While this delusion lasted, Naples, its beautiful bay and classical environs, presented all that was sublime and enchanting in nature. The duchess was the sovereign of his will—she preferred residing in Italy; and England, his native country, the soil of the worthy and brave, the nursery of arts, the emporium of the world, was not only relinquished, but forgotten.

The duchess de Valencourt was not handsome; she possessed neither mind nor accomplishments; her only knowledge was how to make use of a pair of large black eyes, and to shew two rows of very white teeth: her Parisian education had given her manners an imposing polish, and taught her to combine, in the adornment of her *petit* person, the becoming with the fashionable. The duchess, though deficient in sense, was mistress of consummate art; she had smiles and tears at command, she could trifle agreeably, and with these slender recommendations she contrived, by flattering his self-love, by affecting to renounce, for him, friends, reputation, and country, to wind her fetters round the earl; and so rosy, so magical did they seem, so replete with all of felicity, that a wish to break them never entered his infatuated mind, till the capricious fair one, yielding to her passion for variety, boldly and openly encouraged the attentions of a German baron.

Irritated and jealous at the flirtation that took place before his eyes, the offended earl upbraided and expostulated, till, with a provoking calmness, the duchess told him that she had positively loved him as long as she possibly could; that she was sorry, very sorry, she could not command her affections: she confessed she had been very happy with him, but her heart had received a new impression, and that he ought to admire the sincerity of her avowal, and to remember, that the inconstancy of her disposition was the fault of nature, who had given her a heart alive to the pleasurable impressions of novelty.—“But though the charm of love has ceased,” said the duchess, “I shall always recollect you with esteem. Within an hour I shall be on the wing for Germany. Adieu, my lord; I recommend to you a new attachment; pursue my plan—be happy, as I intend to be.”

The earl of Torrington was not disposed to follow the advice of madame la duchesse; her *toujours gai* was a motto quite incompatible with the state of his feelings, which were wrought almost to frenzy when he found she had really left Naples with her innamorato; the so-late-enchanting Bay suddenly lost its attractions, he detested the blue sky reflected in its waters; the rumbling explosions of Vesuvius were horrible, the odour of the orange-groves oppressed his nerves, and the rains of ancient magnificence wearied his eyes. But while the perfidy of the duchess de Valencourt, by wounding his pride, made him insensible to the beauties of nature, it had the salutary effect of rousing his slumbering conscience; he thought with pangs of remorse on former occurrences, in which he had acted a perfidious and deceitful part; the anguish he felt at being

ungratefully deserted, recalled to memory his betrayed friend Saville, and one other tender bosom, which he had lacerated, deceived, and forsaken.

In the midst of the agony he sustained by the dereliction of the duchess, dispatches arrived from Torrington Castle, in which Miss Delmore's beauty and accomplishments were described in very glowing terms. Many of the steward's former letters had spoken of Mrs. Doricourt, the improvements she had made on St. Herbert's Island, her very recluse way of life, and the various great advantages Cecilia had derived from her partiality. Eager for relief from mental suffering, which was not to be hoped for in the gay parties and amusements where the duchess de Valencourt had so lately moved the mirthful goddess of the scene, the earl resolved to occupy his thoughts with looking over a parcel of papers, which it was necessary he should examine, but which, while under the infatuating dominion of a disgraceful passion, he had neglected; the chief of these papers were accounts and letters from Wilson; all of them spoke of Mrs. Doricourt and Cecilia, whom, having accustomed himself to consider a child, he had left to the entire direction of the housekeeper and steward, satisfied of their integrity, and that she was taken proper care of. In Wilson's last letter she was brought before his eyes, a young woman, and, if his account of her was not dictated by partiality rather than truth, beautiful, sensible, and highly accomplished. The earl's memory now recalled the lovely engaging child he had promised Mrs. Milman to adopt; he recollected too the strong resemblance she bore to a person who had once claims upon him, claims which he had despised and denied; the recollection brought with it such agonizing remorse, that he solemnly swore to return to England, and repair to Cumberland with all possible expedition, and to perform through life the character of father and protector to the orphan Cecilia.

The countess of Torrington having failed to overcome or retard the earl's return to England, was constrained to bid adieu to the delightful freedom of Italy. As yet, she had not shaken off all respect for reputation; though the reality of virtue was lost, she considered it necessary to keep up appearances; therefore, to accompany her husband became an indispensable, though unpleasant duty.

The earl would gladly have taken leave of his foreign friends—his late painful experience had made him suspicious of their ardent professions; but the count del Montarino declared he had long projected a voyage to the land of liberty, and that he should be happy to embrace the opportunity of visiting England in the earl of Torrington's suite.

Politeness forbade the earl uttering the negative that rose to his lips; he felt reluctant to make the count the companion of his voyage; but the countess constrained him to suppress his objections, by protesting she should only be reconciled to leave Naples, and undertake the voyage, by having a friend with her who could enliven her spirits, by conversing with her on the pleasures of the dear Misenum, the enchanting rides to Portici, and the delightful opera.

The count del Montarino, so necessary to the spirits of the countess, of course embarked with them for England; and when arrived at London, he made part of their family in Berkeley-square.

Even in the month of May the countess found such attractions in London, that her repugnance to the odious country became every day more confirmed; but the earl was peremptorily bent on quitting town; and as no remonstrances would soften his obstinacy,

the countess, shrinking from the solitude of an old castle, or what, in her opinion, was equally as bad, the society of the Cumberland gentry, by her denominated boors and Hottentots, she invited lady Jacintha Fitzosborne, her cousin, lady Eglantine Sydney, lord Melvil, and sir Cyril Musgrove, to spend the summer at the castle.

The earl of Torrington did not object to this arrangement, but while he suffered her to pursue her own plans, and draw round her the friends she approved, he resolved she should understand it was his pleasure that she should receive, respect, and countenance his adopted daughter.

The countess had not been an hour at the castle before a note was put into her hand, in which an anonymous correspondent informed her that Miss Delmore was the natural daughter of the earl by the housekeeper, Mrs. Milman; that she had been educated by a person not always in her senses, of the name of Doricourt; and that it was the earl's intention to give her a large fortune. The countess having glanced over this very friendly intimation, gave it to the perusal of lady Jacintha Fitzosborne, who, throwing it down with a contemptuous smile, said—"I never pay much attention to anonymous communications; besides, if the contents of that delectable scrawl are true, whether the earl has or has not a natural daughter can make no difference to you."

"Not in the least," replied the countess, with the utmost *nonchalance*—"my fortune, you know, is settled; and as to his affections, you will, I trust, do me the credit to believe they are perfectly at his own disposal."

"This is the little miracle, I suppose," resumed lady Jacintha, "with whose graces and elegances the earl wearied us yesterday."

"The very same," replied the countess—"the lovely, artless, angelic creature, who has happily escaped the contagion of high life and fashionable morals. I hate these monsters of perfection," continued she, with a sneering laugh. "But do advise me how to act in this affair. The earl, I know, intends to introduce this Arcadian princess, this pupil of a bedlamite, among us; it will be monstrous disagreeable, but how to get off it puzzles me. What shall I do, my dear friend? shall I honour this illegitimate scion of the noble house of Torrington with my countenance, or shall I offend the earl, and refuse to receive her?"

"Oh, receive her, by all means," said lady Jacintha—"her *mauvaise honte* will amuse us; besides, as the earl has taken so unaccountable a fancy to simplicity, this child of nature, as he calls her, will occupy his attention, and prevent his being observant of the actions of his friends, who have been educated in the world, and incline towards what his wisdom may denominate follies."

"Your advice is actually judicious," returned the countess, "and shall be followed; for, on second thoughts, were I to object to receive the girl, the earl might fancy I was piqued at the discovery of his having had a low amour; which, though it must have taken place about the time of our marriage, gives me no pang of jealousy, no uneasy feeling; for Plutus, not Cupid, joined our hands at the hymeneal altar; and then, and now, he has my free permission to make love wherever he pleases."

"Perfectly right," said lady Jacintha; "with persons of sense, matrimony is always a compact of interest and convenience."

"I shall follow your advice, my dear friend," resumed the countess, "and receive the fair miracle graciously. As you observe, her ignorance of fashionable life will afford

us entertainment; besides, it will really be doing an act of charity to put the girl in the way of marrying well."

"You are all goodness and amiable consideration," said lady Jacintha; "and as the earl intends to portion her off handsomely, some needy gentleman may be found ready to forget her birth in consideration of her golden advantages."

From this conversation the countess retired to her dressing-room, to commence the important mysteries of the toilet; for though, when dressed, she still appeared a handsome woman, the roses of her cheek had in reality faded, and were to be renewed with *oeillet carne*; and her neck, once white and elastic, required the aid of pearl powder and madame Dupont's elastic corsets. Intending to look more than usually captivating, she had sent her attendant Smithson to the antichamber, to unpack a trunk that contained a new dress; but the accident that happened to her hand deprived the countess at once of an assistant and of her good temper.

While exclaiming and lamenting her ill fortune, and fearing, as Smithson could not dress her, she should not eclipse her more youthful guests, the earl unfortunately introduced Cecilia. One glance at her face was sufficient to awaken envy in the bosom of the already-irritated countess; the glossy chesnut ringlets that hung on Cecilia's ivory forehead, and shaded her graceful neck—her sunny eyes, beaming animation and intelligence—her dimpled smile—the elegant simplicity of her unadorned, yet conspicuously-lovely appearance—destroyed all her self-command, and provoked the vain, narrow-minded countess, to endeavour at mortifying the innocent creature, in whom she could find no fault, but that most unpardonable one—exceeding her in beauty.

The timidity of Cecilia, while it gave her inexpressible charms, did not prevent her highly-cultivated understanding from appearing, in the replies the earl drew from her relative to Mrs. Doricourt, of whom she spoke in terms that did honour to her own grateful heart, and evinced the high sense she entertained of her friend's transcendent genius. While she spoke, the now-attentive and obsequious Mr. Oxley's frigid countenance relaxed into something like smiles of approbation; but the expressive eyes of the more ardent lord Rushdale sparkled, his handsome features glowed with the delighted sensations of his generous heart; and it was only when he heard her request the earl's permission to return to the Hermitage, that he believed Cecilia's lips could utter a sound but what would give him pleasure.

The earl was convinced of the propriety of her return to Mrs. Doricourt, should he be unable to prevail on the countess to apologize for her late insulting behaviour. Mrs. Milman, though a very worthy character, he no longer considered a fit companion for Miss Delmore; the housekeeper's parlour was now the resort of valets and *femmes de chambre*, with whom she could by no means associate.

Requesting lord Rushdale to entertain Miss Delmore till his return, the earl left the library to seek the countess, who had not yet left her toilet. Her mirror having flattered her into the belief that she did not look more than twenty, she began to regain her good temper, and to reflect with no little self-condemnation on her very rude behaviour to her liege lord's adopted daughter, and to apprehend that, in revenge for her insulting conduct, he might offend the guests she had invited to the castle, and thus deprive her, unless she sacrificed all pretension to fame and propriety, of the count del Montarino's society; and without his adulations, his attentions, she thought it quite impossible to live. She wished she had acted up to the advice of her friend, lady Jacintha; but then the girl was so



provokingly beautiful, it put her out of all patience. While casting about her thoughts to mollify the earl's resentment and extenuate her own insulting behaviour to Miss Delmore, her eye fell on the anonymous letter.—“This shall be my excuse,” said the countess; “jealousy and offended delicacy shall bear the weight of my misdemeanour.”

This point was scarcely settled before the earl entered her dressing-room, and dismissing the attendants, without further preface, insisted that she should apologize for her unfeeling and grossly-insulting conduct to Miss Delmore, and solicit her to remain at the castle.

Sullenness and jealousy was the part the countess had planned to act; with well-affected resentment she pointed to the letter; she bade him read, and let his conscience decide whether, deceived and injured as she had been, his illegitimate child had a right to expect a more gracious reception from her irritated feelings.

The earl, in a more solemn manner than she expected, denied an affinity with Miss Delmore; he assured her, in a way she could not doubt, that the innocent object of her displeasure was really the niece, and not the daughter, of Mrs. Milman.

The countess, with great effort, squeezed out a few tears; she expressed concern that she had suffered her tender affection for him, and her idea of his infidelity, at so early a period of their marriage, to hurry her into a conduct for which she now stood self-condemned.

The earl having brought her to make this concession, was not long in persuading her to accompany him to the library, where Miss Delmore no doubt would accept her apology, and oblige her by remaining at the castle.

This was a stretch of condescension rather beyond the wish or intention of the countess; but, fearing to irritate her moody lord, she suffered him to take her hand. In the gallery they were met by lady Eglantine Sydney, who, with a childish lisp, declared she thought Torrington Castle a sweet, pretty place; and that she did not at all regret not having gone with her aunt, lady Granville, to Weymouth, though part of the royal family were to be there, and no doubt the season would be very crowded and fashionable.

“No, my gentle coz,” said lady Jacintha Fitzosborne, who that instant joined them, “no one suspects you of regretting the company of your formal, querulous old aunt, while you can listen unreprieved to the pretty love-tales of lord Melvil. But have you considered that your father, the right honourable viscount Batford, earl Ledwick, baron Riverton, will never consent to your giving your fair hand, and eighty thousand pounds, to the poor lord Melvil, whose lack of dirty acres will separate you, take my word for it, ‘far as the poles asunder?’ You had better turn your languishing blue eyes on sir Cyril Musgrove, who can count his hundred thousands.”

“No,” interrupted the pretty lisper—“no, Jacintha, I would not be so ungenerous—I would not deprive you of a lover.”

“You mistake, child,” said lady Jacintha; “sir Cyril is no Philander of mine, I promise you—I have no design upon his heart; and, to let you into a trifling secret, I believe ‘there is nothing under heaven’s wide hollowiness’ that he so much admires or loves as his own divine person; my sweet coz, he is another Narcissus.”

“Narcissus!” lisped lady Eglantine; “why that is a flower!—How can sir Cyril be a narcissus?”

“Sweet simplicity!” replied lady Jacintha; “he is the flower of modern beaux. But, for your edification respecting Narcissus, look into Lempriere’s Classical Dictionary, and read.”

“No, I can’t indeed,” said lady Eglantine; “I hate reading, it is so troublesome.”

The earl was impatient at this nonsense, and he reminded the countess that Miss Delmore waited his decision respecting her return to the Hermitage.

The countess took the arm of lady Jacintha, and begged her support in the moment of her humiliation. The earl’s look expressed displeasure, but, for the satisfaction of Cecilia, he determined the apology should be made in the presence of her ladyship’s guests, and he invited lady Eglantine to accompany them to the library, who, being assured it was not a reading party they were forming, suffered the earl to hand her down stairs.

When the fashionable party entered the library, lord Rushdale was reading aloud this passage in Milton:—

With thee conversing, I forgot all time,  
All seasons, and their change.

Cecilia was attentively listening to the graceful enunciation and harmonious voice of lord Rushdale; the reverend Mr. Oxley was pondering in his mind the probable advantages that would result from his marrying the earl’s adopted daughter—he was calculating the value of the livings in his patron’s gift, and the possibility of rising, through his interest, to the high dignity of lawn sleeves.

The timid Cecilia received the apology of the unblushing countess with a dignity that rather disconcerted her and surprised the earl; but having received their pressing entreaty, and heard the earl’s wish that she should remain at the castle during the summer, with condescending sweetness, though not without secret reluctance, she consented to submit to their pleasure, at the same time stipulating to pay frequent visits to the Hermitage.

That Miss Delmore should become an inmate of the castle gave sincere pleasure to lord Rushdale, but very little to the female trio, who, with sickening envy, beheld a faultless face and form, and in Miss Delmore dreaded the rival of their hopes.

The earl led Cecilia to the drawing room, where the countess introduced her, much against her will, to the count del Montarino, lord Melvil, and sir Cyril Musgrove. The count’s gaze of admiration was restrained by the watchful glances of lady Torrington, whom it did not suit his slender finances to offend. The large fortune of lady Eglantine Sydney was of too much consequence to be put to hazard by lord Melvil; and though in reality he considered her insipid, and very nearly an idiot, yet his “lack of dirty acres” compelled him to confine his admiration where interest pointed. Sir Cyril Musgrove was a coxcomb by nature, and possessing more wealth than he knew what to do with, he was seldom in the humour to admire any thing but what appertained to himself; his own person, his own dress, his own equipage, were, in sir Cyril’s estimation, the most elegant, the most captivating, the most *nouveau*, in the fashionable world. When introduced to Miss Delmore, he thought, next to his own, hers the handsomest face and figure he had ever seen; and before the dessert was removed, he had settled it in his own mind that she would be exactly the mistress he should like. She was under the earl of

Torrington's protection—the earl was his friend—but what did that signify? a man of the world annexed no meaning, beyond his own pleasure of convenience, to the word *friend*. But would not the seduction of Miss Delmore be a breach of hospitality? Sir Cyril considered that a matter of little importance; modern friendships, and modern attachments, and modern hospitality, meant nothing more than lip-deep professions, and the ostentatious display of a richly-decorated table. Miss Delmore should be his *chere amie*; and when he drove her round the ring in Hyde Park, the gaping multitude should confess that sir Cyril Musgrove and Cecilia Delmore formed the handsomest, if not the tenderest attachment in the purlieu of St. James's.

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#### CHAPTER IV.

Gone was her summer rose, by grief consum'd;  
But yet remain'd, to point where once it bloom'd,  
Some remnant, by the vengeful spoiler left,  
Though robb'd, as if repentant of the theft—  
A charm that witness'd, even in decay,  
The fair one's beauty in her better day.      BLAND.

Oh! shouldst thou meet, in life's eventful way,  
Some heart, like mine, in fancy's promise blest,  
See o'er her path joy's meteor-radiance play,  
And flatt'ring phantoms gay, by pleasure drest;  
Ah! then from me thy treasur'd lesson give  
Of the world's changing hour—hope's treacherous form—  
Visions, though fair, that charm but to deceive,  
Like transient sunshine 'midst the wintry storm.  
COCKLE.

But swifter than the frightened dove,  
Fled the gay morning of her love:  
Ah! that so bright a morn so soon  
Should vanish in so dark a noon!  
MONTGOMERY.

#### *The Romance of Love—Female Fortitude—A modern Attachment.*

ALFRED Greville, the first lieutenant of his majesty's frigate *Cleopatra*, with no greater recommendations or higher possessions than a very handsome person, superior talents, and persuasive manners, won the affections of Louisa Oswald, the youngest daughter of sir Alan Oswald, a rich baronet, of very ancient family, and prevailed upon her, at the unthinking age of sixteen, to elope with him to Scotland, where, believing it impossible that her father could refuse forgiveness to so venial a trespass as that of love, she became his wife. But sir Alan Oswald, proud and unbending, refused to see or pardon his disobedient daughter; and this, her first and only error, shut her out for ever from the countenance of her haughty family; and having, through the hands of his solicitor, paid Mrs. Greville five thousand pounds, the legacy of her godmother, sir Alan declared her having married a man of no family would always afford an excuse for declining any intercourse with her, whom, he made no scruple of saying, had disgraced herself and him, by introducing into an ancient family a person whose father was a cornfactor, and even worse than that—a person who had no means of existence but what he derived from his pay.

Mrs. Greville was severely hurt by the displeasure and inflexibility of sir Alan Oswald; but her husband was brave, handsome, and possessed talents that rendered him, in her eyes, the first of created beings; and, encouraged by his tenderness, she was taught to hope that time would restore her to the affection of her father. The lieutenant and herself were young and thoughtless; while the five thousand pounds lasted, they entered into every fashionable amusement, and fancied their happiness would only end with their lives. But, alas! they were soon convinced that gold has wings, and that poverty brings in its train cares, mortifications, and inquietudes. Debts began to pour in, and creditors became importunate, till, at length unable to preserve appearances in the fashionable world, they were obliged to retire to a small cottage in Gloucestershire, provided for them by the father of Alfred Greville.

Mrs. Greville still loved, and was fondly beloved by her husband; and their happiness was increased by the infantile graces and engaging prattle of their little Julia, then too young to be sensible of the change that had taken place in the circumstances of her doting parents. Their cottage was beautifully situated on the banks of the Severn, and, rich in connubial happiness, they had ceased to regret the glittering gewgaws which experience taught them were not necessary to content.

Already the strong genius of her father, who delighted to instruct and unfold her budding talents, was conspicuous in the little Julia, when the lieutenant received a heart-rending order to join his ship. Alfred Greville was brave, the enemies of his country were to be chastised, and he parted from his wife and child, his sorrow cheered by ardent hope, for his sanguine fancy led him to believe he was going on a fortunate cruise, and that he should return, after adding fresh laurels to the British flag, with prize-money sufficient to place his beloved wife and his cherub Julia in happy independence. But, alas for them! the noble-hearted Greville returned no more—he died, bravely fighting the battles of his country, and left his deprived widow and orphan no other support than the slender pittance allowed by government to the desolate widows of the “slaughtered brave.”

Mrs. Greville, young, inexperienced, and fondly attached to her husband, felt his loss with a deep sorrow, that neither vented itself in tears or lamentations—it sunk on her heart with an overwhelming force, that would soon have hurried her to a premature grave; but the dark hazel eye, the dimpled smile of Julia, so like her lost Alfred’s, roused her from the despondency of grief; and while she gazed with all a mother’s tenderness, and all a widow’s sorrow, on the child so dear to her lost husband, she fancied that she heard his voice commanding her to live for the sake of his child. Roused to exertion by this idea, Mrs. Greville forced herself to admit the society of her husband’s relations, and by their advice, and with their assistance, after many struggles and difficulties thrown in her way by the pride of her unfeeling and inexorable family, she at length established herself at the head of a boarding-school at Cheltenham, where the knowledge of her being a person of family greatly contributed to her success; and Mrs. Greville’s seminary for young ladies became the most fashionable establishment for the daughters of bilious nabobs and gouty persons of distinction, to whose diseases the waters of Cheltenham had been prescribed.

As Julia Greville grew to womanhood, her finely-formed figure attained the middle height; her face, a long oval, was interesting, without being exactly handsome; the usual expression of her dark hazel eyes was tender melancholy, but, when animated by the account of heroic actions, or when the energies of her mind were awakened by

peculiar circumstances, they sparkled with all the brilliant sublimated fire of genius; her mouth was beautiful, and her smile so magical, that it seemed to irradiate her features, while it discovered unthought-of dimples playing round her coral lips.

The extraordinary talents of Miss Greville added much to the fame of the school, and induced many East Indian families to place their daughters with Mrs. Greville, and among these, the daughter of a Mr. Saville, who had sent his children, a son and daughter, to England for education. Miss Saville was a beautiful, giddy romp—so very beautiful, that Julia Greville, an artist and sculptor, frequently made her animated countenance and symmetrical form the subject of her pencil and her chisel.

These interesting girls were nearly of an age, and fondly attached to each other, though Miss Saville's mind partook not of the pensive character of her friend's; for, never having felt sorrow or disappointment, she expected that her path through life would be strewn with flowers, and that every new day would awaken her to new enjoyments. The first cloud that darkened this vision of happiness, and taught Miss Saville the possibility of her being made sensible of sorrow, was her separation from Julia Greville.

An uncle of Alfred Greville's, on the maternal side, returned from the East Indies, where he had become immensely rich by a marriage contracted with a woman of colour, who died in giving birth to a daughter; gratitude to the person who had made his fortune, if not parental affection, induced Mr. Doricourt to pay every attention to her offspring; the health of the child was delicate, and her education totally neglected. Though himself ignorant of polite literature, Mr. Doricourt wished his dingy heiress to be acquainted with the belles lettres, and to attain accomplishments suitable to her expectations: these considerations hastened the settlement of his affairs in the East Indies, and induced him to bring his little Almora to England.

After some time spent among his own relations, whom he found a set of narrow-minded, selfish beings, he began to inquire after the widow of his favourite nephew, Alfred Greville. From his nieces he learned the situation of Mrs. Greville; they informed him that Alfred's widow was too proud of her high family, and her daughter thought too much of her genius, and her learning, and her music, and her painting, and nobody knew what besides, for them, who were only plain, ignorant folks, to be very intimate with, or to visit often.

"But I will visit her directly," said Mr. Doricourt; and his relations, with much envy and discontent, heard him order his carriage to Cheltenham.

The elegant manners of Alfred's widow, the unassuming modesty of Julia, her graceful affability, and her very superior attainments, soon convinced Mr. Doricourt that they could not be pleasant companions to his coarse-minded and illiterate relations. Under the care of Mrs. Greville he would have been most happy to have placed his Almora, but her health was so precarious, that the faculty recommended his removing her to the south of France as speedily as possible. To preserve the life of his little dusky blossom, as he called her, was the wish nearest the heart of Mr. Doricourt; his next was to see her graceful, elegant, and accomplished, as Julia Greville: to unite these points was in the compass of possibility, and he made it the interest of Mrs. Greville and her daughter to give up their establishment, and accompany him and Almora to Marseilles.

Mrs. Greville knew that Julia had no predilection for the laborious task of tuition; in the gratitude and kindness of Mr. Doricourt she saw a provision for her idolized daughter when she should be no more, and for her sake she consented to his

arrangements. The mind of Julia, proud and delicate, had ever revolted from what she considered the degradation of keeping a school—she had nourished in her bosom the consciousness of high family; with the sorrow she felt for the fate of her brave father, she had also appreciated her own uncommon genius and talents, and felt them shorn of half their genuine lustre, while debased in the endeavour to instruct those who had neither capacity nor application.

Of all her pupils, Miss Saville alone possessed genius and feeling—to her alone she was attached; and while she thought of the immense distance that would soon divide them, her only consolation arose from the promise of a constant correspondence. They parted, with tears and assurances of eternal friendship: Miss Saville remained with the lady who took Mrs. Greville's school, and for some months a correspondence between the two friends was kept up with spirit and regularity. The letters of Julia were filled with animated and accurate descriptions of the country through which they travelled, and entertaining anecdotes of French manners and customs; those of Miss Saville spoke of a gentleman whom her brother had introduced to her as his particular friend: at first he was mentioned merely as an elegant, agreeable young man; but it soon appeared he had created no inconsiderable share of interest in the heart of Miss Saville. Julia warned her volatile friend against the allurements of this agreeable stranger, and bade her, as she valued her future peace, make a confidant of her brother, before she entered into any love engagement. To this letter of friendly advice Miss Greville received no answer; and after many anxious inquiries, to her inexpressible regret she learned that her fondly-beloved friend had eloped from school with a young man, who, taking advantage of her brother's absence from England, it was feared had from the secrecy with which he had conducted his plans, seduced her into a dishonourable connexion.

While Julia wept the imprudence of her friend, she was called from the indulgence of her sorrow to console and keep up the spirits of Mr. Doricourt, who had the regret to see that consumption had seized on his “dingy blossom,” and was bending it to the grave. Almora was an interesting child; her voice was naturally plaintive, her disposition mild, and her manners gentle and affectionate. Her love and admiration of Miss Greville amounted almost to idolatry: it was impossible for a heart like Julia's to be insensible to the warm respect and regard of this lovely, fragile creature: she was fond of music, and she would sit like the statue of Attention, while Julia swept the strings of her harp, or sang to her the soft pensive ballads in which she delighted. Every day increased the malady of this interesting child, and every day seemed to render Julia dearer to her: at last she was unable to leave her chamber, and then her eyes would dwell with delight on Julia—from her hand alone she would receive her medicines or accept nourishment. At this awful crisis the attentive tenderness of Julia shone conspicuous; on her knees the emaciated Almora would sink into slumber—on her bosom repose her pale cheek.

The medical attendant had just informed Mr. Doricourt that he thought it was impossible that the sufferer should live to see another day, when, unclosing her eyes, she said—“I am quite content to die, for I have just seen my own dear mamma; and she told me I should go to heaven, and live with her.”

Mr. Doricourt was much affected; he stooped over her couch, to kiss her forehead.

“My dear father,” said she, “I love you dearly—indeed I do; but I know you grieve to see me so very ill; and as I can never get well in this world, you ought to be glad that I am going where dear Mrs. Greville says there is neither pain nor sickness.”

"You will be an angel," sobbed Mr. Doricourt; "my Almora, you will be happy."  
"Yes," resumed she, with a heavenly smile, "yes, and you must be happy too.  
Father, you have often said you loved me."

"And I said most true," replied Mr. Doricourt.

"Will you promise me one thing?" asked she, earnestly.

"Any thing, my child," said he; "name your request."

"Give my beloved Julia," returned she, "my casket of diamonds, and the same fortune that you designed—for me," she would have said, but at that moment she was seized with such agonizing spasms that she became convulsed, and in administering to her relief the subject of her request was forgotten.

Her pains having subsided, Almora sunk into a short slumber; when she awoke, she pressed her pale lips on the hand of Julia, who still remained beside her couch.—  
"Farewell, dear, dear Julia," said the little sufferer, in a feeble voice—"I am going to my mother; and when I live with her in heaven, I shall be quite well."

She then asked for her father; she entreated him to bless her—a request he fervently and devoutly complied with. Almora then made an effort to join her father's hand with Julia's, and fixing her languid eyes on his face, she, with great difficulty, articulated—"The casket—love Julia—give her—" and expired.

Mr. Doricourt, though a very worthy man, did not possess acute sensibility or strong feeling; he regretted the loss of his little "dingy blossom," but not with a grief that defied consolation. His dying Almora had bade him love Julia; this was no severe task, for Julia was formed to inspire love; but, had she been homely in person and weak in intellect, her amiable and unwearied attention to his suffering child must have given her charms more impressive than beauty or wit in the eyes of a parent. But Mr. Doricourt, Julia's senior by full thirty years, had not beheld her person or her genius with indifference; he was neither poet, painter, sculptor, nor musician; he had no great taste for classical lore, or veneration for the fine arts; yet he was proud of Julia's fame, and felt gratified when he heard her spoken of as possessing a very superior genius. Almora's dying words were—"Love Julia;" she had attempted to join their hands—Mr. Doricourt wished their hearts were joined; and was this utterly impossible? To be sure he was many years older than Julia; but then she was not giddy, vain, and eager after admiration, like the generality of young women; at any rate, he would disclose his sentiments to Mrs. Greville, and if she approved his intentions, why he would offer himself to Julia's acceptance.

The health of Mrs. Greville had long been declining—the death of her husband was a never-forgotten grief, which, though confined to her own bosom, and never suffered to appear in idle lamentations and impious murmurs, was not the less poignantly felt. The death of the little Almora seemed to warn her of her own approaching dissolution; it roused all her maternal tenderness, and filled her with apprehensions for the future welfare of her orphan Julia, by nature and excessive sensibility, the cherished offspring of her elevated genius, so little calculated to make her way in the world, where mean flattery and servile compliance were necessary to win favour and obtain patronage.

While these uneasy thoughts agitated Mrs. Greville, and gave additional pangs to the idea of a separation from her beloved child, Mr. Doricourt surprised her by a declaration of his passion for Julia. At first the recollection of his advanced age seemed to be a grand obstacle, in her opinion, to his wishes; but believing the heart of Julia free, and



knowing her utter contempt of the frivolous young men that had fluttered round her since her residence in France, Mrs. Greville encouraged the hope, that gratitude to Mr. Doricourt, and her own influence over the dutiful mind of Julia, would have due weight, and dispose her to accept his generous proposals, and give her the felicity of seeing her not only in affluent circumstances, but safe in honourable protection, before she was summoned to join her husband in “realms unsullied with a tear.”

Mrs. Greville’s pale cheek and wasting form had not passed unobserved or unlamented by the tender Julia, who, with unremitting solicitude, watched every glance of her eye and every hectic glow of her cheek, trembling lest death should snatch away this almost-adored parent, and leave her a friendless, destitute orphan, to struggle with a pitiless world.

Mrs. Greville, conscious that she every day grew weaker, felt the necessity of declaring Mr. Doricourt’s proposals to Julia. She listened with sensations approximating to horror; his face was round and unmeaning, his person inclined to corpulency; could such a man be the choice of the elegant, refined Julia? Mr. Doricourt paid no worship to the divine emanations of genius, he had little taste for the fine arts; and though he had spared no expence to procure Julia the instruction of the most eminent artists, and seemed gratified at the celebrity her talents acquired, yet it was a feeling of pride, not the enthusiasm of delight; for he surveyed the exquisite productions of her pencil and chisel, he read the glowing productions of her muse, he listened to the harmony of her finely-modulated voice, and heard her perform the most complicated and entrancing compositions on the harp and pianoforte, with no higher pleasure than what arose from the rapturous praises of his guests. As yet the heart of Julia had remained insensible to the passion of love; when recovered from the surprise and consternation the avowal of his affection had occasioned her, she confessed he was entitled to her sincerest gratitude, her most perfect esteem; “but whenever I marry, dearer, warmer sentiments than these must accompany me to the altar,” said Julia, “and dictate my vows.”

“I wish not to shock you, my beloved child,” replied Mrs. Greville, “or to terrify you into a compliance with what your heart disapproves; but I feel my end rapidly approaching; your unprovided state fills me with apprehension—with grief unutterable. Remember, my love, you cannot remain under the roof of Mr. Doricourt when I am no more; the envious and censorious world will attach blame to his generous friendship, and see in your gratitude causes from which your delicacy would shrink; so well I know the pure mind of my Julia, that I am certain it would suffer pangs insupportable, should the malevolent breath of slander glance upon her reputation.”

Julia threw herself weeping into the arms of her mother—“Oh!” replied she, “do not, do not speak of leaving me!”

“Alas, my child!” said Mrs. Greville, “it would be cruel to deceive you:

‘I hear a voice you cannot hear,  
That calls me hence away;  
I see a hand you cannot see,  
That beckons me away.’

But let me, while my strength permits, point out to you the dangers and inconveniences your unprotected state will be exposed to; and, I entreat you, subdue this unavailing grief,

and listen to me. Your genius, your accomplishments would be invaluable in many families of rank; but I am already well acquainted with your dislike to the labour of tuition; on this subject, therefore, I forbear to speak."

Julia cast her dark eyes to heaven with a look of indescribable woe—"Mother! my dearest mother!" said she, "the same grave shall hold us both."

"Julia," returned Mrs. Greville, calmly and impressively, "life and death are only in the power of the Supreme, and to his almighty will, as Christians, we are commanded to submit, with humble resignation. Let me not have the anguish to suppose that the religious precepts I have, even from your infancy, endeavoured to instil into your mind, have all been shed on barren ground; let not my own example of fortitude be thrown away; remember I have suffered, in their unkindness and neglect, more than the death of all my relations; and remember also, when he, the beloved of my heart, my better self, for whose dear sake I had suffered scorn and unkindness, my only friend and consoler, died, and left me a widow, with an orphan babe, I sunk not under these accumulated woes, but, relying on the goodness of Him who promises to be 'the Father of the fatherless,' I bore up with all my power against the enervating encroachments of sorrow, satisfied that the trials of this life are but transient, and, if well sustained, will lead the way to an eternity of happiness."

Julia, self-condemned, sunk at the feet of her mother—"Forgive me, dearest, best of parents!" murmured from her lips, while the tears chased each other down her cheeks; "I do not, I will not forget your sufferings, your piety, and resignation."

Mrs. Greville's pale lips pressed the forehead of the kneeling Julia—"In the world, my child," resumed she, "genius and talent seldom flourish without friends and interest; and, well acquainted as I am with your mind, I am certain you would suffer every privation that could befall poverty and obscurity, rather than solicit patronage."

"Yes," replied Julia, a bright crimson flashing over her face—"yes; for I shall never forget that I am the granddaughter of sir Alan Oswald, neither can I bear to hire out, to the ignorant and unfeeling, those gifts which Heaven bestowed upon me, for the delight of my own life and the pleasure of my chosen friends."

"Our true and only friend, Mr. Doricourt, is aware of all this," said Mrs. Greville, "and of all the inconveniences into which your romantic mind will plunge your youth and inexperience, should you be thrown upon the world without a protector. This worthy, generous man loves you, my Julia, not with the impetuous ardency of youth, but with calm, rational affection, which has its basis in a knowledge of your virtues, as the wife of Mr. Doricourt."

Julia started from her knees—she pressed her hands upon her bosom—her face became paler than marble, as she murmured—"Oh, gracious Heaven! can this be ordained?—I the wife of Mr. Doricourt!"

The mild eyes of Mrs. Greville turned with fixed regard on the agitated Julia—"Alas! then have I been deceived?" said she, faintly; "have I believed myself possessed of the confidence of my child? and am I fated to the anguish of discovering she has concealments from me?"

"What means my dearest mother?" interrupted Julia, her humid eyes expressing all the innocent unconsciousness of surprise.

"I fear, I fear," replied Mrs. Greville, in hurried accents, "that your heart, unhappy Julia! has already received an impression inimical to your peace and my wishes. But, oh,

my Julia! I entreat, I implore you, reflect on the sorrows of your parents; remember that the indulgence of an imprudent passion has been the source of all my difficulties and calamities.”

Julia smiled; she pressed the hand of her mother to her lips and her heart.—“Feel here,” said she; “are these the throbs of love? Oh no, no. Be assured, I have no secret, no concealments from you, the best, the tenderest of mothers; my heart has received no impression—it is free.”

“Thank Heaven!” ejaculated Mrs. Greville, as she fondly returned the embrace of her daughter; “that assurance, my beloved child, is ease and comfort to me; and now I no longer hesitate to say that I have no regret, no uneasiness on my mind, but for your unprotected state. My Julia, would you but promise me to give your hand to Mr. Doricourt, I should quit the world in peace, and die happy.”

The ardent-minded, enthusiastic Julia would have promised to have sacrificed even love, had she felt the passion, to the happiness of her dying parent, but her bosom had hitherto been sensible of no attachment warmer than friendship; to give happiness to the last moments of a parent, whose whole life had been a series of tender solicitude for her welfare, by the sacrifice of inclination to her will, was an act that duty, obedience, and religion enjoined; should her beloved parent die ungratified by her compliance with her last wish, how greatly would the reflection, that she had suffered the spirit of her mother to quit its mortal tenement unsatisfied, and the certainty that the blessing breathed with her parting breath was mingled with regret, augment and embitter the sorrow she must feel for her loss!

These sad reflections were too much for the sensitive, enthusiastic Julia to bear, even in idea. Mr. Doricourt was more than twice her age; his round unmeaning face, his clumsy figure, passed before her “mind’s eye;” she was certain she could never love him, but she felt that he was entitled to her respect and gratitude. Her mother, whose virtuous fortitude in her days of misfortune, and whose patient suffering under a lingering disease, had, in her opinion, entitled her to canonization, had expressed a wish to see her united to him: Julia beheld this wish as the ordination of Heaven, and stifling her own regretful feelings, she became the wife of Mr. Doricourt.

Mrs. Greville lived till the following autumn; she had the satisfaction of beholding her daughter in affluence, she no longer feared that her exalted genius would be a misfortune rather than a blessing to her, and she died, as her last words expressed, happy.

If a magnificent establishment, a profusion of diamonds, and the uncontrolled disposal of money, would have conferred happiness, Mrs. Doricourt had all that wealth could bestow to make her happy; but the pursuits most delightful to her taste gave no pleasure to her husband—books, painting, and music, wearied him, except when he required their display to astonish his guests. The youth of Mr. Doricourt had been spent in accumulating wealth—to enjoy it was now his grand desideratum, and his enjoyments were confined to the delicacies of the table, to rich wines, costly apparel, and splendid furniture; to genius, sentiment, and fine feeling, he had no pretension, nor any idea how a person could be unhappy, surrounded with all the luxuries that wealth could purchase. Yet Mrs. Doricourt, in the midst of pomp and magnificence, felt an aching void in her heart, and her most happy moments were those when the absence of Mr. Doricourt allowed her to pursue the pleasing labours of her chisel and pencil, or to sing her

favourite plaintive ballads to the music of her harp, or, unseen by all, save Heaven, weep and pray at the tomb of her sainted mother.

Thus passed three years of her life; she was visited, flattered, envied, admired, and all her numerous acquaintance believed Mrs. Doricourt the happiest of the happy; but the difference of years between Mr. Doricourt and herself forbade that endearing confidence that forms the bond of affection—the coldness and apathy of his disposition chilled and repressed the glowing warmth of hers; and though he was in all points indulgent to her wishes, yet her heart sighed for some one to love, some congenial spirit who would understand and share her emotions, to whom her talents would afford delight, who would participate her joys and her regrets. But Mr. Doricourt was a good-natured man, with a common understanding; he had no refinements; he was neither an enthusiast, a scholar, nor a philosopher; and Julia felt that respect and gratitude were insufficient for a heart like hers to bestow on her wedded lord.

Mr. Doricourt's increasing corpulency brought with it many inconveniences, and as the best means of keeping down the superabundance of his flesh, he was recommended to use much exercise, particularly walking. One morning crossing the street, he was seized with a vertigo, and was preserved from a dangerous fall by the timely support of a young gentleman whom he had before seen at his banker's. Henry Woodville, perceiving Mr. Doricourt's carriage was not waiting, politely offered his arm, and had the satisfaction to find the old gentleman much recovered before he reached home. Mr. Woodville, though ardently longing to see Mrs. Doricourt, of whose elegant person and extraordinary endowments he had heard so much, would here have taken his leave, but Mr. Doricourt, independent of the service he had just rendered him, was so much pleased with his new-made acquaintance, that he insisted on his staying to dine with him. The long-nourished desire of Woodville was now gratified, in an introduction to Mrs. Doricourt. He thought her person charming, and he believed that report had done no more than justice in declaring her genius elevated and uncommon.

From that time Henry Woodville made himself so agreeable and so necessary to Mr. Doricourt, that if a day passed and he did not spend the greater part of it at his mansion, he was peevish and dissatisfied. Mr. Doricourt had inquired into the family and prospects of his young favourite, and found that the small property left by his deceased father was barely sufficient for the maintenance of his mother, and that Henry Woodville had passed over to France, with the hope of obtaining a situation in the banking-house of messieurs De Launcy, to whom he brought letters of recommendation from a merchant in London. Mr. Doricourt thought the situation of clerk in a banking-house, too humble and laborious for Henry Woodville; but something must be done for him; he determined on making him his own secretary, with a handsome salary; Mr. Doricourt detested writing, and he had some commercial affairs to settle. Having arranged the matter in his own mind, he made his proposals to Mr. Woodville; they were too liberal to be rejected, and a few hours saw the young man perfectly at home in the mansion of his patron.

The company of Henry Woodville was a delightful relief to the long dull evenings which the gout, or other complaints of Mr. Doricourt, obliged them to pass alone; but, alas for Julia! his polite attentions, his insinuating manners, became destructive to her peace. Hitherto her bosom had remained ignorant of the inquietudes of love; but the deep blue, long-formed eyes of Henry Woodville, whenever they encountered hers, shot beams of tenderness that thrilled her frame with emotions new and painful; his expressive

glances had told her that he beheld her with affection; but, alas! she was already a wife—fate had thrown an insurmountable barrier between them, and to encourage love would be worse than madness, it would be inviting guilt. Nor was Henry Woodville, though gifted with an interesting person and a pleasing address, worthy the tenderness of a heart noble and generous as Julia's; in him sound understanding and real energy of mind were supplied by a retentive memory and a facility of imitating the tones, looks, and passions of other men; he had neither intellect, judgment, or taste of his own: but these were successfully counterfeited by echoing the opinions of others. Henry Woodville's mind was flexible, even to weakness, which made him the easy dupe of persuasion, and ever ready to follow the example even of vice and folly; yet, had he been destitute of these accommodating qualities, his mind would have been a sterile waste, without principle, sentiment, or idea.

How truly the artist understood the human heart, when he pictured Love blind! In the impassioned eyes and ardent imagination of Julia, Henry Woodville was all that humanity could present of perfection and excellence, and in vain she struggled to subdue the passion he inspired; the monotonous tranquillity of which she had once complained, was now succeeded by restless wishes, that crimsoned her cheek with blushes, and drove repose from her couch; her fevered dreams were full of Henry Woodville, and her first waking thoughts would picture the happiness that would have been hers, had they met before she gave her hand to Mr. Doricourt; for his sake she believed she could have been content to submit to the drudgery of tuition; and how happy would even that life have been! though her talents were employed for their support, his approving smile would have cheered her, and the blessings of congenial mind, of mutual love, would have been hers. Such were the day-dreams of the romantic Julia. That Henry loved her, was evident from every look and action; if she moved, his eyes followed her steps; if she read, or sung, or played, he was all ear.—“With Henry Woodville,” said Mrs. Doricourt, “how enviable would have been my lot! Together we should have wandered through the sublimity of poetry—his taste would have selected subjects for my pencil—he would have hung enraptured on the notes of my harp—our pleasures would have been similar—our ideas, our souls would have mingled—we should have been all the world to each other.”

Such were the delusions of love, such were the reflections of Julia, when the sudden death of her husband left her at liberty to indulge her passion for Henry Woodville, without a violation of the vows her obedience to an idolized parent had compelled her to make.

Mr. Doricourt had often desired that his bones might not remain in France, but that, in case of his death, his body should be removed to a little village in Surry, and repose in the same tomb with his parents. Mrs. Doricourt wept the death of a good man and a sincere friend, but her grief did not prevent her making arrangements for conveying his remains to England, whither, attended by Henry Woodville and four attached domestics, she also went. The interment having taken place, she sent for Mr. Doricourt's solicitor, in whose keeping she expected to find a will, made by her deceased husband shortly after their marriage; to her surprise, Mr. Waldron informed her that he had drawn a will at the time she mentioned, in which the whole of Mr. Doricourt's immense possessions, with the exception of a few legacies, had been bequeathed to her; that two gentlemen, then resident in London, had witnessed the will, which he had, agreeable to

Mr. Doricourt's order, transmitted to him for his signature, which was all that was necessary to its validity.—“And I would recommend, madam,” said Mr. Waldron, “that you make careful search after this will among Mr. Doricourt's papers, as I understand the heirs-at-law intend to endeavour at possessing themselves of a part of the property.”

Mrs. Doricourt commenced the search, assisted by Henry Woodville; but no will being to be found, she was obliged to yield to necessity, and accept a third, instead of the whole of her husband's wealth. Content with genteel independence, she cheerfully resigned the pomp and splendour to which she had been so long accustomed, and, without one sigh of regret, retired to a small elegant villa near Richmond. Propriety did not admit of Henry Woodville residing under the same roof, but he had lodgings at Richmond, and every day beheld him attending the fair widow in her walks and rides; nor was it long before the visionary Julia received the confession of his love. Hours, days, and weeks now flew on the rapid wings of delight, for Henry spoke only of the happiness he derived from being beloved by her. Henry admired her person, but he adored her genius; and poetry, painting, sculpture, and music, mingled their enchantments with the glowing illusions of love. There was now no aching void in the bosom of Julia—the image of Henry Woodville was there enshrined; she believed his soul assimilated with hers, and she looked forward to a life of happiness as his wife; her dark eyes now sparkled with pleasure, her beautiful mouth was dimpled with smiles—Henry was to her a newly-discovered object in creation, which made existence valuable; the inspirations of genius were now dearer to her than ever, for she had found a being who worshipped its sublimities, who could range with her through the fairy worlds of imagination, and glow, like herself, at the awful or tender touches of the pen and pencil.

It was after a day passed in all the confidence of youthful hope, in all the luxury of love, poetry, and music—after exchanging vows of eternal affection, and speaking of their marriage, which was settled to take place as soon as propriety allowed her to throw off her weeds, she accompanied Henry to the gate at the bottom of the lawn, to receive his adieu for the night; where, though these tender adieus had been often repeated, they still lingered to gaze on the sky, to mark the majestic orb of night gliding beneath a thin veil of transparent clouds, which did not obscure, but only softened her effulgence—which every instant silvered their fleecy edges, and melted them into forms of fantastic beauty. Oh love! how sweet and magical is thy power! in what dazzling colours do thy votaries deck thee! how bright and glowing are the roses with which they entwine thee! But, alas! how blind are they to the sharp and rankling thorns that are concealed beneath the silken leaves!—As Woodville pressed repeated kisses on the white hand of Julia, he turned his deep blue eyes to heaven, and remarked the uncommon beauty of the clouds and the clear radiance of the moon—“Farewell, my adored!” said he; “and if you love me, employ your muse against we meet to-morrow; describe for me, in a dozen lines, the beauty of this heavenly night.”

Every wish of Henry's met sacred observance with Julia; the talents she was gifted with were now doubly valuable—they were admired by the chosen of her heart—his approving smile was fame and happiness. Again she looked at the sky; the eyes of Henry resembled its deep blue; but the clouds so rapidly flying over the face of the moon, and every instant varying their forms—did they picture the mutability of his heart? A tear started at this idea, and hung on the dark silken fringes of her eyes, as she sat down to comply with his request.

“TO HIM,

*Who, admiring a beautiful moonlight sky, bade me write  
him a dozen lines on the subject.*

“Queen of splendour! orb serene!  
Floating transparent clouds between—  
Sure in this sky, to mortal sight  
Is giv’n glimpse of scenes more bright,  
Where spirits, freed from earthly spell,  
On plains for ever blooming dwell.  
Effulgent moon! how silv’ry sweet!  
Yet, ah! how soon ordain’d to fleet  
Thy beams!—Bright now, in Henry’s eyes,  
I see his soul’s emotions rise;  
Yet who can tell but with thy ray  
All he now feels may fade away?”

Julia was not satisfied with her production—she could not bear to believe that Henry would ever change—but yet it was possible; the idea was anguish, and at a very late hour she retired, with tearful eyes and a mind ill at ease.

Henry came to dinner; she read the lines to him; he saw and chid the tear that rose to her eye, he pressed the verses to his heart and his lips, and vowed that neither time or circumstance would have power to alter his affection for her.

In the midst of her own smiling prospects Mrs. Doricourt did not forget Miss Saville; her retreat still remained undiscovered, and all the information her anxious inquiries obtained was, that Mr. Saville had been constrained to make a voyage to Calcutta, to settle the affairs of his deceased father; and that, a few days after her brother had sailed, Miss Saville had eloped from school, no one knew with whom; for though her brother’s friend had at first been suspected of seducing her into this imprudent step, that idea had subsided, from the circumstance of his having called upon her friend, and given them incontrovertible proof that he had no hand in the mysterious affair, which he had shortly after confirmed by marrying. Mrs. Doricourt’s attachment for Miss Saville was not weakened by absence; she saw disgrace and sorrow the certain consequences of her imprudence, yet such was her friendship for the deluded girl, her pity for her inexperienced youth, that her liberal mind made a thousand excuses for her error; and gladly, could she have discovered her retreat, would Julia have flown to pour the balm of consolation into her bosom, and, despising the opinions of a harsh, un pitying world, would have taken her to her home, and reconciled her again to virtue and peace.

The time had now arrived for Mrs. Doricourt to throw aside her mourning, and Henry Woodville, all joy and rapture, won her blushing consent to meet him at the altar immediately on his return from Bath, whither the settlement of his mother’s affairs, who had involved herself in a lawsuit, obliged him to repair. The parting of Mrs. Doricourt and Henry Woodville took place with emotions of agonizing sorrow, such as might have attended an eternal rather than a temporary separation; their tears mingled in torrents, and

while he hung upon her with doting fondness, he urged her to accompany him to Bath, and let their nuptials take place there. But though the soul of Julia was shook with gloomy presentiments, she was ashamed to confess her weakness by a compliance with his often repeated request; she wished to put his love and constancy to some little trial, and though it cost her many severe pangs, she determined he should take the journey free, and with no restraint from her presence.

With tears, vows of fidelity, and promises of quick return, Henry Woodville set off for Bath. How dull, how lonely, were now the days of Julia! The miniature of Henry, which she had herself painted, was now her only solace in his absence; for as her tearful gaze was fixed on the beautiful semblance, she fancied that the expressive eyes threw mournful glances on hers, that the lips wore a smile of pensive sweetness, as if regretful of their separation. The arrival of a letter from Henry, breathing all a lover's tender anxiety, restored her to comparative happiness. He lamented and promised to expedite the business that detained him from her. Julia loved, and believed. He entreated that she would reply to him by return of post, to tell him she was well, and loved him with unabated affection. Julia kissed every word traced by the hand of Henry, and sat down to reply to him on the instant: a lily he admired had blown in his absence, and she introduced into her letter lines she had composed.

ON THE  
FERRURIA TIGRIDIA,  
OR TIGER LILY.\*

“This graceful lily sure is love's own flower,  
So deep, so dazzling are its flaming dyes;  
And, ah! just like love's bliss! a little hour  
It lasts—then droops, and all its lustre flies.

“Resembling truly love's enchanting dream,  
While hope o'er rapture throws a splendid glow,  
But fleeting as the evanescent gleam  
Painting on summer clouds the shadowy bow.

“Yet long the brilliant lily shall survive,  
And lustrous wake from winter's torpid gloom;  
But passion chill'd shall ne'er again revive;  
Oh! faded love shall know no second bloom.”

“And this, dearest Henry,” said she, “is a mournful fact: should any circumstance occur to put aside our union, and separate us, which Heaven avert! never would my heart admit another object, never again would it be sensible of love; you are the first—you will be the last affection of Julia. I remember telling that departed saint, my mother, that I was formed to love but once, and that for ever: if she were alive, how fondly would her maternal heart participate in my felicity! how she would dote on Henry Woodville! how

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\* This beautiful flower, elegant in form, and rich in brilliant shades of orange, brown, and flame-colour, lasts only one day, and retains its splendour little more than an hour.



ferently, how devoutly pray for the happiness of two beings whom Heaven seems purposely to have formed for each other! Our hearts, my Henry, are cemented by the firm and tender bond of congenial feelings and sentiments; with you I look forward to a bright, unclouded destiny: placed by fortune above dependence, blest with an elegant sufficiency, and loving as we love, we must be happy.”

Thus did the romantic Julia write to a man who in reality had neither elevated mind nor superior understanding. Henry Woodville had heard the genius of Mrs. Doricourt echoed from every mouth, he had seen her like a goddess moving amidst a crowd of worshippers, who watched with devout attention the glances shot from her dark effulgent eyes, and who listened in breathless silence to catch the warblings of her voice—her temple decorated, by the lavish hand of wealth, with more than eastern magnificence. But, divested of two-thirds of her possessions, and living in retirement, devoting her genius and accomplishments to him alone, the spell that bound him to her dissolved—his cold ungrateful heart found that “beauty loses its power, even before it loses its charms;” he was incapable of appreciating the sacrifices her delicacy made to affection; he could not value the exalted tenderness that wished to live, that desired to be admired by him alone; and when he no longer heard the praise of her talents and accomplishments loudly echoed from the lips of admiring crowds, the correct delineations of her pencil, her delightful poetry, her tasteful singing, her scientific performances on the harp and pianoforte, were all tiresome and insipid.

Such was Henry Woodville; yet, with the assistance of a pair of fine eyes, and lips that uttered the sentiments borrowed from others, he concealed the deplorable sterility of his own mind, and, like a venomous serpent, coiled himself round the confiding heart of Julia—a heart rich in every noble and virtuous quality. Henry Woodville had nothing to look forward to, except a trifling property after the death of his mother; self-interest persuaded him to take advantage of the prepossession his imposing manners and insinuating flattery had created in Mrs. Doricourt’s bosom; her having, when in France, distinguished him, in preference to many young men of rank and fortune, who had professed themselves her slaves, had at first inflated his vanity; her continued disinterested affection he now determined should secure him independence; and though he neither felt nor understood the generous emotions of love, he feigned them so well, that the deceit was not suspected by the deluded Julia, whom he left with an intention of returning to claim her hand, and make himself master of her fortune.

For some time the spirits of Mrs. Doricourt were kept up by regularly receiving letters from him, expressing tender anxieties, deploring the unavoidable delay occasioned by the intricacy of the business in which his mother’s little property was involved, his impatience to return to her, and assurances of eternal faith and unchanging love. But, alas for the confiding Julia! the hope that sustained suddenly forsook her bosom, and left her to all the agony of doubt and fear. Her last letter remained unanswered—Henry ceased writing; week after week dragged slowly away, and no intelligence arrived to sooth her alarm and mitigate her misery—no replies were given to the repeated letters she addressed to Henry Woodville and his mother. What pen shall describe her torturing regret, her agonizing grief, when the flame of enthusiasm with which she had regarded the character of Henry Woodville expired—when all the virtues with which her partial fancy had decorated his mind faded before conviction of his baseness—when she was

constrained to know him, as he really was, faithless, heartless, and ungrateful—when all her glowing visionary hopes of future joys and blessings became extinct!

The interest Henry Woodville had created in her young and innocent heart every added interview had increased—his look, his voice, were deeply impressed on her romantic mind, which loved him with a passion pure as what angels might feel—he was her world, and having lost him, creation was to her a blank. She had supplicated Heaven for his return—her straining eyes had watched, through the long hours of many a weary day, for intelligence of him, who was still dearer to her than life—she had clung to hope till not a lingering ray illumined her benighted heart, for at length doubt and suspense were at an end; from a newspaper she gleaned the certainty of Woodville's ingratitude and perfidy, and the total annihilation of the hope that, in spite of probability, she had encouraged of his returning to justify his conduct and fulfil his vows. From a person recently returned from Bath the forsaken Julia learned that Henry Woodville had married an artful young woman, to whom he had, a year or two before, paid his addresses, without fortune, beauty, understanding, or accomplishments—whom he did not even affect to love; but that, weakly yielding to the persuasions of his mother, whom, it was supposed, had private reasons of her own, and the advice of pretended friends, who, from motives of envy, wished to mar his better prospects, in a state of inebriation the weak young man had completed a marriage that promised only poverty, discontent, and repentance.

Pride and reason presented arguments against allowing her thoughts to dwell on Henry Woodville—a being heartless and perfidious, in every respect unworthy her regret; but the heart of Julia was too deeply engaged to release itself from the enthralment of love; though the object of her tenderness had proved unworthy, she remembered only when he appeared devotedly hers; he was now married—his faith was irrevocably pledged to another—he was lost to her for ever; to love a married man was criminal, but Julia could not rend away the passion that she knew was disgraceful to pride, to reason, and virtue. Her struggles to conquer what she felt a debasing infatuation, brought on a nervous fever, that threatened her intellects; her lips would unconsciously murmur the name indelibly impressed on her heart, and her long-drawn sighs evinced the agonizing sorrow resulting from the sudden desolation of every blissful hope.

It was at this period of severe trial that Mrs. Doricourt experienced the faithful attachment of her servants; they had lived with her mother before she was born, they had followed Mrs. Greville through all the vicissitudes of her life, and after her death they had remained with Mrs. Doricourt, less her domestics than her friends; to their affectionate care she owed the recovery of her health; but, alas! it was not in their power to restore her peace of mind—that was gone for ever. Scorning the ungrateful cause of her misery, and beholding him a blot upon society—despising his weak, heartless conduct—yet still her imagination dwelt with mournful fondness on the days when she believed him possessed of principle and virtue, still her memory would present his deep-blue eyes beaming with tenderness, or sparkling with animation—still his voice, in the deep silence of the night, would seem to thrill upon her ear; and so delusively sweet, so blest were these visions of fancy, that she was displeased when awakened from their indulgence.

It was now when forsaken and sunk in woe, that her own misfortunes renewed the remembrance of her early friend, and Mrs. Doricourt again commenced an inquiry after

Miss Saville.—“Like me, perhaps,” said Julia, “my friend is deserted by him who won her heart with vows of affection now no longer remembered or respected; could I but find her, we would weep together the perfidy of man; and though I have not the loss of innocence to deplore, my tears will be no less bitter, for, alas! I shall weep not only my own disastrous fate, but hers.”

The villa, though delightfully situated, and elegantly embellished by the tasteful operations of art, and commanding prospects that combined the varied beauties of wood and water, had now become hateful to Mrs. Doricourt; it had once been the temple of happiness—genius, inspired by love, had designed its decorations; but, alas! perfidy had transformed it to a dark and gloomy cave—misery and discontent had changed its gay adornments to sad mementoes of desolated felicity. Julia threw her tearful eyes round the apartments—they had been new furnished for her marriage; she had pictured to her imagination the delights of connubial love—her prospects of felicity were now for ever blighted, and she determined to quit a place where every object renewed her unavailing regrets. A new-married pair applied for the villa, and Mrs. Doricourt consented that others should enjoy the paradise she had planned.—“Yes,” said she, with a deep-drawn sigh—“yes, though I am driven forth, a wanderer, hopeless to find a place of rest, let the villa become the temple of happiness to those whom a happier destiny has united.”

Mrs. Doricourt now prepared for her departure to Italy. The things being removed from a small cabinet she intended taking with her, and which had belonged to Mr. Doricourt, her maid, in pulling out the drawers, threw it down; the jerk it received in falling forced open an unperceived recess in the back—it was full of papers, among which was the lost will. This unexpected recovery of fortune gave no pleasure to Mrs. Doricourt—she even felt inclined to destroy the will; but the recollection of the legacies made her doubt the justice of her intention, and she sent for Mr. Waldron. The heirs-at-law had enforced their supposed right in an insulting and unworthy manner, and the solicitor convinced Mrs. Doricourt that she would be doing an injury to society if she did not reclaim her right. The will was proved, and a short time restored to Mrs. Doricourt the immense wealth which her benevolence rendered a diffusive blessing; her ear was never deaf to a tale of distress, nor her purse closed against the claims of poverty. But, while binding up the wounds of others, her own heart still bled with the lacerations of perfidy and disappointed love; her health was greatly impaired, her eyes were dim, her cheek pale, and change of scene and a warmer climate were recommended to the almost-broken-hearted Julia.

Attended by her faithfully-attached servants, she travelled to Rome, where her liberal encouragement of the fine arts made her known to the cardinal Avelino; and at a grand entertainment given by him, her genius was again awakened; and, as an *improvisatrice*, she was decreed a costly emerald tiara, superbly set to represent laurels. At this entertainment, while she gracefully swept the strings of the harp, in low, but correspondent tones, to the impromptu effusions of her highly-polished muse, she inspired a passion in a young nobleman, who, with all the ardency of love, strove to win her regard. But the heart of Julia had received a chill which no love, however ardent and sincere, could ever again warm; reason had convinced her that Henry Woodville had never deserved her devoted affection, but, unworthy as he was, she was fated to love but once, and that for ever. The tender pleadings of the count di Loverno, and the persuasions of his friends, distressed, though they could not alter the sentiments of Mrs.

Doricourt—she was henceforth dead to love, and resolved never again to enter the married state. Convinced of the amiable disposition of the count di Loverno and the sincerity of his passion, she saw but one way of restoring him to peace; absence generally proved the tomb of love; she resolved to quit Rome. She wrote her adieu to the cardinal Avelino and her other friends; to the count di Loverno she sent a brief sketch of her life, a candid avowal of her feelings, and the following lines:—

“Like the blue lotus trembling on the stream,  
Beneath the golden glow of eastern skies,  
Oh! such—remembrance yet surveys the beam—  
Such was the lustre of young Henry’s eyes.

“Soft as the gentle melancholy strains  
Given by the lyre when woo’d by Zephyr’s breath,  
Oh! such was Henry’s voice: my heart retains,  
And will retain the sound, till chill’d by death.

“But since those eyes no more on me must shine,  
And since that voice no more my days must cheer,  
No other eyes shall mix their glance with mine,  
No other voice shall charm my list’ning ear.”

Mrs. Doricourt now made the tour of Italy: at Ancona she was introduced to the abbess of Santa Lucilla; romantic and inclined to superstition, she listened to the artful insinuations of the abbess, and became persuaded that having loved Henry Woodville, during the lifetime of her husband, was a crime that nothing but devoting her remaining days to penitence and monastic seclusion would expiate. Duped by the cunning of the abbess, to whom her wealth was a grand object, the melancholy Julia would have taken the veil, but for the tears and entreaties of her kneeling servants. It is said that women have but two passions—love and devotion; and when the former meets disappointment, the other takes such possession of the mind as to leave no room for sublunary wishes or concerns. Certain it is that Mrs. Doricourt’s heart did not resign its long-cherished passion, yet she became more than ever superstitious; the imposing ceremonies of the Catholic church made a strong impression on her visionary mind, and believing that her love was sinful, she inflicted upon herself fasts and penances, which, failing to overcome her rooted disease, gave a melancholy cast to her character, and added self-reproach to her other griefs. In this frame of mind she travelled through Switzerland and Germany, dragging a lengthened chain of woe.

Weary of foreign countries, she returned to England, to learn that Henry Woodville, unhappy in his marriage, had taken to drinking ardent spirits; that he had suffered the extreme of poverty, and, with his wife, had emigrated to America. This was intelligence that tore open the wounds time had rendered less painful; again the conflict of mental agony was renewed, and the suffering Julia was reduced to infantile weakness and shadowy thinness. Again change of air was recommended.—“I will go,” said she; “but in the grave alone can I hope to find tranquillity; ever, while I continue a wretched wanderer upon earth, shall I find its path thickly strewed with thorns.”

Mrs. Doricourt set out to visit the lakes of Cumberland: the beautiful Derwentwater and its emerald islands formed a picture attractive to her tasteful fancy; the history of saint Herbert and his hermitage determined her to fix her residence on the spot consecrated, in her idea, by the sanctity and prayers of a man, who, subduing every worldly passion, had dwelt there in holy retirement, and whose piety had canonized him.

END OF VOL. I.

Printed by J. Darling, Leadenhall-street, London.

LOVERS AND FRIENDS.

A NOVEL.

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LOVERS AND FRIENDS;

OR,

Modern Attachments.

A NOVEL.

IN FIVE VOLUMES.

BY

ANNE OF SWANSEA,

AUTHOR OF

CONVICTION, GONZALO DE BALDIVIA, CHRONICLES OF AN ILLUSTRIOUS  
HOUSE,

SECRET AVENGERS, SECRETS IN EVERY MANSION, CAMBRIAN  
PICUTRES, CESARIO ROSALBA,

&c. &c.

“I hold a mirror up for men to see  
How bad they are, how good they ought to be.”

VOL. II.

London:

*Printed at the Minerva Press for*

A.K. NEWMAN AND CO. LEADENHALL-STREET.

1821.

## LOVERS AND FRIENDS.

### CHAPTER I.

“In a frivolous age like this, while fantastic Folly jingles all her bells, Genius, Sensibility, and Modesty, are treated with contempt.”

“Why, Fashion has clapp’d a fool’s cap on his head, and persuaded him, that he who can make himself most ridiculous is most eminent.”

“When those baneful passions, envy and jealousy, take possession of a female bosom, she is transformed by their influence to a fiend.”

*The Danger of possessing Genius—A Fashionable Party—Modern Friendship.*

TWO days, not the most pleasant of her life, having passed since her arrival at the castle, Cecilia on the third arose with the sun, to write, as she had faithfully promised, to Mrs. Doricourt, an account of all that had occurred since she left the Hermitage.

Miss Delmore did not make a single comment while narrating her introduction to the Countess of Torrington, nor on the fashionable party with which she was associated; yet in the warmly-expressed wish to return to the calm delights, the rational amusements of the Hermitage, and her tender friendship, it was evident to Mrs. Doricourt, that her gentle mind had been greatly shocked at the reception given her by lady Torrington, and that her good sense and virtuous principles disapproved the free manners of her guests, though they were all of them persons of rank, and that the earl of Torrington and his son were the only persons exempt from her mental censure.

Of Oscar lord Rushdale, described by the ingenious Cecilia as affable, elegant, and well-informed, Mrs. Doricourt thought with much apprehension; her beloved child had a heart to bestow, and she endured ten thousand fears lest the inestimable prize should be given, where unfeeling pride, incapable of appreciating its value, would oppose, and eventually destroy its happiness. But while distressing her own too-sensitive mind with unpleasant presentiments and anticipations of evil, Mrs. Doricourt was careful not to drop a hint of her apprehensions to Cecilia; she merely requested her to be careful of forming hasty judgments, and of suffering her eye to mislead her heart; she tenderly reminded her that the Hermitage was her home, and that whatever new friendships she might be led to form, she should always tenaciously cling to her right of being always considered her mother, and most affectionate friend. Mrs. Doricourt in her letter did not dwell on the regret she felt at their separation, or urge Miss Delmore’s return to the Hermitage; but Caleb Baldwin, the venerable domestic, commissioned by Mrs. Doricourt to deliver her letter, and a beautiful silver and gold filligree casket, informed Miss Delmore, that his mistress had been but poorly ever since she had been away; and though



he was not desired to say so, yet he was sure his mistress felt the loss of her company, and longed to see her.

"And she shall see me," returned Cecilia, eagerly, her bright eyes filling with tears of grateful sensibility, "Yes, Mr. Baldwin, I will return to the Hermitage directly; there is no place to me so pleasant. There is no being on earth half so dear to me as Mrs. Doricourt; I will hasten to her, and prove, by my unremitting attention, that the heart she formed cannot be sensible of pleasure, with the knowledge that she is unwell or unhappy. I will go back with you, as soon as I have informed the earl and countess."

"My dear young lady," said Baldwin, "let me beg of you not to be so hasty; my mistress is not alarmingly ill, and will be angry with me for having put you into such a flurry; and she will be sadly vexed too, should you affront the earl of Torrington by leaving the castle so suddenly; besides, I know my mistress does not expect you to return home yet awhile, for she has sent your harp, and your drawing-box, and a large trunk full of fine things, that arrived from London yesterday."

"How shall I ever repay her generosity, her more than maternal solicitude?" said Cecilia.

"Why by always remaining as good as you are now, my dear young lady," replied honest Baldwin; "my mistress wants nothing that money can purchase, for she has abundance of that, and she will be sufficiently repaid in seeing you virtuous, and kind, and grateful, Heaven bless your sweet face! When Mrs. Doricourt first took such a liking to you, we, her servants I mean, thought you a little angel, that was sent on purpose to comfort her, for it is certain, her health and her spirits have been much better since you have been with her; and do pray now, my dear young lady, think over very often all the prayers, and lessons, and good advice my mistress has given you, and don't let the wicked example of these London lords and ladies turn you to their evil ways; for I am sure it would break Mrs. Doricourt's heart, and all our hearts, if any thing amiss was to happen to you. I beg pardon though, my sweet young lady—I hope my boldness in speaking has not offended you; but while I was in the hall just now, I heard and saw such behaviour with the London servants, mercy upon us, and forgive our uncharitableness! but one is apt to think but badly of the masters and mistresses that keep such reprobate servants. But I hope, my dear Miss Delmore, you are not displeased with my freedom in speaking my mind."

"Offended! no, Mr. Baldwin," replied she, pressing his old withered hand between both hers; "on the contrary, I am sincerely obliged to you for your kind counsel; and be assured it will be my pride to deserve the approbation of a worthy man like you."

Old Baldwin kissed the white hands that so gratefully pressed his, and begged her, when she intended a visit to the Hermitage, to write a few lines to Mrs. Doricourt, to prepare her for the pleasure—"Because, you know," said the old man, "her nerves are so weak, she cannot bear surprises, even though they are joyful ones."

Cecilia promised to be guided by his advice; she then dismissed him to Mrs. Milman's parlour, where she hoped he would not be annoyed by the intrusion of fashionable valets and pert chambermaids, whose assurance and conceit even exceeded their masters and mistresses.

She then hastened to her own apartment, to examine the magnificent casket delivered to her by Baldwin; it contained a complete set of oriental pearl ornaments, among which was a chaplet of lilies for the hair; the necklace, armlets, and bracelets, had

superb brilliant clasps. A beautiful cross of emeralds and diamonds, attached to a curiously-wrought gold chain, with several costly rings of various jewels, made up this elegant and valuable present.

The trunk was filled with dresses, made in the first style of fashion, and of the richest materials. One was of lace, to be worn over white satin; the sleeves and bosom of this dress were trimmed with pearls, in the form of lilies, chains, and tassels.

Cecilia stood astonished. Mrs. Doricourt's own dress was always black, extremely plain, though made of the very best materials; nor did she recollect ever to have seen her wear an ornament of any kind, except mourning rings; that she should procure for her dresses and trinkets so rich and expensive, surprised and pained her; for though, like other young women of her age, Cecilia was pleased with elegant dresses and costly ornaments, yet a sentiment of delicacy, the remembrance that her mother was sister to the present housekeeper of Torrington Castle, made her hesitate, and doubt the propriety of wearing satin and jewels fit for the daughter of a nobleman; but while the blush of timidity crimsoned her cheek, and a tear of conscious inferiority trembled in her eye, she beheld a folded paper at the bottom of the trunk; it was addressed in the hand-writing of Mrs. Doricourt—"To Cecilia Delmore, the child of my affection." On opening it, bank-notes, to the amount of one hundred pounds, and the following words, met her sight:—"The sum of one hundred pounds, my beloved Cecilia, will in future be your quarterly allowance; you will perhaps think and say that I have left you no occasion for money; but I am far better acquainted with these matters than you are, and know that a young lady received into the fashionable parties of the countess of Torrington will assuredly have demands upon her purse. In a word, to satisfy your delicate scruples, I am rich, and can afford, if I see it necessary, to do much more for you than this. I hope, my love, you like your dresses; they were made under the direction of the celebrated madame de Cloude, Pall-Mall, the present goddess of taste, who will be worshipped till some new arbitress of fashion, by the invention of a vest, or a trimming, supersedes, and decrees her obsolete and antideluvian. Remember, my Cecilia, that it is my pleasure that you wear what I have sent you; my fortune will allow these trifles; and though I no longer dress, it is my will that you do."

This was not a hard command, yet Cecilia's modesty made her wish the dresses had been less expensive; she feared the countess of Torrington would think her presuming, and accuse her of attempting to outvie herself and her guests in the splendour of dress; she shrunk from the idea of incurring ridicule, and provoking animadversions on her birth and dependent state. But it was the will of her more than mother that she should wear those elegant dresses, and her will she had ever considered a law.

Consigning the pearls to their magnificent case, she wrote a letter to Mrs. Doricourt, expressive of her heart's grateful feelings, which having given with her own hand to Mr. Baldwin, and charged him with kind remembrances to all at the Hermitage, she hastened to select one of the plainest of the dresses, wishing at the same time to do honour to the countess, whom she knew expected an addition to her present party.

When her toilet was completed, her watch told her she had yet full two hours before the company would assemble in the *salle-à-manger*; and wishing to inquire after her harp, she entered the library, with an intention of ringing for a servant, when the first objects she saw were her harp, portfolio, and drawing-box.

Cecilia had not heard a note of music since she left the Hermitage, and she flew to the harp, with sensations joyous as those we feel when we hasten to embrace a friend, from whom we have some time been separated. Her fingers passed rapidly over the strings; but notes of joy did not assimilate with the emotions of her heart; these were sorrowful, for she thought of the supercilious conduct of lady Torrington, and contrasted her *hauteur* with the tender generous friendship of Mrs. Doricourt, till unconsciously the sprightly measure changed to a plaintive air, of which her friend was particularly fond, and accompanying the notes with her voice, she sang—

Ah, where are now those eyes of light,  
That made the passing hours so bright?  
I never mark'd time's rapid flight,  
So lucid were their beams.

Ah, where is now that rosy smile,  
So full of beauty and of guile,  
That I did ne'er suspect the while  
I ere should rue its pow'r?

Yet though those eyes, that smile no more,  
This cheated bosom can adore,  
Yet I their falsehood shall deplore,  
Till silent in the grave.

While thus employed she cast her eyes towards the folding-doors at the end of the room, and beheld the earl of Torrington, pale and agitated, gazing on her. In an instant the strain ceased, and blushing and apologizing, she would have withdrawn.

"Stay, Cecilia," said the earl, advancing towards her—"stay, and inform me where, and by whom, you were taught that air, for it never was published? it was written and composed——"

"By a gentleman of the name of Saville," interrupted Miss Delmore.

The eyes of the earl gazed wildly on her, and his lip quivered as he asked—"How came you by this knowledge—who told you this?"

"Mrs. Doricourt informed me, my lord," replied Cecilia, "that the words and music were composed by the brother of a very dear friend of hers—a Miss Saville."

"And what more did she tell you?" asked the earl, in an eager agitated tone.

"Nothing more, my lord," replied Cecilia, "only that this beloved friend was dead."

Miss Delmore had before seen the earl strangely agitated, but his emotions were now stronger than ever; his face was ghastly pale, and large drops of perspiration started on his forehead—"True, true," said he, covering his face with his hands, "she is dead—she is happy; her abode is with angels, pure and innocent as herself."

Cecilia wondered how the name of Miss Saville should produce these terrible conflicts, and began to believe that the earl was affected with temporary fits of insanity, when he relieved this apprehension by asking, in a composed voice, Mrs. Doricourt's maiden name?

"It was Greville," replied Cecilia; "her mother was the youngest daughter of sir Alan Oswald."

"I thought so," replied the earl, striking his forehead: "retribution comes. I remember Julia Greville; she would have persuaded, she would have preserved, but it was ordained that I should be wretched."

Of these broken incoherent sentences Cecilia could make nothing, and she rejoiced when the paroxysm going off, he became sufficiently restored to himself to request to see her drawings.

Cecilia opened her portfolio. A beautiful view of the castle, as seen from the lake, a romantic dell on the margin of the Derwentwater, and the rocks, temple, and cascade, seen from the windows of Mrs. Doricourt's boudoir, were all the finished drawings it contained, except two heads—a Hebe and a Bacchus, so admirably and correctly pencilled, that the earl was lavish in commendation of them, when the countess, her friend lady Jacintha Fitzosborne, and lord Rushdale, entered laughing.

"I came to announce to your lordship," said the countess, "that lady Welford and her party will be with us to dinner."

The earl, without taking his eyes off the drawing he held in his hand, replied—"I shall be glad to see lady Welford; for the fools she brings in her train, I cannot venture to promise so much."

"I really think we ought to beg pardon for our very abrupt intrusion," said lady Jacintha, turning her eyes with a malicious glance from Cecilia to the countess; "I actually believe we are interrupting a very interesting *tête-à-tête*—study, I mean."

"You have spoken truly, lady Jacintha," returned the earl, with a look of undisguised contempt; "but allow me to assure you, the drawings before me are so worthy of admiration, that praise is a just and voluntary impulse, not a studied compliment."

"Some Italian artist's pencil, I presume," rejoined the countess, approaching the table; "very beautiful and clever, I dare say; every thing done by the natives of delightful Italy must be charming."

"But these drawings, lady Torrington," said the earl, "are not the productions of an Italian, but a very youthful English artist, whose modest blushes would betray her, even if I were inclined to withhold from her the meed of praise."

"Miss Delmore's pencil!" exclaimed lord Rushdale; "these views are indeed correctly beautiful. How exquisite is the delineation of that dell! how soft the shadow of that tree! and here is the east front of Torrington Castle. How bold and perfect the touches of the pencil on that tower! and there, on the distant Skiddaw, how admirably the perspective is preserved!"

Lady Jacintha frowned and bit her lip, while lady Torrington, affecting a laugh, said—"Oscar is quite an enthusiast in paintings and if Heaven had not thought fit he should be born the heir to an earldom, he would have made a tolerable artist himself. For my part, I like to look at a pretty drawing, but do not pretend to be a judge of its beauties or defects."

"Nor I, thank my stars," rejoined lady Jacintha, spitefully; "I leave these important decisions to men of genius who have money to throw away, and persons whose want of money renders it necessary for them to cultivate and employ their talents. I

always remembered Chesterfield's advice to his son; and knowing that pictures were to be bought, seldom troubled myself to attend to the instructions of my drawing-master."

"If you had," returned lord Rushdale, "you would have found your pencil a delightful resource in the hours you pass alone."

"Alone!" exclaimed lady Jacintha, "what a notion for a young man of rank! Alone! you really make me smile! Why I never have half an hour to myself, from the beginning to the end of the year! what with dressing, shopping, paying and receiving visits, the park, the theatres, the opera, masquerades, auctions, concerts, balls, and the thousand other amusements a person of fashion is obliged to attend, I promise you I have scarce time to sleep; but, bless me! what a superb harp that is! I did bestow a little attention upon this divine instrument, because our attitude-master recommended learning the harp, to shew the grace of the figure, and the beauty of the hand and arm." She then placed the harp before her, and without waiting for a request, played very indifferently a popular air. Then addressing lady Torrington—"This is your harp. Well, how modest to conceal your accomplishments from your friends! I declare, countess, I will never forgive you, for not introducing this ravishing instrument, when you knew how I doat upon music."

"Really, my dear friend," replied the countess, "I never beheld that ravishing instrument till now. Lord Chesterfield's opinion has also governed me. I think he says, there is no occasion for persons of rank to be themselves musicians, while they can purchase the abilities of others; but music, I suppose, is another of Miss Delmore's accomplishments; the harp, I presume, is hers."

"Yes," said the earl, "that harp belongs to Miss Delmore; and I am proud to say she is of that as perfect mistress as of the pencil; and I promise myself, lady Jacintha, with the assistance of yourself, lady Eglantine, the count del Montarino, and lord Melvil, to form an agreeable musical party. Oscar breathes a tolerable flute, and I can beat a tamborine."

The eyes of lord Rushdale, expressive of delight and admiration, had wandered too often to the face of Miss Delmore to escape the watchful glances of lady Jacintha; and as she had fixed on him, by the advice of the earl her father, for her partner in wedlock, she was not a little chagrined and disappointed to find that the unstudied graces and genuine talents of Cecilia, a nobody, were likely to deprive her of his attentions, and defeat her scheme of obtaining a wealthy husband, her own fortune being inadequate to the support of her rank. Full of spleen, she again turned to the harp, affecting to admire its ornaments—"It is very handsome," said she; "to the full as magnificent, I think, as the duchess of Eltham's, for which she told me she paid a hundred and fifty pounds. Pray, my lord, if it is not a secret," glancing her eye insidiously towards the countess, "what might it cost?"

"Not being a purchaser, madam," returned the earl, "I cannot reply to your question."

"Not the purchaser!" repeated lady Torrington, incredulously; "why I understood Miss Delmore had been brought up entirely at your lordship's expense."

The earl saw how much Cecilia's delicacy was wounded by this gross allusion to her dependent state; and his tone and manner evinced the displeasure he felt, as he replied—"This, madam, is a subject I should have thought politeness would have prevented your introducing before persons in no way concerned in my private

transactions: but since it is thus indelicately brought upon the tapis, with Miss Delmore's permission I will inform you she has not cost me one single guinea for the last ten years; her education had been conducted by Mrs. Doricourt, who has also supplied every other necessity with so liberal a hand, that she has only left me the title of Miss Delmore's father—a title which I shall proudly arrogate to myself, till she shall choose herself a dearer protector in a husband."

Cecilia's eyes were suffused with tears as she modestly bent to the earl; the countess and lady Jacintha smiled contemptuously; while lord Rushdale, with a suppressed sigh, said—"How enviable will the lot be of that mortal whom Miss Delmore honours with her affection!"

Lady Jacintha liked neither the speech nor the look of lord Rushdale, and determined, if possible, to mortify Cecilia, she asked—"Pray, Miss Delmore, can you tell me what were the configurations of the planets at the time of your birth?"

Smiling at the strangeness of the question, she replied—"Not really, madam."

"Well, certainly," resumed lady Jacintha, "if any faith is to be placed in astrology, you, Miss Delmore, were born under a lucky constellation of stars: no doubt your friend, this Mrs. Dor—Dorland—what is her name, is very rich?"

"Certainly she is," replied Cecilia, with a dignified air of reproof, "for money never appears an object to Mrs. Doricourt; in her charities she is most liberal and diffusive; and in her presents to those whom she honours with her regard, she is generous even to profusion."

"I really congratulate you on having so munificent a friend, Miss Delmore," said lady Jacintha; "I suppose those yellow cornelians on your neck were her gift; they are handsome if they are real."

"Madam!" said Cecilia, colouring highly, "Mrs. Doricourt would not allow me to wear any ornaments that were not real."

"Indeed!" returned lady Jacintha; "very genteel people though wear imitations; and they are now brought so near perfection, that only jewellers and lapidaries can tell the difference; if yours are real, they cost a pretty sum; earrings, broach, and bracelets to match—a very handsome present indeed! My jeweller charged me fifty guineas for my set, and they are not so large nor so handsomely cut as yours."

"Mrs. Doricourt's presents are costly presents indeed!" said the countess. "Pray, Miss Delmore, who makes your dresses? some person at Keswick, I suppose; this is a pretty peach-coloured satin of yours, and is trimmed very smartly for the country. I want a few things done; and as Smithson's hand is at present disabled, I will thank you to give her the address of your——"

"This dress, madam," said Cecilia, vexed to see her very clothes provoke the spleen of these high-bred ladies, "was made by madame de Cloude, of Pall-Mall, and is very inferior to some others Mrs. Doricourt has just sent me."

Lady Jacintha almost shrieked at this intelligence, but affectedly applying her eye-glass to the trimming, which was tastefully composed of blond and white roses, she observed it was tolerable—"But De Cloude," continued she, "has exhausted her fancy, and is sinking fast in the estimation of ladies of rank. She has now, I believe, poor creature! leisure enough to work for merchants' wives, or even persons of an inferior class, if they can come up to her price."

The drift of this speech, and the contemptuous look that accompanied it, did not escape the earl; he also saw the indignant crimson on Cecilia's cheek, and instantly replied—"I cannot pretend to prop the fame of madame de Cloude, which your ladyship asserts to be sinking, but I must beg permission to set you right in one point. Mrs. Doricourt, though retired from the deceits and frivolities of the *haut ton*, has prominent claims to that rank on which you so peremptorily insist, and on which you appear to place so high a value, being herself a branch of one of the highest and most ancient families in England."

The countess and lady Jacintha listened with surprise, as the earl continued to say—"Mrs. Doricourt is a granddaughter of sir Alan Oswald, and her mother's sisters, the one the duchess of Alverston, the other the marchioness of Inglesfield, would, I believe, be not a little astonished and offended to hear your ladyship herd their niece with merchant's wives, and persons of even an inferior class to these."

Lady Jacintha was really disconcerted by this rebuke. She protested that she had no sort of intention to offend against Mrs. Doricourt's dignity, though she was unacquainted with her family and pretensions to class with persons of rank; "but your lordship," continued she, "must be sensible that I am quite correct, when I assert that money will effect almost any thing."

"And while I subscribe to the truth of that remark," replied the earl, "I sincerely wish it had the power of removing from the female heart, envy, hatred, and arrogance, particularly from those who, possessing beauty, rank, and accomplishments themselves, ought to be superior to such mean and debasing passions."

The oblique compliment conveyed in this speech did not blunt its severity, and stung to the quick lady Jacintha, who coloured through her rouge.

Cecilia, feeling she was the occasion of this unpleasant conversation, wished herself back at the dear Hermitage, where the evil passions, envy, hatred, and arrogance, never entered.

Lord Rushdale saw her uneasiness, and anxious to remove it, spoke of some beautiful songs, composed by Emdin, whose music was gaining great celebrity in the fashionable world.

The countess, offended at the earl's severity to her friend, and more at her son's assiduity to the housekeeper's niece, was luckily prevented from uttering her displeasure by the abrupt entrance of sir Cyril Musgrove, covered with dust—"You are under an infinitude of obligations to me," said he, gasping and panting for breath.

"Have the goodness to inform me," replied lady Torrington, supposing herself the person addressed, "what mighty favour you have conferred on me?"

"Why I am choked with dust, and have rode, at the imminent hazard of breaking my neck," said sir Cyril, "to inform you, that lady Welford and her party are, at this present moment, within half a mile of the castle."

"I confess my obligation," said lady Torrington, with a stately bend.

"Who does lady Welford bring with her?" asked lady Jacintha; "what beau? Come, leave off gasping and panting, which I know is all affectation, and satisfy my curiosity."

"That you may prepare your *nods, becks, and wreathed smiles*," returned sir Cyril. "Well then, as all the world knows the pleasure I feel in obeying the commands of a fair lady, lady Welford's barouche is driven by lord Wilton."

“What, is that coxcomb of the party?” said lady Jacintha. “But I don’t want to hear the order—I only wish to know the persons who form the train of lady Welford. There is another proof of the power of money—that woman’s wealth—But deuce take her wealth! Dear sir Cyril, who is coming?”

“Sir Middleton Maxfield, and his sister Jemima,” replied sir Cyril, “the sweet child of nature, as her aunt Mrs. Freakley calls her.”

“And is that insufferable old fool of the party?” asked the countess.

“The sweet child of nature,” returned sir Cyril, “is, you know, a ward of Chancery, and wants three years of being of age; and her aunt is so afraid of the lovely innocent being run away with, that she never trusts her out of her sight; besides, I was present when you told her you should be happy to see her in Cumberland. The rest of the party are the honourable Tangent Drawley and colonel St. Irwin. How fortunate that you are all dressed! I must hasten to put off the savage and adonize. Rushdale, ’pon my soul, I envy you the happiness of handing the child of nature from the carriage! take care of your heart, or her leaden—pshaw! her blue eyes I mean, will shoot through it like a pair of bullets. *Pardonnez moi!* can’t stay to answer another question,” and sir Cyril withdrew as abruptly as he entered.

“Miss Maxfield’s fortune,” said lady Jacintha, “is a hundred and fifty thousand pounds, besides great expectations. I suppose, my lord,” addressing Oscar, “you will improve the hint given you by sir Cyril.”

“I have not yet, madam,” replied he, “become so great a worshipper of wealth as to sacrifice happiness at the shrine of avarice.”

“No,” said the earl, “no, Oscar—I trust not; for miserable is that wretch who deludes himself with the hope that wealth will supply the place of mutual love; wretchedly will he be deceived, who fancies wealth will prove an equivalent for happiness.”

Lady Torrington cast a glance of disdain on her husband, in whose words she found an allusion to their own marriage, formed by interest, without attachment on either side. Perceiving lady Welford’s barouche entering the gates, she took her son’s arm, and requesting lady Jacintha to assist in receiving her guests, they left the library.

They were no sooner alone, than the earl, taking Cecilia’s hand, said—“I am sorry, my sweet girl, that you should have been subjected to the impertinence of lady Jacintha Fitzosborne, who is a compound of pride, affectation, and envy, though it gave me an opportunity of witnessing your equanimity of temper. The insolence and folly of lady Jacintha, failing of the effect she wishes, will subside; and as she cannot mortify, she will learn to respect you.”

Miss Delmore’s pride had compelled her to hide her mortification, but she had poignantly felt the contempt thrown upon her by the countess and lady Jacintha, and most happy would she have been to return to Mrs. Doricourt; already she had seen enough of fashionable manners to convince her, that it was scarcely possible to associate with the great, and preserve the bosom free from evil passions: ardently did she wish to return to Mrs. Doricourt, endeared to her by a comparison with the countess and lady Jacintha; from her lips she had never heard contumelious speech—her every look and action expressed affection and approval.



But the earl would not hear of her quitting the castle; he had that very morning dispatched a letter to Mrs. Doricourt, requesting permission to wait upon her—"And if she consents to receive my visit," said the earl, "you shall accompany me."

With this promise Cecilia was obliged to be content.

"As yet," resumed the earl, "you have seen nothing of life; and I consider it my duty not to let your youth, your beauty, and talents, be buried in the seclusion of St. Herbert's Island."

Cecilia could with truth have said, the specimen she had seen of life and high breeding, since she had been at the castle, had decided her preference for retirement; but respect for the earl prevented her so freely declaring her sentiments; and the second ringing of the dinner-bell put an end to their conversation.

Conducted by the earl, she entered the *salle-à-manger*, where the guests were already assembled.

The earl of Torrington was instantly surrounded, and saluted with many flattering compliments; but though all gazed on the beautiful confused Cecilia, she remained unIntroduced, till the earl, irritated at the marked neglect of the countess, reminded her, in a manner unusually stern, of her inattention to the unpleasant and awkward situation of his adopted daughter.

The countess did not choose to offend her lord by a downright opposition to his will; she pleaded forgetfulness, made a slight apology to Cecilia, and introduced her to her guests, as the *protégée* of the earl of Torrington.

Lady Welford, a good-humoured, lively widow, without any striking claims to beauty or wit, was greatly admired by the gentlemen, for she had fifty thousand pounds a-year, without child or encumbrance. She was sensible that though warmly pressed to spend the summer at Torrington Castle, she was no favourite with the countess, or her friend lady Jacintha Fitzosborne; but the beaux that fluttered in her train were men of high ton, and consequently desirable acquisitions to their party.

Lady Welford had no pretension to genius, but she had amiable qualities, that amply compensated for shining talents; she possessed a generous and feeling heart. The countenance of Miss Delmore had, at the first glance, made an impression in her favour, which the cold and rude neglect of the countess confirmed; and lady Welford resolved, as she placed the diffident girl next herself at table, to make the "*earl's protégée*" the object of her particular attention.

Miss Maxfield, a ward of Chancery, was just emancipated from a boarding-school, to reside under the protection of her aunt, Mrs. Freakley, who, having a most devoted reverence for titles, was determined that her niece should marry an earl; for, as her father was a baronet, and her own fortune was very large, and her expectations still greater, she made no hesitation in saying, she thought Jemima might, without being accused of presumption, aspire to the rank of countess. Mrs. Freakley had heard much in favour of the youthful lord Rushdale; report had represented him of a sentimental turn, singular in opinions and habits, to the young nobility who had courted his acquaintance. In Mrs. Freakley's eyes her niece was all sweet simplicity and engaging innocence; and as there was rank to recommend the alliance, she thought this sentimental youth would be exactly such a husband as she could wish for her child of nature. Full of this project, with indefatigable perseverance, Mrs. Freakley worked herself into every party where she knew the countess of Torrington was invited; and having discovered that she was weakly

fond of flattery, she so successfully complimented her person, taste in dress, and equipages, that her endeavours were crowned with an invitation to Torrington Castle.

Miss Maxfield was a complete hoyden, with an alabaster complexion, flaxen hair, and lead-coloured eyes; she was of the middle height, and a good deal warped, which irregularity of shape was, as far as possible, concealed by padding the sunk shoulder. Her features, though not bad, were insipid; her mind was a blank, and she had profited little by an expensive education; but it was a favourite position with Mrs. Freakley, that money was more valuable than sense or education; and though her sweet Jemima was not a wit, she had a very large fortune; and, as far as her own observance of life and manners went, she had always found that men hated clever women.

The company had seated themselves at table, when lady Eglantine Sydney was led into the room by lord Melvil. She lisped an apology for her late appearance, but really had no idea of its being dinner-time, being so pleasantly engaged.

"With a love tale," said lady Jacintha, "in which there is nothing new or marvellous."

"No, Heaven knows," replied Mr. Drawley; "the subject is worn 'to tatters, to very rags,' as some poet says. I really wonder any lady can lend an ear to such stuff!"

"Or any gentleman take the trouble to repeat it," said lord Wilton. "Did I not hear you tell lady Welford this morning, that her cruelty would drive you to despair, and that it was only for the happiness of being near her that you came into Cumberland?"

"Pray, my lord, don't put Mr. Drawley to the trouble of recollecting his tender speeches," said lady Welford, "which, I promise you, have no more place in my memory than his own."

"Dear, how odd!" observed Miss Maxfield. "Well, I never forget what a gentleman says to me."

"Your memory then must be like old lady Napper's lumber-room," rejoined lady Jacintha, "in which there is not a single article that you can depend upon as fit for use, or that is worth preserving."

"*But when she spoke,*" said lord Wilton, "*forth from her coral lips even satire broke.*"

"*Nonsense* you mean," returned lady Jacintha; "but I pardon you, on the consideration that satire would be lost on people determined to play the fool."

Drawley bowed affectedly; said he was perfectly sensible of her ladyship's compliment, but that the fatigue of talking prevented his expressing his gratitude—"Really," said he, yawning, "I am so wearied, so inert, that I don't believe I shall be able to utter another syllable to-night."

"Not speak again to-night!" exclaimed Miss Maxfield; "why I never knew any body before that did not love to talk! I am sure I should think it a great punishment if I was obliged to hold my tongue; should not you, Miss Delmore?"

"To be constrained not to speak," replied Cecilia, "would certainly be far from pleasant; yet, in my opinion, a less punishment than to be compelled to converse."

"When neither the person nor the subject were interesting," said lord Rushdale.

"But this is liberty hall, Miss Maxfield," observed the countess; "and I trust all who favour me with their company will feel themselves under no restraint."

With the second course sir Cyril Musgrove made his appearance—"Ladies and gentlemen," said he, bowing profoundly, "I beg leave to offer an apology for—" but

seeing the removal of dishes and plates, he placed himself at the table—"any apology," said he, "is unnecessary, for you have not waited."

"We never wait," replied the countess; "that, with various other tiresome ceremonies, is gone by."

"And very properly," remarked colonel St. Irwin, "or a dinner might spoil, while a coxcomb sat under the hands of his valet, or admired his person in a mirror."

Sir Cyril did not choose to resent any thing said by colonel St. Irwin; he contented himself with replying—"Your late campaign, colonel, has not blunted the edge of your wit; that I perceive is keen as ever. But if I do waste a little time under the hands of my valet, or in consulting my mirror, I have the pleasure to know it is not time thrown away."

"It would be far better employed," replied the colonel, "in the study of books—in the cultivation of your mind; for you will pardon me the remark, sir Cyril—however handsomely dressed the outside of your head may be, I never heard any person praise its inward adornments."

"Thank you, thank you for your advice, my good friend," said sir Cyril; "sorry I can't follow it; but whenever I take up a book, I fall asleep over it.—This leveret is dressed exquisitely! Now, after the acid, a little of that sweet sauce, if you please.—Lady Eglantine, 'pon my honour, you look celestial!"

Lady Eglantine simpered, and bowed to the compliment.

"Celestial blue," returned lady Jacintha.

"La! lady Jacintha," said Miss Maxfield, tittering, "do you mean to say your cousin looks blue? When I was at school, we used to say the teachers looked blue when they were cross."

"Very smart, 'pon my honour," returned sir Cyril. "But no, my charming Miss Maxfield! I did not mean to accuse lady Eglantine of looking cross, but, like a sylph, or a seraph, surrounded by clouds of celestial blue."

"Is that poetry, sir Cyril?" asked Miss Maxfield; "for I had a task to learn once about seraphs and blue clouds."

This question occasioned a general laugh.

Sir Cyril declared he hated poetry, and in plain prose had expressed his admiration of lady Eglantine's dress.

"It is particularly elegant," said lord Melvil; "blue becomes lady Eglantine's transparent complexion."

"Nay, now I am sure you are flattering me," returned lady Eglantine, with a smile of conscious beauty.

Lady Jacintha hated compliments, except when paid to herself, and she prevented the adulation issuing from lord Melvil's lips, by saying—"Sir Cyril, you have doubtless heard of a scarlet and yellow fever, but possibly not of a blue one."

"No, really," replied he; "but there may be a fever of that sort abroad, for any thing I know to the contrary."

"I shall not travel abroad for confirmation on this point," resumed lady Jacintha, "because I know it rages with great violence in England——"

"Not at this time, I hope," interrupted Mrs. Freakley; "not in this part of the country, I trust; I am so alarmed at the thought of having a fever."

"You have nothing to apprehend at present, madam," returned lady Jacintha, with a look of disdain, "though certainly with your *embonpoint* a fever might be dangerous."

Then again addressing sir Cyril—"I never heard of a blue fever till I became acquainted with lady Jane Osbright, whose lead-coloured eyes some needy sonneteer celebrated in witless rhymes, denominating them sapphire and azure; and so infatuated has she become with blue, that now her satins and velvets, the draperies of her drawing-room, her liveries, the lining of her carriage, the hammercloth, are all blue—celestial blue. Pray Heaven my cousin may not be infected by her ladyship! for I perceive strong symptoms of a blue fever."

Sir Cyril had sense enough to see the envy couched under this speech. Lady Eglantine's dress was new and elegant; and as her cousin's fortune would not allow her to indulge the love of show, she always felt mortified when lady Eglantine appeared in any thing new.

Lady Welford, during dinner, bestowed all her attention on Miss Delmore, because she perceived that the countess of Torrington and lady Jacintha Fitzosborne honoured her with very little regard; nor was she at any loss to account for their neglect. Youth, beauty, and elegance, she knew, were possessions sufficient to render her hateful in their eyes; and as much to mortify them as gratify herself, when they retired to the drawing-room, she took her arm; and as they walked up and down, she asked several questions relative to the improvements on St. Herbert's Island, and particularly inquired after the health of Mrs. Doricourt.

"Do you know Mrs. Doricourt, madam?" asked Cecilia.

"When I was Lucy Archer, I knew Julia Greville," replied lady Welford; "and when you have an opportunity, I will thank you, Miss Delmore, if you will say to her, that I shall feel most happy to be permitted to renew my acquaintance with her."

Cecilia had just time to say she would remember her ladyship's request, when the gentlemen entered the room, and a general conversation took place, in which Cecilia observed Mr. Drawley took no part; for, withdrawing to a distant window, he had thrown himself on an ottoman, in an attitude of fatigue, appearing to take no sort of interest in any thing he heard or saw.

Miss Maxfield, who admired his fine person, and had fixed upon him for her lover, endeavoured to draw him into a conversation; but to all her remarks and questions he appeared deaf and dumb, and as insensible and motionless as a statue, till provoked and tired with his obstinate silence, she flew up to lady Welford, and half crying, asked her if she had heard Mr. Drawley speak since they rose from table?

"Why really, Miss Maxfield, I do not remember," said lady Welford, "nor is it a matter of any importance, I believe; for when he does speak, it is very little to the purpose."

"La! do you think so?" returned Miss Maxfield. "Sir Middleton says he is a very sensible young man, and he must know, because they were schoolfellows together at Eton."

"I shall not presume to dispute sir Middleton's judgement," said lady Welford; "I can only say that his silence affords me equal pleasure with his speech."

"Well now, that is very odd," replied Miss Maxfield, "for I like of all things to hear him talk; and I will make him speak—I will go again and plague him till I make him talk."

"It is a pity," said lady Welford, as she ran towards Drawley, who still maintained the appearance of lassitude and insensibility, "it is a great pity that silly girl has so large a

fortune; her money will induce some indigent man of rank to marry her, who, ashamed of her ignorance, will afterwards treat her with neglect and contempt.”

The earl of Torrington proposed going to the music-room, to which lady Jacintha Fitzosborne gave her immediate assent, vanity whispering that she could have no rival in voice or finger.

Lord Rushdale selected the music, and lady Jacintha, taking her place at the piano-forte, attempted a bravura song of Bishop's; but wishing to distance all competition, she strained her voice to an absolute squall; and though loudly and flatteringly applauded, every critical ear was convinced she sung out of time and tune.

Lady Eglantine Sydney protested she was hoarse—that it was inhuman to solicit her to sing—declared that she was out of spirits—that she had not sufficient confidence in her ability to oblige; and after a thousand other such excuses, was at last prevailed on by lord Melvil to do what she from the first intended. Accompanied by lady Jacintha at the pianoforte, and lords Melvil and Rushdale on the flute and clarionet, she sang, in a very affected style, an Italian canzonet.

The applause that succeeded this having subsided, and half reclining on the assiduous adoring Melvil, lady Eglantine had resumed her seat.

Cecilia was called upon to contribute her share to the general entertainment. Never having sung but to Mrs. Doricourt, and other friends equally indulgent, she felt considerable alarm to make her *début* before so many strangers; but encouraged by the earl of Torrington, lord Rushdale, and lady Welford, she gracefully swept the strings of her harp, and, with enchanting sweetness, sang a simple Scotch ballad. Her voice, naturally clear, full, and melodious, had received every aid from taste and science. When she ceased, a burst of rapturous applause followed her song; even lady Jacintha, though swelling with envy and spite, was compelled to acknowledge Miss Delmore's voice, style, and execution, were not to be excelled.

Lady Torrington condescended to relax from her *hauteur*, and confess herself so much delighted, as to join the general request that Miss Delmore would repeat the ballad.

Ever ready to oblige, Cecilia complied; and as her timidity had in some measure passed off, she acquitted herself better than at first.

Some hours were now delightfully spent in the music-room. Cecilia sang duets with lord Rushdale and sir Middleton Maxfield, who had a fine voice, and sung in tolerable good style.

Actuated by the spirit of envy, lady Jacintha exerted all her powers to rival Cecilia's performances, but neither her voice nor science would bear comparison.

Lady Eglantine declined the contest, by affecting a cough, and protesting her constitution too weak for the great exertion required in singing.

Colonel St. Irwin had before expressed his admiration of Miss Delmore's person; but her voice, her superior style of singing, he spoke of in terms of rapture to lord Rushdale, who declared that, in his sight, Miss Delmore was the most perfect of Heaven's creatures—“If it was possible,” said he, “to escape the fascinations of her beauty, her voice would lead the heart into captivity.”

Mr. Drawley, who was lounging on a sofa, and had not before opened his lips, now started up, and laying his hand on lord Rushdale's arm, said—“You speak my sentiments exactly; Miss Delmore looks, moves, and sings, like an angel.”

"Only hear!" shouted Miss Maxfield, clapping her hands, "only hear, good folks—Mr. Drawley spoke!"

"Is there any thing so very extraordinary in that?" asked the silent youth, affecting to suppress a yawn, and relapsing into his former lounging attitude.

"Yes, indeed, I think it very extraordinary," replied Miss Maxfield; "for I am sure, before we left the drawing-room, I asked you a hundred questions, and told you ever so many droll things that happened while I was at school; but not a word did you speak, good, bad, or indifferent. I am certain I have not heard the sound of your voice but once since we left the inn at Keswick."

"It is so vulgar to talk," said Drawley, shrugging his shoulders; "it is really horrible to be put to the labour of finding ideas for conversation; it is an immense exertion of mental and corporal faculties, and nothing but the extreme pleasure I felt at hearing Miss Delmore sing, could have animated me to sustain this wordy labour."

Lord Wilton now joined the conversation by saying—"What, is Drawley actually speaking?"

'I've read that things inanimate have mov'd,  
And, as with living souls, have been inform'd  
By magic numbers and persuasive sounds.'

And so you have been speechifying, my boy? Bravo! go on, let me entreat you. Here, Musgrove, Maxfield! Proceed, Drawley, proceed, my good fellow."

Sir Cyril Musgrove and sir Middleton Maxfield having obeyed the call, he bade them prepare their cash; then slapping Drawley on the shoulder, told him that his loquacity had won him a thousand pounds.

"I feel immensely happy to have been so fortunate as to supply you with what I know you want," said Drawley, "though talking is undoubtedly excessive vulgar, as one's valet, or one's tailor, makes use of expressly the same organ that we do to express ideas."

"Suppose then," replied sir Cyril, "by way of a change, you were to adopt the plan of writing yours."

"It would never answer," returned Drawley; "writing would be even more wearying than speaking."

"Well, then, invent a certain number of signs to express your thoughts," said sir Middleton Maxfield.

"It has been done already," replied Drawley. "No; without novelty it would not do for me; besides, if I were to be at the fatigue of inventing signs, how could I impart comprehension to other people? and then the exertion attending on gesticulation would be unbearable."

"What will become of you," asked Mrs. Freakley, "if you marry? for it is not natural to expect that your wife will have as great a dislike to talking as you have, or, in compliance with your out-of-the-way whims, that she will put a seal on her lips."

"And for that very reason," replied Drawley, "I will never marry."

"More shame for you to say so!" returned Miss Maxfield, angrily; "if all the gentlemen were of your mind, Mr. Drawley, I wonder what would become of all the young ladies of my acquaintance."

“Why they would all be doomed to die discontented old maids,” said sir Cyril Musgrove. “But cheer up; there is no danger, my charming Miss Maxfield, of your belonging to that unhappy class.”

“I hope not,” replied she, “for I assure you, sir Cyril, I intend to be married, but not to Mr. Drawley, for I will talk as much as I please; and indeed I should be greatly offended if my husband was to yawn, and shrug his shoulders, and wave his hand, and say ‘my head aches—pray don’t speak—you weary me—it is so immensely vulgar to talk.’”

“Bravo, Jemima!” said her brother; “‘pon my honour, you are a capital mimic!”

“It was really a most excellent imitation,” replied lord Wilton. “It was just your air, voice, and manner, Drawley.”

“Very likely,” returned he; “I am prodigiously happy to have afforded you entertainment; but as the expenditure of breath required in speaking affects my nervous system, you will pardon my declining for the present the honour of your conversation.”

“Your oratory, my good fellow,” said lord Wilton, laughing, “has won me a thousand pounds, and you have now my permission to close the portal of your perceptions and conceptions as soon and for any length of time you please.”

“Is it possible,” said Miss Delmore, as she walked up the room with lady Welford, “that Mr. Drawley can be pleased to sit in that listless posture, neither joining in conversation, or partaking the amusements of the company?”

“It is evident,” replied lady Welford, “that you, my sweet girl, are unacquainted with the manners of the *haut ton*. The honourable Mr. Drawley, I will venture to assert, feels the utmost uneasiness in affecting lassitude and constraining himself to silence; but he is one of these empty-headed young men of fashion, who will even punish themselves to astonish the gaping multitude. Last winter he was a dashing, rattling, four-in-hand character—a Stentor in voice, a Hercules in strength. You now behold him reduced to a machine, a moving statue, disclaiming thought and speech as wearying exertions; but in the midst of this seeming inanity, you will discover that no fatigue, no privation, is too great to obtain the eclat of singularity.”

Cecilia smiled, and acknowledged she had no idea of such a character as Mr. Drawley being in existence.

“In the great world, my dear,” replied lady Welford, “you will find every one assuming a character different to their real one. But more of this another time, for our conversation will not suit the lady who approaches.”

This was the countess of Torrington.

Cecilia’s singing and execution on the pianoforte and harp had given general delight. Lady Eglantine, casting a languishing glance from her blue eyes on lord Melvil, declared she had never heard any one sing so charmingly as Miss Delmore.

Lord Melvil, pressing her hand, assured her, that to his ear her voice was infinitely more delightful.

Lady Eglantine smiled, and said she thought Miss Delmore’s voice and style greatly superior to lady Jacintha’s.

“Oh, certainly!” replied lord Melvil; “I am entirely of your opinion.”

“And so you would have been, most courteous lord,” said lady Jacintha, who had overheard their conversation, “if this discerning, sensible divinity, had asserted that Miss Delmore croaked like a raven. I thank your lordship though for the very high compliment

you have paid me, in placing my voice and style below lady Eglantine's. Upon her musical abilities I shall make no comment; but permit me to observe, that did she sing with the monotonous note of a cuckoo, I am aware that you have motives that would induce you to declare she warbled like a nightingale."

This speech was far from pleasant to either lady Eglantine or lord Melvil, particularly the latter, whose conscience felt its truth; but lady Eglantine imputing it to envy of Miss Delmore, gave lord Melvil a languishing smile, and suffered him to conduct her to the supper-room.

When the countess of Torrington retired, lady Jacintha tapped at the door of her dressing-room—"Not feeling disposed to sleep, I am come," said she, "to chat half-an-hour with you."

At that time lady Torrington could have dispensed with her dear friend's company; she had promised to admit the count del Montarino to a private conference. Lady Jacintha's presence disappointed the interview, as their intercourse was a secret she could not venture to confide even to the bosom of friendship. A glance of her eye was at once understood by the comprehensive, convenient waiting gentlewoman, who took an opportunity to visit the count's apartment, with intelligence that sent him quietly to bed.

The count would have been well content to give up the assignation, for he was tired of acting the passionate lover; but his purse was empty, and he wanted to draw upon her ladyship's for a supply. The wager laid by sir Cyril Musgrove and sir Middleton Maxfield, that the honourable Mr. Drawley would not speak before supper-time, was a convincing proof to the wily Italian, that they had more money than wit, and that it would be no very difficult matter to make a transfer of their superfluity to his necessity; and the time that he intended to bestow in making love, he now devoted to planning the means of making money.

Lady Jacintha perceived an air of constraint in the manner of lady Torrington, and observed that her eyes often turned towards the door. She saw she was an intruder, and suspicions, not very honourable to the reputation of her friend, rose in her mind; but suspicion was not proof, and lady Torrington's acquaintance was of great importance, for her father had suggested to her that Oscar lord Rushdale, the heir to a rich earldom, would be a very advantageous match for her.

"Bless me!" said the countess, "your spirits, lady Jacintha, are astonishing; for my part, I am worn out, and half asleep. Why," looking at her watch, "it is near two o'clock!"

"I really felt it impossible to sleep," replied lady Jacintha, "with so many alarms on my mind."

"Alarms!" repeated the countess, affecting to yawn, "what has happened to alarm you?"

"I positively could not rest," resumed lady Jacintha, "till I came to put you on your guard."

"You have now communicated your alarm to me," said the countess, her assignation with the count darting on her mind; "what have I to fear?"

"Every thing from that artful creature, Cecilia Delmore," replied lady Jacintha.

The countess smiled contemptuously—"I am sorry so insignificant a cause," said she, "should have kept you from retiring to rest; for my part, I perceive nothing in the girl to cause alarm, or prevent me from sleeping with my usual tranquillity."



"I congratulate you most sincerely, my dear friend," returned lady Jacintha, "on your happy indifference. Some wives would be highly offended, if not absolutely jealous, if their lords bestowed such looks of tender admiration, such devoted attention, on another. I am sure the earl's glaring attention to the girl rendered me quite uncomfortable all the evening on your account; and my friendship for you made me resolve to put you on your guard before I retired to rest."

Lady Torrington's tone was ironical, as she said—"I certainly must be vastly grateful to the friendly solicitude that has deprived you of sleep, and brought you here at this hour, to put me on my guard against a rival in my husband's love; but at once to tranquillize your kind apprehensions for my peace, I beg to inform you that the earl of Torrington is at perfect liberty to bestow his admiration and attentions, wherever caprice or inclination directs, provided I am not the object. When we married, ours was an union brought about by Plutus, not Cupid; and as the early part of our wedded life was not enlivened by jealous squabbles, I believe I shall be able to proceed, without making myself ridiculous in the opinion of the fashionable world, by affecting uneasiness that I do not feel. Miss Delmore has awakened the earl's tender passions—I really am much obliged to her, as, while this caprice lasts, he will be entertained, and prevented from becoming cross, peremptory, and gloomy, which was the case when madame la duchesse de Valencourt no longer enlivened our parties."

Lady Jacintha felt and looked disappointed; she had deprived herself of an hour's sleep, on purpose to light the torch of discord, and inflame the bosom of lady Torrington with jealousy; she had encouraged the hope of instigating her dear friend to insist on Miss Delmore being sent from the castle. This scheme proving abortive, she determined on trying if her apathy respecting her son was equal to that she avowed towards the conduct of her lord.

"Though you are content that the earl should flirt with this girl," said she, "because you are certain no consequences of any importance to yourself can be the result, yet it would not be very gratifying to your pride, my dear countess, if lord Rushdale should be weak enough to fall into the snares of this Armida."

"You apprehend things absolutely impossible," returned the countess.

"To me it does not appear impossible," said lady Jacintha, "that a noble lord may marry a maid of low degree; such occurrences have taken place."

The countess drew herself up indignantly—"Lord Rushdale," replied she, "has too much proper pride to suffer the niece of his father's housekeeper to inveigle his affections; he knows the heir of Torrington must form an alliance with rank equal to his own. I am really surprised, lady Jacintha, how you can suffer such absurd notions to enter into your head. Cecilia Delmore marry lord Rushdale! ridiculous! But, to tell truth, my dear friend, I begin to suspect that this girl's accomplishments, which you have affected to despise, are the thorns which have made your pillow so uneasy. I am sorry that I cannot send her from the castle to oblige you; but you have yourself noticed what a fuss the earl makes about his adopted daughter, and how impossible it is for me to interfere in the matter, without incurring the odious imputation of being fond of my husband. I shall talk with Oscar to-morrow, and let him understand where I wish him to place his affections."

"You have selected a wife for him then," said lady Jacintha, in a flutter of hope and fear.

“Oh yes,” returned the countess; “lady Arabella Moncrief, the second daughter of the duchess of Aberdeen.”

“Why she is a mere child, and is frightfully marked with the smallpox!” interrupted lady Jacintha, spitefully.

“She is exactly three years younger than Oscar,” said the countess, “who is now barely eighteen. He will not marry before he is of age, and then her youth will be no objection; and as to her being marked by that frightful distemper, doctor Bingley, who attended her, assured me she would not be at all injured; and she was allowed to have fine eyes, and a lovely complexion; but where such very great advantages will result from the alliance, beauty is but a minor consideration.”

It required all the dissimulation lady Jacintha was mistress of, to hide her rage and disappointment. She had given up a party going to Weymouth, on purpose to make lord Rushdale sensible of her attractions, and to discover that his mother had already planned a matrimonial engagement for him, was almost too much for her patience to endure.

She rejoiced when the countess said—“I really must wish you good night, for, in spite of politeness, my eyes will close.”

Lady Jacintha saw, in this haste to get rid of her, an intention beyond that of going to rest, and she determined to watch what was agitating. Bidding the countess good night, she extinguished her taper, and concealed herself in the dark recess of a window, from whence she had a full view of the dressing-room door. Presently she saw it unclose, and lady Torrington advance a little way into the gallery, where having remained a few seconds, she again retreated.

Soon after her ladyship’s woman appeared, and lady Jacintha was in the utmost trepidation, lest the lynx eyes of Mrs. Smithson should see her, crouching in a corner, in the mean act of eaves-dropping; but, apparently half asleep, Mrs. Smithson passed on, and entered the dressing-room.

Blessing her lucky stars that she had escaped detection, lady Jacintha rose from her uneasy posture; and perceiving that day was breaking, hurried to her chamber, satisfied in her own mind that she had interrupted an assignation with the count del Montarino, to whom the glances of the countess were so invariably and unequivocally directed, that it was evident to her there was a perfect understanding between them. But though lady Jacintha had failed to detect the criminality of her dear friend the countess, she determined the discovery should be made; for lady Torrington, by unfolding her intentions respecting lord Rushdale, had roused all the malignant passions of her bosom; and, to accomplish her own purposes, it was necessary to have the countess completely in her power, who, dreading the exposure of her guilt, would be compelled to forward any scheme she should lay down.

“The heart of Rushdale,” said lady Jacintha, “is yet free; or, if it has yielded to the siren Delmore, may be recovered. The task be mine,” said she, “to transform his goddess into an erring mortal. Be it my task, too, and that immediately, to unmask the haughty lady Torrington. Her dread of public exposure will make her a tool in my hands. Yes, yes, her reputation, once in my power, she will be glad to purchase my silence at the easy rate of pointing out to lord Rushdale the advantages that will result from an alliance with lady Jacintha Fitzosborne.”

## CHAPTER II.

To sit on rocks, to muse o'er flood and fell,  
To slowly trace the forest's shady scene,  
Where things that own not man's dominion dwell,  
And mortal foot hath ne'er, or rarely, been;  
To climb the trackless mountain all unseen,  
With the wild flock that never needs a fold;  
Alone o'er steeps and foaming falls to lean;  
This is not solitude, 'tis but to hold  
Converse with nature's charms, and see her stores unroll'd.

But midst the crowds, the hum, the shock of men,  
To hear, to see, to feel, and to possess,  
And roam along, the world's tir'd denizen,  
With none who bless us, none whom we can bless;  
Minions of splendour, shrinking from distress!  
None that with kindred consciousness endued,  
If we were not, would seem to smile the less,  
Of all that flatter'd, follow'd, sought, and sued;  
This is to be alone—this—this is solitude! BYRON.

*Reasons for not liking Catholics—Hints for composing a Sermon—A Declaration of Love.*

WHEN disgusted with the world, Mrs. Doricourt formed the resolution of fixing her residence on St. Herbert's Island; her diseased and deeply-wounded mind believed, in that peaceful solitude, remote from other habitation, she should find solace for those rending sorrows, those cruel disappointments, that had almost driven reason from its seat; she fancied that, in contemplating and examining into the grand and beautiful works of the creation, in climbing to the steep summits of rocks, in wandering through waving woods, in listening to the melancholy lapse of streams, in viewing the glories of the rising and setting sun, her soul, released from the trammels of grief, would be elevated above earthly pursuits and passions, and that, resigning herself to the inspiration and guidance of religion, she should again be restored to the enjoyment of tranquillity.

But how fallacious are such hopes! in employment, in active pursuits, the mind can alone hope to detach itself from sorrow; by flying to solitude, Mrs. Doricourt deceived herself; the summer, with its warbling birds, its sunny skies, its emerald groves, and odour-breathing flowers, brought painful recollections of those lovely halcyon days, when she believed herself the sovereign of Henry Woodville's affections, when she had wandered with him through the romantic groves of Richmond Villa, and fancied that his truth and her happiness were unfading. The winds of autumn, scattering the leaves, and blighting the silken flowers, renewed on her brain the agonizing remembrance of the perfidy that had so cruelly withered her hopes; and the dark convolving clouds of winter,

the naked trees, shivering beneath the fury of the howling tempest, presented a faithful picture of her heart, desolated by treachery and ingratitude.

In unfolding and cultivating the talents of Cecilia Delmore, Mrs. Doricourt found some relief from mental torture; her quick perceptions and endearing manners made the task of tuition every day less irksome; by degrees it became delightful, for the sensibility, the gratitude, and the tenderness of the lovely orphan, repelled and conquered the misanthropic feelings, that were hastening to deform a noble and truly-benevolent heart, and taught her there was yet a being who could awaken her affections and solicitude, and reconcile her to the world.

It was not till the arrival of the earl of Torrington recalled Miss Delmore to the castle, that Mrs. Doricourt reflected their separation might be for months—perhaps for ever—that she again became sensible of her lonely situation, of the absolute solitude in which she lived.

The morning came, but Cecilia no longer drew back her curtain, and with a countenance bright with smiles, and glowing in beauty, met her eyes—Cecilia no longer sat at the head of the table, to carve, or persuade her to eat the delicacies she selected—Cecilia's song no longer awoke the echo of the rock—she was no more the companion of her evening ramble, on the margin of the lake—within the house all was mournful silence, for Cecilia's fingers no longer swept the harp, and without all was gloom and solitude.

While Mrs. Doricourt wept the loss of the lovely girl, whose buoyant spirits, and animated conversation, had prevented the wish for other society, and banished the idea of loneliness, a feeling of jealousy mingled with the bitterness of grief; for in this visit to the castle, this introduction to strangers, she dreaded a forgetfulness, if not an estrangement of the heart of Cecilia—she foresaw a division of that tender affection, which, till the present period, had been exclusively her own.

Sunk in these unpleasant reflections and forebodings, Mrs. Doricourt had wasted four days; on the fifth the earl of Torrington's letter was delivered to her. It did not surprise, for it was a compliment she had expected. The request to pay his personal respects was made in polite and flattering terms; and while she hesitated whether she would receive or decline the earl's visit, another letter from Cecilia, informing her of the strange effect the song and mention of Miss Saville had produced on lord Torrington, brought Mrs. Doricourt to a decision. From the earl she might obtain a clue to discover her early friend, whose fate still remained wrapped in such mystery, that she had never been able to ascertain whether she was living or dead. Besides, her darling Cecilia informed her, that if she consented to receive the earl, she was to accompany him to the Hermitage.

These considerations fixed the wavering resolves of Mrs. Doricourt, and she hastened to accord, by the earl's messenger, the permission he requested. Cecilia was informed by a letter to herself, that Mrs. Doricourt expected their visit, which was afterwards confirmed by the earl, who very politely referred the hour of their setting off for St. Herbert's Island to herself.

In the drawing-room their intended excursion to the Hermitage being mentioned by the earl, lady Welford again reminded Miss Delmore of her request respecting the renewal of her acquaintance with Mrs. Doricourt.

Sir Cyril Musgrove, to whom Cecilia's beauty was every hour more attractive, and who cherished the profligate hope of obtaining her, whenever he chose to make the agreeable in earnest, observed, that an introduction to the "Lady of the Lake," the epithet by which he designated Mrs. Doricourt, was the thing of all others he most desired.—  
"But then," said he, "I understand there is no landing on her enchanted island, or approaching her crystal palace, without going through certain examinations and tedious ceremonials; and then the difficulty of obtaining an audience is increased by the discouraging circumstance of her hating men; though, 'pon my honour," conceitedly surveying his person, "I can scarcely credit that report, it is so extraordinary, so immensely singular."

"What is singular?" asked the honourable Tangent Drawley, as if newly awakened from a trance, "what is singular?"

"That you have spoken twice within the last half hour," replied sir Middleton Maxfield.

"You prodigiously increase the consequence of my speeches," returned Drawley, "by noting the periods when they were uttered."

He then resumed his recumbent attitude, and with his eyes half shut, appeared to detach himself from the conversation. Sir Cyril Musgrove observing him fold his arms, and drop his eyelids, with the affectation of languor, laughed aloud—"Poor Drawley!" said he, "I really feel for you; the length of your last speech must have tired you prodigiously, and the arranging of your ideas must have been an immense exertion."

"Pray, Miss Delmore," asked lady Jacintha Fitsosborne, "is it true that Mrs. Doricourt has cut off her hair, and dresses in the exact costume of a nun?"

"No, madam," was the reply.

"But she always dresses in black, and she is a Catholic—is she not?" demanded lady Eglantine Sydney.

Cecilia's answer was confined to a simple affirmative, for she was displeased to be questioned on any point relative to her friend, by persons incapable of appreciating her worth.

"Dear me, a Roman Catholic!" exclaimed Miss Maxfield; "only think of that! Well, I am sure I should not have liked to live with her, as you did, Miss Delmore, on that desolate island."

Cecilia smiled, with the grateful remembrance of the uninterrupted happiness she had enjoyed while living with Mrs. Doricourt, and was on the point of removing Miss Maxfield's prejudice against Catholics, by expatiating on the accomplishments and virtues of her respected friend, when she was prevented by lord Wilton asking Miss Maxfield why she supposed she should not like to reside with Mrs. Doricourt?

"Why, because you know," replied Miss Maxfield, "all Roman Catholics fast Wednesdays and Fridays, and I don't know how many days besides in the year; and then they wear horse-hair next their skins, and beat themselves with cords tied all over in knots."

"I don't wonder, Miss Maxfield," said sir Cyril, with an air of grave acquiescence in her opinion, "that your delicacy shrinks from the severity of such frequent fasts, and the barbarity of such cruel castigations."

"But as long as you were not made to fast," said lady Welford, "and were not beat with knotted cords, what difference could it possibly make to you?"

“Why be—because—indeed I don’t know,” returned Miss Maxfield; “but I am quite sure I should not like to live in the same house with a Roman Catholic, for I have heard they are very savage inhuman people; and I read in some book, when I was at school, I have forgot the name of it, that the Catholics made a great large bonfire, and burnt ever so many bishops, and little infants, and I have always been sadly afraid of Catholics ever since.”

“A very shrewd reason indeed!” observed colonel St. Irwin; “and on the same principle, Miss Maxfield, no doubt you dislike soldiers, and are afraid of them, because they have performed their duty, by destroying the enemies of their country.”

“Dear me, no!” replied Miss Maxfield, “that is quite another thing. I am very fond of the army, I assure you; there is nothing I admire so much as a scarlet coat and gold epaulets, and the plume and the cockade; la! they make a gentleman look so handsome and so grand! besides, we ought to like soldiers, because of the reviews, and the balls, and the public breakfast, that the officers give.”

“And is the regimental coat, the pageantry of a review, the fopperies of a public breakfast and a ball,” asked the colonel, in a tone of mingled asperity and contempt, “all that recommends a soldier to your favour, Miss Maxfield?”

“Why, la! yes, to be sure,” replied the young lady; “and is not that enough?”

“Oh, certainly, quite enough,” said the colonel, “for so young a mind as yours.”

The strong emphasis laid by the colonel on the words—“*young a mind as yours*,” tingled in the ears of Mrs. Freakley.—“Jemima is quite a child of nature,” observed she, “and speaks exactly as she thinks upon every subject, and that, you know, colonel, must be expected from a mind so artless and ingenuous; and you must allow it is quite natural, at her age, to be pleased with every thing that appears gay, and promises pleasure.”

“In explaining Jemima’s feelings, aunt,” said sir Middleton Maxfield, “you have, no doubt, defined the sentiments of the sex in general: they all love scarlet coats, fine sights, and gay amusements.” Then turning to the reverend Mr. Oxley, he asked when they were to have the pleasure of witnessing his *débüt* in Cumberland?

The word *débüt*, approximating, in the divine’s opinion, with a theatrical first appearance, was extremely offensive to his consequence; but smothering his displeasure, with great solemnity he replied—“I have the honour to inform you, sir Middleton Maxfield, that the village church having undergone the necessary repairs, I venture to flatter myself with the gratification of seeing the present company assembled there next Sunday morning, to hear a sermon I have prepared for the occasion, on sound orthodox principles.”

“It is a principle with me,” said lord Wilton, “to follow the example of the ladies; if they take their morning lounge at church, I shall be found in their suit. I beg to premise, Mr. Oxley, that I expect to hear a sermon, not a lecture, for I have heard of divines who constantly make their sermons vehicles to vent their own private dislikes and resentments, to the annoyance rather than the edification of their congregation.”

“Well observed,” rejoined sir Cyril Musgrove; “and I trust, Mr. Oxley, that you will not, as some clergymen do, interlard your sermon with scraps of Latin, merely to shew your learning, for, ’pon my soul, I have entirely forgotten my college exercises, and I fancy there will be but few of your congregation able to translate those brilliant quotations, particularly the ladies, who will, no doubt, form the major part of the *assemblée*.”

"No," replied lady Torrington; "a quotation from Tasso, Petrarch, or Ariosto, would be better understood by us. But, of all things, Mr. Oxley, let me entreat you to keep clear of personality."

"Oh yes, for Heaven's sake!" rejoined lady Jacintha, "remember that injunction—no personality; let us and our follies alone—stick to divinity, Mr. Oxley, but do not presume to commence censor."

"And pray don't let your sermon touch upon novel-writers or novel-readers," said lady Eglantine; "for I am passionately fond of works of that description, and should positively expire of ennui, but for the entertainment I derive from novels."

"And I am persuaded," observed lady Welford, "that a well-written novel, while it amuses the mind, conveys more improvement to the heart than a hodge-podge sermon, garnished with Greek and Latin, from the lips of a pragmatic conceited parson."

"Your ladyship speaks my opinion exactly," said sir Cyril Musgrove; "I do not affect to despise novels—I always read a page or two while my hair is dressing."

The reverend gentleman did not relish this conversation; but the rank of the speakers operated like a charm, and prevented any ebullition of his resentment; and in reply to an empty compliment of Mrs. Freakeley's on his mental endowments and oratorical powers, he expressed the hope that he should produce a sermon that would give general satisfaction.

Since the earl of Torrington's heart had been released from the witcheries of beauty, his reason and understanding had found leisure to examine persons and things, that had passed entirely unnoticed while he was under the dominion of love; among others, the reverend Mr. Oxley, whom he had received as a tutor for his son, from the recommendation of a friend, had come under his observation, and he had found him pedantic, superficial, conceited, and intolerably proud; he now remarked, that with vanity unbecoming his cloth, he wished to impress them with a high opinion of the merits of his intended sermon; and, with a look and tone calculated to damp his arrogance, he addressed him.—"Prepare such a sermon, sir, as Christianity dictates; remember, as a minister of the gospel, it is your duty to warn and admonish the wicked, to inform the ignorant, and support the weak; let it be so worded, that the meanest capacity may understand it, for it is scriptural truths, not the flowers of rhetoric, that should be delivered from the pulpit; let your doctrine prove that you are no respecter of persons. I should be shocked to hear the gospel preached by a servile time-server, who, to preserve the goodwill of men, would subvert the important doctrine of religion."

This speech of the earl's seemed to disconcert most of the company. The countess placed herself, with an air of graceful negligence, on a sofa, and having drawn a circle round her, desired the count del Montarino to fan her, protesting that Oxley's conceit, and the earl's solemnity, had overcome her.—"Churches and sermons," said the countess, "ought only to be mentioned on Sundays; an hour or two, once a-week, is, in my opinion, quite sufficient to wear a grave face and be doleful in."

The count del Montarino complimented her ladyship's charming vivacity; his was a mind sunk in sensuality, devoted to vicious pursuits, and insensible of the blessings and comforts diffused by religion; the present life and its enjoyments were all he considered worthy of thought; the contemplation of a world to come he left to those whom age or infirmity rendered incapable of entering into, what he called, scenes of delight. But while surrounded by all the pleasures most consonant with his gross libertine ideas, he was

aware of the possibility of seeing them, “like the baseless fabric of a vision,” pass away, and perceived the necessity of striking out some bold plan, that might place him beyond the apprehension of poverty; the large fortune of Miss Maxfield was not only extremely desirable, but absolutely necessary to him, who was now entirely subsisting on the caprice of a woman, that woman one of the weakest and vainest of her sex, who, possessing an ample share of all their fickleness, might suddenly entertain a *tendresse* for another, and cast him off, destitute of resources. Could he accomplish a marriage with Miss Maxfield, her fortune would render him independent of unpleasant contingencies; it was true, she was not very far removed from idiotism, but her deficiency of sense was greatly in his favour, as was her egregious vanity and impatience for a lover.

The count had made such accurate observations on the understanding and disposition of Miss Maxfield, as convinced him that her discretion would offer but slight opposition to his scheme of an elopement. Having seen Mrs. Freakley deeply engaged with the countess and lady Jacintha, in an important dispute respecting the dress of a lady at a recent masquerade, he contrived to draw Miss Maxfield to a window, under pretence of shewing her the polar star.

Miss Maxfield said it was very bright, but could not think, for her part, how any body could find that star in particular, among so many others, all shining so bright and beautiful.

The count gently pressed her reluctant hand, and vowed the lustre of her brilliant eyes outsparkled all the stars.

Miss Maxfield simpered, and said, she believed he flattered her.

The count laid his hand on his heart, and protested his sincerity.

Miss Maxfield thought him much handsomer than the honourable Mr. Drawley, who never had spoken a word in praise of her beauty, though she had teased him incessantly.

The count perceived he had made an impression on her vanity, and pursuing his advantage, complimented her blue eyes and flaxen hair, and sighed and vowed he was expiring for love of her, till the silly girl was won by his flattery to promise that she would meet him at sunrise the following morning.

Secure of his conquest, the count cautioned her to be secret; and having compared her to all the goddesses he could think of, he suggested the possibility of their being observed, and the propriety of their separating, to which she very unwillingly subscribed.

The countess of Torrington being made sensible of the count del Montarino’s want of cash, and having listened with the utmost composure to his intention of engaging sir Middleton Maxfield and sir Cyril Musgrove at some game of chance, where his skill in shuffling the cards would ensure him success, supplied him with a more sparing hand than usual, at the same time observing, that the earl’s increasing parsimony made it horribly disagreeable, and indeed a dreadful task, to introduce the subject of money to him—“And, really, my dear count,” added she, “I have at this very time several pressing demands from tradesmen, which, coming to my lord’s ears, would inevitably draw upon me his severest philippics, from the horror of which I should not recover for a month—and I am sure I need not tell you his capability in that way.”

The count’s suspicions were raised; he fancied he saw in her manner, and the small sum she had given him, a visible decrease of that vehement love that she had so often vowed would never know abatement.



The count was neither surprised nor hurt at this change; he was not in love, and he had before experienced the inconstancy of woman. His thoughts, his hopes, now centered in Jemima Maxfield, and making himself master of her fortune—that point secured, he could laugh at the countess, and, by absolute indifference, prove that her affection was of no consequence.

The count del Montarino was not altogether wrong in his suspicions; the vain erring lady Torrington beheld the count in a different light in England to what she had considered him in Italy. She began to grow weary of him; other men were handsomer and much more agreeable; besides, he was a terrible tax upon her purse. He had often talked of selling an estate he possessed near Naples, and repaying her the various sums she had lent him; but, latterly, she had heard no mention of this estate, and began to believe that he had no possessions whatever; his demands on her purse she found it very inconvenient to answer; he was growing ugly, rude, and disagreeable; in short, the honourable Tangent Drawley was much more elegant and fashionable, and his present singular insensibility was a stimulus strongly urging her to try whether her charms would not make him try the *agréable*, for she thought it a great pity so fine a young man should adopt insensibility, and wish to make it fashionable.

Miss Maxfield had indeed been at some pains to animate the statue; but Drawley had not thought proper to hear or regard the child of nature—it required beauty more attractive, manners more refined, and understanding of a higher standard, than Jemima possessed, to allure the honourable Tangent Drawley to a new pursuit—him, whose idol was fashion, whose greatest ambition was to be thought singular.

The natural politeness of lord Rushdale had led him to pay such polite attention to lady Jacintha Fitzosborne, as he conceived due to his mother's guest; but, beyond this, his thoughts had never glanced. There was, in lady Jacintha, an obtrusive desire to be considered a wit, which often prompted her to elicit brilliancies, at the expence of good manners and delicacy. An assuming confident character was not likely to conciliate the esteem of the sentimental Oscar, whose refined ideas of feminine softness and propriety made him shrink in disgust from the undaunted eye, the unblushing cheek, and decided tone of lady Jacintha, who flattered herself with dazzling the young enthusiast with her wit, and throwing over his heart fetters forged by beauty, and polished by fashion.

The few evenings they were together in town, he had listened to her volubility with astonishment, which she mistook for admiration—he had gazed on her with wonder at the confidence of her manner, and her vanity converted his surprise into love.

During their journey into Cumberland he had been attentive to her, because she must, but for him, have been neglected. Lord Melvil had neither hands or eyes but for lady Eglantine Sydney—sir Cyril Musgrove appeared only solicitous for his own ease and accommodation—the earl of Torrington was wrapped in discontent, and noticed no one—the count del Montarino devoted himself to divert the chagrin of the countess, who, during the journey, talked incessantly of the delights she had left behind in Italy, and of the dreadful *ennui* she was certain she should endure in a gloomy old castle, deprived of the pleasure of the enchanting *conversazione* that had made her evenings glide away so pleasantly at Naples.

Every gentleman of the party having a particular object of attention, lady Jacintha would have been left to her own reflections, but for lord Rushdale, who constrained himself to entertain her, and beguile the length of the way.

But while lady Jacintha deceived herself with the belief that she had inspired the elegant Rushdale with a tender passion, she considered what the countess's mother had said respecting an union with lady Arabella Moncrief, as an obstacle thrown in the way of her wishes, that required no common skill and management to get over. She had, more than once, heard the earl of Torrington express sentiments in favour of marriages brought about by mutual affection; and from these sentiments she was convinced, that having once secured the son's affection, she should have nothing to apprehend from the opposition of the father. Lady Torrington, artful, scheming, proud, and ambitious, was much more difficult to be won.

The family of the duke of Aberdeen was more ancient, and ranked higher than hers; and the fortune of lady Arabella was known to be very large; these were obstacles of magnitude, sufficient to puzzle the Machiavelian brain of lady Jacintha, and keep her thoughts in a state of uneasiness. But when next under the hands of Mrs. Garnett, her *femme-de-chambre*, from some hints dropped by that loquacious gentlewoman, her fertile genius felt a project "peering on her brain," the accomplishment of which would place the countess so completely in her power, as to leave her no alternative between an absolute agreement with her wishes, and an irrevocable promise to promote, with all her powers, her marriage with lord Rushdale, or public exposure.

"My dear friend, the countess of Torrington, shall aid my plans, or let her beware my revenge!" said lady Jacintha, mentally, while she considered the compulsory measures she intended to pursue; "she is yet to learn, perhaps, that modern vocabularies explain the word attachment, convenience; and really, when it is remembered that the earl of Torrington's father was a bankrupt banker, and the countess the daughter of a petty apothecary, they may think themselves honoured by an alliance with lady Jacintha Fitzosborne, whose family has never yet known the disgrace of a plebeian marriage. And how do you like Torrington Castle, Miss Garnett?" asked lady Jacintha, while that paragon of slip-slops turned her ladyship's glossy ringlets over her short thick fingers.

"Why is it a fine Gothic specimen of anticity, to be sure, my lady," replied the waiting gentlewoman; "but I can't say that it shutes my taste; give me Brighton or Weymouth in performance to this Cumberland excretion. For my part, my lady, I think all the earl's people as we found here at the castle, like nothing in the world but Gorths and Vandellers: why they stared at us fashernable folks gist as if we were mounterbacks or rareeshews. And then this Miss Milman, the housekeeper, she gives herself sitch hairs—though I have heard," tossing her head disdainfully, "that she is no better than she should be; yet, for all that, my lady, I purtest she is as proud as the old gentleman."

"What old gentleman?" asked lady Jacintha; "do you mean the earl?"

"The earl!" repeated Mrs. Garnett; "dear me, my lady! no, not the earl—I meant the devil; though, if I was to take the liberty to speak my mind, I might say that he—But I would not for the world be so undiscrit, to speak in that there way of my betters; and nobody can say that ever I was ill-mannerdly, or at all given to hannivert, or speak opinions about hanny body."

"But when you have my permissions to speak, Mrs. Garnett," said lady Jacintha, "that is quite another thing, you know; and really your accounts are very clever and correct, and your descriptions of these odd bodies so extremely entertaining, that I am quite amused. And so you don't like Mrs. Milman?"

"Not at all," replied Mrs. Garnett, delighted with the encouragement given to her idle reports, "not a bit; she is as proud and as purcise as if she had never stepped awry; and people do say, that Miss Delmore, as they call her, is her own natural daughter by the earl. Why, would you believe it, my lady, the stuck-up thing does not remit any of us to her parlour, with the deception of Mrs. Peters, lady Welford's woman! and she is an ugly old maid, and a methody into the bargain."

"Well, but you have a parlour to yourselves, I suppose?" said lady Jacintha.

"Oh, certainly, to be sure, my lady; the Hottenpots could not treat us so hill has to turn us like wild beastes altogether into the servants' hall. But then you know, my lady, it would have been wastly pleasant to sit with the earl's people, and hear little droll nanecdotes."

"Very true," said lady Jacintha, with an ironical smile; "for if it was not for intelligence picked up by the servants and their embellished communications, the affairs of families would never find their way into the world. But tell me, my good Garnett, do you never hear any hints dropped, and little observations made, upon this Italian count?"

"Dear me! yes, my lady, a great deal; but then, as you are very detached to the countess, you would be very angry."

But here Mrs. Garnett was mistaken, for it was on her dear friend's indiscretion with the count lady Jacintha's hope of success in her own scheme hung, and she eagerly replied—"Not at all, Mrs. Garnett, for if my friends act imprudently, it can attach no blame to me. Thank Heaven! I am not to answer for their misconduct."

"So I said, my lady," resumed the talkative abigail—"so I said; and, says I, if the countess of Torrington has a little *crim. con.* with this here Nipoliter count, why my lady is not to be concluded in their armour; my lady's virtue is not to be inspected, though Mr. Simkins, sir Cyril Musgrove's gentleman, had the howdaciousness to assinnuate, that 'birds of a feather always flock together.'"

In the earnest desire to murder the reputation of her friend, lady Jacintha passed over the impertinence of a remark levelled at herself, and impatiently asked—"Do the servants then really believe, Garnett, that there is any thing criminal in the intimacy of lady Torrington and the count del Montarino?"

"Dear me," returned Mrs. Garnett, in a half-crying tone, "I hope your ladyship is not angry with me for exporting other people's opinions! I am sure I am vexed to the heart to think I should have been reduced to hutter a sinable."

"You mistake me, Garnett," interrupted lady Jacintha; "I am not angry with you; on the contrary, I beg you will tell me, without reserve, all you have heard of this affair."

"Oh, certainly, my lady," said Garnett, dropping the whining tone, "and to be sure it is nothing but propriety, as I told lady Eglantine Sydney's woman, that our virtuous ladies should be told all about it, for fear that karacters should suffer; and I devised Mrs. Painter to deform lady Eglantine, by reason I thought it was fit she should know all about it."

"Of course then," replied lady Jacintha, "it is proper I should be informed also; and I beg, Mrs. Garnett, that you will be quick, and tell me all you have heard, for I am absolutely dying with curiosity."

"Well, my lady," resumed Garnett, "the count's gentleman swears that his master is not worth a foot of land, and that he has not a penny of his own in the world."

"Indeed!" said lady Jacintha, in an inward voice. "If this account be correct——"

Mrs. Garnett only caught the last word, to which she eagerly replied—"Oh, no, my lady; the count dares not correct him, for he owes mounseer a power of money, and mounseer is deep in all his secrets."

"But what of the countess?" asked lady Jacintha.

"Why, my lady," replied the communicative Mrs. Garnett—"Mounseer does not sophisticate at all about her, for he plainly sinuates that the count is quite tired of lady Torrington, and cares no more for her now than he does for his grannum, only for the sake of her money, which he draws upon as freely as if he was her husband."

"Well, dear Garnett, and what more does his valet say?" demanded lady Jacintha, her eyes sparkling with malicious pleasure.

"Why, mounseer says, my lady, when they were abroad at that there places—Aples, I think he called it, the earl and countess had extinct apartments."

This required a pause to make it clear to the comprehension of lady Jacintha, who, though accustomed to the phraseology of Mrs. Garnett, was at a loss for a moment to understand her "extinct apartments." At length her apprehension was clear, and, with a smile of encouragement, she said—"Separate apartments!"

"Yes, my lady, separate apartments," continued Mrs. Garnett; "and mounseer says, it is all the same here; and what is that for? mounseer winks his eye, and laughs, and puts his finger aside his nose, and purtests, if the earl wishes a disvorse, he can furbish him with surficient proofs of her ladyship's fidelity."

"So, so; this may be turned to good account," said lady Jacintha.

"Yes, my lady," resumed the waiting-gentlewoman. "Mr. Tripton, lord Wilton's gentleman, says the earl would be monstrous glad to get a disvorce, on account of his being over head and ears in love with Miss Delmore."

"What, do they suspect that the earl is in love with Miss Delmore?" asked lady Jacintha.

"Oh dear me, yes, my lady! and all the gentlemen, is seems, are gist wild about her," said Mrs. Garnett, with a disdainful toss of her head; "though, for my part, I can see nothing so exturnary in her; but then Mr. Simkin says, and he ought to know, for he was a driveller once, and used to write for the lawyers, that it would be incesterous for the earl to think of marrying Miss Delmore, because it is inspected that she is his own flesh and blood."

"And is it really believed," asked lady Jacintha, "that Miss Delmore is the earl's daughter?"

"Not ginerally, my lady," replied Garnett. "There is a decision in our parlour on that subject; one party desists that she is no relation to the earl, and that he gives discouragement to lord Rushdale, which would not be the case if there was hany definity between them."

"Lord Rushdale!" exclaimed lady Jacintha; "what are you talking about, Garnett?"

"Why, my lady, it is exported in our parlour that lord Rushdale pays Miss Delmore the most prodigious retention and disrespect, and that he will certainly marry her."

Lady Jacintha pushed the officious waiting-maid from her, and in a voice almost shrieking, repeated—"Marry her! Lord Rushdale marry that minx! Garnett, you are raving mad! What could have put so poposterous an idea into your head?"

"Indeed, my lady," returned Mrs. Garnett, "it is all the talk at our table, that lord Rushdale is infiriently in love with Miss Delmore."

"Can this be possible?" said lady Jacintha. "But no; I will never believe he can be such a fool."

"Ay, so I said, my lady," resumed Mrs. Garnett; "but my mouth was stopped by sir Cyril Musgrove's gentleman, who read a paper that one of the housemaids had found, crumpled up in lord Rushdale's room, all over rhymes, about stars, and flowers, and divine Cecilia."

"Who could have believed," said lady Jacintha, "that lord Rushdale would have been guilty of such egregious folly! write verses," continued she, with evident vexation, "to expose his debasing infatuation!"

"So I said, my lady," responded Mrs. Garnett; "I said he was a great fool to write verses about a low-lived person, as had no inventions to gintility, and one who was unsufferable proud already, without having her head filled with sitch nodamontade stuff. But I assure you, when I was gist speaking my mind, as we was fetching a walk yesterday, Mr. Moreton, my lord Rushdale's gentleman, tooked me up as sharp as a needle, and said forsooth, that the earl of Torrington would be monstrous defended, if hany person spoke a word respectful of Miss Delmore, and that he wished, from the bottom of his heart, when lord Rushdale married, he might have a wife as beautiful, and as virtuous, and as sensible, and as—I can't remember half what besides, as Miss Delmore, who was an accomplice good enough for an empress."

Lady Jacintha had now heard more than she wished, and in no very amiable temper she dismissed her attendant, with strict injunctions not to tell any one that she had dropped a hint to her respecting the suspected amour of the countess of Torrington and the count del Montarino. When the door of her dressing-room closed on the communicative Mrs. Garnett, lady Jacintha sat some time approving and rejecting schemes for detecting her dear friend's amour, that having her reputation completely at her mercy, she might compel her, in spite of former arrangements of interest and ambition, to promote her designs on lord Rushdale, to whose elegant person she was far from indifferent, and whose immense wealth was of the utmost consequence to her, whom the narrow fortunes of her illustrious house constrained to look out for a husband whose possessions would support her rank, and indulge her desire of extravagant expenditure. If lord Rushdale really felt a passion for Cecilia, it would be an additional difficulty in her way; and to prevent the possibility of any transient liking expanding into love, now became a grand object in her scheme. The countess of Torrington had rejected the idea of her son attaching himself to Cecilia Delmore as ridiculous; but though her ladyship treated the notion with contempt, the earl might perhaps be inclined to treat it more seriously; and she resolved to make use of every art to alarm his pride, and, if possible, get this sorceress, who was inveigling the hearts of all the men, banished to St. Herbert's Island, where, as she understood Mrs. Doricourt received no company, it was very unlikely that lord Rushdale and she would meet again while he remained in Cumberland; and when he was no longer within the circle of her enchantments, she would trust to the various amusements of London, the engagements of fashionable life, and her own attractions, to detach his mind from a silly passion, inspired by a low-born creature.

Among all the gentlemen at Torrington Castle, Miss Delmore saw none so handsome, so elegant, and graceful, as lord Rushdale. Sir Cyril Musgrove's person was shewy, and his teeth remarkably even and white, but he was a finished coxcomb, and so presuming, that he fancied he inspired a tender passion in the bosom of every female he met. Lord Wilton was a little man, with high cheek-bones, sunk eyes, and a very sallow complexion: he was a freethinker, and, like sir Middleton Maxfield, fond of gambling and the turf. The honourable Tangent Drawley was remarkably handsome, and so remarkable for courting notoriety, that it was doubtful in the fashionable world, whether he was most a fool or a madman. Colonel St. Irwin was a brave officer, who had *done the state some service*; his form was dignified, and his countenance expressive of good sense; his address was polite, and his manners gentlemanly, but he was many years the senior of lord Rushdale, and wanted those attractions, those nameless graces, that hover in smiles round the lips, and shed irresistible beauty on the actions of youth.

Cecilia thought, had her rank in life been equal to lord Rushdale's, she could have preferred him to all mankind; and at this thought a sigh would rise, and a wish, that she suppressed as soon as it was formed. She saw the immense distance between them, and wisely determined to think of him and his perfections as little as possible, and to carefully guard her heart from encouraging romantic desires, that there could be no hope of realizing.

But while Cecilia fortified her mind against visionary expectations of future elevation, Mrs. Milman, far less prudent, had carefully picked up the hints thrown out by the servants; she flattered herself with the probability of her niece's great beauty, and still greater accomplishments, raising her to rank; she saw, with a satisfaction that increased her own consequence in her own opinion, the influence Cecilia had, in the few days of their acquaintance, gained over the earl; and though she had reason to believe he was excessively proud, yet she also knew from experience that he was very generous, and that he loved his son beyond any thing on earth—"And if this darling son, this only child's happiness," said Mrs. Milman, debating the affair with herself, "depends on his marrying Cecilia Delmore, why to a certainty the earl will never let him pine away to a skeleton, and die for love. No, no; he could never be so cruel; he would give his consent, and I shall, no doubt, see my niece lady Rushdale; and then I know her first care would be to provide handsomely for me; I should have a neat house, keep a footman, and ride in my own gig at last."

But while these chimerical plans had the effect of exhilarating the spirits of Mrs. Milman, and keeping her in perfect good-humour, Mr. Wilson saw the castles he had built melting into air. In the first place, Mr. Oxley was so insinuating, and so artful, and so adulative to the earl and his son, that he saw, with inexpressible envy and mortification, all the livings in the earl's gift disposed of to him; and after his having, at a very great expence, educated his nephew, Solomon Scroggins, to fill these very livings, to be obliged to resign his long-cherished hopes, and seek about for another patron for him, was a circumstance disappointing and vexatious in the extreme: and then Cecilia, whom he had even from her cradle fixed upon for his nephew's wife, she was so surrounded by fops of rank, that it was next to impossible that he should ever see his wishes accomplished, though he was still persuaded they were exactly the pair that ought to come together; and if he could bring himself to mention his designs to the earl, he might be mortified with finding that he had other views for her, and he should only be

more hurt to have his proposals scornfully rejected.—“Ay, ay,” said Wilson, “*delays are dangerous*,” this is the way; this comes of procrastination, of ‘*putting off till to-morrow what may be done to-day*.’ I remember, when I was a young man, I might have married a very pretty agreeable girl, with a tolerable fortune; but while I stood shilly-shally, and delayed speaking my mind, egad! another suitor, with more assurance than Pill-Garlic, put the question, was accepted, went to church off hand, and left me a solitary bachelor to lament my own diffidence; and this Mr. Oxley, this prig of a parson, now I warrant his bashfulness will be no sort of impediment in the way of his preferment—I warrant he will lose nothing for want of asking. I have a good mind to go and open my mind to the earl at once.” But, unfortunately, the earl was gone to Keswick, and Mr. Wilson was again obliged to postpone declaring the plan he had formed for the happiness of Cecilia and his nephew Solomon, neither of whom were acquainted with his designs, or knew each other but by name.

Cecilia’s impatience to see Mrs. Doricourt had roused her at daybreak; and in order to be ready to attend the earl immediately after breakfast, she deserted her pillow before her usual hour; but finding it would still be long before the earl left his chamber, she finished her toilet, and descended to the library, to beguile the time with a book. Having read a few pages, she opened her drawing-box, and prepared to finish a picture, on which she had already bestowed uncommon pains.

The library windows faced a plantation of evergreens, and other ornamental trees, through which serpentine walks were cut to a grotto, ornamented in the interior with a beautiful representation, sculptured in white marble, of the goddess Amphitrite, reclining on the backs of two dolphins, who, as if proud of bearing their beauteous mistress, sportively spouted two streams of pellucid water into a polished bason, elegantly bordered with Egyptian lotus and other aquatic plants.

Seated near the window, Cecilia had been some time busily employed in giving the last touches to a miniature of lord Rushdale, which, unconscious of the partiality her young heart entertained for him, she had painted from memory, as she believed merely to give Mrs. Doricourt an idea of his interesting countenance, and the beautiful intelligence of his deep blue eyes, shaded by long dark fringes.—“No,” said Cecilia, holding up the ivory in a proper light for judging the accuracy of the likeness, “no; those charming eyes of his are not to be expressed by any art of the pencil. How provoking! I may imitate their form and their colour, but I cannot give them their brilliant light, their melting softness.” Dissatisfied with her work, she gave it a few more touches; then, throwing aside the pencil, exclaimed—“It is a fruitless attempt; I might as well try to paint the splendid blue of heaven;” and as her eyes glanced from the sky to the opposite plantation, to her utter astonishment she beheld Miss Maxfield emerge from the shade of the trees, her white morning dress soiled, and wet nearly half way up the skirt, and her hair hanging in strings from beneath her bonnet.

Perceiving Cecilia at the open window, which she was obliged to pass, she walked in, regardless of the disordered state of her dress; and throwing herself on a seat, exclaimed—“La! Miss Delmore, who could have thought of meeting you here! You can’t think how tired I am! Well, dear me, I never knew that you was such an early riser before! Gracious! now do but look how wet my boots are! aunt would talk enough about my catching cold, if she saw the condition I am in. I suppose, Miss Delmore, you got up so soon this morning to meet your lover. La me! you need not blush so if you did,”

smiling and nodding her head. "I am no tell-tale—I never blab; I can keep a secret, I promise you—I have been trusted with many secrets; you need not be afraid of me."

"As I have no secret to keep, Miss Maxfield," replied Cecilia, gravely, "I have no occasion to be afraid of your divulging it. But may I take the liberty of asking where you have been at this early hour of the morning, and how you got in that wet and dirty condition?"

"I have been to the grotto," replied Miss Maxfield; "and as to my wet and dirty condition, la! bless you, Miss Delmore! why that is only dew, that I have swept from the grass."

Cecilia wished to ask if she had been to the grotto alone, but delicacy forbade the question.

"You have no notion," resumed Miss Maxfield, "how pleasant it is to take a walk so early in the morning; the little birds warbling so beautiful, and the roses and honeysuckles smelling so sweet! I could have staid out a great while longer, only I was so wet and so tired; it was so agreeable, you have no notion. Did you ever see the sun rise, Miss Delmore?"

"Frequently," replied Cecilia.

"La! have you? well, only think of that! You must have got up very early then," said Miss Maxfield. "I always hated to get up early, because I was so sleepy; but I shall try to get over that, for I should like to see the sun rise again; it looked like a wheel all fire, turning round and round; and then an early walk is so delightful you can't think!"

But Cecilia did think, and felt ashamed and sorry for the silly girl before her, for at that moment she caught a glimpse of the count del Montarino, stealing cautiously towards a gate that opened on a green lane that led to the stables. Cecilia blushed for the imprudence of Miss Maxfield, who had so incautiously placed her reputation in the power of a man who was but the acquaintance of yesterday. But while the scrupulous delicacy and timidity of Cecilia suggested all the train of disagreeable consequences that might, and would, in all probability, result to Miss Maxfield from her morning ramble, she felt it her duty to warn her of the danger she had so unthinkingly incurred.

But while she hesitated in what manner to introduce the unpleasant subject, and make the imprudence of her conduct clear to her very limited understanding, the child of nature rudely caught up the miniature from the table, from whence Cecilia, in her astonishment at seeing Miss Maxfield, and her subsequent discovery of the companion of her morning ramble, had forgotten to remove it.—"Well now, I am so glad," said Miss Maxfield, laughing, and grasping the picture—"I am so glad that I have found out your secret, Miss Delmore, for all you would not trust me."

"I have no secret, Miss Maxfield," replied Cecilia, "and I request you will restore the miniature."

"La! you need not look so serious about it," returned Miss Maxfield; "you shall have it presently, only let me look at it. I would not give a pinch of aunt Freakley's snuff for lord Rushdale's picture, for I think him a very proud, disagreeable young man, I declare, though it is as like him as can be; and I see, Miss Delmore, though you don't go a-walking of mornings, you get up to paint lord Rushdale's likeness, all out of your own head; and I am sure you must think a good deal about him, or you could never do it so well.—La! here is the little mole on his nose; never go to deny it, Miss Delmore. But if you did not love lord Rushdale, you could never paint such a good likeness of him."



This was an accusation Cecilia was unprepared to meet, and her deepening blushes might have looked suspicious in the eyes of less prejudiced judges than Miss Maxfield, had it not been acknowledged that there is a blush of innocence as well as of guilt. Cecilia did not believe she loved lord Rushdale; and in denying the accusation, she forgot the advice she designed giving her tormentor, who would not be talked out of the persuasion, that in painting his likeness, Cecilia had given a strong and incontrovertible proof of a tender partiality for lord Rushdale.”

“And if you are in love, how can you help it, you know?” said Jemima, attempting to look wise; “but you may be sure I wont tell a living soul about it. Bless you, I have been let into many love secrets before now! I used to read all the sweet pretty letters Miss Corbett had from ensign Digby of the Guards; and though he had nothing at all but his commission, he used to write that he despised her money, for all she had eighty thousand pounds for her fortune, and that all he wished or wanted was her beautiful self; and I am sure,” continued Miss Maxfield, “that was real true love, to despise such a fortune, and to think Fanny Corbett beautiful, when she squinted so bad you can’t think; but I never told a word about it till after she ran away from madame Chantillion’s, and was married.”

Cecilia vainly endeavoured to remove her error respecting lord Rushdale having inspired any thing like love in her bosom; but repeating—“You need not take the trouble to deny—I can keep a secret—you need not be afraid of me—I wont blab,” Miss Maxfield hurried from the library.

Cecilia wept for vexation, and her first impulse was to destroy the unlucky miniature, that had exposed her to suspicion and impertinence; but the likeness was excellent; the rich coral lips seemed to plead, and the deep blue eyes to implore for preservation. Her second thoughts determined her to shew it to the earl; and by candidly explaining for what purpose she had painted the resemblance, remove any impression that might otherwise be made by the communications of the silly Jemima, on whose secrecy, though so highly boasted, she placed no reliance. Having determined what line of conduct to pursue, she committed the miniature to her pocketbook. While replacing the paints and pencils in her drawing-box, the reverend Mr. Oxley entered the library. The compliments of the morning being reciprocally given, Cecilia would have withdrawn. Mr. Oxley sincerely hoped he had not the misfortune to disturb her; he protested, on the word of a man of honour, his intrusion was altogether unintentional, and that he should be quite hurt if his presence had the unpleasant effect of sending her from the library.

Cecilia replied she was on the point of quitting the room when he entered, and then, with a graceful bend, she moved towards the door.

Mr. Oxley had wished for an opportunity of speaking to Miss Delmore alone; the present was too favourable to be neglected. After many hems and bows, he begged she would indulge him with a few moments’ conversation.

Cecilia wondering what he could possibly have to say, took the seat he offered her.

Mr. Oxley seemed labouring with the importance of his subject, yet hesitated to begin. He wiped the perspiration from his forehead, raised up his collar, affectedly displayed the ring on his little finger, and with a loud hem, having cleared his throat, he at last, with much pomposity, said—“Miss Delmore, being possessed of much more discernment than falls to the share of females in general, you must, in spite of your great modesty, have perceived the very great admiration with which, from the period wherein I

had the pleasure of being introduced to your acquaintance, I have beheld you." The hems and pauses that accompanied this elaborate speech made it difficult for Cecilia to refrain from laughing in his face, though utterly unsuspecting of what was to follow—"and though my various learned pursuits, and serious avocations," resumed Mr. Oxley, "might reasonably have been supposed to guard, madam—to place a shield as it were before my heart, yet I think, Miss Delmore, you must have been aware—you must have observed the great impression your personal and mental graces, your amiable qualities, have made."

Cecilia felt confused; she had neither wished to inspire, or expected to hear, a declaration of love from the reverend gentleman. She looked towards the door, and would gladly have made her retreat; but perceiving he sat full of importance, waiting her reply, she merely said—"No, really, sir, such an idea never once presented itself to my imagination."

"How unlike the impertinent vanity of other young females is this amiable unconsciousness of possessing beauty and endowments!" returned Mr. Oxley, again applying his cambric handkerchief to wipe away the drops that were rolling down his ample cheeks; "but, madam, having heard me deliver a true statement of my feelings and sentiments, I trust to obtain a place in your esteem, and that you will not think me precipitate in urging you for an immediate reply, or that I arrogate too much in flattering myself with having won your regard."

"I have always been taught, sir," replied Cecilia, "to reverence gentlemen of your sacred calling—every clergyman, but more particularly, the earl of Torrington's chaplain, is entitled to my respect."

She now attempted to quit her seat, but swelling with consequence and self-sufficiency, he took her hand, and opposed her intention of leaving the room.—"I have not yet, Miss Delmore," resumed he, "divulged—hem! hem!—spoken, madam, to the earl of Torrington on the subject of my love; but I can entertain no doubt but he will remunerate my acknowledged merits with his usual liberal acquiescence, that is, madam—hem! hem! hem!—when his lordship is given to understand that there is a reciprocal regard between us, he will, with a becoming generosity, being sensible of my capability and zeal in the service of the church, without further procrastination, induct me into the livings now become vacant by the decease of the late worthy and venerable incumbent, and bestow on you, madam, such a portion as will place his munificence and generosity to his most amiable adopted daughter beyond question."

"Really, sir," said Cecilia, colouring with offended delicacy, "you astonish me! This is a subject to which I have never given a thought, and most certainly did not expect to hear even hinted at by you; and I must seriously entreat——"

"Another proof of your innate modesty, madam," interrupted the persevering divine. "You shrink, with the timidity of the sensitive plant, from receiving or confessing affection; but the unworthiness of the object, Miss Delmore—the unworthiness, I say, madam, of the object alone, should create diffidence and hesitation; but I trust," surveying his person with an eye of approbation, at the same time raising his cravat, and displaying his ring—"I trust, madam, your choice will, in the opinion of the world, justify your partiality."

"My choice!" repeated Cecilia, "my partiality! really, sir, I am at a loss to understand what part of my conduct towards you could have induced you to believe it

was possible I could mean to encourage your addresses; and I beg you will not so far mistake my meaning, as to construe the respect paid to your cloth into partiality for your person."

"Mistake!" echoed Oxley, with more than usual pomposity; "I fancy, madam, it will be allowed that my discernment is not liable to mistakes; and I hope and trust, madam, that, sanctioned by the earl of Torrington, and honoured by his approval, you will allow me to offer myself to your acceptance, and permit my endeavour to win your regard."

"As yet, sir," replied Cecilia, "I have never even thought of bestowing my regard; and you will pardon me the observation, but I must say, I think the disparity of our ages a sufficient objection to my selecting you, did no other exist."

This was an observation, of all others disagreeable to Mr. Oxley. He was intolerably vain of his clumsy person, and wished to sink at least a dozen years of his age. He frowned; again applied his cambric handkerchief to the drops that were oozing from his capacious forehead.—"As to age, madam," said he, "that is a matter, madam—hem! hem!—that can seldom be decided upon with any thing like accuracy. Some persons, madam, from a loftiness of height, a dignity of figure, an inclination to fullness—to what the French denominate *embonpoint*, appear much older than they really are. Possibly, madam, I may be a few years your senior. Allowing it is so, from the prudence of your deportment, Miss Delmore, it might be concluded, that in a matrimonial engagement, you would prefer a protector a few years older than yourself; and I entertain no doubt but the earl of Torrington, and the lady by whom you were educated, will not only greatly approve, but actually persuade you to marry your senior, with the very natural expectation, that such a husband will be competent to direct and advise your inexperience."

Mr. Oxley having talked himself out of breath, gave Cecilia an opportunity to say—"On such important subjects as love and matrimony, I beg leave to repeat, sir, I have never yet allowed myself to think, and with the greatest sincerity I also assure you, that it is not my intention, for some years to come, to seek any other protection than that so generously afforded me by Mrs. Doricourt and the earl of Torrington."

Mr. Oxley was so disconcerted, so disappointed, his vanity was so wounded, that he did not, for above a moment, discover that Miss Delmore had withdrawn, and that he was alone. His face grew red as a firebrand; it was the first time a female had presumed to hint at his age, and Cecilia was the only female in whose eyes he had a desire to appear irresistible, though infinitely mortified at her impertinent allusion to age. He remembered that she had not expressed any dislike to his person, or hinted at a predilection for another—he considered and reconsidered, and having turned their late conversation over in his memory, he found, to his extreme satisfaction, that the case was by no means hopeless; for young ladies, either from bashfulness or perverseness—the latter he believed—very rarely spoke their sentiments in a love affair. Under this impression, he believed it not only possible, but very probable, that Miss Delmore would accept him; if the earl favoured his suit, there was no doubt of her acquiescence. His attention to the improvement of lord Rushdale—his unwearied assiduity—his solicitude in all that concerned the cultivation of the talents of his pupil, deserved greater remuneration than his yearly salary; therefore, of the livings in the earl's gift, Mr. Oxley held himself secure, and fancied that nothing more would be necessary to complete his happiness, than

the left hand of the beautiful Cecilia, adorned with the wedding-ring, and her right holding out to him the marriage portion given by the earl. Mr. Oxley took another survey of his colossal person, lifted his collar, wiped the perspiration from his face, and protested that Miss Delmore's unpolite remark on his age had put him into as great a heat as ever he endured from preaching a sermon, divided into six heads, to a yawning congregation.

Cecilia, according to appointment, met the earl of Torrington at the breakfast-table. Her recent vexations had heightened the bloom of her cheek, and added to the lustre of her eyes. The earl had brought himself to behold and converse with her, without betraying the emotions that her likeness to a being loved too late, lamented when gone for ever, excited in his bosom; and he remarked, that taking her in his hand, Mrs. Doricourt would be sure to receive him graciously, since her bloom had suffered no diminution from being at the castle.

Cecilia was conscious that no inconsiderable part of her bloom was owing to irritation; and to prevent any further uneasiness arising from misrepresentation, as soon as the breakfast-things were removed, she produced the miniature of lord Rushdale, and rendered Miss Maxfield's promised secrecy of no avail.

The earl extolled the beauty of the painting, and admired the likeness, which, he said, was more correct than any that had been taken by celebrated artists—"So high a compliment," said the earl, "as a likeness painted by a young and beautiful lady, might well, by its refined flattery, make a young man vain; but Oscar, thank Heaven! has a mind of a superior cast, and incapable of idle vanity, will appreciate the honour you have done him as he ought."

Cecilia explained her intention respecting the picture, and added—"She would on no account have lord Rushdale made acquainted with the circumstance."

The earl fixed on her a look of penetrating regard, as if to read what were the motives that made her shrink from the acknowledgments of his son—"And why not?" asked the earl; "Oscar would consider it as a testimony of sisterly regard, proving to him that Cecilia thinks of, and estimates her brother."

A blush and a sigh were Cecilia's answer; the earl turned his head to give some orders to a servant, and they passed unnoticed and unquestioned.

Cecilia, artless and inexperienced, did not herself understand the meaning of her blush and sigh; she felt gratified and honoured by the earl calling lord Rushdale her brother, though the fluttering emotions of her heart might have told her he was dearer to her affection than any brother; but Cecilia was yet to learn that the preference she felt for lord Rushdale was love.

Satisfied with having secured herself from any unpleasant imputation that the silly loquacity of Miss Maxfield might have fixed upon her respecting the miniature, she smiled with the cheerfulness of innocence, and, in her present satisfaction, forgot the consequential overtures of the pompous Mr. Oxley.

The carriage being announced, she gave her hand to the earl; but, before the carriage-door was closed upon them, lord Rushdale stood beside it.

After affectionately saluting the earl, he addressed Cecilia, with a hope that she did not intend to remain all night at the Hermitage—"We have planned an entertainment," said he, "Miss Delmore, and cannot do without your assistance."

Cecilia feared she should not be able to meet his wishes.—“Mrs. Doricourt will doubtless expect me to remain to-night; and did I not so tenderly love her, she has claims upon my gratitude, that would oblige me to sacrifice my own pleasure to hers.”

“Mrs. Doricourt is happy to possess such influence in a heart like yours,” said lord Rushdale.

“Yes,” returned the earl, “and I am, I perceive, envied the privilege of escorting Miss Delmore to the Hermitage; for I see the eyes of sir Cyril Musgrove and lord Wilton fixed on me at this moment, with a jealous desire to occupy my place.”

Lord Rushdale bade them good morning.

Cecilia beheld him gazing after the carriage, and she wished that Mrs. Doricourt was not so averse to receiving visitors, because she was certain that she would be delighted with the sensible, elegant lord Rushdale.

The morning air, impregnated with a thousand sweets, seemed by its refreshing influence to impart new life and spirits to the earl. Cecilia had never before found him so cheerful and communicative; he talked of Italy, and its productions, natural and artificial, and, by his animated conversation, so amused her, that she did not believe they were more than half way, when the carriage stopped on the margin of the lake, and beheld Mrs. Doricourt’s beautiful yacht waiting to convey them to St. Herbert’s Island.

As the light vessel flew over the smooth surface of the lake, the earl thought he had never seen Cecilia look so beautiful—the soft breeze gently fanned her chestnut ringlets, and her eyes sparkled with more than their usual brilliancy.

“I am now,” said the earl, “like some adventurous knight in a fairy tale, wafted over a stream by a blooming enchantress to the island of calm delights.”

“Where the queen of the island awaits your arrival,” replied Cecilia, smiling, “arrayed by the Graces, and wearing on her bosom a powerful talisman, bearing the radiant impression of VIRTUE and TRUTH.”

### CHAPTER III.

“Have you not seen a sweet, an early flower  
Expand its buds, and raise its dewy head?  
Have you not seen a cold, a chilling shower  
Wither each leaf, and all its blossoms shed?  
So the young heart, when fann’d by hope’s soft breeze,  
Expands its folds to catch affection’s breath;  
But a cold night will soon each blossom freeze,  
Blight ev’ry leaf, and sink its bloom in death!”

.....

———She passes praise:  
A withered hermit, fourscore winters worn,  
Would shake off fifty, looking in her eye.  
SHAKESPEARE.

“——Bred in the midst of wily plotters,  
I was early taught to turn each circumstance  
To my advantage.”

*A Suspicion confirmed—Disappointed Hopes—A Discovery, and fashionable  
Compromise.*

AS soon as the yacht had doubled the rock, where it had been stationed to wait the arrival of lord Torrington and Miss Delmore, St. Herbert’s Island burst upon the sight, like a woody amphitheatre, towering above its sister isles; and as they drew near, the earl several times expressed his admiration of its picturesque effect, seen from the lake, where a beautiful view of temples, lawns, bridges, and groves, their various foliage bright with all the glowing colours of summer, seemed, like the fabled groves of Shadaski, to invite to pleasure, refreshment, and repose.

Cecilia beheld her beloved Mrs. Doricourt on the Chinese bridge, where, a few days before, she had parted from her; and such was her impatience to spring to the embrace of her friend, that she would have taken a dangerous leap from the side of the yacht, but for the timely observance of the earl, who with difficulty restrained her, till the vessel made the marble stairs where they were to land.

Mrs. Doricourt, forgetful of ceremonious etiquette, indulged the warm feelings of her heart, by clasping Cecilia in her arms, who returned her caresses with the same sincerity they were bestowed. When the emotions of joy, which they were not fashionable enough to restrain, had subsided, Mrs. Doricourt made a graceful apology to the earl, and courteously bade him welcome.

The earl had scarcely remembered that he remained unnoticed, so much was he astonished at all he beheld. Wherever he turned his eyes, he saw a beautiful transformation of barren ground into a perfect Elysium. Though so long accustomed to the classic scenery of Italy, the earl’s judgment confessed that nothing could exceed the

taste that had planned, adorned, and cultivated the barren soil of St. Herbert's Island, where every turn presented some unexpected object of elegance to admire; and as he approached the house, raised on a gentle eminence, and beheld its light colonnades, entwined with flowers, then glowing in their richest, most luxuriant bloom, he almost believed he walked on enchanted ground, and was approaching the delightful palace of a fairy.

The decorations of the interior bore a corresponding elegance with the beauty of the grounds; and the earl, charmed out of his usual reserve, in very animated terms expressed his pleasure and surprise, at beholding the spot he had left so wild and sterile, cultivated beyond his idea of its capability, and exhibiting the utmost refinement of taste, yet preserving all the grace of natural beauty.

Nor did the earl less admire the elegant person and dignified manner of Mrs. Doricourt; her countenance to him was interesting beyond the charm of beauty; her eyes, though their general expression was sadness, were at some moments lit up with a splendour that, like a luminous exhalation brightening the darkness of night, gave a glowing lustre to every pensive feature.

While gazing on her face, his imagination saw in its varied expression the lofty workings of superior genius, and he could fancy she possessed more than mortal talents and endowments; while reason, coolly examining the intelligent expanse, would have believed it possible that her life had been marked by uncommon suffering, severe as singular.

After having partaken some refreshment, Cecilia obtained permission to visit her friends and favourites.

Old Baldwin and his wife rejoiced to see her, as if she had been absent from them for months; and many a hope escaped them, that their dear young lady would remain at home, and suffer the earl of Torrington to return to the castle alone.

Cecilia flew to visit the dogs and her birds; all were well, and seemed to recognise her with grateful joy. Her flowers and plants had suffered no neglect in her absence; they were blooming in healthful beauty. From the conservatory and parterre she hastened to the urn of Triton; his grave was covered with a thick short turf, smooth as velvet, and thickly sprinkled with violets. Cecilia read the tablet that commemorated his worth, and heaved a sigh of tender regret, to the memory of her old friend and playmate.

In the meantime an interesting conversation had taken place between the earl and Mrs. Doricourt; she had questioned him concerning the mysterious elopement of Miss Saville; and his replies had confirmed the suspicion she entertained of his being the seducer of her unhappy friend, of whose death she was now made certain. But the agony the earl suffered while speaking of his lovely victim, who had fearfully expiated her errors before she was quite eighteen, gave her reason to believe he was sincerely penitent, and that his conscience, impressed with a sense of his enormous guilt, did unceasing penance—was she then, herself the slave of error, whose heart, in its secret recesses, cherished a weak and guilty passion for an unworthy object, was she to condemn, with unrelenting severity, the faults of others? Oh no! while she wept the fate of her early friend, and deeply regretted the fatal consequences of the earl's excess, she was constrained to pity the remorse and anguish he endured, and to pray that Heaven would pardon his offences, and receive to its mercy the erring being who, in her love for the

creature, had neglected to supplicate her Creator, whose power could alone have preserved her from the snares into which she had so unhappily fallen.

“For that wealth which has neither brought me peace or joy,” said the earl, “I have sacrificed truth, innocence, and loveliness—I have cut asunder the bonds of friendship, and made myself, of all men, the most wretched!”

“Retrospections are vain,” replied Mrs. Doricourt, in a soothing voice; “every soul that lives bears in his bosom the remembrance of some act, committed in the hour of giddy folly, which his more sober judgment laments the impossibility of recalling. To repent of error is all that man is capable of doing, and we are promised by Him whose word is truth, that the tear of sorrow, the prayer of contrition, shall not be rejected.”

“Angel of consolation!” said the earl, “your words are balm to my afflicted soul. I know, and I repent, the injuries I have committed; yes, could Edmund Saville, the man I have most wronged—could he behold my sufferings, even he would pity and forgive me.”

Mrs. Doricourt beheld the pale trembling state of the earl, and feared to pursue the melancholy subject further; her own oppressed feelings told her that air would be of service to them both.

Opening a glass door, she invited him to walk; as they entered on a winding path, ornamented with flowering shrubs, Mrs. Doricourt explained to the earl, that it had been cut through rocks—“And will,” said she, “be a lasting proof of the possibility of rendering the most barren soil capable of embellishment.”

The earl’s mind had become composed; he felt the influence of the air, and the charm of refined conversation, while every instant he became more astonished at the comprehensive mind of Mrs. Doricourt, which seemed to embrace universal knowledge; for while they walked, she spoke of the nature of soils, and the properties of plants, and convinced him that she was perfectly acquainted with agriculture and botany.

They were now in sight of a cascade—its sparkling water falling from an immense high rock, and bounding over its numerous unequal ledges, formed a beautiful object in that solitude, where the turf presented a more vivid green, and the flowers shed a richer perfume, owing to the little stream that wandered among their roots.

Rank and wealth had not vitiated the earl’s taste; he could feel the sublimities of nature, and admire its beauties. To the right of the cascade its waters collected in a broad stream, on the clear bosom of which two stately swans reared a numerous progeny of snowy cygnets; they knew and obeyed the voice of Mrs. Doricourt, and fed without fear from her hand; but seeing a stranger, they evinced alarm by spreading their downy wings, and collecting their young ones with the most affectionate solicitude, and hastily retiring to the concealment of their reedy habitation, under the branches of the osiers that hung over the stream.

Mrs. Doricourt being assured by the earl that he was not fatigued, led the way through an arch formed by jessamine, woodbine, and clematis, to a rocky excavation, where shells, coral, and spar, were tastefully arranged, and rustic seats invited the weary to rest. Here, on a marble table, were placed grapes and peaches, with which the earl allayed his thirst. While he lingered to admire some beautiful specimens of the buccanim and volute, a strain of music was heard. The earl looked at Mrs. Doricourt—“Are you indeed an enchantress?” asked he, smiling; “certainly you are possessed of more than mortal powers, or whence those harmonious sounds?”



“No,” replied Mrs. Doricourt, “I disclaim all knowledge of magical spells, and possession of superhuman powers; but if your lordship has a wish to see the musician, you have only to follow me.”

The earl bowed, and said he should be much gratified, being particularly fond of music.

Mrs. Doricourt led the way up a flight of narrow steps, which had escaped the earl’s notice; a door, artfully constructed, covered with shells and spar, yielded to her touch.

In the next instant the earl found himself in a Chinese temple—the walls were superbly panelled with stained glass, on which were described the feast of lanthorns, palaces, gardens, amusements, and remarkable places near Pekin; the seats were formed of bamboo, inlaid with ivory; the cushions and draperies were of rich chintz, lined with rose-coloured taffeta; large gilt cages, with foreign birds; and crystal globes, with gold and silver fish, hung at the open lattices, the gilded recesses of which contained beautiful porcelain vases, with exotic plants and flowers, that filled the temple with their perfume. Here they found Cecilia; but no instrument of music being visible, the earl looked surprised, and inquired by what means she had produced the sounds which he had heard in the grotto, and which certainly were not vocal?

Cecilia smiled.—“Do you not remember, my lord,” said she, “that sir Cyril Musgrove called this an enchanted island? Can you not suppose the ‘Lady of the Lake’ has attendant spirits, who, at her potent bidding, utter magic sounds?”

“Be you then subject to my spells,” replied Mrs. Doricourt, catching Cecilia’s lively tone, “and instantly produce, for the earl’s amusement, an instrument that will at once gratify his eye and ear.”

Cecilia gracefully bent to the command—she touched one of the panels—it slid back, and disclosed a recess, which contained the most magnificent organ the earl had ever seen. Cecilia drew forth a stool, and placing herself at the instrument, played several of the earl’s favourite airs. She then resigned her place to Mrs. Doricourt, who, anxious to divert the melancholy of her guest, sang duets with Cecilia, till she supposed it was near the hour of dinner.

The earl pressed their hands respectfully to his lips, expressed his delight, and declared them both enchantresses, and that every part of the island was calculated to inspire the romantic idea of magic.

“It is all the reality of nature,” said Mrs. Doricourt, “aided by the labour of human industry. The accomplishment of my plan cost me some thought, trouble, and expence; but it now amply rewards my pains. St. Herbert’s Island, independent of its own beauties, commands prospects unrivalled in sublimity and loveliness, and while I wander over my little domain, inhaling the breath of heaven, and the odour of the flowers, I feel that I ought to be happy.” A tear trembled in her eye as she spoke; but, suppressing the lucid intruder, she added—“With your lordship’s pleasure, we will now return.”

Cecilia slid back another panel, and they descended a flight of marble steps, to a part of the ground ornamented with Chinese railings and bridges.

The earl looked back on the temple, and found that it was built in the exact Chinese style, with its appropriate decoration of gilded bells and painted minarets.

Having conducted the earl to the library, Mrs. Doricourt and Cecilia retired to dress; but as the toilet occupied but a small portion of their time, they returned to

converse for half-an-hour on literary subjects, where the earl had a fresh opportunity of admiring the modesty of Cecilia, who had concealed her knowledge of Italian and German, both of which she read with fluency, and understood correctly.

The announcing of dinner spared the blushes of Cecilia, and released her friend from the pain of receiving thanks and praise from the earl, who had never before met so much learning or so little pedantry.

Mrs. Doricourt did the honours of her table with a grace and elegance that evinced an intimate acquaintance with fashionable manners; and though the party was so very small, the earl never sat down to greater delicacies, or saw them more magnificently served up; the table-service consisting of silver, and the most expensively-cut glass.

The evening drawing to a close, the earl proposed departing. Mrs. Doricourt requested that Cecilia might remain at the Hermitage.

The earl looked at Cecilia; her countenance spoke the wish of her heart.—“I need not ask,” said he, “your wishes—I read them in your eyes; and I will not only deprive myself of the pleasure of your company, but will also make your excuses to lady Torrington, on one condition.”

“You are too good,” replied Cecilia, “too generous to make the condition a hard one.”

“It is,” said the earl, “that you prevail on Mrs. Doricourt to accompany you to the castle, where, I am certain, the countess of Torrington will consider your visit an honour.”

Mrs. Doricourt would have excused herself from accepting this invitation, on the plea of delicate health, and being, from the long seclusion, almost a stranger to the forms of fashionable life.

The earl would not admit this excuse; and Mrs. Doricourt gave a reluctant promise to visit Torrington Castle.

The earl had not for many years spent a day so pleasantly or so rationally; and when he bade the ladies farewell on the Chinese bridge, he warmly repeated his invitation, that Mrs. Doricourt would accompany Cecilia to the castle.

When seated in the yacht, he reflected on the lovely form, superior mind, and uncommon attainments and accomplishments of Mrs. Doricourt; he wondered what strange events had driven her from a world she was formed to adorn, and sighed to think that the beauteous blossom he had precipitated to the grave might have expanded to as bright a flower; while, for the sake of that wealth, now considered with contempt, he had linked his destiny with a being destitute of understanding and accomplishments.

Mrs. Doricourt thought of the earl of Torrington with pity; high in rank, surrounded with luxury, he envied the meanest peasant that moistened his hard crust in the running stream, while himself possessing all things but content, was a melancholy proof of the insufficiency of wealth to ensure happiness.

The communications of Cecilia did not exalt the characters of the countess of Torrington, or her guests, in Mrs. Doricourt’s opinion; but this very circumstance made her resolve to quit the tranquillity of the Hermitage, and mix once again with the cold heartless votaries of fashion, particularly as she found lady Welford was at the castle, which would secure her the society of one rational female, whose observations might aid her to ascertain whether Cecilia might, without danger to the purity of her mind, remain

under the protection of lady Torrington, should the earl make a point of her spending the winter with them in town.

The representations of Cecilia by no means impressed her with respect for lady Torrington, added to which, the worthy Baldwin, on whose plain understanding and honest principles every reliance was to be placed, had heard such accounts of lady Torrington and her guests, as made the old man, full of anxiety on Cecilia's account, communicate the unfavourable reports that had reached his own ear to Mrs. Doricourt.

Her knowledge of the world taught her that report always exaggerated; but the innocence and reputation of Cecilia were of too much consequence to be exposed with persons whose characters appeared to be of no value, even in their own esteem. Of these persons she determined herself to judge; and if she found the least reason to doubt their being proper society, remove Cecilia from the contagion of vice, even at the hazard of the earl's displeasure. Mrs. Doricourt considered her own fortune quite sufficient to provide amply for this darling child; but were it much less, she would preserve to her an approving conscience, and virtuous poverty was infinitely preferable to guilty wealth.

Miss Delmore being absent from the castle, lady Jacintha had no rival to divert the attentions of lord Rushdale from herself; and knowing his great partiality for music, she contrived every evening to draw him into the music-room, where, unconscious of the comparison he was drawing between her bold intrusive manner, and that of the timid, retiring Cecilia, she played and sung his favourite airs, much more to her own satisfaction than his, who, though wearied and disgusted, was, by her art, kept constantly at her side at table, and in their morning walks and rides.

This manoeuvring of lady Jacintha did not escape the observation of the countess of Torrington, who, aware of the slender fortune of her dear friend, and of her father's hopes that she would secure to herself a wealthy husband, began to suspect her design on the heart of the sentimental Oscar, whose opinions on all occasions she seemed anxious to consult; and whose taste for reading she had lately flattered, by passing hours with him in the library, while the rest of the party were contriving amusements to kill the time she devoted to study. But though of rank equal to her own, lady Torrington considered that lady Jacintha was a full seven years older than her son—a disparity on the wrong side; and that her qualities of mind, and certain fashionable propensities, particularly her passion for gambling, were not exactly what she should approve in his wife. Besides, when she was in town, it was agreed between the duchess of Aberdeen and herself, that a union of their families would, on several accounts, be extremely desirable. Oscar was exactly of an age when the heart yields itself to tender impressions, without considering either interest or consequences; and at once to acquaint her son with her own intentions, and guard him against the acts of lady Jacintha Fitzosborne, she summoned him to a private conference in her dressing-room. To the countess of Torrington, Oscar had ever conducted himself with the respectful duty of a son, but it was duty governed by a principle of right, not influenced by the warm impulse of filial affection, he believed, and accused himself of being unnatural; but he did not love his mother; he saw all her faults and inconsistencies; and her weak indulgence of his boyish follies served to convince him, that she consulted the gratification of her own idle whims, and the indolence of her own temper, rather than the improvement of his understanding, or the forming of his principles, by putting him under proper restraints. Lady Torrington was not over delicate

in disclosing to her son the treaty she had entered into with the duchess of Aberdeen—"With which I am certain, Oscar," said she, "you must be delighted."

"I am of a temper, madam," replied he, "not easily moved to ecstasies."

"Why, positively," resumed the countess, "you are becoming as solemn and frigid as your father, or you could not be so insensible to beauty. Surely you must remember lady Arabella Moncrief?"

"Yes, madam, perfectly," replied lord Rushdale; "I remember she is a spoiled child, rude, pert, and uninformed."

"Lively, artless, and beautiful as an angel," said lady Torrington, determined not to give up the point.

"If angels in any way resemble Arabella Moncrief," returned Oscar, "I shall always prefer the company of sensible mortals."

"Nay, that is being too severe upon the beautiful romp," said lady Torrington; "you ought to remember her youth, and what improvements the acknowledged abilities of madame St. Pierre may produce; the duke of Aberdeen has engaged that wonderful woman, at a monstrous salary, to complete the education of lady Arabella. All the world knows that madame St. Pierre is the first singer in the kingdom, and that she dances like a goddess. When lady Arabella comes out next winter, you will see her——"

"*Sans* mind, *sans* taste, *sans* every thing," returned Oscar. "Madame St. Pierre may give instruction, but she cannot infuse into the vacant mind of her pupil the ethereal genius that embodies idea—she cannot inspire her with virtue, feeling, and sense."

"How ridiculous and romantic!" said lady Torrington, contemptuously. "There are very few men of the world but will very readily dispense with the last-named qualification; they are not generally ambitious of having clever wives. Men are tenacious of their privileges, and seldom approve of females trespassing on their ground; a pretty face, and a heavy purse, is, I believe, the prevailing sentiment."

"With a sensualist or a miser, probably it may," returned lord Rushdale; "but I lay no claim to either of these characters: far from bowing at the shrine of Mammon, I am not avaricious, and have never yet considered wealth an equivalent for happiness. If ever I marry, I must be certain that congenial mind, and mutual affection——"

"What romantic nonsense!" interrupted lady Torrington; "I really supposed that pedant Oxley had given you different ideas, and taught you a proper respect for rank and wealth. I am certain the rich enjoy pleasures the poor can never attain, and without abundance of that money you affect to despise, I see no possibility of a person's being happy."

"Happiness, madam," said Oscar, "does not depend, as you erroneously believe, on wealth; on the contrary, I fear its possession is frequently the source of more wretchedness than ever poverty inflicted.—Happiness is oftener found in a cottage than a palace, where the moderate desires, and simple pleasures of its inhabitants, leave no stings behind them, where their wants are few, and circumscribed to their situation."

"It is really a pity," replied the countess, scornfully, "that you were not born a cottager; how prodigiously happy you would have been with some pretty rustic!"

Lord Rushdale thought of Cecilia Delmore, and his deep blue eyes sparkled with more than their usual lustre, as he said—"Had such been my destination, madam, I have no doubt but I should have enjoyed that sunshine of the mind which does not depend on high birth, or the possession of wealth, but is the actual result of rectitude, from a

consciousness of having performed the duties which Providence allots to every state of life; and with a rustic wife, whose mind would have understood mine, of whose affection I was assured, and on whose virtue I could confide, I am certain I should have been too happy to desire greater pleasures than were to be found in my own cottage, or in the rural sports of my equally-contented village neighbours."

Lady Torrington tried to laugh, but the conviction that happiness was indeed the offspring of virtue made her serious, in spite of her efforts to appear gay.—"You have drawn a very pretty picture certainly," said she; "but recollect, the golden days of Arcadia are over, and shepherds have ruder employments in this age than dressing the crook of the favourite shepherdess with flowers, and tending with her a flock of snow-white sheep. But for my part, I do not presume to believe that I have understanding sufficient to combat your opinions, which may, for ought I know, be orthodox, as your pompous tutor says; but of this I am certain, the duke of Aberdeen's alliance will be extremely advantageous to you; and as lady Arabella Moncrief is very young, and has not entered into fashionable pleasures, I think you would act wisely to antecede other proposals; and as she is so perfect a novice, you may mould her as you please, and make it as tender and romantic as your own; and then you may create an Elysium for yourselves, and live as rural and innocent as cottagers."

"Whenever I marry, madam," said lord Rushdale, "I trust to live both innocent and happy; but as I have determined to bestow my heart with my hand, I assure you lady Arabella Moncrief will never share the Elysium I may create."

Lady Torrington frowned; she had not expected such obstinate contradiction—"You are yet too young," said she, "to see all the advantages attending this alliance: you will, when your judgment is matured by an intercourse with the world, get rid of your idle sickly sentiments, fit only for the hero of a romance. Who, in fashionable life, ever thinks or speaks of such ridiculous nonsense as mutual love? What well-bred man cares about the sense of his wife? I really blush for your folly!" Oscar blushed for his mother, who continued—"But these vulgar notions of yours, I believe to have been inculcated by that prosing animal Oxley; and as you can walk without leading-strings, I think the sooner the consequential porpoise is dismissed the better; for, in my opinion, his instructions have the pernicious effect of rendering you totally unfit for the rank you are to hold in life."

"There you do Mr. Oxley great injustice," said lord Rushdale, "for, truth to tell, I believe no man in existence can more devoutly worship rank and fortune than he does. Wealth, in his estimation, is the sovereign good, before which the claims of genius, the social charities, love, friendship, all fade, all sink to insignificance."

"The man has more sense than I have given him credit for," returned lady Torrington; "and, I trust, his wisdom will eradicate your folly, and teach you to set a proper value on the advantages you appear to despise."

"You err, madam," replied Oscar, "if you suppose I despise rank and fortune; as bestowing the power of being useful to my fellow-men, I value them highly; but considered as the means to indulge in ostentations splendour, to procure the heartless homage of the multitude, and obtain what your ladyship calls pleasure, I confess they lose respect in my eyes; and I believe that every rational mind estimates them as I do."

"I am sick and fatigued with this controversy," said the countess, "and shall be infinitely obliged to you for a rational answer to a plain question—Are you disposed to favour my wishes, by considering your hand engaged to lady Arabella Moncrief?"

“Certainly, for a cotillion,” replied lord Rushdale, “at the very first ball your ladyship gives the ensuing winter, but not for matrimony. Plainly, I do not like lady Arabella; and I see no rational cause to induce the heir of Torrington to sacrifice himself to pertness and ignorance.”

“This contradiction to my will,” said the countess, “is a grateful return for my having always indulged your humours. But I see it all. I understand your love in a cottage perfectly; I have not been blind to the arts of lady Jacintha Fitzosborne; I perceive where her ambition points.” Lord Rushdale was not so clear-sighted, till the vehemence of his mother quickened his apprehension. “But you must be mad,” resumed her ladyship, “to think of her for a wife! so many years older than yourself, proud as if she was a princess, and so poor, that she is a perpetual tax upon her acquaintance; in temper envious, satirical, and malicious.”

“Your particular friend, your inseparable companion, lady Jacintha Fitzosborne! surely, madam,” said lord Rushdale, “you cannot be speaking of her?”

The countess felt the look and question of her son; but too well-bred to appear confounded, she resumed—“I am so far her friend, as to invite her to my house, because I know her own finances are too slender to support her rank. But friendship does not make me blind; I see all her faults; she is the last woman in the world to wish an alliance with; and if you expect happiness with lady Jacintha Fitzosborne——”

“I shall be greatly deceived,” interrupted lord Rushdale. “Be satisfied, madam, lady Jacintha Fitzosborne will never be my choice; she is too deeply initiated in the mysteries of the *haut ton*; affected softness, and studied graces, will never endanger my heart.”

“No, it must be beautiful simplicity, blushing to display its own excellence, graceful timidity, in the form of Cecilia Delmore,” said the countess, in a tone of irony; “but beware, young man, of encouraging the idea of making her your wife. Do not imagine that the earl or myself will ever consent to so preposterous, so debasing a union; I should expire with shame to hear it whispered in fashionable circles, that my son had married the niece of my housekeeper.”

“Yet her mother,” returned lord Rushdale, calmly, “was the daughter of a clergyman, and her father was the son of an apothecary.”

Lady Torrington’s eyes flashed fire; in a voice scarcely articulate from rage, she commanded him instantly to quit her presence.

Lord Rushdale bowed and obeyed, glad to escape a controversy in which he might be led to betray his passion for Cecilia. She was indeed the gentle lovely creature his reason and his heart approved; but as yet they were too young to marry, and a disclosure of his affection would only expose her to the enmity of lady Torrington; he therefore resolved to conceal in his own bosom the tenderness she inspired, till being of age, he should be master of his actions, and at liberty to place her beauty and accomplishments in their proper sphere.

The count del Montarino found Miss Maxfield credulous as he could possibly desire, persuaded that he thought her the most beautiful of all beauties, and that he adored the very earth on which she stood. The silly girl agreed to elope with him, as soon as he could arrange the affair in a way to prevent discovery and pursuit. Deeply smitten with the count, and full of gay projects for the future, when she should burst upon her astonished acquaintance in all the grandeur and consequence of a countess, debating

within herself whether she would receive her wedding visits in white and silver, or pink and gold, Miss Maxfield left off teasing the honourable Tangent Drawley, who was beginning to believe he had acted the INDOLENT long enough, particularly as a friend informed him it did not take in town—a severe mortification to Mr. Drawley, who had always enjoyed the extreme delight of seeing his eccentricities eagerly adopted and imitated; and his only consolation under the present disappointment was, to believe that the character was too difficult, and that his copyists had not brains sufficient to counterfeit lassitude and inanity.

While divided in his own mind, whether to continue the INDOLENT a little longer, or to order his carriage, make his congee, and start a new character at Weymouth, he met the intelligent glances of lady Torrington. The invitation they conveyed made him give up Weymouth, and resolve to rival the count del Montarino, whose attentions to the countess were glaringly evident to every person, except the earl and lord Rushdale.

The count del Montarino did not forget to engage sir Cyril Musgrove and sir Middleton Maxfield at play; but they knew how to shuffle the cards as dexterously as himself, and he found, to his great disappointment, that he should never pluck them of a sum sufficient to enable him to carry off Miss Maxfield. To apply to the countess was the only expedient that promised success; and lest any unforeseen circumstance should prevent his carrying off Miss Maxfield, he resolved she should immediately supply him with the means. But the mind of the countess had undergone a revolution; she no longer watched for the signs, that, like another free-masonry, made them intelligible to each other. This was vexatious to the count, and obliged him to write a note, requesting an interview. This the countess would, if possible, have denied; but the count, confirmed in his opinion of her indifference, and sensible of his own precarious situation, assumed a determined tone, and insisted on her admitting him to her dressing-room.

Mrs. Garnett, ever on the alert to pick up intelligence for her lady, met the count's valet sauntering in the gallery, where he was waiting for the convenient Mrs. Smithson, who had promised to bring him an answer to the note he had a few moments before committed to her care.

"Bless me! mounseer," said Mrs. Garnett, "what are you in retendance here for?"

The Frenchman caught her hand—"Vill you give von littel kiss for know?"

Mrs. Garnett affected to struggle; but suffering him to take a kiss, she said—

"Well, there now, mounseer, I have paid for your secret; let me have it."

"I vait de reply to von littel tendre billet de count sen to lady Torrington," replied the Frenchman; "de count make de assignation, an vy we not be happy so vell as dey? Ma belle ange! vill you admit me to de *tête-à-tête* vid you, vile de count make de lofe to de countess?"

Mrs. Garnett asked at what hour the assassination was to take place?

The Frenchman told her, when every body retired to their beds. He then repeated his request that she should admit him to her chamber.

Mrs. Garnett disdainfully snatched her hand from the astonished Frenchman—"How dare you resume, you yeller-faced monkey," said she, "to result my virtue by making sitch a hinsolent purposal?—Take that!" giving him a smart slap on his cheek, "and larn how to inspect a modest person for the future."

Before the disappointed valet could recover from the smart of her fingers, Mrs. Garnett had informed lady Jacintha Fitzosborne of all she had gleaned from mounseer.

Lady Jacintha received this confirmation of her friend's frailty without any feeling of sorrow: her face glowed indeed, but it was with malignant pleasure at the near prospect of exposing her criminal conduct, and of rendering her humbly subservient to her will.

During the day, the count del Montarino so narrowly watched the glances of the countess, that he prevented her bestowing her regards on the honourable Mr. Drawley, who, having entirely thrown off the INDOLENT, danced, sung, talked loud, and played the fool, like the rest of the company. Sir Middleton Maxfield betted fifty pounds with sir Cyril Musgrove, that his late inactivity had rendered Drawley so weak, that he could not run a hundred yards without losing breath.

Drawley being made acquainted with this wager, offered to run a race with sir Middleton Maxfield for a hundred pounds. The bet was instantly accepted, and the avenue, half a mile in length, the appointed ground.

"La! Mr. Drawley," said Miss Maxfield, "I am sorry you have laid this wager, for you will be sure to lose."

"Indeed! you are sure of that are you?" returned Drawley.

"Yes, quite sure," resumed Miss Maxfield, "for Middleton is such a runner you can't think!"

"Yes," said sir Cyril Musgrove, "my friend Mid runs in debt with every body that will trust him."

Sir Middleton laughed; but his sister, throwing an angry glance on sir Cyril Musgrove, told him he was a great story-teller.

Sir Cyril bowed.

"La!" said Miss Maxfield, "I am sure you need not bow, for I did not mean to pay you a compliment, sir Cyril. But, dear me, Mr. Drawley, half a mile is a long way to run; won't you be monstrous tired?"

"Not in the least," replied he, "I am never tired."

"Dear me! how can you say so," resumed Miss Maxfield, "when it was no longer ago than yesterday, when I scolded you for pouring lobster sauce upon my turkey, you folded your arms, shut your eyes, and bade me not speak, for you were tired to death?"

"I had a very good night's rest, Miss Maxfield," replied Drawley, "and woke this morning quite refreshed, and strong enough to carry you on my shoulder to the end of the race."

"No, thank you, sir," said Jemima; "I don't at all like to be carried; for when I was at school, we used to carry one another pin-pan, make believe a sedan-chair, you know, and so I got a sad fall, and bruised my forehead, and cut my arm, and tore a long slit in my frock; my forehead was so black you can't think! and my arm was bad ever so long after. I think I had enough of being carried; don't you think I had, Mr. Drawley?"

"Yes, truly," replied he; "and after so many disasters, I shall not press to have the pleasure of carrying you."

The race of sir Middleton Maxfield and Mr. Drawley occasioned a bet between the count del Montarino and lord Wilton for twenty pounds. Colonel St. Irwin had seen many athletic feats performed by the honourable Tangent Drawley, and his opinion sided with him, in opposition to the opinion of the earl of Torrington and lord Rushdale, who viewed the florid complexion and firm-knit limbs of sir Middleton Maxfield, as sure indications of success.



Lady Eglantine Sydney, more soft and languishing than ever, thought a foot-race very clownish and vulgar. She assured lord Melvil, that it would shock her beyond measure to see him broiling and covered with dust, to gain the fame of being a swift runner, in which accomplishment she was certain her footman would excel either sir Middleton Maxfield or Mr. Drawley.

But though lady Eglantine objected to such vulgar sport, the rest of the ladies entered into its spirit; and being informed by the erudite Mr. Oxley, that footraces made a part of the ancient Olympic games, where the victor was rewarded with a crown of olive, lady Torrington declared her entire approbation, because it was classical. But, what a misfortune! they had no olive-trees.

“Laurel will do equally as well,” said lady Jacintha; “for laurel is sacred to the hero as well as the bard.”

This point arranged, a wreath was prepared to crown the victor.

Mr. Drawley, at setting off, appeared to be sinking into the INDOLENT, for he gave sir Middleton Maxfield considerable advantage. Lord Wilton felt so certain of winning, that he offered to double his bet; but the count del Montarino, sensible that twenty pounds would make a deep hole in his purse, affecting not to hear his lordship’s proposal, shifted his ground, which he afterwards severely repented; for in the next instant he saw Drawley shoot with the swiftness of an arrow past his opponent, and reach the goal, while sir Middleton Maxfield remained several yards behind.

Shouts and acclamations rent the air; some congratulated, others condoled, while, to prove a fashionable indifference to her nephew’s failure, and herself too well-bred to think any thing of losing a hundred pounds, Mrs. Freakley proposed that the child of nature, being the youngest of the party, should crown the victor.

But Jemima positively refused the office, telling her aunt it was quite unnatural of her to propose such a thing, when her own brother had just lost a hundred pounds—any body that liked might crown Mr. Drawley, but, for her part, she should do no such thing, and she wondered how her brother could shake hands with him.

Mrs. Freakley endeavoured to pacify the child of nature, while lady Torrington gracefully placed the wreath on the head of Drawley, who declared he felt more pleasure in being crowned by the hand of beauty, than of the victory he had gained.

Lady Torrington gave him one of her sweetest smiles.

Sir Middleton Maxfield paid the money, and swore he would have it out of Drawley another time.

Jemima said she should not have minded her brother losing, if Mr. Drawley had not taken him in with always pretending to be so tired, just as if he was not able to move a limb, and, after all, to run as fast as he did; it was quite a shameful trick, that it was; and she should hate him for it as long as she lived.

Drawley laughed, and hoped she would forget her anger.

The count del Montarino received lord Wilton’s twenty pounds with the regretful remembrance that he might so easily have made it forty; and this regret was more poignantly felt, as the mere want of cash was all that delayed his elopement with Miss Maxfield, to whom he was fearful of declaring his poverty, after having boasted to her of his Neapolitan estates, his beautiful villas, rich vineyards, and mulberry plantations; his sole hope now rested on obtaining a sufficient supply from lady Torrington; and rather

than be defeated in this grand stake, he was ready to throw aside entreaty, and enforce his demand by menace.

Mr. Oxley took an early opportunity to solicit the earl's consent to address Miss Delmore as a lover.

Lord Rushdale, who was present when this unexpected permission was asked, started from his seat, and felt as if he could have struck the divine to the earth for his presumption.

The earl's features relaxed into a smile, as he viewed the self-sufficient, portly, middle-aged gentleman.

This smile gave Oxley confidence, for he was too much in favour with himself to suppose it could be derisive or contemptuous; and while lord Rushdale felt every pulse in his body agitated with as painful emotion as if his very existence hung on the earl's lips, Mr. Oxley arrogantly hinted his own merits, and flattered himself with the hope he had founded on the earl's liberality and just discrimination, would not be deceived by his refusing his approbation and concurrence in the present momentous affair.

The earl having waited patiently for the conclusion of this elaborate speech, which did not appear to make the impression, or have all the effect the reverend gentleman expected, very calmly asked—"Pray, sir, is Miss Delmore apprised of your predilection in her favour?"

"Certainly, my lord," replied the divine, "certainly; Miss Delmore is apprised—is informed of my wishes and expectations in their fullest extent."

"And does Miss Delmore listen to your love?" asked lord Rushdale, eagerly; "can she approve—does she consent to be yours?—does Cecilia indeed encourage your addresses?"

Mr. Oxley drew up his collar—"Miss Delmore," said he conceitedly, "has acted with becoming modesty on the occasion."

"And referred you to me?" asked the earl.

"Not absolutely referred," replied the parson, "nor did she forbid the application; I have therefore acted," continued he, with a consequential smile, "on the axiom of silence gives consent."

Lord Rushdale, fearing he should betray his feelings, took up a book, which he was not conscious he held the wrong way upwards; his eyes were fixed on the page, but his faculties were concentrated; he was all ear, and listened with agonizing impatience for the earl's answer.

"I am not surprised, Mr. Oxley," said the earl, "that you should entertain a passion for Miss Delmore; she is beautiful and highly accomplished; but I remember she is little more than seventeen, and her extreme youth, and consequent inexperience, are with me strong objections to her entering into any serious engagement. She has been bred in such absolute retirement, that she cannot possibly judge what would be her choice. Matrimony is an affair that will involve the happiness of her life, and I can by no means accord my approbation to hasty measures. It is my intention that Miss Delmore shall spend the next winter in London; and if after that ordeal she prefers you, I will not withhold my consent; though you will pardon me, Mr. Oxley, if I suggest that a wife nearer your own age would be more likely to ensure your comfort in the matrimonial state."

"Surely the disparity is too great," rejoined lord Rushdale, his spirits calmed by the earl's decision; "Miss Delmore is young enough to be your daughter, Mr. Oxley."

This was a remark extremely ill-bred and disagreeable, in the reverend gentleman's opinion, who wished to be considered a young man. He coloured highly, coughed, and wiped his forehead, to conceal his vexation, when he so far forgot his own consequence, as to propose marrying the niece of Mrs. Milman. He did not calculate upon his age forming any sort of objection; he supposed the earl would be glad to get her off his hands, at the expence of a few thousand pounds. But he now began to suspect that the report of her being his daughter might be true, and that his pride, though she was illegitimate, looked for a better husband for her.

Mr. Oxley was highly offended, but self-interest taught him to smother his resentment. He acknowledged he was a few years older than Miss Delmore, but flattered himself the trifling difference of age would be no objection with her; and he humbly entreated to know if he was to consider himself honoured with his lordship's permission to endeavour at winning her regard?

Lord Rushdale threw down the book he had still held, and, as if fearful of the permission being granted, hastily replied—"Surely it is necessary to consult Miss Delmore's inclinations, to learn whether she approves——"

"Undoubtedly," replied the earl; "and till from her own lips I am put in possession of her sentiments, I must beg to remain neuter in the business. Cecilia is candour itself; she will at once speak ingenuously; and if she approves your addresses, Mr. Oxley, I shall not suffer any opinion of my own to militate against her wishes."

The earl moved from his seat; he saw Mr. Oxley was preparing another speech, but not approving the reverend gentleman's pretensions, he did not feel inclined to listen to any arguments he might offer in favour of a marriage with Cecilia. Bending with more than his usual stateliness, he wished Mr. Oxley a good-morning, and telling his son he wished his opinion respecting an alteration in the banqueting-room, they left the divine swelling with indignation.

Mr. Oxley's consequence had never before been so lowered. He had entertained no doubt of the earl's approval, nor of Miss Delmore yielding implicit obedience to his will; all the projects in which he had placed such unbounded confidence, seemed in a single moment to fall to nothing. Miss Delmore, the rich livings in the earl's gift, popularity, dignity, and lawn sleeves, were all likely to elude his grasp. Lord Rushdale too, the boy whose ignorance he had enlightened, whom he had made acquainted with Greek and Latin, and taught to imitate the eloquence of Cicero and Demosthenes—he had not uttered a sentence in his favour, but had appeared displeased at his pretensions, and had, rather than aided, constrained the earl by his remarks to reject his suit.—"Perhaps," said Mr. Oxley, after a little consideration, "perhaps the boy has cast an eye of inclination on her himself.—Yes, it must be so; I now recollect many little circumstances to confirm the idea. Lord Rushdale is himself in love with Miss Delmore, and would not forward my views. But what will lady Torrington say to her son so degrading himself? She will never consent to receive Cecilia Delmore, the niece of her housekeeper, as her daughter."

"You are perfectly correct in that opinion, Mr. Oxley," said the countess, who, during the latter part of his soliloquy, had entered the room unheard; "but, pray, sir, inform me, for you have greatly awakened my curiosity, what has occurred to provoke you to utter your thoughts so loud and incautiously? for surely, if lord Rushdale is so forgetful of his rank and dignity to encourage a partiality of this degrading nature, you, as his tutor, ought to be sensible of the indelicacy of publishing his disgraceful weakness.

But I request, sir, that I may be no longer kept in ignorance; let me hear the extent of lord Rushdale's folly. Has he confessed a passion for Miss Delmore?—Has he solicited the earl to consent to their marriage?"

Mr. Oxley, always in the "melting mood," applied his cambric handkerchief to his forehead; his cunning whispered that he might turn the *hauteur* of the countess to his advantage. With much mock humility he apologized for his indiscretion in giving vent to his wounded feelings aloud; he then informed her ladyship of his application to the earl respecting Miss Delmore, with the little encouragement his proposals had met—"The agitated manner, and, pardon me, madam, if I say, obtrusive remarks of lord Rushdale, led me, who am ever anxious for my pupil acting up to his rank and high expectations, to suspect that his not advancing my cause, as I certainly expected he would, proceeded from himself feeling a passion for the young lady——"

"The young lady, as you call her," interrupted lady Torrington, with a sneer, "shall never be the wife of Oscar Rushdale. But pray sir, inform me, did the earl mention any engagement he had formed for her?—Did he seem at all to understand that his son was guilty of the folly of liking Miss Delmore?"

"To look into the thoughts of another, your ladyship must be aware, is beyond human penetration," said Mr. Oxley.

"But we may guess them pretty accurately," returned the countess. "Could you learn nothing from lord Torrington's countenance?"

"Nothing," replied Mr. Oxley, "except that he looked very cold on my request."

"Really, Mr. Oxley," resumed the countess, "I think you have greatly honoured Miss Delmore by your regard, and you may depend that I will take an early opportunity of letting the earl and lord Rushdale know my sentiments on the business. To see Miss Delmore eligibly married, must be gratifying to her friends; and I see no reasonable objection that can possibly be made to you." Mr. Oxley bowed. "You may depend, Mr. Oxley," continued lady Torrington, "I will warmly advocate your cause; and if I have any influence, you may promise yourself success."

Mr. Oxley was all gratitude; he bowed lower and lower, as the countess, retiring, bade him hope. But doubts still hung upon his mind: Miss Delmore might accept him—the earl might be persuaded to give his consent; but if it was not his own voluntary approval, he could withhold the livings—he could reduce the fortune of his adopted daughter to hundreds instead of thousands. In short, he might obtain a pretty wife, and lose all the advantages that he hoped to grasp by marrying; and a wife without a good fortune seemed, in Mr. Oxley's idea, like being condemned to climb a high mountain with a huge load on his back. He had never considered the matter so seriously before, and till he clearly understood what the earl intended to do for Miss Delmore, he determined not to throw himself away.

Lady Jacintha Fitzosborne had kept a watchful eye on the countess during the day, and her penetration had discovered that for some cause or other, she did not appear as solicitous to engross the attentions of the count del Montarino as usual; but this might be merely an artful manoeuvre to elude observation. She was certain, from Garnett's report, that an assignation had been made, and she resolved that nothing should prevent the execution of her plan to discover and subjugate the countess to her power.

When lady Jacintha retired for the night, she artfully complimented Mrs. Garnett on her fidelity, propriety of conduct, and personal attractions, till finding she had wound up the silly creature to her purpose, she asked if she could keep a secret?

Mrs. Garnett pouted she had been the expository of many secrets.

"But you must swear," resumed lady Jacintha, "that you will never divulge what I am about to confide to you, till I desire you to tell it."

Mrs. Garnett would have taken fifty oaths to satisfy her curiosity, and she was greatly disappointed when lady Jacintha having made her swear, informed her that she must accompany her to lady Torrington's chamber, as she was that night resolved to convince herself whether there was any truth in the report of an improper intimacy between the count del Montarino and lady Torrington. Mrs. Garnett began to tremble and cry bitterly—"Oh, dear! dear! I have brought myself into a pretty dilemma," said she; "the countess will have me hanged for speaking *crim. con.* against her."

It was some time before lady Jacintha could pacify the alarms of Mrs. Garnett; but at length it being artfully suggested to her that lady Torrington would make her a handsome present to keep her secret, she dried up her tears, and promised to obey lady Jacintha's directions.

Having put on her night-clothes, lady Jacintha, followed by her abigail, stepped cautiously along the gallery to the countess's dressing-room, the door of which they found ajar. Lady Jacintha pushed it open, and saw Mrs. Smithson fast asleep, with a candle so near her, that it was next to a miracle that her muslin dress had not taken fire. Lady Jacintha took advantage of this circumstance; and pushing down the candle in an instant, the unfortunate waiting-woman was in a blaze. Mrs. Garnett and lady Jacintha screamed, and busied themselves to extinguish the flames, which caught the toilet and window curtain.

Mrs. Smithson, in her terror, was thrown completely off her guard; and running to the chamber-door, shrieked out—"My lady! count! you will be burnt to death!"

Lady Torrington's voice was now heard calling to Smithson, who, coming to herself, and seeing the fire out, begged of lady Jacintha to return to her own apartment. But this was by no means her intention. She began explaining that the smell of fire having alarmed her, she had roused up Garnett, and full of apprehension for the safety of her dear friend, had hastened to inform her of her danger.

"Yes," said Mrs. Garnett, "if my lady had not fortunately awaked when she did, you would have been burnt up to a cinder, Mrs. Smithson. But what in the world do you do out of bed at this time? if your constertution was as dilercate as mine, you would be gist dead to be up till sich hours."

"Hush, Mrs. Garnett; don't talk so loud," replied Mrs. Smithson; "my lady is very unwell, and you will disturb her. I sat here, fearing she might be worse."

"And the count del Montarino, he is sitting up also?" said lady Jacintha.

"Not that I know of, my lady," replied Smithson, much confused.

"Oh, yes; you forget yourself, Mrs. Smithson," returned lady Jacintha; "you called upon the count to leave the countess's chamber not many moments ago."

"Me call upon the count! No, as I hope to live," said Mrs. Smithson; "you have made a mistake. Pray, my lady, return to your bed; you will take cold."

"No," returned lady Jacintha, "as the countess is ill, I will step into her chamber; no doubt the noise we have made has alarmed her; I will just see how she is."

“On no account, my lady,” said Mrs. Smithson, in great trepidation; “pray don’t go to awake her.”

“She must be dead,” resumed lady Jacintha, “if she is not awake already.—Pray stand aside,” (Smithson had placed herself before the door), “for I am determined to see lady Torrington.”

Mrs. Smithson fell on her knees, and wept, and entreated; but lady Jacintha pushing her aside, entered the chamber, followed by Garnett. Flushed with triumphant malice, she threw back the curtains of the bed, and beheld the countess of Torrington, who, starting up, inquired what was the matter?

Lady Jacintha’s eyes rolled in disappointment round the chamber; they rested on a gold snuff-box, which she knew to be the property of the count del Montarino.

“Return to the dressing-room, Garnett,” said lady Jacintha; “that creature Smithson, whom terror has deprived of prudence, may want assistance. Unhappy woman!” resumed lady Jacintha, as the door closed on Mrs. Garnett, “unhappy woman! your guilt is discovered.”

“Guilt!” repeated lady Torrington; “I really am at a loss to understand.”

“Smithson, in her terror, (for the dressing-room has been on fire,) had confessed that the count del Montarino was this night in your chamber—nay, more, she thought him with you at this moment; but though he has escaped, he has left behind him a witness of your criminality.” As lady Jacintha spoke, she took up the snuff-box—“Can you deny that this belongs to the count?”

Lady Torrington tried to account for the appearance of the box; she had borrowed it of the count.

“Poor creature!” resumed lady Jacintha, “I pity you from my soul! but your guilt is confirmed beyond the shadow of a doubt; and all that remains for me, whom you have so cruelly deceived, is to hasten my departure, for I can by no means think of putting my reputation in doubt by remaining longer under this polluted roof.”

Lady Torrington caught her arm; she wept—she besought her to remain—“You will not, surely, you will not expose me!” said she; “you will not be the means of separating me from the earl!—you will not render me an object of hatred to my son!”

Lady Jacintha for some time seemed inflexible; she suffered the countess to weep and entreat, while she talked in high-flown terms of her virtue being contaminated, her reputation tarnished by remaining at the castle, and affording her countenance, so degraded, so fallen. At length she affected to weep, and lament the necessity of giving up a friendship so prized, at a moment too when she had formed wishes. Here she paused.

But though extremely mortified at being found out, lady Torrington was not so overcome with grief as not to perceive that lady Jacintha expressed much more abhorrence of her error than she really felt; she was certain her dear friend had some point to carry, by which her silence was to be bought. Catching her tone, the countess declared, with many applications of her handkerchief to her eyes, that being cast from her friendship would actually break her heart, and that if she could be any way conducive to her wishes, though they were to part for ever, she should be more than happy to promote their accomplishment.

Lady Jacintha sighed heavily—wished it had not been her cruel misfortune to find a shade in the character of a friend she so truly loved and admired—a friend, whom she had formed the romantic wish of regarding still more nearly—“Oh, Oscar! beloved

Oscar!” exclaimed lady Jacintha, covering her face with her handkerchief, and affecting to weep.

The countess now discovered the intention of lady Jacintha, whom she hated worse than ever. But this was not a moment to contend or seem averse—“How blind I have been,” said lady Torrington, “not to see this partiality! but if you indeed honour Oscar with your regard, you will surely, for his sake, conceal the error of his mother?”

“Alas! poor human creature,” returned lady Jacintha; “we are all liable to error; the brightest characters are not exempt from failings; and such is my pity for you, and love for your son, that I might be induced to forget the unfortunate discovery of to-night, if I thought you would in gratitude give up your engagement with the duchess of Aberdeen.”

This was a sacrifice of no great magnitude, for the strong repugnance her son had expressed to a marriage with lady Arabella Moncrief, gave her but little hope of bringing that scheme of aggrandizement to bear. The countess gave one sigh to the blighted hope she had so fondly cherished, and promised lady Jacintha that she would never again mention the duke of Aberdeen's alliance, but would use all her influence with the earl and her son, nor ever give up the point till she saluted her lady Rushdale.

Lady Jacintha embraced the countess, promised to consign her error to oblivion, and bade her resume her gaiety, for the abigails knew their own interest better than to prate.

The waiting gentlewomen being called in, lady Torrington presented Mrs. Garnett with five guineas, for the assistance she had rendered in extinguishing the fire.

Lady Jacintha then very kindly begged Mrs. Smithson would take care of her arm (which she had been the means of scorching); and with many obliging wishes for her dear friend's repose, she retired exultingly to her own chamber.

The unfortunate Mrs. Smithson had to encounter a storm of rage, for having neglected to lock the dressing-room door, through which oversight that detested creature, lady Jacintha, had gained admittance.

Mrs. Smithson said she had locked it, and that it was all the count's fault; he ought to have waked her when he went away. It was not to be supposed she could keep her eyes open for ever, any more than other people; and though far from being pleased with the demolition of her new muslin dress, she added, “it was lucky the door was not locked, for it had most likely been the saving of their lives.”

“But it has been the ruin of my reputation,” returned lady Torrington; “it has placed me in the power of an envious, malicious woman—it has engaged me in a hateful promise; I would sooner see him dead than married to that detestable creature—poor Oscar!”

“My beautiful new sprigged muslin is burnt to pieces,” said Mrs. Smithson, crying; “if I had been allowed to go to my bed, I should not have met that loss. There is not so much of it left as will make me a frill; and here is my arm all blistered. I am sure I meet nothing but losses and crosses.”

Lady Torrington was too much in the power of her woman to let her suffer any sort of loss; she immediately gave her five guineas to buy a new dress, and told her to take an expensive muslin she had only worn twice.

Mrs. Smithson ceased to complain; she thanked her lady, and retired to sleep; while the countess, though she closed her eyes, was kept awake with the reflection that

she was completely in the toils of lady Jacintha, who, no doubt, at that very moment, was exulting in her disgrace, and laying plans to catch the heart of her noble-minded son.

Lady Jacintha was indeed exulting; she had laughed heartily at the terror of Smithson, and at lady Torrington's weakness, whom she had actually talked into a confession of that guilt, which, had she stoutly denied, it would have been impossible to prove against her.

"I suppose, my lady," said Mrs. Garnett, "having diskivered this *crim. con.* affair, you will set off directly. I shall be rather sorry to go too, for that Mr. Tripton is sitch a droll creter, with his kan-mag nanecdotes, as he calls them."

"You will certainly have the pleasure of enjoying Mr. Tripton's agreeable society some time longer," said lady Jacintha. "I have no proof, Garnett, against the countess; and if I had, I don't expect to find my friends saints; and if there was really any thing wrong, why the vices and errors of our acquaintance are not catching."

"So I say, my lady," returned Garnett, highly pleased they were not to depart, Mr. Tripton having made the castle a very agreeable place.

Lady Jacintha rewarded Mrs. Garnett with a lilac sarsnet dress, almost as good as new; and bidding her remember that she had sworn, and been well paid to keep lady Torrington's secret, dismissed her to repose.

Lady Jacintha then sought her pillow. In her dreams the scene with the countess was renewed; and when she awoke at a late hour the following day, her first thought was triumph; her first words were—"Lady Torrington is now my slave; her reputation is in my power. Lord Rushdale will be obliged to offer me his hand, or I expose his mother, and cover him with disgrace."

But second thoughts, and a consultation with her prime minister, Mrs. Smithson, had inspired lady Torrington with resolution to put lady Jacintha to defiance.



#### CHAP. IV.

All that the world affords of art,  
All that of cunning you can find,  
Is nourish'd warm in woman's heart,  
Is bred in her deceitful mind.

And all that's good, or chaste or bright,  
In truth is found in woman too:  
Her rosy smile's the beam of light  
That points to heav'n man's erring view.

Ye youths, be careful how you love;  
Place, when you do, your choice aright,  
For woman, when a wife, will prove  
An angel pure—or devil quite!

.....  
“Good gentlemen, I thank you for your loves:  
But neither will I wed, so please you.”

*A Counterplot—Rejected Addresses—A Widow's  
Disappointment—Castle-building.*

THE reflections of the countess of Torrington, on the following morning, were not of an enviable nature; she severely condemned herself for want of that presence of mind so essential in fashionable dilemmas; she blamed herself for being deficient in that necessary assurance, by the aid of which she might have confounded and confuted the bold artful lady Jacintha Fitzosborne, who, by the torrent and rapidity of her accusations and reproaches, had thrown her entirely off her guard, and, by mere dint of effrontery, had talked her into criminating herself.

Lady Torrington was no stranger to the malignant disposition of her dear friend, and she wept for vexation to think that, by her own folly, she had so committed herself to the power of a woman, who would have the greatest delight in exposing her errors.

But second thoughts were always considered best—a brilliant idea dried up lady Torrington's tears. She boldly determined on denying every syllable of what had passed between her dear friend and herself; and having given the ductile Mrs. Smithson a preliminary lesson, she became quite composed and easy, convinced that this measure would effectually emancipate her from the toils of the wily lady Jacintha, whom, she was quite certain, lord Rushdale would never accept for a wife, even if she could so far overcome her aversion as to receive her as a daughter.

Having arranged this disagreeable affair to her entire satisfaction, she requested Smithson to shake up her pillows, and issued a command, on no account to disturb her before noon.

The countess of Torrington always took her *déjeuné* in her dressing-room, of which lady Jacintha frequently partook; but this morning Smithson had orders to say the countess was extremely unwell—an unnecessary caution, for so satisfied was lady Jacintha with the success of her scheme, that she reposed supinely in the arms of the drowsy god, nor even dreamt that the half-witted countess had concerted its complete *bouleversement*.

When these dear friends met in the drawing-room, a few minutes before the bell rang for dinner, even the undaunted lady Jacintha Fitzosborne envied the unvarying cheek, and air of perfect oblivion, with which the countess received her salutation; but this envy was succeeded by absolute astonishment, when she saw her ladyship present the count del Montarino with his gold box.

“Your snuff, count,” said she, with an air of perfect innocence, “is most excellent; it afforded my head great relief, and I am infinitely obliged to you, though the ease it procured me was productive of rather a serious accident.”

The earl of Torrington asked—“What has happened?”

“Why poor Smithson,” replied the countess, “who fancied me much worse than I really was, determined, entirely without my knowledge, to sit up in my dressing-room, that she might be at hand if I wanted any thing; but sleep overcame her good intentions, and unfortunately she set herself and the draperies of the toilet and window on fire.”

“Has Smithson suffered much?” inquired lord Rushdale.

“Only a little scorch on her arm, and the loss of a new muslin dress,” returned the countess; “but Heaven knows where the accident would have ended! most fatally, I fear, if lady Jacintha Fitzosborne had not smelt fire, and came in time to prevent any further loss than a few yards of silk and muslin, which is of no consequence, and is good for trade, you know.”

“It is well it is no worse,” said the earl.

“But the best part of the story,” resumed the countess, “remains to be told. Smithson, it seems, had been dreaming that I was married to the count del Montarino, and waking, in terror, ran to my chamber-door, calling upon the count and me to save our lives—Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha! I declare I have laughed excessively to think, lady Jacintha, what your ideas must have been at seeing the confusion of poor bewildered Smithson.”

Most of the party laughed, though the mind of each made its own comment.

Lady Jacintha, trembling with rage and disappointment, muttered—“Matchless effrontery!”

Lord Rushdale indistinctly caught her exclamation, and coloured scarlet deep.

The earl threw a glance of scrutiny on the count.

And lady Torrington then said a few words, in a low whisper, to colonel St. Irwin, who replied—“You will do well to effect it as soon as possible.”

From this moment the countess did her utmost possible to avoid being alone with her dear friend, who perceived that she had nothing to expect from the promise she had extorted, and that the counterplot of the countess had left her no dependence but upon her own allurements and attractions.

Lord Rushdale was still polite; and if she could but keep that young witch, Miss Delmore, at a distance, she might make an impression on his heart; it would be double triumph to mount the towering height of her ambition without the assistance or

concurrence of the countess. To this end she put on a gentle serious behaviour, and affected the affable and sentimental.

While, with all the artful softness she could throw into her look and voice, she was reading Prior's "Nut-Brown Maid" with lord Rushdale, sir Middleton Maxfield burst into the little drawing-room, and, after a loud and boisterous laugh, said—"Are you two studying love or politics?"

"Neither, sir," replied lady Jacintha, gravely.

"Shut up your book then, and prepare——"

"For what?" asked lord Rushdale.

"By Jupiter, she is coming! I had the honour of a bow and a smile; such a rosy blush, such a dimpled smile! How you stare, instead of returning me thanks for the happy tidings!"

The envious feelings of lady Jacintha informed her it was Miss Delmore sir Middleton meant. To hide her vexation she again pretended to read.

Lord Rushdale, scarcely less agitated, asked—"Who is coming, sir Middleton?"

Lady Jacintha felt a shock, worse than the chilling touch of the torpedo, when sir Cyril Musgrove joined them, exclaiming—"Take care of your hearts! The renowned 'Lady of the Lake,' the 'Queen of the Island of Calm-Delights,' the fairy Benigna, is arrived!"

"What influence the earl of Torrington must possess, to persuade the recluse to quit her cell!" said sir Middleton. "Oh that I possessed the persuasive powers of lord Torrington! I know a little charming——"

"Pshaw, your charmer!" interrupted Sir Cyril, "compared to the charmer Mrs. Doricourt brings in her suit, is a mere Blowzabella; and though I confess my curiosity to see this *rara avis*, this *ne plus ultra* of all perfection, the 'Lady of the Lake,' yet I would gladly resign that pleasure to be favoured with one approving smile from that dove, that bird of Paradise, that phoenix!—help me to some terms, Rushdale, to express timidity, sweetness, unparalleled beauty!"

"If it were past the dinner hour," said lady Jacintha, disdainfully, "I should really suppose, sir Cyril, you had taken too liberally of your favourite pink champagne."

"Pink champagne!" repeated he, "flat as the drainings of your grandmother's posset-bowl, compared with the beauty I am speaking of! a single glance of her eye is a thousand times more exhilarating than nectar! and, '*blest as the immortal gods is he*——' No, I am wrong there—will he be, is the proper phrase—who shall call the divine, enchanting, beautiful, adorable Cecilia his!"

Sir Cyril had talked himself into a heat—he threw himself on a chair, and requested lady Jacintha to fan him.

"I had forgot," said lord Rushdale, rising, "that I have some arrangements to make before dinner."

"I wonder I was not informed," rejoined lady Jacintha, haughtily, "that Mrs. Doricourt was expected to dinner; but, *n'importe*, my toilet is soon made."

Lord Rushdale had left the room, and lady Jacintha was about to follow, when sir Cyril, starting up, placed his back against the door.—"Your beauty is resplendent enough," said he, "and wants no improvement; you cannot fear being eclipsed by the little dryade."

"Of such a consequence resulting from her beauty," returned lady Jacintha, scornfully, "I have assuredly not thought; nor, indeed, to confess the truth, of her possessing beauty at all. I really pity the poor thing! she will be flattered into a belief that she is a divinity."

"Envy, by Jove!" rejoined sir Middleton Maxfield; "sheer envy! There is no flattery in the case, for we all think her angelic."

"*We!*" echoed lady Jacintha; "that *we* is truly ridiculous. Do you arrogate to yourself the plural of royalty, sir Middleton?"

"Certainly not, lady Jacintha," replied he. "Do I, Musgrove?"

"On the subject of Miss Delmore's beauty," replied sir Cyril, "there is—there can be but one opinion—'She is the peerless Rosaline!'"

"Upon my word, gentlemen, you enlighten my ignorance," said lady Jacintha, endeavouring to smother her resentment; "I never before understood that Miss Delmore was considered more than tolerably pretty."

"Elegant, beautiful, divine!" said sir Cyril.

"Charming, graceful, fascinating," rejoined sir Middleton.

"*More than painting can express!*" returned sir Cyril.

"*Or youthful poets fancy when they love!*" exclaimed sir Middleton.

Their intention was to torment lady Jacintha, and they succeeded to their utmost wish.

"Pon my honour, lady Jacintha, Miss Delmore is the brilliant cynosure on which all male eyes fix: if you doubt my assertion," continued sir Cyril, "ask Wilmot, Rushdale, Montarino, Maxfield, St. Irwin—nay, even the earl of Torrington; they will all tell you——"

"Nothing that I have the smallest ambition to hear," interrupted lady Jacintha; "and, really, gentlemen, your detaining me here, to fatigue me with a subject so little interesting, is not very creditable to your politeness. I insist, sir Cyril, you will allow me to pass—I shall be too late to dress."

"Beg ten thousand pardons; sorry to have discomposed—detained I mean. 'Pon my honour, I must go and pay my devoirs to my reflector."

"Curse reflection!" rejoined sir Middleton; "I never reflect—it makes me dull and stupid."

"Time enough yet though, to adonize," resumed sir Cyril, pulling out his watch.

"Oh time, what an enemy art thou to youth and beauty!"

"Make the most of it then," said sir Middleton, "while it lasts; live while you can, that's my motto."

Lady Jacintha's patience was at the last gasp, when sir Cyril resumed.—"The divine Cecilia is worth a little attention to the graces; and, if I don't take care to improve every advantage, Rushdale will cut me out."

"Do you suppose," asked lady Jacintha, affecting indifference, "that lord Rushdale troubles himself about how he appears in the eyes of the housekeeper's niece?"

"He has no other care on earth," replied sir Cyril; "he is in love with her unnumbered fathoms deep—no plummet can sound the depth of his affection——"

"Or of your folly," said lady Jacintha, angrily. "I will be kept here no longer, sir Cyril—let me pass!"

"Not till you promise me to employ your muse in writing an ode."

"To nonsense?" asked lady Jacintha.

"A triumphal ode," said sir Cyril.

"On what occasion?" demanded lady Jacintha.

"On the rapturous occasion——" sir Cyril paused; "no," said he, "no, the time is not ripe.

'Still be the secret lock'd within my breast—  
I would not have my cherish'd purpose guess'd.'

'Pon my veracity, that couplet is my own—egad, I believe if I only applied a little, I should soon rival lord Byron, Walter Scott, and Tom Moore. I have infinitely undervalued my own abilities, no doubt; with a little, a very little study, I might be able to compose an ode myself on the happy occasion."

"On what occasion?" again asked lady Jacintha.

"A very joyous one to be sure," replied sir Cyril; "every line glowing with transport, bliss, delight; flutes breathing, graces dancing, Venus scattering roses, Cupid, with golden bow and flaming torch——"

"And Hymen," said lady Jacintha, "bringing——"

"Brawling and squalling," interrupted sir Cyril, "tears, hysterics, murmurings, contradictions, and repentance—Nothing in the shape of matrimony, I am much obliged to you. I have not the least objection to give a diamond ring to a fair lady, but not a plain gold one. It is time enough for me to submit my shoulders to the *jugum conjugale*."

"You are right—my maxim exactly. None but fools marry," rejoined sir Middleton Maxfield.

"At any rate," replied sir Cyril, "it will be time enough for me to do penance for my sins twenty years hence."

Again sir Cyril looked at his watch— "*My hour is come*," said he, and removing from the door, suffered lady Jacintha to depart.

"Pon my honour, she bore it famously, Maxfield," said sir Cyril; "but we must never hope to be forgiven."

Sir Middleton laughed.—"If her eyes had been swords," replied he, "the spiteful devil would have run us through. I never knew lady Jacintha allow another woman beauty in my life. Our praise of Miss Delmore has, I am certain, deprived her of all appetite—she will eat no dinner."

That sir Cyril Musgrove had some project floating in his brain, lady Jacintha had no doubt. Perhaps it was as well she should be ignorant in the business, if it concerned Cecilia, to whose fate, good or ill, she was altogether indifferent, so it removed her from lord Rushdale. From her dressing-room window she beheld the object of her hatred, glowing in youthful beauty, and near her stood lord Rushdale. He gathered a rose, and presented it to Cecilia, who received it with a smile, and placed it in her bosom. Mad with jealousy, lady Jacintha found a thousand faults with Mrs. Garnett, whom she had almost fatigued to death with putting on and pulling off the whole of her wardrobe. At last Mrs. Garnett, with smothering her resentment, grew quite ill, and sinking on the ground, fell into hysterics.

Lady Jacintha was now reduced to the necessity of finishing dressing herself, and with that, and exclaiming against servants pretending to be fatigued, and having fine

feelings, she so exhausted her spirits, pretty well strained before by sir Cyril Musgrove and sir Middleton Maxfield, that she was obliged to take *sal volatile*, and apply to her *eau de luce*, before she was able to descend to the drawing-room, where she had to undergo the disagreeable ceremony of introduction to another prodigy of beauty and perfection.

"Heaven defend me," exclaimed she, "from a *femme savante*! I detest all wit but my own, and on that account refused an introduction to the Blue Stocking club; and now to be sickened with a beauty and a wit!—it is too much for mortal endurance. And here comes another of my torments," said she, mentally, as lady Eglantine Sydney inquired if her toilet was finished? "From this *faduer*, this *petit beguele*, this worse than *automata*, if worse can be, Heaven deliver me!" thought lady Jacintha. "If I were but heiress to the wealth of her father, I cared not how soon she reposed in the monument of her ancestors."

Lady Eglantine Sydney having settled in her own mind a very important point, came to the dressing-room of her cousin, to announce her intention of setting off in a few days for Weymouth, from whence her aunt, the honourable Mrs. Mabel Oldstock, had written, to request she would join her, as soon as politeness would allow her to take leave of the earl and countess of Torrington.

"What, in the name of all extraordinary things, can have taken the stately old maid to Weymouth?" said lady Jacintha. "I greatly fear this journey augurs contempt on the right honourable name of Oldstock; as sure as fate, Eglantine, aunt Mabel is gone to Weymouth, to try the force of her charms; weary of '*single blessedness*,' she is on the look-out for a husband."

"For shame, cousin," lisped lady Eglantine, "don't speak so disrespectful."

"Well, I admire you for that," returned lady Jacintha; "disrespectful, truly!—Pray are not you anxious to enter the respectable state of matrimony? and is not every single woman on the look-out for a husband?"

"No," replied lady Eglantine, "for I am quite certain——"

"You have secured one," said lady Jacintha; "the incomparable youth lord Melvil. Don't trouble yourself to contradict me, my sweet gentle coz."

"I declare, Jacintha, you are the strangest creature—I am sure I wish——"

"I know you do," resumed lady Jacintha; "you wish aunt Mabel would die."

"Me, cousin!" exclaimed lady Eglantine; "me so unnatural as to wish so kind a relation to die?"

"Yes, you, cousin," replied lady Jacintha; "and for my part, I see nothing unnatural in the wish; she is an old woman, gouty, and asthmatic—you are a young woman, handsome, and in love; now if you could persuade her to die, her fourteen thousand a year would be a very pretty beginning for you and Melvil."

"How careless you talk about aunt Mabel's fortune, cousin," said lady Eglantine, "when you know you have as much right as I have to expect——"

"Not a single foot of her land, or a guinea of her cash," returned lady Jacintha. "I have offended past all hope of forgiveness: ever since the unfortunate likeness I discovered between her and a picture of Shakespeare's Sycorax, she never called me niece, or gave me an invitation to her house; and having, when we met at lady Norberry's, thrown out some little witticism about '*withering on the virgin thorn*,' the old lady, craning her scraggy neck, and placing her skinny hands before her, with more than her usual formality, said—'Lady Jacintha Fitzosborne, your rudeness is intolerable, your attempts at satire despicable, and your manner so bold, that I fear I shall never see

you so respectable a character as an old maid.' She then screwed up her portal of intelligence, as Wilton calls it, and never on any occasion afterwards honoured me with the slightest recognition. '*Unwary pleasantries*' has lost me aunt Mabel's favour; depart this life when she may, she will bequeath me only her displeasure, and unless I can persuade some rich fool to marry me, have no better prospect than sinking into aunty's respectable character of an antiquated virgin."

Lady Eglantine, tender, gentle, and silly as she appeared, was as deep a plotter as her cousin, and had artfully kept alive her aunt's resentment, which, but for her insinuations and false reports, would have been forgotten. But lady Eglantine knew that her father, ambitious and mercenary, would never consent to her marrying lord Melvil. She was deeply in love—in her eyes Melvil was all perfection—besides, he had sworn to destroy himself if she deceived him; and he doated on her with such an extravagance of passion, and had her interest so much at heart, that he persuaded her to go to Weymouth, where her aunt being unwell, would consider her leaving the gaieties of a young party at Torrington Castle, as an incontrovertible proof of her affection, and most amiable disposition; and when at Weymouth, he hoped to persuade her to a private marriage; his apprehension, if not his jealousy, being excited by a letter he had been permitted to read, from lady Eglantine's mother, in which she was bade to prepare herself to receive the marquis of Dudley, on his return from his travels, who, through the duke of Abberville, his uncle, had made proposals for her fair hand. But lady Eglantine had vowed to be the wife of Melvil, and the approbation of fathers and uncles was of no consequence.

Lord Melvil acted the jealous and despairing lover—he raved and entreated—she wept, consented that he should follow her to Weymouth, and promised that she would marry him, as soon as the ceremony could be performed without the dread of discovery.

By the poor lord Melvil this was "*a consummation devoutly to be wished*," for the fortune of lady Eglantine was necessary to support his rank; of her person he was already weary, even before marriage, and he was eager for the performance of the ceremony, that he might be at liberty to act the perfect indifference he felt.

Lady Jacintha, of proud unyielding spirit, had never been able to conform to the formal restrictions and old-fashioned decorum of her aunt Oldstock; and she reconciled herself to the probability of lady Eglantine being her heiress, with the hope of obtaining from her weakness what she had lost by her own flippancy.—"Poor aunt Mabel!" said she, as she descended with her cousin to the drawing-room; "I ought to have remembered that a woman, let her age be what it may, never pardons or forgets a reflection on her person."

When the cousins entered the drawing-room, Mrs. Doricourt had been introduced to all the party, themselves excepted, and, spite of lady Jacintha's effrontery, she felt insignificant beneath the glance of her dark eye, which seemed to pierce into her inmost thoughts.

Cecilia's dress, a white sarsenet, simply but elegantly trimmed, occupied lady Eglantine's thoughts; her coral earring and necklace set off the dazzling whiteness of her neck, and lady Eglantine determined to have a set of coral exactly like Miss Delmore's, because they were so pretty and becoming.

Lady Jacintha's eyes, in restless movement, wandered from Cecilia to lord Rushdale, to discover the effect her beauty had upon him. His countenance was bright

with pleasure—he was no longer pensive, but joined in the sprightly jest and elegant repartee, with all the gaiety of happiness.

Lady Jacintha was mortified; his eyes had never sparkled, nor his lips smiled on her, in the way they now did; and on whom? a girl of low birth, a dependant. Pride and indignation swelled her bosom; but when dinner was announced, and she saw him lead Cecilia into the *salle-à-manger*, and placed himself between Mrs. Doricourt and her, utterly regardless of her own superior rank, her melancholy reproachful glances, it required all the art of the *haut ton* to prevent her looks and words from crushing to the earth her unconscious rival, whose innocent mind felt only sensations of pleasure. She beheld her almost-worshipped friend receiving the homage due to her superior elegance of mind and manner—she saw the smile of affability on the rich coral lip of lord Rushdale—she heard him addressing her in a voice of respectful tenderness, and she had not one uneasy thought or wish ungratified.

Lady Jacintha was placed opposite the trio, between lord Wilton and sir Middleton Maxfield; the one spoke of Drawley's wonderful resuscitation, who was now all assiduous attention to the countess, and was uttering *bon mots* to the astonishment of Miss Maxfield.

Her brother talked of his determination to win back his hundred pounds in some way or other.

Lady Jacintha's thoughts were on the other side of the table; and when applied to by the gentlemen, blundered out a negative for an affirmative, in reply to their questions: bent upon disturbing lord Rushdale's pleasure, whenever she saw him engaged in conversation with Cecilia, she contrived to want to be helped to something that stood near him, or to ask him some question; to which having replied, to her great mortification, he resumed his attentions and conversation with Mrs. Doricourt and Cecilia.

The countess, informed of the family and great wealth of Mrs. Doricourt, paid her a marked attention, which was highly pleasing to the earl; but this conduct, almost servile, did not impose on Mrs. Doricourt, who perceived at once the homage paid to her adventitious possessions; the *saute* of the countess to herself did not eradicate from her mind the recollection of the unfeeling *hauteur* with which she had insulted the lovely innocent Cecilia on her introduction; but this the countess having herself condescended to forget, she did not suppose any other person would have the temerity to remember.

As lady Welford, Mrs. Doricourt with much pleasure recognised a pupil of her mother's; and, though she had never evinced brilliant talents, Mrs. Doricourt remembered many instances of her goodness of heart; and now, after the lapse of years, she was happy to find, among so many flirts and coxcombs, one woman of rank escaped from the contagion of folly, and preserving an unblemished reputation, with whom she could converse rationally, and whose dress and manners neither outraged decency, nor descended to vulgarity.

When the ladies retired to the drawing-room, Mrs. Doricourt took out her netting, and Cecilia, seated near her, prepared to finish a gold chain.

"La, how pretty!" said Miss Maxfield; "well, I declare, I should like to make a chain too; only I don't think I should have patience, and then it seems so difficult."

"Not at all," replied Cecilia; "I shall have much pleasure in teaching you."

"Dear, you are very good; well, then, I will begin to-morrow."



"To do what, Jemima?" asked Mrs. Freakley.

"To make a chain to hold her lovers with," said lady Eglantine.

"The chain must be a gold one," rejoined Miss Maxfield.

"*Sans doute*," said lady Jacintha, "no other will be strong enough."

"Why, la! it does not require to be strong," returned Jemima, "just to bear a locket."

"*Pardonnez moi*," said lady Jacintha; "I thought it was to bear matrimony."

Mrs. Freakley looked displeased, for though her niece did not take her ladyship's meaning, she did, and with some tartness she replied—"I hope, with her gold chain, Jemima will secure herself a husband before she is thirty, for I should be very sorry to see her an envious old maid."

Lady Jacintha did not choose to suppose this speech directed to her, and throwing herself in a graceful attitude, on a *chaise longue*, she protested her amazement that Drawley had relinquished the INDOLENT, while the weather continued so very warm.—"I really feel inclined to take up the character," said she, "only I detest being a copyist."

The countess admired the different works of Mrs. Doricourt, Lady Welford, and Cecilia—declared she was ashamed of her own idleness; but example was every thing, and she would positively endeavour to work a flounce—"That is, if I have time," said she, "for, *à-propos*, Mrs. Doricourt, we are going to astonish all our neighbours with a *fête champêtre* and a masquerade."

"*Oh charmante! que ravit!*" exclaimed lady Jacintha, "what an opportunity for a display of talent!"

"The person may be shewn to great advantage in a Polish dress," said lady Eglantine.

"I was never at a masquerade—what is it like?" asked Miss Maxfield.

"Every thing that is droll and comical," replied Mrs. Freakley; "a masquerade is like—dear me, nothing in the world that I know of; it is an assembly where people meet together, in the habits of all nations, with masques on their faces, and dance, and sing, and talk scandal, and tell one another disagreeable truths."

"Admirably described!" said lady Jacintha.

Mrs. Freakley took irony for compliment, and her bend of thanks had nearly produced a general laugh, when the countess resumed—"And we are planning a theatre, Miss Delmore, where we expect to shine, for part of our *corps dramatique* are veterans in the histrionic art."

Cecilia expressed much pleasure at the prospect of witnessing a dramatic entertainment.

"Why where in the world have you been buried all your life, Miss Delmore, never to have seen a play?" asked Miss Maxfield. "La, how odd! I dare say I have seen a thousand."

"A thousand! dear me, Jemima," observed Mrs. Freakley, "any person would believe you are an old woman, to hear you talk; consider, my love, it was only last winter you came out."

"La! aunt, you need not tell every body when I came out," replied Miss Maxfield; "but there you only do it to make me look like a child; but never mind—I am not so very young, but I may get a husband before you think for."

Cecilia thought of the count del Montarino, who that instant entered the room, with the rest of the gentlemen.

Mrs. Freakley laughed at what she called the innocence of the Child of Nature.—“No fear, Jemima, my love,” said she, “but what you will have offers enough—whether you will get a good husband is the question.”

“To be sure I shall,” replied Miss Maxfield; “I warrant I shall know how to choose, and to manage a husband, though I am so young, as well as the rest of my acquaintance. La! Miss Delmore, I have hardly had an opportunity of speaking to you since your return. I missed you so, you can’t think; well, and how do you do, after your rustication, as sir Cyril Musgrove calls it? I declare Mrs. Doricourt is very handsome, only somehow she makes me afraid of her.”

“Because she is a Catholic?” asked Cecilia.

“No,” replied Miss Maxfield, “not for that altogether; but her eyes—I never saw such eyes—they look as if they saw into one’s thoughts.”

“And have you any thoughts you wish to conceal?” asked Cecilia.

“La! no, to be sure,” returned Miss Maxfield, “what should I have to think about? Only look at lady Jacintha Fitzosborne, how she shews her ancles—if any body else was to loll in that way, she would be the first to say it was indelicate. What can she be saying to the count? I hate her so, you can’t think.”

“For speaking to the count del Montarino do you hate her?” asked Cecilia, archly.

“Dear me, no—what do I care for the count? La! Miss Delmore, you look at me as if you did not believe me,” said Miss Maxfield, colouring, “just as if you suspected the count was going to run away with me.”

“That would be a service of danger, as you are unfortunately a ward of Chancery,” observed the honourable Tangent Drawley, whose ear caught the latter part of Miss Maxfield’s speech; “so, *vice versa*, child, you must run away with the gentleman.”

“La, Mr. Drawley, how droll you are!” replied Miss Maxfield; “how can I run away with a gentleman?”

“The easiest thing imaginable; if you are determined on a matrimonial frolic, give me all your attention, and I will put you in a way to baffle the big wigs and long gowns,” said Mr. Drawley; “you must tie your lover, hand and foot, and throw him into a carriage; then you must have a pair of loaded pistols, or a blunderbuss, to convince the gentlemen of the long robe, the big wigs, you know, that you used force, and put him in bodily fear.”

“I never heard of a lady running away with a gentleman,” returned Miss Maxfield, “and I am sure you are only joking.”

“Serious as matrimony,” replied Drawley, putting on a look of gravity; “why I would have run away with you myself.”

“Would you though,” interrupted Jemima; “and why did not you?”

“Pon my veracity,” said Drawley, ready to laugh, “because I was afraid of the consequences.”

Card-tables being set, this conversation, so interesting to the Child of Nature, was interrupted.

Mrs. Doricourt and lady Welford still remained at the work-table, while lady Jacintha, who always contrived to win, was eagerly forming a party for *rouge et noir*.

Cecilia knew nothing of cards, and remained quietly engaged with her chain.

The count del Montarino had heard Mrs. Doricourt was rich, and in the hope of easing her of some of her superfluous cash, he used all his rhetoric to persuade her and lady Welford to join the card-players; but Mrs. Doricourt had an opinion of her own, from which she always acted, and the count, cursing her inflexibility, was obliged to give up his point.

"You must learn to play at cards," said the earl of Torrington to Miss Delmore, "or what will become of you when we get you to town? Come, I insist on your joining the *rouge et noir* party."

Cecilia played like a novice; at first she won considerably, but fortune was, as usual, capricious; and before she rose from the table, she lost eleven guineas, which the earl insisted on paying.

"I am certain I shall never be a gamester," said Cecilia.

"And why not?" demanded the earl; "our first women of fashion play deep."

"I am sorry to hear it," returned Cecilia; "this fashionable amusement neither adds to their beauty, nor the goodness of their tempers. Lady Jacintha and Mrs. Freakley really frightened me! No, I shall never be a gamester."

"Because you have been unfortunate to-night?" asked the earl; "to-morrow you may be more successful."

"I should never like cards," replied Cecilia, "even if I were sure to be a winner."

"And wherefore?" demanded the earl.

"Because," replied Cecilia, "I should be satisfied that the money I won ought to have been applied to the paying of more worthy debts than those contracted at a card-table; and if I lost, I should regret having thrown away money that might have been far better employed in acts of charity."

The earl held a small note-case in his hand. "You prove to me," said he, "that you understand the real value of money: receive this from your father, Cecilia—I will not have my first gift refused."

"Pardon me, my lord," said Cecilia; "I have already to-night been indebted to your liberality."

"You merely complied with my desire," replied the earl; "it was only fair that I should defray the expence of your being initiated. The approaching festivities will, of course, require decoration—if you find the sum contained in this case," presenting it, "insufficient, do not hesitate to inform me. Mrs. Doricourt must not deprive me altogether of the pleasure of providing for your wants."

Cecilia would have excused herself from accepting his present, but the earl closing her hand on the note-case, added—"From me, Cecilia, who have pledged myself to be your father, you may, without incurring the charge of impropriety, accept a present."

He then joined colonel St. Irwin, whose arm he took; they seemed in earnest conversation, and often turned their eyes on Cecilia, as she seated herself beside Mrs. Doricourt, to whom she repeated what had passed between herself and the earl of Torrington.

"I did not wish my Cecilia should have obligations of a pecuniary nature, even to the earl of Torrington," said Mrs. Doricourt, "but you must not offend him by refusing his gift; as he persists in considering you his daughter, there certainly can be no impropriety attached to his making you a present."

Lady Welford joined in Mrs. Doricourt's opinion, and Cecilia placed the note-case in her bosom.

The countess of Torrington now joined them, and inquired of Cecilia if she had made a fortune at *rouge et noir*?

Cecilia mentioned the amount of her loss.

"A mere trifle!" said the countess; "but pray who was the winner?"

Cecilia believed lady Jacintha Fitzosborne.

"As usual," resumed the countess; "no woman in England better understands *mêler bâton les cartes* than lady Jacintha Fitzosborne; indeed some of her acquaintance do not scruple to say her wardrobe is supplied by the board of green cloth; but females of rank, who have slender fortunes, must support appearances, or how are they to establish themselves in life?"

At this moment the earl approached, and asked Mrs. Doricourt if she would allow him to conduct her to the music-room?

Mrs. Doricourt, disgusted with lady Torrington's exposure of the woman she called her friend, was glad of an opportunity to withdraw from the conversation.

Lord Rushdale took the hand of the delighted Cecilia, and they passed on to the music-room.

As the countess followed, leaning on the arm of Drawley, she said, with an affected sigh—" *Malheur pour moi*, I am neither gifted with a dulcet voice, or a scientific finger."

"*Heureux fortune pour moi*," replied Drawley, "or you would be too charming."

"What flattery!" said the countess; "*mais allons*, or we shall fall under the censure of my doughty lord, for not paying sufficient homage to madame, the reigning favourite."

"Is it possible the earl can have a favourite except yourself?" asked Drawley.

"How ridiculous!" exclaimed the countess; "surely you must have been asleep for the last hundred years, or you never could ask so absurd a question; with all his nonsensical pomp and solemnity, I must do the earl of Torrington the justice to say, he pays, in some points, a strict attention to fashionable customs; he is as politely indifferent to his wife as any well-bred man need be."

"And to other ladies?" said Drawley.

"*Pardonnez moi*," returned the countess; "as I am not at all inclined to jealousy, I am not observant of his actions, and the whom, the when, and the where, so far from rendering me uneasy, never enter my imagination."

"How superlatively happy it would make me," said Drawley, "to know I had a place there!"

The countess turned her really-handsome eyes on him, with a glance not calculated to annihilate him; neither did her voice express displeasure, as she replied—"You! what confident creatures men are—how they presume, if one condescends to bestow on them the most trifling notice!"

The reply Drawley would have made was prevented by Miss Maxfield.

"La! lady Torrington, did you hear Mrs. Doricourt sing?"

"Yes," replied Drawley; "we have not stuffed our ears with cotton."

"Nonsense!" exclaimed the countess, vexed at the interruption of a conversation that was growing very interesting.

“Dear me, no!” said Miss Maxfield; “the words are very sensible, I assure you—all about love being like a rose. La! don’t you think Mrs. Doricourt sings better than lady Jacintha Fitzosborne?”

“Much better,” returned Drawley; “she sings like a nightingale that has swallowed a jelly.”

“What a droll creature you are!” said Miss Maxfield, tittering; “that’s the best joke I ever heard.”

Finding she could not get rid of Miss Maxfield, lady Torrington moved towards the pianoforte, to join in complimenting Mrs. Doricourt, who had just finished a beautiful canzonet from Camoens. Lady Torrington had not heard a single note while Mrs. Doricourt sang; but that did not signify—she was as loud in praise as those who had enjoyed the delight of hearing her.

Cecilia’s alabaster arm rested on the harp, on which she had been requested by lady Jacintha to accompany her in a song she was selecting.

Lady Jacintha was in voice, and would have got through extremely well, had she not observed the eyes of lord Rushdale fixed on Cecilia, with such evident admiration as left no doubt of his sentiments; love beamed in every feature of his fine face—love for a low-born girl, a creature brought up upon charity, a dependant! Envy and indignation are no friends to harmony—lady Jacintha was out of temper, and she sang out of tune; but too polite to notice what was evident to every ear, the company applauded, and lady Jacintha rose from the instrument with a haughty air, casting looks of displeasure at the countess, who appeared to have entirely forgotten their treaty of alliance, and her former contempt of Cecilia, to whom she seemed desirous of atoning by every possible attention.

While lady Jacintha’s bosom was the seat of anarchy, and she felt all the tortures of jealousy and offended pride, the rest of the party appeared more than usually happy; nothing like discontent appeared, every one willingly contributed the talent they possessed to add to the general hilarity.

Lord Rushdale and Cecilia sang duets, and Mrs. Doricourt and sir Middleton Maxfield joined in glees and trios. Lady Eglantine Sydney warbled a pensive rondeau, and lady Jacintha, though boiling with rage at the absolute desertion of Oscar, determined not to yield the palm to her rival. She exerted all her powers of look and voice to win back the wanderer; but, insensible to her allurements, lord Rushdale remained near Cecilia; nor, at any period of his remembrance, had he enjoyed such perfect felicity; he touched her hand, soft and white as the down of the cygnet; he saw her smile, and heard her utter the refined sentiments of an innocent unsophisticated mind; he felt that he loved her with a devoted affection, and his heart made a vow never to marry unless Cecilia was his wife.

Lady Jacintha had noticed the note-case in the folds of Cecilia’s dress, and jealousy prompted the belief that it was a gift from lord Rushdale; with much satisfaction she saw it drop from her bosom, and having the power to gratify a mean curiosity, she slyly raised it from the ground, with the malicious hope of discovering something that might render Cecilia less perfect in the opinion of lord Torrington.

It was not till Cecilia undressed, that she discovered her loss, and to what extent she knew not. She had seen that the note-case contained bank paper, but the amount she had not examined. Her aunt Milman had been some time retired to bed, and she thought it useless to disturb her; she therefore contented herself with telling the maid who attended

her to search for the note-case in the music-room, and where they had supped; and having no doubt of its recovery, she soon fell asleep, unsuspecting that lady Jacintha Fitzosborne was at that very moment arraigning fate, and execrating her malignant stars, that she could not appropriate to her own use the four hundred pounds the note-case contained, the signature of the earl of Torrington being so conspicuously written on the back of each of the notes, as to render the erasure impossible; neither was there any *petit billet* in the note-case to confirm her own jealousy, or degrade Cecilia in the eyes of others. Throwing the note-case on her toilet, she sat beating the carpet with her foot, and exclaiming, that she was, of all created beings, the most unlucky; all her schemes had failed, all her wishes had been disappointed, and, unless something could be effected to separate Cecilia and lord Rushdale, she should be utterly undone; all her creditors, whom she had put off with hints of her speedy marriage with the heir of Torrington, would be clamorous for their demands, and nothing but flight to a foreign country would preserve her from the horrors of incarceration.

Lady Torrington, since the moment of her presenting his snuff-box to the count in full *assemblée*, had actually regarded lady Jacintha with an eye of defiance, and seemed to menace a determined purpose to deny her confession of error, of which, unhappily, she had no proof beyond assertion; and though her account might be believed by some, it would militate but little against her dear friend's reputation in *haut ton*, where her rank, her power of giving splendid entertainments, would always attract the idle and dissipated, who would neither see or hear what was likely to deprive them of pleasure.

These uneasy reflections kept lady Jacintha tossing on her pillow long after the countess had sunk to rest, for the consciousness of error disturbed not her bosom; she had defeated lady Jacintha, whose wit she had often envied; and her triumph made her forgetful that a moment might yet arrive, when she should stand exposed to the resentment of her husband, the scorn of the world, and the remorseful upbraidings of her own conscience.

With the morning came new reflections—the handsome person of the late insensible Drawley, who, having thrown off the INDOLENT, was a very charming young man. As to the count del Montarino, he was grown odious to her remembrance; she wished, with all her soul, he was hanged, his neck was broke, he was married, or had met any other disaster, no matter what, that would take him for ever from her sight.

While the countess of Torrington sat sipping her chocolate, and musing on the means of getting rid of the troublesome, disagreeable count, the earl, her husband, suddenly entered her dressing-room. A kind of consciousness gave an uneasy twinge to her mind; but she was too great an adept in the effrontery of *bon ton* to suffer it to suffuse her cheek, or embarrass her manner. Lady Torrington received her lord, if not with the smile of innocence, with the assumption of smiling affability; she held out her white hand to him, called him dear Wilfred, and said it was so kind, so gallant of him to take his *déjeuné* with her—she was quite delighted, it was such an unexpected pleasure, so *nouveau*, that he should prefer a *tête-à-tête* with his wife, when there were so many more *jeunes belles* at the castle.

The earl did not even smile at this pretty *badinage*. He gravely seated himself at the breakfast-table; and when the countess had exhausted her exclamations of surprise and pleasure, he bade Smithson leave the room.

This appeared the prelude to a storm, and her ladyship, unwilling to encounter it alone, said—"But if Smithson goes, who is to attend? for I never admit the men-servants here."

"We will wait upon ourselves for once," replied the earl; "it will be novelty, and must on that account prove agreeable."

Lady Torrington, convinced she was to undergo a lecture, prepared to receive it with the spirit and dignity of a fashionable wife.

The door closed on Smithson, who was glad to escape, and the earl very provokingly said—"Do not let your ladyship's vanity set down my visit to the score of compliment or gallantry; I am not come to flatter, but to have a little serious conversation with you."

"*Mon Dieu*, serious!" repeated lady Torrington. "No, for pity's sake! you will vapour me to death; I detest every thing serious."

"I seriously believe you, upon my honour," resumed the earl; "but though I may chance to displease—nay, to give you the vapours, I shall persevere in telling you what I consider necessary to my own dignity——"

"*Ciel!*" interrupted the countess; "what are you going to tell me?"

"That I am heartily tired, madam," said the earl, "of the count del Montarino's extended visit."

"I am sure so am I," returned the countess; "I was never so weary of seeing any person in my life."

"And more than this," continued lord Torrington, "his particular attention to you, and the encouragement you have given him, have raised suspicions that I——"

"That you have no right either to feel or mention," interrupted the countess.

"When did I ever appear piqued, or interfere with your gallantries? Pray, my lord, did I resent your attentions to Miss O'Rooke, the Irish beauty, though every body at Belfast saw your attachment? Did I ever once appear offended, or take the least notice of your amour with the duchess de Valencourt?"

"I confess," said the earl, ironically, "you have been most gentle, amiable, and uncomplaining."

"Yes, yes," replied the countess, "common justice obliges you to allow that."

"But if you had been uneasy, if you had upbraided me, Emily, it would have been a proof that my affection was of some consequence to you. But do not suppose that the infidelity of a husband authorizes the libertinism of a wife, or that the vices——"

"Libertinism! vices!" echoed the countess, resentfully. "Really, my lord, your language goes beyond my comprehension. Whatever your own vices may be, I am not conscious that I deserve to be reproached with any."

"I will soften the term," resumed lord Torrington; "to accommodate your delicacy, I will speak of your errors."

"You are superlatively polite," returned the countess, with a sneer; "but I do not remember having acknowledged any errors."

"Possibly not," said the earl, "and they may perhaps exist only in suspicious idea. I trust it is so; but you must acknowledge, Emily, that the world will judge from appearance, and the count del Montarino, not my friend, but yours—not my guest, but yours, may—nay, does give license to the tongue of slander; and remember, whatever stains your fame, must communicate its plague-blotch to your husband's."

"I am sure I wish I had never seen the count," replied lady Torrington. "Who could have believed he would have fixed himself upon us when he came to England? I should be excessively glad to get rid of him; but how to manage his dismissal without being absolutely rude——"

"It must be done, manage it in what way you will," said the earl. "I will not be made a subject of ridicule to fops and flirts—I will not suffer the world to point me out as an easy fool, a blind, convenient husband."

"I am sure," returned lady Torrington, "the world is too well bred to behave so absurdly; and I believe the circle of my acquaintance have errors of their own to attend to, without commenting upon mine."

"You are mistaken," said the earl; "it is those who are most conscious of impropriety, who are the first to seek and point out the failings of others. But of this you cannot be ignorant; and understand me, Emily, the manners of Italy will not be countenanced in England; here fashion itself does not allow a *cecisbeo*. The count del Montarino must quit the castle."

"The things is quite impossible at present," replied the countess. "At this particular time the count is so useful."

"I have so seldom contradicted your whims, madam," said earl, "that you presume on my indulgence; but in the dismissal of the count you will find me peremptory; it is my command that he quits the castle, and I will be obeyed."

"*Contre mon gré!—bon gré, malgré!*" exclaimed the countess. "You astonish me! Where on earth could you pick up that obsolete word *command*? But jesting apart, I assure you, my lord, this assumption of authority does not at all add to your *agrémens*. I have assured you that I am as weary of the count as you can possibly be, and that I am to the full as anxious to get rid of him; but then one must sacrifice a little to convenience; at this time the count's services will be extremely useful and absolutely necessary; indeed it is impossibility to dispense with them, for how can I conduct the *fête champêtre* without his assistance? and to do him only common justice, you must allow he has infinite taste, and is extremely clever.—Yes, Wilfred, you must confess the disagreeable wretch is perfectly *au fait* in these entertainments, and understands the appropriate emblems, devices, and decorations: when the *fête champêtre* and the masquerade have taken place, the count can be spared—yes, yes, the theatricals can be managed without him."

"There are persons in town," said the earl, "who can manage these entertainments as well as the count. Send to London for artists and mechanics, for I insist upon it, lady Torrington, that you inform the count, that his visit has been disagreeably prolonged."

"*Pardonnez moi*," replied the countess; "I can do any thing but be rude; you know I have such an aversion to being rude."

"Let it be my rudeness then," said the earl. "Tell him that the earl of Torrington, your husband, desires his absence—tell him——"

"That you are jealous," returned the countess, laughing. "Well, really till now I never believed you cared about me; but jealousy is a proof of love."

"This trifling is ridiculous," said the earl, sternly. "Tell the count, madam, that I consider his removal as necessary to your reputation."

The countess let the spoon with which she had been playing drop from her fingers—"My reputation!" reiterated she, with a look which she intended to be dignified.



“Does your lordship intend to insult me?—Do you mean to insinuate a belief of impropriety in my conduct?”

The earl’s temper was naturally irritable, and he warmly replied—“When a man is seen continuously following a woman, like her shadow—when he eats, and sleeps, and actually lives under the same roof with her, the world will take the liberty of making such comments as they think applicable to the case; and if they are not altogether favourable to the virtue of the lady who indulges her friendship in defiance of established rule, she has no great reason to be offended.”

“Indulge!” repeated lady Torrington, angrily. “I have never indulged myself in greater freedoms than other woman of my rank allow themselves—I have never indulged my friendships in the way your lordship has done—witness your passion for——”

“Emily, Emily,” said the earl, “this is idle and useless recrimination. I confess I have been much to blame; but remember, in these cases, no stain attaches to the character of a man, while similar indulgences degrade a woman for ever. Custom authorizes a freedom of conduct in our sex, which it never pardons in yours.”

“More shame for the customs of the world then,” said the countess, “for if infidelity is sinful and infamous in woman, it is equally so in man; and I think it very unjust indeed, that the same act should be a matter of triumph and fame to one sex, while it stamps the other with shame and disgrace. But man, when he made laws, took care they should all be in his own favour.”

“This is a point I have not leisure to argue,” replied the earl, “or I could convince you.”

“Indeed you could not.” said the countess; “I must be an idiot not to perceive that man has done his possible to make woman a patient, submissive slave.”

“Think as you please,” returned the earl, rising. “Having explained the motive of my visit, I will take my leave; I fear I have greatly trespassed on your time. Will you accept my apology?”

“Bless me! how excessively polite!” exclaimed the countess, happy to be released from what she had all along considered a wearying visit.

“I trust,” said the earl, “I have never given you reason to complain of my rudeness.”

“Oh, no, my lord, certainly not,” replied the countess; “you have always been extremely well behaved; I am sure no one ever heard me complain of your want of politeness, whatever I might do of your want of affection.”

“Emily, have you a heart?” asked the earl, with a look and tone of seriousness.

“A heart! yes, I believe so,” replied the countess. “Has not every person a heart? I never heard of any one without one.”

“Can you say,” resumed the earl, “that yours was bestowed on me?”

“Hem!” said the countess, pretending to cough.

“Recollect, Emily,” continued the earl, “ours was not a match of love.”

“Why not exactly, I believe,” said the countess.

“Did you ever seek to gain my affection?” asked the earl.

“Of that,” replied the countess, “you ought to be able to judge.”

“True,” said the earl; “and I have judged, and can, I believe, with truth aver, you never did. Vanity, not affection, Emily, has had the empire of your heart; to be admired

has been your ruling passion—to be thought beautiful, your utmost wish; your own person is your idol, and my mine acquits you of every other worship.”

“Vastly obliging indeed,” returned the countess, surveying herself in the opposite mirror. “That I possess one virtue, you must acknowledge, in an eminent degree.”

“Yes,” returned the earl, “a constant, unvarying adoration of self; and let this *amour propre* prompt you to get rid of the count del Montarino; do it in the way most agreeable to yourself, but let it be done quickly. For the sake of your fame, Emily, I do not wish to quarrel with him, which must inevitably be the case if I dismiss him; neither do I wish to assume the authority of a husband, but in this instance I will be obeyed.”

“*Grace à Dieu!*” exclaimed the countess, as the door closed on lord Torrington. “Most assuredly I will obey, as is the duty of an obedient wife, because in so doing I shall conform exactly with my own will. What can the poor man have got in his wise head, I wonder. *N’importe*,” continued she, with a *nonchalante* shrug of her shoulders; “it is impossible to guess. The count del Montarino shall be informed that his presence displeases the earl.—Yes, he shall certainly make his congee, because it is my pleasure to dismiss him, or—But no matter; I will be a submissive wife; the count SHALL depart; but not till he has arranged every thing for my *fête champêtre* and masquerade. Till then it is impossible that I can spare my machinist, my chief director, till his inventive genius has insured me the astonishment and envy of the whole country; then, nothing hurt by *le brandon de Cupidon*, I shall say—‘*Adieu, mon cher ami, de tout mon coeur.*’”

The loss of the note-case did not keep Cecilia waking, or obtrude on her dreams, but her first inquiry on quitting her chamber was, whether it was found? The apartments had been carefully searched, but nothing of the sort had been seen.

Vexed and angry with herself for having been so very careless, Cecilia was about to communicate her loss to Mrs. Doricourt, when she was prevented by the entrance of the earl of Torrington, whose censure she felt she deserved, for having paid so little attention to his gift, of which she did not even know the value.

Mrs. Doricourt had rested well, and replied to the earl’s morning salutation with such cheerfulness, that his own manner became lively, and he displayed a vein of pleasantry that rendered his observations on men and manners entertaining as well as instructive. Having spoke of the superstitions of different nations, the earl asked Mrs. Doricourt, whether she believed in witchcraft?

Cecilia smiled as Mrs. Doricourt replied, she had but little faith, and must be made to suffer before she could believe.

“Cecilia then will find an advocate in you,” resumed the earl, “for she is actually accused of having, with certain magical spells, better known by the term—fascinating glances, shot from a pair of beautiful hazel eyes, and with dimpled smiles—yes, madam, with ‘*nods, and becks, and wreathed smiles,*’ she has subjugated the heart of the reverend Mr. Oxley.”

“I positively deny the glances, nods, becks, and smiles,” said Cecilia, blushing. I never——”

Regardless of this interruption, the earl continued—“And this poor man, suffering all the wounds and torments thus cruelly inflicted on him, humbly prays that I will use my judicial authority, and closely examine the offender on the question, whether she will, in the face of all men, make satisfaction?”

“Pray say no more, my lord, I entreat you,” said Cecilia.

“Surely there is something more than jesting in your lordship’s words, or wherefore should they occasion such confusion?” asked Mrs. Doricourt. “Cecilia, my love, what am I to understand?”

“Only, my dear madam,” replied the earl, “that the reverend Mr. Oxley has solicited my approbation and interest with this fair lady, to whom he flatters himself that he shall render his addresses agreeable. But what says Cecilia to this?” said the earl, fixing his dark eyes with a scrutinizing glance on her face; “what answer does she return to the pressing suit of this impassioned lover, ‘who fears, and hopes, but still his hopes prevail?’”

Cecilia was silent; from the earl’s manner, half jesting, half serious, she believed he meant to advocate Mr. Oxley’s suit; and she felt fearful of offending him, by rejecting a person of his recommendation, though honour and inclination prompted her decided refusal of a man she was certain she could never love.

Mrs. Doricourt was not attracted by the person or manner of Mr. Oxley, though to her he had been most obsequiously polite, from the moment of his introduction; but it was not impossible that Cecilia might regard him with a more favourable eye. Well she knew that love has the magical power of veiling imperfections, and decorating, in brilliant attributes, the object of affection. Mrs. Doricourt dreaded, yet was anxious for Cecilia’s decision—“Speak, my love,” said she; “do you approve Mr. Oxley? Are you inclined to accept his addresses?”

Cecilia’s countenance bespoke the perturbed state of her mind, as she falteringly replied—“I am too young to be capable of deciding on a subject of such importance.”

“Speak to the point, my dear child,” said Mrs. Doricourt. “Do you like Mr. Oxley?”

“I really don’t know,” returned Cecilia; “I have never heard him in the pulpit.”

“Little prevaricator!” rejoined the earl. “You are not questioned whether or not you approve him in his clerical character; answer truly, do you like his person?”

“I have seen much handsomer men,” replied Cecilia.

“Will you accept his addresses?” asked the earl.

“Indeed,” returned Cecilia, “I had much rather decline the honour.”

Mrs. Doricourt’s eyes brightened, and one of her magical smiles played on her lip.

“And so you reject Mr. Oxley’s addresses,” resumed the earl. “Can you have the cruelty to blight with your scorn this lofty-minded man? Will you chill with disdain his aspiring hopes? I see you pity the wounds you have inflicted—you will recant.”

“Never!” returned Cecilia; “indeed, my lord, I am convinced I could never be happy with Mr. Oxley; there is too great a disparity in our ages, our tastes, our dispositions; I am obliged to him for the preference he has given me, but must decidedly decline taking advantage of his partiality, and sincerely wish him happiness with another.”

“My dear child!” said the earl, assuming his natural gravity, and affectionately pressing her hand, “your candid refusal proves the goodness of your heart; your decision, my sweet, ingenuous girl, meets my warm approbation. Mr. Oxley is by no means the husband I should select for you; and I am pleased that you reject him.”

Cecilia’s mind was again at ease, and her lovely face was radiant with smiles.

Mrs. Doricourt wondered that a man of Mr. Oxley’s apparent age should have thought of marrying a person so many years younger than himself.

“Mr. Oxley, madam, has much worldly wisdom,” said the earl, “and had weighty reasons, independent of love, for wishing that I should bestow Cecilia’s hand upon him—reasons which will assuredly be disappointed; the reverend gentleman, it appears to me, is fated to be crossed in fortune as well as love.”

“My beloved Cecilia is still very young,” rejoined Mrs. Doricourt; “I should wish her to see more of the world before she marries; unhappiness is too frequently the result of hasty engagements.”

“Be under no apprehension, my dear madam,” said Cecilia; “I am too happy in your affection, too sensible of the blessings I enjoy in the earl of Torrington’s adoption, to wish to exchange my present unalloyed felicity for the arduous duties of a wife.”

“Perhaps then,” said the earl, smiling, “I may as well put off the hour of disappointment, by deferring, to a more propitious time, another lover’s permission to be admitted to your favour.”

“Another lover! this is really astonishing,” exclaimed Mrs. Doricourt. “Cecilia, my love, in spite of that air of *naïveté*, I shall begin to believe you do practice witchcraft.”

“Indeed, madam,” returned Cecilia, “I am ignorant of the offence, and believe the earl is merely jesting with me.”

“In sober sadness,” said the earl, “nothing can be more remote from my present thoughts than jesting. Seriously and truly, madam, colonel St. Irwin, the immediate heir to the dukedom of Ardenbrooke, has commissioned me to express his sincere respect and admiration, and to solicit for him the hand of Cecilia Delmore.”

Mrs. Doricourt turned to Cecilia; her own countenance expressed approbation; that of Cecilia confusion and perplexity—“It is a great and generous offer, my love,” said Mrs. Doricourt. “Colonel St. Irwin is a man of sense and education, of noble family, and affluent fortune.”

Cecilia turned pale; she grasped the hand of Mrs. Doricourt, and faintly articulated—“I am honoured, distinguished by colonel St. Irwin’s preference, but I dare not, cannot accept.”

“Do not alarm your spirits unnecessarily, Cecilia,” said the earl; “this is a matter on which your own judgment and choice can alone decide. I shall merely point out the advantages that will result from your acceptance of colonel St. Irwin; no persuasions will be offered, no dictates used. It is true, St. Irwin is full twice your age, and this, I think, is the only objection that can possibly arise against him; for in person he is handsome and dignified; in manners a gentleman. His natural good sense he has improved by studying the best authors; that he is a brave man, will be acknowledged by enemies as well as friends; rank and fortune accompany the offer of his hand.”

“Above, far above my humble expectations,” said Cecilia, “are such munificent offers.”

“I will not admit this humility,” replied the earl; “I would have you consider the advantages that will result to yourself, the delight it will afford your friends, to behold you honourably elevated to rank and fortune.”

Cecilia’s eyes filled with tears, but struggling with emotion, she said—“I have considered, my lord, and perceive the path I ought to pursue. Colonel St. Irwin is your friend, Mrs. Doricourt approves him, and I—yes, my lord, duty and gratitude command my obedience—I am ready.”

“To confirm the hopes of colonel St. Irwin,” asked Mrs. Doricourt, “to accept him for your husband?”

“I perceive,” resumed Cecilia, pale and agitated—“I perceive you think it proper I should accept him. Do with me as you please; you have a right to all my obedience; I should be a monster of ingratitude if I suffered my own wayward fancies to oppose the judgment of friends to whom I owe so much.”

Cecilia could utter no more; she sunk back on her seat; the tears rushed from her eyes; they relieved her oppressed feelings, and prevented her fainting.

“Dearest Cecilia!” said the earl, affectionately pressing her hand, “recover your spirits; nothing repugnant to your own inclination will be exacted from your obedience. We are your friends, not your tyrants; and believe me, my sweet girl, I should regret to see you seated on a throne, if I thought your elevation was effected only by a principle of gratitude; nor would the knowledge that obedience to the wishes of your friends gave him your hand, satisfy a mind delicate, sensitive, and refined as St. Irwin’s. No; his heart, replete with every generous and noble feeling, would require, to constitute its felicity, a warmer sentiment.”

Cecilia being restored to composure, Mrs. Doricourt said—“I entreat you, my beloved child, let not duty and gratitude, however highly the earl of Torrington and myself may appreciate these virtuous impulses, influence you on a point so important as this. Remember, that vows plighted at the altar involve not only your earthly, but your eternal felicity. For myself, I solemnly affirm, and I am persuaded that the earl is actuated by the same sentiment, I would much rather behold you happy than great—Speak to me, Cecilia, and I charge you, be not allured with the expectation of a title, or the glitter of wealth—Can you become the wife of colonel St. Irwin with the cheerful concurrence of your heart, and the unequivocal approval of your conscience?”

Cecilia’s expressive countenance underwent many changes from red to pale, at this solemn appeal to her heart and conscience, at the moment that rank and splendour presented themselves in glittering array to her imagination. The interesting form of the elegant Rushdale pressed on her heart, and conscience whispered—“How can you solemnly pledge your faith to St. Irwin, when you are certain that you prefer another?”

Mrs. Doricourt trembled, lest the dazzling advantages of title, wealth, and worldly consequence, should get the better of Cecilia’s virtuous principles; but suspense on this point became torture, and again she requested a candid reply.

The face of Cecilia sunk on Mrs. Doricourt’s shoulder; for a moment, and only a moment, she remained silent and undecided; but virtue was triumphant—“I respect,” said she, “I esteem colonel St. Irwin; but I am certain I can never love him.”

“Then Heaven forbid,” returned the earl, “that you should marry him! Look up, Cecilia; the friends who are anxious for your advancement in life can never wish to obtain it by the sacrifice of your happiness. Be ever thus ingenuous, my sweet girl; and whenever you marry, let the chief inducement be affection, not ambition.”

Cecilia pressed the hands of the earl and Mrs. Doricourt to her lips, with tears of grateful pleasure, faithfully promising to be always guided by their advice.

Mrs. Doricourt, ever an enthusiast, clasped Cecilia to her heart, and extolled her conduct in refusing the noble St. Irwin, since her heart could not invest him with its dearest affections.

The earl promised to convey Cecilia's grateful thanks to the colonel, and to use his best endeavours to convince him of the propriety of her refusal.

When the earl had withdrawn, Cecilia informed Mrs. Doricourt of her loss of the note-case, and of her never having examined its contents.

Mrs. Doricourt expressed concern, but was inclined to believe the servants must have picked it up; and previous to informing the earl, she advised acquainting Mrs. Milman, who might cause an examination among the household.

Mrs. Milman was seated in earnest confab with Mr. Wilson, when Cecilia, affectionately saluting them, placed her hand in Wilson's, and seated herself by his side.

"Well," said Mr. Wilson, "this is something like former times, and does not smack of pride; and I am very glad, Miss Delmore, for of course it must not be Cecilia now, to see you look so well, which I did not expect, for late hours do not amend the looks."

"And why not Cecilia as usual?" demanded she, with one of those artless smiles that he had always thought so beautiful and engaging; "and why not your Cecilia now as well as formerly, Mr. Wilson?"

"No, no," replied he, shaking his head, "you are now company for ladies and lords—a very different person from my Cecilia, who used to put her little hand in mine, and trip like a fairy by my side over the fields, and amuse me with her engaging prattle."

"I may be altered in person, my estimable friend," replied Cecilia, "but in mind, in affection, believe me I am still your Cecilia."

"And then," resumed Wilson, in a querulous tone, "you are going to be married to this high priest, this Mr. Oxley, who seems to look down upon every body with such pride and consequence. A parson ought to be meek and humble, like the doctrine he preaches; instead of which, he is proud as the—and lord Torrington is to give him, as a fortune with you, the rich livings that I did certainly suppose——"

"Is this true, Cecilia?" interrupted Mrs. Milman; "those livings will be a handsome portion indeed, for they are very valuable. I much wonder though, child, that you never mentioned a word to me, that the earl had settled this marriage for you with the reverend."

"Believe me, my dear aunt," replied Cecilia, "the earl has no such intention; and I assure you, Mr. Oxley would never be my choice, if the earl could make him a bishop."

"Dear me! and why not?" asked Mrs. Milman; "I am sure, child, the reverend is a fine, comely, portly-looking man, and holds up his head just as if he was somebody of consequence already. I declare," smoothing her clear muslin apron, "I don't think I should refuse him, if he was to make me an offer, and my own father was a reverend. But perhaps, Cecilia, you are looking higher than Mr. Oxley—a lord, or a baronet. Well, child, nobody knows what luck they are born to; and you are but just out of the egg-shell, as one may say—a mere chick; you have got time enough yet to look about you, and pick and choose."

"I perfectly agree with you, my dear aunt, that I am too young even to think of marriage," said Cecilia; "and I am happy, so very happy in my present state, that let me change it when I may, I scarcely dare hope for such felicity. But come that period soon or late, if I know my own principles at all, I shall never be allured into matrimony by the nonsensical vanity of being called my lady, or with the ostentatious wish of possessing

more wealth than I know what to do with, or than others more deserving than myself of the gifts of fortune."

"You are still my Cecilia," said Wilson, kindly shaking her hand; "you are what I always thought you—a sensible, upright-minded girl; and since I find this high priest, this stiff-necked parson, is not your choice, why perhaps things may all be right yet, and marriages may take place, and livings may be given, *tol lol de dol lol*." Wilson sang a bit of a tune, rubbed his hands, then addressing Mrs. Milman—"Do, my good woman, give me a glass of your peach brandy; I protest it is the finest cordial in the world." Mrs. Milman, gratified with his praise of her cordial, rose to reach it from a liquor-case, while he continued to say—"I declare I am quite happy to find—to see, I mean, that Cecilia is not corrupted by these high-flyers, these town-bred fops and devildums of quality—Pshaw! the only qualities they possess are pride, assurance, vanity, and deceit. Well," drinking off the cordial, "Mrs. Milman, here's the completion of all our honest desires."

"Amen, Mr. Wilson, with all my heart!" responded the housekeeper, settling her frills.

Cecilia's lips did not utter an audible amen, but her heart felt a wish, in which lord Rushdale was included, and a sigh and a blush made the response.

Cecilia having mentioned the loss of the note-case, left her aunt more than ever convinced, that her extraordinary beauty could not fail to make her fortune; and so absorbed was she in ideas of her own future grandeur and consequence, that she had actually forgotten the presence of her friend Wilson, till suddenly starting from his chair, he exclaimed—"DELAYS ARE DANGEROUS; I will conquer my plaguy bashfulness, and speak my mind at once boldly."

Mrs. Milman had often flattered herself that her comely person, her prudent behaviour, and good management, had not been overlooked by Mr. Wilson; she had, year after year, till many had passed away, expected that he would make her an offer of his hand—an offer she had made up her mind not to refuse, because it was well known to every body that Wilson was a monied man. He had lately built himself a very neat house, and had consulted her taste in the furniture, which he certainly would not have done, if he had not designed she should be its mistress; and more than this, he kept a handsome gig; besides, the man was in the prime of life, his person was far from disagreeable, and his temper appeared to be very tolerable. When he talked of speaking his mind boldly, Mrs. Milman was all over in a twitter, and she sat expecting the realizing of her hopes, and rather impatient for the declaration of his passion.

Perceiving he stood pondering, as she believed, on the important "*to be, or not to be, a husband*," Mrs. Milman kindly endeavoured to relieve his perplexity, by asking, what he was going to speak his mind about? "I am sure, Mr. Wilson," said she, putting on an agreeable smile, "if you have any favours to ask, nobody has a better right than you to expect to have them granted."

"I am obliged to you, Mrs. Milman, for your good opinion," returned he.

"Dear bless me! not at all," replied she, smiling kindly on him, "not at all, Mr. Wilson; and I am sure, if I have any concern in your wish, you have only to ask and have."

"Thank you, thank you kindly, Mrs. Milman," said Wilson; "you are as good a woman as ever lived, and I am greatly obliged to you; but the favour I have to ask is from the earl, and yonder he is alone; I will go and speak to him directly."

Wilson hurried out of the room.

“The man’s a fool, a downright blockhead, an ass, an idiot!” said Mrs. Milman, quite disappointed and vexed to think he could not take her hints. “But perhaps this may be for the best,” continued she, “after all; for if Cecilia marries a lord, why no doubt she will provide better for me than if I was to have Wilson. No one knows what they are born for, and one great event leads on to another. Cecilia becomes my lady—a countess, no doubt—she places me in affluence—I am neither old nor ugly, of course I shall be introduced among great people; and if I have the good fortune to attract some baronet myself, why I shall bless Wilson for not offering to marry, and make me mistress of his new brick-house and his handsome gig.”

END OF VOL. II.

Printed by J. Darling, Leadenhall-Street, London.



LOVERS AND FRIENDS.

A NOVEL.

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LOVERS AND FRIENDS;  
OR,  
MODERN ATTACHMENTS.

A NOVEL.  
IN FIVE VOLUMES.

BY  
ANNE OF SWANSEA,

AUTHOR OF  
CONVICTION, GONZALO DE BALDIVIA, CHRONICLES OF AN ILLUSTRIOUS  
HOUSE,  
SECRET AVENGERS, SECRETS IN EVERY MANSION, CAMBRIAN  
PICTURES, CESARIO ROSALBA,  
&c. &c.

“I hold a mirror up for men to see  
How bad they are, how good they ought to be.”

VOL. III.

LONDON:

Printed at the Minerva Press for  
A.K. NEWMAN AND CO. LEADENHALL STREET.

1821.

## LOVERS AND FRIENDS.

### CHAPTER I.

The liberal-minded and generous part of the community are constantly exposed to the arts and deceptions of the cunning and designing; their feelings are worked upon, advantage is taken even of their virtues, and it is not till after repeatedly suffering from benevolent credulity, that reason and experience bring the painful conviction, that their liberality has been duped, and their humanity deceived.

Z.

“—————Sweet is a rural life,  
And innocent as sweet.”

*An Arrest—Simplicity imposed upon—A fortunate Blunder—Suspicious and Confidences.*

ON inquiring for Mrs. Doricourt, Cecilia was informed she was gone with a party to see a pair of Angola sheep, that had recently been added to the earl's menagerie, and that most of the gentlemen were gone to Keswick.

While Cecilia was preparing to follow Mrs. Doricourt, lady Jacintha Fitzosborne entered the saloon. With an air of perfect unconsciousness she inquired for the countess, and the rest of the party. On being told they were all out—“I am vastly sorry that I slept so late,” said she, “for, *sans doute*, the owner of this note-case,” displaying it, “is not a little vexed at its loss, and anxious for its recovery.”

Cecilia joyfully exclaimed—“Dear lady Jacintha, how happy I am that you found it! that note-case is mine; I was indeed very anxious for its recovery.”

“Yours!” replied lady Jacintha. “Well, really, Miss Delmore, you shew a most noble contempt for money, by throwing it about so carelessly.”

“I confess, lady Jacintha, I deserve your censure,” said Cecilia, “for I have been very blameable. I know not how I lost the note-case, and consider myself particularly fortunate that it fell into your hands, as I do not know what it contains.”

“Astonishing!” exclaimed lady Jacintha. “Why, Miss Delmore, do you possess the riches of Cræsus, that you are ignorant of the extent of your wealth? Not know the contents!”

“No, really I do not,” said Cecilia.

“Surprising indeed!” resumed lady Jacintha. “Where then, and from whom, child, could you receive this elegant note-case?”

Cecilia thought these interrogations extremely rude; but conscious there could be no necessity for concealment, she replied—“The earl of Torrington, madam, presented it to me last night in the drawing-room, where I had no opportunity to examine its contents. While I was undressing, I discovered my loss.”

“What a fortunate creature you are,” said lady Jacintha, enviously, “to be the adopted daughter of the munificent earl of Torrington! Four hundred pounds is a very handsome gift; there are persons in the world who might consider such a sum a very pretty fortune.”

Cecilia felt the allusion, but suffered no mortification; and lady Jacintha, seeing her malicious remark pass unnoticed, continued to say—“What in the world, Miss Delmore, will you find to do with all that money? Your mamma Doricourt supplies you so amply with expensive trinkets and every article of dress, that you can want no addition to your wardrobe. Well, you are a fortunate creature! I am almost tempted to wish I was an adopted daughter, that is, if I could meet as generous a papa as lord Torrington. Here, Miss Delmore, take your note-case, and thank your lucky stars it is restored; for money is really so tempting, that you may think it next to a miracle that it ever came into your hands again.”

Cecilia did not see any thing extraordinary in a woman of rank being merely honest, but she thanked lady Jacintha, looked at the amount of the notes, and wondered that the earl should give her so much money.

Lady Jacintha thought it might have been much better bestowed, and fell to contriving, in her mind, how she could, without lowering her dignity, and betraying her poverty, borrow a part of it; and being opportunely alone with Miss Delmore, she wished to draw from her the nature of her sentiments respecting lord Rushdale, and the certainty whether he had degraded himself by making her a declaration of love.

Cecilia had now tied on her bonnet, and repeating her thanks, she bade lady Jacintha good morning.

“Have you an assignation?” asked lady Jacintha; “does some happy swain wait you down in the Hawthorn Glen, my beautiful blushing maid?”

“If I do blush, madam,” replied Cecilia, gravely, “it is that you should suspect me of the imprudence of making assignations.”

“Well, don’t look so serious,” returned lady Jacintha; “I was only jesting; but surely, Miss Delmore, you will not have the barbarity to leave me to my own doleful meditations?”

“Perhaps your ladyship would like to walk?” said Cecilia.

“No really, my ladyship will not,” replied she, “walk at this time of day; the sun broiling—dust flying in clouds, I should be choked, and scorched the colour of an Ethiop. Do pray, my dear Miss Delmore, have a little consideration for your own lilies and roses. Spare your own complexion, and take compassion on mine. Come, I know you are fond of employment. Sit down, and finish your gold chain, which is really very pretty, though not quite massy enough for the child of nature to bind her lovers with. But deuce take the men! they are not worth a thought. Let us peerless maidens sit down and enjoy a rational *tête-à-tête*.”

Cecilia would have preferred a walk to the conversation of lady Jacintha, but politeness constrained her to open her work-box.

“I wish I had ingenuity and application sufficient to make a chain like that; for I admire it prodigiously,” said lady Jacintha.

“I shall be happy to present it to you,” replied Cecilia, “if you would consider such a trifle worth your acceptance.”

Lady Jacintha's pride did not prevent her accepting a present from the house-keeper's niece; she was all smiles and thanks; and Cecilia sat down to finish the chain, that her ladyship might wear it at dinner.

They conversed for some time on poetry, of which lady Jacintha had read a great deal. She spoke in rapturous terms of Moore's *Lalla Rookh*, and recited some beautiful passages from the *Fire-Worshippers* with much spirit and feeling. Painting was next discussed, and lady Jacintha lamented her want of skill in that delightful art. Portraits of the earl, the countess, and lord Rushdale, ornamented the saloon, and the merits and defects of each being pointed out, lady Jacintha asked Cecilia if she thought lord Rushdale resembled his mother?

"Not much," replied Cecilia, "though their eyes are the same colour."

"He is a clever young man," continued lady Jacintha; "very handsome and elegant, only too much tinctured with romance and sentiment."

Cecilia thought him all perfect, and a sigh she could not suppress heaved her bosom.

"Bless me, Miss Delmore!" exclaimed lady Jacintha, "that is a very expressive sigh; I hope the graces of the accomplished Rushdale have not made an impression on your heart?"

"Oh no," replied Cecilia, "I am not so susceptible or romantic as to fall in love, without a single hope to encourage me. I am sensible of the distance fortune has placed between lord Rushdale and myself, and shall never, even in idea, remove the fraternal title which has received the earl's sanction, and his own approval."

"You are really a prodigy of discretion, Miss Delmore," said lady Jacintha; "and I am vastly happy to hear you make this declaration, because I am certain that lord Rushdale's affections are seriously engaged to a lady of rank, an intimate friend of mine."

Cecilia's heart felt a painful flutter—a mist swam before her eyes.

"Yes, Rushdale is certainly a fascinating young man," continued lady Jacintha; "but it would be shocking if you were to be deluded by compliments, attentions, and flatteries, which mean nothing, and are only the mere gallantries of fashionable men."

This subject was particularly unfortunate to the gold chain, for Cecilia's tremor made her drop a stitch, and before she could recover it, half the chain was undone.

"The countess of Torrington," continued lady Jacintha, "has views of her own: her ambition has selected a wife for her son, of high rank and splendid fortune; but I, who am in his confidence, know that his affections are irrevocably engaged; and where he loves he will marry. Why you tremble and look pale, Miss Delmore. I really am sorry I introduced this subject, since you appear so affected by it."

"Not by what you have said, madam," replied Cecilia; "this room is very warm—the heat overcomes me."

"It is intensely hot," said lady Jacintha, throwing open a window; "I believe indeed a little air may be of service to us both. "But are you quite sure now," asked she, maliciously, "that you could hear of Rushdale's marriage without a tremor of the nerves?"

"Quite certain," said Cecilia, forcing a smile.

"The *idea* then," resumed the tormenting lady Jacintha, "is worse than the *reality*; for your hands absolutely tremble at the thought; and, as I live, child, you are undoing instead of finishing the chain."

"I have made a small mistake," said Cecilia, "but I shall soon rectify it."

“Well, you need not blush so deeply about a trifling error,” returned lady Jacintha. “Positively you must leave off blushing before you go to town, or you will be set down for a rustic simpleton; and if your heart, Miss Delmore, has strayed a little, call home the truant as speedily as possible. Rectify that mistake without loss of time; for you may rest assured that Oscar lord Rushdale inherits all the pride of his parents, and will never take a wife beneath the rank of nobility. Upon my honour, I tell you this out of friendship and goodwill; for I am *tout-à-fait* in his affairs.”

Cecilia was angry as well as confused; she wished lady Jacintha had kept her friendly communications to herself; for though lord Rushdale was not, nor ever could be, any thing to her, she was agitated, in spite of her unwillingness to acknowledge it even to herself.

Lady Jacintha had accomplished her design—she had made Cecilia uneasy; but ashamed of her weakness, she wished to remove all idea that she encouraged a partiality for lord Rushdale; but before she could express her sentiments, a servant entered, to say that lord Bechamp and major Norman wished to have the pleasure of paying their respects to lady Jacintha Fitzosborne, if she was not engaged.

“What can have brought these delightful men so far from Brighton, where they told me they were going?” said lady Jacintha. “Admit them instantly.”

Cecilia rose to leave the room.

“I shall not let you go, Miss Delmore,” said lady Jacintha. “Pray keep your seat: Bechamp is my flirt; but I can spare Norman, and you have my permission to make a fool of him.”

Cecilia had no wish to avail herself of this permission. She pleaded a headache, and had reached the door, when a tall vulgar-looking man rudely caught her arm.—“In another minit,” said he, “you would have put in leg-bail. Not so nimble, my lady, for ve has got a little small bit of business to settle with you.”

“You mistake, sir,” returned Cecilia; “you can have no business with me.”

“Beg pardon for contradicting a lady,” said a diminutive figure, dressed in all the extravagance of dandyism, who closed the door, at which the tall man stationed himself; “a writ, my lady, at the suit of madame De Hays, milliner, Pall-Mall, for two hundred and fifty-eight pounds six shillings and sixpence. Beg pardon for intruding, but your la’ship knows we must do our duty.”

“I repeat, sir, you are under a mistake,” replied Cecilia. “I never heard of madame De Hays. Suffer me to ring the bell—I shall then be able to convince you of your mistake.”

“Deep, deep as Garrick,” said the tall man, winking; “but ve be up to snuff, and a pinch above it; ve never makes no mistakes. Ve vas told vhere to nab you afore ve left Lunnun, so ve gist tooked the liberty to send in them there gemmen’s names, lord Bechamp and major Norman, case as how they vas at Mr. Hinde’s lock-up-house, in Gray’s Ind Lane, same time your la’ship vas last vinter.”

Cecilia looked round; she suspected it was lady Jacintha Fitzosborne the men mistook her for; but she had unaccountably vanished, and in terror Cecilia exclaimed—“Let me pass, man! Lock-up-house! I do not comprehend.”

“You has got a plaguy short memory then,” said the tall man, “like the rest of your grand folks; though I thinks as how you has got reasons plenty to remember Hinde’s sponging-house, vere you stuckt atwixt the bars, trying to make your ‘scape out on the winder.”

"I am still in the dark," said Cecilia, advancing to pull the bell. "In one moment I will convince you I never was in London in my life, and am as much a stranger to lock-up houses as I am to you."

"Stay, Miss Delmore—for Heaven sake stay!" exclaimed lady Jacintha, springing from the concealment of an Indian screen, behind which she had shrunk at the entrance of the men. "Don't pull the bell. Don't let me be exposed to the servants!"

"Good Heaven!" said Cecilia, "what is the meaning of this strange conduct? Why am I detained by these men?"

"Beg pardon, ma'am," replied the little dandy; "a trifling misnomer, as we civilians term it—a mistake in persons, ma'am. It appears in evidence, ma'am, that you are not lady Jacintha Fitzosborne. This being now proved, we can shew no cause, ma'am, for detaining your person. Beg pardon—I perceive," advancing to lady Jacintha, "that you are the lady we are to have the honour of introducing to John Doe and Richard Roe. I now recollect your la'ship perfectly. Had the honour, when I was clerk to Levisham & Co. to wait upon you in Chancery-lane, to settle Fairborne the jeweller's business."

"Your memory, sir," replied lady Jacintha, "is impertinently tenacious; and I think you might have conducted this affair more delicately, without all this noise and exposure. Persons of rank are not to be put on a level with the vulgar."

"That's the vay of you all," rejoined the tall man; "nab you as ginteely as ever ve vill, ve be sure to get abused for our pains."

Lady Jacintha having cast her eyes over the writ, exclaimed—"At the suit of madame De Hays! the vile creature! the abominable, ungrateful wretch, that I took so much trouble to recommend to all my friends!"

"But your friends," retorted the bailiff, "vas gist like your la'ship—they tooked her goods, but forgot to pay for them."

"I could not have believed that madame De Hays would have behaved so ungratefully," said lady Jacintha; "she promised me she would wait till winter."

"And no doubt madame De Hays would have kept her word with your la'ship," said Mr. Ferret, the little dandy; "but unfortunately the customhouse officers have made so large a seizure of contraband goods, that the poor French-woman, being herself ruined, is compelled to be troublesome to your la'ship."

"What is to be done I know not," replied lady Jacintha; "for at this time I cannot command twenty pounds."

"Vhy then, my lady, if you can't pay the debt, vhy ve bees obligated," said the bailiff, "to take you off directly to Lunnun."

"At this time of the year to London!" exclaimed lady Jacintha; "intolerable! unbearable! it will be the death of me!"

"You can go to your old apartments in Gray's Ind Lane," said the bailiff; "and wery snug they be, as your la'ship knows; for Mr. Hinde told me as how you vas there three weeks last vinter."

Cecilia, during this scene, had several times attempted to leave the room, but had been constantly prevented by lady Jacintha, who entreated she would not leave her.

"Nothing on earth could have been more unfortunate," said lady Jacintha, "than this debt being demanded when I have no money. I really am at a loss what to do."

"Beg pardon for hurrying your la'ship," rejoined the attorney, "but really time is so precious, I have so much business on my hands, that I don't know which way to turn,

which constrains me to hurry your la'ship's decision. Your la'ship must either pay the money immediately, or suffer us to convey you to a place of security."

"To the King's Bench," said the bailiff, "if your la'ship likes. All the grand folks goes to the Bench; there they waits for a solvency act, and vipes off all their scores with a vet finger."

Lady Jacintha walked about the room, wringing her hands.

Cecilia asked if it would not be right to acquaint lady Eglantine Sydney, who might have it in her power to advance the money.

"To apply to her will be useless," replied lady Jacintha; "she has no debts herself, and would exclaim against mine. If I could only have time till November, I could settle this demand."

The little dandy, to whom this intimation was addressed, replied—"Beg pardon, my lady, but I have no commission, no power, to withdraw the writ, or allow time. Sorry to be rude, or hurry your la'ship, but unless your la'ship has a friend who will advance the money, we must be off directly. Beg pardon, but your la'ship knows, by experience, that these sort of affairs admit of no delay: we must obey the law, or we stand in danger of being struck off the rolls."

"Ve must not lose no more time, Mr. Ferret," said the bailiff, "for you vell knows as how I has writs in my pocket against fourteen gemmen, and they must all be served this week, vile term lasts."

Lady Jacintha appeared ready to faint; and Cecilia, compassionating her situation, though the consequence of unwarrantable extravagance, entreated to be allowed to inform her cousin and lady Torrington of her unpleasant embarrassment.

"Did you know them as well as I do," said lady Jacintha, "you would be certain, as I am, that so far from assisting me in my distress, they would rejoice at it."

"Oh, no, no," returned Cecilia, "you mistake their characters; human nature cannot be so pitiless, so void of feeling; but if you think they would not serve you, let me apply to the earl of Torrington or Mrs. Doricourt."

"No, Miss Delmore," said lady Jacintha, "I would rather endure the horrors of a prison than lay open my distresses to the earl of Torrington or Mrs. Doricourt; and if I could so far subdue my pride, what right have I to expect Mrs. Doricourt would lend so large a sum to me, almost a stranger?"

"You do not know Mrs. Doricourt," replied Cecilia, "or you would hope every thing from her generosity and humanity."

"I have but one hope, Miss Delmore, and that," said lady Jacintha, "that rests with you."

"With me!" repeated Cecilia; "in what way?—how can I?—with me!"

"Yes, Miss Delmore, with you alone," returned lady Jacintha; "you can, if you please, release me from this disagreeable embarrassment; and if all the sentiments of feeling and generosity which I have heard you utter from time to time are real impulses of your heart, you will not hesitate to rescue me from this misfortune."

"Good Heaven! lady Jacintha, what can I possibly do?" said Cecilia. "I have offered to apply for you to the earl and Mrs. Doricourt, and their assistance you have declined. Do you wish me to inform lord Rushdale?"

"Not for your life!" exclaimed lady Jacintha, grasping her hand. "You seem affected at my situation; you would apply for my assistance to others—why not yourself be my



friend? You have the money, for which I know you have no immediate occasion; in a few months I shall be able to repay it, but my gratitude will be eternal.”

In the alarm and confusion of the arrest, Cecilia had entirely forgot the note-case.

Lady Jacintha remembered it with envy and desire.—“You have four hundred pounds at your command,” resumed she; “by lending me three hundred, you will be my guardian angel; you will preserve me from exposure, inconvenience, and suffering.”

Cecilia’s heart was feeling and generous. She would not have hesitated a moment in lending the money to remove the distress of lady Jacintha, but she doubted whether the earl and Mrs. Doricourt would approve her having disposed of so large a sum to relieve the embarrassments of a person whose character and manners she knew they disliked.

“It is easy, I perceive,” said lady Jacintha, bitterly, “to use the *language* of feeling and kindness, but very hard to conform to the *practice*. You will not lend me the money—you will not save me from disgrace—from destruction!”

Cecilia was silent, for she knew not how to act.

“Tis no sort of use to wait any longer,” said the bailiff; “so do you see, Mr. Ferret, I bees for beginning the way back to Lunnun.”

“Beg pardon for offering unsolicited advice,” said the attorney, “but really it appears to my conception that your la’ship does wrong in not applying to some of your friends, as this young lady, Miss Delmore, has more than once urged. A prison is disagreeable—confinement uncomfortable, particularly at this beautiful time of the year, when nature, as the poet observes, is *prodigal of charms*. Be persuaded, my lady; some of your right honourable noble friends may come forward, and settle this little awkward business.”

“I have no friends,” returned lady Jacintha, sullenly, “and must submit to my misfortunes.”

“Vell then, the chay may draw close up to the door,” said the bailiff, “since my lady is determined to go with us. I don’t care how soon we bees upon the road again. I spose, my lady, you’ll choose to go to Mr. Hinde’s again?”

“I care not where I go,” replied lady Jacintha.

“Beg pardon for advising,” said the little dandy, “but should suppose a lock-up house will be better than to prison; many expences saved, fees et cetera.”

“I care not what is saved or lost,” interrupted lady Jacintha, “for I will not long survive the disgrace of incarceration, and when I have, with a desperate hand, put an end to my existence, the unfeeling will perhaps remember with regret, they had the power, but would not exert it, to save me from destruction.”

This speech, delivered with a frantic air, had all the effect lady Jacintha designed; it frightened and settled the resolves of Cecilia; she shuddered at the menace it conveyed, and rather chose to incur the censure of Mrs. Doricourt and the earl of Torrington, than to have suicide committed.

Mr. Ferret bade the bailiff see that the chaise was drawn up as close as possible.

Cecilia desired him to remain.

“Vhy, there has been time enough spent about this here little job already, Miss,” said he, “and I has got a vife and seven children to find wittles and clothes for, and so I don’t wait no longer; for while I stand here listnin to a parcel of purlaver as comes to nothing at last, vhy it vont put no Spanish into my pocket, do you see?”

“Very true, Trapwell,” replied the attorney, “but remember you are waiting on a lady, my good fellow; always behave polite to the ladies.”

"Purlite!" repeated the bailiff; "vhy, Mr. Ferret, I bees always purlite, when I gets vell paid for it; but here ve be kept purlarvering, with not so much as a drap of nothing to vet one's vhistle vith."

Mr. Ferret, who noticed Cecilia's emotion, gave the bailiff a sly wink, that made him silent; then addressing Cecilia—"Beg pardon, Miss Delmore, I think you bade us remain; without doubt you would not detain me, a professional man, without having some reason, some purpose; excuse me, ma'am, for putting the question so abruptly, but do you intend to advance her la'ship the money to discharge the debt?"

"I intend lending lady Jacintha Fitzosborne three hundred pounds, sir," replied Cecilia.

"Will you indeed?" exclaimed lady Jacintha; "will you be such a good, kind, generous angel? I will never forget the obligation."

"I hope you will never again be in such a disagreeable situation," returned Cecilia, placing notes to the amount of three hundred pounds in her hand. "I believe I do not act prudently in this affair, but I cannot bear the idea of a female going to prison for debt."

"You are all that is good and amiable," said the exulting lady Jacintha. "Now, sir," turning to the little dandy, "here is the money; give me a proper discharge."

"With all pleasure, my lady; my client will be rejoiced at getting paid with so little trouble—beg pardon," placing the notes in his pocketbook, "but certainly did expect the honour of escorting your la'ship to town."

"Beg pardon," said lady Jacintha, mimicking his manner, "but I feel much pleasure in disappointing you."

"Vell, now I hopes, my lady," said the bailiff, "you vill think of me."

"Not if I can help it," replied lady Jacintha; "I always do my possible to avoid recurring to disagreeable subjects or persons."

"Disagreeable!" repeated the bailiff; "vhy as to that, if so be as Jack Swinton had come down upon this here business with Mr. Ferret, steed of me, you'd a seed some odds twixt his behaviours and mine. Vhy all the gemmen at the vest end of the town vill give me the best of karacturs; they all know as I be as commodating a feller as is to be found in my calling, and every gemmen as ever I touched on the shoulder always remembers my purlite vay of doing the job."

"Your purliteness is equalled only by your eloquence, Mr. Fletcher," said lady Jacintha; "but to spare a further display of your oratorical powers, I shall remember you in the way you wish: there is a pound note for you, and the sooner you leave Torrington Castle, the more I shall be satisfied with your commodating behaviours."

"A pound note!" returned the bailiff, disdainfully; "vhy, Ned Snip, the tailor, comed down more handsomer. Only this here dirty bit of paper! vont you order us a bottle of vind to drink your health, my lady?"

"I am not at home here," replied lady Jacintha, "and can offer you nothing, Mr. Fletcher, but my sincere wishes for your absence."

The bailiff retired, muttering that it vas like enough she might come in his vay again, and he vould not forget she vas cursed shabby, and had not so much as axed him to vhet his vistle.

The little dandy attorney, who had despaired of getting the money paid, having given her ladyship a proper discharge, begged pardon for having been under the disagreeable necessity of troubling her, which had been excessively painful to his feelings—hoped, if

she should hereafter have occasion to employ a gentleman of his profession, that she would condescend to recollect her most obsequious and devoted humble servant, James Ferret, solicitor, No. 15, Halfmoon-street, Piccadilly. He then, with many bows and scrapes, followed the bailiff.

Lady Jacintha threw herself on the ottoman, and indulged in a long fit of laughter, to the consternation of Cecilia, who thought she was going into convulsions. At last she said—"Beg pardon, as Mr. Ferret says, but did you ever see such a baboon, such a little ape, with his bows and grimaces and slides? I declare I should much sooner have taken him for a dancing-master than a lawyer."

"I am happy to see you in such spirits," replied Cecilia, not a little astonished to see the woman who but a few moments before had talked of destroying herself, so soon forget her troubles.

"Spirits! yes, thank Heaven," said her ladyship, "my spirits are tolerably good, and with sufficient reason, I think; but as you have never known the misery of being in the fangs of those vile myrmidons of the law, you can have no idea of the transport of an escape."

"What I have this morning witnessed," replied Cecilia, "will be a lesson to me through life; I am confident I shall never incur a debt."

"As yet you have had no occasion," said lady Jacintha, "but make no vows, child, for fear you should break them: when you get to town, and are surrounded with all the elegant splendid temptations of the *beau monde*, then will come the trial. I know you are very prudent and circumspect, and all that;"—Cecilia doubted her right to these praises, having so recently lent her money to a person who did not appear to possess one honourable principle—"but when you get into the great world," continued lady Jacintha, "you will discover a thousand wants, of which you can form no idea in the country. At every turn you will be assailed with some brilliant toy, some charming expensive decoration, without which you can have no pretension to fashion, or hope to excite envy and admiration. In short, whether you will or not, in town you will be compelled to incur debt. A-propos, that ugly word *debt* recalls to my mind that I ought to have let Mr. Ferret draw up a note for the money you lent me. Bless me, I am so thoughtless! now what is to be done? for I am really so ignorant of the vulgar forms of business, that I do not know how a note of hand should be worded."

"Mr. Wilson, the earl's steward, can remedy this forgetfulness," said Cecilia.

"On no account; I would not for the world this transaction should transpire," returned lady Jacintha; "and I entreat it as a particular favour, Miss Delmore, you will not mention the kindness you have done me to any person. I will give you a memorandum acknowledging the debt, and as soon as I can conveniently raise the money, I will repay it; though, situated as you are with the earl of Torrington and Mrs. Doricourt, that trifling sum can be of very little consequence to you."

The effrontery of lady Jacintha astonished Cecilia. Inexperienced as she was in the ways of the world, she perceived that the three hundred pounds were irretrievably gone, as she was certain no dependence could be placed on the honour of lady Jacintha; and to the former censure of carelessness she now must add imprudence: but all remonstrance was for the present prevented by the entrance of the party from walking.

"Dear, I am so tired!" said Miss Maxfield, seating herself. "La! do you know, lady Jacintha, I have been running up a hill?"

“And then you run down again, I suppose, and that accounts for your being so tired.”

“No, I did not run down,” replied Miss Maxfield; “I walked down, and I stumbled over a nasty great stone, and hurt my foot sadly; and do you know, though Mr. Drawley said he could run with me on his shoulder, he never offered to carry me a little bit of the way, for all I limped so you can’t think.”

Unheeding Miss Maxfield’s complaint against him, Mr. Drawley said—“I am quite delighted with the plan of the theatre.”

“Yes,” replied the countess of Torrington, “the theatre will be charming: Rushdale says we shall perform operas in grand style—Rosina is a prodigious favourite of mine.”

“And Miss Delmore,” said lord Rushdale, “will be every thing the author designed in that character.”

“Pray do not think of me,” replied Cecilia, “for I fear I should never have courage.”

“We cannot possibly do without you,” rejoined the countess; “colonel St. Irwin observed that the songs were set on purpose for your voice.”

“I trust,” said the earl of Torrington, “that the rage for opera will not consign the immortal Shakespeare to oblivion.”

“Romeo and Juliet,” observed Mrs. Freakley, “is a very fine play.”

“Excellent!” rejoined the countess; “Romeo, lord Rushdale; Juliet, Miss Delmore.”

“I think,” said lady Jacintha, who did not at all approve the arrangement, “you are assigning Miss Delmore a heavy task; you forget, my dear countess, she has never seen a play.”

“That is of no consequence,” replied lady Torrington; “Miss Delmore has genius, and a most excellent memory, and who besides her looks as innocent as Juliet and Rosina?”

“Your ladyship has entirely forgotten Miss Maxfield,” said lady Jacintha, spitefully.

“La! I wish you would not mention me, lady Jacintha,” replied Miss Maxfield; “I hate so to learn any thing out of book you can’t think. I have seen Romeo and Juliet two or three times, to be sure, but I know I should never get those long speeches by heart, about cutting Romeo up into moons and stars, and about his being a rose, and looking like a glove upon her hand; and about his eyes being like swords and Æthiop’s ears.”

Mrs. Freakley felt proud of the recollections of her niece, while the rest of the party found it difficult to restrain their risibility.

“Not remember!” said Drawley, with affected gravity; “you greatly underrate your abilities, Miss Maxfield; your memory is prodigious! for I am certain you have recollected much more than any other person in company can.”

“La! I am sure you are flattering me, Mr. Drawley,” replied the child of nature; “well, when I was at school, the teachers used to say I did not want abilities; that I only wanted patience; but, dear me, it used to tire me so to learn my lesson you can’t think; and I would not undertake to learn all those long speeches in the play for any thing. And, do you know, I vowed, when I left school, I would never learn any thing again as long as I lived.”

Mrs. Freakley said she should like to see Jemima in some pretty character, but certainly it was very tiresome to learn long speeches out of books, and she could not blame her for declining it.

The earl of Torrington observed, it was quite time enough to select plays and engage performers, when the theatre was in a state of forwardness.

The countess observed that the heat and dust during their walk had been quite distressing, and that she must retire to make a reform in her person. Her example was followed by the rest of the ladies.

Cecilia reflected with satisfaction that she had not promised secrecy respecting lady Jacintha's arrest and subsequent conduct. The loss of her money she did not regret, further than having deprived herself of the power to be essentially useful to others more deserving than lady Jacintha, whose manner convinced her that she had no intention of returning it. Having completed her toilet, Cecilia repaired to the dressing-room of Mrs. Doricourt, to whom she narrated the scene of the arrest, and the disposal she had made of three-fourths of the earl's munificent gift.

Mrs. Doricourt expressed no surprise, neither did she blame Cecilia for the humane and generous feelings that had impelled her to bestow so large a sum for the relief of an artful unprincipled woman.

"Lady Jacintha Fitzosborne, my love," said Mrs. Doricourt, "has in this affair proved herself designing and dishonourable. She was aware of your inexperience, and took an artful advantage of it; but let this transaction, my Cecilia, teach you, that persons who cunningly work upon your feelings are unworthy of your generosity: had this unprincipled woman really determined on suicide, she would not have made three persons the confidants of her intention. Of the money, my love, think no more; there must be a revolution in the mind of lady Jacintha before she returns it. As to the earl of Torrington, be under no apprehension of his displeasure; he gave you the money, and would never ask you an account of its expenditure, though I consider it proper to inform him of the advantage that has been taken of your inexperience."

"But, my dear madam," returned Cecilia, "lady Jacintha seemed particularly anxious to conceal the affair from the earl and lord Rushdale."

"No doubt," replied Mrs. Doricourt, "such a disclosure would militate against her grand scheme."

"I do not know the scheme to which you allude," said Cecilia.

"I did not suppose you did," replied Mrs. Doricourt. "Innocent yourself, my Cecilia, you are not aware of lady Jacintha's duplicity and cunning; you do not perceive that she is displaying all her graces to captivate the heart of lord Rushdale."

"Indeed, my dear madam," said Cecilia, with generous earnestness, "in this particular you do lady Jacintha injustice; for, with the greatest kindness, she—" Cecilia coloured, and hesitated to proceed.

Mrs. Doricourt took her hand, and asked what kindness lady Jacintha had evinced towards her?

"She warned me," replied Cecilia, blushing still deeper, "against viewing with partial eyes the graces of lord Rushdale."

"Kind and considerate indeed!" said Mrs. Doricourt, "had the motive been sincere."

"Indeed I think she was sincere," resumed Cecilia, "for she told me lord Rushdale was engaged to a lady of high rank, whom he loved with a most ardent affection."

"The warning lady Jacintha gave you was undoubtedly kind," said Mrs. Doricourt, "as far as it tends to secure your tranquillity; but be assured lord Rushdale neither has, nor will enter into a matrimonial engagement during his minority. Lady Jacintha is poor; the wealth of lord Rushdale, putting his personal attractions out of the question, extremely desirable to her; but if I read the young man's character aright, he will never,

unsanctioned by his father, marry, and with the earl's approbation, I am certain, never lady Jacintha Fitzosborne."

After dinner the countess of Torrington remarked the absence of Mr. Oxley—"I thought I missed something at table," said she; "pray, my lord, why did not your chaplain say grace as usual?"

"Mr. Oxley left the castle early this morning," replied the earl.

"And when does he return?" asked the countess.

"Never," was the earl's laconic reply.

"Bless me! what sudden movement is this?" said the countess; "you really astonish me; not hearing grace pronounced in his pompous way, I fear I shall not dine with my usual appetite."

"I never understood before," replied the earl, "that Mr. Oxley was of so much consequence to your ladyship; but as he is never to return, I trust you will be able to dine without seeing him at the bottom of your table."

"Never to return!" echoed sir Cyril Musgrove. "Rushdale, you have lost the prompter you fixed upon for your theatre."

"We shall have no difficulty in supplying his loss," said lord Rushdale, carelessly.

"I am really at a loss to understand you, gentlemen," resumed the countess, addressing her husband and son; "Mr. Oxley gone, without my having the slightest intimation of his departure, after his having so particularly requested my good offices with a certain young lady!"—Miss Delmore and lord Rushdale coloured scarlet deep—"and after," continued the countess, "I had promised to use all my influence in his favour—very strange indeed!"

"Your promise to Mr. Oxley was premature and inconsiderate," replied the earl; "but he is gone, and with the full assurance on his mind, that a certain young lady, neither with her own inclination, or with my concurrence, could ever accept him."

"*De tout mon coeur*," said the countess: "it is a matter of perfect indifference to me; the poor man was never a favourite of mine, with his importance and pedantry; only I thought that your lordship might intend to——"

"Remunerate him handsomely for his services," said the earl, hastily interrupting what he supposed would be wounding to the delicacy of Cecilia, "which I certainly have not omitted doing. Lord Rushdale no longer has occasion for a tutor, and Mr. Oxley goes to resume his clerical avocation."

"He was the most self-conceited fellow under the sun," said sir Middleton Maxfield.

"And offered his advice with the lofty air of a bishop," remarked lord Wilton.

"How he would swell in lawn sleeves!" rejoined sir Middleton Maxfield: "he is now proud as any prelate."

"Woe to the clergy in his diocese," said lady Jacintha Fitzosborne: "he would be a tyrant."

"Another cardinal Wolsey," returned sir Cyril.

"The parson has made his exit, good folk," said Mr. Drawley; "let his faults depart with him. I never spare a man to his face, but I think it ungenerous to maul him, when he is too distant to make the retort courteous."

"That sentiment does you honour, Drawley," replied colonel St. Irwin, "and I join in it

most cordially.”

The company having dispersed, and no one remaining near—“How prodigiously good we shall all grow in this moral society!” said lady Jacintha to Mrs. Freakley, who sat fanning herself, and complaining of the excessive heat. “I think colonel St. Irwin and Mrs. Doricourt would make a famous match: they could sentimentalize, and lay down plans for the amendment of their neighbours *sans cesser*.”

“The colonel has no taste for mature beauty,” replied Mrs. Freakley; “he would prefer, I have a notion, Mrs. Doricourt’s daughter.”

“Has Mrs. Doricourt a daughter?” asked lady Jacintha.

“Never heard Mrs. Doricourt had a daughter!” returned Mrs. Freakley; “bless me! I thought every body knew that Miss Delmore was Mrs. Doricourt’s daughter.”

“No, really, I never heard this precious piece of intelligence before,” said lady Jacintha; “though, all circumstances considered, it appears likely enough to be true; but her father, my dear Mrs. Freakley—who do they say is Miss Delmore’s father?”

“Look at the earl of Torrington,” returned Mrs. Freakley, “and you will have no occasion to ask that question. I am sure I discovered a strong likeness the moment I saw Miss Delmore. I wonder it could escape your ladyship’s notice.”

“No,” replied lady Jacintha, musing; “no, I can perceive no resemblance; Miss Delmore is extremely fair—the earl is dark; her eyes are hazel—his are jet; then their hair is quite a different colour; no, I cannot see a sufficient resemblance to warrant a belief of her being the earl’s daughter, though I think it very probable she may be Mrs. Doricourt’s: that exemplary lady, depend upon it, has had a little momentary error, a trifling *faux pas*, of which Miss Delmore is the fruit. Some particular cause has driven this pattern of perfection from the world, Mrs. Freakley; her settling on St. Herbert’s Island, and taking upon herself to educate Miss Delmore, are corroborating proofs of this affinity; it is not improbable but the earl may be in the secret—a friend of the gentleman’s, perhaps, and in order to preserve the lady’s reputation, may have consented to adopt Miss Delmore, and bring her forward in life; though I confess why they have thought proper to let her pass for the housekeeper’s niece, goes beyond my comprehension.”

“I suppose your ladyship heard that Mr. Oxley offered himself to Miss Delmore, and was refused.”

“That accounts for his absence,” said lady Jacintha, “and so, in downright despair, the lovesick parson gave in his resignation, and made his adieu. I wonder what Mrs. Doricourt expects this girl is to marry; a prince of the Holy Roman Empire, I suppose.”

“Nothing less, I dare say,” returned Mrs. Freakley, “for colonel St. Irwin has been rejected.”

“Colonel St. Irwin offer to marry Cecilia Delmore! a girl of low family, if not of suspicious birth!” exclaimed lady Jacintha; “a man of his rank, fortune, and expectations! and she has been suffered to refuse colonel St. Irwin! you astonish me, Mrs. Freakley; but can this report be depended upon? has not Wilmot, or Musgrove, or that creature, Drawley, been hoaxing you, my dear madam?”

“I speak from far better authority than either of those gentlemen,” said Mrs. Freakley—“from the evidence of my own ears. I was sitting in the grotto this morning, when the earl of Torrington and colonel St. Irwin stopped close at the entrance, and I heard the earl tell the colonel, that Miss Delmore was grateful for the honour he had

conferred on her, by the offer of his hand; but as yet she considered herself too young to enter into so sacred an engagement as matrimony."

"Well, and what answer did the colonel make?" asked lady Jacintha, eagerly.

"Why, he said something about renewing the offer when they met in town next winter; but to my great joy they walked on, and I made the best of my way to the lawn, for your ladyship must be sensible it would have been very unpleasant to me to be seen, as no doubt they designed their conversation to be secret."

"Upon my word," said lady Jacintha, enviously, "this girl, this Miss Delmore, must have an insufferable share of vanity—reject colonel St. Irwin! who, though he is between thirty and forty, half the women of fashion in town would be glad to marry; and Mrs. Doricourt and the earl to encourage her folly! what can the silly girl mean? she would very shortly be a duchess."

"She will be content to be a countess," said Mrs. Freakley.

Lady Jacintha frowned, and bit her lip, but not choosing to betray her suspicion to Mrs. Freakley, she asked, with affected indifference—"Does Miss Delmore expect to marry an earl?"

"It is impossible for me," said Mrs. Freakley, "to tell what Miss Delmore's expectations may be; but any person, with only half an eye, may see that lord Rushdale pays her all the attention of an accepted lover."

Lady Jacintha detested Mrs. Freakley, for having discovered what was so evident to herself.

"The earl," said she, "has desired them to consider each other as brother and sister. Lord Rushdale's attentions are merely fraternal, depend upon it, Mrs. Freakley; besides, were it otherwise, he would never be suffered to marry so much beneath his rank. To my certain knowledge the countess has views for her son."

"Yes, and other ladies," returned Mrs. Freakley, pointedly, "have views upon the heir of Torrington; but we shall see—lord Rushdale will take his own choice, after all. I wish it had fallen upon Jemima Maxfield; they are nearly of an age, and would have made a charming couple."

"A wealthy couple, you mean, Mrs. Freakley?" said lady Jacintha, spitefully; "for, with your large fortune added to Miss Maxfield's, they might have a princely establishment, and challenge the kingdom for splendour."

"Very true," replied the widow; "but it is quite impossible to tell what will happen. I am not an old woman, you know, lady Jacintha; and it is by no means certain that I shall not marry again, and in that case I may have children of my own to possess my fortune."

Lady Jacintha was too well-bred to laugh, though she could scarcely restrain her risibility, as she eyed the little rotundity before her, who measured in breadth nearly as much as in height.

"Possibly you may," returned she; "for this is the age of miracles—witness the surprising conception of Johanna Southcote, and her train of wonders."

Mrs. Freakley did not hear the whole of this good-natured reply, for lord Wilton, on whom she had bestowed not a few encouraging smiles, begged to know if she would go on the water, as a party was forming for an aquatic excursion.

"I have no objection to make one in this excursion," said lady Jacintha; "but I am



really fatigued to death with pedestrian exercise. I am not robust enough to be perpetually walking.”

“We are going to see a curious waterfall,” rejoined lord Wilton, “and a rock beneath it, with a surprising echo.”

Lady Jacintha knew Mrs. Freakley never ventured on the water, and merely to plague her, she asked if she should order her bonnet and shawl?

Mrs. Freakley thanked her, but having no curiosity about echoes and waterfalls, she should not hazard her life in a boat.

“How cruel you are to deprive us of your delightful company!” said lady Jacintha; “you will positively expire of ennui, if you remain alone.”

“Mrs. Doricourt, lady Welford, colonel St. Irwin, and the earl of Torrington, have formed a reading party,” rejoined lord Wilton; “perhaps, as Mrs. Freakley dislikes the water, she may find entertainment in listening to the sublimities of Milton.”

Mrs. Freakley would have been much more agreeably entertained, if his lordship had staid at home and played at piquet with her, but, unsuspecting of the widow’s predilection, lord Wilton begged to have the honour of conducting lady Jacintha to the boat.

Mrs. Freakley, rather than remain alone, repaired to the library, where Mrs. Doricourt was reading “*Satan’s Address to the Sun*.” Mrs. Freakley impatiently listened while that passage and “*Eve’s Dream*” were read, and she wondered how any person could read for such a length of time without being fatigued to death. She thought a rubber at whist would be much more amusing, and anxiously wished to see the book laid aside; but though remarks were every now and then made, which suspended the reading, it was again resumed, till no longer able to conceal her weariness, Mrs. Freakley yawned; she took a pinch of the earl’s snuff, but that failed to rouse her, and fearful of incurring the charge of ill manners, by falling asleep, she left the room.

The evening was remarkably fine, and thinking the open air preferable to moping by herself, she threw on her bonnet and shawl, and walked about the lawn, debating within herself, as she was something older than lord Wilton, whether he might not be apprehensive of giving her offence by declaring a passion for her.—“If I could only be assured this is the case,” said Mrs. Freakley, mentally, “I might drop him a hint.”

While the agreeable idea of being still an object of love, and what was equally as pleasant, of obtaining a titled husband, while the coquettish conceited lady Jacintha was without a serious admirer, possessed the fancy of Mrs. Freakley, she strolled into a green lane, at the end of which was a rustic seat, on which she sat down to recover herself; for the walk, and the hope of a second husband, had fluttered and deprived her of breath.

At a little distance, on a road that led across the country, she saw two young-looking countrymen harnessing a horse to a covered cart. Mrs. Freakley was naturally inquisitive, and giving way to her propensity, she asked the men what they had got in their cart, and where they were going?

One of the men replied to her questions in the Cumberland dialect, while the other pulled out a letter, and attentively read it. He then drew nearer Mrs. Freakley, and making many awkward bows, said—“No offence, I hope, but does Miss Delmore ever fetch a walk this way?”

“And why, my good man, do you inquire after Miss Delmore?” asked Mrs. Freakley; “what can you know about Miss Delmore?”

The man laughed.—“I have got a secret to tell her,” said he, “and a bit of paper to give her; and, odds bobs! I have waited hereabout all day, and could not get sight of a petticoat till now; and that is not the worst of it neither, for I don’t know Miss Delmore if I was to see her.”

Mrs. Freakley thought this a glorious opportunity to learn Miss Delmore’s secrets; doubtless there was a lover in the case, and by telling a harmless white lie, she might learn why, and for whom, colonel St. Irwin and Mr. Oxley had been refused.

“My good friend,” said she, simpering at the idea of the hoax she was going to put on the man, “I am Miss Delmore.”

“No, no, that’s a hum, for certain,” said the man.

“I assure you I am Miss Delmore,” returned Mrs. Freakley, “and if you have a letter for me, pray let me have it.”

“Hold a bit there,” said the man; “I has got my lesson all by heart; and we knows, don’t we, Will, what we has got to do first?”

“To do!” repeated Mrs. Freakley, in alarm; “what do you mean? do you intend to rob and murder me?”

The men laughed, and seizing her by the arms, bade her not be scarified, for they were only going to take her to a snug little farmhouse, not far off, where a young handsome lord, or a sir, they could not tell which, wanted to have a bit of private talk with her.

Mrs. Freakley screamed, and struggled, and protested she was not Miss Delmore; but it was to no purpose—the men were strong, and in spite of her screams and resistance, they hoisted her into the cart, which they closely covered down, and instantly set off at a brisk pace; unheeding of Mrs. Freakley’s threats, shrieks, and persuasions, they continued trotting on till they came to a thatched cottage, at the side of the road, at the distance of six miles from Torrington Castle.

On lifting up the covering of the cart, the men found Mrs. Freakley lying breathless with the jolts and jumbling she had received. They carried her into the cottage, at the door of which they met a clean tidy-looking woman, who opposed their leaving the strange-looking body at her house, and bade them go on with her two miles farther, to the Carpenter’s Arms, where she could have accommodation.

The men pushed a dirty folded paper into the woman’s hand, told her to give the young Miss a night’s lodging, and that her sweetheart would be there in the morning, and well pay her for her trouble.

The woman declared she should not remain in her house; she did not want nothing to do with young Misses, nor their sweethearts.

The men laughed, bade her take care of the young Miss, and drove off.

The woman stared at Mrs. Freakley, whose bonnet was nearly the hind part before, and all her dress discomposed.—“Well,” said the woman, almost crying, “I never seed nothing to come up to this in all my born days—to have a mad cretur forced upon one in this manner, as I don’t know who she be, nor where she belongs to. Oh dear! oh dear! how terrificated I be! Oh, I wish as how my Tom was at home!”

Mrs. Freakley having recovered her breath, which was almost shook out of her body, asked the woman, who was still staring at her, what she was brought there for?

"How the pies should I know?" replied the woman; "the men as left you here, whether I would or no, said you was a young Miss, comed here to wait for your sweetheart."

Mrs. Freakley cast her eyes round, and terrified at the lonely situation of the cottage, heartily repented the *white lie* that had brought her into such a scrape.—"I am come here to wait for no gentleman," said she, angrily; "I was brought here by those two villains against my will, and I will have them hanged, if there is law or justice to be had. They forced me into their jumbling cart, which has almost shook me to death."

"You don't say so! Poor cretur! I never heard the like before! against your will to be carried off in that there manner is too bad!" said the woman; "but I hope the rogues did not behave uncivil to you, Miss?"

"Don't Miss me, woman!" replied Mrs. Freakley; "I am no Miss—I am a widow lady, a person of consequence and fortune. I am aunt to sir Middleton Maxfield, who is now on a visit at Torrington Castle, from whence I have been brought. I insist upon it, woman, you find me a messenger to go to the castle directly; and give me pen, ink, and paper, that I may write a note, to inform my friends what has befallen me, and what a miserable hole I am in."

"Well, to be sure, now I looks at you again," said the woman, "I may well believe you be no young Miss, for you seems pretty much in years. But as for ink, and pens, and sitch like, we does not keep none. Well, for sartin, the men must have been cracked, to take an old body like you for a young Miss."

This observation did not conduce to the calming Mrs. Freakley's temper.—"Procure me a messenger to go to Torrington Castle directly, woman," said she, "and don't trouble me with your impertinent remarks."

"There is not a living sould in the house but myself and the two children," replied the woman.

"Do you live here alone?" asked Mrs. Freakley. "Have you no neighbours?"

"Yes, plenty of neighbours," replied the woman, "but they lives at the village, a mile off; and my Tom is gone to fair, and the boy has lamed his leg, and the little wench don't know a step of the way."

"Then you must go yourself to Torrington Castle," said Mrs. Freakley.

"At this time?" returned the woman, "to meet old Whinney's ghaist on the lower common? No, not I. I would not go if you would give me a crownd!"

Mrs. Freakley began to cry and to exclaim—"What an unfortunate gentlewoman I am! If I had only been fond of reading, if I had only taken warning by Eve, I never should have met this cruel misfortune! What will become of me? what shall I do?"

"Why if you don't like to stay here till the morning," said the woman, "you can set off for the castle directly—it is not much more than four miles across the fields."

"I could not walk four miles," replied Mrs. Freakley, "if I should have Torrington Castle for a recompence."

"Well then you must be content to stay where you be till the morning," said the woman; "and, odds pies! here be the bit of paper the man bid me give you."

Mrs. Freakley tore it open, in the hope of discovering by whose contrivance she had been brought to that place, but the note contained only a few words, in a very cramped hand.—“*Make yourself easy, adorable Cecilia, no harm is intended you. To-morrow morning you will see him who lives to obey your will!*”

Mrs. Freakley committed this precious *morceau* to her pocketbook, in the hope that it would lead to the detection of the person who intended carrying off Miss Delmore; and finding that she had no alternative, but that she must remain where she was till the morning, she asked the woman if she could make her a cup of tea?

“Yes, to be sure, I always keeps sage, and balm, and mint, and them sort of herbs?”

“Herbs!” exclaimed Mrs. Freakley; “why, woman, I am not in a fever! I don’t want herb tea.”

“We never use nothing else here,” replied the woman. “I has not got none of that sort like the gentlefolks drinks, as they buys at the shops.”

“What have you got in the house?” asked Mrs. Freakley, in a tone of impatience.

“Why we has got skim-milk, and whey, and butter-milk,” said the woman; “and as you be poorly with jolting in the cart, why you had better have a little drop of the whey warmed with treacle and ginger, and a bit of bread baked brown in it.”

“What a filthy mess!” exclaimed Mrs. Freakley. “Do you want to poison me, woman? Have you nothing in the house fit for a Christian to eat?”

“Ay, by my troth!” returned the woman, “fit for better Christians than you be, as I thinks.”

“Well, well, don’t be affronted,” said Mrs. Freakley, “because I don’t like herb tea and whey with treacle and ginger. You shall lose nothing by being civil.”

“Oh! as to that,” replied the woman, “I ben’t no fool; I knows how to be civil, when folks behaves themselves; but I does not like to hear my whey called filthy stuff and poison, nor no such disparagement; for a very grand gentleman, as pratty a spoken body as can be, his horsen be here at grass, said as how my whey was as good as hecter; and he always axes for some on it when he comes here.”

“What gentleman are you speaking of?” asked Mrs. Freakley; “what is his name?”

“Bless your heart! I never remembers no names,” returned the woman; “but here,” reaching a book from the top of a cuckoo-clock, “here be Tom’s book, where he did set down the name.”

Mrs. Freakley read, with much pleasure, the name of her nephew, expecting, from the circumstance of his horse’s being there at grass, she should be treated with more respect.—“Why, my good woman,” said she, “sir Middleton Maxfield is my nephew.”

“Mayhap so,” replied the woman; “but you ben’t a bit like him; for he is a fresh, comely, good-looking body.”

This commendation of her nephew did not compensate for the slight put upon her own beauty, yet Mrs. Freakley had sense enough to perceive it would answer no purpose to be upon ill terms with her hostess, whom she asked if sir Middleton often came there?

“About once a-week,” was the reply.

Mrs. Freakley was so sore from the jumbling she had received in the cart, that she was glad to take a boiled egg, and accept the good woman’s coarse but clean bed, who, to accommodate her, slept with her children in the cock-loft.

Mrs. Freakley felt quite convinced that her nephew was in love with Miss Delmore, and that he was the person who had contrived to carry her off, though how his agents had made such a blunder she could not imagine.—“At any rate, I am the sufferer for his frolic,” said Mrs. Freakley, grumbling to herself. “My bones are nearly dislocated by jolting in the cart. I think he might have provided a genteeler conveyance for the young lady; and the brutes of fellows have left the prints of their fingers, in black and blue, all over my arms. Well, well, see sir Middleton when I may, I will read him such a lecture as shall make him ashamed of his conduct; for no doubt he designed to ruin Miss Delmore; and though she is not a person of family, she is under the protection of a man of rank, and respect for the earl of Torrington ought to have kept him from such shameful proceedings.”

The strange place and hard bed kept Mrs. Freakley from sleeping; and early in the morning, to her great joy, she heard the voice of sir Middleton’s groom. Having called till she was hoarse, she began rapping with her shoe on the floor, which at length brought up her hostess.—“That is William,” said Mrs. Freakley, “my nephew’s servant, below.”

“Why, to be sartin you be as good as a witch!” replied the woman. “It be he sure enough; and there be a mortal to do about you at the castle. If so be as how you be madam Freckly, some on ‘em thought as you had feld into the fish-pond; and some on em—”

“Well, no matter what they thought,” said Mrs. Freakley. “Tell William to come up stairs to me immediately; I want to convince him that I am alive after all my sufferings.”

“Up here!” replied the woman, with a look of surprise.

“Yes, up here, to be sure,” returned Mrs. Freakley. “What do you stare at? Go and send William up to me directly.”

“Send a man up stairs, and you in bed!” exclaimed the woman; “I would have you to know, for all you be madam Freckly, as I be a decent body, and keeps a house as is not used to no sitch wicked doings.”

Mrs. Freakley laughed.

“Ay, ay,” continued the woman, “I sees you be one of the fine Lunnun madams as is not ashamed of nothing. So then this is the sweetheart as was to come to you in the morning, is it? But I would have you to know as no man comes into my bedroom but my lawful husband, as married me twelve years ago, at our village church; and so if you does not choose to get up, the man is not coming up my stairs, I promise you; though, for the matter of that, I sartinly believe there would not be no harm, seeing as how you be so mortal ugly, and old enough to be the young fellow’s mother.”

The offended delicacy of the hostess made her slam to the door, and hasten to the kitchen, where she told the groom to wait and take his fine Lunnun madam away with him.

The groom replied he could not take Mrs. Freakley with him, for she could neither walk nor sit a horse.

“And yet,” said the woman, “sitch a poor, helpless, ramshackled cretur, with hair on her head as white as my cap, now her fine curled-up wig is off, sends for a man to her bedside! Shame on the naughty body! it would be fitter for her to think about her grave than sitch wickedness.”

The groom laughed heartily, and explained to the woman, who had never been ten miles from her own village, that it was not unusual with great ladies to breakfast in bed, and be waited upon by their footmen. He assured her that Mrs. Freakley was a person of unblemished reputation, and, to a certainty, had no design upon him, who had been brought up in her house from a child.

Mrs. Freakley had not dressed herself for many years, but such was her impatience to quit a place where the mistress was almost a savage, she contrived to huddle on her clothes, and in far less time than she had ever before completed her toilet, she descended to the kitchen, where William waited her commands.

After a tedious detail of her sufferings, and a narrative of the confusion her absence had occasioned at the castle, Mrs. Freakley inquired if there was no sort of carriage to be had to remove her from that wretched hovel, where, among a variety of other evils, the dread of famine was not the least?

To obviate this apprehension, William proposed a bason of milk warm from the cow, and a slice of toasted bread.

As neither chocolate or coffee had ever been seen in that remote place, Mrs. Freakley was necessitated to accept the homely breakfast of bread and milk, without even a cloth to cover the oak table at which she sat.

William, having mounted his horse, rode off to the castle, to give intelligence of Mrs. Freakley's safety, and order a carriage for her removal, leaving her to the amusement of despising and finding fault with every thing she saw till his return.

"I can't think how you contrive to live in this out-of-the-way place," said Mrs. Freakley.

"Why we does not want for nothing," replied the woman. "I has got a good careful husband, and two bonny children."

"But how can you pass your time in this lonesome cottage? that is what amazes me!" said Mrs. Freakley.

"The time goes fast enough," replied the woman; "for I has none to spare. I makes a little butter and cheese, and I fattens a pig or two, and feeds a few ducks and fowl, and I makes and mends all our garments. I finds plenty to do when the days be at the longest."

"But Sunday," said Mrs. Freakley—"don't you find Sunday very long and tedious?"

"No," replied the woman, "we be glad to see Sunday come, for then we goes to church, and hears a good sarmont, and we fetches a walk to the village, or to see my mither, as lives atop of yonden common; and at night Tom reads a good book till bed-time, for Tom's a scholar; and we never finds the day too long for us, for we works hard all the week, and we likes to take our pleasure on Sabbath-day."

Mrs. Freakley mentally exclaimed—"What a Hottentot!" She looked with contempt on the honest industrious creature before her, who cheerfully performed the duties of her humble station, nor thought that, uncontaminated by what the great call pleasures, she would quit the world, and, from the blameless tenor of her life, obtain a place in that kingdom where labour ends in an eternal glorious Sabbath.

For rural pleasures and occupations Mrs. Freakley had no taste, and she almost screamed with joy when she heard the wheels of a carriage, and saw her nephew, sir Cyril Musgrove and lord Wilton.

Sir Middleton was the first to enter the house.—“My dear aunt,” said he, “I am so happy to find you safe.”

“I am much obliged to you, sir Middleton,” replied she; “I dare say you are glad to find me alive, for, no doubt, it would have laid rather heavy on your conscience, had you been the cause of my death.”

“Me the cause of your death!” repeated sir Middleton; “I don’t understand you, madam. No one could shew more anxiety for your safety than I have.”

“Nephew! nephew!” interrupted Mrs. Freakley, “this may be very true, but yet when you saw Miss Delmore safe by your side, you could not help knowing what had become of me; and if you had possessed a grain of feeling, you would have fetched me from this miserable hole, where, after being jolted to a jelly, and stifled in a filthy cart, I have been in danger of starving.”

“Miss Delmore by my side!” repeated sir Middleton; “what am I to understand by that? what connexion is there between Miss Delmore’s safety, and your being jolted and stifled in a cart?”

“Most vile hypocrite! most abominable profligate!” raved Mrs. Freakley, “will you pretend innocence? but I am not to be deceived, sir; I know your fine plot, and though you are my sister’s son, I will expose your wickedness.”

“What the devil do you mean?” said sir Middleton; “are you mad? has the stifling and jolting disturbed your brain?”

“No, sir,” replied Mrs. Freakley, “I am not mad, nor quite a fool; I understand very clearly that you designed to carry off Miss Delmore, but your blundering agents mistook me for her.”

“That was a confounded blunder,” whispered sir Cyril Musgrove to lord Wilton, who, with a face of inflexible gravity, was laughing in his sleeve at the idea of any person mistaking the short fat widow for the blooming sylph-like Cecilia.

“And while you,” resumed Mrs. Freakley, “were enjoying yourself in the midst of luxury, I was tossing on a bed like pebbles.”

“As good a flock-bed as any body would desire to lie on,” said the hostess.

“And as I could get nothing fit to eat,” continued Mrs. Freakley, “I was almost starving.”

“I never heard of nobody starving,” retorted the hostess, “where there was plenty of bread and cheese, and butter, and bacon, and eggs.”

“Insolent woman!” exclaimed Mrs. Freakley, “how dare you talk to your betters?”

“Betters!” repeated the woman, “I think myself as good as you, since you forces me to tell my mind; and I be sartin my skin looks more wholesomer, for your face be all over patches of red stuff, like the ruddle as I puts on my bricks afore the fireplace there.”

Mrs. Freakley had not seen her face that morning, for the only glass the house afforded was one of about six inches square, that hung beside the cuckoo clock on the kitchen wall, and her rouge having neither been washed off, or renewed, her face was, as the good woman described, “all patches of red stuff;” but the observation adding to Mrs. Freakley’s ill-temper, she furiously ordered the woman to quit her presence.

“Why, be you a-going to pay my rent,” said the woman, “as you orders me to get out on my own house? This is pratty thanks indeed, after giving up my bed to commodate

you, and offering you the best of every thing as I had! but, since it comes to this, I desires you will get out, for a more displeasing grumbling old body I never seed in my born days; you be worsen by half than old Elsie Mumpy, as nobody could never satisfy, do what they would for her.”

Sir Cyril Musgrove laughed aloud.

Lord Wilton took Mrs. Freakley’s hand, and led her to the carriage, preserving a grave face, and condoling with her on her sufferings, while sir Middleton remained behind to pacify and remunerate the woman for her trouble, who protested she did not care about being paid, and should not have minded the trouble a bit, only the old body was so crabbed, and found sitch fault, and despised every thing in sitch a proud way, gist as if folks was not Christian flesh and blood, as well as she.

When arrived at the castle, the child of nature hung about her aunt’s neck—“Do you know,” said she, “we all thought you had tumbled into the fishpond, and I cried so you can’t think, and, la! all the while you was at that nasty cottage, and lying upon a hard flock-bed. Only think, sir Cyril, how shocking!”

“Yet that was better,” replied he, “than supping with the carp at the bottom of the fishpond.”

“Miss Delmore is under infinite obligations to you, Mrs. Freakley,” said lady Jacintha Fitzosborne, “for bearing the sufferings designed for her.”

“For me!” repeated the astonished Cecilia.

“Yes, for you, Miss Delmore,” said Mrs. Freakley; “I was taken for you, Miss Delmore, as this scrap of paper will prove,” presenting the dirty billet to the earl, who having examined it, said he should carefully preserve it, and would spare no trouble or expence to find out the principal in so daring an outrage.

Lady Jacintha suspected sir Cyril Musgrove, for when sir Middleton Maxfield proposed offering a handsome reward, through the medium of the public papers, for the discovery of the men who had forced his aunt into the cart, he opposed the measure with all his eloquence, and convinced sir Middleton that it would only be a means of exposing Mrs. Freakley to ridicule among all her fashionable friends in town.

Lady Jacintha also recollected certain expressions sir Cyril had let fall, but he laughed so heartily at the mistake that had preserved Miss Delmore, and appeared so earnest in the wish to discover the perpetrator of the outrage, that no one, her ladyship excepted, believed he had the remotest knowledge of the affair.

Mrs. Freakley, like the generality of weak-minded persons, was extremely positive, and considered it a reflection on her understanding to be mistaken; she therefore persisted in accusing her nephew of having exposed her to insults, through his profligate design of carrying off a young lady from her friends.

Every person acquitted sir Middleton, for no one believed he had brains to contrive such a project; but Mrs. Freakley having resolved to take a second husband, seized on this pretence to quarrel with her nephew, and to inform him that no part of her fortune should ever become his.

Sir Middleton Maxfield, though he did not possess superabundance of sense, was a good-hearted young man; he loved his aunt, because she was his mother’s sister, and because her house had been his home, and she had behaved very kindly to him during his



minority; he would have resented any insult offered to her, but for her money he did not care a straw, and he told her so in very plain terms: at her menace of marrying he laughed, and made the breach between them wider, by telling her that no man in his senses would accept her money, if she was to be put into the scale with it.

The count del Montarino was wiser than sir Middleton; he knew the value of money, from being so frequently in want of it; he therefore persuaded Miss Maxfield to be doubly attentive to her aunt at this period of irritation, whose wealth, he observed, should, if possible, be kept in the family.

The earl of Torrington examined his own household, and the servants of his guests, without any light being thrown on the affair, and was compelled to believe them ignorant of the design to carry off Miss Delmore.

Mrs. Doricourt was much more uneasy on Cecilia's account than she chose to express. Lady Torrington's behaviour, much too free and volatile for a matron, rendered her a very unfit person to guide a young inexperienced girl through the dangerous mazes of fashionable life. She knew that the earl intended Cecilia should pass the winter in London, and make her *entrée* on the great world, under the protection of himself and lady Torrington; but even in the country an attempt had been made to carry Cecilia off, and if such an atrocious act took place at Torrington Castle, how many more opportunities would offer for a repetition of the outrage in town, where the countess, taken up with the pursuit of her own pleasures, would become careless and forgetful of the treasure entrusted to her charge!

Mrs. Doricourt was not averse to Cecilia seeing the world, or partaking of its amusements, but she wished her a *chaperon* of graver manners and steadier principles than lady Torrington, who still believing herself beautiful, expected the adoration of the men, and would, she was convinced, detest Cecilia, for being younger and handsomer than herself. Weighty as were these reasons, there was still another of greater moment, that rendered Mrs. Doricourt unwilling that Cecilia should reside with lady Torrington: the elegant sentimental Oscar was an object so fascinating, that even the fraternal character he assumed was insufficient to secure the peace of Cecilia: it appeared prudent to Mrs. Doricourt to put an end to those seductive interviews they mutually sought, in which they read, or sung, or painted together, where similar sentiment and congenial taste were so likely to inspire love.

The preservation of Cecilia's innocence and happiness formed the chief employment of Mrs. Doricourt's thoughts; perfidy and ingratitude had shook her reason, and driven her, in the bloom of youth and beauty, from the world. Cecilia was to her a beam of light, shining on her darkened existence; she was her all of joy in the wide world; and to secure this darling's felicity, to watch over her innocence, Mrs. Doricourt resolved to quit her retirement, to mingle again in the busy scenes of fashionable life. Thus determined, she sought an opportunity of speaking to the earl of Torrington alone: she unreservedly explained to him all her apprehensions, and her intention of taking a house in town.—“A separation from Cecilia would be worse than death to me,” said Mrs. Doricourt; “her voice animates me, her smile sheds on my afflicted heart all the pleasure it is capable of feeling; judge then what a dreary wilderness St. Herbert's Island would be, when Cecilia's presence no longer gladdened its shades. Cecilia is more precious to me than a

daughter; while I live she shall share my affluence, and when I die, all I possess shall be hers."

The earl was more gratified by this confidence than he thought proper to avow, for he was aware that lady Torrington was too thoughtless a character to secure Cecilia from danger in the vortex of *haut-ton*. On lord Rushdale the earl assured Mrs. Doricourt he should lay no restraint, and if Cecilia proved to be the choice of his heart, her humble birth should with him form no objection.—"As yet," said the earl, "they are too young to marry; let us, madam, leave this affair to Heaven, without dropping a hint to the young people that we have ever spoken on the subject."

Mrs. Doricourt acquiesced in the earl's opinion, that it was best to preserve inviolable silence, being convinced that Cecilia would have no concealments from her, should she love lord Rushdale, and that she was too noble-minded to accept his hand unless her heart preferred him beyond all other of his sex.

## CHAPTER II.

I call'd her fickle, for I thought her so;  
Swore she was vain as any of her sex.  
Gods! that such baubles should create us woe,  
Should man's superior intellect perplex!  
Thus did I rave; for she is pure as light,  
Gentle as truth, and innocent as fair:  
Grant me her smile to make my moments bright;  
Nought else beneath the sky is worth my care! Z.

*Surmises—A Robbery—An Elopement—Disappointments and Miseries of a Woman of Rank.*

A RAINY morning confining the party at Torrington Castle to seek amusement within doors, the countess chose to affect indisposition, and having displayed her person for some time, in a listless lounging attitude, she observed, that of all weather incidental to this dull, variable, and disagreeable climate, she detested rain most, it so distressed her nerves.

"It is extremely dull," said lady Jacintha, who was amusing herself with opening and shutting a parasol; "we really want some delightful adventure to create a bustle, and put us in spirits."

"What do you think of a wedding, cousin?" lisped lady Eglantine, casting a languishing look towards lord Melvil, who was winding thread on an ivory shuttle for her ladyship's tatting.

"A wedding!" exclaimed lady Jacintha; "sickening! I always make it a point to decline an invitation to a wedding; it is worse than a dose of ipecacuanha to be in attendance on these occasions."

"La! do you think so?" asked Miss Maxfield; "I wish somebody would invite me to their wedding. I should like to be a bridesmaid above all things."

"Except being the bride," said sir Cyril Musgrove; "come, confess, Miss Maxfield, you would like that better."

"Confess!" repeated she, "why, you are not a Catholic priest, sir Cyril, are you?"

"No, but 'pon honour," replied he, "I envy those sly fellows, they have such opportunities and such influence with women."

"But remember," said lady Eglantine, "they are not permitted to marry."

"La, what a shame!" observed Miss Maxfield.

"I shall be at lady Leonora Sedley's marriage early in January," said lady Eglantine. "I am certain it will be delightful, lord Tempest is so fond of lady Leonora."

"When persons are joined together by mutual concurrence," resumed lady Torrington, "it is at best but a dull stupid affair, while a runaway match always occasions confusion, and is sure to put the contending parties in high spirits."

"For my part," said Mrs. Freakley, "I don't at all approve of runaway matches."

“Nor of being runaway with?” asked Drawley.

“Pray don’t mention it,” replied Mrs. Freakley; “I have had a pretty good specimen of that pleasure, and shall take care to avoid a repetition of such adventures, by never walking out alone.”

“I think Miss Delmore ought to be careful of walking out alone,” rejoined the countess; “though it strikes me, if she had been carried off, her usage would have been kind and merciful. She would only have had to complain of confinement in a neat snug parsonage-house.”

“Does your ladyship then suspect Mr. Oxley of being the hero of the late adventure?” asked Mr. Drawley.

“Indubitably,” replied the countess; “my suspicion never glanced upon any one else, and, if I do his reverence wrong, I trust, that, out of his abundant charity, he will pardon me.”

The earl and lord Rushdale entered as lady Torrington was speaking, and lord Rushdale, from a principle of generosity, replied—“I am certain, madam, you do Mr. Oxley injustice, by imputing to him this villanous transaction.”

“Bless me, lord Rushdale!” returned the countess, “how decidedly you take upon you to exculpate Mr. Oxley! Pray, have you the honour to be his *é secretis*, that you are so perfectly informed in his affairs?”

“Without being quite so deep in his confidence,” replied lord Rushdale, with a good-natured smile, “I have reasons which I should suppose might be equally obvious to your ladyship, that compel me to acquit Mr. Oxley of any share in this outrage.”

“Positively,” resumed the countess, “with respect to these obvious reasons, I must confess my incorrigible *bêtise*; but I remember Mr. Oxley did me the superlative honour to make me the confidant of his *flamme amoureuse* for Miss Delmore, and I suspect that desperation might have set him upon this *ruse*, as his fair enslaver was inexorable to his tender suit, and scornfully rejected his overtures.”

“I am entirely of Oscar’s opinion,” said the earl of Torrington; “Mr. Oxley, depend upon it, has nothing to do with this villanous business: he is of too cool a temperament—too cautious a nature—to risk his fair character by an act of violence which must have been discovered.”

“But doubtless,” replied the countess, “knowing how immense a favourite the young lady is with your lordship, the reverend gentleman’s intention was to make *l’amende honorable*.”

“You are possessed with the spirit of contradiction this morning,” said the earl; “Mr. Oxley would not—dared not commit an outrage that he was certain would destroy his present and future advancement in life, for he well knows that any insult, offered directly or indirectly to Miss Delmore, would make me his irreconcilable enemy: and now, madam, let me request you to let the matter rest, till some fortunate chance reveals the villain; for villain he must be who would seek to possess himself of the person of a female by stratagem or force.”

The countess put up her lip, but as she wanted money for her intended fete, she did not think it prudent to irritate her lord.

The entrance of the count del Montarino turned the conversation, and the countess forgot her indisposition and weak nerves, while listening in rapture to his plan for decorating the castle and grounds for the *fête champêtre*. Such an entertainment had never been heard of in Cumberland, and to introduce a novelty was gratifying in the extreme to the vain lady Torrington, who wished to be considered the goddess of fashion and elegance, and who thought nothing of expending thousands on her whims: expence was beneath her consideration when her object was to rival, astonish, and eclipse; though to suffering merit, to aged affliction, or houseless poverty, lady Torrington was unfeeling and parsimonious; her charity was ostentation; what she gave was to obtain the praise of the world, for the pleasure of seeing her name enrolled among beings heartless as herself, not for the pure delight of fulfilling the divine command that says—“*Give of thy abundance to the poor.*”

The count del Montarino proposed illuminating the chesnut avenue, the lawn and shrubberies, with variegated lamps, and to erect in the park a light Corinthian temple to Fortune.

“The temple must be entirely open,” said lord Melvil, “for you know there are various entrances to the shrine of Fortune.”

“Very true,” rejoined lady Jacintha, “there are many ways to make a fortune; sometimes,” added she, significantly, “men constrain Cupid to introduce them to Plutus.”

“No matter for the means,” said lord Wilmot, “so the money is made.”

“La!” observed Miss Maxfield, “I have seen a man sweeping the crossings to the streets in London, and they told me he was so rich you can’t think.”

“And that,” said Drawley, “is not the only dirty means of making money.”

“Well, let the grovelling wretches sweep and toil to make it,” returned lady Torrington, “I know how to spend it; but let us speak about the temple; Rushdale, we will trouble you to draw us a plan.”

“This temple,” resumed the count, “must contain a statue of the goddess Fortune.”

“Why a statue?” asked the countess; “would not the effect be more striking to have a person in an appropriate dress preside in the temple?”

“Your idea is perfectly correct,” replied the obsequious Montarino; “doubtless a living goddess will be infinitely more effective; but in the place of her usual appendage, a purse, she must present to her votaries a splendid antique casket, containing elegant *bijoux*, the prizes of a certain number of female archers, whose unerring arrows shall bring down a golden key from the centre of an ornamented arch, erected in view of the temple.”

“What a delightful thought!” exclaimed the countess.

“Charming!” lisped lady Eglantine; “I will write immediately to town for appropriate costume—a green velvet robe, and buskins à la Diane.”

“And I will instantly set about practising to shoot with a bow,” said lady Jacintha.

“La, and so will I!” said Miss Maxfield: “dear, I should be so pleased to bring down the gold key you can’t think! What trinkets will be locked up in the casket, lady Torrington!”

“I have not thought of the matter,” returned the countess; “whatever the count thinks proper; I leave all these arrangements entirely to his taste.”

The count bowed, declared himself honoured, and informed Miss Maxfield that the prizes must not be known till won.

“La! well, it does not signify to me, I am certain,” said Miss Maxfield, “for, perhaps, I may not bring down the gold key; for I am always so unlucky at cards you can’t think. I lost every time I played last winter, though I am sure it was not all fair play, for everybody said the honourable Miss Plume cheated, and lady Aimwell laughed, and said, that as I lost at cards, I should be fortunate in a husband.”

“And that consoled you for being cheated out of your money?” asked lord Melvil.

“To be sure it did,” replied Miss Maxfield.

“But if lady Aimwell’s prophecy should be false, what then is to console you for losing your money?” asked lord Melvil.

“La! you only ask me that to tease me,” replied Miss Maxfield. “Lady Aimwell ought to know something about such things, for she has had three husbands.”

“How vastly indelicate,” lisped lady Eglantine, “to marry more than once!”

“What an unconscionable creature!” exclaimed lady Jacintha. “Mercy on us! three husbands! In my opinion, no woman ought to be allowed to marry more than once.”

“There certainly would be a greater chance for your ladyship,” said Mrs. Freakley, “if such a regulation could be brought about; and indeed I don’t at all wonder that you disapprove second marriages, who have remained so long single.”

“I am not yet weary of my liberty, madam,” replied lady Jacintha. “There are fools, fops, and fortune-hunters enough to be had, but these do not happen to suit my taste. I flatter myself with possessing refinement, and the man on whom I bestow my hand, must possess qualifications of no common stamp.”

The countess smiled disdainfully, for she knew to whom the wishes of lady Jacintha pointed, and to whose uncommon qualifications she alluded.—“Clouds and rain in the country,” said she, “are intolerable. Thank Heaven the sun shines!—Who will drive me to Keswick?”

Mr. Drawley immediately offered his services, and was, with a gracious smile, accepted.

The earl made one of the party; but lord Rushdale excused himself, on the pretence of having letters to write, but, in reality, to take a solitary walk, and muse over the altered behaviour of Cecilia, who, with Mrs. Doricourt, lady Welford, and colonel St. Irwin, were gone on a visit of charity.

The manner of Cecilia to lord Rushdale was indeed reserved and constrained; the artful communication of lady Jacintha had impressed itself painfully on her mind; the idea that his heart was bestowed, his hand engaged, never for a moment quitted her memory. She now considered him in the light of a married man, and feared to indulge herself in listening to him, lest she should feel a pleasure in his conversation that might destroy her peace, and outrage propriety. Oscar was engaged; delicacy bade her shun him, before his honour, or her own happiness, became endangered. She now constantly seated herself between lady Welford and Mrs. Doricourt. He could no longer approach her, and when he addressed a question to her, she replied without looking at him.

This conduct, new as strange, gave the generous Rushdale much uneasiness. Cecilia no longer smiled on him, and when he proposed renewing their reading or painting studies, she was particularly engaged; when he mentioned music, she had a cold, was hoarse, and could not sing.

At first these excuses passed, but when he saw her seated beside Mrs. Doricourt, employed with her pencil, and heard her, at the request of the earl, sing with her usual expression and brilliancy, he felt offended, and mentally accused her of caprice and inconsistency.—“Even the beautiful Cecilia,” said he, “whom I thought so artless, she is far from perfect; she has the fickle spirit of her sex. At first my attentions seemed to give her pleasure; our tastes, our pursuits, were congenial, but wearied with sameness, she has found some more interesting friend, some more agreeable companion.”

Lord Rushdale was jealous, though he knew not of whom. Cecilia had refused colonel St. Irwin and Mr. Oxley; but these lovers were advanced in the “*vale of years*.” They were not suited to her inclination. Perhaps she had made choice of sir Cyril Musgrove; he had spoken in rapturous terms of her beauty and accomplishments. Was it possible that the timid, modest Cecilia could receive pleasure from the profligate flattery of a professed libertine—a coxcomb who idolized under heaven nothing so much as himself, who never would have thought her worthy of a second glance of his, had he not found she was universally admired, and, in the language of *haut-ton*, was likely to be the fashion the ensuing winter?—“But be it so,” said Oscar, sighing, “Cecilia shall never know how much her conduct pains me; she shall ever find me the sincerest of her friends.”

Mrs. Doricourt remarked the reserve of Cecilia, and approved it. If lord Rushdale was seriously attached to her, such conduct would increase his passion; but if unfortunately the love was only felt by Cecilia, it was praiseworthy in her to deprive herself of moments of pleasure, that were to be succeeded by years of sorrow; it was a proof of nobleness of mind, to endeavour at subduing an ill-placed affection; but though lord Rushdale uttered no complaint, asked no explanation of this unaccountable change, yet his eyes mournfully reproached her; and Cecilia was compelled to keep a strict guard upon her feelings, to prevent relapsing into her former confidential habits.

The earl of Torrington had presented Miss Delmore with a beautiful horse, and having overcome her timidity, she could now enjoy the rides that were frequently made to the lakes, and about the country.

Lady Jacintha Fitzosborne piqued herself upon sitting and managing a horse gracefully; and it gave her no small vexation to see Miss Delmore, in a few days, as much at ease as herself, and looking more blooming than ever, from equestrian exercise.

Lady Jacintha perceived that lord Rushdale’s attentions to Cecilia were not as unremitting as they had been, but his eyes still followed her; and though in one of their rides she had fixed him to her side, and with all the wit and vivacity she could assume, kept him engaged in conversation, still she found Miss Delmore was the object that fixed his regard, for he spoke of the elegance of her figure, and the grace with which she sat her horse.

These observations were daggers to her envious bosom, and she determined to be revenged for the slight and mortification this low-born girl occasioned her. Suddenly crossing the road, lady Jacintha let fall a white cambric handkerchief, which she dextrously caught on her whip before it reached the ground.

This manoeuvre answered her malicious design—it startled Cecilia’s horse, and he set off at full gallop towards a turning of the road that led to a deep stone-quarry.

Cecilia's life was now in imminent danger; to pursue would but increase the speed of the terrified animal. Lord Rushdale waited not an instant to deliberate; his horse, quick as thought, cleared a high hedge; with the velocity of an arrow, he dashed over an impending gate, in the hope of preserving Cecilia from the horrible fate that menaced her with destruction.

Lord Rushdale was now before the dreaded quarry: Cecilia's horse was also there, trembling on the extreme edge of the tremendous gulph; but the lovely object of Rushdale's anxiety was nowhere to be seen. He cast a shuddering glance down the pit, expecting to behold her beautiful form mutilated and bleeding at its bottom, and never did more grateful thanksgiving arise from a devoted heart, than breathed from the lips of Oscar, when he found she had escaped that dreadful plunge. Again he set forward, and to his unutterable joy, found Cecilia safe and unhurt, but pale, faint, and trembling, on a high bank that overhung the narrow road, where, with admirable presence of mind, she had thrown herself from the back of the terrified horse.

In the fulness of his joy, Oscar pressed a thousand kisses on her hands, while she, overcome by the recollection of her narrow escape, wept on his bosom.

"Cecilia, my adored, my own Cecilia!" said the agitated Rushdale, "I feared you were lost to me for ever. Never will this dreadful morning be effaced from my memory."

Cecilia was unable to speak; but her heart felt, and her tears evinced, her gratitude for his tender solicitude.

Lord Rushdale's groom had by this time caught Cecilia's horse, and the rest of the party had arrived to witness and congratulate Miss Delmore on her miraculous escape; but though unhurt by the accident, Cecilia was too much agitated to ride, nor would lord Rushdale hear of it.

While debating what was to be done, sir Cyril Musgrove proposed, that some of the party should directly proceed to the castle, and dispatch a carriage, while the rest remained with Miss Delmore.

Lady Jacintha now repented her revengeful project, as it only had given Cecilia a new triumph, in the certainty that to preserve her life lord Rushdale had risked his own.

Lady Eglantine protested, that apprehension for the life of Miss Delmore had made her quite ill, and that she would proceed to the castle, for she was too much affected to be of any service to Miss Delmore.

Lady Jacintha was extremely sorry to leave Miss Delmore, but her cousin being too ill to remain, must be her apology.

"La! it is very ill-natured and unfeeling of you both to go away!" said Miss Maxfield. "You neither of you look ill at all, and see how pale Miss Delmore is, and how she trembles. I am sure I am so frightened you can't think; but I will stay with her for all that."

Cecilia pressed Miss Maxfield's hand, who seated herself beside her on the bank.

Lady Jacintha coldly wished Miss Delmore better, and lady Eglantine said she would send a smelling-bottle, if she reached the castle before the carriage set off.

Cecilia having wept, became more composed, and hoped that no one would inform Mrs. Doricourt of the danger she had been in.

Sir Middleton Maxfield asked lord Rushdale what he would take for his horse; and



by praising the extraordinary leaps he had taken, informed Cecilia of the imminent hazard lord Rushdale had put his own life in, by the endeavour to save hers.

Lord Rushdale replied, before that morning, he had never known the animal's great capabilities, but having discovered them, he would not part with him for any sum of money that would be offered.

Cecilia's eyes, eloquent with gratitude, met those of Rushdale, and that glance of soul repaid him for all the uneasiness she had made him endure.

Lady Jacintha and her party met one of the earl's carriages, but it past them so rapidly, that they could not see who was hastening to the relief of Miss Delmore; but when they reached the castle, they found that lord Torrington had gone alone, strictly charging the domestics not to inform Mrs. Doricourt that Miss Delmore had met an accident; but lady Eglantine chose to have hysterics, now she had a couch to throw herself upon, for she made it a rule never to have a fit but when she could display her person to advantage, and secure the attention of two or three gentlemen.

By the confusion this farce occasioned, Mrs. Doricourt became acquainted with what had happened, and her distress and apprehension for Cecilia occasioned her to faint in reality.

The noise, and hurrying backwards and forwards through the gallery, disturbed the countess of Torrington, who had not yet left her dressing-room; and, not a little displeased, she sent Smithson to inquire what uncommon event had taken place, to cause such a disagreeable bustle among the servants?

Mrs. Smithson quickly returned, with an account that Miss Delmore had been thrown from her horse, and fractured her skull, that sir Middleton Maxfield had broke a leg and an arm in trying to stop Miss Delmore's horse, that lady Eglantine Sydney was in convulsion fits, and Mrs. Doricourt had been carried to her chamber dying.

"Mercy on me, Smithson!" said lady Torrington, "what is to be done with all these people? Why the castle will absolutely be turned into an hospital for sick and wounded. I wish, with all my soul, Mrs. Doricourt had remained herself, and kept this girl, this Miss Delmore, who is always causing trouble, at her own Hermitage. They have chosen a very awkward time indeed for their accidents and their fits, just as if they did it on purpose to tease and torment one. I certainly hear a carriage. Do, for goodness sake, Smithson, look out, and see what is coming next! my *fête champêtre* and masquerade will be totally ruined. I think no person breathing meets with such disagreeable people, and such provoking disappointments, as I do."

Mrs. Smithson looked from the balcony, as she was desired.—"Well, to be sure, I never saw the like of this since I came into the world," exclaimed she.

"Well, let me hear," said the countess, eagerly. "Do pray, Smithson, be quick, and put me out of this painful suspense! What has happened? Don't be afraid to tell me. Is lord Torrington killed?"

"Dear me, my lady, no," replied Smithson; "but only think what an abominable story-teller Clinton is. What a pack of stuff he told me about fractured skulls, and broken arms and legs! and I declare, my lady, there is sir Middleton Maxfield walking about as well as ever he did, and Miss Delmore leaning on the earl's arm, looking a little palish, to be sure, but none the worse, as I see, for her fall."

"I breathe again," said the countess. "I am quite happy to learn I am not to be troubled with sick or wounded; not that I care a straw about the girl, only I know lord Torrington would have insisted on my putting off my entertainments, if any thing had happened to her, and that would have been a most mortifying disappointment. As to lady Eglantine's fits, I dare swear they are not dangerous, nothing more than affectation."

A tap at the door silenced lady Torrington, and announced a visitor—it was lord Rushdale. Giving his mother credit for feelings she did not possess, he came to relieve the fear he supposed she would entertain on his account, by assuring her, in person, of his safety.

"Oh, it is only lord Rushdale; you may finish my hair, Smithson," said the countess. "I suppose your lordship comes to treat me with a page from the Chapter of Accidents? but you may spare yourself the fatigue. I have heard it all."

The heart of Rushdale felt an uneasy pang, and his cheek glowed with displeasure, as, with the utmost *sang froid*, the countess turned to her mirror, to complete the arrangement of her hair.

"Upon my word, lord Rushdale," resumed she, "this Miss Delmore is quite a heroine, the princess of doleful adventures, and seems fated to keep us in a state of alarm."

"Your ladyship does not appear to suffer much from alarm," replied lord Rushdale, rather indignantly. "Miss Delmore, thank Heaven! has received no serious injury; and for myself, if I had lost my life in the attempt to save hers, I believe you would have received the intelligence with stoical firmness."

"You pay my fortitude a great compliment," said lady Torrington. "In that firmness I should have resembled your favourite Spartan and Roman matrons; but, for pity's sake! don't look so doleful. You know I mortally detest dismals. No injury having happened to any person, what do you expect me to lament and be melancholy about?"

"Mrs. Doricourt is very ill, madam," replied Oscar; "and lady Eglantine Sydney is—"

"Having a fit or two of her own," interrupted the countess. "*N'importe*: when she has fatigued herself with affecting to laugh and cry, she will recover, take my word for it."

"I see," resumed lord Rushdale, "it is impossible to interest your feelings; but surely, madam, politeness to your guests demands that you should pay them the compliment of an inquiry, after their late fearful shock, particularly Miss Delmore, who—"

"I entreat, lord Rushdale," said the countess, not allowing him to proceed, "I entreat you will not designate your father's housekeeper's relation my guest. I never invited her to the castle. I never—"

"But Mrs. Doricourt, madam," said lord Rushdale, interrupting her, "Mrs. Doricourt you did invite; she is your guest; and if Miss Delmore, lovely and amiable as she is, has failed to conciliate your esteem, respect to Mrs. Doricourt, who considers Miss Delmore her daughter, demands that you should inquire how she is after her accident."

"I am really under an infinitude of obligation to you, lord Rushdale," replied the countess, with a low courtsey, "for taking the trouble to instruct me how to conduct myself with good manners in my own house, and in the proper respect I ought to pay my guests. Be assured, I will not forget you have condescended to give me a lesson on politeness; but though," continued she, ironically, "I must, of course, admire and applaud the knight-errantry, the chivalric bravery, with which you put your own life in peril to

preserve that of the peerless lady of your heart, I greatly apprehend your right noble and illustrious neck has been endangered in vain, and that your romance will not terminate, in the usual way of romances, with the marriage of the hero and heroine."

Lord Rushdale moved towards the door.—"Be assured, madam," said he, "I glory in what you are pleased to term my knight-errantry, though I am persuaded a perfect stranger, seeing a female in danger, would have evinced equal bravery; and in whatever way my romance may end, I shall consider him the happiest of mortals who obtains the hand of the peerless Cecilia Delmore."

"So, so! vastly noble and sublime!" exclaimed the countess, as the door closed on lord Rushdale's departure. "The silly boy is actually in love with this chit, this minx! Lord Torrington, with his charity, and humanity, and fine feelings, has effected a glorious business; but never shall a son of mine degrade himself by marrying Cecilia Delmore." With this resolution the countess smoothed her brow, and descended to the drawing-room, to inquire after the sick and convalescent.

Mrs. Doricourt's joy was extreme when she received into her arms the child of her affection, safe and unhurt; but Cecilia's cheek was pale, and her nerves trembling, and she yielded to the advice of her friends, and retired, to endeavour, by sleep, to regain composure; but it was long before the tumult of her thoughts allowed her the repose necessary to her restoration, though it was rapture to her heart to remember that, if betrothed to another, Rushdale was her *friend*—that he had even risked his valuable life in a noble effort to preserve her from the terrific death at which her recollection shuddered.

Lady Eglantine Sydney, as the countess predicted, soon recovered from her fits, in which she remained something longer than agreeable, out of compliment to lord Melvil, whom she had heard say, that timidity, gentleness, and compassion, made a lovely woman appear more lovely. In conformity to this opinion, she determined to continue the amiable, and before she changed her dress, went to pay a visit to Cecilia in her chamber, who happily escaped her affected commiseration and condolence by being asleep.

At dinner neither Mrs. Doricourt nor Miss Delmore appeared, and in spite of lady Jacintha's exuberant spirits, and Drawley's drolleries, every person at table seemed sensible of their absence.

"That horse of Miss Delmore's appeared a very gentle animal," said sir Cyril Musgrove; "I have no idea what startled it."

"La! don't you know, sir Cyril," replied Miss Maxfield, "that it was lady Jacintha's white handkerchief, which she let fall and caught again upon her whip? When I saw Miss Delmore's horse rear up, and gallop off, I was so frightened you can't think."

The countess, casting a suspicious glance on lady Jacintha, said—"If lord Rushdale had lost his life, I should never have endured the display of a white handkerchief on any occasion."

"Miss Delmore's life," observed the earl of Torrington, "was equally valuable with lord Rushdale's. I sincerely thank Heaven they are both preserved; and I confess I glory in the humanity and courage of my son."

The countess frowned, and tried to change the subject; but Miss Maxfield would continue it.—"Dear," said she, "when Miss Delmore's head lay on lord Rushdale's

shoulder, she looked so beautiful you can't think. I don't know which of their faces was the palest; and Miss Delmore's long hair hung over lord Rushdale's arm, and the tears ran down her cheeks, for all her eyes were shut; and I was so sorry to see her I cried too."

"Yes," replied lord Rushdale, "yes, Miss Maxfield, you did evince concern and humanity, for you remained with Miss Delmore, who must otherwise have been without the assistance of any but gentlemen in her distressing situation."

"For my part," returned lady Eglantine, in a languid tone, "my nerves are so excessively weak, that I had occasion for assistance myself."

"And I could not possibly let my cousin, who was so unwell, return alone," said lady Jacintha.

"A truce with these unnecessary excuses," rejoined the countess, "and introduce another subject, for I am absolutely *ennuyée* of hearing of startled palfreys, and fainting damsels, with pale cheeks and dishevelled hair. Do you think, count, that all will be in readiness by the seventeenth of the next month for the masquerade?"

"Without doubt," replied the count. "The artists are to be here to-morrow. Flowers for the Turkish garden will be down in a few days; and the dresses can be sent for. I really see nothing to prevent all being complete by the time your ladyship has appointed."

"What dress will you wear, lady Eglantine, at the masquerade?" asked Miss Maxfield.

"I really have not fixed upon any," replied lady Eglantine; "but I think a sultana, or a Circassian slave."

"*Her eyes blue languish, and her golden hair*—very appropriate, 'pon my honour," said sir Cyril Musgrove. "Be a Circassian by all means, lady Eglantine."

"I intend to be a nun," rejoined Miss Maxfield.

"A nun!" repeated Drawley; "I pray you, saintly maid, when you do count your beads, offer a prayer for me!"

"La! what nonsense you talk, Mr. Drawley! I don't mean to be a nun in earnest," said Miss Maxfield; "but I have heard one of my schoolfellows read in a book about a young lady being forced into a nunnery, and going through such a deal of trouble, and then her lover ran away with her. La! it was so pretty you can't think."

"The running away part you mean?" returned Drawley; "but remember, Miss Maxfield, what I told you."

"Dear, how you tease one, Mr. Drawley!" said Miss Maxfield; "just as if you was sure that I was going to run away."

"You run away, Jemima! Heaven forbid, child!" exclaimed Mrs. Freakley. "I hope you will have more discretion."

"Yes, but an elopement is so charming," said lady Jacintha; "for if relations or guardians pursue, it gives the lover a delightful opportunity to display his courage, and the lady to prove the strength of her attachment."

"If my sister was such a fool as to run away," replied sir Middleton, "I would never take the trouble to run after her."

"La! that is very cross indeed, Middleton," said Miss Maxfield; "for I should expect you to be in a terrible great passion, and to try to force me away from my lover."

"I should certainly leave all that trouble to the lord chancellor," replied sir Middleton.

"I would not ride half a mile after you."

"Dear, how ill-natured!" returned Miss Maxfield. "I declare I feel so vexed you can't think."

"Why sure, Jemima, you are not going to be so silly as to cry?" said Mrs. Freakley. "I protest this has a very serious look! Do you really intend to elope, child?"

"What a ridiculous question!" returned sir Middleton. "She has no such intention: she is thinking of the nun in the book."

"I hate those novels and romances," said Mrs. Freakley, "they fill the heads of young people with such a pack of foolish notions and schemes. I never read a book of any sort in all my life, and if Jemima will follow my advice, she will let such trumpery alone."

Cecilia awoke seriously indisposed, and, at Mrs. Doricourt's desire, a physician was sent for from Keswick, who recommended bleeding, and that the young lady should be kept perfectly tranquil, as he apprehended fever.

This report occasioned no little alarm to lady Torrington, who, in her solicitude for self-preservation, would have requested Cecilia's removal from the castle, had she not been assured by the physician that Miss Delmore's fever would not be catching. She therefore contented herself with ordering strong fumigations, and with sending to express the regrets she did not feel, secretly rejoicing that Mrs. Doricourt's tenderness and compassion confined her to the invalid's chamber, and delivered her, for the present, from the presence of a person whose dignified manner awed her, and whose reproving glance put an irksome restraint on her levity.

Lady Jacintha, far from repenting having caused Miss Delmore's indisposition, now hoped that fever might carry her off, for she was convinced that the heart of Rushdale was devoted to Cecilia, and she hated her, with all the malice of jealous rivalry.

Far from being sensible to lady Jacintha's blandishments, or grateful for the partiality she took no pains to conceal, Oscar did his best to avoid conversing with her at all; but when compelled to reply to her questions, his answers were monosyllables, or made in the fewest words possible.

Lord Rushdale had never admired the person or wit of lady Jacintha, but the knowledge that through her, who expressed no sort of concern, the accident had occurred that might yet cost Cecilia her life, made her an object of abhorrence to him; and he continually invented excuses to avoid singing, reading, or walking, with her.

Meantime lady Jacintha found the hope of attaching him grow every hour weaker. The countess too, since the night of the fire, had treated her with disdainful slight; but at present it was not convenient to her to remove, for she had just then no dear friend to visit, and her finances were not equal to the expence of a bathing-place. She was therefore obliged to conceal the torments of hatred, jealousy, and disappointment, and to smile, while she rankled with envy and spite.

Nor was the bosom of Rushdale much more at ease; his adored Cecilia was ill, might never recover, and if restored to health, he had the misery to know that he should possess her gratitude, her cold esteem, while the love he would give worlds to obtain would be bestowed on sir Cyril Musgrove, a fop, a coxcomb, incapable of feeling her worth, of appreciating her affection.

The dejection so visibly impressed on the countenance of Oscar exposed him to the

censure of his mother, and the illiberal sarcasms of lady Jacintha, who seized every occasion to ridicule the attainments of Mrs. Doricourt, and condemn her manner of educating Miss Delmore, “who, if she had been brought up according to her rank in life,” said lady Jacintha, “would no doubt have made a good milliner or dressmaker; but now, poor girl! with all her wonderful accomplishments, she will, I fear, remain a tedious time on hand, as very few gentlemen will choose to take a wife from the lower order of the people.”

“True,” replied Mrs. Freakley; “family is certainly a great object, when a gentleman takes a wife.”

“Yes, yes,” said sir Middleton Maxfield, “when a man makes up his mind to marry, high blood is of consequence; but they say, as an equivalent for family, the ‘*Lady of the Lake*’ will come down handsomely with her thousands.”

“Your information, sir Middleton, is rather incorrect,” replied lady Jacintha, “for I know, to a certainty, that all Mrs. Doricourt’s property is secured, and will devolve, after her death, to a nephew of her late husband’s.”

“Poor Miss Delmore!” said sir Middleton, “what will become of her, if the ‘*Lady of the Lake*’ should take it into her head to die?”

“She must go upon the stage,” replied lady Jacintha.

“No, no, that will never do for Miss Delmore,” said sir Middleton; “she is too reserved, too timid.”

“Her bashfulness will never stand in the way of her success,” returned lady Jacintha; “and really, when we consider how very fortunate the actresses of late have been, it would be no bad speculation for Miss Delmore, with her accomplishments.”

Lady Jacintha took care to say this when neither the earl of Torrington or his son were present. The countess, she knew, had not taken the trouble to inquire into Mrs. Doricourt’s affairs, and could not contradict her assertion respecting the disposal of her fortune.

Mrs. Freakley observed, that Mrs. Doricourt might outlive Miss Delmore, for she was yet but a young woman.

“Of about fifty, I suppose,” said lady Torrington.

“Not so much as that, certainly,” replied sir Cyril Musgrove; “but let her age be what it will, the ‘*Lady of the Lake*’ is a devilish handsome woman, ‘pon my honour!”

“She has a very odd look with her eyes,” lisped lady Eglantine.

“Her eyes are remarkably beautiful,” said lord Wilton.

Mrs. Freakley raised her eyebrows, and wondered he could think so.

“I wish she had remained, beauty and all, on her enchanted island,” said lady Torrington, “and had kept the paragon of perfection, Miss Delmore, with her; for they have absolutely deranged my plans of amusement, with their formal objections and their romantic adventures; and if I was at all inclined to encourage that ‘*green-eyed monster*,’ jealousy, which, thank Heaven! I am not, I might fancy my lord and husband paid too much devotion to this constellation of charms and fascinations, this ‘*Lady of the Lake*,’ while Rushdale, I blush for his degeneracy, seems influenced by his father’s example of folly, and worships the peerless Cecilia; but Rushdale will get over this boyish flame. I have views for him, which shall defeat all the artful snares spread to entrap him.”

As she spoke she looked full at lady Jacintha, who, nothing disconcerted, turned to sir Middleton Maxfield, and asked if he was afraid of being entrapped by the wiles of artful woman?

"None have ever yet thought me worth spreading a snare for," replied sir Middleton, not aware that lady Jacintha's question was a wile to throw him off his guard, and render him unsuspecting of the design she was forming in her own crafty mind.

Sir Middleton Maxfield had estates to the amount of sixteen thousand pounds a-year, and his godmother, a very old woman, had promised to make him heir to seven thousand a-year more. If lord Rushdale could not be brought to offer her his hand, lady Jacintha thought that sir Middleton Maxfield would be no bad match for her. Sir Middleton's person was very tolerable, and for his wit, he had quite sufficient for a husband, particularly for her, who never intended the man she married should have an opinion of his own. Sir Middleton had a good voice: lady Jacintha invited him to sing duets with her. She pronounced his style superior to Braham's. She condescended to flatter Mrs. Freakley; took the arm of Miss Maxfield when they walked; and by persevering in shewing a marked attention to sir Middleton, she at last persuaded him to believe that he was in love with her.

Lord Wilton, who had taken the hints of Mrs. Freakley, was debating whether he should tie himself to a little fat talkative woman, for the sake of her money, when lady Jacintha's manoeuvring struck his observation; and, as sir Middleton might possibly be a part of his family, he thought it his duty to point out to him, that her artful ladyship had pursued a similar conduct with lord Rushdale; that her object, without a single particle of affection, was to secure a wealthy husband, her father being a ruined gamester, and herself portionless.

Sir Middleton acknowledged that he had once thought lady Jacintha Fitzosborne a disagreeable satirical coquette, but she had flattered his vanity—she had influenced his pride; he fancied himself beloved, and the representations of lord Wilton he considered as the ebullitions of envy. Lord Wilton, he recollected, had often acknowledged that lady Jacintha was handsome, and had too much understanding for a woman. What then, but envy at his success, could induce him to rail against her?

Sir Middleton was convinced, that to the sensible disinterested lady Jacintha, his fortune was no object, and though his friends remonstrated, and his aunt disapproved, he made up his mind, in spite of all former objections to matrimony, to offer his hand to lady Jacintha Fitzosborne, whose rank, beauty, and wit, were fortune sufficient.

But lady Jacintha by no means designed to hurry the affair; old lady Witherington, sir Middleton's godmother, though very ill, was not insensible, and no one could yet be certain of the disposal of her fortune. She had of late been methodistically inclined, and might leave her money to build conventicles. A baronet and sixteen thousand pounds a-year was certainly infinitely better than enduring the inconveniences she did as a spinster; but she would not throw herself away—she would try one more winter, and if nothing superior in rank or fortune offered, why she would condescend to accept the title of lady Maxfield early in the spring. Of course, she took care not to explain her real motives to sir Middleton, but put off his urgency for an immediate union, by persuading him, that her disinterested principles would not allow her to take advantage of his partiality; reason

and judgment should have time to act; but if his heart continued unchanged after the trial of the ensuing winter, she would give him her hand the following April.

Lady Jacintha's hopes and wishes still lingered round the elegant Rushdale, whose jealousy and pride she conceived it possible to pique, by her flirtation with sir Middleton Maxfield; but her conduct was in every respect matter of total indifference to Oscar; he neither, by look or word, seemed sensible that she had made a transfer of her regards; but the countess, who had a watchful eye upon lady Jacintha, perceived, with much secret satisfaction, the change in her ladyship's conduct. She had beheld, with much displeasure, the pains she had taken to captivate her son; and none knew better than lady Torrington how fascinating to a young man were the blandishments of a fine woman.

The artists, machinists, and upholsterers, were now arrived from London, and the countess was made perfectly happy, with the noise of hammers, the smell of paint, and all the delightful hurry and tumult of preparation for her fete. She now, more than ever, indulged in the transporting idea of being the wonder, and supplying conversation for all the country. In the intoxicating pleasure of viewing, approving, and ordering, she quite forgot that Cecilia had kept her chamber four days, that her son looked melancholy and woe-be-gone, and that the earl had more sharply than ever remonstrated with her on the glaring imprudence of detaining the count del Montarino at the castle.

Secure in her conquest of sir Middleton Maxfield, who saw, heard, and thought, but as she directed him, lady Jacintha had one morning been more than usually brilliant; she had shot the arrows of her wit without mercy at sir Cyril Musgrove and lord Wilton; nor had the languishing lady Eglantine and her lover, lord Melvil, escaped her sarcastic ridicule, when, in the full tide of her illiberal triumph, she beheld Mrs. Doricourt, lady Welford, and Miss Delmore, enter the room.

In an instant Cecilia was surrounded by the gentlemen; even sir Middleton Maxfield, to lady Jacintha's extreme mortification, approached to pay his compliments of congratulation on Miss Delmore's recovery.

Cecilia's morning robe of cambric and lace sat close to her ivory throat; a rich Persian shawl hung loose over her shoulder, and the redundancy of her glossy hair was confined under a cap; but in this dishabille, the disdainful, envious lady Jacintha was compelled to acknowledge, that though something paler, she had lost nothing of her enchanting beauty, and looked more interesting than ever. *The Lady of the Lake*, and her lovely *protégée*, now engrossed all the conversation and attention, and lady Jacintha found herself a mere cipher.

Mrs. Doricourt was witty, but not satirical, and the convalescence of her beloved Cecilia had so cheering an effect on her naturally-pensive spirits, that her powers of pleasing, by brilliant sallies of imagination, were that morning most happily exerted, and before her lady Jacintha shrunk into actual insignificance, to the infinite delight of sir Cyril Musgrove, who exulted in the mortification which all her self-command failed to disguise.

Lady Torrington was too busily occupied in arranging, planning, and decorating, to devote much time to her guests; but though the health, nay, the life of Miss Delmore, was of no consequence to her, she was yet glad to find she had left her chamber, and had offered her assistance to paint the white velvet for the draperies of the saloon. The



countess, *malgré* the displeasure of the earl whenever the count del Montarino crossed his path, was all smiles and affability, for every thing for the *fête champêtre* and masquerade was proceeding to her wish; a large chest full of masks and fantastic habits had arrived, and flowers enough to transform a desert into a blooming paradise.—A Laplander's hut, sledges, reindeer, and hills of snow, were already created; a Turkish pavilion and gardens were in a state of forwardness; and Cecilia, aided by the taste of Mrs. Doricourt, was ornamenting with shells, spar, and seaweed, a grotto, in which the countess herself was to preside as the goddess Calypso. The invitation-tickets, with French devices, embossed and perfumed with attar gul, were ready for sending out. The countess of Torrington, too happy for mortality, appeared to tread on air: within and without the castle, all was enchantment. Transparent temples, gilded pillars entwined with roses, cascades, grottoes, and pavilions, met the eye in the extensive park, on the lawn, and in the pleasure-grounds; while the interior of the castle exhibited all the splendour of gold and silver draperies, tablets of verd antique, superb candelabras, vases of lapis lazuli, and statues of bronze and marble.

Cecilia retained a grateful remembrance of the feeling and kindness Miss Maxfield had evinced at the time she was thrown from her horse: suspecting the count del Montarino's design of making himself master of Miss Maxfield's fortune, she endeavoured to convince her of the little chance she would have for happiness with a man so devoted to pleasure.

Poor Miss Maxfield wanted to be a countess, and she would not be convinced that it was possible the count could love her money, and not her; but though she did not attend to Miss Delmore's friendly admonitions, she liked her conversation much better than lady Jacintha's or lady Eglantine's, who both of them took pleasure in imposing upon her ignorance, and exposing her defective understanding. She looked on with surprise, while Cecilia, with tasteful hand, interspersed shells, weed, and spar, over the sides of the grotto, and sometimes she was gratified in assisting to spread the weed and sort the shells. At length, growing weary of employment, she exclaimed—"La, Miss Delmore! you work as hard as if you was to get a living by it: dear, I wonder you are not tired to death."

"You know," replied Cecilia, "how extremely anxious the countess is to get all finished, and I cannot possibly deny her the aid of my little services."

"You are very good-natured, I am sure," said Miss Maxfield, "to work so many hours, tiring yourself to please other people. La, Miss Delmore! do you think my brother is in love, in downright earnest, with lady Jacintha?"

"It is impossible for me to read sir Middleton's heart," replied Cecilia, "but certainly he pays her the attention of a lover."

"La! do you think so?" returned Miss Maxfield; "do you know, I hate her so you can't think; and if Middleton does marry her, I will never call her sister, for all she seems so kind to me, and so polite to aunt; and dear, what will become of me, if aunt should marry lord Wilton?"

"Have you any reason to suppose that Mrs. Freakley has such an intention?" asked Cecilia.

"La! yes," replied Miss Maxfield; "Middleton and she had a fine quarrel last night

about lord Wilton. Do you know he was so rude to aunt, you can't think, and told her that lord Wilton thought her an old fool; and she told Middleton that lady Jacintha knew he was a young fool, and that she was a heap of deceit; and if she liked any body in real earnest, it was lord Rushdale."

"Indeed!" said Cecilia.

"Yes, indeed," continued Miss Maxfield; "and do you know, Mr. Drawley said, if any gentleman of higher rank and greater fortune was to offer, lady Jacintha would give up Middleton directly: that would be very shameful behaviour though, would it not, Miss Delmore?"

"Certainly it would," replied Cecilia.

"And lord Wilton said," resumed Miss Maxfield, "that lady Jacintha wished every body to believe that lord Rushdale was in love with her, and was always throwing out hints that they were to be married as soon as he was of age."

"I wish lord Rushdale every felicity," said Cecilia, with a sigh.

"I thank you most sincerely for that kind wish, Miss Delmore," replied lord Rushdale, who that moment entered the grotto; "but I give you my word of honour, I shall never seek it in any way where lady Jacintha Fitzosborne is concerned; neither in my love or my friendship will she ever participate."

"And yet her ladyship is in your lordship's confidence," said Cecilia; "is the repository of your heart's dearest affections and intentions. I shall never, I believe, be other than a novice," continued she, "for it appears quite impossible to me to comprehend the arcanum, or what lady Jacintha terms the mystification of fashionable life."

A sudden gleam of light shot on Oscar's mind, from the reproach conveyed in Cecilia's speech. He began to suspect that the late cold reserve of her manner was occasioned by some artful insinuation or communication of lady Jacintha's, and he eagerly and earnestly replied—"I give you my honour, Miss Delmore, I have never reposed a confidence of any sort with lady Jacintha: self-interested and unfeeling, she would be the last person on earth to whom I should make known my heart's affections or intentions."

Cecilia caught the glance of his deep blue eye; it beamed with the sublime energy of truth.—"I have lately perceived a strange alteration in your manner towards me, Miss Delmore," continued he; "I fear lady Jacintha has prejudiced you against me."

"I am sure, if she has," said Miss Maxfield, "she ought to be ashamed of herself; but lady Jacintha is so spiteful, she never speaks a good word of any body; no, not even of her own cousin; she takes off aunt Freakley, and calls her a Dutch frow and Bobbin Joan, and such odd names you can't think."

"Truth obliges me," rejoined Cecilia, "to exonerate lady Jacintha from the suspicion of having endeavoured to prejudice me against your lordship. I never heard her speak of you but with respect."

"To what cause then, Cecilia," said lord Rushdale, taking her hand, "am I to attribute the chilling change that has lately taken place in your manner? Why do I no longer meet you in the library, where the early hours of morning used to pass so pleasantly? Why do you refuse to sing with me? Give me, I entreat you, a reason for this strange conduct. Do not constrain me to believe that you are fickle—you, whose mind I have delighted to

believe as faultless as your person. Dearest Cecilia, let me not think you have no fixed principles. Afford me, I conjure you, some reason for your seemingly-capricious behaviour.”

Cecilia felt the hand that still held hers tremble.—“When I considered your lordship under no particular engagement,” replied she, “I saw no impropriety in admitting the friendship with which you honoured me; but no female of delicacy will—will—” Cecilia blushed, stammered, and felt unable to proceed.

“Cecilia! for Heaven’s sake, what do you mean?” inquired Rushdale, with increased agitation: “answer me, I entreat you?”

“Is not your heart, your honour engaged?” asked Cecilia, with a faltering voice: “are you not under a promise of marriage?”

“No, on my life! my soul!” replied lord Rushdale; “who can have been base enough to impose upon you such a detestable fabrication?”

Tears of joy filled Cecilia’s downcast eyes; her heart was relieved from an oppressive load, but unwilling to draw on lady Jacintha the displeasure of lord Rushdale, she refused to name her informer.

Oscar pressed the reluctant hand of Cecilia to his lips.—“Let me be assured,” said he, “that this explanation has restored to me my Cecilia, kind, affable, and ingenuous as I first knew her; and now,” added he, “that no future suspicions may interrupt our friendship, receive my sacred promise, that I will never address a lady without your approbation—never marry without you assist at my nuptials.”

Cecilia was extremely unwilling to receive this promise, but lord Rushdale insisted on keeping his word.—“I will not,” continued he, “exact a similar promise from you, nor insist on being a guest at your marriage, Cecilia.”

“You think I shall marry unworthily,” said Cecilia.

“In truth, my lovely friend,” replied Oscar, “I do not know among your present acquaintance any I should think worthy of you.”

“You overrate my value,” said Cecilia; “but at present my heart is free, and I think it will be some years before I marry—most likely never.”

“La, Miss Delmore! how strange you talk!” rejoined Miss Maxfield. “If I thought I should never marry, I should be so miserable you can’t think; for I know a Miss Prudence Freakley, a near relation of aunt’s, and she is an old maid, and so cross, and so particular about every thing. Do you know, Miss Delmore, she has got six white cats, and six white dogs, and they have all silver collars and bells about their necks; and she has got a parrot, and an owl, and a maccaw, and dormice in a cage, and a squirrel that rings little bells, and a monkey, and guinea-pigs; but she never suffers a man to come inside her house. La! I would not live with her for all the world. Would you, Miss Delmore?”

“Not if she is so cross and particular,” replied Cecilia: “but is it not time that we should return to the castle?”

“The air is balmy and refreshing,” said lord Rushdale; “and yesterday about this time I heard a nightingale in yonder shrubbery.”

“La! I never heard a nightingale in all my life,” replied Miss Maxfield. “Dear, I should so like to hear it sing, you can’t think!”

“I should be sorry to deprive you of the pleasure,” returned Cecilia, suffering lord

Rushdale to draw her arm under his, while he offered the other to Miss Maxfield.

"This is exactly such an evening," said Cecilia, "as Milton describes."

"Who is Milton?" asked Miss Maxfield.

"A poet," replied Oscar, "who, after he became blind, wrote, among other beautiful poems, that celebrated work called Paradise Lost."

"La! yes, so he did," returned Miss Maxfield; "for I read in a book of sir Cyril Musgrove's yesterday, that somebody asked lord Chesterfield what he thought of Milton's Paradise Lost, and he replied, he thought it was an infernal production, for the devil was the hero of the tale."

"In this instance," replied lord Rushdale, "the wit of Chesterfield got the better of his judgment. Paradise Lost has immortalized its author; and though doubtless it has many faults, no poem of its length abounds with so many noble descriptions, or with such beautiful imagery."

"———Now glow'd the firmament  
With living sapphire; Hesperus, that led  
The starry host, shone brightest; till the moon,  
Rising in clouded majesty, at length  
Apparent queen, unveil'd her peerless light,  
And o'er the dark her silver mantle threw."

"Well, I declare," said Miss Maxfield, "the moon is rising, just as if it knew you had been talking about it! and hark!—la! I declare I hear the nightingale."

After warbling for some time, the bird ceased, and Miss Maxfield expressed much curiosity to see it.—"I am sure," said she, "it is in this rose-bush."

"Most likely," replied Cecilia, "for the nightingale is said to be enamoured of the rose."

"What! in love with it?" asked Miss Maxfield.

"Yes," said lord Rushdale, "and many poets, particularly those of the East, have celebrated the loves of the nightingale and rose."

"Well, only think what a deal of odd things poets have wrote about!" returned Miss Maxfield; "very pretty too, I dare say. I had a large book full of poetry when I was at school; but, la! I don't know what became of it."

Cecilia again proposed their return, and as the dew was falling, lord Rushdale did not oppose her wish, though to him the present scene was most sweet, most happy.

On the lawn they met sir Cyril Musgrove, who exclaimed—"A lady on each arm! Really, Rushdale, you ought to be called to account for monopoly. Here have I been sauntering this half-hour, and no smiling fair one was kind enough to take my arm. I shall grow quite melancholy, unless some compassionate female will allow me to make love to her."

"Will you, Miss Maxfield," asked lord Rushdale, "take pity on sir Cyril's melancholy, and suffer him to make love to you?"

"La, no!" replied she; "for I have heard sir Cyril say, he wont be married these twenty years; and I should be getting an old woman, you know, by that time. Besides, I

hate long courtships so you can't think."

"After what Miss Maxfield has advanced respecting the period when I intend commencing benedict," said sir Cyril, "I dare not ask you, Miss Delmore, to have pity on me."

"And if I had not heard of your determination, sir Cyril," replied Cecilia, "I should not have been inclined to listen to you, because, not being ambitious of the character of a coquette, I should think it dishonourable to encourage a preference I never could return."

Sir Cyril bowed with a mortified air.—"You are very ingenuous, Miss Delmore," said he, "and, I flatter myself, rather more fastidious than young ladies in general are."

Sir Cyril's manner had more than once offended Cecilia's delicacy; he had taken opportunities, when he was unobserved, of whispering flatteries in her ear, while in general his behaviour, though polite, was distant and haughty; besides, he was a coxcomb, and seemed to think more highly of himself, on every occasion, than was consistent with good sense or good manners.

Cecilia retired to rest early, her mind restored to serenity by the explanation that had so happily taken place in the grotto; and though she could not understand what lady Jacintha meant by her invention, respecting lord Rushdale's being engaged to marry a friend of hers, she resolved in future to pay no attention to her communications.

"Doubtless lord Rushdale will marry some time," said Cecilia; "but he will always be my brother—my friend."

When recommending herself to the protection of Heaven, Cecilia prayed for the felicity of Rushdale; she supplicated blessings for Mrs. Doricourt; and soon after sunk into the tranquil forgetfulness of sleep.

The moon shone full into her chamber, when a noise near her bed startled her. She threw back the drapery, and gazed on a tall figure, wrapped in a scarlet cloak, whose face was covered by a grotesque mask. Unable to suppress her alarm, she uttered a faint shriek.

The figure approached the bed, and, in a strange squeaking voice, bade her be silent if she valued her life.—"You have in your possession," said he, "a hundred and fifty pounds. Give me instantly the key of your silver casket, for there I know the money is deposited."

Cecilia's hand was raised to the bell-rope that hung beside her bed.

Perceiving her intention of calling for assistance, the man grasped her arm, and throwing back the cloak that disguised his person, he displayed to her shuddering sight two pistols.—"You see," said he, "I am prepared to compel your acquiescence with my request. I have an immediate and pressing occasion for a sum of money. Under my present appearance, were I to swear I will return what I obtain from you, I should not gain your belief. Once more I request the key of your silver casket. Do not compel me to force it!"

"It does not open with a key," replied the terrified Cecilia: "the casket has a spring."

The man snatched the casket from the dressing-table, and placed it before her.—

"Open it quickly," said he; "I am in haste to be gone."

Cecilia, with trembling fingers, pressed the spring. The cover fell back, and presented to sight several valuable ornaments, as well as the bank-notes.

"I am not a robber," said the man, "though the desperation of my circumstances has forced me on this compulsory action. I repeat, I do not mean to rob you."

"Terror will deprive me of my senses," replied Cecilia. "Take what you want, and leave me."

"No, I will not take the notes," said the man, drawing one of the pistols from beneath his cloak; "you must lend the money. I will not rob you. I will only borrow."

Cecilia's alarm was increased by the sight of the pistol. She snatched up the notes, and placing them in his hand, exclaimed—"Take the money, the casket, any thing I possess, and leave me—for mercy leave me!"

The man did not wait a second bidding. He grasped the notes.—"You have saved my honour," said he. "Remember, you have lent me this money!"

Cecilia no sooner saw him quit the room, than she hastened to fasten the door; but before she could accomplish her design, the object of her terror stood again before her.

"One thing I had forgot," said he; "you must solemnly swear to keep this transaction secret till you hear from me."

"I shall be questioned respecting the money, and what excuse can I make?" replied Cecilia.

"Any that first presents itself," said the man. "A woman's invention never fails."

Again the dreaded pistol was displayed. Cecilia took the oath he required, and the terrific intruder withdrew.

Left to herself, Cecilia regained composure. The figure of the man who had extorted her money was tall, and though the voice was disguised, she recollected a foreign accent, that left no room to doubt the count del Montarino being the perpetrator of this outrage.

Cecilia felt dissatisfied with herself, for having suffered fear to prevent her calling for assistance.—"Surely," said she, "I shall gain experience and fortitude, otherwise I shall not be fit to be entrusted with money; for now, only alarm me, and I weakly supply any unworthy person. Surely I shall in future remember that I have allowed myself to be frightened into compliances that my judgment condemns; for certainly lady Jacintha would not have destroyed herself, neither would the count del Montarino have murdered me, had I but possessed firmness to resist his demand."

Unable to sleep, Cecilia rose before the sun; but hearing no one moving, she sat at her window, to enjoy the freshness of the morning air, to listen to the early carol of the birds, and offer her matin prayer to the great Creator, at whose potent bidding all the beauties of the sky and earth assumed their varied forms, for the use and the delight of man.

At the usual hour Cecilia went to Mrs. Doricourt's apartment, who remarked that she looked pale, and that her eyes were heavy.

Cecilia smiled, and declared she was quite well.

At breakfast they were joined by lady Welford, the earl of Torrington, and his son.

Oscar also observed that Cecilia looked pale, and suggested that she fatigued herself too much in completing the grotto.

"I suspect," said Cecilia, "that there is a combination to persuade me that I am ill, but really I feel no symptoms of present or approaching sickness; and as my word is pledged to the countess of Torrington, I cannot think of losing time."

She then requested a servant to inform Miss Maxfield that she waited for her to go to the grotto.

The earl asked if she found Miss Maxfield an able assistant?

"She selects the shells for me," said Cecilia, "which saves much time; but if she was of no use to me, I would request her company, for neither lady Eglantine Sydney, nor lady Jacintha Fitzosborne, pay her much attention."

"You are very amiable," returned the earl, "or you would not trouble yourself with a girl, who is not above two removes from idiocy."

"She has a feeling heart," said Cecilia, "and is extremely good-tempered."

"If Miss Maxfield's relations," resumed the earl, "do not keep a watchful eye over her, she will become the prey of some needy adventurer, who will take advantage of her feeling heart, and her good temper, to possess himself of her fortune."

The servant who had been sent by Cecilia returned to say, Miss Maxfield was not to be found, and that she had not been in bed all night.

The truth instantly flashed on Cecilia's mind, and clasping her hands, she exclaimed—"Deluded, unfortunate girl! she has eloped with the count del Montarino!"

Mrs. Doricourt turned on her an inquiring look, but no explanation was asked; for Mrs. Freakley and sir Middleton Maxfield entered the breakfast-parlour in high dispute.

"That blacklegs! that swindler! that foreign count, as he calls himself," said sir Middleton, "has run away with my sister!"

"A count!" repeated Mrs. Freakley. "I believe he is nothing more than a dancing-master. Poor dear Jemima! to be overseen by such a shabby wretch, who has been supported—"

Mrs. Freakley recollected who was present, and affecting to cough, said—"By the charity of the countess of Torrington."

"I wish, madam," replied the earl, "her ladyship's charity had found a more worthy object." He then left the room, to satisfy himself that the count had actually left the castle.

Mrs. Freakley, provoked at the *nonchalance* of her nephew, burst into tears.—"Jemima," said she, "is quite a child of nature, you know. She is too innocent to suspect this villain of having a design upon her fortune, or she never would have been persuaded to elope with him. Nobody knows what the vile wretch may intend to do with her, after he has married her, and got possession of her money. He may carry her to Italy, and afterwards sell her to the Algerines."

"True," replied sir Middleton, "and if she offends the dey, he may order her to be strangled, or to be tied up in a sack, and thrown into the sea."

"Oh! what a terrible fate for poor dear Jemima!" said Mrs. Freakley. "Pray, nephew, let me entreat you to consider the honour of the family! If you have no affection for your sister, think of the disgrace, sir Middleton, that may result from this elopement. No doubt, if you set off directly, you may yet overtake them, and bring her back."

"It is not my intention to try," replied sir Middleton, seating himself, and pouring out a cup of coffee. "Jemima is a ward of Chancery—let the big wigs look after her, and settle the business in their own way. You know as well as I do, that Jemima is a little soft in the upper story, and the sooner she gets a husband, the sooner she will be out of danger. He will certainly marry her, for the sake of her fortune; and with her money, if he

is a count, he may live magnificently in Italy."

"The villain is no more a count than I am!" said Mrs. Freakley. "Poor dear Jemima! she will be utterly undone! What is she to do among foreigners? She does not understand a word of their language. I hope the lord chancellor will hang the villain! If I was a man—but, Heaven help me! I am only a poor weak woman, and can do nothing but lament. Sir Middleton—nephew, are you made of stone? have you no feeling for the deluded girl?"

Sir Middleton very deliberately sipped his coffee, and devoured a plate of muffins.

"I can't think how you can eat at this distressing time," said Mrs. Freakley.

"I eat to keep up my spirits to be sure," said sir Middleton.

"And while you are making a comfortable breakfast," resumed Mrs. Freakley, "poor dear Jemima is on the road to ruin; and you, her brother, the nearest relation she has in the whole world, refuse to stir a step to save her."

"They have the start by too many hours," replied sir Middleton; "it would be folly to attempt overtaking them. Besides do you take me for a conjurer? How the devil should I know which road they have taken?"

"To Scotland, you may be sure," returned Mrs. Freakley.

"Not altogether so polite in Jemima to take the lead of her elders; she ought to have let me married first," said sir Middleton.

"I would sooner see you in your coffin," replied Mrs. Freakley, "than married to lady Jacintha Fitzosborne."

"Greatly obliged to you, madam," said sir Middleton. "You agitate yourself surprisingly, because your niece has chosen herself a husband, and your nephew intends taking a wife. Now we have neither of us interfered with your folly—pray, when am I to have the honour of saluting you as lady Wilton?"

Mrs. Freakley bounced out of the room, calling her nephew an unfeeling unnatural wretch.

The countess of Torrington was really tired of the count del Montarino, but there was a selfish vanity in her mind, that could not bear the man she no longer cared for to prefer another. She was vexed, though she wished his dereliction; she was jealous, though she had herself set him the example of inconstancy by flirting with Drawley. The countess would have been pleased if Montarino had returned to Italy alone, if he had expressed regret and distraction at their separation, if he had vowed never to love another; instead of which, without even a reproach for the coldness she had latterly assumed towards him, without one regretful sigh, or look of sorrow, he had left the castle, with a girl who had not the shadow of a pretension to wit or beauty; and what was still a subject of deeper resentment, he had, by taking himself away at that important crisis, delayed, if not absolutely put an end, to her projected entertainments; for now a person to conduct her *fête champêtre* must be sent for from London, and another female found to personate the goddess Fortune, which Miss Maxfield, assured there was nothing more to learn than how to present the prizes gracefully to the female archers, had undertaken.

"These," said lady Torrington to the commiserating Smithson, "these are miseries, these are disappointments. After having issued the most elegant tickets that ever were seen, after having endured this gloomy old castle, merely for the purpose of giving an



entertainment, that was certain to fill the hearts of all the county with envy, jealousy, and astonishment—oh, Smithson! Smithson! these are miseries, these are disappointments!”

“I wish their carriage may overturn, and break their necks!” said the compassionate Smithson.

“No, Smithson, no, that would be putting them out of pain too soon,” replied the countess. “Wish Montarino may marry Miss Maxfield, and that they may break one another’s hearts; to know they will be wretched for long lingering years, would, I think console me: but, good Smithson, dress me to the best advantage; make me look handsome; for I would not for the world that spiteful creature lady Jacintha Fitzosborne should think I fret at these miseries and disappointments.”

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### CHAPTER III.

Oaths made in pain are violent and void. MILTON.

.....

—The grinning fiend Derision  
An uncouth bugle his left hand display'd,  
From a grey monkey's skull by cunning made,  
And form'd to pour, in harmony's despight,  
Sounds that each jarring sense of pain excite.

HALEY.

.....

Who sees the heavenly Rosaline,  
That like a rude and savage man of Inde,  
At the first opening of the gorgeous East,  
Bows not his vassal head?

SHAKESPEARE.

*A Charity Subscription—More Suspicions—Ma-  
ternal Feelings—More Disappointments—  
Lovers' Vows.*

THE elopement of Miss Maxfield with the count del Montarino stamped, beyond a doubt, the conviction on Cecilia's mind, that it was to enable him to carry off the silly girl before any competitor arrived to dispute the prize with him, that he had entered her chamber in disguise, and extorted the money from her, all she possessed, within a few shillings.

Cecilia felt the sincerest concern for Miss Maxfield; her unfortunate imbecility of understanding had rendered her an easy dupe to the pretended affection of the profligate count, who, once possessed of her fortune, would, she feared, despise his wife, and, too probably, treat her ill.

The exclamation uttered by Cecilia, when she heard of the elopement, had been remarked by Mrs. Doricourt with surprise, strongly tinged with suspicion that she had been made the confidant of Miss Maxfield's imprudent intention—a suspicion that gave Mrs. Doricourt much pain, as she had hoped and believed that Cecilia's understanding, as well as her humanity, would have urged her to use every possible means to prevent the silly girl from incurring the inevitable misfortune of becoming the count del Montarino's wife—a man who openly derided religion, and plumed himself on leading a life of dissipation.

The first time they were alone, Mrs. Doricourt introduced the subject of Miss Maxfield's folly, and having expressed her apprehension that the count would make a very bad husband, she said—"Surely, my dear Cecilia, you were not the confidant of this unfortunate girl's imprudence? you could not, I trust, have been acquainted with her intention to elope with the count del Montarino?"

Cecilia blushed crimson deep, not from reproachful guilt, but from the painful remembrance that she had been compelled to become an accessory in Miss Maxfield's imprudence; but, as she was bound by oath not to inform Mrs. Doricourt of the terrific midnight scene in her chamber, her "*eloquent blood*" rushed to her face, as she replied—"No, on my word, I knew nothing of Miss Maxfield's intention, though I cannot pretend to deny having, for some time, suspected the count of endeavouring to ingratiate himself with Miss Maxfield, and win her regard; and believe me, I have more than once warned her of the very little chance she would have in a marriage with the count, either to be happy herself, or promote his happiness, whose habits and principles were incorrigibly dissolute and libertine. I assure you, my dear madam, I had no knowledge, no suspicion, of an elopement."

Mrs. Doricourt knew that Cecilia was incapable of falsehood; she was satisfied with the explanation, and questioned her no farther.

The countess of Torrington had wisdom enough to know that tears and vexation would not add to the lustre of her eyes, but to a certainty would wash the bloom from her cheeks. She was sensible that to sit down and indulge grief was downright folly. Besides, she had never in her life been partial to the "*luxury of woe*;" she therefore set about repairing the loss she sustained by the count del Montarino's defection and departure with all possible expedition. In the first place, she wrote to town, to request the immediate attendance of monsieur Frippoine, who had conducted a grand melange entertainment for the duchess of Squander, which entertainment had, two summers before, filled all the newspapers in the kingdom, and furnished conversation for the higher circles for a month. In the next place, lady Torrington fixed on Miss Macdonald, the niece of sir Alexander Stuart, as the goddess Fortune; and as she was much taller, and had an infinitely more graceful *manière*, there would be nothing to regret in the absence of Miss Maxfield.

These points being arranged, the countess remembered, with much secret satisfaction, that the honourable Tangent Drawley, a very handsome young man, of fashionable celebrity, had declared himself the ardent adorer of her beauty. What then was there to regret? not the dereliction of the count, who had been a heavy tax on her purse.

The countess resumed her smiles and gaiety, and recollecting that the earl's birthday was on the following Thursday, she sent out cards of invitation to all the families of note in the vicinity of Torrington Castle.

No news having arrived from Miss Maxfield or the count del Montarino, it was supposed they were gone to Italy; and in listening to the compliments of lord Wilmot, Mrs. Freakley almost forgot to lament, or even speak of, the imprudent elopement of the "child of nature;" while, completely managed by the artful lady Jacintha Fitzosborne, sir Middleton Maxfield was taught to believe, that it was by no means proper or necessary for him to interfere respecting his sister's marriage with the count del Montarino.

Mrs. Doricourt, in her youth, had yielded to custom, rather than inclination, when she entered into public amusements and fashionable parties, and now, when disappointment, sickness, and affliction, had cast a deeper shade on her naturally-pensive disposition, she soon grew weary of the frivolous pleasures so eagerly pursued by the idle dissipated

inmates of Torrington Castle; she languished to return again to the tranquil rational delight she was accustomed to derive from books, music, and the pencil, to wander in the groves she had reared round the Hermitage, and listen to the rush of the waters, as they laved the green slopes of the island of St. Herbert.

Mrs. Doricourt announced to the earl and countess of Torrington her intention of returning home, and of taking Cecilia with her; but the countess could not spare either Mrs. Doricourt or Cecilia, for she had arranged, in her own mind, a concert and ball for the earl's birthday, and she was so pressing in her entreaties, that Mrs. Doricourt consented to remain her visitor till after Thursday, a day of splendour and festivity, of which every one spoke with delighted expectation, except the earl himself, who seemed to endure, rather than enjoy amusement. He was seldom seen to smile; and though he never expressed disapprobation of the expensive follies of his lady, nor absented himself from her entertainments, it was evident they neither flattered his pride, nor afforded him pleasure.

When the earl's melancholy was mentioned before the countess, she would laugh, and say, he was yet smarting under the perfidy of the duchess de Valencourt; for she well remembered, when basking in the sunshine of her smiles, lord Torrington never looked grave, never was addicted to reflection, but was at all times volatile, and ready to thread the rosy mazes of pleasure; but though at present suffering under a *maladie de coeur*, he would get over the *flamme amoureux*, and be himself again.

The good breeding of her ladyship's guests prevented their contradicting her assertion, but some of them placed the earl's gloom to jealousy of her ladyship; others believed that his fortune was considerably deranged by her extravagance.

Mrs. Doricourt alone knew that lord Torrington bore in his bosom a secret sorrow, the rankling remembrance of a crime, which all the glitter of rank and wealth, all the fascinations and allurements of pleasure, could not lull to silence, and with which neither the fidelity nor the expences of the countess were at all connected.

Mrs. Doricourt's charity was of that active sort, that she did not content herself with relieving present want and distress; her benevolence led her to provide against their attacks in future. A case of peculiar distress had come to her knowledge, and she determined to try whether her present fashionable associates would spare any thing from their own frivolous gratifications to relieve the wants of an indigent widow, who, by the sudden death of her husband, was left in extreme poverty, with eleven children, the eldest a boy not yet thirteen years of age.

Mrs. Doricourt's intention was to set the widow up in a shop at Keswick, appropriate a small sum to apprentice the two elder children, and reserve the remainder, if any money should remain, for placing out the other children, as they grew old enough to learn trades.

The earl of Torrington himself drew up a narrative of the widow's case, and set his own name down for a hundred pounds; Mrs. Doricourt, lady Welford, lord Rushdale, and colonel St. Irwin, for the same sum each.

The subscription paper was then presented to the countess, who, glancing her eye over it, coldly said—"Poor woman!—eleven children! Why does she not send them to the parish? I protest I am sorry for her; but I have not a single shilling to spare. No time on earth could be more unfortunate to ask money from me; but if you, my lord, or you,

Rushdale, will lend me a few pounds—”

The earl threw on her a glance of indignation, as, interrupting her, he replied—“I am ashamed to find that you can throw away thousands on toys and baubles, all useless and unnecessary, and yet coldly and selfishly deny your assistance to relieve the wants and sorrows of a wretched widow, and her helpless family!”

“Why you are lately become so charitable, so benevolent, my lord,” replied the countess, “that positively I think—”

The earl frowned.—“No matter, madam, what you think,” said he. “Are we to have your hundred pounds?”

“A hundred pounds!” exclaimed lady Torrington. “A hundred pounds! Your requisition amazes me! Pray, allow me to ask, is it your intention to portion this same widow’s eleven children? Really I have not a hundred pounds in the world! and if I had, I must confess my charity is not so diffusive.”

During this contest, Cecilia sat, pale and uneasy, in the thought that she should presently be applied to, and having only a few shillings in her purse, she knew not what excuse she could offer, as Mrs. Doricourt would suppose she had still a hundred and fifty pounds in her possession.

Lord Rushdale took up a pen, and setting down his mother’s name, said he would lend her the required sum.

“You are infinitely kind and obliging,” returned the countess; “but really I think ten pounds would have been a very sufficient and handsome donation; and if I become your debtor, lord Rushdale, for a hundred pounds, I am sure I can set no time for repaying it—the expences of my fete and masquerade will keep me poor for an age to come.”

Lady Jacintha Fitzosborne would rather have been broiling in London at that moment, than sitting cool in the earl’s library; but when asked for her contribution, she replied, no one could feel more concern than she did at a case of such distress; but all the world knew her poverty, and how utterly unable she was, except by good wishes, to promote Mrs. Doricourt’s benevolent design; but if her mite, a pound note, would be accepted, she would endeavour to spare that from her own necessities.

Lady Eglantine Sydney and Mrs. Freakley declared they had so many pensioners, that it was quite impossible for them to spare more than ten pounds on the present occasion.

Lords Melvil and Wilton contributed five pounds each.

Sir Middleton Maxfield set his name down for fifty pounds, observing, that he was sorry he could not do more, but his late losses on the turf had almost done him up.

Sir Cyril Musgrove and the honourable Mr. Drawley entering the room together, Mrs. Doricourt immediately handed them the subscription list, on which having cast his eye, sir Cyril said—“pon my honour, have given my name to so many charities lately, that my purse is as empty—”

“As your head,” replied Drawley.

“Thank you! Very witty, ‘pon my honour; but as to the article of brains—”

“The requisition is not for brains,” interrupted Drawley, “but for money.”

“*Tant pis*, ‘pon my honour,” said sir Cyril. “A widow and eleven children! If she had been young and handsome, there would have been some incitement to charity, but the

mother of eleven children, no doubt, must be ugly and old.”

“And therefore an object of greater charity, according to your own opinion,” rejoined Mrs. Doricourt; “for if this unfortunate widow had been young and handsome, no question but many gentlemen, as well as yourself, would have thought youth and beauty undeniable applicants; but I hope, sir Cyril, for humanity’s sake, that you are only jesting, and that I shall not plead to you in vain, for a distressed widow and her orphan family.”

“It is impossible, madam,” replied sir Cyril, bowing conceitedly, “that you should ever plead in vain. In compliance with your wish, as you advocate the widow’s cause, ‘pon my honour, if she was as old and ugly as Hecate, I would—”

“You would subscribe your hundred pounds,” interrupted lord Wilton.

Sir Cyril did not intend to give more than twenty; but seeing sir Middleton Maxfield’s name down for fifty, pride and ostentation supplying the place of better feelings, led him to double his subscription, and he immediately set his name down for a hundred pounds.

The generous eccentric Drawley did not wait to be asked; taking up a pen, he said—“Charity covers a multitude of sins, and Heaven knows, I have a multitude to cover.” He added his hundred pounds to the subscription.

Miss Delmore was now the only person who had not been called upon. Several times she had attempted to quit the room, but, as if spell-bound, still kept her seat.

At length the dreaded moment arrived. Mrs. Doricourt asked her for what sum she should set her name down?

“I am very sorry,” said Cecilia, changing colour, “but I cannot contribute to this subscription.”

“Cecilia, my love, you cannot mean to withhold your assistance from this poor woman: I never before knew you backward in the cause of charity. Recollect yourself,” said Mrs. Doricourt.

Cecilia, confused, and affected even to tears, rose from her seat.—“I am compelled to refuse,” replied she, “because—because—” Unable to say, “because I have not the means,” she abruptly left the room.

“This is very strange,” said Mrs. Doricourt. “I know the heart of Miss Delmore to be generous, feeling, and charitable; and I certainly believed her to be in possession of a sum more than sufficient for the present occasion.”

“Perhaps, madam,” replied the earl of Torrington, fixing his dark penetrating eyes on lady Jacintha, “perhaps Miss Delmore’s generous and charitable feelings have been played upon to supply another loan, and contributing to remove pretended distresses, may have deprived her of the power to relieve real ones.”

Lady Jacintha did not choose to understand, and she stood the look and hint of the earl with unblushing effrontery.

Mr. Drawley inquired what company was expected at the castle on Thursday?

Among many others, Miss Graham was mentioned.

Sir Cyril declared, ‘pon his honour, she was the finest girl in Keswick.

“And that may very easily be,” replied Drawley, “without her possessing any extraordinary charms; for I do not recollect seeing one tolerable-looking female in the town.”

"And as to Miss Graham," said the countess, "she is freckled like a toad."

"*Warm amorous kisses of the sun!*" exclaimed sir Cyril.

"And then her hair is red," said lady Jacintha.

"Adown her ivory neck the massy gold  
In many a loose and wanton ringlet roll'd."

"Classical hair, 'pon my honour," replied sir Cyril.

"And if I recollect aright," lisped lady Eglantine, "Miss Graham squints."

"Jet," returned sir Cyril, "dark and brilliant. What your ladyship terms a squint, is a certain arch turn, which, so far from being a defect, greatly adds to the beauty of her eyes."

"So much for Miss Graham," rejoined the countess. "Then her cousin, Miss Macdonald—she is another beauty, I suppose?"

"She is a very fine figure," said sir Middleton Maxfield.

"Tall as a church-steeple," replied lady Jacintha. "A grenadier in petticoats."

"And as thin as a hurdle," said Mrs. Freakley.

"With a complexion," rejoined the countess, "pale as a corpse."

"Miss Macdonald might easily improve that," said Drawley. "I wonder some of her fashionable friends don't advise her to wear rouge."

"She would not wear colour on any account," replied lady Torrington, "because she fancies her marble complexion gives interest to her features."

"Well," rejoined lady Jacintha, "I believe no one will accuse lady Jane Bruce of beauty or expression."

"But every body will allow," said lord Wilton, "that she is a famous dancer of reels."

"Be generous then," replied Drawley, "and give her heels the praise you refuse her face."

"But are we to have a ball on Thursday night?" demanded sir Middleton Maxfield.

"Most assuredly," replied the countess. "In what other way could I find amusement for the masters and misses who will honour lord Torrington with their company?"

"I declare," said Mrs. Freakley, "it is almost a pity to spoil the floor, it is so beautifully chalked."

"That is because she can't dance," whispered sir Middleton to lady Jacintha.

"Suppose you persuade her to move a minuet with sir Archibald Mackenzie?" replied lady Jacintha; "they would be the most prominent figures in the room. But, sir Middleton, are you fond of waltzing?"

"It makes my head giddy," said he.

"I doat upon a waltz," returned lady Jacintha; "but I suppose I must not think of Drawley for a partner, and he is the most elegant waltzer in the world."

"And why not think of him?" asked sir Middleton.

"Do you not perceive," said lady Jacintha, "that since he dropped the *indolent*, he has taken up the *attentive*, and undertaken to console the lady of the castle for the perfidy of her recreant knight, Montarino? At present it would be sinning against the divinity of love, to have eyes or ears for any one but her. No, I do not presume to hope for the

honour of waltzing with Drawley, till, weary of her ladyship's mature beauties, he shakes off the thralldom of *Monsieur Cupidon*, and engages in a new caprice."

Cecilia hurried to her own apartment, to give vent to her oppressed feelings, to weep the displeasure of Mrs. Doricourt, and the weak terror that had involved her in such distressing circumstances.

Mrs. Doricourt, though she had confined her suspicion to her own bosom, believed, as the earl of Torrington did, that Cecilia's humanity had again been wrought upon, and that she had supplied the artful lady Jacintha Fitzosborne with a second loan. Mrs. Doricourt felt hurt to think that her advice had been so utterly disregarded; but Cecilia had retired under evident agitation, and she was too dearly beloved for her friend and benefactress to allow her to remain in a state of uneasiness about so un consequential a sum as a hundred and fifty pounds.

With the amiable intention of restoring Cecilia to serenity, Mrs. Doricourt repaired to her apartment, to ask an explanation of her recent conduct, and to counsel her again to beware of the duplicity and cunning of lady Jacintha, and to forgive the error of generous compassion, excited by art, in the bosom of inexperienced youth.

Cecilia, oppressed with sorrow, had sunk on her knees, her head reclined on her clasped hands, over which her tears fell in large and heavy drops.

As Mrs. Doricourt entered the room, she started up, and throwing herself at her feet, said—"You are angry with me—I know you are; and I feel, I acknowledge your resentment to be just, for I have been weak and criminal."

Mrs. Doricourt sunk on a chair, faintly repeating—"Criminal! Good Heaven, what can you mean? Answer me, Cecilia, what have you done?"

"I dare not," said Cecilia; "I must not, cannot answer you."

"Do not distract me," exclaimed Mrs. Doricourt, "by accusing yourself of criminality. If you have lent the remainder of your money to lady Jacintha Fitzosborne, say so at once, and ease my alarming apprehensions; the act may certainly be termed folly, but does not amount to criminality."

"Oh, no, no," replied the weeping Cecilia, "lady Jacintha has no part in this affair. I have—but I must not, dare not explain the mystery. I must endure your displeasure, though it breaks my heart. It is fit I should suffer for my shameful weakness."

For a moment Mrs. Doricourt sat bewildered. At length Miss Maxfield's elopement recurred to her mind, and with a severity of look and tone she said—"You assured me, Miss Delmore, that you had no knowledge of Miss Maxfield's elopement. I grieve to suppose you capable of the meanness of uttering an untruth; but circumstances induce me to believe you lent her the money to take this imprudent step; if this is the case, you are indeed both weak and criminal, for you have supplied the unfortunate girl with money to render herself wretched for life, and you have grossly deceived me, your friend."

"Do not, I beseech you," sobbed Cecilia, "do not add to the anguish I endure, by thinking me so contemptible; do not believe me capable of uttering falsehoods—of deceiving you. No, no, I call Heaven to attest, I knew nothing of Miss Maxfield's elopement. I lent her no money."

"To whom then have you lent it?" demanded Mrs. Doricourt, affected and astonished at her grief and energy. "Cecilia, in what instance have I forfeited your affection, that you



thus cruelly withhold from me your confidence?"

"Heaven knows!" replied Cecilia, "there is no being on earth whom I love so much, so dearly as yourself; but do not, I conjure you, do not question me on this subject; for though I owe you all gratitude, all respect, here I am constrained to silence."

"It is true," said Mrs. Doricourt, "I have no right to question you on the disposal of this money. I have been led to inquire how it was employed, from the confusion you betrayed in the library, from the distress in which I have now found you, and the mystery you attach to its disposal; but since you can resolve to give pain to my feelings, by persisting to deny me your confidence, farewell for ever Cecilia! On your account I left the tranquillity of my home, on your account I shall return to it immediately, leaving you my good wishes, that the being who has persuaded you to conceal your actions from my inspection may prove to you as true a friend as I have been."

Mrs. Doricourt rose to leave the room.

Convulsed with agony, Cecilia clung to her knees.—"Take me," said she, "take me with you. Do not leave me to distraction in this hateful place!"

"No," replied Mrs. Doricourt, endeavouring to disengage herself from the strong embrace of Cecilia, "that cannot be, for the bond of our confidence is destroyed. When Cecilia Delmore was ingenuous, when no action of her life shunned the inquiry of her friend, then she was the pure angel whose smile illumined the peaceful, innocent shades of St. Herbert's Island; but now—"

"Oh that you could read my heart," interrupted Cecilia, "you would find it still ingenuous, still innocent as ever; you would see that I have no thought, no act, that shuns your inquiry; you would then pity me, for you would know that I am cruelly constrained to silence."

"Constrained!" repeated Mrs. Doricourt; "ridiculous assertion! You have no parents nor husband. By whom, or what then, can you be constrained?"

"Forgive me—I have been compelled to take an oath," murmured Cecilia, and sunk motionless at the feet of Mrs. Doricourt, who, having succeeded in restoring her to recollection, endeavoured, by the most soothing attentions, to assure her that she was still her tender and attached friend.

Mrs. Doricourt soon discovered that Cecilia had far overrated her error in calling it criminal, and that some deep artifice had been used to bind her by oath to conceal to whom she had lent her money. Mrs. Doricourt was convinced that compulsory oaths neither were, nor ought to be binding.

Having descended with Cecilia to the library, she sent to request the presence of the earl of Torrington, and at length their united arguments and persuasions drew from the weeping Cecilia the history—of the count del Montarino's midnight intrusion, and the means he had used to terrify her into lending the money, and extort from her an oath of secrecy.

Lord Torrington evinced the utmost indignation. He made no scruple to call the count a robber, of whom the law ought to be permitted to take cognizance. He wished that Cecilia had possessed the courage to call for assistance, but at the same time confessed that few women would have acted otherwise than she had done in such alarming circumstances.

Mrs. Doricourt mingled her tears of joy with Cecilia's; for it had been most painful to her feelings, to think the child she had brought up, whose mind she had cultivated with such fond solicitude, could be capable of deceit, or forgetful of the precepts of religion and virtue.

Mrs. Doricourt added Cecilia's name to the subscription list for the poor widow, and the earl insisted on replenishing her purse, saying, with a good-humoured smile—"Do not, my dear Cecilia, give one moment's thought or regret to the money you have lost; for I am greatly deceived, if either lady Jacintha Fitzosborne or the count del Montarino ever recollect they are in your debt."

"I am exactly of your lordship's opinion," rejoined Mrs. Doricourt; "and I recommend it to Cecilia, to set down as memoranda—'Paid four hundred and fifty pounds for experience, which shall, in future, prevent my being terrified or persuaded into compliances that reason, calm and dispassionate, may disapprove.'"

The earl informed his son of the base conduct of the count del Montarino; and though Oscar felt all the fiery particles of his nature roused up to revenge this outrage on Miss Delmore, yet regard for the feelings of Miss Maxfield's family, and considerations for Cecilia's delicacy, made it appear most proper to let the nefarious business rest in silence.

Cecilia's conduct was cleared from the shadow of blame, and Mrs. Doricourt entreated the earl to let the count del Montarino's villany remain a secret among themselves, out of pity to the unfortunate silly girl, who, no doubt, was by that time his wife.

Cecilia's tears and agitation had given her a violent headache, and Mrs. Doricourt apologized for her not appearing at dinner.

The countess thought of her morning concert, and hoped Miss Delmore was not seriously indisposed.

Lady Jacintha could not restrain a smile at the selfish solicitude of the countess, who, independent of her own purposes, she knew, did not care whether Miss Delmore lived or died; but the next morning found Cecilia perfectly recovered, and radiant in beauty, to the great relief of the countess, who had trembled with the cruel apprehension of being deprived of her assistance.

Lady Jacintha passed the morning salutation with Miss Delmore with ill-disguised vexation. She would have been pleased at any mischance, sickness, or accident, that would have prevented her appearing in the music-room or at the ball.

The next day, Thursday, the earl received the compliments and congratulations of his friends. The morning concert passed off with great eclat, but was not so well attended as the countess expected, which rather offended her pride; but before the dinner-hour a large party arrived from Keswick, and her vanity was gratified with seeing her table crowded beyond comfort.

With the last arrivals came lady Jane Bruce, Miss Graham, and her cousin, the Patagonian Miss Macdonald, whose towering height overtopped most of the females present by half a head.

Miss Graham, like lady Jacintha Fitzosborne, was a coquette of the first order, but far her inferior in finesse and fashionable education; she was showy in person rather than handsome, and united to the bloom of eighteen a good-tempered vivacity, that made her a

general favourite with the gentlemen.

Miss Macdonald had been told by a travelled gentleman, that she resembled the ancient Grecian statues in countenance and figure; and to render the likeness more strikingly obvious, she threw over her thin form antique draperies of the most transparent texture; she bound up her long lank hair with Athenian fillets, and affected graceful attitudes, till her tall person much oftener excited ridicule than admiration.

Lady Jane Bruce was a Scotchwoman, who prided herself but little on the score of beauty; but on her descent from Robert Bruce, and of her dancing, no mortal on earth was prouder or vainer.

The lively Miss Graham had never seen the wonders of London, and she was expatiating with great volubility on the delight she expected from being presented at court, and spending the winter in town, when the eyes of all her auditors were turned on Mrs. Doricourt, who, in compliment to the earl, had thrown off her black robes, and entered the drawing-room in a superb dress of oriental manufacture; her fine dark glossy hair banded *à la Grec*, and confined with brilliant ornaments of immense value. Mrs. Doricourt was still a beautiful woman: without study or affectation, her countenance, figure, and attitudes, were exactly Grecian, and near her Miss Macdonald appeared a coarse, awkward imitation.

The brilliants that glittered on Mrs. Doricourt's head, bosom, and arms, had excited much admiration, envy, and surmises, respecting their value, when lady Jacintha whispered sir Cyril Musgrove—"Your 'Lady of the Lake' is transformed into the queen of diamonds."

"Into the queen of hearts, you mean," replied he, "for, 'pon my honour, she is the handsomest woman in the room."

Lady Jacintha smiled disdainfully, thought sir Cyril very rude, and was about to mortify his vanity by praising the fashionable appearance of lord Alwyn Bruce, when Cecilia was led into the room by lord Rushdale.

Lady Jacintha coloured with envy, the countess of Torrington with indignation, for whispers met their ears that lord Rushdale and Miss Delmore were a beautiful pair, and seemed designed for each other.

Lord Alwyn Bruce had heard much of Miss Delmore's beauty, but had never seen her till the present moment, and he now requested to be introduced to her so eagerly, that Miss Macdonald, who had set his lordship down in the list of her admirers, felt a pang of jealousy, and threw the drapery over her left arm with an action so violent, so ungraceful, and so unlike her usual statue movements, that the tassel terminating its end struck sir Cyril Musgrove a smart blow on the cheek.

The lady blushed and apologized, and though he felt an unpleasant tingle, sir Cyril's politeness compelled him to say that he felt proud to be distinguished by Miss Macdonald, and if she had marked him, he hoped it was for her own.

During lord Alwyn Bruce's introduction to Miss Delmore, the females had leisure to examine her dress: it was lace of the finest texture, thrown over white satin; the bosom and sleeves were elegantly ornamented with loops composed of roses and lilies of the valley—all of the richest oriental pearl: her earrings, necklace, bracelets, and armlets, were of the same costly material, as was the chaplet of roses, lilies, and jessamine, that

crowned the glossy ringlets of her dark auburn hair.

"Open that window, for Heaven's sake, sir Middleton!" said lady Jacintha, "or I shall faint: "why, all the pearl-merchants of Bassora have emptied their caskets to adorn Miss Delmore to-night. Did you ever see such a profusion of pearls on one dress?"

"For my part," lisped lady Eglantine, "I never saw any thing half as elegant and I never shall be happy till I have just such another chaplet."

"I should despise myself," replied lady Jacintha, "if I was capable of wishing for any thing that resembles it: thank Heaven, I feel myself superior to the desire of copying the dress of lord Torrington's housekeeper's niece. What consummate vanity and effrontery the girl must possess, to appear in a dress fit for a princess before us, to whom her origin is so well known! No one need wonder she has not money for charitable purposes, when they perceive how extravagant she is in trinkets and ornaments."

"And yet," said lord Wilton, "I would venture to lay a thousand pounds, that Miss Delmore never bought a trinket in her life."

"She is vastly obliged to you for defending her cause," replied lady Jacintha, spitefully; "but I really wonder how you should know in what way Miss Delmore disposes of the large sums of money the earl of Torrington and Mrs. Doricourt supply her with."

"I have more knowledge of Miss Delmore's money transactions than your ladyship is aware of," returned lord Wilton; "two gentlemen of your acquaintance lately let me into the secret."

"Two gentlemen of my acquaintance!" repeated lady Jacintha; "your lordship must be in an error, for I am positive no gentlemen of my acquaintance would take the trouble to investigate any concerns of Miss Delmore's."

"Shall I name them?" said lord Wilton.

"Certainly," returned lady Jacintha, carelessly; "just as you please."

"Are you quite certain you will not be displeased if I do?" asked lord Wilton.

"I am quite certain," replied lady Jacintha, "that I have no acquaintance with gentlemen that I shall be ashamed to acknowledge."

"Vell then, my lady," said lord Wilton, imitating the slang manner of the bailiff, "I shall come for to go for to ax you what you thinks of the information of one Dick Trapwell, and," changing his manner to that of the dandy attorney, "beg pardon, my lady, of James Ferret, solicitor, No. 15, Halfmoon-street, Piccadilly."

Lady Jacintha was in reality ready to faint. Astonished and confounded, she exclaimed—"I have heard quite enough—say no more, I entreat you."

"Only this," resumed lord Wilton, "that you may not suppose me in the confidence of Miss Delmore, I beg to inform you, that I met Messrs. Ferret and Trapwell, as I returned from Keswick: they were known to me, and I would have taken another road, supposing their visit to Torrington Castle was to pay their respects to me, but they overtook and undeceived me, and from these *ci-devant* friends of yours, lady Jacintha, I gained the information of Miss Delmore's manner of disposing of her money."

Lord Wilton coldly bowed, and moved to another part of the room. Lady Jacintha stood mortified and enraged.

Mrs. Freakley's little grey eyes were extended into a stare of contempt, and lady

Jacintha saw in her look that she perfectly understood her obligation to lord Torrington's housekeeper's niece.

Sir Middleton Maxfield asked what they were talking about.

"Miss Delmore's beauty, to be sure," returned lady Jacintha.

"She is not so handsome as Mrs. Doricourt," lisped lady Eglantine: "I never thought her so beautiful before."

Lord Wilton again approached with sir Cyril Musgrove.—"pon my honour," said he, "I don't think I shall dance tonight."

"Not dance!" said lady Jane Bruce, "why not? are you ill, sir Cyril?"

"No, not ill," replied he, "but mortified, 'pon my honour: was stepping up to ask Miss Delmore if she would, when she turned away with the air of a duchess, and said she was engaged. I should be very angry, only, 'pon my honour, it is impossible to be angry with a beautiful woman."

"Really," drawled Miss Macdonald, "I think the gentlemen are all fascinated by this Miss Delmore: they talk of nothing but her beauty."

"Pardon me there," replied lord Wilton; "lady Jacintha Fitzosborne can witness we had just now a long conversation, in which we never spoke of Miss Delmore's beauty, but only of her amiable qualities, her generosity, and feeling."

"Bless me, lord Wilton," exclaimed Mrs. Freakley, anger tinging her cheeks of a deeper red than her rose-coloured satin, "I actually believe you are in love with Miss Delmore, you talk so much about her."

"No," replied sir Cyril, laughing; "no, I promise you, Wilton has more wisdom—

"Philander pass'd the op'ning rosebud by;  
The tulip's full-blown charms engag'd his eye."

Mrs. Freakley smiled with self-complacency. She felt she was the tulip, and, as sir Cyril suppressed the conclusion of the stanza, she construed the quotation into a compliment.

Miss Delmore and Miss Graham, though rival beauties, appeared to be much pleased with each other, which lady Torrington assured Drawley was nothing more than finesse; for she was certain they could, in reality, poison each other; but she was prodigiously glad to see Miss Delmore conduct herself so properly, because it relieved her from uneasy apprehensions respecting her behaviour when introduced to her parties in town, where it was highly necessary to be *au fait* in the art of mystification.

The day passed with Cecilia very pleasantly, but the evening was delightful. She danced with lord Rushdale, with lord Alwyn Bruce, and with Mr. Drawley, who, while they waited for the forming of the set, wished that her heart was at liberty; he would assail it with all "love's artillery," but I know," continued he, "that the little flutterer is caged, and all that remains for me is to wish you happiness."

Cecilia protested she did not understand him.

Drawley would have given her a hint that her partiality for lord Rushdale had not escaped him, but lady Torrington was too near, and the conversation was interrupted by the commencement of the dance.

Lady Jane Bruce made a set for reels, and proved that report had not exaggerated, for in this national dance she excelled, and kept up its spirit with unwearied gaiety.

Lady Jacintha had set her heart on tormenting the countess of Torrington, and by persevering in ridiculing, alluring, and teasing, she at last engaged Drawley to waltz with her. In the giddy velocity of this dance, lady Jacintha contrived to outvie the attitudes of Miss Macdonald.

The countess declared Drawley a divinity, but lady Jacintha shockingly indelicate; and lord Rushdale, as he beheld their limbs entwined in the whirl of the dance, mentally hoped that he might never see Cecilia waltz.

A magnificent supper, served between one and two in the morning, disengaged Drawley from the inebriating witchery of the waltz, in the delirium of which he forgot his dislike of lady Jacintha; and while, in the rapid whirl of the dance, he held her in his arms, he began to think her beautiful; but when the music ceased, the fever of imagination subsided, the spell was dissolved, and he returned to whisper soft nothings in the ear of the countess, to the extreme vexation of lady Jacintha, who had flattered herself with enslaving Drawley, and gaining a triumph over the countess, whom she hated, and wished, by every possible means, to annoy.

It was near eight o'clock in the morning before all the company had left the castle, to spread the fame of lady Torrington's taste and elegance, and the earl's hospitality.

Fatigued but not satiated with pleasure, the countess retired to rest, satisfied that she had given the Cumberland gentry a specimen of splendour such as had never blazed upon their optics before, and had inflamed their imaginations with impatient longings for her *fête champêtre*; but when lady Torrington awoke from entrancing dreams of outdoing every thing that taste had hitherto projected or wealth procured, she was fated to prove that disappointment treads on the heels of expectation, and that it is an error to say wealth can purchase every thing. A letter was handed to the countess, informing her, that monsieur Frippoine had departed this life the very day her ladyship wished to engage him, and that all the clever people in town had been put in requisition, to arrange and conduct a fete to be given in Devonshire, in honour of the marriage of a citizen's daughter with the earl of Brookford.

The countess wept and raved, and execrated the perfidious villain, count del Montarino, through whose unparalleled ingratitude she should be obliged to give up her fete, on which not only her waking thoughts, but her very dreams, had been employed for the last month.—“Oh,” said the countess, wringing her hands, “every thing happens to plague me; that monsieur Frippoine died on purpose to disappoint me. Oh! it was barbarous!—it was cruel of him not to live till my fete was over! He might have been spared then, but now—oh! Smithson! Smithson! I shall go mad!”

“After having cost so much money, and being in such a state of forwardness,” said Mrs. Smithson, sobbing in sympathy with the distress of her lady, “and after having such beautiful things made, which are now of no use at all. Oh dear, it is shocking barbarous work, for a citizen's daughter to set about disappointing a countess. I could tear her nasty eyes out—the impudent creature.”

“To be sure, Smithson, that greatly aggravates the disappointment,” replied the countess. “A citizen's daughter to have the presumption to give a fete! but this

impertinent attempt of city pride, to imitate the entertainments of persons of fashion and rank, would only have been matter of diversion to me, had that vile man put off his ridiculous elopement for another fortnight; but I am now ruined past redemption. All the newspapers will relate the disappointment of the countess of Torrington, and the triumph of this detestable *citoyenne*—every column will be filled with descriptions of her splendid entertainment, while my disappointment will afford subject of laughter to all my acquaintance.”

Before night the ferment of lady Torrington’s spirits had considerably subsided, for the sudden indisposition of lord Rushdale seemed to promise her an excuse for giving up her fete, and sparing her the mortification of confessing she was obliged to yield to a citizen’s daughter.

Lord Rushdale, while playing at chess with Mrs. Doricourt, complained of a swimming in his head, and shortly after fell back in his chair in a fainting fit.

The opinion of the physicians, that lord Rushdale’s disorder was the smallpox, constrained Mrs. Doricourt to remove Cecilia immediately from the castle, as she had never had that terrible enemy to beauty.

Cecilia thought not of herself—Oscar, the suffering Oscar, filled every idea, and she would have been content to share the disorder, might she but be permitted to watch over and console him in his illness.

The earl, though full of apprehension for his son’s life, hurried the departure of Cecilia, so fearful was he of her taking the infection, and suffering from a disease so generally fatal in its progress.

The countess, irritated by her recent disappointment, seemed little affected by her son’s malady, or sensible of Cecilia’s danger; self occupied her mind solely, and she heard her guests giving orders for their departure, with no other feeling of regret but that the gloom and loneliness of the castle would be intolerable, when she was left with no other company than the earl, who had never been to her very agreeable society, and now would be worse than ever.

Nothing on earth could have given lady Jacintha more pleasure than to witness the disappointments of the countess of Torrington. At the dangerous state of lord Rushdale her malignant heart rejoiced; she anticipated, with the feelings of a fiend, the extinction of the title of Torrington; for since Rushdale would not live for her, she wished him laid in the family monument.

Lady Eglantine Sydney, with much affected concern for the situation of lord Rushdale, with many hopes that he would recover, and wishes that his very interesting face would not be injured by the shocking distemper, prepared to join her aunt, the honourable Mrs. Mabel Oldstock, at Weymouth, thus evading giving her cousin, lady Jacintha, an invitation to Jessamine Lodge, her father’s seat, near Bath; lord Melvil intending to follow her to Weymouth, and privately make her his bride.

Lady Jacintha, not being able to persuade her cousin to put off her visit to Weymouth, found herself awkwardly situated, having at that time no dear friend that she could favour with her company. Thus disagreeably circumstanced, she would have invited herself into Wiltshire, to Strawberry Hall, with Mrs. Freakley; but Mrs. Freakley had felt the effect of lady Jacintha’s wit, in ill-natured remarks on her person; she also

disapproved sir Middleton Maxfield's attentions to her ladyship, and fearful of her inveigling the foolish boy into marrying her, Mrs. Freakley prudently resolved to give them no opportunities of meeting at her house, by volunteering, with lady Welford, to remain at Torrington Castle with the countess, during the melancholy illness of lord Rushdale.

Lady Torrington joyfully accepted lady Welford and Mrs. Freakley's offer of remaining, dreading solitude, and being without mental resources; any society was better than none, for neither of these ladies had ever been favourites with the countess; but now she was willing to forget that lady Welford belonged to the *perfectionists*, and that Mrs. Freakley was a short, fat, disagreeable, talkative, old woman.

The earl of Torrington, in the illness of his son, saw an awful visitation for the sins of his youth. Regardless of his own health, he seldom left the chamber of the suffering Oscar, whose disorder was of the worst sort, and his life in imminent danger. Covered with virulent pustules, he was in a high fever, delirious, knew no one, and raved continually of Cecilia, to whom he addressed the most impassioned vows of love and undeviating fidelity.

The visits of the countess to the sick chamber were always short; the dreadful situation of her son, she pretended to say, was too much for her feelings to bear, and she spoke truly; for the name of Cecilia, uttered in so impassioned a way by her son in his delirium, proved to her the strong attachment of his heart. Her indignant feelings were roused into tumult at the disclosure of what she denominated his meanness and depravity, and in preference to the destruction of her own ambitious schemes, she would have preferred to behold the heir of Torrington a corpse.

The state of lord Rushdale was every morning dispatched to the Hermitage by lady Welford, where Mrs. Doricourt had, in her turn, very unpleasant intelligence to communicate.

Cecilia, the morning after her return home, had been taken ill, and exhibited symptoms of the terrific smallpox.

"My Cecilia," said Mrs. Doricourt, in a note to her friend, "is free from fever, her face is entirely covered, and her beautiful eyes are sealed up with this frightful distemper. Her beauty, I fear, will be entirely destroyed; but this, I trust, her good sense will enable her to bear unmurmuring. If it pleases Heaven to restore her sight, beauty is but of little consequence; her amiable disposition, and her various accomplishments, will render her sufficiently attractive."

The earl of Torrington heard of Cecilia's illness with grief as sincere as that he felt for his son; and in the privacy of his closet, he humbled himself before the Omnipotent Dispenser of blessings and misfortunes, and while he acknowledged that his offences deserved the punishment of losing both these interesting beings, he prayed that the chastisement of his sins might fall on himself alone, and Oscar and Cecilia might be spared.

The prayer of the penitent was not rejected—contrary to the belief or hope of the medical gentlemen, lord Rushdale, having passed the crisis of his disorder, fell into a deep sleep; a gentle dew moistened his burning frame, and he awoke refreshed, restored to reason, and so much better, as to remove from the mind of the countess the horror of



being what she called buried alive—remaining at Torrington Castle with no other company than the perfect lady Welford, and the tiresome *pronneur*, Mrs. Freakley.

At the same hour that lord Rushdale spoke rationally, Cecilia was also declared out of danger, which intelligence, gratifying to lord Torrington's ears, was communicated to him in the presence of the countess by Mrs. Milman, who was just returned from the Hermitage, where she had distressed and offended Mrs. Doricourt, by weeping and ignorantly lamenting the disgusting appearance of the disorder on her niece's face.—“The poor dear child is quite a downright fright to look at, my lady,” said Mrs. Milman, wiping her eyes; “they have cut off her fine long hair close to her head; and only think, my lady, that the dear creature should catch the disorder from lord Rushdale, after having been vaccinated twice, and never taking it! All her eyebrows, and her long dark eyelashes, are gone! Oh dear, dear!” bursting again into tears, “Cecilia, that every body, man, woman, and child, said was so beautiful, will be quite an object!”

“So much the better,” returned lady Torrington, hoping her ugliness would cure lord Rushdale's *maladie de coeur*.

“Don't say so, pray, my lady,” said Mrs. Milman; “don't be so cruel as to say it is better for the poor dear child to be a fright.”

“I did not mean that,” replied lady Torrington, perceiving the earl looked displeased. “I mean she will get better—that is, I mean her appearance will get better.”

“Indeed I hope so, my lady,” said the housekeeper, “or else, poor thing! according to my fancy, she would be better in the grave, with her poor mother, than to live, and be such a fright as nobody could bear to look at.”

Lady Torrington having given her orders, Mrs. Milman left the room, repeating to herself—“The countess has a heart as hard as a flint stone; but as she felt so little for her own son, I need not expect her to care at all about my poor dear Cecilia.”

Mrs. Milman found Mr. Wilson in her parlour, impatiently waiting, in hopes of hearing news of Cecilia's amended health; but for some time her sobs and tears, and wringing of her hands, led him to suppose she was dead.

At last he made out, that her excessive grief was for the loss of Cecilia's beauty—not her life, which was considered entirely out of danger; and he almost scolded to think that she put so much value on so perishable an article as beauty, or thought a smooth skin of such consequence.

“If Cecilia should lose her beauty,” said Mr. Wilson, “never mind that, my worthy friend—she will keep an amiable temper and good sense.”

“Yes, Mr. Wilson, all this is very true,” replied Mrs. Milman, sobbing; “but then, what great lord or baronet cares a fig about amiable tempers or good sense? they can see when a young woman's face is handsome, but they never trouble themselves to look so deep as her mind.”

“More fools they,” said Wilson; “beauty is a flower that soon fades, and the mind is what a man ought to look at, if he intends to be happy when he marries; and if a woman has nothing more than a pretty face to recommend her, after the honeymoon is over, a man would care less for his wife than he does for his horse.”

Mrs. Milman was not convinced by Mr. Wilson's logic, and she continued to sigh and weep, as he went on—“Now, for my part, Cecilia's beauty appears to me to be of no

sort of consequence; in fact, it will give my nephew Solomon Scroggins a better chance of success; and from what you, Mrs. Milman, consider a great misfortune, I derive the strongest hope that the earl of Torrington will agree with my wishes, and approve the marriage of the young folks. I am really quite hurt to see you cry so, Mrs. Milman; you know you used to tell me, that whatever happened was for the best."

"Well, I suppose it is," replied Mrs. Milman; "but I am only a weak silly woman, and when I remember her white skin, and her beautiful colour, it almost breaks my heart. Oh dear, dear, Mr. Wilson! if you was to see the poor dear child, you would not know her; her face is so swelled, and her nose looks so big and do you know, when I was telling the earl, who loves her as well as he does his own son, how altered she was, the countess, (I shall hate her for it as long as I draw breath), she, forsooth, who prides herself so much on her own painted face, said, it was so much the better that Cecilia's beauty was quite and clean gone."

"Indeed! Did lady Torrington say that?" asked Wilson.

"Yes, indeed did she," replied Mrs. Milman; "the unfeeling creature!"

"It is the most sensible thing she ever said in her life," returned Wilson.

"Oh dear, dear!" exclaimed Mrs. Milman, bursting into a fresh flood of tears. "You are all alike; you have all hearts harder than flint stones. I know the countess can't bear that any body should be handsome but herself; I know she would be glad if the poor child was to have seams in her face as thick as my finger, and to be blind with one eye, and blink with the other; but I little expected that you, Mr. Wilson, would have been so hard-hearted; that you, Mr. Wilson, who always pretended to be so fond of Cecilia, would have said such cruel things."

Wilson looked amazed.—"Mercy on me!" replied he, "what cruel things have I said, Mrs. Milman?"

"Why you said," replied Mrs. Milman, "that the countess spoke sense when she said—'so much the better that Cecilia had lost all her beauty.'"

"Beauty! nonsense!" replied Wilson; "what is it good for? only to make girls vain and foolish."

"But Cecilia was neither vain nor foolish, and I was in hopes her beauty would have married her to a baronet at least."

"Her good temper and her good sense," said Wilson, "will marry her to Solomon Scroggins, my nephew, the best translator of Hebrew, Chaldee, and Greek, in England. Keep up your spirits, my good woman, and you will find that sense is better than beauty. I am now very glad that I did not invite Solomon down this summer: he will now choose his wife by his judgment—not with his eyes."

Mrs. Milman being left alone, did not feel all the consolation Mr. Wilson intended to give, when he informed her that the loss of her niece's beauty made not the least alteration in his design of marrying her to his nephew.—"To be sure young Scroggins may be a good enough match now," said Mrs. Milman, wiping her eyes and smoothing her apron, "but, oh dear! dear! before Cecilia's face was so disfigured, I looked forward to seeing her a countess, and now nothing but plain Mrs. Scroggins. Well, well, what poor short-sighted mortals we are! I had set it down for certain that Cecilia would marry highly, and that I, when she was countess, or somebody of rank, should have risen in life

myself. Ah! well-a-day! nothing in this life but troubles and disappointments! Now I suppose I shall be the earl of Torrington's housekeeper as long as I live, unless I choose to go to London and keep a coffeehouse."

Cecilia's greatest anxiety during her illness was lord Rushdale. She had not once expressed a wish respecting her own person, but had many times hoped the fine expressive countenance of lord Rushdale might not be injured by the ravages of the distemper.

"You have had the disorder much more heavily than lord Rushdale, my love," said lady Welford, who was come to the Hermitage, at Oscar's express desire, to see Cecilia, and to bring him a true account whether she was, as his mother had dropped a hint, much disfigured; "you," continued lady Welford, "have had the disorder much more heavily than lord Rushdale: when the redness wears off, I do not believe he will be at all marked."

"Thank Heaven!" said Cecilia, with fervency; "I should have been extremely sorry to see his fine face disfigured."

Cecilia's eyes were yet too weak to bear the light, and being covered with a green shade, she could not see the smile exchanged by lady Welford and Mrs. Doricourt.

"And for yourself, my sweet Cecilia," resumed lady Welford, "have you no concern for your own beauty?"

"Not in the least, my dear madam," replied she; "I am so certain that the loss of any little personal attractions I might have once possessed will make no alteration in the affection of my friends, that I never give my face a thought; but now you put me in mind of it, I should like to see what effect the disorder has had on my countenance."

"You have entirely lost your eyebrows and your eyelashes, my Cecilia," said Mrs. Doricourt.

"Yes, and my long hair," returned Cecilia, "of which, to confess the truth, I was not a little vain; but these, my dear madam, will, you know, grow again."

"There have been many very kind inquiries made since your illness," said Mrs. Doricourt, "particularly by lady Jane Bruce, and the lively Miss Graham."

"Miss Macdonald, being a little jealous," rejoined lady Welford, "has not, I suppose, been very anxious for the preservation of your beauty. Lord Alwyn Bruce, though, has made daily inquiries after you: but fortify your mind, my love, for, with the loss of your beauty, you must expect the loss of your lovers."

"If my beauty was their sole attraction," replied Cecilia, smiling, "I am content to lose them. It is true, I have heard many fine speeches from the gentlemen at Torrington Castle, but they made no impression, and indeed, before my illness, I had almost made a resolve never to marry; and now, since—"

"Beware of making rash resolves, my love," said Mrs. Doricourt, "particularly on a love subject: I hope to see you married and happy with the man of your choice."

Cecilia sighed.

"There is not the smallest occasion for that deep sigh," rejoined lady Welford, "for you know you said yesterday, that if you could hear that lord Rushdale's face would escape injury, you should be quite happy."

"And so I am," returned Cecilia; "I am quite happy, for, thanks to Heaven, and you,

my dear madam," pressing Mrs. Doricourt's hand to her lips, "I am now almost well, and if I should be altogether as frightful as aunt Milman said when she fancied me asleep, why I will correct all my faults, and endeavour to be amiable."

"You are already amiable, my dear Cecilia," said lady Welford, "and will, I trust, forgive the little trial I induced Mrs. Doricourt to make of your fortitude and resignation. I wished to know how you would bear the loss of your beauty—the most precious, in a vain woman's idea, of all her possessions."

"You have borne the trial nobly," rejoined Mrs. Doricourt, "and believe me, Cecilia, in spite of your aunt Milman's doleful predictions, and Miss Macdonald's wishes, you will, in a very short time, recover all your charms. I was very sorry to cut off your hair, my sweet girl, but that will soon grow again, while I do not think your face will retain a single mark of the disorder."

When lord Rushdale was able to quit his chamber, and join the family party, he expressed the greatest delight at being assured by lady Welford that Cecilia would not lose a single charm.

The countess of Torrington replied, she wished very sincerely that Miss Delmore had been deprived of all her charms, for she had been the very genius of mischief in her family; "twice," said the countess, "she has endangered Oscar's life, and added to her mischief by driving all my friends from the castle."

Lord Rushdale would have spoken in defence of Cecilia, but the earl prevented him by contradicting part of lady Torrington's assertion.—"It is not true," said he, "that Miss Delmore has twice endangered Oscar's life: the symptoms of this cruel disorder first appeared in lord Rushdale; of consequence, he must have communicated the infection to Miss Delmore, and deprived you of the company of your friends: but are these idle retrospections, Emily, your aspirations of gratitude to Heaven, for having graciously restored the health of your son, whose life your weakness, not to give it a worse name, has endangered? for had you not persisted in sending him from you in his infancy to be inoculated, you would have been certain the operation had been performed, which is now evident never took place. Are these idle querulous complaints of the departure of your friends, the most grateful return you can make those ladies who have kindly remained with you during the illness of your son?"

"I am sure you are growing every day more and more *unkind* in your remarks and censures," replied the countess; "you must be very certain that I am infinitely obliged to lady Welford and Mrs. Freakley, for having staid to enliven my solitude, and no person of common sense can doubt my being very happy to see Oscar able to come among us again; but you know I never could see Miss Delmore with your lordship's eyes, and that I have always hated to hear her beauty so extravagantly extolled."

"I am very sorry to add to your vexation," said the earl, "but I fear Miss Delmore's beauty is fated to disturb your serenity, and give you mortification, for I shall insist that you invite Mrs. Doricourt and Miss Delmore to all your routs next winter."

"What miracle next?" exclaimed lady Torrington; "the Lady of the Lake intend to forsake the Island of Calm Delights, as sir Cyril Musgrove calls it, and pass the winter in the foggy impure atmosphere of London! can this be possible?"

"*Most veritable*," replied the earl.

"Mrs. Doricourt's own house in Bedford-square is preparing for her reception," said lady Welford, "and she has ordered a superb equipage."

"Wonder upon wonder!" exclaimed the countess; "all this fine show-off is with the intention of getting the peerless Cecilia a husband, I suppose; but, alas for portionless maidens! this is a very mercenary age, and men are only to be caught with a golden hook."

"All men," replied lord Rushdale, "are not so mercenary, and the beauty and accomplishments of Miss Delmore—"

"Of which I am positively sick to hear," interrupted lady Torrington—"may perhaps entrap the hearts of silly romantic boys; but the laws of this country, thank Heaven, lord Rushdale, have wisely provided against a minor disgracing himself and his family by an improper marriage."

"And, thank Heaven," returned lord Rushdale, "the same wise laws give freedom of will at a certain age, and restrain the heads of families from exercising the authority that might occasion misery for life."

"Over you, Oscar," said the earl, "no undue authority will ever be exercised; in your father you will find an indulgent friend."

The countess frowned, and retired to write a note to doctor Bellamy, in which she offered him a considerable *douceur* if he would directly advise sea-bathing for lord Rushdale. The countess was *ennuyée* to death with the unceasing nonsense of Mrs. Freakley, and the perfections of lady Welford. Her friend, the duchess of Aberdeen, was at Brighthelmstone with her daughter, lady Arabella Moncrief; and the handsome elegant Tangent Drawley had written to assure her that he had seen no eyes half as brilliant as hers among the fair promenaders on the Steine.

Agreeable to her ladyship's request, the obsequious doctor Bellamy, at his next visit, recommended change of air for his patient, and particularly advised sea-bathing, as necessary to lord Rushdale's perfect recovery.

The earl had come into Cumberland with an intention of remaining till the beginning of November, but his son's health was to him of so much importance, that he proposed setting off immediately for Weymouth.

Lady Torrington strongly objected to Weymouth, declaring that she wished to avoid lady Eglantine Sydney, and the tiresome old maid, her aunt, whom she must be compelled to visit if she went to Weymouth. She then mentioned Brighthelmstone, and carried her point with very little opposition from the earl.

Mrs. Freakley had promised to meet lord Wilton at Tunbridge Wells the beginning of October, and she took leave of Torrington Castle with very little regret, the purpose for which she had so eagerly sought an invitation from the countess being completely disappointed by the indifference of lord Rushdale to the sweet engaging simplicity of her "Child of Nature," and by poor dear Jemima's unfortunate engagement with an artful villain, whose right to the title of count she had always doubted; but that her own choice had fallen on a nobleman she was quite certain; and she consoled her mind for the imprudence of her unfortunate niece, with the delightful thought of very soon exchanging the plain Mrs. Freakley for the title of lady Wilton.

All the regrets and disappointments of the countess of Torrington were now forgotten

in preparing to leave Cumberland, which she protested to Mrs. Smithson, she hoped never to visit again.

Notes were every day exchanged between Torrington Castle and the Hermitage, and Mrs. Doricourt had informed the earl that she considered it proper to prevent lord Rushdale from seeing Cecilia again before they met in town in November. But the impassioned Rushdale had opened his heart to his father; he had declared his unalterable affection for Cecilia, and the misery he should endure, if not permitted to see her previous to his quitting Cumberland.

The earl was not inexorable to the pleadings of his son; he remembered when he had loved a being fair and faultless as Cecilia; his heart melted at the tender recollection, and Oscar received his permission to see and disclose his passion to Cecilia.

Lord Torrington prepared Mrs. Doricourt to expect a visit from himself and Oscar, whose cause he pleaded so successfully, that Mrs. Doricourt consented they should take Cecilia by surprise.

Cecilia was now quite well, and her complexion was regaining its natural delicacy. She was practising a favourite harp song of the earl's, when the guests so little expected by her were welcomed to the Hermitage by Mrs. Doricourt.

Lord Rushdale impatiently inquired for Cecilia.

"She is well, and you shall see her presently," replied Mrs. Doricourt; "but I would yet recommend that all professions and declarations, save those of friendship, be postponed till you meet in town. Your heart will then have proved the effect of absence: perhaps, after that trial, you will find—"

"I shall find," replied Oscar, eagerly interrupting her, "that neither time nor absence will alter my love for Cecilia."

Mrs. Doricourt mournfully shook her head. She remembered that Henry Woodville had so vowed: he had sworn to love none but her, yet, in the short space of a little month, he had forgotten his ardent professions, and married another. Mrs. Doricourt wished to spare the heart of Cecilia the pangs she had endured; but lord Rushdale felt confident of the stability of his affection, and would not listen to remonstrances, or admit delay. He was impatient to plight his own vows and receive those of Cecilia; he longed to press her to his heart, to gaze upon her face, and assure her, that had her person been ever so much altered, she would have been still dearer to him from that circumstance.

Mrs. Doricourt, finding all her arguments ineffectual, sent to request the company of Miss Delmore; but Cecilia, whose thoughts were too full of Oscar to allow even her harp to tranquillize their restless wanderings, had left the boudoir, and unconsciously strayed to the chapel. Cecilia approached the altar, where it had been her custom to breathe a prayer of thankfulness for the blessings bestowed on herself, and to supplicate for the happiness of her friends.—"Rushdale is my brother—my friend," said Cecilia; "I will pray for him."

In the act of bending her knee at the altar, she perceived a miniature picture lying on a missal; she caught it up, and gazing with astonishment, beheld the resemblance of him who occupied her thoughts—of Rushdale! The crystal was wet with recently-shed tears. Cecilia almost doubted her senses. Again she examined the countenance. It was Oscar's, though the hair was something lighter, and divided in a different way to that in which he

wore his, and the dress was Spanish.

Cecilia's eyes were fixed on the picture with feelings almost amounting to horror. Was it possible Mrs. Doricourt could love lord Rushdale? Again she perused the lineaments of the face, in the hope of discovering that it was not his resemblance; but the deep blue eye, the serpentine lip, gave a pang to her heart; the countenance was older than Oscar's—"But she has painted him thus," said Cecilia, "to bring him nearer to her own time of life. Unhappy Mrs. Doricourt! wretched—wretched Cecilia!" Her own tears fell on the miniature, as she again placed it on the missal.

As she left the chapel she met the earl of Torrington, who having warmly and affectionately congratulated her on her good looks, informed her that Mrs. Doricourt wished to see her.

Cecilia wished to speak of Oscar, but merely saying Oscar is well, the earl pursued his way through the grounds, while Cecilia, passing under the arcade, entered the library. Here she was surprised by the presence of lord Rushdale, who, folding her to his heart, expressed the happiness he felt in again beholding her.

The countenance of Mrs. Doricourt expressed no jealous emotion, but with a smile of approving sweetness she said, as she rose to quit the room—"Lord Rushdale, my Cecilia, has a suit to prefer to you, of which the earl of Torrington and myself are informed, and we invest you with full power to reject or approve, according to the dictates of your own heart."

A few moments explained to the happy Cecilia lord Rushdale's love and hopes. With modest candour and sincerity, she confessed that the knowledge of his affection increased her happiness, though she feared the world would consider her altogether unworthy his preference, being so much his inferior in rank.

"And superior to every other female," said the enraptured Rushdale, "in beauty, temper, virtue, and accomplishments."

Cecilia having given him the promise he so urgently entreated, of being his as soon as he was of age, the period his indulgent father had appointed for their marriage, Oscar became more calm, and informed Cecilia that sea-bathing had been prescribed him, and that his mother had decided on going to Brighthelmstone.

"And Mrs. Doricourt," said Cecilia, "has accepted lady Welford's invitation, and we are going to Teignmouth till November."

"And then, my lovely Cecilia," returned Oscar, "to London, where," said he, kissing her hand, "you will be surrounded by admirers; where you will be followed, flattered, and perhaps will forget—"

"Beware of suspicion," interrupted Cecilia; "I have given you my sacred promise, and it must be your own conduct alone that will induce me to retract."

Rushdale again repeated the warm vow of everlasting love and fidelity; again he pressed his lips on her white hand, and obtained her promise to correspond with him during the period of their separation.

#### CHAPTER IV.

—————Be not over exquisite  
To cast the fashion of uncertain evils;  
For grant they be so, while they rest unknown,  
What need a man forestall his fate of grief,  
And run to meet what he would most avoid? MILTON.

To dash each glimpse of joy was giv'n—  
The gift the future ill to know. MONTGOMERY.

—————Oh, Shame, where is thy blush?  
Rebellious hell, if thou canst mutiny  
In a matron's bones, to flaming youth let  
Virtue be as wax, and melt in its own fire.  
SHAKESPEARE.

*Curiosity gratified—A farewell Visit—Amuse  
ments at a fashionable Watering Place—  
An unexpected Arrival.*

MRS. Doricourt, though she found nothing to approve or admire in the conduct of the countess of Torrington, was yet unwilling to quit Cumberland without evincing her recollection of the very polite attention with which she had been treated at Torrington Castle. For the earl Mrs. Doricourt felt both pity and esteem, for she saw in him what Shakespeare so beautifully expresses—

“The web of our life is of a mingled yarn—  
Good and ill together; our virtues would be proud,  
If our faults whipped them not; and our crimes  
Would despair, if they were not cherish'd by  
Our virtues.”

Mrs. Doricourt beheld in the earl of Torrington the baneful effects of a fashionable education, where religion, the basis of every virtue, had been totally neglected, and the prevalence of bad example, resulting from having in early youth kept what is called the very best company—young men of high rank, and large fortune, who, following the bent of their own unbridled and licentious inclinations, trampled on all laws divine and moral.

Happily for the earl of Torrington, the ingratitude of a worthless woman had roused him, in the very meridian of his profligate career, from the supine state in which his conscience had so long slumbered; he saw, and trembled at the destructive lengths to which his own impetuous passions, and the pernicious maxims and manners of his



companions, had led him.

Mrs. Doricourt had powerful reasons for believing that lord Torrington was sincerely penitent for the errors and offences of his past life; she knew that all men had much to be forgiven, and she was also certain that the earl had virtues which demanded and deserved esteem: for his sake, but more particularly for the sake of the interesting amiable Rushdale, whose happiness was so closely entwined with that of her darling Cecilia, Mrs. Doricourt wished to be on terms of amity with the countess of Torrington. To preserve this lovely unsullied blossom from the contagion of fashionable vices, she constrained herself to cultivate the acquaintance of a woman from whose society she expected to derive neither improvement or pleasure.

Mrs. Doricourt was now about to quit the peaceful retirement of St. Herbert's Island, to embark again on that headlong turbulent stream, where her happiness had been engulfed and lost for ever. A trembling presentiment, the dark shadow of evil, fell on her mind, as she reflected on the manners of the present day, and the sort of beings that crowd the fashionable circles in which the innocent Cecilia was about to move. Mrs. Doricourt was, to a certain extent, superstitious, and yielding to this weakness, she fancied that she saw sorrows and misfortunes for the child of her affection; but clouds and mists hid from her prophetic view the termination of her destiny.

Having for some moments indulged this melancholy vision, she started as from a trance, and exclaimed—"Surely it is wrong to anticipate evil, and worse than folly to *'shun joy's transient beams, because to-morrow's storm may lower.'*" To the protection of Heaven I commit my Cecilia, satisfied, that be her portion in life weal or woe, the wisdom of Providence cannot err."

Having resolved to give an entertainment at the Hermitage, previous to quitting Cumberland, she summoned Cecilia to the library.—"There, my love," said she, placing them before her, "there are the invitation cards. You will perceive I have remembered all who appeared solicitous to cultivate our acquaintance while we remained at Torrington Castle, and who expressed, during your illness, anxiety for your recovery."

"But, my dear madam, will you not invite Miss Macdonald?" finding no card addressed to her. "You know her cousin, Miss Graham, accepts no invitation in which she is not included—they are inseparable."

"In person," returned Mrs. Doricourt, "and as opposite as the poles in mind; but certainly, if you wish it, Miss Macdonald shall have a card; though you should recollect, my love, she considers you her rival with lord Alwyn Bruce, and under that impression has expressed herself in a way that reflects no credit on her delicacy, or her heart."

"I am too happy," replied Cecilia, "to bear enmity against any one; and if Miss Macdonald loves lord Alwyn Bruce, she is to be pitied, believing he prefers another."

"Miss Macdonald loves the rank of lord Alwyn Bruce," returned Mrs. Doricourt. "She is of too cold and selfish a disposition to feel any torments, except those which have their rise in disappointed ambition; but as there certainly is no revenge so noble as that of shewing kindness to an enemy, why there is a card for Miss Macdonald."

On Mrs. Doricourt's first arrival in Cumberland, she had declined receiving visits, on the plea of ill health, which had given no little offence to many, whom the report of her high family, and large fortune, rendered anxious to introduce themselves to her

acquaintance; but her choosing to reside on St. Herbert's Island soon confirmed the idle report that she was mad, and all resentment at what had been considered pride, was lost in commiseration for her fancied malady; but her appearance at Torrington Castle, after having lived so many years in total seclusion, did away the idea of her insanity—to be seen was to be admired, and again her intimacy was courted with eager avidity.

As no company had ever been received at the Hermitage, Mrs. Doricourt's unexpected invitation was hailed with transport, for curiosity, respecting the complete transformation of the island, had for years pervaded the bosoms of all ranks of people in the vicinity; and many a longing look had been cast over the barriers that prevented the landing of intruders on St. Herbert's Island.

The accounts of the extreme beauty of the walks and buildings given by Wilson and the workmen, had by some been considered fabulous, and by all greatly exaggerated; and perhaps no exhibition, promising a display of all the wonderful in art and nature, that ever was announced to the grown children of Great Britain, could have excited more general commotion.

The consecrated shades and forbidden walks of St. Herbert's were thrown open. Curiosity was at length to be gratified. All Keswick was in motion. Tailors, shoemakers, milliners, dressmakers, and hairdressers, jostled one another; and lady Torrington had the misery to hear, that even her intended fete had not been half so much talked of as Mrs. Doricourt's invitation to the Hermitage.

On the appointed day, gilded boats, with silken streamers glittering in the sun, covered the bosom of the lake; and Mrs. Doricourt and Miss Delmore received their expected guests on the Chinese bridge, where a band of concealed musicians welcomed them with enlivening strains to St. Herbert's Island, where the groves, the lawn, the shrubberies, and gardens, exhibited a beautiful spectacle of blooming fertility, and more than answered the expectations of the admiring guests, who, without a dissenting voice, agreed that the once-sterile island was converted into Elysium.

The swans, the grotto, the Chinese temple, were visited; and feasting, music, and dancing, made the hours fleet as rapidly as minutes.

In the evening the walks, bridges, groves, and shrubberies, were illuminated with variegated lamps, that shed over the island and surrounding lake a light brilliant as noonday; while a grand display of chemical fireworks completed the splendour of the scene.

But while Mrs. Doricourt and Miss Delmore, with the most elegant and polite attention to the pleasure and gratification of their guests, exerted their various talents to banish every unquiet thought and baneful passion, yet envy, jealousy, hatred, and disappointment, prevailed, and, with their scorpion fangs, prevented the countess of Torrington and Miss Macdonald from participating the general hilarity, or feeling the smallest portion of the satisfaction they affected.

Lady Torrington writhed with envy, to see that Mrs. Doricourt's entertainment had far outdone all the splendour of Torrington Castle.

Miss Macdonald could scarcely obtain a look from lord Alwyn Bruce; and she execrated the beauty of the fascinating Miss Delmore, on whom he gazed with tender admiration, near whom he contrived to fix himself, evading all her advances and efforts

to draw him into conversation.

A thousand times Miss Macdonald viewed her Grecian figure, adorned with antique draperies, in the surrounding mirrors; and vanity as constantly told her, she was in all points superior to the girl near whom lord Alwyn Bruce so provokingly hovered. Miss Macdonald wished she had remained at home, and avoided the mortification of seeing the man whom she had for many weeks played off all her studied graces to mould into a lover, treat her with negligent politeness, and bestow his warm regard on a low-born girl, subsisted by charity.

Miss Macdonald could not conceal her vexation from lady Jane Bruce, to whom she pointed out, with no little acrimony, her brother's prodigious admiration of Miss Delmore.

Lady Jane Bruce was too proud of her high descent herself, to entertain the remotest suspicion that her brother could have any serious meaning in complimenting Cecilia Delmore, whose humble birth, she wisely concluded, would present an insuperable objection, and deter any man of rank and family from thinking of her for a wife.

Lady Jane laughed at Miss Macdonald's jealousy and vexation, observing, at the same time, that her brother's gallantry gave her no sort of uneasiness. His attention to Miss Delmore, whom she must confess was a very lovely young woman, she thought extremely natural; but she had many times before seen him very attentive to handsome women—she had even known him compose sonnets and odes in praise of their beauty; yet, though he had been guilty of the folly of turning poet, she believed she could venture to affirm, his heart had never been seriously attached.

Lady Torrington greatly enjoyed the mortification of Miss Macdonald. The evident admiration of lord Alwyn Bruce for Miss Delmore consoled her for being outdone in splendour by Mrs. Doricourt, whose worldly prudence, she hoped, would persuade Miss Delmore, that lord Alwyn Bruce, being uncontrolled master of his fortune and actions, would, in every particular, be a much more eligible match for her than lord Rushdale, who was yet a minor, and that it would be best at once to secure a husband of rank, in the way of which there was no impediment, rather than wait the changes that might even in the short space of a few days, be effected in the heart of a young man, who, from his situation in life, would have access to the first and most beautiful women in England, while the splendid sphere in which he moved would enable him to select a wife from any family, however noble and distinguished.

Lady Torrington saw with concern that Cecilia's person was still lovely as ever, and that the infatuated Oscar beheld her with the same romantic passion; but lady Torrington was a woman of the world—she gave no credence to eternal love; she hoped to find the accomplishment of her ambitious projects in absence, and the natural mutability of his sex.

Miss Graham had already made herself a favourite with Mrs. Doricourt, who hoped in her that Cecilia would find a friend and companion the ensuing winter in town, the delights of which they both pictured to themselves with the vivid colouring of youthful imagination.

The supper served up to the company at the Hermitage revived the envy and vexation of the countess of Torrington; for, without any bustle or parade of preparation, Mrs.

Doricourt entertained all the first people in her vicinity, and placed before them, in a magnificent service of gilt plate, every variety and delicacy that wealth could procure, or taste invent. Her mortification was increased by seeing the company take their leave, more than ever impressed with the opinion, that Mrs. Doricourt and her *protégée* were unrivalled in beauty, elegance, and accomplishments.

Lady Torrington took leave of Mrs. Doricourt and Miss Delmore with the warmest professions of friendship and regard, at the same time secretly hoping she might never in the course of her life meet either of them again, or any other persons belonging to the class of perfects, for whom she had a most sovereign contempt, and detested with all her soul.

The earl and his son bade Mrs. Doricourt and Cecilia adieu, with unfeigned regret, and while they dwelt on the pleasure they should experience in relating to each other, when they met in town, the events occurring during their separation, Oscar took an opportunity to slide from Cecilia's finger a ring, which he replaced with a valuable brilliant from his own. While the countess bade lady Welford farewell, whom Mrs. Doricourt had prevailed on to remain at the Hermitage till their departure for Devonshire, Oscar took the opportunity of whispering in a low voice—"Heaven guard you, my adored Cecilia! Remember that my health, nay, my very life, depends on your faith!"

Cecilia smiled and blushed, for the eyes of the countess were at that moment turned on her with a look of disdain.

"Without doubt, Miss Delmore," said she, "lord Alwyn Bruce will follow you to Teignmouth; and if you are wise, you will employ all the witchery of your beauty to engage him in the trammels of matrimony. Lovers of rank and fortune are not to be met every day; and it is far better to ensure a certainty, than depend on contingencies."

Mrs. Doricourt coloured with indignation.

Cecilia's delicacy was offended by the grossness of lady Torrington's speech; but coldly thanking her for her advice, she remarked, that lord Alwyn Bruce never having professed himself her lover, she had not the choice to approve or reject his suit; but whenever she did marry, she begged to assure her ladyship, it would be inclination, not interest, that would influence her choice.

The earl and Oscar looked their approval of her reply; while the countess, twisting an expensive shawl round her throat, replied—"I have heard young ladies make similar protestations before, and seen them, after all, make marriages of interest; prudence, I believe though, would have been a more correct expression. Adieu, Miss Delmore! I predict, when we meet in town, I shall salute you by the title of lady Alwyn Bruce."

Mrs. Doricourt was prevented from uttering a few plain truths, which would have been unpleasant to the refined ear of the countess, by a servant announcing that the yacht was ready to convey the earl's party across the lake.

On the Chinese bridge Oscar lingered a moment to press Cecilia's hand to his lips, to conjure her to answer his letters, and to assure her of his unalterable affection.

"Adieu, dearest Oscar!" said Cecilia, as she waved her white hand to him, while he leaned over the side of the light vessel, still gazing on the angel-form of her his youthful heart adored.

"We have met and parted," thought Cecilia, as she walked silently between lady

Welford and Mrs. Doricourt to the house. "Farewell, dear Oscar! Heaven only knows whether we shall ever meet again, and if we should, what alteration a few weeks separation may make in the heart, that now professes itself fondly devoted to me."

Mrs. Doricourt saw the tender regret of Cecilia, and it recalled the remembrance of Henry Woodville. He too had vowed, "*tender was the time when we two parted ne'er to meet again.*"—"Oh! may gracious Heaven avert from my Cecilia the anguish of knowing Oscar deceitful and perjured!" exclaimed she. "Better, far better, will it be that she should weep him dead, than endure the anguish of knowing that he lives, and is forsworn!"

The arrangements of Mrs. Doricourt kept her in Cumberland a few days after the family had quitted Torrington Castle, and Cecilia had the melancholy pleasure, when she went to take leave of her aunt Milman and Mr. Wilson, of visiting lord Rushdale's chamber, of sitting in the place where, the night before he was taken ill, they had read together in the little drawing-room.

Cecilia respected and loved Mrs. Milman, but she knew she was fond of talking; she therefore bade her farewell, without entrusting her with the secret of her engagement with lord Rushdale.

Mr. Wilson felt more regret at parting with Cecilia than Mrs. Milman did, for she plumed herself with the hope that, since her niece's face was not injured by the smallpox, she would yet marry a great lord, or a rich baronet, and that when Cecilia's own fortune was made, she should herself become a person of consequence.

Mr. Wilson cared nothing for her beauty, only that in its preservation he saw many obstacles to her becoming Mrs. Solomon Scroggins; but, at all events, he determined to go to town early in the winter, for the express purpose of introducing them to each other; and if they were designed for each other, why very good; and if not, he would endeavour to believe with Pope—"whatever is, is right."

"If it had not been for that consequential Mrs. Smithson, who so entirely manages the countess," said Mrs. Milman, "I might have gone to the town-house for the winter; but Mrs. Smithson did not like me, and so I must mope out the winter here as well as I can."

"You are mistress of your own time and actions at Torrington Castle," replied Wilson. "If you had gone to London, you would have been driven mad; for the servants in town are ten times worse than they are in the country."

"Well," said Mrs. Milman, consoling herself with her old adage, '*every thing that happens is for the best.*' I am certain I should have quarrelled pretty often with Mrs. Smithson; for she gives herself as many airs as the countess herself; but I shall be so sorry after Cecilia, though nobody knows but this jaunt may make her fortune."

The countess of Torrington, as the travelling carriage drove through the great gates that terminated the chesnut avenue, looked back at the castle, and in a joyful tone exclaimed—"Adieu, thou dreary pile!"

The spirits of the earl and his son were neither of them *in alt*; and though they both felt displeased with the tasteless exultation of the countess, they remained silent, unwilling to reproach her silly and unfeeling joy.

Finding she could not provoke them to talk, the countess was constrained to converse with Mrs. Smithson, who being rather indisposed with a cold, was permitted to occupy a seat in the carriage.—"In the morning," said the countess, "we renovate our beauties by

taking a dip in the sea; we then put on a becoming morning-dress, and lounge an hour or two at the libraries, toss over the novels, criticise all the new publications, and subscribe to the loos for some pretty trifle, which is always put up at four times its real value, for the possession of which we contend with as much spite and envy as if the bauble was actually necessary to our existence. Then we have our morning and evening promenades on the Steine, where the prince regent frequently condescends to receive the compliments of the company, and allows his own band to play for their amusement. Then there are balls, public and private, and the theatre, where people of fashion go to hear and retail scandal. I assure you, Smithson, Brighton is a delightful place."

At every stage the countess, to the great annoyance of her husband and son, uttered childish exclamations of joy and thankfulness, that she had escaped the boors of Cumberland, and lost sight of the gloomy Gothic Castle of Torrington, where she protested she had passed the most miserable days of her life.

The earl was at last tormented into expressing himself greatly pleased with the castle, its situation, prospects, and neighbourhood.

"The lakes," said Oscar, "are stupendous objects of grandeur, beauty, and sublimity. Poets and painters continually visit Cumberland, to admire and exercise the best efforts of genius, in describing the scenery of the lakes."

"But unfortunately," returned the countess, "I am neither a poet or painter; and, thank my stars, am not romantic enough to pretend to genius."

"No one, I believe, ever yet accused you of genius," said the earl; "but taste is not confined to poets and painters. To every eye Heaven has given the faculty of observation, and none but the cold and senseless can view the grand and picturesque beauties of the lakes of Cumberland, without feeling strong emotions of awe and admiration."

"I then," replied the countess, "am one of those cold senseless beings. I neither admire woods, mountains, rocks, sheets of water, or old castles; my taste is infinitely more gratified by seeing representations of them at the theatres. I prefer the Opera House, or a crowded ball-room, to all the solemnities of the lakes of Cumberland; and again, I thank Heaven that the sound of water is out of my ears, which, all the time I was at the castle, reminded me of Noah's flood, and that I have entirely lost sight of the ivy-covered battlements and pointed turrets of the ancient seat of your illustrious ancestors. I am sure I never met more disappointments in my life, nor ever mingled with a set of more disagreeable and ignorant people, than did me the immense favour of annoying me with their visits at Torrington Castle."

The earl did not choose to pursue this altercation further. He was perfectly aware that the defection of the count del Montarino, and the disappointment of the *fête champêtre*, yet rankled in the frivolous mind of the countess, who said truly, that she had no taste for the sublimities of nature, who only existed in crowds, and delighted in parade, noise, and show, and shrunk with horror from what she was incompetent to sustain—a rational conversation; but Oscar, his fine countenance flushed with the glow of indignation, asked if she ranked Mrs. Doricourt with the disagreeable persons who had visited at the castle.

"Most assuredly I do," replied the countess. "The miraculous attainments and endless perfections of Mrs. Doricourt have worn my spirits to death's door. It does not signify your looking offended, lord Rushdale, for unfortunately I do not possess your *lumière de*

*sentiment*, and cannot admire with your enthusiasm.”

“Mrs. Doricourt,” said lord Rushdale, “is in mind and manners the most superior woman I know.”

“Prodigiously polite and complimentary!” returned the countess; “but different persons will, you know, have different opinions. Then that other *rara avis*, Miss Delmore—I saw nothing wonderful in her, though she belongs to the class of *perfects*.”

“Permit me to ask your ladyship,” said Oscar, “can you possibly assign a reason why you dislike Miss Delmore?”

“Undoubtedly I can,” replied the countess; “a thousand! in the first place, she is low born.”

“Emily! Emily!” said the earl, “can you be serious in this declaration?”

“Positively I am,” returned the countess, “though perfectly understanding the drift of your question. I beg leave to remind your lordship that I was not of suspicious birth, nor brought up on charity. Bless me, how you frown! you ask me for reasons, and then are angry at my candour; but *je n’y saurois que faire*—I have many times before observed, that the *perfect* Mrs. Doricourt, and her amiable, artless pupil, Miss Delmore, have, with their wonderful accomplishments and superior sense, entrapped the heart of the romantic, sentimental lord Rushdale; and I am sorry to add, that it is evident to me, that you, lord Torrington, instead of opposing, as the honour of your family requires, this boyish attachment—”

“Cecilia Delmore is an angel!” said lord Rushdale, “and in manhood I am convinced my heart will as warmly approve her as at the present moment.”

“I hope to see my son happy,” rejoined the earl: “fortune has already placed him high in the ranks of life; he will, I trust, choose a wife, who will be his companion, his friend; who will be able to exist as happily in solitude as in a crowd.”

“And who so suited for this friend and companion,” said the countess, “as the *perfect* Cecilia Delmore? But,” added she, spitefully, “remember I tell you, lord Rushdale, if you flatter yourself with my ever receiving that low-born girl as my daughter, you encourage *un fol espoir*; and now having favoured you with my determination, I beg to hear no more of this girl: she has sufficiently annoyed me all the time I was in Cumberland, and I most sincerely trust that her inimitable perfections and wonderful beauty will dispose of her to some fool or other before November, that I may escape the misery of having to introduce her to my friends in town.”

To this generous wish neither lord Torrington nor his son made any remark or reply; their opinions and determinations were fixed beyond the power of envy or ambition to alter, and the rest of the journey was performed without the names of Mrs. Doricourt or Miss Delmore being again mentioned.

The countess of Torrington, on her arrival at Brighthelmstone, found an elegant house prepared to receive her, within a few doors of her dear friend, the duchess of Aberdeen, and being again in the midst of beings weak, vain, selfish, and unthinking as herself, the countess for a few days thought herself in a new world, and the very happiest of created beings. The libraries, the assemblies, the promenade, the theatre, and detailing to her friends the terrible disappointment she had endured, in being constrained to put off her *fête champêtre*, for which every thing was in such delightful preparation, through the

unfortunate illness of lord Rushdale, had left her no leisure to remark that the honourable Tangent Drawley was by no means so ardent an admirer of her beauties at Brighton as he was at Torrington Castle; nor could all her hints, allurements, or invitations, when she perceived his coldness, produce the change she wished.

Drawley was extremely polite, but nothing more; and again the countess of Torrington had the mortification to find that the professions of men were empty as air, but determined not to give his vanity a triumph, by seeming to lament his inconstancy: she looked round for some fashionable dashing man, with whom she might alarm his pride and inflame his jealousy. At this crisis she was introduced to the celebrated major Norman, whom lady Jacintha Fitzosborne had, on the memorable morning of her arrest, given Miss Delmore permission to make a fool of.

Major Norman was a fashionable man, who dashed into every extravagance of *haute ton*, with very little more than his handsome person and a commission in the guards to depend upon; but his easy manners and insinuating address made him so general a favourite with the ladies, and procured him such constant invitations, that he lived a gay life, without restriction or annoyance, except when his tailor or shoemaker, his hatter or his laundress, tired of giving him credit, became troublesome and impertinent.

The earl of Torrington at first received major Norman with hospitality and kindness, but having learned his character, and seeing him every day occupy a place at his table, and constantly attending lady Torrington like her shadow, he began to fear what was already the case, that the weak vanity and imprudence of the countess would expose her to the censure of the scandal hunters and venders, with which the place abounded, and that by suffering the major to visit so familiarly at his house, he should cover himself with disgrace, and be considered an easy accommodating husband.

Finding all remonstrances ineffectual to convince lady Torrington of her imprudence, the earl gave his servants, in her hearing, a positive command, not to admit major Norman on any pretence whatever.

Of this, the earl's first act of authority, the countess complained bitterly, and in high resentment threatened, since she was deprived of the liberty of choosing her visitors, that she would separate from such barbarous tyranny.

This menace had not the effect lady Torrington expected, for the earl calmly and coldly replied, that in the particular of a separation, he was at any moment ready to acquiesce with her wishes; but while she continued to reside under the same roof with him, he would endeavour to prevent her disgracing herself, and rendering him contemptible in the eyes of the world.

This remonstrance on the part of the earl had no other effect on the countess than to provoke bitter upbraidings and reflections on his past conduct, and an indignant declaration, that being past babyhood she would submit to no control—no, not even that of a husband; that she would, *malgré* his displeasure, choose her own company: adding, with a sneer, that certainly he must be very capable of ruling the conduct of others who had never yet been able to govern his own.

Lord Rushdale entered in the very heat of this altercation. No hints respecting the imprudence of his mother had met his ear, but the gallantries of major Norman were too notorious, and too generally talked of, for Rushdale to approve his mother's intimacy



with him; and when the earl, full of resentment, had left the room, with the most respectful tenderness he represented to her ladyship the fatal consequences that must ensue from continuing an acquaintance with a man of major Norman's licentious character: with moving eloquence he represented to her, that she put to hazard her son's life, for should a whisper against her fame reach him, his sense of honour would compel him to demand satisfaction from the major, when one or perhaps both their lives would be sacrificed, and to the indelible shame and disgrace she would fix upon her reputation, she would have the stain of murder on her conscience.

The countess shuddered. Oscar saw she was affected, and seizing the moment of compunctious feeling, he obtained her promise that in future she would avoid major Norman, as far as she could with politeness.

With this promise lord Rushdale satisfied the anxious mind of his father. He then read to him part of a letter he had just received from Miss Delmore, who spoke of the beauties of Devonshire with animated delight, particularly of the romantic scenery round Teignmouth, but confessed a preference for the mountains and lakes of Cumberland, which were endeared to her by local circumstances, and recurred to her memory with all the finer emotions of affection and gratitude.

For a few days the countess persevered in keeping the handsome major at a distance; but too intimately acquainted with the weak vanity of her mind to be so easily repulsed, he assailed her with billets filled with tender complaints of her cruelty, which was affecting his health, and driving him to despair. It was impossible to let so handsome a man die for love; the countess answered his tender epistles, bade him take care of his health, and look forward with hope to their meeting in town.

The major laughed, and exclaimed—"Frailty, thy name is woman!" But two months were an age to the impatient major, who, finding it necessary to take a trip to the Continent, to avoid the impertinent applications of clamorous creditors, thought it would be no bad hit, if he could persuade the countess of Torrington to be his companion, and draw upon her purse for travelling expences. The major wrote again, and his billet was so flattering, so persuasive, that the countess consented to an assignation at a farmhouse, two miles from the town.

In one of those drives, taken at an early hour of the morning, the countess of Torrington, to her extreme surprise, beheld the honourable Tangent Drawley and lady Arabella Moncrief sauntering in a love-making way along a field near the road, where so very earnest was their conversation, that they never raised their eyes at the sound of the carriage-wheels. The countess could have exclaimed with Milton's Satan—"Sight, hateful sight, tormenting!" but shame and jealous resentment sealed her lips, and as long as her straining eyes could behold them, she gazed with rage and astonishment.

Lady Arabella Moncrief was an only child, and, as well as being heiress to the wealth of her deceased father, had a large independent fortune, which she was to possess at the age of eighteen.

The terms of kindness in which lord Rushdale always spoke of lady Arabella, and the intimacy that subsisted between them, visiting, dancing, walking, and riding together, had deceived the countess into a belief that her wishes were *en train*; and that her son, ashamed of and forgetting his Cumberland attachment, had discovered that it was his

interest to address the high-born wealthy lady Arabella Moncrief; and that she, a wild, good-tempered romp, actually preferred the sensible, elegant Rushdale, to all the young men of fashion who formed her train, and eagerly sought to render themselves agreeable.

The countess now saw her mistake, for nothing short of a serious attachment could possibly have induced lady Arabella and Drawley to take a long and early walk, and to so unfrequented a place. Lady Torrington now clearly saw why and for whom Drawley had failed in his allegiance to her, and spite, envy, and jealousy, did not render her the most agreeable companion in the world to the obsequious major, who, while trying to flatter her into good humour, had not suspicion that her sudden change from smiles to frowns was effected by the demon Jealousy, but imputed her ill-temper to the apprehensions of the seeing her ambitious scheme entirely defeated by lady Arabella Moncrief preferring the honourable Tangent Drawley to the right honourable heir of Torrington.

Major Norman knew that lady Torrington had near three thousand a year independent of her husband, and he had been exerting all his power of persuasion to induce her to leave the dull, gloomy earl of Torrington, and fly with him to enjoy the delights of liberty and love in Italy—a country of which she always spoke in raptures; but all the major's vows, sighs, and flatteries, were at that time thrown away: rage and jealousy possessed the bosom of lady Torrington, and she insisted on returning home on the instant, that she might, as she said, investigate the deceptive conduct of lady Arabella Moncrief, who, though a mere child in years, appeared to be an adept in affairs *de la coeur*, to be perfect mistress of the art of coquetry.

But the countess of Torrington had greatly mistaken lady Arabella Moncrief: entirely exempt from coquetry or dissimulation, Nature never enshrined in a female bosom a heart more generous, sincere, and ingenuous: having met the honourable Tangent Drawley a few times at public and private assemblies, she was pleased with his person, and captivated by his lively manner: on a more intimate acquaintance, she found him a being exactly suited to her taste, eccentric, gay, and full of whim. Lady Arabella was fond of dancing, for which her little light airy figure was admirably adapted. Drawley had solicited the honour of her hand at two or three balls, and his inimitable style of dancing had completely secured her heart; nor was Drawley less won by the lively unassuming manners of the blooming lady Arabella, who united to all the gaiety of youth a generous feeling heart, and a sweet unaffected temper, that rendered her a general favourite with the circle in which she moved; and though her talents, understanding, or attainments, did not place lady Arabella Moncrief high in the ranks of genius, she had sense sufficient to prevent her saying or doing any thing glaringly silly, and her good heart and amiable disposition amply supplied the place of more brilliant, but not more estimable qualifications.

The affections of Drawley were free; his vanity, his imagination, and ardent passions, had sometimes led him into excesses that his judgment condemned, and his untainted principles despised.

The countess of Torrington had thrown out lures for him, that it was utterly impossible for a gay young man to pass unnoticed; but honour had a peremptory voice in his bosom, and forbade his taking advantage of her weakness, or abusing the hospitality of the earl; and Drawley had resolved on breaking the spells of the countess, by pretending

to be called away by urgent business, when lord Rushdale's illness furnished an excuse for quitting Torrington Castle. One letter, and only one, he wrote to the countess, after he left Cumberland, filled with the news of the day, and those unmeaning compliments which a polite man thinks himself constrained to pay to a vain female.

The heart of Drawley had never been seriously touched till he became acquainted with lady Arabella Moncrief, whose rosy smile, innocent and playful as infancy, and whose preference of his attentions, on every occasion, gave him the hint on which he determined to speak the feelings and purposes of his heart, as soon as honour would allow the declaration; and this love for lady Arabella found him invulnerable to the inviting smiles and reproachful glances of the countess of Torrington, who declared that the air of Brightehelmstone had transformed the charming animated Drawley into a dull, insensible clod, even more annoying than when he chose to assume the INDOLENT.

Drawley, while amusing himself with lady Torrington's partiality, had been admitted into her confidence respecting the intended alliance of the houses of Aberdeen and Torrington; but he had marked the impassioned glances of lord Rushdale, and was sensible that the affections of his heart were devoted to Cecilia Delmore, and that the ambitious views of his mother would never influence him in a matrimonial engagement.

Previous to making an avowal of his passion to lady Arabella Moncrief, Drawley generously resolved on coming to an explanation with lord Rushdale, that the countess might not, at a future period, have it in her power to accuse him of deceptive and dishonourable conduct.

The second day after the arrival of the Torrington family at Brighton, a conversation with lord Rushdale, open and explicit on both sides, put Drawley in possession of a sincere friend, and left him at liberty to declare himself to lady Arabella, who, with sweet smiles, and engaging modesty, bade him endeavour to win the favour of her mother, the duchess.

"And yours, sweetest Arabella, will follow," said Drawley. "Assure me but of that, and I shall be happy."

"Every body knows," replied lady Arabella, "that I am so dutiful a daughter—"

"That if," interrupted Drawley, "the duchess desires you to accept lord Riverton, you will obey her."

"No," interrupted lady Arabella, laughing, "though he kisses my gloves, puts my nosegay in his bosom, and fondles my Barbet, I fear I shall not be quite dutiful and obedient enough for that, because—because—"

"Because what?" asked Drawley.

"Why because I dislike lord Riverton," replied lady Arabella; "he has such frightful red hair, and such long yellow teeth, that he always puts me in mind of the wolf in Little Red Riding Hood; but there is my hand—obtain the consent of the duchess, if you can, and I am yours. Will this promise content you?"

"No," said he, covering with kisses the white hand she struggled to release from his clasp—"no—but, dearest Arabella, I will be content if you will promise to be mine immediately, whether the duchess consents or not."

"My mother," returned lady Arabella, "has hitherto been most kind and indulgent; if you fail to win her approval, you must wait till I am of age."

"Till next spring," said Drawley, "and then, my Arabella, you will, I trust, give me a right to this dear hand."

"How can you expect me to make an obedient wife," replied lady Arabella, "if you yourself persuade me to be an undutiful daughter?"

"Heaven forbid that I should ever persuade you," said Drawley, "to an act that your own heart would condemn, or the duchess consider unpardonable! but I trust to the venial trespass of love she would not long remain inexorable."

Lord Rushdale was announced.—"I fear," said he, "I interrupt an interesting conversation. Be candid, lady Arabella, and tell me if I am an unwelcome visitor."

"By no means," replied lady Arabella; "for though we are in league to contradict the wise schemes of the countess of Torrington and the duchess of Aberdeen, I trust we shall ever meet as friends, and be glad to see each other."

Lord Rushdale expressed himself honoured in being admitted to a participation of her friendship.

"Yes, I permit you," said Drawley, "to call Rushdale your friend, though I know very few others that I should feel pleased to hear you honour with that distinction, lady Arabella."

"Do not arrogate to yourself too much authority," returned lady Arabella, "lest I punish your arrogance by curtailing your pretensions."

"Could you have the cruelty?" asked Drawley.

"I really cannot say," replied lady Arabella; "but no doubt you would survive, were I ever so cruel; and as to the friendship," continued she, "of such a giddy creature as I am, it is not of much value; and though lord Rushdale is good enough to accept it in lieu of a tenderer sentiment, I fear lady Torrington will not so readily pardon me.—As I live, her ladyship's carriage!"

"I do not wish to meet my mother just now," said lord Rushdale.

The visit of the countess was not to lady Arabella, and having inquired for the duchess, she was conducted to her dressing-room.

"I am for the library," said lady Arabella, tying on her morning bonnet. "We are to decide a loo this morning for the most complete work-box—"

"A work-box!" repeated Drawley, with a smile; "and if you win it, of what use will it be to you? Does your ladyship ever work?"

"To be sure I do," said lady Arabella. "I have been employed for the last two months in making—" Baby-clothes she was on the point of saying; but stopping short, and blushing deeply, she added—"but what right, pray, have you to inquire?"

"None, certainly," replied Drawley; "only I was surprised into the question by your speaking of a work-box, which, I confess, I never suspected could possibly be of use to you."

"You are greatly mistaken," returned lady Arabella. "Ask lady Torrington—she will tell you that I belong to the class of *notables*, and that when I marry I shall imitate the industrious dames of the olden time, and employ my hours in knitting comfortable stockings for my husband, and in spinning and making linen for my household."

"Happy would it be for England," said lord Rushdale, "if the simplicity and industry of the olden time had not been exchanged by its females for frivolity, idleness, and

extravagance.”

Lord Rushdale and Drawley attended lady Arabella to the library, where the party had collected who were to decide the possession of the work-box.

The earl of Torrington hastily entered, drew lord Rushdale aside, and in great agitation asked him if he had seen his mother that morning?

“Yes,” replied Oscar, “we have had rather an unpleasant discussion respecting the duties of parents and children.”

“Do you know,” inquired the earl, “at what time she left home?”

“Not till after I did, I am certain,” said Oscar; “and I left her a few moments since with the duchess of Aberdeen, who, having sprained her ankle, is confined to her couch.”

“Are you sure,” demanded the earl, “that your mother is at the duchess of Aberdeen’s?”

“I am certain I left her there,” returned lord Rushdale.

“Thank Heaven!” exclaimed the earl. “I heard she was seen in a carriage, driving furiously towards London.”

The next moment lady Torrington, a Miss Sedgeley, and lord Riverton, passed the library.

The earl seated himself.—“I see,” said he to his son, “there is not much reliance to be placed on reports.”

Oscar was distressed, for he perceived that the imprudence of his mother had given rise to some new scandal; but he was prevented from asking an explanation from the earl, by lady Bloomfield taking his arm, and insisting on his going with her to see her long-tailed ponies.

Lady Arabella Moncrief observed to Drawley, that Miss Sedgeley looked remarkably well that morning.

“Oh dear, yes!” said old lady Bromford, in a half-whisper to Miss Jameson, a Miss of fifty-four, “she lays on her Paris bloom with great effect.”

“Does Miss Sedgeley wear paint?” asked her nephew, sir Thomas Plover, a young miser of large fortune. “What ridiculous extravagance! it is throwing money away.”

“It is throwing out a bait to catch a gudgeon,” resumed lady Bromford. “Miss Sedgeley is putting on her best looks to captivate lord Riverton; but, poor thing! she may spare herself the pain of affecting to smile. Report says that lord Riverton has other views, and she will be fated to another disappointment.”

“There is nothing but disappointments in this life,” said Miss Jameson, with a sigh. “I am sure I have had my share; but what does your ladyship allude to? I never heard of Miss Sedgeley having met a disappointment.”

“Dear me, can that be possible?” returned lady Bromford, taking an enormous pinch of snuff. “Well, really I thought all the world had heard of poor Miss Sedgeley’s disappointment.”

“No, really,” replied Miss Jameson, with a look of curiosity, “I never heard a syllable of the affair. Pray how—”

“Oh, my dear creature,” said lady Bromford, “the story is too long to narrate with all its aggravating circumstances; but Miss Sedgeley, it seems, fell in love with the handsome major Norman, at a ball given by her uncle, sir Robert Arden, in

Leicestershire; and the major believing the young lady heiress to Arden Manor, and all her uncle's wealth, was, for some months, her most adoring slave; but when the Leicester Bank broke, and other misfortunes of sir Robert were made public, and major Norman understood that Miss Sedgeley's fortune would not be more than five or six thousand pounds at most, his violent love began to cool; he pretended that she encouraged the addresses of another gentleman, sent back her letters, and demanded his, which she was silly enough to return, and after a vast many paltry inventions and evasions, gave up her acquaintance altogether. Report says she had a fit of sickness, and was very near death; but I am glad to see that she looks tolerably well, and has spirit enough to treat the major with the indifference and contempt he deserves."

"The major is a gay deceiver," observed Miss Jameson; "but so handsome, and so very insinuating, that I have always avoided his acquaintance. The fascinating wretch, he behaved very ill indeed to Miss Sedgeley!"

"He acted very prudently, I think," said sir Thomas Plover. "A man must be out of his senses that marries in these dreadful times, when taxes are so exorbitant, and every article of life so extravagantly dear, unless his wife brings a sufficient fortune to enable him to support the enormous expences of a family. Let who will blame the major, I do not. The affair would have been very different if he had broke off the acquaintance before her uncle's misfortunes."

"The times indeed," said Miss Jameson, "are very bad, sufficiently so to make every person wary how they marry, to increase expences; and as the major has very little, if any thing more than his commission to exist upon, it certainly is necessary that he should have a wife with a large fortune. His habits, I am told, are very expensive."

"And are paid, I fancy, by the public at large," returned lady Bromford, "for he runs in debt wherever he can; and if he has no fortune, independent of his commission, his tradespeople must suffer. He is a very bad and dangerous character. Poor Miss Sedgeley! he now meets her with a ceremonious bow, and takes no more notice of her than if she was an absolute stranger."

"Major Norman," returned Miss Jameson, "has another pursuit, or report speaks falsely; but as he is notorious in the annals of gallantry, ladies, if they have any respect for their reputations, should be careful of giving the world occasion to censure their conduct, by encouraging an intimacy with a person of his libertine celebrity."

"Bless my soul!" said lady Bromford, delaying to raise the ready pinch of snuff to her nose, "I wonder I have not heard this report."

"So do I, upon my soul!" rejoined sir Thomas Plover; "for if a scandalous story is in circulation, you have generally the earliest information."

"Thank you, sir Thomas," replied lady Bromford; "you are pleased to compliment; but I think a less impertinent remark would have better become the mouth of my nephew; but it does not suppress my curiosity; and pray, my dear Miss Jameson, on whom is it said the major bestows his attentions now?"

"On a married lady," replied Miss Jameson, "a person of no small consequence in fashionable life, who contrives to give him private meetings, in spite of the jealousy of her husband."

The earl of Torrington rose from his seat, and hastily left the library.

Miss Jameson smiled, and nodded significantly, as she gazed after the retreating earl.

"Bless me! how very stupid I must have been!" said lady Bromford, stuffing her nose full of snuff. "I might, from several little incidents, have suspected this affair; but never having been given to intrigue myself (lady Bromford was very much deformed, and had grey squinting eyes), I never inclined to think ill of other females; but if detection should follow this business, the husband will be obliged to call the major out, for he is too poor to pay damages."

"And if he was rich," observed a tall, thin, sallow-looking man, who had sat for some time leaning on his elbow, and concealing his face with his hands, "the husband would be a contemptible wretch who makes a sale of the honour of his wife; and what better than a sale can it be considered, when a man takes money—damages the law terms it—for the infidelity of his wife?"

"I must beg leave to be of a different opinion," rejoined sir Thomas Plover; "I think it quite right to make a man pay for breaking up the peace of a family; and in such a case I should infinitely prefer a handsome sum of money to an ounce of cold lead."

"Or to any thing else under the sun," said lady Bromford. "Your love of money, nephew, is as notorious as major Norman's gallantries."

"Avarice is the vice of age," observed the stranger. "Is it possible so young a man can make gold his passion? No character is more detestable than that of a miser; for love of money contracts the heart, dries up the sacred fount of charity, and extinguishes every noble and generous feeling. The *auri sacra fames* makes a man hateful to his fellow creatures, and miserable in himself."

"There, sir Thomas, do you hear?" asked lady Bromford.

"Yes, madam, I do hear, and I think," said he, "that such observations from perfect stranger are very unaccountable, very odd, very—"

"Very impertinent, no doubt you mean," returned the stranger, "though you hesitate to say so. Perhaps they are impertinent; but I wished to warn you against making gold your idol, for I never yet knew, and I have had some experience in the world, one person whom its possession made happier, wiser, or better."

"But its possession gives a man consequence in life," replied sir Thomas; "it procures him respect."

"From sycophants and fools," returned the stranger.

"Your opinion and mine, sir, will never agree," said sir Thomas. "I consider it wisdom to accumulate money; and to be careful of it when gained, the greatest proof a man can give of sound sense. Your crack-brained poets indeed affect to rail against wealth, but that is because the poor devils cannot prevail on persons of sane mind to purchase their doggerel."

Lady Arabella Moncrief now advanced from the opposite side of the library, where she had been deciding the loo for the work-box, which she had lost— "There is," said she, offering a paper to lady Bromford, "the petition of a poor man who fell off the mail coach a few evenings since, and unfortunately broke a leg and an arm; and, from this dreadful accident, is unable to proceed on his journey."

"I have no objection to give the poor fellow five shillings," said lady Bromford, feeling for her purse.

"I have really no money about me," said Miss Jameson; "but I will get the man's address, and send to him."

"Send him to his parish!" exclaimed sir Thomas Plover, refusing to look at the paper. "I have made up my mind never to encourage paupers by looking at petitions. I suppose the fellow was intoxicated, or why should he meet with an accident any more than the other passengers? and really, Mr.—what is your name?" addressing the master of the shop, "you do very wrong to encumber your counter with these sort of things; for if a gentleman cannot come into your library without being annoyed with beggars' petitions, it will make him resolve never to enter it at all."

"Poor young man!" said the stranger, darting a look of contempt on sir Thomas Plover. "I pity you, because I feel convinced there is no poverty so deplorable as a niggardly spirit."

He then approached lady Arabella, and laying a bank-note on the petition, added, with enthusiasm— "*An angel thou, descended from thy heavenly sphere to plead the cause of charity!*"

He then inquired where the poor man was to be found, and left the shop.

"That man is certainly mad," said sir Thomas Plover. "Can any one tell who he is?"

No one knew the gentleman.

"He is a stranger," said the master of the shop. "I saw him get out of the mail yesterday."

"I thought he was nobody," resumed sir Thomas. "Some poet or actor, no doubt; for these fellows have always an abundance of assurance, and rail against money because they seldom are worth a groat."

"This gentleman then is neither poet or actor," said Drawley, "for he has given five pounds to this petition."

"That was for mere gasconade, to make himself appear of consequence," said sir Thomas. "I warrant the fellow must go without a dinner for a month at least, after parting with that note, for most likely he has not another in the world."

"The greater then must be his generosity," said Drawley, "if he deprives himself of necessary food to relieve the wants of others."

Lady Arabella again addressed sir Thomas Plover— "Come," said she, "I know that you are only jesting, and do not mean to be out done by this stranger in humanity and charity. You will, I am certain, subscribe your five pounds."

"Does your ladyship suppose," replied he, "that I pick up bank-notes on the highway? I promise you I know the value of money better than to throw it away upon vagabonds. I am sorry to deny any thing to lady Arabella Moncrief, but I have positively made up my mind never to notice petitions."

"And I have made up my mind never to speak to you again," said lady Arabella.

She then wished the ladies good morning, and telling Drawley she was ready, left the library.

"I will take care," said lady Arabella, "to exclude that miser from all the duchess of Aberdeen's entertainments. They say he is immensely rich, but always lives in lodgings, without a servant, to save expences."

Drawley laughed, and replied—"Sir Thomas has been known to purchase second-



hand clothes; and it is said, when he has not invitations to dine with his acquaintance, he constantly visits a cook's shop. At one of these eating-houses, report says, he sat down to table with his tailor, whom he cautioned not to know him, attempting to conceal his parsimony by telling the man he had a wish to see life in all its varieties."

On the Steine they met the countess of Torrington, Miss Sedgeley, and lord Riverton, who immediately deserted Miss Sedgeley for lady Arabella, to whom he addressed all his conversation; while Miss Sedgeley, who had before received from him the most flattering compliments, would have remained silent and unnoticed but for Drawley, who, out of mere compassion to her feelings, talked of the weather, the company, and the amusements.

The countess of Torrington looked at her watch, and protested it was near dinner-time, and she had invited the rich alderman Sealand, his wife, and their pale-faced niece, Miss Featherstone, that she might have the pleasure of quizzing them. But on her return home, lady Torrington found a card of excuse from Miss Featherstone, stating that Mr. Sealand, having been taken ill after eating a glass of pineapple ice, they were under the necessity of postponing the pleasure they proposed to themselves, in accepting her ladyship's polite invitation.

"A glass of pine-apple ice!" said the countess, with a sneering laugh—"A quart of turtle soup, and a pound of solid rump steaks, more likely, with which trifling quantity of food I am told Mr. Sealand constantly stays his stomach when he dines abroad. Heigho! No company today. We shall be most dolefully dismal; for of all things a family party is most stupid and miserable."

But what was even in her idea more stupid and intolerable than a family party, awaited her ladyship—a *tête-a-tête* dinner, with her lord and husband; for Rushdale had engaged himself, with Drawley, to dine at the duchess of Aberdeen's.

Two or three times lady Torrington thought she would affect indisposition, and by eating her chicken in her dressing-room, avoid the horror of sitting at table alone with the earl; but as she had promised to meet major Norman at lady Needham's rout in the evening, she considered a sudden recovery would excite suspicion, and it would be best to endure the earl's company for an hour or two.

When they met in the dining parlour, the countess perceived, by the frown on his brow, that the earl was not in the best of possible tempers, but determined not to suffer her own spirits to be discomposed, she seated herself at the table, when to her dismay lord Torrington dismissed the servants from their attendance. Still, however, she preserved an appearance of ease, and carving a chicken, asked the earl if she should have the pleasure to help him?

"I wish with all my soul, madam," replied he, "you could help me to a little patience."

"I really possess so very little myself," returned her ladyship, flippantly, "that I have none to spare: but may I, without offence, inquire what vexatious affair has occurred, that your lordship is in want of patience?"

"I have dismissed the servants, madam," said the earl, constraining himself to be calm, "because I am unwilling to degrade you in their eyes."

"Vastly considerate and obliging indeed!" returned the countess; "but pray do not

look so solemn, or you will destroy my appetite: the chickens are very delicate, and the flavour of the ham excellent: do, my lord, allow me to help you to a slice."

"Emily! Emily!" said the earl, "this apathy—this affected gaiety is shocking!"

"And your indifference and disregard of my politeness," returned the countess, "are worse than shocking."

"Madam! madam!" exclaimed the earl, pushing his plate from before him, "this trifling is unbearable: will you hear unmoved that your reputation is ruined? the town rings with your imprudent intimacy with major Norman."

"Indeed!" replied the countess, affecting composure, "the town then has something to enliven it. I thought it monstrously dull since the regent left us."

"Nay, more," resumed the earl, "it is said you were seen this morning in a hired carriage with major Norman, and the report was current, that, abandoned to infamy, you had eloped with him."

"Charming fertility of invention!" exclaimed the countess: "any thing more my lord?"

"Yes, madam," replied lord Torrington, "much more: I was at the library this morning, where I heard—" The earl's emotion prevented his speech, while lady Torrington, with provoking calmness, said—"I am dying with curiosity; what did you hear? pray go on."

"Hints and inuendos, bitter and pointed," replied the earl, "thrown out by your friends, lady Bromford and Miss Jameson, against your reputation, and censures of my own want of spirit in tamely submitting to your unworthy conduct."

"And yet," returned the countess, "when I meet these railers to-night at lady Needham's rout, they will greet me with kindness, smiles, and affability."

"Major Norman," said the earl, "is invited to lady Needham's, and I insist, madam, that you give up your engagement."

"Give up my engagement!" repeated lady Torrington; "not go to lady Needham's rout! when all the world will be there, I cannot think of absenting myself. I should be the talk of the place."

"You are already the talk of the place," said the earl; "but I deserve more, much more misery than this, for I deceived, abandoned—Would to Heaven your uncle Blackburne's money had been left to endow almshouses and build hospitals: I had then escaped the disgrace, the wretchedness of being your husband."

"And I, most likely," replied the countess, picking the merry thought of the chicken, "should have been happily married to Edmund Saville, who was, to tell truth, a very agreeable man; he would have had more sense and more politeness than to listen to idle reports. Edmund Saville would—"

"Presume not to mention that name in my presence," said the earl, sternly interrupting her. "Oh, Saville! Saville!" continued he, covering his face with his hands, "thy injuries are all avenged."

The countess asked if his lecture was finished, because, if it was not, she wished he would conclude it as speedily as possible, as she had dined, and wished the dessert to be brought in.

"From this moment, madam," replied the earl, "I shall be silent; I have fulfilled my

duty in warning you of the precipice on which you stand; pursue your own measures, but if you prefer disgrace and infamy, do not expect that myself or your son will share it with you; for if I should discover that the report of your assassinations with major Norman is true, we separate at once and for ever.”

The earl left the room, and the countess having called him in her own mind a disagreeable troublesome fool, amused herself with cutting a pine-apple to pieces, and throwing it out of the window to some ragged boys; and bidding them scramble for it, she retired to dress for lady Needham’s rout, where, as she had said, the very persons who had been loudest and most bitter in their censure of her conduct, were the first to salute her with adulatory compliments and professions of friendship.

In the meantime, the mind of the earl of Torrington was suffering from a variety of causes. It was true, he had never loved the countess sufficiently to feel jealous of her preference of another, but his pride was hurt, and he shrunk in agony from the idea of seeing his noble-minded Oscar sinking under the disgrace of his mother. To relieve the misery of his mind, though incapable of receiving pleasure from company or amusement, the earl was persuaded to join a party who were going to the theatre, to the representation of a new comedy; but though the wit of the author was admired, and the piece was received with general applause, lord Torrington sat thoughtful and unentertained till the last act of the play had commenced, when the box-door opened, and the tall, thin, sallow-faced man, the stranger of the library, entered, and the earl of Torrington, to his confusion and dismay, beheld himself face to face with the man whom he had deceived, whose confiding friendship he had treacherously abused, whom he had injured beyond reparation, with EDMUND SAVILLE!

Time, sorrow, and an unhealthy climate, had made a great alteration in the person of Mr. Saville, but the dark penetrating eye, the expression of the countenance, was still the same; for a moment that dark eye was fixed on the pallid face of the earl, when again the closing door sounded on his ear. The earl ventured to raise his eyes, which had fallen beneath the reproachful glance of Saville: he was gone. For a moment lord Torrington believed that his restless and uneasy imagination had conjured up a phantom, and that only in his “mind’s eye” he had beheld the form of his injured friend: but a gentleman near him soon convinced him that it was no delusion of his brain, but the living man he had seen, by observing that Mr. Saville had just arrived from Calcutta, and that he was then waiting the arrival of a sick friend, with whom he was going to the south of France.

Unable to remain, lord Torrington made sudden indisposition a plea for quitting the theatre. The sight of the man whom he had so greatly injured, renewed in his tortured memory the years long past, the generous friendship of Saville, the love of the tender, beautiful Edith, whom he had basely deserted for the possession of that wealth which, had he but listened to the voice of honour and rejected, a few months would have rendered of no consequence to him; for, by the death of the sons of the late earl of Torrington, and two other relations, he had, together with the earldom, become heir to incalculable wealth; but shrinking from the honest labour of a profession, a slave to mammon, he had villanously broken vows which his heart approved; he had perfidiously burst asunder the ties of friendship, and married a woman whom he neither loved nor respected. What was now to be done? Saville was arrived—would doubtless call him to

account for his treachery. After an hour passed in agonizing reflections, lord Torrington saw but one path to pursue; he resolved to offer his injured friend all the amends in his power to bestow—an opportunity to revenge his wrongs by blowing his brains out. Having come to this determination, he sat down and wrote as follows:—

“The earl of Torrington is deeply conscious that Mr. Saville can never meet him as a friend: he also feels that no other reparation can be offered Mr. Saville but that which the laws of honour have established. The earl of Torrington, ready to give Mr. Saville the satisfaction he acknowledges his right to demand, will meet him at any hour and place he may think proper to appoint.”

This note being dispatched, the earl began to arrange his temporal affairs in the best way the tumult of his mind would permit; he had made a will while in Cumberland, in which he had made a very handsome provision for his adopted daughter, Cecilia Delmore: this will he resolved should remain unaltered, lest any circumstances, then unthought of, should make a change, either in lord Rushdale’s sentiments or hers, and they should not marry.

No answer arrived from Mr. Saville that night, and at a late hour the earl retired to his bed, full of remorseful feelings, tired of existence, yet shuddering at the thought, that before that hour the following night, he might be in the regions of eternity. His vain, imprudent, unfeeling wife he thought of with pity and forgiveness; of his affectionate noble-minded Oscar, with regret and agony.

The morning dawned on the sleepless eyes of lord Torrington, and while he sat at breakfast with his son, a note was handed to him: the superscription was in the well-remembered characters of Saville. The earl turned pale; his whole frame trembled, and unable to break the seal, he laid the note on the table.

The earl’s agitation was too visible to escape the notice of Oscar, and he kindly expressed a hope that his father did not anticipate ill news.

“No,” replied the earl, endeavouring to smile; “no; on the contrary, I anticipate, from the contents of this note, relief from much mental anxiety.”

There was a solemnity in the earl’s tone, in spite of his smile, that gave lord Rushdale alarm, though he did not perceive the ambiguity of his speech. He feared some new imprudence on the part of his mother, but observing his father evaded opening the note in his presence, he hastened to conclude the morning repast, and remembering an appointment, he left him at liberty to learn Mr. Saville’s decision.

“Now,” said lord Torrington, tearing open the note, “now let me ascertain the resolve of him who was once my friend: doubtless he will eagerly seize the opportunity of revenging his own and Edith’s injuries.”

But the earl was mistaken. Sorrow had quenched the fiery passions of impetuous youth, and religion’s holy precepts had taught Edmund Saville, that revenge was sinful, and that the divine command expressly said—“*Thou shalt do no murder*,” and in his reflective mind, the *duellist* was a *murderer*, let custom gloss the practice how it might. With astonishment, the earl read—

“Mr. Saville’s principles will not allow him to accept the earl of Torrington’s

offer of what he denominates honourable reparation. To take the earl of Torrington's life would not restore the happiness of which he has bereaved Mr. Saville, who, while his religion forbids revenge, sincerely hopes they may never meet again."

The earl groaned heavily as he threw the note into the fire, and if wishes would have restored the happiness he was conscious he had destroyed, gladly would he have resigned his proud titles and splendid possessions, to enjoy again those white and precious days when he was blest with Saville's friendship and Edith's love; but these were gone past recall, and to avoid meeting Mr. Saville, which he knew would be disagreeable to both, he resolved to go to town for a few days.

"Upon my word, lady Arabella," said her grace the duchess of Aberdeen, who had recovered from the confinement of her sprained ancle, "upon my word, I wonder lord Rushdale is not jealous."

"I should greatly wonder, my dear mamma, if he was," replied her ladyship, "for I don't believe the mistress of his heart has ever given him cause."

"Perhaps not in reality," returned the duchess, "but your everlasting flirtations with that handsome young man, the honourable Tangent Drawley, might certainly excuse him if he was a little suspicious."

"Do you really think Mr. Drawley handsome, mamma?" asked lady Arabella.

"Yes, really," returned the duchess, "and, though his manners are so versatile, extremely agreeable."

"I am out of my little wits with joy to hear you say so," replied lady Arabella, sitting down on the ottoman beside the duchess, "for I am exactly of your opinion; and do you know, mamma, I like Mr. Drawley infinitely better than I do lord Rushdale."

"Arabella! child! you astonish me! but you are not serious; I know you are not," said the duchess.

"Indeed but I am very serious," replied lady Arabella. "I admire and like lord Rushdale extremely as a friend, but I should not at all approve him for a lover: he is too sentimental by half: now, as to Drawley, he suits my taste exactly, for he is all life, spirit, and whim."

"Yes," returned the duchess, "he is celebrated for his whims; only think of his buying five pieces of French cambric at the auction the other morning, and then selling it out again himself by the yard. Why, as long as he lives, if that should be for a hundred years, he will be told of selling cambric handkerchiefs to his friends."

"I hope," said lady Arabella, "while it is remembered that Mr. Drawley sold the cambric, it will not be forgotten that he gave every shilling of the money arising from the sale in charity."

"And now," resumed the duchess, "the eccentric mortal is engaged in a new caprice—this rowing-match, on which he has betted five hundred pounds."

"I am quite delighted at his spirit," said lady Arabella; "if he wins, he will give the money to those who want, and if he loses, it will not injure his fortune; and are not Mr. Drawley's whims a thousand times more honourable to himself than the pursuits of other young men of fashion, who rarely have it in their power to boast having bestowed either their time or money to a good purpose?"

"I am really amazed to hear you, child," returned the duchess; "and if lady Torrington knew your sentiments what would she say, who has set her heart on seeing you the wife of her son?"

"She must make up her mind to be disappointed," replied lady Arabella; "for I shall never be lady Rushdale."

"What possesses you, child?" demanded the duchess; "I trust Mr. Drawley, strange being as he is, has had more honour than to attempt supplanting his friend in your regard."

"Mr. Drawley will never be guilty of a dishonourable action," said lady Arabella, warmly; "but, mamma, I will tell you a little secret."

"I do not wish," returned the duchess, "to be informed of any secret in which Mr. Drawley is concerned."

"My secret relates to lord Rushdale," resumed lady Arabella, "and I am sure you will not refuse to listen."

"He is a very charming interesting young man," said the duchess, "and the son of a particular friend: proceed."

"Well then, mamma, you must know," resumed lady Arabella, "that lord Rushdale is in love."

"Is that your secret? I really supposed lord Rushdale to be in love," said the duchess.

"But not with me," continued lady Arabella.

"Nonsense!" exclaimed the duchess, rising from her seat; "Is not the affair entirely settled between the countess and myself? and does not lord Rushdale pay you the attention, and have you not received him as a lover?"

"No, upon my honour, I have not," replied lady Arabella; "nor has lord Rushdale ever offered himself to my acceptance; for he has told me in confidence, that he positively, and with the earl of Torrington's consent, is affianced to a beautiful young lady of the name of Delmore, who is to be brought out next winter by lady Welford."

"The countess does not know of her son's engagement," said the duchess; "and I really think the earl and lord Rushdale have behaved extremely ill in not acquainting her."

"My dear mamma," returned lady Arabella, "you are quite mistaken; lady Torrington is informed of her son's affection for Miss Delmore, and that the earl approves his choice."

"If that is the case," said the duchess, "lady Torrington acts with great duplicity to me."

"To be sure she does," replied lady Arabella; "but as to Rushdale, he is the most candid creature breathing for he told me all about his love for Miss Delmore."

"Well, all things considered," resumed the duchess, recovering her placidity, which had been a little ruffled, "it may, perhaps, be all the better that you are not attached to lord Rushdale, for I have heard some whispers relative to an intimacy between major Norman and the countess of Torrington, that are rather unfavourable to her reputation; though, to be sure, suspicions of this sort glance so often upon persons of the *haut ton*, that it would be folly to break off an advantageous alliance, when absolute proof had failed to disgrace the party."

A thundering rap at the door announced a visitor. The duchess of Aberdeen was at home. It was the honourable Tangent Drawley, in a check shirt, black handkerchief, blue jacket, and snow-white trowsers.

The duchess declared the dress of a sailor became him, and suffered him to conduct her and lady Arabella to see the rowing-match, which, with his usual good fortune, he won.

END OF VOL. III.

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LOVERS AND FRIENDS.

A NOVEL.

Printed by J. Darling, Leadenhall-Street, London.



LOVERS AND FRIENDS;  
OR,  
MODERN ATTACHMENTS.  
A NOVEL.  
IN FIVE VOLUMES.

BY  
ANNE OF SWANSEA,  
AUTHOR OF  
CONVICTION, GONZALO DE BALDIVIA, CHRONICLES OF AN ILLUSTRIOUS  
HOUSE, SECRET AVENGERS, SECRETS IN EVERY MANSION, CAMBRIAN  
PICTURES, CESARIO ROSALBA,  
&c. &c.

"I hold a mirror up for men to see  
How bad they are, how good they ought to be."

VOL. IV.

London:

*Printed at the Minerva Press for*  
A.K. NEWMAN AND CO. LEADENHALL STREET.  
1821.

## LOVERS AND FRIENDS.

### CHAPTER I.

“This man standing before me, whom I believed  
The sea did separate, not more surprises  
Than affrights me; to me his presence is  
A fearful omen of approaching evil.”

“On eagles’ wings immortal scandals fly,  
While virtuous actions are but born and die.”

“I will not doubt her innocence,  
Though hydra-headed Scandal, with her countless  
Tongues, do strive to blacken her fair fame:  
I do believe her chaste—and in that belief  
Boldly stand forth her champion.”

I saw her breast with every passion heave—  
I left her torn from every earthly friend—  
Oh, my hard bosom! that could bear to leave!  
SHENSTONE.

*An unwelcome Intruder on an Assignment—The  
Child of an unmarried Lady Introduced—He-  
nerous Confidence—Calumny confuted.*

THE dread of again encountering his injured friend Saville, hurried the earl of Torrington from Brighton, and left his imprudent lady at liberty to appoint a meeting with the fascinating major Norman, at a milliner’s, with whom she had laid out a good deal of money in unnecessary articles, merely to win her to permit her assignations with the major, as the distance to the farmhouse was inconvenient, and she had a suspicion that its mistress only waited an opportunity to betray their secret.

Mrs. Supple, the milliner, appeared to understand modern customs, as well as fashions; and as the countess promised to recommend her in her business, and had, besides, made her little girl a very handsome present on her birthday, she could not refuse her back drawing-room for an hour or two to so generous a lady, who had an affair of the utmost importance to settle with major Norman.

At the appointed hour lady Torrington repaired to Mrs. Supple’s, to meet major Norman, forgetful of the promise given to her son, and the prohibition of her husband, and deriding his menace of separation—a measure she had nearly reconciled her mind to adopt; for such was the power the insidious major had obtained over her weak understanding, by the adoration he affected to pay her beauty, that his ascendancy had entirely overcome every lingering sentiment of shame, and apprehension of the disgrace

which her licentious conduct would cast on her son, and the only repugnance that now remained on her mind, and prevented her yielding to the pressing solicitations of the artful major, who continually represented, with the misery he endured from his excessive love for her, the delights that awaited them in her favourite Italy, where, uncontrolled by a jealous husband, and the envious reports of the world, they should live for each other and for love.

That these arguments did not succeed with the countess of Torrington, was not owing to any virtuous sentiment that remained in her bosom, but from an unwillingness to resign, even for the life of delightful freedom the major so glowingly pictured, the rank, state, splendour, and precedence, she commanded, while continuing to reside under the roof of her husband.

In the course of their conversation at the milliner's, the major asked when she expected lord Torrington from town?

"Not till I see him," replied her ladyship; "and perhaps I should not express myself very wide of truth, if I were to add—if that never happens, I think I could survive; but, my dear major, come when he will, you must not expect me to meet you any more at that odious farmhouse, for Smithson told me the woman behaved very odd, and asked a number of impertinent questions. I remember too she came into the room once or twice on very frivolous pretences."

"Did she?" returned the major; "devilish impudent behaviour! and I should have told her so, had I observed it; but I had no thoughts but of the happiness I was enjoying, in the proud certainty that you had left the adoration of the crowd to devote an hour to me, the tenderest, the most impassioned of your admirers: but here, my Emily—can we not meet here? Mrs. Supple being your milliner, no suspicion can attach to your coming here: and she, I dare be sworn, will have no objection, if we make it worth her while."

"I shall take care of that point," said lady Torrington; "but I shall actually rejoice when we get to dear London, where observation and curiosity are baffled in the immensity of population—where we can meet when we please, without the fear of detection."

"You only say this," replied the major, putting on the pathetic, "to prevent my falling into absolute desperation; for I shall never be free from the torments of jealousy—never be persuaded, my lovely Emily, that you are really attached to me, unless you consent to adopt my plan."

"What plan, you insinuating wretch?" asked the countess; "have I not put my reputation to the utmost risk for you? Oh! what a glorious triumph it would afford that snuffy old cat, lady Bromford, and her inseparable friend, the immaculate Miss Jameson, if they could only peep into this room! What a tale they would make for the gossiping loungers at the library to-morrow! How my character would be cut up!"

"And all for having condescended to bless me with your company for an hour!" said the major; "what gratitude do I owe you!"

"And yet you are still encroaching on my favour," resumed the countess.

"Yes," replied the major; "and I shall never cease to entreat and persuade till I have convinced you that my plan—"

"What new folly," asked the countess, "do you wish to persuade me into?"

"Not into folly, my charming Emily," returned the major, fondly pressing her hand, "but into happiness."

“What conceited creatures men are!” said the countess; “and do you believe major, do you seriously think that you have it in your power to make me happy?”

“It should be the study, the unceasing employment of my life,” replied the major. “The Persian does not adore the sun with half the devotion I should worship your eyes—I would watch over you with more solicitude than a miser bestows on his gold.”

Lady Torrington thought the major talked like an angel—the major never remembered being more eloquent; but similes and ideas began to fail, and he brought his speech to a conclusion, with adding an entreaty that she would accept his protection, and at once leave the earl of Torrington to his gloomy morality.

“Morality!” repeated the countess, laughing—“he has a great deal on his lips, I grant you, but very little in his heart. If time would allow, I could treat you with a few pleasant anecdotes of the earl’s morality, but I must reserve them for a future opportunity. Lord Torrington, you must know, my dear major, affects to say, that he thinks with horror of his former gallantries—that he feels no pleasure in public amusements and scenes of gaiety—in fact, he is verging into the opposite extreme, and it is my opinion, will shortly turn Methodist; for he already preaches sermons, long, dull, and wearying, against cards, masquerades, and all the festivities of life.”

“And surely, my Emily,” said the major, “you must be enamoured of his gloom and stupidity, or you would never endure its annoyance. You have given me reason to believe my person, my professions of love, are not disagreeable to you; why will you not fly with me from this hated, this insensible husband?”

“Well, well, pray don’t look so doleful,” returned the countess, “and I will give you my promise to think seriously of your plan; for, *entre nous*, I am really quite *ennuyée* with lord Torrington’s everlasting philippics, and disgusted with his sober *manière*, as cold, precise, and formal, as if he belonged to the society of Quakers. I positively declare I scarcely remember the day when he appeared pleased with any thing I could say or do.”

“What a savage, a barbarian, he must be,” exclaimed the major, “when your beauty, your charming vivacity, my beautiful Emily, fails to please him! You are in person, temper, and elegance, so superior to all other women—”

“You are such an agreeable flatterer,” returned the countess, “that I shall grow vain, and believe you, if I listen much longer; besides, I have to dress for lady Colloney’s rout—adieu, dear major—I must be gone.”

“Not yet, my lovely countess,” replied the major, kissing and detaining her hand.

Lady Torrington chose to be girlish, and affected a little struggle to release herself from the major, who was clasping her in his arms, when, in the height of their toying, the door opposite to where they were sitting opened, and a gentleman entered the room.

The countess started from the encircling arms of the major, uttering a loud scream. The major extended his arm to prevent her falling to the ground, for she appeared near fainting, while in an angry tone he inquired of the intruder—“What the devil, sir, do you want here?”

For a moment the stranger gazed on the varying countenance of lady Torrington, totally regardless of the major’s loud and peremptory command that he should instantly quit the room; he then, with a look of mingled pity and contempt, exclaimed—“And you are the once-lovely Emily Herbert, the present degraded countess of Torrington, a wife and a mother! Poor lost creature! what a situation do I find you in—forgetful of your rank

in life, dead to all sense of virtue! You have a son, of whom the public voice speaks highly—have you no compunction for the disgrace you are bringing on him?”

The countenance of the intrepid major was fixed in amazement—the countess hid her face on the arm of the sofa, as the stranger continued to say—“At your age better thoughts should have possession of your mind, for you are past the giddy years of youth. A matron’s passions should be under the control of reason, and where is your reason?—lost, sunk in licentiousness. That I escaped making you my wife ought to give me joy; but, alas! to find you thus profligate, thus abandoned, thus debased, from the pure artless being I once knew, renders the pangs your perfidy inflicted more intolerable; and while I reflect on the shame, the misery, your conduct must occasion the man I once called my friend, I am compelled to pity and forgive him; for what greater curse can enmity wish, or he endure, than the certainty that the cause of injured friendship is revenged by the infidelity of her for whose sake he became a villain?”

Having thus spoken, the stranger, darting a look of contemptuous indignation on the major, precipitately left the room; while he, stamping about the floor, muttered something like—“Revenge for this insolence—call the fellow out if he is a gentleman.”

The countess slowly raised her head, and seeing the enemy gone, clasped her hands, exclaiming—“*Grace à Dieu!* he is departed. I protest, my dear major, I never was so terrified since I was born.”

“Who the devil is the fellow?” demanded the major.

“A gentleman, I assure you,” replied the countess.

“Favour me with his name,” said the major; “as he is a gentleman, I shall do him the honour to send him a challenge.”

“Not for the world!” replied the countess—“not if you love me.”

“Not call him out,” said the major, “when he has uttered such impertinent things?”

“If you challenge him, my reputation will be ruined,” resumed the countess; “for then our meeting, dear major, will be made public. Who could have expected to see Saville at Brighton, whom I have so long considered dead, or, if living, safe in the East Indies?”

“But who is this Mr. Saville?” again inquired the major; “and by what right has he presumed to say such insolent things to you?”

“Why, you must know, my dear major,” replied the countess, “this Mr. Saville was once a lover of mine, before I married the earl of Torrington; and being rich, he was greatly favoured by my parents; though, for my own part, I was perfectly indifferent about him: but I was very young and very dutiful at that time, and to oblige my father and mother, who thought it an excellent match for me, I certainly did promise Mr. Saville to wait for him till his return from Calcutta. But he should have married me at once, you know, if he intended it; because no person can answer for the change a few days even may make in their sentiments.”

“Very true,” returned the major; “a few moments, my lovely Emily, have made a change in mine; my anger is converted into pity for this Mr. Saville. Poor devil!” continued he, conceitedly, “he is jealous, and the impertinence he uttered was the effect of envy at the happiness he supposed I enjoyed in your favour.”

“And now, I suppose,” resumed the countess, “out of downright revenge, he will inform lord Torrington of the discovery he has made.”

"If he presumes," exclaimed the major, "to breathe a sentence of our—"

"Mr. Saville is a very decided character," interrupted the countess, "and will not be prevented, by any dread of incurring your revenge, from doing what he thinks is proper: but this unlucky discovery brings me to a determination; and if the earl of Torrington talks to me again of a separation, I shall know what course to pursue."

"You will at once abandon the gloomy tyrant, my charming Emily, will you not?" asked the insinuating major, "and take shelter in the arms of him who lives only to adore you?"

The countess smiled, called the major a presuming wretch; and at last gave him a solemn promise, that if things were brought to extremity, she would accompany him to Italy.

Mrs. Supple, the milliner, made many apologies and excuses for the alarm the countess had been put into by the abrupt entrance of Mr. Saville, who, she supposed, had made a mistake, and opened the door of the room she was in, instead of his own, which was the next to it.—"But I wonder," said Mrs. Supple, "the major or your ladyship did not turn the key in the lock, which would have prevented any disagreeable intrusion."

The countess protested that the innocency of her thoughts and actions rendered such a precaution equally unthought of as unnecessary; but as she had refused her hand to Mr. Saville before her marriage with the earl of Torrington, he might, out of mere spite and revenge, spread reports to injure her reputation.

"Then he must write his reports from France, my lady," returned Mrs. Supple; "for he is now gone aboard a smack he has hired to take himself and a sick friend to the nearest port; and as the wind is fair, they will soon be far enough from Brighton."

The countess, leaving the major to inform the accommodating Mrs. Supple that the business he had met the countess of Torrington upon being interrupted by the intrusion of Mr. Saville, they should again want the room; and that to prevent her being any way a loser by her very obliging behaviour, he would engage the whole of her lodgings during the time of his stay at Brighton, which would be the surest way to prevent future intrusion, though he should only occupy them a few hours now and then; but this engagement, Mrs. Supple's good sense would tell her, must be *sub rosa*.

Mrs. Supple's understanding had frequently been exercised in the same way; she looked archly, and told the major she knew her own interest too well to betray secrets.

The countess returned home, relieved from the fear of present detection; and being told by Smithson, after she was dressed, that she looked handsomer than ever, she went to lady Colloney's rout in high spirits, where the evening passed very agreeably, till some person said in her hearing, that the very first time the duchess of Aberdeen went out, after spraining her ancle, she was seen to walk on the Steyne, leaning on the arm of the honourable Mr. Drawley; and that it was currently reported and believed, that her grace favoured his addresses to her daughter, lady Arabella Moncrief.

This conversation was quite sufficient to put the countess of Torrington out of temper with every thing and every body; she sat down to a table to play gold loo, where, though she cheated with admirable dexterity, she lost her money. Her evening's entertainment was quite spoiled; Drawley and lady Arabella Moncrief were uppermost in her thoughts, and she ordered her carriage much sooner than her usual hour, to call upon the duchess of Aberdeen, whom she found alone. An explanation soon took place; they

mutually upbraided each other with duplicity, and parted, with a resolve never to be in future more than visiting acquaintance.

The countess returned home, to confide her disappointments and mortifications to the sympathizing Mrs. Smithson, who had always a tear at command, and an assenting word for every thing her lady advanced, true or untrue. The faithful Mrs. Smithson assisted the countess to rail at the deceit of the duchess of Aberdeen, the ingratitude of the honourable Tangent Drawley, and the coquetry of lady Arabella Moncrief.

The next morning, in a *tête-à-tête* conversation with her son, the countess was informed, that she had nothing to accuse either the duchess, lady Arabella, or Drawley of—"For I," said Oscar, "at my first introduction to lady Arabella, informed her that my affections were irrevocably engaged; and Drawley, whom you so bitterly accuse of deceit, was also in possession of my sentiments."

"I dare say," returned the countess, reddening with passion, "you think your conduct extremely candid and generous; but if the earl of Torrington would be guided by my opinion, and the duchess of Aberdeen was not the next thing to an idiot, you and lady Arabella might be taught obedience to your parents."

"The earl of Torrington is the best of parents," resumed lord Rushdale; "and the duchess of Aberdeen has too much feeling, as well as understanding, to wish to force her daughter's affections, which are placed on a deserving man, to whose family and fortune no reasonable objection can be formed."

"Pretty romantic nonsense!" exclaimed the countess. "Affection!—give me patience! What can such a mere chit as lady Arabella Moncrief know about affection, I wonder?"

"And yet, madam, chit as you are pleased to call lady Arabella Moncrief, you have peremptorily insisted that I should make love to her."

"Certainly," resumed lady Torrington; "most certainly I did; and for the best reason in the world, the Aberdeen alliance being, in all points, very desirable; and I have no doubt, if you had obeyed my command, you would have secured the prize."

"I think I can venture to assert I should not," replied lord Rushdale; "for I have great reason to believe lady Arabella had bestowed her regard on Mr. Drawley before our arrival at Brighton."

"I seldom suffer any of my plans to be defeated," said the countess; "and it is a thousand to one but I find means to disappoint Mr. Drawley's ambition, by breaking off his match with lady Arabella Moncrief."

"That avowal, madam," said lord Rushdale, "I am persuaded, is the mere ebullition of resentment; but if you really intend what you say, I am convinced you may spare yourself any efforts to separate lady Arabella Moncrief and Mr. Drawley; their attachment is sincere, and entirely divested of ambitious or interested views; and if the duchess of Aberdeen should oppose lady Arabella's preference of Mr. Drawley, she will marry him as soon as she is of age; and for my own particular, I beg to assure your ladyship, that I will never be a bar in the way of their union."

"What!" asked the countess, with a sneer, "is not the *perfect* Miss Delmore forgotten yet? I really supposed that romantic caprice had yielded to six weeks absence."

"Then, madam, you did the stability of my principles injustice," returned lord Rushdale; "for while I have a heart to feel, and judgment to approve, never will Miss Delmore or her perfections be forgotten."

“Very sublime and pathetic, upon my word,” said the countess; “spoken 'with *good emphasis*,' but not much discretion; a great sound, meaning nothing at all.”

“You will find, madam,” returned lord Rushdale, “that my words have a meaning; and that, satisfied that she alone, of all her sex, can make me happy, it is my unalterable determination to marry Miss Delmore the very day I am of age.”

“Mean-spirited wretch!” exclaimed the countess, furiously ringing the bell, and ordering her carriage, “is it possible that a son of mine can entertain such grovelling notions? marry Cecilia Delmore, a girl of low origin—brought up on charity! Get rid of your vulgar passion—give up the idea of this degrading marriage, or I disclaim you.”

With an air of offended dignity, the countess of Torrington stepped into her carriage, when, having composed her ruffled spirits, and arranged her looks, she made a few calls, and alighted at the library. Here she found her dear friends, lady Bromford and Miss Jameson, to whom she related the conversation she had overheard at lady Colloney's rout, respecting lady Arabella Moncrief's engagement to Mr. Drawley—“And in this affair,” said lady Torrington, “the duchess of Aberdeen has behaved to me with monstrous duplicity; for it was herself that proposed a marriage between her daughter and lord Rushdale.”

“My dear lady Torrington,” replied Miss Jameson, affecting great sympathy, “I am not at all surprised that you feel hurt and offended at the conduct of the duchess of Aberdeen; for nothing can be more shocking, more distressing to a susceptible heart, than the deceit and ingratitude of those who profess themselves our friends; for, as the poet says, *'when the hand of friendship bars the arrow, the wound is more painful.'*”

“But after all,” said lady Bromford, “every sorrow has its solace; and who knows but your ladyship may yet have more reason to thank than resent the duplicity of the duchess of Aberdeen?”

“No,” replied lady Torrington; “I have been shamefully deceived; the childish folly of lady Arabella ought not to have met encouragement from the duchess. Nothing can possibly reconcile my feelings to the disappointment, or enable me to suppress my resentment.”

“This all appears very just and proper,” rejoined Miss Jameson; “but it strikes me, that there is a trifling circumstance that will reconcile you, my dear countess, to the breaking off this match between lord Rushdale and lady Arabella Moncrief.”

“I cannot even guess at the circumstance you allude to,” said lady Torrington, “nor have I an idea that any thing can possibly reconcile me to the disappoint of a match I had set my heart upon.”

Lady Bromford stuffed an enormous pinch of snuff up her nose, and, with a shrug of her shoulders, observed—“Heaven knows, we live in a strange world, where unthought-of circumstances bring about uncommon events, uniting foes and separating friends.”

“But it is the duty of a friend,” rejoined Miss Jameson, “to present things in their true colours; I am sure I am the last person in the world to say or do an ill-natured thing; but I think a certain person, lady Bromford, ought to be made acquainted—you understand me.”

“Oh, perfectly, my dear friend, perfectly,” replied lady Bromford; “and as I always pay a deference to your opinion, I think this morning as proper a time as any.”



Lady Torrington saw that Miss Jameson and lady Bromford were brimful of some intelligence, which they longed to communicate to her; and being curious to get to the bottom of their mystery, she invited them to take an airing with her.

Lady Bromford proposed driving towards Bramble Cottage, about two miles from the town, where a gardener lived, of whom she wanted to bespeak fruit.

During their drive lady Bromford took occasion to blame the folly of some mothers, who introduced their daughters into public when they were mere babies, unable to conduct themselves, or repress, with proper decorum, the freedoms of the men.—“For my part, I was so tenacious of lady Caroline Bromford’s reputation,” said she, “that I kept her in the nursery till she was turned of nineteen; and I had the happiness to see the good effects of my care, for lady Caroline married advantageously the following winter.”

“Yes, to a man old enough to be her grandfather,” thought Miss Jameson; “advantageously, but not happily; the poor girl escaped the tyranny of her mother, to suffer, in splendid misery, the peevish humours of a valetudinarian husband.”

“Had the duchess of Aberdeen followed my prudent example,” resumed lady Bromford, tapping her snuff-box, with an air of self-gratulation, “lady Arabella Moncrief would, without doubt, have been a different person in morals and conduct; and now her grace must see the error of introducing a child of fifteen to fashionable parties—But there are the gardens.”

Lady Torrington followed the direction of lady Bromford’s finger, and saw a very neat cottage, covered with roses and honeysuckles, and surrounded with smooth-trimmed hedges of white thorn.

“That is Bramble Cottage,” said lady Bromford, “where, if you please, we will alight and take a little fruit.”

There was no person in the cottage but a girl of about seven years old, who was rocking a cradle, which was lined and covered with fine corded dimity, as white as snow. Lady Bromford inquired for the gardener, and was told he was out in the ground.

Miss Jameson asked—“And whose child, my dear, are you rocking to sleep?”

“Not my little sister,” replied the girl; “she was put in the pit, in the church-yard, and then mother took the pretty lady’s baby to nurse.”

“And what is this pretty lady’s name?” asked lady Torrington, suspecting she had been brought to the cottage to learn a secret.

“Her name is—is—I have forgot her name; but she is a very pretty lady, and a very good lady too, mother says: and this,” said the little girl, catching up a cambric handkerchief that lay on the cradle, “and this is her handkitchur; lauks, how sweet it smells! and see here is letters along the connel of it—great A; and mother says as how I shall larn to do fine work like that.”

The countess of Torrington saw a coronet marked on the corner, and beneath it Arabella Moncrief in full.—“My stars, what a discovery!” exclaimed she, reading the name; “but it never can be possible—this infant can never belong to lady Arabella Moncrief.”

“Yes, but it does though,” replied the girl; “it is lady Arabella’s child, and she loves it dearly, so she does; and she comes here every day, sometimes in her coach, so grand, with two men, all silver lace, ahind on it; and she kisses it, and nurses it, and calls it her own dear dear baby; and the baby’s name is Arabella too, the same as her own; and sometimes a fine gentleman comes, with powder in his hair, and he kisses it, and calls it

poor little infortinit thing: but they shall never take it away in the grand coach, for I love the baby, and mother and father loves it, and the baby shall live with us always."

Lady Torrington had heard sufficient, and she returned to her carriage, turning up her eyes, and exclaiming—"Well, certainly I never could have suspected this! Lady Arabella Moncrief's child! Astonishing!"

Lady Bromford having applied her finger and thumb to her snuff, replied, there was nothing astonishing in the affair, when lady Arabella's education was considered—"But I presume," added she, "your ladyship is not now as much offended with the duchess of Aberdeen as you were before this discovery?"

"I am positively so surprised," returned the countess, "that I am incapable of defining my own feelings, lady Arabella Moncrief is so young."

"She is old enough, you see," replied Miss Jameson, "to have made a faux pas, of which you have just seen the living witness."

"I can scarcely believe I am awake," said the countess; "lady Arabella Moncrief's child! It is a strange business."

"But very true, for all that," returned lady Bromford; "and, for my part, I see nothing so very wonderful in it; for when young girls are allowed a carriage, and are suffered to drive about here and there, and where they please, such consequences are generally the result of reprehensible indulgence, and a child might naturally enough be expected to—"

"But when," interrupted the countess, "or where could this affair have happened?"

"It is all clear as noonday," rejoined Miss Jameson. "Every body supposes that a Frenchman is the father of the brat, a young man, a Parisian tailor or hair-dresser, who used to visit lady Arabella's governess, madame de Piere; and she was dismissed in disgrace from the duchess of Aberdeen's family, we all know."

"Yes," said lady Bromford; "and we all know, that as soon as she arrived here, lady Arabella was taken ill—that medical assistance was sent for from town, and that she was full three weeks before she was seen abroad again."

"Very odd though," resumed the countess, "that lady Arabella takes no care to conceal her disgrace."

"She rather seems proud of it," replied Miss Jameson; "for you both heard, ladies, what the little girl at Bramble Cottage said, which proves that lady Arabella is at no pains to prevent her shame from becoming public. I should like to know if Mr. Drawley has had no hint given him of lady Arabella's little indiscretion."

"He has my perfect consent to make her his wife as soon as he pleases," said lady Torrington; "for lord Rushdale is now entirely out of the question."

"If Mr. Drawley has not been informed of the affair," rejoined lady Bromford, "it is impossible it should remain a secret long, lady Arabella visits the child so openly."

"I am surprised I never heard it before," said the countess, "for it seems public enough; but doubtless my friends, knowing how extremely anxious I was for the alliance, were delicate in mentioning the affair before me."

"Mr. Drawley," rejoined Miss Jameson, "is passionately fond of lady Arabella; and when he comes to hear of her imprudence, the consequences are to be dreaded; I should not wonder if he was to shoot her, and himself afterwards."

"I should not believe," replied lady Bromford, "that his love is so violent; Mr. Drawley is a volatile unthinking young man; he has been in love many times, or report

errs, and has got over all his tender passions without difficulty, or resorting to violent measures.”

The countess of Torrington resolved, let the consequences be what they might, that Mr. Drawley should be acquainted with the affair, before another day passed over his head; Miss Jameson had said he was passionately fond of lady Arabella, and that was cause sufficient, in her envious mind, to endeavour at making him miserable. Pleading an engagement, she took leave of her dear friends, lady Bromford and Miss Jameson, and hastened home to employ the ready agent of her mischiefs, Mrs. Smithson, in copying an anonymous letter to Mr. Drawley.

The countess considered it necessary to use the utmost precaution, lest suspicion should fall on her, as the author of the intelligence to Mr. Drawley of lady Arabella's indiscretion: Mrs. Smithson received a strict command to be entirely ignorant in the story, while she placed a seal on her own lips, and never dropped a hint, even to lord Rushdale, of the important discovery she had made, leaving the circulation of the scandalous tale to the indefatigable industry of her friends, lady Bromford and Miss Jameson, through whose representations it was soon currently believed that lady Arabella Moncrief was bona fide the mother of an illegitimate child; and that the duchess of Aberdeen was doing all in her power to cover her daughter's disgrace, and draw in the honourable Tangent Drawley to marry her.

“A tale of scandal is believ'd,  
And none suspect that they're deceiv'd;  
While if a noble act you do,  
Folks wonder if the tale is true.”

Mr. Drawley had no sooner read the anonymous scandal transmitted to him by lady Torrington, than his generous mind at once pronounced it false; and glowing with honest indignation, he hastened to communicate it to lord Rushdale; for though he despised, and gave no sort of credence to the information, he was anxious to trace the inventor of such a vile fabrication, and to remove every shadow of suspicion from the character of his beloved Arabella.

Lord Rushdale confessed having already heard the story at lady Bloom's; but being equally incredulous with Drawley, he advised that the anonymous letter should be immediately shewn to the duchess of Aberdeen and lady Arabella Moncrief, who, without doubt, would give such satisfactory explanation of the business, as would effectually justify lady Arabella's conduct, and clear her reputation from suspicion.

This advice was too good to be neglected; the deeply-interested, but confiding Drawley shook his friend by the hand.—“Farewell!” said he; “from my soul I believe Arabella innocent; I confess I am now agitated a little, but when we meet in the evening, you will find *Richard is himself again*.”

Drawley repaired, without further delay, to the duchess of Aberdeen's, where he was welcomed with smiles by lady Arabella, who told him that she was very happy to see him, for the duchess and herself had determined on spending the morning at home; and while they worked, he should read to them.—“Here,” said she, handing a pamphlet to him, “here is a very curious, though very improbable tale.”

“Not half so improbable or curious,” replied Drawley, “as the tale this letter contains, which I must entreat the duchess to favour me by perusing.”

The duchess took the letter.

“Now, I dare say,” resumed lady Arabella, “you expect me to be extremely anxious concerning the contents of that letter; but,” taking up her work, “I am determined to convince you that I have no curiosity respecting it.”

“And yet,” said the duchess, “it concerns you most nearly.”

“Concerns me!” repeated lady Arabella; “that will not do, mamma; you are only trying my forbearance.”

“Listen, and be convinced,” said the duchess.

“SIR,

“Report says you are paying your addresses to lady Arabella Moncrief; it would perhaps be well for your future peace, if you were to investigate the reasons that prompt the haughty duchess of Aberdeen to acquiesce in your wishes. At Bramble Cottage, two miles on the London road, is nursed a female child, which is every morning visited by lady Arabella Moncrief, who calls it hers, and bestows on it the most tender caresses; a cambric handkerchief, with a ducal coronet, and the name of Arabella Moncrief, was left at Bramble Cottage. Perhaps the wily duchess, or her sprightly daughter, may be able to clear up this affair to your satisfaction, and find another mother for the infant Arabella, whose actual existence reflects no lustre on the fame of lady Arabella Moncrief.”

A pause of a moment ensued; lady Arabella blushed as Drawley sought in her eyes the confirmation of her innocence.

“If you had attended to my advice, lady Arabella Moncrief,” said the duchess, “this indelicate affair had never been canvassed by the public.”

“No doubt, my dear mamma, you were right,” replied lady Arabella; “but I could not bear to part with the dear little innocent.”

“And you see the consequences,” resumed the duchess, colouring with indignation; “the hitherto unsullied name of Aberdeen is become the sport of licentious tongues. I pity the poor infant, but must for ever condemn the imprudence that has exposed you to this scandal.”

Drawley listened in astonishment; the speech and look of the duchess seemed to condemn and pronounce her daughter guilty, but the countenance of lady Arabella betrayed no consciousness of shame; her blush was the rosy emanation of purity; and, in spite of appearances, his impassioned heart generously whispered—“She is innocent.”

The duchess turned to Mr. Drawley, and, with more hauteur than he had ever seen her assume, said—“And you, sir, who have placed this insolent, mortifying scrawl before me, you, no doubt, join the scandalous cabal, and condemn the indiscretion of lady Arabella Moncrief.”

“No, on my soul—my sacred honour,” replied Drawley; “had I for a moment suspected the purity of lady Arabella, you had not seen me here. No, believe me, madam, I placed the letter in your hands, with the full assurance that you would enable me to vindicate the fame more precious to me than my own life.”

The haughty features of the duchess relaxed into complacency; she extended her hand to him, with a gracious smile, while, in a softened voice, she said—"You are a noble-hearted young man, and deserve our confidence."

Drawley pressed his lips on her hand, and replied, he was happy to be thought worthy the distinction.

Lady Arabella having perused the letter, returned it to Drawley, saying—"You merit my warmest thanks for the open generous conduct you have pursued. I acknowledge that you, above all others, have a right to ask an explanation of this affair, and I will not withhold it; but first, Drawley, on the honour of a gentleman, answer me—do you believe me guilty?"

"No, so help me Heaven!" replied Drawley; "there is in your look, in your manner, an air of angel innocence, that speaks conviction to my heart—that tells me you are wronged; and on my soul, I am ready to vindicate your honour against a host of calumniators, even before I am acquainted with the history of this child."

Lady Arabella, with a delighted look, rang for her writing-desk.

"That declaration, Mr. Drawley," said the duchess, "has won my heart; you think liberally, and have acted nobly. Arabella, from this moment I permit you to receive Mr. Drawley's addresses."

Drawley warmly thanked the duchess, and would have pressed lady Arabella's hand to his lips, but, gently withdrawing it, she said—"Not yet; let me first prove that I am worthy the affection of a man of honour." Then opening her desk, she took out three letters, bearing the Leicester post-mark, and signed Maria Weston. These she placed before Drawley, and insisted on his reading. They contained a most humble and pathetic acknowledgment of a deviation from virtue, and the most fervid and grateful thanks to the duchess and lady Arabella, for having preserved her from the horrid act of self-destruction, and for the care they were so humanely taking of her unfortunate child. The writer also expressed an abhorrence of her barbarous seducer, major Norman, and a hope that she might never again behold him.

Drawley now pressed lady Arabella to his heart.—"I am not mistaken," said he; "you are the angel I have ever believed you; you are indeed worthy of all my love and confidence."

Lady Arabella's shining eyes evinced the delighted feelings of her heart, while Drawley, addressing the duchess, said—"How, my dear madam, shall I ever sufficiently evince my gratitude to you, for the hope you have generously given me, that I shall call this angel mine!"

The duchess smiled, and jocosely replied—"You will best evince your gratitude to me, Mr. Drawley, by forbearing to engage in any whims that may endanger your life."

"And have the grace and goodness," said lady Arabella, "to release my hand, which you will please to recollect is, at present, my own property; and before I promise that you shall at a future period have a right to it, you must engage to love my child, and pledge your honour to bring it up; for it is such a darling—such a little wax-doll, that I would not part with it for the universe."

Drawley promised to love the little Arabella for her sake; to help to nurse it, and to be its father through life.

The duchess of Aberdeen now informed Mr. Drawley, that the unhappy Maria Weston was the daughter of a clergyman, whose widow, unable to support her rank in

life, had been reduced to the necessity of keeping a lodging-house at Leicester, where major Norman, happening to see Miss Weston, engaged apartments in her mother's house, for the sole purpose of seducing the inexperienced girl.—“Maria Weston was pretty, and very young; the artful major took the utmost pains to lull the watchfulness of the mother, and recommend himself to the favour of the daughter. Being certain that he had gained her affection, with a thousand promises of marrying her as soon as they arrived in London, he persuaded her to elope from her widowed mother, and throw herself on his protection and honour, to which proposal the miserable deluded girl consented, because she was afraid to meet the resentment of her mother, on the discovery of her disgrace, which she was conscious must soon happen, as she was in the way to become a mother. After remaining with her a few weeks in obscure lodgings in London, and putting off their marriage on various pretences, the major grew weary of her tears and reproaches, and cruelly abandoned her, when she stood most in need of support and consolation. Careless of the want and distress in which he left Maria Weston, the gay profligate major Norman set off for Brighton, and without a single pang of remorse for the sorrowing deprived widow, or her ruined daughter, he entered into expensive amusements, and mingled with the most fashionable parties, where, I am sorry to add,” said the duchess, “men of the major's licentious character are but too favourably received. A letter, unintentionally dropped by the major, informed the wretched Maria whither he was gone; instantly her resolution was taken to follow him—to endeavour to soften his hard heart; but on her arrival here, major Norman inhumanly denied all knowledge of her; and boldly asserting she was a woman of the town, he had her thrust from his door. The evening was closing in; penniless, and without a roof to shelter her, the unhappy creature, desperate with her injuries, attempted to plunge into the sea, but was happily prevented from accomplishing her dreadful purpose, by Mrs. Maynard, my woman, and Mr. Jennings, the butler, who happened to be near, and by force dragged her from the water. Mrs. Maynard is a sensible woman, with an excellent heart; she placed Maria Weston in decent lodgings, and immediately informed me of her situation and unhappy story. I need not tell you, we did all in our power to convince the wretched girl of the double sin she would commit, by rushing unbidden into the presence of her Maker; and while we administered to her wants, we had the satisfaction to see that she was truly penitent for her indiscretion, and anxious to be reconciled to her justly-offended mother. Lady Arabella immediately wrote to Mrs. Weston, who joyfully consented to receive her; the week after, Maria became the mother of a female infant; and as soon as she was able to travel, set out again for her deserted home, and the protection of her mother; but as taking the infant with her must at once have published her indiscretion, I complied with Arabella's request, and permitted her to adopt it. Maria Weston,” continued the duchess, “is now addressed by a respectable tradesman, who has been made acquainted with her misfortune, and is willing to bring up the child, but Arabella will on no account part with it; and as she goes every morning to Bramble Cottage to see the urchin, and always calls it hers, I really wonder that the idlers and gossippers, who have no other employment than to invent and circulate scandal, have been so long silent. I have now,” said the duchess, “finished a long story.”

“Which does infinite credit, my dear madam,” replied Drawley, “to your own and lady Arabella's heart.”

“Very prettily observed,” said lady Arabella; “and as you have behaved remarkably well in this business, by way of reward, you shall go with me to-morrow morning to see my little marmoset. I generally take Jennings with me, and I am rather surprised that he has not been implicated in the scandal.”

Having first obtained lady Arabella’s permission, Drawley informed lord Rushdale of all the particulars relative to the child at Bramble Cottage; and while they commiserated the erring Maria Weston, they mutually execrated major Norman, who, having seduced the fair unfortunate, and decoyed her from her home, had the cruelty to abandon her to misery, want, and despair.

At the library, next morning, when lady Torrington and all the scandalous party were assembled, lady Arabella Moncrief, quitting the side of a venerable old lady, with whom she had been in conversation, invited Miss Sedgeley, lord Rushdale, and Drawley, to take a drive with her as far as Bramble Cottage, to see her little girl.

All eyes were turned, with a stare of astonishment, on lady Arabella, while with a smile, lord Rushdale, taking Miss Sedgeley’s hand, said—“I am certain, Miss Sedgeley, you must be greatly pleased with this invitation; lady Arabella Moncrief’s child has been so much talked of, and has created such interest in Brighton, that no doubt you have a curiosity to see it.”

Miss Sedgeley wondered why she in particular had been invited to see the child; but being convinced that lady Arabella would not, in so very public a way, have spoken of it, had she been its mother, she suffered lord Rushdale to lead her to lady Arabella’s elegant barouche, leaving lady Torrington and her party turning up their eyes in amazement at lady Arabella Moncrief’s effrontery.

Lady Bromford, while she deliberately took an enormous pinch of snuff, began to see the possibility of the child not being lady Arabella’s; and as she did not wish to be expelled from the duchess of Aberdeen’s parties, was casting about in her mind how to exonerate herself from having had a share in propagating the scandal, when the venerable lady with whom lady Arabella had been conversing put down the newspaper she had been reading, and having consigned her silver-mounted spectacles to their green shagreen case, said—“That young creature has the best heart in the world.”

“Lady Arabella Moncrief, I presume you mean, ma’am,” returned Miss Jameson.

“Yes, ma’am,” replied the stranger, “lady Arabella first preserved the life of the mother, and sent her home to her friends, and she now humanely provides for the child, which she has placed out to nurse at Bramble Cottage, and calls it her own.”

“Bless my soul!” exclaimed Miss Jameson, “this is placing the affair in a very favourable light indeed: but are you certain, ma’am, of what you assent? I assure you I have heard a very different story respecting this same child.”

“I have no doubt, ma’am,” replied the old lady, “but there are persons in the world sufficiently wicked to traduce the fame of an angel; but I can take upon me to vouch for the truth of what I advance. I am just arrived from the town of Leicester, where the mother and grandmother of the infant reside; I have had the whole story from their own lips; and so vile, so detestable a part has major Norman acted in this affair, that I have no scruple to say I think he deserves hanging more than a highway robber.”

Lady Torrington felt uneasy, and unable to resist an opportunity of vindicating his reputation, she replied—“Major Norman, ma’am, is a man of fashion—an officer who has distinguished himself on more than one occasion; his name—”

“He has disgraced it,” interrupted the old lady, “by the most villanous conduct; and I shall take care, while I remain at Brighton, that major Norman is never admitted within my doors, or to any assembly where I may have a voice.”

Two beautiful young women now entered the library, and addressing the old lady, said—“We hope we have not tired your grace’s patience.”

Lady Torrington stared—a duchess was a person of too much consequence to be neglected; but before she could contrive to get introduced, an elegant barouche drove up, and the young ladies assisted their grandmother, the duchess of Singleton, into it.

“This is quite astonishing,” said lady Bromford; “who could have suspected that queer-looking woman of being the duchess of Singleton? I am sure I had not an idea of the little, shrivelled, old soul, in a close bonnet and a plain pelisse, being a person of rank. Those young ladies, I suppose, are lady Georgina and lady Ellinor Walworth. Well, I am quite happy to think I had prudence enough to give no opinion respecting lady Arabella Moncrief and the child, for it would be very disagreeable to make an enemy of a person of the duchess of Singleton’s consequence.”

Miss Jameson’s pallid face grew red with passion, as she exclaimed—“Why, surely, lady Bromford, you will not pretend to deny that you were the person who first mentioned to me that lady Arabella Moncrief had a child.”

“I am sorry, ma’am, to be obliged to contradict you,” replied lady Bromford; “your memory must be very short indeed, if you forget whispering in my ear, at lady Seaton’s rout, that lady Arabella Moncrief looked very blooming, considering it was so short a time since her accouchement.”

“I solemnly protest,” returned Miss Jameson, “I have not the remotest recollection of making such an observation, though I certainly heard you say—”

“Your memory, ma’am, is very convenient,” interrupted lady Bromford; “but I positively declare, whatever I may have said, has been merely repetitions of your reports.”

“My reports!” repeated Miss Jameson, “my reports! why certainly you do not mean to accuse me of inventing the scandal?”

“By no means, ma’am,” replied lady Bromford; “I shall not take upon me to say who was the inventor; but this I know—I am extremely concerned it ever was invented at all, and that I was so weak as to lend an ear to the abominable calumny, for indeed lady Arabella Moncrief’s extreme youth, and look of perfect innocence, were enough to convince the most prejudiced person, and I cannot sufficiently congratulate myself that I never took any trouble to—”

“Why, surely,” interrupted lady Torrington, who had sat silently enjoying the squabble between these dear friends, “surely, lady Bromford, you will not deny having invited me to accompany you to Bramble Cottage to see the child?”

“Yes—no,” replied lady Bromford, upsetting her snuff-box on her lilac satin pelisse, “no, lady Torrington, I did not invite you to see lady Arabella Moncrief’s child—I merely asked you to drive to Bramble Cottage, that I might speak to the man who supplies me with fruit: but I see, ladies, you have entered into a combination to throw upon my shoulders the odium of this scandalous invention; but since I fortunately perceive your intention, I shall take care that you come in for your share of the opprobrium, I promise you.”



Lady Torrington's only vexation arose from having been duped by the reports of her dear friends, which, after all, were likely to end like the fable of the 'mountain and the mouse.' She felt too angry with the duchess of Aberdeen and lady Arabella Moncrief, on account of Drawley, to trouble herself about removing the scandal from their illustrious name; and though she had enjoyed the petit brule between lady Bromford and Miss Jameson, she had no wish or design to take part with, or embroil herself with either of them; because, from their insatiate passion for scandal, she was constantly supplied with anecdotes, pathetic and ludicrous, of the follies and improprieties committed in the extensive circles of haut ton.

"For my part," said lady Torrington, "I do not see what we have to do with lady Arabella's guilt or innocence. Let things take their own course—no doubt the truth will soon come out. It is not worth while to dispute about her reputation, and as to who invented or promulgated the report, it has been so general, that I fancy it would be extremely difficult to trace it to the fountain head; and whether the child proves to be hers or not, the most unprejudiced person living must acknowledge that appearances have been very much against her."

To this opinion lady Bromford and Miss Jameson assented; and after mutual apologies, the trio parted with great apparent friendliness, while in their hearts they determined not to spare each other, rather than be excluded from the duchess of Singleton's parties.

During their ride to Bramble Cottage, lady Arabella Moncrief, who had reason to believe that Miss Sedgeley still nourished in her bosom a passion for the unprincipled and unworthy major Norman, with great delicacy and tenderness, explained to her his base and most inhuman conduct to Maria Weston, the unfortunate mother of the beautiful infant they were going to visit. Lady Arabella made this communication, not for ostentation, or the vanity of having her own generosity talked of, but in the sincere hope that this fresh instance of major Norman's depravity would effect a thorough cure, in the virtuous and susceptible heart his desertion had wounded, and restore the amiable Miss Sedgeley to that perfect health and tranquillity his sordid and unmanly conduct had deranged.

Arrived at the cottage, the lovely infant smiled, and held out its little dimpled hands to lady Arabella, who, almost smothering it with caresses, called it her child, her own Arabella, her marmoset, and her wax-doll.—Miss Sedgeley wept over the innocent babe, while she deplored the fate of its deluded mother, whom she said she well remembered at Leicester, a blooming animated girl.—Drawley took the laughing babe in his arms, and played a thousand antics with it, declaring he knew how to nurse better than any of them; then repeatedly kissing its soft rosy cheek, he insisted on his right to be its father.

Lord Rushdale, in his turn, took the babe; but whether he did not handle it so adroitly, or the child was weary, it began to put up its coral lip, and whimper. Lady Arabella soothed it with the tenderest affection, and, as if sensible that it was in the arms of its benefactress, the babe again smiled, and lady Arabella, fondly kissing it, protested, let the world invent what scandals it would, she would never part from her dear child.

"Our child, my Arabella," said Drawley.

"Very well," replied she, "our child it shall be; but do you know the dear babe has not yet been christened?"

“We will have this ceremony performed as publicly as possible,” said Drawley, “and I take the liberty of naming you, Rushdale, for one of the marmoset’s sponsors.”

To this lord Rushdale immediately agreed; and while he caressed the engaging infant, expressed his surprise how any man could be so destitute of natural feeling, as to deny and abandon his offspring.

“No man can abhor,” said Drawley, “such inhuman conduct more than I do; but, by-the-bye, the major, if report does not exaggerate, would have a numerous family to maintain, if he acknowledged all his children.”

Miss Sedgeley warmly thanked lady Arabella, for making her acquainted with this fresh instance of major Norman’s profligacy and want of feeling.—“It will, I am certain,” said she, “cure me of the lingering regard which, I blush to confess, I till this discovery nourished for him. I believed and hoped he might repent his conduct to me, and sue to be forgiven; but Maria Weston’s injuries and claims upon him are far greater than mine, and my pity for her wrongs teaches me to scorn and despise her villanous betrayer.” She then took the babe in her arms—“It is very like its unfortunate mother,” continued she—“it has the same lovely blue eyes and alabaster skin. I would offer myself as a sponsor; but, doubtless, lady Arabella, you will prefer those of higher rank and greater consequence than myself?”

“I have a reason,” returned lady Arabella, “for wishing you to be one of my child’s godmothers, and I will not suffer you to retract—I wish you to convince major Norman that you are acquainted with his base conduct to Maria Weston, and think of him as he deserves.”

The duchess of Aberdeen had not seen the infant for some time, and generously wishing to keep alive her interest in it, lady Arabella took the nurse and child with her in the carriage; and as they were obliged to pass through the most public part of the town, her appearance with it in the face of day had the good effect of putting an end to the suspicion of its being her child, though two old spinsters of quality, whom lady Arabella stopped the carriage to speak to, still retained their doubts and surmises.

Lady Arabella presented the infant to the antiquated virgins. They peered at the smiling urchin through their glasses, pronounced it a little beauty, and having bade lady Arabella good-morning, gave each other their opinion respecting the child, as they slowly walked home—lady Barbara Grizzle thought it the express image of the honourable Tangent Drawley, while lady Mildred Blight declared she thought the child vastly like colonel Annesley, an agreeable rattling Irishman, of some celebrity in haut ton, with whom lady Arabella used to flirt before he went abroad.

The duchess of Aberdeen had been put into such extreme good temper by the generous, manly conduct of Drawley, that all he said and did was received in the most favourable manner; and when he carried the child into the drawing-room, and placed it in her arms, she condescended to caress it, and to admire its bright blue eyes and dimpled chin.

Drawley conceiving the present moment favourable, proposed the child being christened; and the duchess of Singleton fortunately calling while lady Arabella was persuading her mother to be one of its sponsors, she had the pleasure to arrange every thing entirely to her wish, by the venerable lady proposing herself for one of the godmothers.

"This poor babe," said the duchess of Singleton, kissing its white forehead, "has many claims upon the feelings of humanity; and you must understand, my love," turning to lady Arabella, "that old women have to the full as many whims as young ones—are you inclined to indulge one of mine?"

"Assuredly, my dear madam," replied lady Arabella; "for I am certain what you term a whim will prove to be—"

"Not a word—not one word more," said the venerable duchess; "I am too old to be flattered: my wish is, that this child should be christened in the most public manner possible, because I think it will answer two good purposes—it will entirely silence your defamers, and it may bring shame and compunction to the heart of major Norman."

Drawley declared, in a whisper to lady Arabella, that if he was not irrevocably engaged to her, he would make love to the duchess of Singleton, for she was a delightful old woman, and he longed to kiss her.

The ceremony of christening lady Arabella Moncrief's adopted child took place with the utmost magnificence and publicity; and when the company the duchess of Aberdeen had invited to dinner met in the drawing-room, lord Rushdale having admired a beautiful antique vase, placed it on a table.—"We have just bestowed a name," said he, "on this lovely babe—let us give her an independence."

Lord Rushdale was at that time the fashion—his dress, his manner, his very look, were copied; no matter what was their incentive, his proposal was instantly adopted. Lord Rushdale having premised that he was the infant's godfather, dropped bank-notes to the value of five hundred pounds into the vase. Drawley immediately followed his example with the same sum; and before the dinner-bell rung, the infant Arabella Georgina's fortune amounted to five thousand pounds.

"This sum, with the interest," said lady Hardy, "will be a very handsome thing when the child comes of age."

"You forget to mention the compound interest, lady Hardy," returned her little bustling husband; "if I had pencil—I wonder if I could borrow one?"

"Borrow what?" asked his lady.

"A pencil," replied sir Peter Hardy; "if I only had a pencil about me," feeling in his waistcoat pockets, "I could tell to a fraction how much five thousand pounds, interest and compound interest, will amount to in nineteen years, eight months, and fifteen days."

"You really make me blush, sir Peter," returned lady Hardy; "I really did not expect, when I took you from a counting-house, to be annoyed with your everlasting calculations. Let me request it as a particular favour, sir Peter, that you will forget, for this one day, that you ever were a merchant; and do, pray, try to remember that you are not now in company with traders, but with persons of the first quality and fashion."

Lady Hardy turned away; the abashed knight repented having married a quality wife, and sighed for the freedom of that counting-house, which he had bartered for the privilege of looking like a fool, in the company of titled sharpers and rantipole women of fashion.

The accommodating Mrs. Supple, the milliner, had shut up her shop, and gone on her travels with a French nobleman, leaving lady Torrington at a great loss where to meet the fascinating major, whom she had not seen for the tedious space of three long days. At last, aided by the fertile invention of Mrs. Smithson, she pretended indisposition, which furnished an excuse for not accepting the duchess of Aberdeen's invitation to the

christening. Lord Rushdale, they knew, was engaged for the whole day; and having given orders to admit no person, her lady being very unwell, the kind convenient Mrs. Smithson introduced major Norman, disguised as a doctor, to her apartment.

The public christening of Maria Weston's child had prepared the major for upbraidings and reproaches. Lady Torrington thought this a happy moment to prove the strength of his affection for her, and with an air of dignified seriousness she told him, she had sent for him merely to say, that all intercourse between them was at an end; for his barbarous conduct to Miss Weston convinced her, that no reliance was to be placed on his professions, that she in her turn could only expect scorn and desertion, and that to prevent so unpleasant a termination of their acquaintance, she had determined it should conclude there.

The major vowed, knelt, wept, and swore, and so artfully told his story, that the countess affected to believe that he had been the seduced, not the seducer, in the affair with Maria Weston, whom he represented as an adept in intrigue. The major protested, that so far from having, as report represented, abandoned the artful girl, that he had really intended to make her his wife, till he made the distressing discovery of her criminal intimacy with his brother officers, "with one of whom," said the major, "she had been more than a week before I left town; and I leave you to imagine, my adored Emily, my indignation and surprise, when I found the artful girl had followed me here, and in the most unfeminine manner exposed herself and me. I confess, in my rage, I did order her to be turned from my door, and I am certain any other gentleman, with the same provocation, would have acted as I did. At that moment I was under the influence of resentment; but, Heaven knows, I did not intend to let her suffer want, ill as she had conducted herself. In spite of her ingratitude, I designed to support her during her confinement, to provide for the child, and, on her recovery, to send her back to Leicester, to her mother, who ought not to have suffered her to visit the apartments of her lodgers."

"It certainly was very imprudent of her," replied the countess; "it was exposing the girl to temptation."

"And if, giving way to her violent passions, she attempted to throw herself into the sea, am I to blame?" asked the major.

"Certainly not, as you tell the story," replied the countess; "but are you sure it is not a little apocryphal?"

"Every syllable truth, my divine Emily," said the major. "You have heard in what way Miss Weston was preserved by the duchess of Aberdeen's butler, to whom, of course, she made her case pitiable, by representing me as a monster; and as the duchess and lady Arabella took upon themselves to provide for the mother and child, why, you see, my lovely countess, they released me from what I should otherwise have considered a duty imposed by humanity entirely; for as to love, or even esteem, her own bad conduct had put that quite out of the question."

The rhetoric of the engaging major was not lost on the countess, who protested he was an insinuating, fascinating wretch, born to delude and deceive poor, silly, believing women.

As the major was conducted through the hall by Mrs. Smithson, one of the footmen stared him full in the face; and just as he descended the steps, lord Rushdale met him. The height and gait of major Norman were too particular to be passed unnoticed. The first impulse of lord Rushdale was to follow, and satisfy his suspicion, for

notwithstanding a black coat and curled wig, the person of major Norman was ill disguised. The idea of covering his mother with disgrace prevented lord Rushdale from pursuing him; but as he entered the hall, he inquired who the person was he had that moment met?

“The doctor that came to bleed my lady,” was the reply.

Lord Rushdale asked no more, but hastily passed up stairs.

“The doctor—the devil!” repeated one of the servants, when lord Rushdale had left the hall—“I’ll wager a crown that he was no more a doctor than I am, though I might lose too, for he might have been doctor to the regiment before he was promoted, for what I know.”

“He! what he are you talking about?” asked the butler.

“Why, about major Norman,” replied the footman; “if that was not he I opened the door for, I never saw him in my life, that’s all. A doctor! fudge! the countess is as much sick as I am.”

“Hush! you long-tongued blockhead,” said the butler; “if madam Smithson hears you, I would not give you a straw for your place or your character. What is it to you whether the man you let out was a major or a doctor?”

“Nothing at all, but—”

“But you are a fool,” interrupted the butler; “a still tongue puts money in the pouch. Do you think I should have lived all these years in this family, if I had been given to prating? if you wish to keep your place, you must hear, see, and say nothing.”

Lord Rushdale, agitated, and full of resentment, entered his mother’s apartment; but perceiving her arm bound up, and two china cups on the dressing-table, he became convinced that he had been mistaken, and that it was possible the doctor might resemble major Norman, or that he might have fancied a likeness that did not really exist. Having given her ladyship an account of the splendid christening, lord Rushdale expressed his wishes for her recovery, and bade her good-night.

Mrs. Smithson closed the door, and having joined the countess in a laugh, drank the claret from the china cups, and retired to bed, protesting the most sensible men were the easiest deceived.

The following week the earl of Torrington arrived from town, and brought the news, that the count del Montarino had proceeded from Torrington Castle to London, where he had found out a money-lender, who had advanced Miss Maxfield thirty thousand pounds, with which they had proceeded to Scotland, where they had got married, and from thence had departed for Naples.

Lord Rushdale said he was extremely sorry for Miss Maxfield.

The countess observed she was a fool, and that the count had married her for her money.

“But if he uses her ill,” resumed lord Rushdale, “being under age, the law can annul her marriage.”

“To whom is she to complain?” said lady Torrington. “She speaks neither French nor Italian; she has committed a glorious folly in marrying a foreigner.”

“If I was her brother,” replied lord Rushdale, “I would compel the count to treat her kindly.”

“Her brother is so enamoured of lady Jacintha Fitzosborne,” returned the earl, “that he has quarreled with all his relations on her account; and to revenge herself on the

'child of nature' and her head-strong nephew, Mrs. Freakley, last week, at Tunbridge Wells, gave her fair hand to lord Wilton."

"What a mercenary wretch lord Wilton must be," exclaimed the countess, "to sacrifice himself to that frightful, chattering, old woman, for the sake of her money! Well, I suppose in winter we shall see lady Wilton waddling along in all the bridal pomp of white and silver—a happy exchange! for my eyes actually used to ache with gazing on her rose-coloured and her Waterloo-blue satin; and now she is married, I hope her lord will oblige her to keep her nails clean; for what with snuff, and other dirt, it was really disgusting to see her at a card-table."

"I have not yet told you all the news," resumed the earl; "the tender loves of lord Melvil and lady Eglantine Sydney are terminated."

"In marriage, I suppose?" said lord Rushdale.

"Yes," replied the earl, "but not as you suppose. At Weymouth lady Eglantine was introduced to the marquis of Beverley, a fine dashing young man, newly returned from his travels, and just come into possession of sixty thousand pounds a-year; for this new lover the fair inconstant forgot all her tender vows to lord Melvil, who remonstrated by letter. Lady Eglantine wondered what he could possibly mean, thought him extremely impertinent, and returned his next billet unopened. Lord Melvil was not so much in love as to fall into utter despair at her inconstancy—he turned his attentions to the rich widow of an Armenian diamond-merchant, who is reported to be worth near a million of money: they were married last Friday; and the account of lord Melvil's superb equipage, his liveries covered with gold lace, and his pretty little bride glittering with precious stones, fills half the newspapers of the day."

"And they say Melvil's bride is pretty, do they?" asked the countess; "that must be a double mortification to lady Eglantine."

"I do not see," rejoined lord Rushdale, "how lord Melvil's marriage should mortify lady Eglantine; she had rejected him, and certainly cannot consider his good fortune with displeasure."

"There, young man, you are greatly mistaken," replied lady Torrington; "for when a lady sees it proper to reject a gentleman, though she may not wish him absolutely to expire with grief, or live in downright agony, she would not be displeased to know that he was a little unhappy on her account."

"Such vanity," replied lord Rushdale, "ought to be disappointed; and I am glad that lord Melvil has the power to prove to lady Eglantine Sydney, that her inconstancy has neither affected his spirits, nor marred his fortune."

"On such subjects," returned lady Torrington, "the learned will differ.—Any thing more in the way of news, my lord?"

"Yes," returned the earl—"I saw lord Alwyn Bruce in town; he told me he had just left Teignmouth."

"How the proud lady Jane will fume and fret, to find the heart of her brother seriously caught at last! This is news indeed!" said the countess; "for I have no doubt but lord Alwyn Bruce went to Teignmouth to offer his hand to Miss Delmore."

"He went for that purpose solely," replied the earl.

"I am most sincerely glad to hear it," resumed the countess; "for nothing on earth would give me half so much pleasure as to hear of Miss Delmore's marriage."

"That is a pleasure," replied the earl, "you will not enjoy just yet, for Miss Delmore's marriage, I understand, cannot take place for some time."

"No matter; as long as she is positively engaged," said lady Torrington, "her immediate marriage is not of so much consequence. To be certain she is affianced would make me perfectly happy."

"Then your happiness is certain," replied the earl; "for I give you my honour, that, with Mrs. Doricourt's consent, and my approbation, Miss Delmore is affianced."

"This intelligence is delightful," said the countess, looking exultingly at her son, who, to her great surprise, seemed perfectly composed. "But is your lordship quite certain—did lord Alwyn Bruce tell you Miss Delmore had accepted his offer?"

"No, really," replied the earl; "I had not my information from lord Alwyn Bruce."

"By letter, then, from Mrs. Doricourt?" asked the countess.

"I did not hear from Mrs. Doricourt while I was in town," said the earl.

"How excessively teasing you are!" returned the countess—"you see I am expiring with curiosity, and you are resolved to torment me—Miss Delmore, then, must have written you the account of her *bonne fortune*?"

"Not a sentence like it," returned the earl; "your ladyship is unfortunate in all your guesses: but at once to relieve your curiosity, lady Torrington, I will candidly inform you Miss Delmore has rejected lord Alwyn Bruce's addresses."

"She is a fool, an idiot!" said the countess; "and I am certain Mrs. Doricourt is mad, or she never—but stay, there is a mystery in your lordship's words—Miss Delmore, you say, has rejected lord Alwyn Bruce's addresses, but with Mrs. Doricourt's consent, and your approbation, she is engaged—affianced; this is easily solved—Miss Delmore is affianced to some one——"

"Whom she prefers to lord Alwyn Bruce," interrupted the earl. "To put an end at once to this mystery, lady Torrington, Miss Delmore is affianced to your son; and it is my intention their marriage shall take place the day he is of age."

The countess was speechless with rage; and to avoid further altercation, the earl took his son's arm, and left her ladyship to reconcile her mind to his determination in the best way she could.

## CHAPTER II.

\_\_\_\_\_“Will pride make a man immortal? no:  
Will pride hinder the worms from feeding on  
The carcase after death? no: for your glutton  
Worm feasts most luxurious on a pamper'd  
Noble. Pride, that sin most sinful,  
Is transform'd bright angels into devils,  
And seeing that man is form'd of dust, and  
Must return to dust again, why should he  
Proudly scorn his fellow-men, who after  
Death must mingle with him in one common  
Mass?”

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“You shall find I am your lord, your head, your master;  
have you not sworn to honour and obey me? Unbend  
that haughty brow, and put on looks gentle and sub-  
missive. What, have I braved the raging elements; and  
steered through seas that boiled, and foamed, and swelled  
in angry billows, to quail because a woman frowns? Go  
to, my will shall be your law.’

*An unwished-for Introduction — Definition of  
Friendship—Mercenary Marriages—The De-  
ceiver deceived — How to rule a Wife.*

THE pride of lord Alwyn Bruce was by no means so excessive as that of his sister. The amiable disposition, beauty, and accomplishments of Miss Delmore, united with her highly-cultivated understanding, made him forgetful of her humble birth, and rendered him a constant visitor at Mrs. Doricourt’s, to the last day of their remaining in Cumberland.

Miss Macdonald had been informed of his lordship’s daily visits to the Hermitage, and expressed her jealous displeasure, in wondering how any person could cry up Miss Delmore for a beauty; the girl was very well, but had a certain air, that plainly told she was of low origin; and as to her accomplishments, she saw nothing wonderful; but for her part she thanked Heaven she had sense enough to judge for herself, and must declare Miss Delmore had never astonished her.

At length the day so anxiously wished by Miss Macdonald arrived, and she heard, with undisguised pleasure, that the trio of perfects, as lady Torrington had named them, lady Welford, Mrs. Doricourt, and Miss Delmore, had left Cumberland.

Miss Macdonald believed that lord Alwyn Bruce, having no longer a magnet to attract him to St. Herbert’s Island, would be, as usual, a constant visitor at her uncle’s, sir



Alexander Stuart, and that his senses released from the witcheries of Miss Delmore, he would become sensible of her superiority, and feel himself honoured in her notice.

Miss Macdonald, like many other females in similar situations, believed as she hoped; but though lord Alwyn Bruce did not decline sir Alexander Stuart's invitations, he paid no more attention to Miss Macdonald than he did to Miss Graham, or lady Stuart; and she had the mortification to prove she studied Grecian attitudes, and robed her tall figure in antique draperies, without even obtaining from him a word, or even a glance of tender admiration.

After remaining at Keswick about a month after Mrs. Doricourt's departure from the Hermitage, lord Alwyn Bruce asked his sister if she would accompany him to Teignmouth?

Lady Jane began to feel alarmed, and to suspect that Miss Delmore was the incentive to this excursion; but being herself deeply engaged in a matrimonial speculation, she was, though very reluctantly, compelled to decline his invitation, and suffer him to proceed alone: but previous to his setting off, she, in a very lofty tone, reminded him, that the family of Bruce descended in a direct line from royalty, and never had disgraced itself by a plebeian marriage, and expressed an oblique hope, that he did not design to introduce the low-born Miss Delmore into a family of their antiquity, rank, and consequence.

Lord Alwyn Bruce had often combated the prejudices of his sister, but always unsuccessfully. Lady Jane, in his eyes, had but one fault—excessive pride; she was an affectionate sister; and as he knew it impossible to reconcile her to his intention, he determined to let her remain in ignorance till his fate was decided, "*to be or not to be a husband;*" and while he made up his mind not to interfere in her choice, he determined not to let her opinions influence his; he had seriously weighed every circumstance for and against a marriage with Miss Delmore, and saw no possible objection that could be made by the most fastidious, except her want of rank; and that to him, young and in love, appeared of no importance, for in every other point she stood proudly pre-eminent, and seemed "*a creature of celestial mould.*"

Ardent and full of hope, lord Alwyn Bruce had not once entertained an idea that it was possible Miss Delmore's heart and hand might already be engaged. On his arrival at Teignmouth, he was received by Mrs. Doricourt and Miss Delmore with many expressions of pleasure. Love is apt to delude itself; and in the smiles of Miss Delmore, lord Alwyn Bruce read the success of his suit. With all the fervour of youthful passion he explained the motive of his visit to Teignmouth, and made her an offer of his hand.

Miss Delmore esteemed and respected lord Alwyn Bruce as a friend, but her love was irrevocably placed, and his heart felt many severe pangs, when, with modest candour, she thanked him for the honour he intended her, and confessed herself engaged.

Lord Alwyn Bruce was a man of honourable principles; it was painful to endure a disappointment of his most cherished hopes, but he did not attempt to persuade Miss Delmore to break the faith plighted to a rival. He respected the honourable avowal she had made of her preference of another, and entreated to be admitted to her friendship—an honour he would in person claim, when time and absence had reconciled him to his disappointment. This was a request not to be refused; and lord Alwyn Bruce and Miss Delmore parted, with the sincerest good wishes for each other's happiness.

The beauty of Miss Delmore was now completely restored, and no trace remained of the disorder from which her rival, Miss Macdonald, had hoped so much. The health and spirits of Mrs. Doricourt were also so much improved by the Devonshire air, that her repugnance to society was lessened daily, and she ceased to regret having left the quiet shades of St. Herbert's to mingle with the world. Lady Welford had met several of her acquaintance at Teignmouth, and with these Mrs. Doricourt had been led to visit the theatre and the assemblies, at first for the sake of Cecilia partaking the amusements of the place, and afterwards for the relief she found they afforded to those sorrows too long and too fondly cherished.

The necessity of answering some letters from abroad detaining Mrs. Doricourt at home, lady Welford and Miss Delmore set out to make a few morning calls. At the house of general Amherst they were introduced to sir Alan Oswald, an old gentleman of near ninety years of age, who still walked erect, and was in full possession of his faculties. Lady Welford soon understood that sir Alan Oswald was Mrs. Doricourt's grandfather; and in his lofty air, of which time had in no degree divested him, lady Welford distinguished all the unbending pride which, in the days of Mrs. Greville, had distinguished his character. Miss Delmore was certain Mrs. Doricourt rather wished to avoid than meet sir Alan Oswald; but as he was come to spend some weeks at Teignmouth, an interview was unavoidable, and lady Welford undertook to mention sir Alan's arrival to her friend.

Mrs. Doricourt received the intelligence with far less emotion than Cecilia expected, who had sat in much uneasiness while lady Welford made the communication. But Mrs. Doricourt had never considered sir Alan Oswald as a relation; he had never seen or forgiven her mother after her marriage with lieutenant Greville—a man honoured by his country, and idolized by his family; and for herself, he had never bestowed on her the slightest notice.

Lady Welford described sir Alan as tall and dignified, with all the ceremonious formality of the old school about him.

Mrs. Doricourt wished herself at the Hermitage, for it afforded her no pleasure to learn she was in the vicinity of a relation, whose unbending pride and relentless cruelty had rendered him rather an object of aversion than respect to her mind; for she remembered, with feelings of resentment, how often she had seen her mother weep at his harshness and neglect—that mother, the most gentle and amiable of women; she remembered too the piety and fortitude with which that dear and tender mother had borne up against the cruelty and pride of her unfeeling family, and the unwearied solicitude and affection with which she had watched over her youth: while these reflections passed in succession through her mind, Mrs. Doricourt again felt the loss of this beloved parent, and bathed her memory with tears of agony.

Resentful of the injustice and hardness of heart of sir Alan Oswald, she felt a strong repugnance to meeting him—"My mother's only fault," said she, "was loving and marrying a man of handsome person, great intellectual endowments, and acknowledged bravery. Such was my father, lieutenant Greville; and for loving him my lamented mother was discarded and disclaimed."

"These retrospections," replied lady Welford, "avail nothing; the past cannot be recalled. Sir Alan is anxious to shew to you the affection he denied your parents, and he

requested lady Amherst to bring about an interview as speedily as possible. He is invited to dine at the general's where you know we have been engaged for near a week."

Mrs. Doricourt could not bring her mind to support an interview with sir Alan Oswald, and she requested lady Welford to make her excuses to general and lady Amherst.

But against this hasty determination lady Welford urged many arguments, particularly, that shrinking from an interview with sir Alan Oswald would give rise to a thousand ridiculous reports. She bade her reflect whether Mrs. Greville, if living, would approve her shunning the presence of her grandfather, who had expressed a desire to be introduced to her; and whether her piety would allow her to refuse sir Alan an opportunity of bestowing on her the blessing he probably repented having withheld from Mrs. Greville.

Mrs. Doricourt listened to lady Welford's arguments without being convinced by them. She felt reluctant to see sir Alan from another motive she had not explained—she was sufficiently rich, and did not wish the world to believe that she entertained a design of worming herself into the favour of her grandfather, with a view of participating in his wealth: but lady Welford would not give up the point, and Cecilia joining her entreaties, Mrs. Doricourt yielded to their opinion, not to her own sense of the propriety of meeting sir Alan Oswald.

It was late when they arrived at lady Amherst's, where sir Alan had been some time fretfully expecting Mrs. Doricourt, every now and then exclaiming—"Refractory like her mother—little respect can be expected from a daughter of lieutenant Greville's—equality and disobedience were his precepts."

Lady Amherst, with a delicate regard to Mrs. Doricourt's feelings, took care that no persons should be present at the interesting introduction but herself and lady Welford. When Mrs. Doricourt was announced, sir Alan appeared much moved; he looked at her for a moment, then exclaimed—"What mockery is this—she is not dead! this is my—this is Mrs. Greville!"

Mrs. Doricourt gazed on the white locks and venerable countenance of sir Alan—nature throbbed at her heart, but the remembrance of her deserted mother suppressed every tender emotion; she thought of his pride, of his hatred of her brave father, and was near fainting.

Sir Alan saw she was sinking, and too feeble to support her, with a countenance expressive of distress, he entreated lady Welford to place her on the couch. Mrs. Doricourt burst into tears, and sinking at the feet of sir Alan, earnestly entreated him to bestow on her the blessing he had denied her mother.

Sir Alan raised her, pressed his lips on her forehead, and pronounced the blessing she requested.—"Your mother, Mrs. Doricourt," said he, "was my favourite child, and on that account her disobedience was more wounding. Had she married a man of family, his poverty might have been overlooked, but the disgrace she brought upon the house of Oswald was of a nature not easy to be pardoned."

Mrs. Doricourt would have replied, but perceiving in her look a vindication of her mother, he hastily said—"But the past not being in our power to recall, it is wisdom sometimes to forget."

During the conversation that ensued, it was evident to Mrs. Doricourt that time had effected very little alteration in the character of sir Alan Oswald—pride was still

predominant, and rank his idol. Being taken by surprise, his feelings had burst forth; but had time been allowed him for reflection, it is probable he would have thought his offended dignity required him to demand concessions, as well as solicitation, before he bestowed his daughter's forfeited blessing on her unoffending offspring. Of every class of persons below nobility sir Alan Oswald spoke and thought with disdain; and while running over a list of grand alliances Mrs. Greville might have formed, he did not forget to express his contemptuous regret that the husband of Mrs. Doricourt had made his fortune by commerce.

At table the person of Miss Delmore, but more particularly the notice bestowed on her by lady Welford and Mrs. Doricourt, exciting sir Alan's curiosity, he inquired who she was? but being informed that she was the *protégée* of his grand-daughter, a person of no family, he took no further notice of her than to observe it was pity she was so handsome, as her beauty might allure some foolish young man of rank to marry her, and disturb the peace of his family, which was always the case when unequal alliance were formed.

The figure of sir Alan Oswald was still unbent by age; his cheeks were florid, his hair white as snow, and his full dark eyes still retained a great portion of their brilliancy. This venerable-looking old man would have awakened all the tender duteous feelings of Mrs. Doricourt's heart, could she have forgotten his inexorable conduct to her mother, or had he confined himself to speak on common topics; but whenever a subject was touched upon in which rank or family had a place, the inordinate pride of his heart became conspicuous; and sir Alan Oswald appeared, at the very great age of near ninety, haughty, overbearing, and tyrannical.

Such a character was not likely to conciliate the affections of Mrs. Doricourt, who, while she beheld the coldness, almost bordering on disdain, with which he treated her darling Cecilia, she wished she had declined being introduced to him. But while Mrs. Doricourt felt neither respect nor affection for sir Alan, his pride in her was strongly awakened. The rest of his family resembled him in disposition and deportment, consequently were little admired or respected; but wherever Mrs. Doricourt moved, she was followed by the voice of popular applause; her person, her manner, her accomplishments, and, above all, her benevolence, were enthusiastically spoken of. The haughty spirit of sir Alan was gratified to perceive her society was eagerly courted by the highest circle at Teignmouth, notwithstanding she was the widow of a man whose wealth had been made in a way his pride despised.

The offer of lord Alwyn Bruce to Miss Delmore had been spoken of before sir Alan, and while others thought she had acted unwisely in refusing so noble a match, he condescended to praise her conduct, observing, had she accepted his hand, she never could have expected to meet any thing but contempt from his family, who, being all persons of rank, would have felt themselves degraded, even while their respect for lord Alwyn compelled them to admit her to an equality with themselves.

Mrs. Doricourt had mildly endeavoured to reason these prejudices from her grand-father's mind, but they appeared every hour to gather strength; and she was not sorry when rain, or any other contingency, kept him from her house.

Miss Delmore, in the meantime, had, with unwearied sweetness, strove to gain sir Alan's favour; but whatever she did, either to assist or entertain him, he received with the haughty air of a superior, who condescended by accepting, rather than considered himself

obliged; and though this haughty ungracious manner of behaving to their favourite induced lady Welford and Mrs. Doricourt to treat her with a double portion of tenderness and respect, it made no sort of change in the conduct of sir Alan Oswald, who publicly and privately condemned their fondness of an inferior, which, sooner or later, he professed himself assured, would be rewarded by ingratitude.

Mrs. Doricourt now looked forward with anxious anticipation to the period that would release her from the presence of a relative she found it impossible to respect or love. Sir Alan had entirely given up visiting London, and always spent the winter at Oswald Abbey, in Dorsetshire; but though Mrs. Doricourt wished to see the birthplace of her mother, she positively declined sir Alan's invitation to accompany him to the Abbey, on the plea of business, which would detain her in town during the winter.

Cecilia regularly received letters from lord Rushdale; the tenderness and liberal spirit breathed in every line amply compensated for the *hauteur* of sir Alan Oswald. They were filled with anxious wishes for the happy period when they should meet in town, and the fondest protestations of love, which absence had increased rather than diminished.

Having formed a very agreeable acquaintance with young ladies of her own age, Cecilia would have found her time pass very pleasantly at Teignmouth, but for the supercilious conduct of sir Alan Oswald; though of this she never complained, for she saw that it pained and displeased her friends equally with herself.

While matters remained in this state, Mrs. Doricourt received a letter from Marseilles, relative to her late husband's property, which she wished to sell, but was informed it could not be disposed of without her presence.

Mrs. Doricourt rejoiced in a circumstance that would separate her from sir Alan, and release her darling Cecilia from the presence of a person, who alone, of all her acquaintance, was insensible to her merits.

Lady Welford determined on a trip to France with her friends; and they had made their arrangements for quitting Teignmouth, when sir Alan Oswald informed his granddaughter, that feeling rather indisposed, he had determined on wintering in France, and would avail himself of the opportunity of going over with her.

Mrs. Doricourt was vexed and mortified; she tried to put the old gentleman from his scheme, by observing, that during her short stay at Marseilles, her time would be entirely occupied by lawyers and land-surveyors, her business there being to dispose of an estate.

Sir Alan had determined on going to the south of France; its air, he felt assured, would prolong his days, and no suggestions of Mrs. Doricourt could alter his purpose.

"Sir Alan Oswald's years have been many," said Mrs. Doricourt to lady Welford; "they may be near a close: his daughters appear to have but little respect or affection for him, or they would not thus commit him to the care of servants. I cannot be hypocrite enough to say that I am actuated by any tenderer sentiment than humanity and general charity towards him; I would much rather decline than accept his company; but the world would call me unnatural—nay, I fear my own conscience would upbraid me; and though it will grieve me to the soul to part from Cecilia, yet I will not take her with me, to be perpetually annoyed by the *hauteur* of sir Alan. Assist me, dear lady Welford, with your advice; to whose protection, during my stay in France (and I will make it as short as possible), shall I commit this dear child of my affection?"

“Sir Alan Oswald’s determination, my dear friend, has entirely altered mine,” replied lady Welford; “I have not your reasons for putting up with his peculiarities, and would on no consideration be an inmate in the same house with him. I am sorry to let you go alone, but nothing would tempt me to visit France in company with sir Alan. You know I am ever candid in my opinions, and will, I trust, pardon me for speaking my mind thus freely; to me the pride of sir Alan is ridiculous, and his behaviour to our sweet Cecilia unpardonable. If you consider me worthy the trust, I will endeavour to make her abode with me as pleasant as it can be during your absence from England.”

Mrs. Doricourt joyfully accepted this kind proposal, adding, she would hasten her return; and hoped her business would not detain her more than a month.

The parting of Cecilia and Mrs. Doricourt was tender and affecting; Cecilia felt that she was separating from her best and truest friend; she shrunk in terror from the reflection, that very soon Mrs. Doricourt would be on that element which had often proved the grave of those who embarked upon its swelling waves, full of brilliant hopes of fortune and of lengthened days.

The piety and resignation of Mrs. Doricourt had taught her to consider “*death our necessary end*,” without fear; but at parting with Cecilia, it made no part of her anxious melancholy thoughts; ever unhappily prone to look on the gloomy side of futurity, she had a dark presentiment, that at her return from France she should find the blooming cheek of Cecilia pale, and her present cheerfulness, through the dereliction of lord Rushdale, destroyed, “*for man regards not oaths nor promises*.” Such were the thoughts of Mrs. Doricourt; and as she pressed Cecilia to her heart, and bade her farewell, she felt convinced that when they met again, she should find her deprived of every hope of that felicity that now seemed to await her.

“Thank Heaven! my dear Cecilia,” said lady Welford, “we have got rid of don Formallo Pomposo, who has, I confess, put my temper and patience to very severe trials; and as to you, certainly you merit lady Torrington’s appellation of perfect—you are absolutely a saint in forbearance and patience; have you really no human failings?”

“A great many, my dear madam,” replied Cecilia; “but gratitude and affection to my dear Mrs. Doricourt made me struggle with my feelings; and I am happy to think I disguised them so well, as I would not for worlds have made her uneasy. Sir Alan is indeed proud, and exacts more respect than the heart can voluntarily pay, at least mine, which is, I know, much more haughty than it ought to be, considering, as sir Alan often observed, my no family, and my dependent state; but it ought to be remembered, sir Alan Oswald is very old, and——”

“Very ill-tempered,” interrupted lady Welford; “do not, my dear girl, attempt to speak one word in extenuation of his fretful, imperious, contradictory humours; he is the most disagreeable old man I ever met in the course of my life; I really hope Mrs. Doricourt will not suffer her goodness of heart and notions of duty to confine her to his side; he will wear out her spirits with his nonsensical pride and parade.”

Cecilia feared sir Alan would persuade Mrs. Doricourt to reside with him at Oswald Abbey.—“And then,” said she, tears trembling in her eyes, “I shall lose her altogether.”

“No,” returned lady Welford, “that will never happen. Mrs. Doricourt is too fondly attached to you to consent to a separation, even if her own happiness was out of the question; but Mrs. Doricourt has been for many years uncontrolled mistress of her

time and actions, and, I am certain, will never submit to be made the slave of sir Alan's haughty caprices, who, by-the-bye, has lived quite long enough, and can now be very well spared; and I promise you, entre nous, I shall not be sorry to hear he sleeps with his illustrious ancestors in the family vault."

A few days after Mrs. Doricourt's departure, as lady Welford and Miss Delmore were coming out of a milliner's shop, they were, to their great surprise, accosted by lady Jacintha Fitzosborne.—"Bless me, Miss Delmore," said she, "I was told you had left Teignmouth!"

"I suppose you heard," returned lady Welford, "that we were all gone to France?"

"No, really, that was not the report that met me on my arrival," said lady Jacintha: "let me recollect—I love to be correct; it was, that old sir Alan Oswald had insisted on Mrs. Doricourt sending you, Miss Delmore, back to your aunt, Mrs. Milford—Milfred—Mildew—what is her name?—the housekeeper at Torrington Castle."

"My aunt's name is Milman, lady Jacintha Fitzosborne," replied Cecilia, mildly, yet proudly, "of which she has never yet given me reason to be ashamed. Report, your ladyship perceives, has deceived you."

"Oh yes, I find my intelligence has not been quite correct," said lady Jacintha; "but what are you doing, now Mrs. Doricourt has deserted you? Does lord Torrington do any thing for you? Teignmouth is a very gay place, I perceive, and rather dangerous, I should think, for an unprotected female."

Lady Welford had suffered lady Jacintha Fitzosborne to run on, in the hope that Cecilia would silence her impertinence; but finding she merely replied—"I certainly shall profit by your ladyship's caution," she asked lady Jacintha, who had informed her that Mrs. Doricourt had deserted Miss Delmore?

"Heavens, what a question!" returned lady Jacintha. "I heard the report while I was bathing; but really I have no recollection who mentioned it."

"Permit me then," said lady Welford, "to enable your ladyship to contradict the report when you next hear it. Mrs. Doricourt neither has, nor ever will desert Miss Delmore, who, notwithstanding Teignmouth is, as your ladyship observes, a gay place, will, I trust, be exposed to no dangers while under my protection." She then took Cecilia's arm, and they wished her ladyship good-morning.

At lady Amherst's, where they made a call, they heard that lady Jacintha Fitzosborne had arrived at Teignmouth with the widow of a Dutch merchant, a Mrs. Vanburgh, whose vulgarity she kindly overlooked, in consideration of being allowed the use of her purse and table, both which were plentifully supplied.

At Teignmouth lady Jacintha Fitzosborne and her Dutch acquaintance attracted great attention, and obtained little respect, for lady Jacintha's dress, and that of Mrs. Vanburgh, were fashionably indelicate, and their manners of a sort that, while they encouraged the intimacy of the gentlemen, alarmed the modesty of the ladies, and by them they were but little noticed or visited.

Among the gentlemen constantly seen in the train of lady Jacintha Fitzosborne, was a Mr. Cheveril, a man something "*declined into the vale of years*," of reserved manners, sparing in speech, and of awkward figure; but report represented his wealth as incalculable. He had spent the best part of his life in Persia, and had been only a few months returned to England.

Mr. Cheveril had been at some pains to study the character of lady Jacintha; he knew she was poor, very mercenary, and very satirical; he observed that only rank or wealth could obtain her notice—and that, in the affair of marriage, her hand was to be purchased by the best bidder.

Mr. Cheveril, in spite of all her numerous imperfections, felt for lady Jacintha a sentiment approximating to love; and he fancied, if she was his wife, he could tame the arrogance of her spirit, soften the keen edge of her wit, and reform the principles that he was willing to believe were the result of education, not the genuine offspring of nature.

Mr. Cheveril had no ancestral dignities to be proud of; his father had worked hard as a ship-carpenter, and brought up a family honestly and creditably: of all his children, two only had survived, George, of whom we are writing, and Charlotte, who had many years been married to a banker at Exeter, of the name of Danvers.

When George Cheveril returned to England, after an absence of full five-and-twenty years, he found all his family dead, except Mrs. Danvers, to whose daughter he made a present of the little property that fell to his share from the decease of his father, at the same time placing a large sum of money in the hands of Mr. Danvers, and hinting that his possessions exceeded their most extravagant thought.

Mr. Cheveril, in the course of the summer, had been at most of the fashionable bathing-places, in the hope of meeting a lady whom he could like well enough to marry. His choice fell on lady Jacintha Fitzosborne, whose poverty was no objection, but whose rank was a great incentive, for pride had some share in the mind of Mr. Cheveril, who thought it would greatly add to his matrimonial felicity to have a titled wife.

The most sensible people have weaknesses; Mr. Cheveril thought an alliance with nobility would place him upon an equality with those who, remembering his father was an honest ship-carpenter, and himself, at his first outset in life, the cabin-boy of a merchantman, behaved with proud civility towards him.

Mr. Cheveril's immense wealth sunk sir Middleton Maxfield's fortune into a mere competency; and, determined that she would marry before she entered her thirtieth year, lady Jacintha did not discourage the visits of Mr. Cheveril, though his genealogical tree wanted supporters: many females of rank had married beneath themselves, without her excuse of poverty; and if nothing else offered in the course of the winter—but she would take time to consider; and, in the mean time, that Mr. Cheveril might not prevent other offers from being made, she resolved to tell all her acquaintance that he was Mrs. Vanburgh's lover, not hers.

Mrs. Vanburgh's vulgarity and want of education did not prevent her having many admirers, who were so seriously in love with her fortune, as to overlook deficiencies so trifling; but Mrs. Vanburgh, to use her own phrase, had tumbled over head and ears in love with a tall, black-whiskered officer of the name of Leland, to whom she spoke her passion, as plain as looks could speak, whenever she met him, but without obtaining the slightest intimation that the young man understood, or was grateful for her condescension: the beauty of Miss Delmore had blinded the ensign to the more matured charms of Mrs. Vanburgh; and without considering that he had only his commission, and the little his family, persons in very moderate circumstances, could spare, to subsist on, he was wasting his sighs and looks on her, following a delusive Cupid, when he ought to have been worshipping at the shrine of Plutus, and praising the simple elegance of Miss



Delmore's appearance, at the moment Mrs. Vanburgh had decorated her person in all the gaudy colours of the rainbow to attract his notice.

Lady Jacintha Fitzosborne did not wish Mrs. Vanburgh to marry, for a husband might consider her friendship an expence prudent to be dispensed with; and at present Mrs. Vanburgh's house, table, and purse, were very necessary to lady Jacintha, and she called forth all her wit to set her against ensign Leland; she ridiculed his family, his person, his connexions, and even did not stick at inventing a few falsehoods. But it was in vain lady Jacintha tried to extinguish the *flamme de Cupidon*; Mrs. Vanburgh persisted in declaring he was the most handsomest man she had seen since she left Amsterdam; and as to his family, if they were not quality folks, he could not help that, because he had not no choice given him before he was born.

Lady Jacintha was certain she was no favourite with ensign Leland, and Mrs. Vanburgh's avowed partiality put her almost to her wit's end; for if she married him, adieu to their friendship: the ensign would take upon himself the direction of the household, all of which now moved at her nod; he would also arrogate the management of her money, and lady Jacintha saw herself deprived of those liberal supplies that now enabled her to dress and indulge in fashionable extravagance.

Young Leland's admiration of Miss Delmore had not escaped the lynx eyes of lady Jacintha; and among many other equally true arguments she made use of to cure Mrs. Vanburgh of her passion, she positively asserted, that ensign Leland was paying his addresses to Miss Delmore, and that they were to be married the second week in January.

This was cruel intelligence to Mrs. Vanburgh; but while lamenting her hopeless passion, she suddenly recollected having once or twice before caught her dear friend, lady Jacintha, telling fibs, and it was not impossible, as she so much disliked the handsome ensign, but she might be sophisticating a little now. "*Once to suspect,*" is, as Othello says, "*once to be resolved;*" Mrs. Vanburgh was determined to be satisfied on this point. The residence of lady Welford was not a hundred yards distant; and while lady Jacintha was busily engaged detailing the news of the day with a party who had made a morning call, Mrs. Vanburgh threw on her Ingee shawl and her Macling whale, and slipped out unobserved. In a few seconds she stood on the steps of lady Welford's house, and with breathless haste gave a thundering rap at the door; having sent in her name, she was admitted to the conference she requested with Miss Delmore.

Not a little astonished at her visit, as lady Welford had never called upon lady Jacintha Fitzosborne and Mrs. Vanburgh since their arrival at Teignmouth, Cecilia received her with an air of cold reserve, that would have sealed up the lips of any but a person deeply in love, and determined to ascertain at once whether they might encourage hope, or were to sink into the darkest gulf of despair.

Mrs. Vanburgh having curtseyed, and said—"Good morning, Miss," floundered into a chair, and throwing up her veil, leaned on her elbows on the table that stood before Cecilia, fixing on her a stare that lasted more than a minute.

The modest cheek of Cecilia was suffused with a blush, as, with graceful dignity, she asked, to what cause she was indebted for the honour of her visit?

"Why, as to the honour, Miss," replied Mrs. Vanburgh, "I don't know whether you think it a honour or not, because you nor lady Welford have not, neither of you, called upon us, though lady Jacintha Osborne, my partickler friend, who is on a visit to me, told me she was intimate with lady Welford, and knew you very well down in

Cumberland, when she was visiting the countess of Torrington; but that does not signify, for we have got plenty of acquaintance.”

Cecilia merely replied—“No doubt, ma’am.”

“I have been looking in your face, Miss,” resumed Mrs. Vanburgh, “just to satisfy myself; and though my partickler friend, lady Jacintha Fitzosborne, will not allow it, I think you are a very pretty young woman.”

Cecilia blushed deeper than before.

Mrs. Vanburgh was not troubled with delicate feelings, and she continued to say—“But a pretty face, Miss, is not a fortune.”

No woman breathing had less right than Mrs. Vanburgh to make this observation, for she was the daughter of an English shoemaker, who had settled at Amsterdam; she had gone to wait on the first Mrs. Vanburgh; and after his wife’s death, her master, taking a fancy to her face, had married her, and in less than three years died himself, leaving her one of the richest widows in Amsterdam.

“What is a poor man,” resumed Mrs. Vanburgh, “to do with a pretty wife? a fair skin, you know, Miss, and rosy cheeks, won’t do nothing to support a family.”

“I really, ma’am, am at a loss to understand you,” said Cecilia, offended at her vulgar familiarity.

“Dear heart, don’t you?” returned Mrs. Vanburgh; “why, folks say you understand every thing. Well, I will try to speak plain:—please to tell me, Miss, are you acquainted with a tall handsome man?”

Cecilia was ready to laugh at the oddity of the question.—“I think, ma’am,” replied she, “I know many who answer that description.”

“But one in partickler, Miss,” resumed Mrs. Vanburgh, “who has offered himself to you for a lover. You must know who I mean—I am sure you must.”

Cecilia thought of lord Rushdale, and wondered what she could possibly have to say about him; but in the next instant she discovered her mistake, by Mrs. Vanburgh continuing—“Now this tall handsome young man, with black eyes, and very dark whiskers—”

“I have no acquaintance with any such gentleman, I assure you, ma’am,” said Cecilia.

“That is mere quivercation, as my partickler friend, lady Jacintha Fitzosborne, says,” resumed Mrs. Vanburgh; “and I come on purpose, out of goodwill, to tell you, Miss, if you marry this tall handsome young man, you will be poorer than poverty itself; and your babes—think of that, Miss—your poor babes will be ragged little beggars, for he has not a shilling but what he gets from his—”

“I must beg, ma’am,” said Cecilia, “that you will spare yourself the trouble of saying any thing more on this subject.”

“What then,” asked Mrs. Vanburgh, in a whimpering tone, “are you positively engaged to marry him? Well, mark my words, you will repent; for when poverty comes in at the door, love jumps out at the winder.”

“I assure you, ma’am,” replied Cecilia, “I have at present no intention of marrying; and when I do, I shall take care to provide against the poverty you describe.”

“Well then, Miss, if you don’t mean to marry, you are acting a barbarous part by the young man,” said Mrs. Vanburgh, “to suffer him to believe you like him, when it seems you care nothing at all about him; you ought to tell him your mind plainly, Miss,

and give him a opportunity of making his fortune, which perhaps he might do, if he was to open his eyes, and look about for favour."

"I must again repeat to you, ma'am," replied Cecilia, "that I do not at all comprehend your meaning; while at the same time I seriously deny having given encouragement to any gentleman here to believe I approved him."

"I wish I was quite sure you are not sinfisticating, as my partickler friend, lady Jacintha Fitzosborne, says; I wish I was quite certain that you are not in love with a tall handsome young man, with black eyes and dark whiskers."

Cecilia, though vexed at the impertinence of Mrs. Vanburgh, found it difficult to help laughing in her face; but restraining her risibility, she again assured her she had no prepossession in favour of any gentleman answering her description.

"He is so engaging, so fascinating," said Mrs. Vanburgh, "it is, I think, quite impossible to know ensign Leland, and not to be in love with him."

The murder was now out, Mrs. Vanburgh's mystery was explained, and Cecilia saw clearly the motive of her visit.—"I beg to assure you, ma'am, on my word of honour," said she, "that I never was in company with ensign Leland but twice in my life—that I never exchanged fifty words with him—and were he to offer me his hand, I should refuse it at once, seriously and for ever."

"And I may depend that you are in earnest, Miss, in this declaration?" asked Mrs. Vanburgh.

"As truth," replied Cecilia.

"I am sure I am extremely obliged to you, Miss, for being so candid," said Mrs. Vanburgh; "and I am quite astonished that my partickler friend, lady Jacintha Fitzosborne, should lead me into such a error; indeed I take it very ill of her, to tell me that ensign Leland was your lover, and that you was to be married the second week in January. Well, Miss, I wish you a good-morning, and I am extremely much obliged to you; and pray, Miss, be so good as to make my compliments to lady Welford, and say we shall be at home Saturday evening; but I will order my footman to call with invitation tickets."

Mrs. Vanburgh bustled away, leaving Miss Delmore in astonishment at her vulgar effrontery, and absolutely at a loss to guess at lady Jacintha Fitzosborne's motive for wishing to persuade her that she encouraged ensign Leland's addresses, when he was not even a visiting acquaintance at lady Welford's.

Mrs. Vanburgh had esteemed herself highly honoured, and uncommonly fortunate, to have a woman of title for her particular friend, though she paid an extravagant price for the distinguished favour of her acquaintance. Before they had been intimate a month, lady Jacintha had flattered her into lending her money to liquidate all her debts, on her promise of repayment, as soon as she married sir Middleton Maxfield, and, as a very great secret, she informed her that she was bound by a solemn engagement to give him her hand early in the following spring.

Mrs. Vanburgh had not received any sort of acknowledgment from lady Jacintha for upwards of eleven hundred pounds, being told by her that the word of a woman of rank was quite sufficient; but on quitting lady Welford's, Mrs. Vanburgh's eyes began to open on the duplicity of her ladyship; and remembering the money she had lent her, and other obligations in matters of dress and jewellery, she thought her particular friend had behaved ungrateful, and she was not a little offended with her, for having, in the first

instance, spoken in very degrading terms of ensign Leland's person, family, and connexions, and in the second, for having so solemnly assured her that he was engaged to marry Miss Delmore.

Mrs. Vanburgh was yet a young woman, but she wisely considered that she every day grew older, and, of course, that the term of her enjoyments was shortening. She had often heard her particular friend, lady Jacintha, say it was folly to let any opportunity of gratification pass, and that money was only properly disposed of when employed to purchase and obtain our wishes. All the gentlemen of their acquaintance allowed lady Jacintha to be an exceedingly-clever woman; Mrs. Vanburgh thought she could not err if she followed her precepts and opinions. She had married her first husband—a man twenty years older than herself, to make her fortune; she was now deeply in love with a poor man, about her own age, and she determined to marry him, and make his fortune.

Mrs. Vanburgh thought the sooner the affair was settled the better. She sent for the ensign, and in a few words explained to him the extent of her affection and her fortune, and made him an offer of her hand.

Ensign Leland felt he had no heart to give in return for this generosity: but Miss Delmore, he understood, was only a dependant, and to marry for love was nonsense. The ensign gave a sigh to the beauty of Miss Delmore, as he contemplated the broad flat face of Mrs. Vanburgh, her little grey eyes and snub nose; but recollecting that her wealth had abundance of charms, he acted the passionate lover, gratefully accepted her offer, and three days after they were privately married, without even dropping a hint to lady Jacintha of their intention.

Presuming on the extreme good-nature and ignorance of Mrs. Vanburgh, lady Jacintha Fitzosborne was infinitely more mistress of the elegant house she had hired at Teignmouth than Mrs. Vanburgh was herself; taking upon her to order every thing, to invite and reject what company she pleased, and even to sit at the head of the table, making it always appear that Mrs. Vanburgh was obliged and honoured by her condescending to be in all things as troublesome and expensive as possible. Ensign Leland, now master of the house, had borne the airs of insolence assumed by lady Jacintha for two days with tolerable patience and temper, without even appearing to notice her impertinent inuendoes, or the scowl of haughty contempt with which she regarded him; but on the third day, when lady Jacintha was about to place herself, as usual, at the head of the table, he took his wife by the hand, and, in a tone of authority, said—"The head of the table is your place, madam, and I insist that you occupy it."

Lady Jacintha still remained standing, and, with a look that she meant to be awful and petrifying, asked him what he meant by presuming to interfere?

"I merely mean, lady Jacintha Fitzosborne," replied he, coolly, "that Mrs. Leland shall sit at the head of her own table."

"Mrs. Leland!" echoed lady Jacintha, with an altered tone and countenance—"Mrs. Leland! can this be true?"

"Yes, indeed, it is very true, my dear friend," replied the bride, "it is three days since I changed the name of Vanburgh for Leland."

"And without even consulting me!" said lady Jacintha; "you have used me shamefully—I did not believe it was possible you could have acted so ungratefully."

"Another time you can decide on which side the obligation lies," observed the ensign. "Will your ladyship be seated?—the dinner cools."

Lady Jacintha placed herself at the right hand of the bride, and the dinner proceeded almost in silence.

When the cloth was removed, and the servants withdrawn, the ensign informed lady Jacintha that business of importance called himself and Mrs. Leland to Holland, and that they should quit Teignmouth the following week.

"Since Mrs. Leland has thought proper to act towards me, her friend, with such horrid duplicity," said lady Jacintha, "the sooner we part the better."

"I am of your ladyship's opinion," replied the ensign; "but before you bid each other adieu, I think," taking out his pocketbook, "it is proper, as probably you never may meet again, that all pecuniary concerns should be settled between you."

"Pecuniary concerns!" repeated lady Jacintha; "you are pleased to be facetious, sir; or perhaps your good fortune has deranged you a little. I have heard that a sudden accession of wealth has frequently turned the brain of persons in the lower sphere of life."

"I dare say you mean to be witty," said the ensign; "but unfortunately my brain is too dull to take in your ladyship's point; this, however, I clearly understand—you are indebted to Mrs. Leland eleven hundred and forty-eight pounds."

"You labour under a trifling mistake, sir," returned lady Jacintha; "you will not pretend to say this, Mrs. Leland?"

"Yes, indeed I will," replied Mrs. Leland. "That money I lent you in good English banknotes, besides bills that I have paid for you since we came to Teignmouth. Here," taking from her husband's hand a memorandum of lady Jacintha's own writing, "here is a list of your debts that you made out yourself and gave me— 'To Allen, shoemaker, sixty-three pounds thirteen shillings'— 'To Havard, glover, ninety-seven—'"

"Spare yourself the trouble of reading, ma'am," said lady Jacintha; "I utterly deny your ever having lent me money, and shall laugh at Mr. Leland's ridiculous demand, till he can produce my acknowledgment of the debt; though I must confess this demand upon my purse is a very grateful return, Mrs. Leland, for my great condescension in taking you under my protection, and introducing you to the first society, which, but for the honour of my acquaintance, you never could have been admitted into."

"And it would be paying rather too dear for the honour you have conferred on me, in making use of my house, table, and carriage, for yourself and your acquaintance," retorted Mrs. Leland, "if at last I am to be swindled out of near twelve hundred pounds."

"I shall quit your house immediately, ma'am," said lady Jacintha; "and shall ever lament having honoured it with my own presence, or the introduction of my friends; but when persons of rank associate with vulgar plebeians, they generally suffer for their condescension."

Lady Jacintha was about to withdraw, when, with a slide and a bow, the ensign placed himself between her and the door.—"Your ladyship will pardon me," said he, "for detaining you; but before you deprive us of your most agreeable society, I shall consider myself obliged if you will favour me with your note of hand on this stamp, for the eleven hundred and forty-eight pounds you are indebted to Mrs. Leland."

"Let me pass, sir," exclaimed lady Jacintha; "do you presume to detain me?"

"I am extremely sorry to be rude to a lady," replied the ensign; "but our being on the very eve of quitting the kingdom must plead my apology. I would certainly much rather receive the money; but as I suppose that is not quite convenient to your ladyship, I will take your note, payable on the day of your marriage."

"I shall give no note," returned lady Jacintha.

"Well," said Mrs. Leland, "I find the honesty of a lady of title is not worth a nutmeg. Here is the list of your debts, set down by yourself—can you deny that they were paid with my money?"

"Whatever I am in your debt, ma'am," returned lady Jacintha, "I give you my word I will pay you."

"Then you must pay me for the dress on your back," said Mrs. Leland; "for I am certain it is set down to my account; and as to your word—you have told me so many falsehoods, that I would not take your word for this filbert."

"Does your ladyship choose to give me your note?" demanded the ensign.

"Let me pass this instant," said lady Jacintha, "or I will swear that you have attempted to extort money from me."

"That menace decides me," replied the ensign.—"Pull the bell, Mrs. Leland."

The servant who entered was desired to request the attendance of an attorney who lived on the opposite side of the street.

Lady Jacintha detested the name of an attorney; she had often been in the hands of the law, and was sensible that she never escaped without suffering loss. To be sure she knew the only witness to her borrowing the money was Mrs. Garnett, and she thought she could depend on her to say whatever she directed. But Mrs. Garnett had lived long enough with lady Jacintha Fitzosborne to find that her wages were considerably in arrear, and that all she got for her services of lying through thick and thin, was now and then a cast-off dress, which lady Jacintha had worn herself as long as it was good for any thing.

Mrs. Garnett was a very expert and clever *femme de chambre*, and Mrs. Leland had dropped several broad hints that she should like to engage her, if she had an intention of quitting her present situation. These hints had not been thrown away—the honour of being waiting-woman to a poor lady of title, Mrs. Garnett began to think, was not so desirable as she once imagined, for she had neither got well paid, nor well married; and hearing the dispute respecting the money, she determined to secure herself a good place, by deserting the side of lady Jacintha.

Mrs. Garnett being called upon for her testimony, said she was monstatiouly sorry to be obligated to tell truth, but she could not do no sitch wicked thing as quivercate against her conscience, and she sartinly was present when Mrs. Leland lent lady Jacintha Fitzosborne eleven hundred and forty-eight pounds, and she did hear lady Jacintha say after, that she would not give a straw for a friend, unless she could make use of their money gist as if it was her own.

Lady Jacintha was quite confounded; the declaration of Mrs. Garnett was a disappointment for which she was so unprepared, that all her effrontery forsook her, and she could only exclaim against the treachery of her servant, and declare she was bribed to witness against her; but finding the ensign resolute to arrest her for the money, she at last gave him her note, payable on the day of her marriage, "with sir Middleton Maxfield," she wished to have inserted; but Mr. Leland, much more wary than she expected, would only have the words, "payable on the day of my marriage." The ensign was so well aware of her mercenary character, that he was convinced, if any match more advantageous should offer, she would, without scruple, deny and break off her engagement with sir Middleton Maxfield; and that he might be sure of his money, if she ever did marry, he insisted on wording the note in his own way.

Mrs. Leland parted with her partickler friend, lady Jacintha, on the worst terms possible, resolving never again to put herself under the management of a poor lady of quality.

Lady Jacintha being unable or unwilling to pay the demand of Mrs. Garnett, was compelled to hear that loquacious and eloquent gentlewoman abuse her in her own phraseology; but as Mrs. Garnett's language was above the comprehension of most persons, lady Jacintha thought it impossible that her representations could be of consequence to her character; and though she reviled Mrs. Leland for engaging her servant, she was not, on the whole, sorry to part with her; for Mrs. Garnett, from being admitted to a participation of her secrets, had become impertinent and presuming.

Ensign Leland prided himself on his generalship, in getting rid of lady Jacintha, whom he compared to a leech, and to whom he had taken a dislike, from the *hauteur* with which she had always behaved to him, which dislike had been considerably increased by Mrs. Leland communicating to him all the disparaging things her ladyship had said of his person, his manner, and his family.—“I am now even with her haughty ladyship,” said the ensign, triumphantly lodging her note of hand with his attorney, giving him a strict charge to demand the money the moment he heard of her marriage.—“And in future, Mrs. Leland,” continued he, “I will prove to you, that rank is not of so much consequence in life as these titled sharpers wish to have it believed. Take my word for it, if you can afford to keep a handsome equipage, and entertain well, the world will never be so impertinent as to ask how many quarters you have in your escutcheon, nor trouble themselves to inquire whether your riches were hereditary possessions, or had their rise in the muddy stream of Pactolus.”

“I never heard of Mr. Pactolus,” returned Mrs. Leland; “but I know Mr. Vanburgh got the chief of his riches by trading to Ceylon; and I know that at Amsterdam I was thought of some consequence, whatever I may be in England.”

Lady Jacintha Fitzosborne heard of the departure of the Lelands from Teignmouth with much satisfaction, and if any person happened to mention them in her presence, she would request not to be reminded of her misfortunes. She had, she confessed, taken pity on the female Hottentot, and had endeavoured to model and reform her savage manners; but her marriage with that presuming, ignorant, vulgar fellow, ensign Leland, had constrained her to cut the connexion, and entirely separate herself from an acquaintance which it was impossible for her to remember without blushing.

Mr. Cheveril was now a constant attendant on lady Jacintha. She condescended to ride his horses—she suffered him to drive her round the country in his curricule; and finding that his fortune was a passport to the best company in Teignmouth, she no longer persisted in denying his being her admirer.

Mr. Cheveril was pleased with the person of lady Jacintha, and he thought he should like to manage the spirit of a woman who kept every person of her acquaintance in awe. He had heard of her engagement with sir Middleton Maxfield, and he one day bluntly asked her when she was to be married?

Lady Jacintha protested she was under no engagement to sir Middleton Maxfield. She would not deny that he had made her an offer of his hand, and had proposed giving her uncontrolled possession of five thousand pounds a-year; but seriously she had entered into no promise, and was at perfect liberty to marry whom she pleased.

Mr. Cheveril perfectly understood the deep and interested game lady Jacintha was playing; but having a design himself, he affected to believe her declaration, and immediately replied, since her ladyship was under no engagement to sir Middleton Maxfield, he should be the happiest of men if he could render himself agreeable to her.

Agreeable, lady Jacintha thought absolutely impossible; but his fortune was extremely desirable. She put on a look of modest confusion—hesitated, and, as he became pressing, desired time for consideration; but Mr. Cheveril was determined not to dangle after any woman; and anxious to conclude the affair at once, he said he would settle twelve thousand a-year upon her, and would give her twenty-four hours to consider his proposal; he would then, within one week, become her husband, or take his leave of her for ever.

This hasty procedure did not exactly please lady Jacintha, who wished her marriage to be conducted with splendour. She considered the family of Mr. Cheveril, his person and education, with contempt; but his wealth was incalculable—she should, by marrying him, be enabled to live in a style of eastern state and magnificence—she should, in the splendour of her establishment, the number of her carriages, and her attendants, black and white, rival all her acquaintance; interest prevailed—lord Rushdale, sir Middleton Maxfield, all her admirers were resigned, and Mr. Cheveril received her consent to be his as soon as the settlement was ready.

Lady Jacintha now wrote to sir Middleton Maxfield, to inform him that her family were very averse to her fulfilling her engagement with him, and that she was certain his were equally ill-disposed to receive her; and as their marriage would only be productive of discord and uneasiness on all sides, she thought it much better they should give up all idea of an union. She added, that she returned all the letters he had written her, and expected, as a gentleman, he would return hers.

Sir Middleton Maxfield raved, swore, and tore his hair; at last he made a packet of her letters, writing in the envelope, that he felt extremely obliged to her for convincing him that the representations of his friends respecting her principles of honour were true. He assured her that he wished her all possible happiness, and begged her to believe that her rejection of his hand would by no means lessen his.

But though sir Middleton Maxfield wrote thus carelessly, he was seriously hurt at lady Jacintha's ungenerous conduct; but determined not to give way to melancholy, he set off to Tunbridge Wells, to reconcile himself to his aunt, and congratulate her on her marriage with lord Wilton.

Lady Jacintha Fitzosborne did not expect to get rid of her engagement with sir Middleton Maxfield so easily; and as she threw the packet of letters into the fire, she felt no little mortification that he had expressed no regret at her conduct.

At the appointed time she found Mr. Cheveril punctual. The promised settlement was brought for her inspection, and being approved, was signed, sealed, and given into her possession; and no chance of any thing superior offering, lady Jacintha, at the end of the following week, exchanged the name of Fitzosborne for Cheveril, and as soon as the ceremony was performed, set off with her husband to spend the honeymoon at Willow Bank, near Exeter.

Lady Jacintha wished to invite a large party to accompany her, as she was not so fondly inclined towards her husband as to desire to spend a single day with him alone; but wishes and angry remonstrances were equally unavailing; even on her wedding day



Mr. Cheveril was so rude as to remind her ladyship that she had vowed to obey; and that it was his will that she should accompany him immediately and alone to Willow Bank.

Lady Jacintha frowned and bit her lip, but she had twelve thousand pounds a-year at her own absolute disposal, and she resolved to shew him a trick for this sudden display of his insolent authority. Into a postchaise she most unwillingly ascended, with a newly-hired female attendant, and her first bridal hours were spent in resolves not to yield, even in the most trivial point, to her husband, or to allow him the prerogative of command.

At the close of the evening the carriage stopped before a large old-fashioned building, and Mr. Cheveril saluting his bride, bade her welcome to Willow Bank.

"This Willow Bank!" exclaimed lady Jacintha, almost shrieking; "that gloomy prison-looking place—that your beautifully-situated country-seat! But though you have deluded me hither, you shall never get me to set my foot within the doors—I insist upon going back to Teignmouth."

"You are my wife, madam," said Mr. Cheveril, sternly; "and I insist that you submit to my pleasure."

Lady Jacintha ordered the driver to take the road back to Teignmouth; but he declared the horses were tired, and could not proceed before morning.

Lady Jacintha scolded vehemently. She looked round, and on all sides, but no house appearing in sight, nor any person she could appeal to, she was obliged to suffer Mr. Cheveril to lead her into an unfurnished hall, where a black man and woman waited to receive her. Lady Jacintha threw herself on a window-seat, without bestowing even a nod in return for the salutations of the sable attendants.

"You now perceive, my dear," said Mr. Cheveril, "why I did not suffer you to bring company to Willow Bank, which having purchased but a few weeks ago, is not furnished; and knowing your exquisite taste, I left every thing to your direction."

Even this compliment failed to reconcile lady Jacintha to her situation. She complained of being cold, and asked if fire had ever been heard of in that out-of-the-way place?

The black woman, in broken English, replied, they knew what fire was very well; and if she would walk into the parlour, she would find herself quite comfortable.

This parlour was a room nearly twenty feet by sixteen; at one end a small grate, with a newly-lighted fire, threw out such volumes of smoke, that it was scarcely possible to see an article of the furniture.

"From the comforts of Willow Bank," exclaimed lady Jacintha, retreating again to the hall—"good Heaven deliver me!"

"I thought you had possessed more philosophy, madam," said Mr. Cheveril, "than to suffer such a trifling inconvenience to disconcert you; the chimneys at present are damp—when they have had time to dry, no doubt the smoke will ascend—if it should not, we must find a remedy; but as it is, my love, you must make a virtue of necessity, and condescend to take your tea in the kitchen."

"In the kitchen!" repeated lady Jacintha, angrily; but putting on a smile of disdain, she added—"Oh certainly! in the scullery, if you think proper. Pray lead the way, sir—I long to go over this elegant magnificent seat of yours."

The kitchen was large, very clean, and enlivened by a good fire, near which being seated, Zeila, the black woman, asked if madam would have tea then?

Lady Jacintha haughtily replied, whenever she thought proper.

Zeila bustled to set a little bright-rubbed oak table, on which she placed, without a tea-tray, cups and saucers, and a large plate of piled-up brown bread and butter.

"Make me some toast," said lady Jacintha; "I never eat bread and butter. Have you no rolls—no manchet?"

"That is the bread," pointing to a large loaf—"we have none whiter," replied Zeila.

"I cannot eat that," returned lady Jacintha; "I must have white bread."

"Then you must fast, my dear, till tomorrow morning," rejoined Mr. Cheveril. "At the distance we are from Exeter, we cannot possibly procure white bread this evening; besides, brown bread is much wholesomer."

"And cheaper, I suppose," said lady Jacintha, with a sneer.

Mr. Cheveril replied—"Certainly, for it goes further in a family."

Zeila made a slice of toast, and at lady Jacintha's desire would have poured out the tea, but Mr. Cheveril chose to take the office on himself.

Having drank two cups of tea, lady Jacintha declared it was abominable smoky stuff, and the toast coarse and dry as chaff, which she had no doubt would make her ill, by lying like lead on her stomach.

"A walk," said Mr. Cheveril, "may perhaps be serviceable; and as the evening is very mild, and the moon at full, you will be able to judge of the capabilities of the garden."

Mortified, disappointed, and out of humour with every thing and every body, lady Jacintha listened to Mr. Cheveril's intended improvements with disdainful indifference; and when he paused, asked him if he really could believe, after he had done his utmost to beautify and embellish, that it would ever be possible to make a place, surrounded with high walls, a summer residence fit for a person of her rank?

"I believe it will make a residence fit for me, madam," replied he; "and as you have done me the honour to accept me for your husband, of course, what will suit me you cannot object to."

"There you are greatly mistaken, Mister Cheveril, returned lady Jacintha, "for doubtless you have been accustomed to live in a style very different to any thing I can have an idea of; and if I had supposed that I was to be hurried away from my friends, even on my wedding-day, and brought to a gloomy mansion, where there is scarcely a chair to sit down upon, I never would have accepted you for a husband, I promise you."

"You can be candid, I perceive," said Mr. Cheveril.

"I certainly expected that a man of your fortune," resumed lady Jacintha, "had a suitable establishment; and from your description of Willow Bank, that it was a magnificent structure, furnished with Asiatic luxury, I expected."

"I know you did," interrupted Mr. Cheveril; "from my long residence in Persia, you expected to find the floors covered with costly carpets—you expected sofas of gold and ivory, glittering with precious stones, and canopied with oriental purple; you expected to be received by a crowd of prostrate slaves, and that your vanity would be gratified, by bringing with you a parcel of high-bred coxcombs, and unprincipled women of fashion, to laugh at, and make a property of the man who had admitted you to a participation of his wealth; but your intentions, madam, by no means coalesce with mine; your career of folly has lasted too long; the world gives you credit for wit—common sense is of infinitely more value; if you possess any, you will accommodate yourself to

my wishes, and become reasonable and rational; we shall then live happily and lovingly together."

"Like Darby and Joan," said lady Jacintha, disdainfully; "may I be permitted sir, to inquire whether solitude forms a part of your plan of rational happiness? Is it among your wishes that I should live without society in this delightful mansion of yours?"

"That question," replied Mr. Cheveril, "is not very flattering to me, who might reasonably expect that at present you would prefer my society to any other; but I forgive you, because I know the amiable serenity of your temper is a little disturbed. Believe me, I have no design to seclude you from society; but I will take care that your company and amusements are such as will not corrupt your morals, or increase your passion for extravagance and dissipation."

"You arrogate too much," returned lady Jacintha, "in supposing that I shall consult your opinion on the choice of my company or amusements."

"You shall do both," interrupted Mr. Cheveril.

"You speak in a very lordly tone," said lady Jacintha; "but you are not now in Persia; recollect, Mr. Cheveril, English women are not slaves."

"If English wives were under the laws that regulate those of the East," replied Mr. Cheveril, "their husbands would not have such frequent reason to repent the imprudence of their choice."

"It is a pity you did not content yourself with one of these slaves," said lady Jacintha, "who would have been satisfied to live moped up in a corner of your house, with no other society than you, her lord and master."

"I have no design to punish you so severely," returned Mr. Cheveril; "you shall have other society; to-morrow, madam, you will be visited by Mr. Danvers, his wife and daughter. Mr. Danvers is not a man of fashion, but, what is far more estimable, he can boast sound principles and unblemished integrity. Charlotte Danvers is a lively little girl, and her mother, my sister, a well-meaning, good sort of woman," which, in lady Jacintha's idea, meant an insipid fool.

Determined not to suffer Mr. Cheveril to believe she was at all intimidated by his conduct or declarations, she returned to the house, and went through every apartment, which she protested was the worst planned and vilest finished building she had ever seen in her life; dull and gloomy enough to nourish melancholy, and bring on madness; and that however Mr. Cheveril might reconcile his mind to live in such a prison, she never could; and she was resolved to set off for Teignmouth the next morning.

"We shall see," said Mr. Cheveril.

But the next morning brought disappointment and fresh vexation to the pride of lady Jacintha. The chaise had left Willow Bank at daybreak; and while she was protesting that she would not remain another day, Mr. Mrs. and Miss Danvers were announced.

Lady Jacintha's love of ridicule overcame her pride; in the hope of mortifying her husband, by quizzing his relations, she constrained herself to receive the congratulations of a country banker and his family.

Mr. Danvers was a man of good understanding; he was disgusted with the haughty airs of lady Jacintha, and soon took his leave; he mentally blamed his brother-in-law for marrying a quality termagant, though, knowing Mr. Cheveril's decided temper, he believed, if any man had power to tame a shrew, he had.

Mrs. Danvers, though used to genteel company, had never met any thing so high bred as lady Jacintha, who, whenever she attempted to speak, either flatly contradicted or ridiculed every thing she said. Mrs. Danvers respected her brother, and for his sake tried to accommodate herself to the haughty capricious temper of his lady, who treated her with supercilious contempt.—“The prospect from this window is very agreeable,” said Mrs. Danvers; “don’t you think so, lady Jacintha Cheveril?”

“Prodigiously agreeable indeed,” replied lady Jacintha; “to the right a stagnant pool, with half-a-dozen ducks swimming on it; to the left a common, with not a tree, or even a furze bush, to rest the weary eye upon; in front a group of miserable thatched huts, dignified with the name of a village—extremely agreeable indeed, Mrs. Danvers!”

“Perhaps your ladyship is not fond of the country,” said Miss Danvers, perceiving her mother was completely put to silence.

“Not very, I confess, Miss Danvers,” replied lady Jacintha. “A watering-place for two or three months in the summer does very well, because one is sure to meet fashionable company; but from a dull quiet place like this, Heaven deliver me!”

“I should greatly prefer living here,” said Mrs. Danvers, “to the noise of Exeter. But different people, to be sure, have different opinions; and you, lady Jacintha Cheveril, have, I suppose, been used to London?”

“Yes, ma’am,” returned lady Jacintha, “I have indeed been used to London—dear delightful London! I am certain I never could survive a winter out of it.”

“My uncle has promised to take me with him to London,” said Miss Danvers.

“Has he?” replied lady Jacintha. “That is not consistent with his usual prudence; I think he had much better let you remain at Exeter.”

Lady Jacintha’s haughty airs and unceasing contradictions had worn out the patience of Mrs. Danvers, who fancying her ladyship considered the expence of taking her daughter to town, observed, in a tone of more spirit than she usually assumed, that her brother was rich enough to afford to give his niece a jaunt to London; and as long as he did not spend other people’s fortunes, nobody had a right to call him to an account about his own.

“I am sure, ma’am,” said lady Jacintha, “I shall never take the trouble; my remark did not proceed from any consideration of expence, I promise you, but merely from Miss Danvers being so young.”

“What difference can that make,” asked Mrs. Danvers, “when she will be under your care?”

“Under my care!” exclaimed lady Jacintha, casting a look of disdain on Mrs. Danvers and her daughter—“expect me to lead Miss Danvers about! You really design me an honour, ma’am, that will be quite out of my power to accept; I shall have too many engagements on my hands.”

“I don’t think my brother will go any where, without taking Charlotte with him,” said Mrs. Danvers.

“To that I can have no possible objection,” replied lady Jacintha, “except that it would be extremely ridiculous. When in town, Mr. Cheveril and myself shall rarely meet, except at dinner.”

“Mercy on me! rarely meet but at dinner!” repeated Mrs. Danvers. “Why, bless my soul, lady Jacintha Cheveril, what can you mean?”

"I mean, ma'am," replied her ladyship, "that married persons in high life have different acquaintance and different pursuits; but your situation in life, placing you in so very opposite a track, Mrs. Danvers, the manners and arrangements of *haut ton* must be beyond your comprehension."

"And to tell you the truth, lady Jacintha Cheveril, I have no wish to comprehend such wicked ways," said Mrs. Danvers; "but I am certain my brother will never allow such doings; he has spirit enough to keep proper order in his family."

Lady Jacintha considered an altercation with Mrs. Danvers beneath her. Mrs. Danvers thought her ladyship a proud insolent woman, and in heart severely condemned her brother for marrying a titled beggar, who treated himself and his relations with disdain, always endeavouring to impress them with an awful sense of the honour she had conferred on them, in condescending to mix her noble blood with their plebeian puddle.

Lady Jacintha believed her husband to be an obstinate narrow-minded man, who, though immensely rich, had not the spirit to spend his money like a gentleman; and she wondered how he had opened his heart to make so liberal a settlement on her.

Lady Jacintha's maid appeared to be as little pleased with Willow Bank as her lady, and she had been easily brought to assist in preparing for the elopement her ladyship projected to make from her husband the very first opportunity.—"Twelve thousand a-year, entirely at my own disposal from the hour of my marriage," said lady Jacintha. "Well, really, with all his caution, Mr. Cheveril was a little overseen there; the silly man has amply provided for my separating myself from him; he was in love, poor soul!"

Having prepared a packet of letters for town, lady Jacintha thought it would be safest to lodge her settlement with a solicitor; but previous to enclosing it with her letters, she broke the seals of the envelope, to indulge herself with again perusing a parchment, that made her independent of a parsimonious husband; but what was her confusion and dismay, when, instead of her settlement, she held two blank skins of vellum. Lady Jacintha shrieked aloud, and Mr. Cheveril and his sister, in alarm, rushed into the room, and demanded what was the matter?

Lady Jacintha, with difficulty, articulated—"Look there!" pointing to the blank parchment.

"Is that all?" said Mr. Cheveril, coldly. "I really supposed something terrible had happened."

"Is not this terrible!" exclaimed lady Jacintha. "Do you not perceive that I am robbed—defrauded?"

"It is of no consequence" returned Mr. Cheveril.

"Do you intend to drive me mad?" said lady Jacintha. "It is of the utmost consequence to me. Was it not the settlement that induced me—"

"To deceive sir Middleton Maxfield, and marry me. I will fill up the pause for you," said Mr. Cheveril.

"I was not going to say any thing of the kind," replied lady Jacintha, looking pale and wild; "but you will renew the settlement, dear Mr. Cheveril, I know you will."

"I have no such silly intention," said he.

"I see I have been taken in," resumed lady Jacintha, raving like a maniac; "I have been deceived—imposed upon; but I will proclaim you to the world."

“What will you proclaim?” asked Mr. Cheveril, with provoking calmness; “will you tell the world, that, with a mind the most mercenary, you married a man, whose family you despised, for the sake of extravagantly spending the wealth he had endured hardships and toil under a burning sun to obtain?”

“I will be revenged!” exclaimed lady Jacintha. “I will have justice! All the world shall know how I have been taken in.”

“Proclaim your own detestable principles to the world as soon as you please, madam,” said Mr. Cheveril; “tell them, that, informed of your intention to elope, and spend my hard-earned fortune according to your pleasure, I deprived you of the power to disgrace yourself and me. Yet, even now, conduct yourself with propriety, and you shall have no reason to complain; but I will restrict your extravagant expences—I will not have my fortune dissipated at a faro-table.”

“I will be separated from you, if law can effect it,” returned lady Jacintha. “What! have I disgraced myself and family, by marrying a low-descended man, to be compelled to square my expences to his mean contracted ideas? Shall I submit?”

“Yes, madam,” resumed Mr. Cheveril, “you shall submit to live, not according to your will, but mine. And mark me, madam, if you leave my house for a single night, never expect to be received into it again, or that any part of my wealth shall maintain you in a state of separation; you brought me no fortune, and I have dearly enough purchased you, for it appears likely I shall expend a tolerable one in paying your debts.”

“It is false,” said lady Jacintha; “I have no debts.”

“Remember Mrs. Leland, and be silent,” returned Mr. Cheveril; “I have this morning taken up your note, given to ensign Leland, for eleven hundred and forty-eight pounds.”

“I wish I owed a hundred thousand pounds,” said lady Jacintha; “but when I get to London—”

“Make your mind easy, madam,” interrupted Mr. Cheveril; “you will not see London this winter.”

After a few days spent in upbraidings, lady Jacintha, finding her husband of a temper on which neither tears, rage, nor sullens, had the least effect, began to consider that it would be to her interest to put on an appearance of affability and reconciliation; she wished to spend the winter in London, and was willing to humble herself a little to gain her point: but Mr. Cheveril kept his word—he remained in Devonshire, but not at Willow Bank, which he had borrowed of his brother-in-law, as the beginning of his plan to reduce the haughty lady Jacintha to reason, and humble her pride. Perceiving a favourable change in her temper, he removed to a modern-built villa, elegantly furnished; she had the use of a carriage, and was properly attended, but still Mr. Cheveril maintained his authority; and though her table, her wardrobe, and her purse, were liberally supplied, on every occasion where her old propensities burst forth, lady Jacintha found that Mr. Cheveril knew how to RULE A WIFE.

### CHAPTER III.

The angel of affliction rose,  
And in his train a thousand woes;  
He pour'd his vial on my head,  
And all the heaven of rapture fled. MONTGOMERY.

“There is nothing under heav’n’s wide hollownesse,  
That moves more dear compassion of mind,  
Than beauties brought t’unworthie wretchednesse,  
Through envie’s snare, or fortune’s freakes unkind.”

“This calumny is thine,  
Thou hast invented this foul tale, to hold  
Me faster in thy toils; but I have yet a  
Friend in heaven, and he who knows my  
Innocence will rescue me.”

*Love a Disease seldom incurable—A Rout and a  
Discovery—Credulity and Deceit—An unplea  
sant Journey.*

THE fog and rains of November had driven the gay fluttering votarists of fashion from the dreariness of the country, to seek amusement in the ever-varying scenes of London. Lord Rushdale and Miss Delmore had met, and considered all the inquietudes of absence overpaid, by discovering in each other numberless improvements in mind and person, and in addition to this pleasure, they found what indeed rarely occurs, that absence had actually increased, not diminished, their affection. The earl of Torrington embraced Cecilia with the tenderness of a parent; the countess met her with undisguised haughtiness, and suffered no opportunity to pass, without giving her to understand that she disapproved her son’s engagement, and would, to the utmost of her power, oppose their marriage.

This disapprobation on the part of the countess, and the absence of Mrs. Doricourt, who was unexpectedly delayed in France, were the only troubles that alloyed the happiness of Cecilia, who having been introduced to lady Arabella Moncrief, Miss Sedgeley, and several other young ladies of fashion, whose party was soon augmented by the arrival of lady Jane Bruce, Miss Graham, and Miss Macdonald, thought lord Rushdale unreasonable in his complaint of the slowness of time; for with her it passed so rapidly, that she was obliged to devote part of that allotted to sleep to write to Mrs. Doricourt and her Cumberland friends: but though continually engaged with parties who reversed the order of time, by turning night into day, Miss Delmore’s health continued good, and her beauty so resplendent, that in all the circles of haut ton, she was the envy of the women and the admiration of the men, who unanimously declared she was the most lovely creature that had appeared for the last century; wherever it was known that Miss Delmore

was to be, the place was crowded to suffocation; and no lady of fashion considered her entertainment complete without the presence of Miss Delmore.

This universal approbation stung the countess of Torrington to the quick, who, go where she would, met the praises of Miss Delmore; her beauty, her accomplishments, her taste in dress, were the constant theme, and heightened her dislike to the low-born girl, whose introduction to her family she considered a misfortune; but while lady Torrington endeavoured to throw contempt on Cecilia, by informing all her friends that she was the niece of her housekeeper, many noble offers were made her, which would have placed the low-born girl, as she termed her, in rank above her own; among these the young and elegant duke of Arvingham made her an offer of his hand; but for Cecilia, whose heart was fondly attached, the golden trefoils of a duke had no attraction; in her eyes, Rushdale was superior to all mankind, and, blest with his love, a desert would have been a paradise.

The earl of Torrington was a watchful observer of the conduct of Miss Delmore; and he warmly congratulated his son, that in the midst of flattery and temptation, she preserved a graceful humility and steady propriety, that proved her mind truly noble.—“This winter’s fiery ordeal past,” said the earl, “I will leave you at liberty, Oscar, to act in the affair of your marriage as you think proper.”

Lord Rushdale was all grateful thanks to his father, while his exulting heart was full of the happiness inspired by a confidence, that Miss Delmore would never be won by flattery, or influenced by ambition, to swerve from the faith that inclination had plighted.—”No,” said he, proudly, “Cecilia is courted, followed, admired, but her affection is mine; my heart is her world, my love the only treasure she is anxious to possess; dearest, loveliest, angelic Cecilia, a few months more, and I shall indeed be blest, for my indulgent father promises to join our hands—to unite us in those happy bonds, which only death can dissolve.”

Lady Jane Bruce, on her arrival in town, among the first news, heard of Miss Delmore’s engagement to lord Rushdale, for both the earl of Torrington and lady Welford had spoken of it publicly. Lady Jane turned up her eyes, and expressed surprise that the earl and lord Rushdale had not more ambition; but feeling inclined to do justice to Miss Delmore’s merits, and admire her in any character but that of her brother’s wife, she renewed her intimacy with lady Welford; and finding that Miss Delmore was the *comète flamboyante* that attracted all the men of fashion, she generally contrived to be one of her party whenever she appeared in public.

Miss Macdonald, too, being convinced that Miss Delmore had no design on the heart or title of lord Alwyn Bruce, declared she was every way deserving of lord Rushdale’s hand, and thought lady Torrington very much to blame to oppose their marriage.

The lively Miss Graham had several admirers; but a little lurking passion for sir Middleton Maxfield, imbibed in Cumberland, appeared to be gaining strength, from knowing that lady Jacintha Fitzosborne, by being married, no longer opposed her hopes; but more particularly, from being told that sir Middleton not only survived her perfidy, but still enjoyed his senses, his spirits, and his appetite, a report confirmed by his calling one morning at lady Welford’s when she happened to be there, a much-pleased witness of his good looks and undiminished gaiety.

When rallied on lady Jacintha’s inconstancy, he confessed he wore a willow garland one day, six hours, and five minutes—“But though,” said he, “I raved and swore,



and acted the disappointed lover for that time, you perceive, ladies, I had sense enough neither to clap a pistol to my head, or dangle in my garters; and when I began to consider the matter calmly, I really felt obliged to her ladyship for jilting me; had we married, we should have been a miserable pair; our tempers, I am certain, never would have agreed; and, by the-by, if report is to be credited, her ladyship is not quite so happy as she expected to be, from marrying a man immensely rich."

"Lady Eglantine Sydney told me," said Miss Graham, "that lady Jacintha's husband, Mr. Cheveril, is a miser, penurious in the extreme, and that she has not a guinea that she can call her own."

"Mr. Cheveril is, I understand, a second Petruchio," replied lady Welford, "and has undertaken to tame a shrew."

"And, by George!" rejoined sir Middleton, "lady Jacintha wanted taming; and it is said her lord let her know he would be master, by beginning to humble her haughty spirit even in her wedding shoes."

"Lady Eglantine called to see her, out of pure curiosity, as she expressed it," said lady Welford, "at a sumptuous mansion in Devonshire, called Woodfield Priory; there she found her surrounded indeed by wealth and magnificence, but without the power to enjoy it, for Mr. Cheveril's authority was visible in ever thing; lady Jacintha's dress was elegant and costly—her boudoir shone with Asiatic splendour, and was adorned with numberless curiosities in gold and ivory; but in the midst of her magnificence lady Jacintha appeared low-spirited, freful, and uneasy; her former amusements and former acquaintance were entirely excluded from Woodfield Priory, and no company admitted but Mr. Cheveril's own relations—a clergyman, his wife, and daughters, and a baronet's family, all of the old school, formal, ceremonious, and puritanical."

"Adieu then to *rouge et noir* and faro," observed sir Middleton; "these enchanting games must now give place to a rubber at sober whist."

"I much question, from lady Eglantine's report, whether even that is allowed," replied lady Welford; "every thing at Woodfield Priory was so regular, so stupid, and so dull, that she protested she was quite sorry for lady Jacintha—'For what,' said she to lady Eglantine, 'does it signify to reside in a palace, if no one is to see its riches? one might as well live in a hovel; when one can't break the heart of one's friends with envy at one's possessions, one might as well be poor.'"

"Her ladyship's mortifications have wrought no change in her sentiments, I perceive," remarked sir Middleton.

"Lady Eglantine declared," resumed lady Welford, "that during the three days she remained at Woodfield Priory, she heard nothing on the part of Mr. Cheveril but contradictions, dressed in the most provoking politeness, and on lady Jacintha's, only murmurs and complaints, for she had no will of her own in any particular. Lady Eglantine begged Mr. Cheveril would allow lady Jacintha to come to London in February, to assist at her nuptials with the marquis of Beverley; but he peremptorily refused, alleging, as an excuse, that he would not hazard the loss of an heir, by allowing his wife to racket about, and keep late hours, and plunge again into the ruinous dissipations of a town life, from which, he flattered himself, he had nearly weaned her."

"The wealth lady Jacintha was so eager to ensure," said Miss Delmore, "has become her bane and punishment; she is married to a man she does not like, and though surrounded by magnificence, lives a life of splendid misery—I pity her most sincerely."

"In that I believe then you are singular," replied Miss Graham; "for most of her ladyship's acquaintance appear to rejoice at her disappointed hopes."

"She is rightly served," said sir Middleton Maxfield, "and I give Mr. Cheveril credit for knowing how to rule a wife."

Miss Graham saw, with much secret satisfaction, that sir Middleton was perfectly reconciled to the loss of lady Jacintha, and that his heart felt no emotions of jealousy or regret; it also gave her no little pleasure to see herself particularly distinguished by him whenever they met, which occurred almost every day; but sir Middleton made no declaration of love—the trick lady Jacintha had served him, though it did not prejudice him against women, made him suspicious and wary, and determined him to see a little into the disposition and principles of the fair one who should next engage his regard, before he made her an offer of his hand.

Miss Macdonald having ceased to consider Miss Delmore a rival, was now more than ever encouraged to believe that her indefatigable exertions to attract the wavering inconstant lord Alwyn Bruce, would ultimately be crowned with success. His visits at sir Alexander Stuart's had been regular, and she had fancied him more attentive to her than formerly. A few days had passed in the encouragement of the delightful hope that she should yet obtain the title of lady Alwyn Bruce, when, alas! at a ball given by lady Wilmington, she had the misery to see him lead out Miss Sedgeley, at the very moment when she believed he was approaching to ask her to dance. This disappointment so deranged and disturbed Miss Macdonald, that she was near fainting, and catching Cecilia's arm, she entreated her to go with her into one of the retiring-rooms for a few moments, where she thought the air would relieve her.

Miss Delmore was engaged to dance with lord Rushdale; but precious as were the moments passed with him, she compassionated Miss Macdonald's indisposition, and entreated his excuse.

Miss Macdonald, in the strong violence of grief and resentment, pushed open a door, which was held by some person in the inside; and the discovery she made on entering the room, instantly removed her indisposition, while it reduced Miss Delmore to a situation the most pitiable, for she trembled, and her lips and cheeks changed to ashy paleness, as Miss Macdonald, with a look of disdain, said—"I really entreat your ladyship's pardon—when I pushed open the door, I had no idea that I was intruding on a *tête-à-tête*; I certainly had no expectation that I should find the countess of Torrington and major Norman shut up together."

"Shut up together!" repeated the major; "you are under a mistake, ma'am—I entered this apartment only the instant before yourself, by mere accident, not supposing any person was here; and knowing how very censorious the world in general is, I held the door, because I did not choose to expose lady Torrington to misrepresentations and undeserved scandal."

"Very gallant, very considerate, and very correct, I dare say!" replied Miss Macdonald, sneeringly—"come, Miss Delmore, I am much better; let us go, for fear the censorious world should include us in its misrepresentations and scandal."

The countess had sat on a sofa; perplexed, if not confused, she now started up—"Stay, Miss Delmore," said she—"I must request you will not misrepresent this affair to the earl of Torrington and lord Rushdale, for major Norman's explanation is, I assure you, true to a letter."

“From me, madam,” replied Cecilia, “you have no misrepresentation to apprehend—I would willingly forget having entered this apartment at all.”

“And you, Miss Macdonald,” resumed the countess, “you will, I trust, remember it may be attended with very serious consequences your mentioning having seen me with major Norman.”

Miss Macdonald replied only by a look of disdain; and taking the arm of the pale trembling Cecilia, she was quitting the room when they met the earl of Torrington; the sight of him increased Cecilia’s agitation, and unable to support herself, she sunk on Miss Macdonald’s shoulder.

Lord Torrington inquired what was the matter?

Miss Macdonald replied that Miss Delmore was unwell, and made an attempt to move towards the ball-room.

“The heat of the ball-room will overcome her quite,” said the earl; “you had better go in there,” pointing to the room they had just quitted.

Miss Delmore now felt added alarm, and she fainted articulated—”No, no, for Heaven’s sake, no—I am better, indeed I am—I am quite well;” but her look and tone contradicted her words.

The earl saw that something unpleasant had occurred, his curiosity was awakened, and resolved to satisfy it, he attempted to open the door. A strong opposition was made from within; but exerting all his strength, the earl forced open the door, and beheld his own disgrace, and the cause of Cecilia’s agitation and alarm. A scene of tumult and confusion took place—the major drew his sword—lady Torrington shrieked and fainted—the company in the ball-room were disturbed: but fortunately the indisposition of Cecilia being mentioned to lord Rushdale, he had flown to her, and remained ignorant of the discovery of his mother’s frailty, till after the major had left the house.

This event put an end to the entertainment of the evening; lady Wilmington was suspected of having encouraged the intimacy of the countess of Torrington and major Norman, by allowing them to meet at her house, and that part of her guests who considered reputation valuable, retired in disgust. Lord Rushdale, overwhelmed with shame and sorrow, accompanied his no-less-distressed father home; and lady Welford withdrew, with Miss Delmore and the other young people of her party.

Sir Middleton Maxfield was dancing with Miss Graham when the news of lady Torrington’s exposure flew round the ball-room; the anxiety with which she sought Miss Delmore, and the tenderness and feeling she had expressed for all the parties concerned in the unpleasant business, convinced him that her disposition was very different to lady Jacintha’s, who would have enjoyed, with malignant pleasure, the discovery of her dear friend’s indiscretion and disgrace.

Lord Torrington, after a long conversation with his son, determined on a separation from the countess, and they waited in the library in painful expectation of her return home, when the earl, in the presence of his son, intended to bid her farewell for ever; it was past one o’clock when they left lady Wilmington’s, and they had sat a long time silent, busied in unpleasant reflections, but yet she came not.

The earl meditated on the justice of his punishment, for he had forsaken a lovely innocent being, to marry a heartless creature, whose ruling passion was vanity, and her dereliction of virtue, he mentally acknowledged, was retribution for his own offences.

Not so the noble high-souled Rushdale. He sat with his hands covering his face, down which, in spite of the burning indignation of his soul, the big tears coursed one another; he wept the dishonour brought on a noble house, and felt a double portion of agony in the reflection, that the disgrace was inflicted by his mother. His father had let fall no hint that he intended to call major Norman to account, but his spirit would not tamely submit to the injury, and Rushdale determined on sending the seducer of his mother a challenge—little did the sorrowing Oscar know that mother, or he would have acquitted major Norman of the guilt of seduction.

The earl of Torrington and his son saw the return of day, and they retired to their beds, convinced she intended to return no more.

When the earl left his chamber the next day, he inquired for Mrs. Smithson, and was informed she had left the house, taking with her a large travelling trunk, and several smaller ones.

When lord Rushdale joined his father at breakfast, he ingenuously told him he had been to call upon his friend Drawley, whom he had fixed upon to be the bearer of a challenge to major Norman; but from him he had learned that the major and his mother had left London at daybreak, on their way to France. Lord Rushdale was for pursuing them; but this the earl opposed—"It is utterly impossible we should ever live together again," said he, "and equally impossible to prevent her continuing this shameful intrigue."

For many days the earl and his son felt unable to go abroad, or admit company, and during this time the newspapers were full of exaggerated accounts of the conduct of the earl, lady Torrington, and major Norman; but however much the generality of lady Torrington's acquaintance might rejoice in the disclosure of her disgrace, Miss Delmore, lady Welford, and Miss Graham, were among the few who deplored her ill conduct, and sincerely commiserated the earl and his son, who seemed almost distracted, and bent to the earth, with the conviction of his unfeeling mother's frailty.

The earl of Torrington and his son had shut themselves from society, and shrunk from the sneers and compassion of the world; but the sensible arguments of colonel St. Irwin and lady Welford, joined with the pathetic remonstrances of Miss Delmore, at length prevailed, and they found that lady Torrington's indiscretion was nearly forgotten, in the wonder excited by some newer instance of infidelity.

The buz of admiration that every where followed Miss Delmore, if it did not excite love in the bosom of the vain conceited sir Cyril Musgrove, raised a passion equally as tormenting; and while he viewed her beautiful face and symmetrical figure, he thought, if he could once secure her favour, he might challenge the kingdom to produce a pair so handsome and well-matched as themselves; but matrimony was considered by sir Cyril with aversion, and that the

—— "Names of wife and husband  
Only meant ill-nature, cares, and quarrels."

As a wife, sir Cyril never thought of Cecilia; but to have so lovely and accomplished a creature for a mistress, would increase the eclat of his gallantries, and render him the envy of the fashionable world. But though sir Cyril got himself introduced at lady Welford's, and contrived to make one in every party where he knew Miss Delmore was

invited, though he had dropped the insolent freedom of his manner, and had become one of the most humble and attentive of her admirers, yet she never bestowed on him so much as an encouraging smile. Sir Cyril had also heard that lord Rushdale was an accepted lover; but to this report he gave no credence, believing that the earl of Torrington would certainly seek to match his heir with a lady of equal rank and consequence with himself.

Miss Macdonald's ambitious projects were now greatly disturbed, by lord Alwyn Bruce being constantly seen at the side of Miss Sedgeley, who, perfectly cured of her passion for the unworthy profligate, major Norman, seemed to listen to his lordship with complacency and approbation; and, full of rage and jealousy, Miss Macdonald appeared one morning at lady Welford's, intending to disclose her griefs and suspicions to Miss Delmore, whom she found prepared to go to Richmond with lady Welford, who had a relation residing there.

"There is no person in the world so unlucky as I am," said Miss Macdonald; "you are going to Richmond, and I came on purpose to fetch you to spend the day with us."

"I am extremely sorry," replied Cecilia.

"And Miss Graham will be here directly," continued Miss Macdonald, "to enforce my suit. Sir Alexander Stuart has got the gout, and is as cross as the—, and we promised to bring you to sing to him, because we know your melody will charm the evil spirit out of him, as David's did out of Saul."

"I do not believe I possess such power," said Cecilia.

"But I am certain of it, you are such a favourite with sir Alexander," returned Miss Macdonald; "and this disappointment will make him more fretful than ever."

"I am sure my dear Cecilia would be happy to banish pain from any person," said lady Welford; "and as she is not expected at Richmond, I will readily relinquish the pleasure of her company to oblige sir Alexander Stuart."

Miss Macdonald was grateful to lady Welford for her kindness; and it was settled that Cecilia should spend the day in Albemarle-street, lady Welford promising to return, if possible, time enough to dine at sir Alexander Stuart's.

Lady Welford's carriage had no sooner left the door, than Miss Macdonald began to disclose her own particular grievances. Cecilia listened to her account of lord Alwyn Bruce's attentions to Miss Sedgeley with patience, though it was given with much ill-nature and prolixity; and when Miss Macdonald paused, she endeavoured to persuade her to think no more of lord Alwyn Bruce, whose conduct so evidently demonstrated that he had no thought of, or intention of addressing her.

But this was advice, though certainly wise and prudent, that Miss Macdonald did not choose to adopt; she determined to hope,

"Though hope was lost,  
Though heaven and earth her wishes crost;"

and she continued to exclaim most spitefully against Miss Sedgeley, who had no pretensions to recommend her to such a match as lord Alwyn Bruce would be in point of rank and fortune, at the same time proudly enumerating the antiquity of the house of Macdonald, and her own fortune and expectations.

Miss Delmore in vain tried to change the subject; but Miss Macdonald could talk of nothing but lord Alwyn Bruce's ridiculous penchant for the sheepish-looking

automaton, Miss Sedgeley, against whom she was violently exclaiming, when Miss Graham entered, and gave a different turn to her ill-temper.—“You have kept me waiting till my patience is quite exhausted,” said she; “your half hours, Miss Graham, are longer than the hours of other people.”

“I beg ten thousand pardons, my dear Margaret,” replied Miss Graham; “to me it has been the shortest half-hour I ever passed in my life; but I hope my stay has not deranged any plan.”

Miss Macdonald proposed a walk in the Park.

“As the morning is so fine,” said Cecilia, “and that can take place now; but I see,” continued she, “in your eyes a sparkling pleasure, that tells me the last half-hour—”

“Has produced an event,” interrupted Miss Graham, “of sufficient importance to make me happy or miserable for life.”

“Why bless me, Jessy, you are not married, are you?” asked Miss Macdonald.

“No, cousin,” replied Miss Graham, “not absolutely married, but on the high road—actually promised.”

“You astonish me, Jessy,” said Miss Macdonald, fretfully; “all my acquaintance, I think, are on the high road to matrimony. Here is Miss Delmore promised, and you, Jessy Graham, promised—I wonder I am not promised.”

“I am not half so particular as you,” replied Miss Graham; “if I was to wait for a man without fault, I should stand a fair chance of leading apes, and so to avoid that terrible employment, I have consented. But, dear me! I believe I ought to blush, and cast down my eyes, with several other young-lady tricks, to shew my ‘maiden modesty;’ but as I cannot blush when I please, I will leave it to your imagination to suppose me overwhelmed with confusion, while I—”

“I hope, cousin,” interrupted Miss Macdonald, “you have entered into no engagement without consulting sir Alexander and lady Stuart; remember how kind and good they have been to you, even from your infancy.”

“You surely cannot suspect me of such ingratitude,” said Miss Graham, “sir Middleton Maxfield—”

Miss Delmore smiled—“I congratulate you, my dear friend,” said she; “with all my heart.”

“Sir Middleton Maxfield is like the rest of his inconstant sex, I perceive,” observed Miss Macdonald, spitefully; “it was but the other day he was dying for love of lady Jacintha Fitzosborne, and now—”

“He is violently in love with Jessy Graham,” interrupted the lively girl, laughing; “and do you know, coz, I have the vanity to think he will be constant.”

“I hope you will not be deceived,” returned Miss Macdonald; “but there is no sort of dependence to be placed on men. I am sure I have seen lord Alwyn Bruce in love with half-a-dozen different females in the course of as many months.”

“But you know, coz,” said Miss Graham, “it was not sir Middleton Maxfield that deceived lady Jacintha Fitzosborne; and surely it is not natural to suppose that he would remain single all his life, for the sake of a worthless woman.”

“Oh dear, no, certainly,” replied Miss Macdonald; “such instances of persevering constancy are very rare in men; but let us drop the subject, for the creatures are not worth so much conversation, and you see we have kept Miss Delmore waiting a long time.”

In the Park the observation that Cecilia's beauty attracted restored Miss Macdonald to tolerable good-humour, for vanity suggested it was her Grecian figure that occasioned several elegant young men not only to express their admiration aloud, but to keep near them during their promenade.

Lady Wilton left her carriage to join the youthful trio, for the pleasure, as she said, of enjoying a walk with them, but in reality to rail against the countess of Torrington; for the salutation of the morning had scarcely passed, before she said—"So, Miss Delmore, your friend and patroness, lady Torrington, has committed a fine faux pas; for my part, I was not at all astonished—I was perfectly convinced that there was something not correct between her and that other vile wretch, count del Montarino, as he calls himself, though I never did believe he had a right to any title; no, no, he was certainly a dancing-master, or a hair-dresser, or some low person of that sort. I dare say you remember the fire, and the count's gold snuff-box—lady Jacintha Fitzosborne could have told a pretty tale about that fire, I fancy."

Miss Graham perceived how much Cecilia was distressed, and anxious to dismiss lady Torrington from the loquacious lady Wilton's thoughts, she inquired if her ladyship had heard from her niece?

"No, not a syllable," replied lady Wilton; "no one knows what has become of her. Poor dear Jemima was quite a child of nature, all innocence and simplicity; and having no deceit herself, never suspected it in another; no one can tell where the fellow may have taken her; he may, for what we know, have sold her to the Algerines, who are said to be monstrously fond of English women. Poor Jemima! it is impossible to tell what she is suffering.—But pray, Miss Delmore, has the earl of Torrington heard whether the countess and major Norman are gone to France or to Italy? Who could have believed, at her years—I dare say she is upwards of forty—that she would have been so foolish as to elope? No doubt the earl will be divorced; but as to damages, the major is as poor as a church mouse—he has not a guinea, I believe, independent of his commission. Really these are very serious times; wickedness of all sorts, and distress of all sorts; but, of course, matrimonial infidelity is extremely distressing—nothing can be more so; I don't know, for my part, how people can be happy a moment with the consciousness of having broken their matrimonial vows—does the earl intend to be divorced?"

Cecilia was so much confused, she knew not what she said.—"I really have not heard."

"Not heard!" repeated lady Wilton—"that is very odd indeed; I thought it was settled that you are to marry lord Rushdale; and as that is the case, I wonder you are not acquainted with the earl's intention respecting his wife."

The indelicacy of this speech so affected Cecilia, that she burst into tears, and Miss Graham begged lady Wilton to drop the subject.

"With all my heart," said lady Wilton; "for my part, I hate the countess of Torrington—I always disapproved her conduct, and am not at all interested to know what becomes of her; I only mentioned her name by mere accident."

"I thought," observed Miss Macdonald, "you had been on the most intimate terms with the countess of Torrington. I perfectly remember last summer—"

"Don't mention last summer, Miss Macdonald," interrupted lady Wilton; "pray don't speak of it—the recollection makes me quite ill; last summer was a most unfortunate period for me—I met nothing but vexation and disappointments at Torrington

Castle: poor dear Jemima! first her unfortunate elopement, then my nephew, sir Middleton Maxfield, became infatuated with that deceitful, unprincipled, satirical lady Jacintha Fitzosborne. Pray, Miss Delmore, did you ever get paid the four hundred pounds you lent her?"

"No, madam," was the reply.

"You are very foolish you don't apply to her husband," resumed lady Wilton; "four hundred pounds is not a trifling sum to lose. Lady Eglantine Sydney told me yesterday, that she had been to see her cousin at Woodfield Priory, and that Mr. Cheveril is quite a bear of a man; but no one can be sorry for lady Jacintha; I hope her husband will keep her in the country; I am sure she was one of the persons that made Torrington Castle extremely disagreeable to me."

"How was it possible, lady Wilton," said Miss Graham, "that Torrington Castle could be disagreeable to you? Was it not the happy scene of your wooing? It was, if my information is correct, at Torrington Castle you became acquainted with lord Wilton, and received his first declaration of love."

"I wish, with all my soul," replied lady Wilton, "he had made love to lady Jacintha Fitzosborne, and married her. With my first husband, Mr. Freakley; as good a creature as ever drew the breath of life, I had no cross looks—no contradictions; I did as I pleased, and my word was a law; but now lord Wilton talks so much about his dignity, and his consequence, and his rank, that I really begin to think I have paid very dear indeed for a title, particularly as his lordship spends my money among persons that I have never yet been introduced to."

"Gamblers and Newmarket jockeys," whispered Miss Macdonald.

"I suppose you young ladies are invited to lady Eglantine Sydney's wedding?" resumed lady Wilton; "there will be most magnificent doings—white and silver liveries, and a new carriage, with superb silver mouldings; but with all the splendour and parade that is to attend the ceremony, I can never persuade myself that lady Eglantine will ever be happy, after using lord Melvil so ill."

"Have you seen lady Melvil," asked Miss Graham.

"No," replied lady Wilton; "but I go with a party to call upon her to-morrow morning. Lord Wilton has seen her, and says she is a very pretty woman."

"And very sensible and unaffected, I have heard," said Miss Delmore.

"I wonder if lady Eglantine and she will visit?" resumed lady Wilton; "tho', if lord Melville is wise, he will avoid the acquaintance of the marquis of Beverley, who, if report speaks truth, will make a very bad husband."

"What does report say of him?" asked Miss Macdonald.

"That he is very much given to women," said lady Wilton; "and, for my part, I know of nothing so likely to disturb matrimonial peace, as a husband being fonder of every other female than his own wife; it is a disposition that is certain to occasion uneasiness and quarrels; in short, a married man taking notice of every face he sees is unpardonable, and would put a saint out of temper."

"Lord Wilton is given to philandering," whispered Miss Graham.

"I dare say such behaviour in a husband would be very shocking," rejoined Miss Macdonald; "but if the marquis of Beverley has been given to gallantry, lady Eglantine will reclaim him; and you know, my dear madam, it is said, a reformed rake makes the very best of husbands."



"I would not advise you to trust to that saying, Miss Macdonald," replied lady Wilton: "men never leave off their vices, take my word for it; let their wives be ever so amiable, they think it no sin to go astray; and I am certain, let lady Eglantine Sydney marry when she will, the marquis of Beverley will give her cause to repent, for he will follow his old courses, like lord Wilton."

"Like lord Wilton!" repeated Miss Graham, with affected astonishment. "Surely lord Wilton can never be so naughty as to abandon the society of so superior a woman as yourself for other females?"

"Yes, my dear Miss Graham," returned lady Wilton; "yes, he neglects and forsakes me; it was only last week that I discovered the cruel barbarous man keeps a mistress."

"Shocking!" exclaimed Miss Macdonald.

"Worse, ten times worse than shocking," resumed lady Wilton; "the base ungrateful man spends my money on a harlot—a concubine! when I am certain there is nothing wanting to his happiness at home: but I will never rest till I ferret her out—and woe betide them if I catch them together! Poor Mr. Freakley, he was a well-conducted person; and after having had one good husband, I was certainly bewitched to take a second."

"You will have better luck with a third husband," replied Miss Graham.

"A third! Heaven forbid that I should be destined to be plagued with a third!" returned lady Wilton; "I am sure I would never persuade any person of my acquaintance to marry at all, men are such deceitful hypocrites, so attentive, and smiling, and tender before they get you to church, and afterwards paying more respect, by half, to their dogs and horses; if I could only have foreseen what a negligent husband lord Wilton would make, I would have remained Mrs. Freakley to the hour of my death."

Lady Wilton was compelled to wish the young ladies good-morning, being engaged to go to an auction; but hoped they would not fail to be at her rout on Wednesday evening.

"Poor lady Wilton!" said Miss Delmore, "she might have foreseen, without any very extraordinary stretch of understanding, that lord Wilton, a free-thinker, an avowed libertine, would make exactly the husband she describes."

"Does not her ladyship's account of her matrimonial felicity frighten you, cousin?" asked Miss Macdonald.

"Not at all," replied Miss Graham; "I think sir Middleton Maxfield has a good heart, and that by proper management I may wean him from his present irregularities; at any rate, I must take my chance; marriage has, you know, been compared to a lottery, in which there are many blanks to a prize: if I am fortunate, I shall rejoice—if I am otherwise, I will endeavour to bear my ill luck, without exposing myself to the ridicule of the world."

At sir Alexander Stuart's Cecilia found an agreeable party; but lady Welford did not, according to her promise, return from Richmond to dinner, and Cecilia, finding it near eight o'clock, was growing very uneasy, when a note was delivered her, which had been brought by one of lady Welford's female servants. It contained the unwelcome intelligence, that lady Welford's carriage, on her return from Richmond, had been overturned at Turnham Green, and that her arm had been dislocated by the accident; that the bearer of the note was the servant of Mr. Robinson, a surgeon, who would conduct

her safely to Turnham Green, to the surgeon's house, where lady Welford remained, being too much bruised to bear the motion of a carriage.

The surgeon's servant, a respectable-looking elderly man, had accompanied lady Welford's housemaid to sir Alexander Stuart's, who said he had brought his master's carriage, the axletree and one of the wheels of lady Welford's being broke.

The man gave so clear and unhesitating an account, that bidding her friends goodnight, Cecilia hastened home, to put up a few necessary things for herself and lady Welford.

On inquiring for James, the footman who always attended her, Cecilia was told he had been out ever since he left her at sir Alexander Stuart's. Much as she disliked trusting herself at that time of the evening in a strange carriage, and with strange servants, she was impatient of any further delay, and, stepping into the carriage, she bade them proceed with all possible expedition.

It was a dark foggy night, and, full of concern for lady Welford, Cecilia paid no attention to the road, till she began to think they were very long reaching Turnham Green; she felt for a check-string, but could find none; she endeavoured to let down the windows, but they resisted her efforts. Her repeater, which she happened to have about her, told her it was ten o'clock; she had left London at half past eight—it was impossible, going at the speed the carriage did, but that Turnham Green must have been left miles behind.

Terror now seized her mind, for she was convinced that she had been deceived. She remembered the carrying Mrs. Freakley off from Torrington Castle, and had now no doubt but this was a contrivance of the same person's.

Cecilia neither shrieked nor wept, but she fervently prayed to Heaven for protection, and fortitude to sustain the trial that awaited her; she was certain that her friends would be active to discover whither she was taken; she pressed the ring, placed on her finger by lord Rushdale, to her lips and again renewed her vow of faithful love, which no circumstance should ever have power to shake; and while she thought with fear on her own unpleasant situation, a tender regret, mingled with alarm for her own fate, to think that sorrow on her account would be added to what he already endured for the misconduct of his mother. Mrs. Doricourt was at present spared the painful knowledge of her being thus artfully separated from her friends—"And perhaps," said Cecilia, "perhaps I may be restored to their protection before she returns; at least I will hope so, for Heaven is every where, and will not now forsake me."

Not the most distant idea entered Cecilia's imagination, of where she was going, or by whom she had been spirited away; and the long tedious hours of night were passed in silence, in regret, and surmises. Sometimes she thought herself in the power of lady Torrington, who, to prevent her marriage with lord Rushdale, was hurrying her away to confinement in some distant part of the country; but if this was the case, she might find means to escape, or to inform lady Welford. At length the grey of the morning shed a faint ray through the windows of the carriage, and with anxious eye she watched the increasing light, till she saw they were on a road that led through a flat country; but unable to make much observation, from the rapidity with which they passed along, she sunk back in a corner of the carriage, almost numbed with cold, and faint with fatigue.

It was near eight o'clock when the carriage stopped at a little inn on the roadside; the door was opened, and Miss Delmore was desired to alight; no person appeared but an

awkward country-girl, who gaped and stared, and led the way up stairs to a bedroom. Cecilia would have detained the girl in the room, but a bold-looking young man, who had opened the carriage door, bade her, in a tone of authority, go down, and make breakfast as quick as possible, for he was almost starved.

The girl obeyed his order, after having stared at Cecilia with stupid wonder.

"Till you reach your journey's end, ma'am," said he, "I am deputed to attend you."

"Whither are you taking me?" asked Miss Delmore; "and by whose orders do you act?"

"These are questions, ma'am," replied the man, "I am not at liberty to answer."

"Where is that elderly man who pretended to be the servant of Mr. Robinson, the surgeon?" demanded Cecilia.

"He is returned to his master," was the reply.

"And who, in reality, is his master?" said Cecilia.

"You will be in that secret, and many more, by-and-by," replied the man, in a tone of impertinent familiarity; "in the mean time, you had better take some refreshment, and go to bed, as we shall not travel again till towards night."

"Send up the young woman to me, sir," said Cecilia; "I prefer the attendance of a female."

The man laughed.—"That young woman," replied he, "would not attend you alone, if you would give her twenty pounds."

"Not attend me alone!" repeated Cecilia; "and why not?"

"Because she is afraid you will bite or scratch her," returned the man, laughing immoderately. "The girl believes you are stark mad, and so does the mistress of the house, and that we are taking you to a private madhouse. You see, ma'am," impudently winking his eye, "we have cut our eye-teeth—we have all our thoughts about us: we don't blunder as they do in Cumberland."

Miss Delmore, disgusted with his insolent manner, told him she wished to be alone, and could dispense with his attendance. From what he had said about the blunder in Cumberland, which certainly alluded to the carrying off Mrs. Freakley, she supposed she was not in the power of lady Torrington—"But let the projector of this villany be whom it may," said Cecilia, "I ought to struggle—I should not remain thus stupified with surprise and alarm, but endeavour to make my escape."

She started from her seat, and tried the door, but it was fastened on the outside; she then applied to the window, but it was strongly nailed down.—"Every precaution has been taken," resumed she, "and I am completely in the toils; but I will not give way to despair—I will trust in Heaven, who will, I am persuaded, deliver me from this trouble."

Cecilia was on her knees, absorbed in devotion, when a key turning in the door announced breakfast. The girl stood on the outside with a tea-try, but seeing Miss Delmore move towards her, she shrieked aloud, and begged Mr. Samuel, as she called him, to take the things, before she let them fall.—"A looks very quiet, to be sure," said she, "but a may bite for all that; mad folks be always cunning, mun."

"Never fear, Ciss," replied the young man, "the lady will do you no mischief."

"No trust to be put in crazy folks," replied Cecily; "I remember granny Dawkins almost throttled me once; and ever since, mun, I be feared to come nigh mad folks."

"I am not mad, my good girl," replied Cecilia, "I am as much in my senses as you are; I have been forced away from my friends, and brought here against my consent."

“Did not I tell you the poor soul would say so?” said Mr. Samuel.

“Yes, to be sure you did,” replied the girl; “and, bless your heart, old granny Dawkins used to say as how she was the queen of England; and that all the country, corn-fields and meadows, and all, belonged to her.”

Cecilia sat down; she found it would be in vain to expect assistance in that house, where the people were persuaded she was mad; she felt sick for want of food, but resolved not to take any till she had first seen the man eat and drink; she therefore bade him take a cup of coffee, that she might be convinced it was not drugged.

Mr. Samuel instantly obeyed, observing the coffee and toast were so good, that she might command him to finish his breakfast, if she pleased.

“You may now go to your breakfast, sir, if you please,” said Cecilia; “when I want you, I will ring for your attendance.”

Being left alone, she partook of what was set before her, considering that it would be wrong to waste the strength she might hereafter want, in useless privations and regrets.

When Mr. Samuel returned to remove the breakfast-things, she inquired at what hour they were to proceed?

Being informed at about six, she desired that she might not be disturbed, as she should endeavour to sleep.

The man retired, locking the door after him. Miss Delmore then placed a tolerably-heavy table against it, and threw herself on the bed, where, in spite of all the grief and incertitude of her mind, she sunk in a few moments into happy forgetfulness.

When she awoke, she found that it was near dark; and while she reflected on her own unhappy situation, and the distress her friends would be in on her account, a rapping at the door informed her it was time to rise. Certain that resistance would avail her nothing, she arose, and having refreshed her throbbing temples, by bathing her face with water, she opened the door.

Mr. Samuel was waiting to conduct her down stairs to a parlour, where a cloth was laid, near a window communicating with the bar.—“You have a long way to go, ma’am,” said the man, “and you have come a long way, and have taken very little refreshment; I have ordered a boiled fowl and ham, which will be ready in a few moments.”

Cecilia knew that opposition on her part would answer no purpose; she made no reply, but seating herself near the fire, kept her eye on the bar, in the hope that she should see some person enter, to whose humanity she might appeal, to aid her liberation from the hands of the villain who had deluded her from her home.

While she sat, full of sad rumination, a carriage stopped at the door; but supposing it the one that was to convey her farther from her friends, she kept her seat, till a voice she knew sounding on her ear, made her start; in another moment she saw sir Cyril Musgrove enter the bar, and heard him inquire if he could have two pair of fresh horses for his carriage, as he wished to reach London with all possible expedition?

Miss Delmore did not wait to hear the reply to this requisition, but advancing to the bar window, she shrieked loudly, and, calling him by his name, entreated his protection.

Cecilia’s spirits no longer supported her; the joyful hope of assistance deprived her of sense, and when she recovered, she found herself supported by sir Cyril and the landlady, who was holding burnt feathers under her nose.

A few words explained her situation; sir Cyril swore vengeance against the rascals who had brought her there; and protested, 'pon his honour, he would have the license taken from the house, where a young lady of consequence, one in whom he was so much interested, had been used so shamefully ill.

The landlady fell on her knees, wept and declared that she had been imposed upon by the two men who brought the young lady there, they having sworn that she was mad, and that they were going to take her to a madhouse, by the order of her relations.

Sir Cyril ordered the landlady to send in the men to him, that he might examine and compel them to give up the name of their employer.

The landlady was absent some time, which sir Cyril employed in soothing the apprehensions of Miss Delmore, and assuring her that she might rely on his word of honour, that he would never leave her till he had placed her in safety.

The landlady returned, full of grief and consternation, to say, that the men had mounted the carriage, which had been ready some time, and drove off full speed; and that, unfortunately, her husband being a cripple, she had no one to send in pursuit of them.

Sir Cyril flew into a violent rage, and stamped and swore that she was in league with the villains, but that he would bring her to a severe account.

The woman wept and sobbed, and protested her innocence with such apparent earnestness and sincerity, that Miss Delmore, convinced she knew nothing of the affair, tried to pacify sir Cyril, who at last becoming calm, inquired if there was anything to be had to eat?

The fowl and ham being brought in, he prevailed on Cecilia to take a seat at the table, observing, that if she travelled on an empty stomach, she would certainly be sick.

Dinner being over, sir Cyril began to apologize for ordering the carriage immediately, the urgency of his business obliging him to be in London early the following day.

To Miss Delmore nothing could be more agreeable than setting off directly; and in a joyful accent she replied, she was ready to attend him.

Seated by sir Cyril Musgrove in his carriage, she anticipated the pleasure of her friends, and her own delight, in being restored to them; and though she had always disliked sir Cyril, she now felt towards him the kindest and most grateful sentiments.

Sir Cyril asked her if she could form no conjecture of the person who had made use of this wicked stratagem to gain possession of her person?

Cecilia could suspect no one, nor could form an idea.

Sir Cyril mentioned Mr. Oxley, observing, he had been known to admire her when at Torrington Castle; and he had heard it whispered the reverend gentleman had made her an offer of his hand; might not the revenge of a disappointed passion have instigated him to this desperate course?

Miss Delmore knew not whom to accuse; but there was something in her mind that acquitted Mr. Oxley.—"No," said she; "though I am utterly at a loss to conjecture the author of this outrage, I have no thought that induces me to suspect Mr. Oxley; I do not think he is the person."

"Neither do I, 'pon my honour!" replied sir Cyril, to the astonishment of Cecilia, who, from what he had said the moment before, supposed he did suspect Mr. Oxley. "I do not," continued sir Cyril, "believe that the reverend gentleman has spirit enough for such

an undertaking; but time, you know, is a great tell-tale, and will, no doubt, reveal this secret, and at a moment perhaps when you least expect it."

At midnight they stopped to change horses and take refreshment, sir Cyril declaring that travelling always gave him an immense appetite.

The hours of night passed in a close carriage are always fatiguing, even when conversation beguiles the way of its tediousness. At daybreak Miss Delmore perceived they were entering a town, which she supposed was London, and, clasping her hands, she exclaimed—"Thank Heaven! I shall shortly be at home."

Sir Cyril smiled, and said—"Pon my honour, Miss Delmore, you have had a most miraculous escape; but, after all, I am prodigiously sorry—"

"Sorry for what, sir Cyril?" asked Cecilia.

"Why, but don't be alarmed, I entreat you," resumed he, "I am only a little apprehensive that there may be persons so ill-disposed as to think and say that you left London with your own free will—that there was no sort of compulsion used."

"They will think and say truly, sir Cyril," replied Miss Delmore; "for sir Alexander Stuart's family, with whom I had dined, as well as lady Welford's servants, are witnesses that I was impatient to set off, under the idea that I was hastening to lady Welford, whom I was taught to believe had met an accident that compelled her to remain at Turnham Green."

"The world, my dear Miss Delmore," resumed sir Cyril, "the censorious world, will not attribute the readiness with which you set off after dark, in a strange carriage, with no other attendant than a man you had never seen before, to concern for lady Welford; they will believe you went by appointment to a lover."

"Impossible, sir Cyril!" replied Miss Delmore; "the world, bad as it is, cannot be so cruel and unjust. My engagement to lord Rushdale is well known, and no one will believe me so base, so vile, as to encourage other addresses."

"It is a very wicked age we live in," returned sir Cyril; "and our most praiseworthy intentions are mistaken and misrepresented. I sincerely wish it was otherwise, for I think it extremely impertinent, 'pon my honour I do, for people to make observations upon the conduct of others."

Miss Delmore was not pleased with the look or conversation of sir Cyril Musgrove; and perceiving they were again off the stones on the high road, she asked how far they were from London?

Instead of replying to her question, sir Cyril continued to say—"Now, for instance, my dear Miss Delmore, if any person was to see you quietly seated beside me, in my carriage, it is a thousand to one but they would have the insolence to say I was the happy fellow for whose sake you had left the protection of your friends."

Miss Delmore coloured with resentment, as she replied—"My friends, sir, know me better than to suspect me of such indiscretion and ingratitude; they will give credit to my assertions; they will not believe you my lover, but they will feel grateful to you for being my protector—for preserving me from the enemy who perhaps had a design upon my life."

"Your life, my sweet creature! ha, ha, ha, ha! that idea is too ridiculous—excuse me—'pon my honour, I cannot help laughing. No, lovely credulity!" continued he, throwing his arm round her waist, "your life is in no danger, be assured; no man would be

so foolish as to deprive himself of the pleasure of gazing on those beauteous eyes—of hearing the silver tones of that melodious voice.”

Miss Delmore endeavoured to release herself from the strong clasp of sir Cyril Musgrove—a sudden light seemed to flash on her mind, and in him she was convinced she beheld the person who had failed to carry her off from Torrington Castle, but had now, unfortunately for her, succeeded in decoying her from the protection of lady Welford.

The road they were travelling was little frequented. She looked anxiously on each side; but no person appeared; and in a voice tremulous with terror, she demanded of sir Cyril whether they were really on the road to London?

“That question implies a doubt,” replied he. “What reason, Miss Delmore, have you to suppose I am deceiving you? ’Pon my honour! I think it monstrously uncivil of you to doubt my veracity.”

“You will, I trust, pardon me, sir Cyril,” said Miss Delmore, “when you reflect how much my mind has been agitated during the last twenty-four hours; besides, you must remember you told me we should reach London by daybreak, and it is now—”

“Nine o’clock,” interrupted sir Cyril, looking at his watch—“tempus fugit! ’Pon my honour! my fair interrogator, I expected we should have been at our journey’s end before this; but take patience—one other hour will satisfy all your doubts.”

Miss Delmore’s apprehensions were by no means lulled by this assurance. There was a constant evasion in all sir Cyril’s replies to her questions, that filled her with alarm, and made her anxiously watch the road for the appearance of some person who might remove her doubts respecting their approach to London; but no human being appeared, and in the utmost trepidation she beheld the carriage quit the high road, and enter on a broad, smooth-rolled gravel walk, which, by sinuous windings, cut through a wood, led to an elegant, modern-built mansion.

Miss Delmore was speechless with indignation and surprise, as sir Cyril, clasping her in his arms, exclaimed—“The triumph is mine! Crown me, shadow me with laurels! Welcome, lovely Cecilia, to Frome Hall; disguise is no long necessary—in me you behold—”

“A villain,” said she, repulsing him with all her strength—“a deceitful betrayer! but whatever may be your intention in bringing me to this place, rely upon it, you have ensured to yourself my eternal contempt and detestation.”

“Rage on, my fair reviler,” replied sir Cyril; “for, ’pon my honour! your very anger is beautiful; let the storm rattle—the louder its present fury, the more delightful will be the sunshine that ensues. Will you allow me to assist you from the carriage?”

Resistance was of no avail; Mr. Samuel, the same bold grinning fellow who had attended her at the inn, now appeared; and Miss Delmore saw that she had been made the dupe of a concerted plan.

An elegant breakfast was ready laid out in a parlour, where every thing gave indication that she had been expected—“I trust you will find yourself perfectly happy at Frome Hall, my divine Cecilia,” said sir Cyril; “though this is not the season of blossoms, I have provided every thing I thought conducive to your pleasure—harp, pianoforte, pencils, paint—”

“And writing materials,” interrupted Miss Delmore, “that I may acquaint my friends with my obligations to you, for having, by a mean deception, a paltry falsehood, decoyed me from my home?”

Sir Cyril replied—“Every other indulgence, except writing materials, you may command; but come—let me see you smile and eat.”

“It is not my intention to starve myself, sir Cyril, I promise you,” said Miss Delmore; “for though it is my misfortune to be your prisoner just now, I hope to enjoy freedom, and many happy days.”

“There is nothing wanting to your freedom and happiness,” returned sir Cyril, “but your acceptance of my love.”

“Pray, sir Cyril Musgrove, let me understand you,” said Cecilia; “you never gave me reason to suppose you beheld me with partiality.”

“Pon my honour,” replied sir Cyril, “you must have less vanity than any woman in the kingdom, or you must have read the ardency of my passion in every look and action; you might have seen my extreme adoration,

‘For love was breath’d in ev’ry sigh,  
And spoke in glances from my eye.’

“But as I had not sufficient vanity to see all this,” said Cecilia, “will you have the kindness to tell me what are your intentions respecting me?”

“With much pleasure,” replied sir Cyril; “for it is but fair we should understand each other. My intention is, that you shall possess my whole heart, participate my fortune, go with me every where, and be in every thing, except the ceremony, my wife, for, ’pon my honour! I have an unconquerable dislike to matrimony; and if a woman was as beautiful as Venus, the very certainty that she was my wife would make her a Gorgon in my eyes.”

“The candour of your explanation, sir Cyril,” said Miss Delmore, “demands an equally-ingenuous declaration on my part. Did you honourably offer me your hand, I should reject it, because my affections are unalterably engaged; but knowing from your own confession, your libertine principles, from my soul I despise you. Your vanity must indeed be excessive, to suppose that I would break my faith plighted to a noble youth, who will with the entire approbation of his father, honour me with his title, to live the degraded life of a mistress with you, whom I never did, never can, respect or esteem.”

“You will alter your sentiments,” replied sir Cyril; “you have not yet had time to find out my good qualities.”

“Do you process any?” asked Cecilia; “I fear not, from the systematic villany with which you have conducted your designs on me.”

Sir Cyril rang the bell, and ordered the servant to remove the breakfast-things—“To which,” said he, “the sauce piquante has been rather too high flavoured.”

“Of which you may avoid tasting again,” replied Cecilia, “by ordering your carriage to convey me to the nearest town.”

“Your company is infinitely agreeable,” said sir Cyril, “so very pleasant and entertaining, that, pon my honour! I cannot consent to part with it.”

“Since you are determined to detain me here,” returned Miss Delmore, “I beg you will recollect, sir Cyril, that I have been up all night, and repose is necessary.”



"You are so like a goddess," replied sir Cyril, "that, 'pon my honour! I am ready to forget you stand in need of refreshment; but at Frome Hall you are queen and mistress, and your wishes will be obeyed as soon as made known."

"I wish then to be allowed to return to London immediately," said Miss Delmore, "where, I am certain, much uneasiness is felt on my account."

"Which will very shortly be removed," replied sir Cyril.

"In what way?" demanded Cecilia.

"Have patience, ma belle ange," said sir Cyril, "and you will see."

A female servant appearing, was told by sir Cyril to conduct her lady to her chamber.

Miss Delmore followed the steps of her guide up stairs to a room furnished for repose with the utmost taste and luxury; adjoining was a dressing-room, where the toilet was covered with elegant trinkets and ornaments.

Miss Delmore inquired for her own small trunk, which contained her night things? The waiting-woman produced it, at the same time saying—"Every thing, my lady, is provided; this wardrobe is full of the most fashionable things as could be got in Lunnon—shall I reach one of the new nightcaps, my lady?"

"On no account," replied Cecilia; "and I beg, young woman, that you will not call me 'my lady,' for, I assure you, I am not married to sir Cyril Musgrove."

"No, we did not suppose you was married," said the girl, pertly; "but that is nothing to us servants—that is your own concern; only sir Cyril gave orders to us all to call you on my lady."

"I perceive, young woman," resumed Cecilia, "that sir Cyril has artfully imposed on you the belief that I am his mistress; but, in the face of Heaven, I declare it is false. He has, by a most wicked stratagem, decoyed me from my friends—I am here against my inclination—I am innocent, and will suffer death before I submit to be the dishonoured wretch sir Cyril wishes me to be."

"Goodness upon us!" said the girl, "can this sartinly be the case? Why, Samuel Sparks told me, Miss, that you fell in love with our master, sir Cyril, down in Cumberlandshire, and run away with him from your friends."

"You are deceived by a false representation," replied Cecilia; "I never left the protection of my friends till last night." She then narrated at large the stratagem that had hurried her from sir Alexander Stuart's, and thrown her into the power of sir Cyril Musgrove.

The young woman turned up her eyes with astonishment—"Our master is a sad man," said she, "and I am sure—"

Sir Cyril's voice, calling "Susan," made her break off, and leaving her speech unfinished, she quitted the room. Cecilia, having examined the doors and windows, and made them fast, recommended herself to the protection of Heaven, and retired to bed.

The next day she was much indisposed, and would gladly have remained in bed; but terror of a visit from sir Cyril constrained her to leave her chamber, and to struggle with a torturing headache.

Many days after this were spent by Cecilia in contrivances to escape, and in trying to win over Susan to procure her some mode of conveyance to Wimbourn, which she found was the town she had passed through, sixteen miles distant from Frome Hall; but Susan stood so much in awe of her sweetheart, Samuel Sparks, that she was afraid to

assist, though she sincerely pitied Miss Delmore, whose spirited resistance, and undisguised aversion to sir Cyril, had convinced her that she was indeed innocent, and detained against her consent.

After having passed more than a month at Frome Hall, one morning Cecilia found on the breakfast-table a newspaper, in which was a paragraph which filled her bosom with grief and horror—it was a long and most artfully-written account of her elopement with sir Cyril Musgrove, with whom it was said she was then upon the Continent.—“Monster!” said she, darting a glance of fiery indignation on sir Cyril “you have indeed succeeded in destroying my reputation; but the consolation of innocence yet is left me, and that will never be in your power to stain.”

“Pon my honour, my adorable creature, replied sir Cyril, laughing, I should be extremely happy if you would put it in my power to contradict the report, by returning with me to London directly. If you would only suffer me to drive you in my curricule a few mornings in Hyde Park, those blunderers, the editors, would find their mistake, and be satisfied that we had never left the kingdom.”

“I should be happy,” said Cecilia, “to find some corner of the world where I might never be annoyed by your hated presence.”

Too much affected to partake the breakfast, she retired to her chamber to weep, not only for herself, but for the agonies of her friends—of lord Rushdale in particular, who, while sorrowing under the disgrace of his mother’s criminality, would have the pangs of her supposed frailty and deceit added to his sufferings.

When Susan came to put her chamber to rights, she offered to give her the elegant gold repeater, which she often admired, if she would procure her writing materials, and convey her letter to the post town. Susan promised to try; but Samuel and his master kept so strict an eye upon Susan, that she had it not in her power to obtain the gold watch, which she often regarded with a longing eye.

One day at dinner, Miss Delmore observed that sir Cyril took more wine than usual, and used much persuasion to induce her to follow his example. In his manner he was bold, and several times attempted to kiss her hand—a freedom she invariably repulsed; and when she would have retired, as was her custom after dinner, he constrained her to remain, and insisted on the harp being brought, that she might play for his amusement.

“You may spare yourself the trouble of bringing the harp here,” replied Miss Delmore; “for never shall my fingers strike a note while I remain under a roof of yours, sir Cyril. You may frown, but I am not to be intimidated—I am not your slave, and will not be constrained to contribute to your amusement.”

“Pon my honour! you are most extremely uncivil,” returned sir Cyril, “and give yourself as high airs as if you were an empress. Every thing has its time; you have been proud, coy, and haughty, for near two months; but I am quite tired of your ridiculous prudery—I have indulged your humours long enough—I have suffered your obstinacy till I am quite weary. You have had your turn—now comes mine; and as I consider my friend Tom Moore’s observation—

—— ‘Not to be blest when you can,  
Is one of the darkest transgressions  
That happens ‘twixt woman and man,’

I am determined this very night to share your chamber.”

Cecilia, with supernatural strength, threw sir Cyril from her, as he attempted to clasp her in his arms.—“Beware,” said she, “how you attempt approaching my chamber—it will assuredly be fatal to you. I do not fear to die, but I will never live dishonoured.”

Before sir Cyril could recover himself, Cecilia had flown to her chamber, and having made fast the door, sat down, full of agonizing thought and painful remembrances of the happiness she had been torn from, to pursue a work that, despairing of obtaining pen and ink, she had begun in the hope that she might render it the means of procuring her release from sir Cyril Musgrove’s power, who never suffered her to quit the house, except himself or Samuel Sparks, attended her steps.

Cecilia’s reliance on Heaven was her support, even while she reflected on sir Cyril’s artful scheme to destroy her reputation. “Mrs. Doricourt,” said Cecilia, “will not doubt the principles she formed, and Rushdale, my beloved Rushdale, he will surely believe it impossible I can be the wretch the newspapers represent.”

While her mind was thus wandering to the dear friends from whom she was separated, her fingers were busily employed in marking, with her own hair, on a cambric handkerchief. On the third of January, Cecilia Delmore was decoyed, by an artful stratagem of sir Cyril Musgrove’s, to Frome Hall, in Dorsetshire, where she still remains in irksome confinement.

Cecilia’s eyes were dim with tears, but she diligently pursued her work, and when it was finished, she breathed on it a prayer that Heaven would graciously permit it to be the means of informing her friends of her distressful situation.

At the hour of repose it was not without considerable apprehension that Cecilia retired to bed, for she recollected, with terror, sir Cyril’s menace, and that Susan’s room was at a distant part of the house. A pair of scissors and a knife were all her weapons of defence, and these she placed on a chair close by her bedside; but this precaution was unnecessary, for sir Cyril having taken an overdose of wine, had fallen into a heavy sleep, out of which not even the most beautiful of Mahomet’s houri would have roused him, and Cecilia might have reposed securely, if fear would have permitted her to rest; but wakeful, and listening to every breath of wind, she thought over every occurrence of her past life, and dewed her pillow with tears of regretful tenderness, while she remembered the peace and happiness of St. Herbert’s Island, where she had passed her childhood, beloved, caressed, and respected. She wondered how her noble-minded Oscar bore her mysterious absence; and while she kissed the memorial of his affection, she prayed that his heart might acquit her of deceit and perfidy, that he might believe her innocent.

Of sir Cyril Musgrove she thought with increasing abhorrence, for his atrocious conduct was not the sudden impulse of ungoverned passion; it had been long meditated and contrived—it was not love, but vanity, that had urged him to destroy her happiness, by a plan of deliberate villany. She had been noticed and admired in the great world—sir Cyril only valued her as a fashionable toy, the possession of which would give him eclat with beings heartless and vicious as himself.

The character of sir Cyril’s steward, Samuel Sparks, Miss Delmore considered with terror; in her opinion he was wicked enough to be the perpetrator of any crime,

however horrible; she recollected with what diabolic mirth he had related to Susan the stupid blunder of his Cumberland relations, in carrying off Mrs. Freakley from Torrington Castle, and the boast he made, that he had never yet failed in the execution of any scheme he had undertaken.

In uneasy reflections, tears, and regrets, Cecilia passed the long dark hours of night, and the morning found her with swollen eyes and an aching head; she could then have slept, but the fear of sir Cyril's intrusion made her quit her bed.

On descending to the breakfast parlour, Cecilia met a beautiful little girl, of about three years old, who was running after a kitten. Cecilia kissed the rosy cheek of the child, who put her little hand within hers, and suffered her to lead her into the breakfast parlour.

Sir Cyril was already there, and made many, what he thought, witty observations on Miss Delmore's love of children. Seeing Cecilia continue to caress the little girl, he inquired who the brat belonged to?

The servant in attendance replied, that she was the child of Thomas Ellis, Susan's brother, who had called to see his sister in his way to Wimbourn, where he was going to take the little girl to live with her mother's sister, who was well married, and kept a druggist's shop.

"Confound the druggist's shop!" replied sir Cyril; "who the devil asked for this history? All I desire is, that the brat may not stay here—I detest the noise of children."

The servant replied, she was going away with her father as soon as he returned from the farrier's, where he was gone to get his horse's shoe fastened.

Miss Delmore requested sir Cyril to allow her to give the child some breakfast. The idea had struck her that she could make the little prattler the instrument of her deliverance. Sir Cyril was dull and out of humour; he stormed at the servants because the newspapers were not arrived; and when the packet was delivered him, he raved because a letter had not been forwarded that he expected.

Miss Delmore hastened to finish her breakfast; and while pretending to play with the child, and arrange her dress, she contrived to place her lettered handkerchief in the front of her frock, which she happily effected while sir Cyril was tumbling over the newspapers.

Every moment now appeared an age to her impatience, so much did she wish the departure of the child, who, full of prattle and of play, seemed delighted with the caresses of Miss Delmore. At length the anxiously-expected moment arrived, and with many a wish, and many a fervid prayer for deliverance, she saw the child placed before its father, who was already mounted, and her eye followed the steps of the horse till she could no longer distinguish them.

But the pleasure derived from having eluded the watchful eyes of sir Cyril, and effecting her purpose, was shortly after damped by his declaring, 'pon his honour, that he could no longer bury himself in the country, which, at that dreary time of the year, was his aversion; he was as bad as dead, and should not wonder if half the Fine women in London had put themselves into mourning on his account. "'Pon my honour!" repeated sir Cyril, "I can bear it no longer ? I must put an end to it."

"You can very easily do that," replied Cecilia; "restore me to liberty, and you will no longer be under restraint."

“That is much easier said than done, my fair prude,” returned sir Cyril; “besides, it would be barbarous in me to abandon you now; for having been so long absent, you cannot suppose lady Welford will receive you.”

“Yes, I do suppose it,” replied Miss Delmore. “Lady Welford will give credit to my assertions—she will be convinced of my innocence, and that my absence has not been my own act.”

“I adore you too much,” said sir Cyril, “to suffer you to run the hazard of being disappointed: no, lovely inflexible, we will try the air of another kingdom—we will take a trip to France, the region of gaiety, of pleasure, and freedom—nay, no contradiction, for, ’pon my honour! I have made up my mind to quit England. Some friends of mine are at this moment on the wing for Paris; we will join them; example may thaw your frigidity? you may be induced to return my love. I perceive you do not approve of going to France, which is very ungrateful, as I shall undergo the horrors of sea-sickness entirely on your account.”

“I beg, sir Cyril—“

“And I beg, Miss Delmore,” continued he, rudely interrupting her, “that you will prepare to set off, as I shall not remain at Frome Hall more than a fortnight.”

Cecilia’s heart sunk—a fortnight would soon elapse, and if before then her handkerchief should meet no pitying eye, what would become of her? In France sir Cyril might throw off all restraint, and in a land of strangers, to whom could she appeal? of whom ask protection? —Of Heaven,” said Cecilia; “yes, of that gracious and omniscient Power who has supported and sustained me to the present moment. Oh! never let me forget the precepts of my more than mother!—oh! never let me cease to supplicate that Almighty Being who watches over the injured and oppressed, and to whom the prayer of the afflicted ascends not in vain.”

#### CHAPTER IV.

Oh, human life! how mutable—how vain!  
How thy wide sorrows circumscribe thy joys!  
A sunny island in a stormy main—  
A speck of azure in a cloudy sky! SCOTT.

Not all are blest whom Fortune's hand sustains  
With wealth in courts, nor all that haunt the plains:  
Well may your hearts believe the truth I tell—  
'Tis virtue makes the bliss where'er we dwell.  
COLLINS.

—————He bade adieu  
To all that hope, to all that fancy drew;  
His frame was languid, and the hectic heat  
Flush'd on his pallid face; and countless beat  
The quick'ning pulse, and faint the limbs that bore  
The slender form that wish'd to breathe no more.  
CRABBE.

*Opinions of modern Friends—An old Friend—  
An unwelcome Discovery—A voyage to Lisbon.*

NEVER did sense of honour inflict deeper wounds than in the bosom of the youthful Rushdale, whose pride, as well as his heart, had received a severe shock from the discovery of lady Torrington's intrigue with major Norman; and though in the presence of his father and his friends he appeared to have conquered his afflictive feelings, yet the burning crimson of shame would flash across his cheek, and his spirit would rise indignant against the disgrace that now tarnished the fame of the house of Torrington, whenever any circumstance occurred to recall his mother to his memory.

The earl of Torrington had removed from his presence every memento of his wife; her name never passed his lips; yet the melancholy imprinted on his countenance gave evidence that she was not yet banished from his remembrance. The most pleasant hours of the earl and his son were spent at lady Welford's, where Cecilia, with angel sweetness, exerted all her various accomplishments to amuse, and reconcile them to an unavoidable evil.

The return of Mrs. Doricourt to England was now looked forward to as an epoch from which they were to date all future felicity; for the earl had informed the youthful pair that their marriage should take place immediately on her arrival: how cruelly this scheme of happiness was destroyed by the mysterious absence of Cecilia, can be easier imagined than described.

On the night she left London, Miss Delmore wrote a hasty note to lord Rushdale, informing him of lady Welford's unfortunate accident; and he was preparing to go to Park-street, to make inquiries in person, when lord Torrington, in much agitation, entered

his apartment, with the distressing information that lady Welford had just returned from Richmond alone, that she had met no accident at Turnham Green, had never heard of doctor Robinson, nor had seen Cecilia since she parted with her at her own house.

No doubt now remained that Cecilia had been decoyed from her home, and made the dupe of some villanous stratagem, for the distracted Rushdale, and his scarcely-less-distressed father, recollected with dismay the attempt made to carry her off from Torrington Castle. Without a clue to trace her, they offered rewards, and made inquiries at all the towns in the vicinity of London, but failed to obtain any information that could lead them to guess whither she had been taken.

As usual in all mysterious cases, there were many who had professed themselves her friends, who inclined to the belief that Miss Delmore, with all her apparent modesty, had preferred the life of honour with some favourite lover, to lord Rushdale, whose title had been in her eyes his sole attraction, she is reality disliking his person, and more particularly the sentimental romantic turn of his mind. Others who had been offended at the preference given to Miss Delmore, observed lord Rushdale was properly treated, for having neglected females of family and distinction for a low-born girl, who, luckily for him, had discovered her licentious propensities before he married her, as doubtless she would have followed the example set by the countess his mother.

Lady Welford, the duchess of Aberdeen, sir Alexander Stuart's family, and some few others, whom the modesty and timidity of Miss Delmore had charmed even more than her beauty, warmly opposed these malevolent opinions, and declared their positive belief that she was detained by force, and prevented from giving her friends information that might relieve their anxiety respecting her.

Not for a single moment did the afflicted Rushdale doubt the truth and innocence of the adored of his heart; and neither himself, nor the earl his father, ceased to offer rewards in the daily papers, or to make inquiries wherever they thought it probable they might obtain intelligence.

The footman who always attended Miss Delmore, on being severely reprimanded by lady Welford, for being out of the way when the note was brought by the man who pretended to come from Turnham Green, confessed, with much real concern, that he had been invited by one of sir Cyril Musgrove's grooms, to go with him to a relation's who kept a tavern, where, he protested, he only drank a single glass of liquor, which had so stupified him that he was unable to walk home, that he had fallen asleep as he sat, and did not wake till a late hour, and was quite certain that something had been purposely given him to take away his senses. The people at the tavern were examined, but they appeared ignorant in the affair.

Suspicion now fell on sir Cyril Musgrove, and doubt was shortly after converted into certainty, by paragraph after paragraph appearing in the fashionable papers, all tending to render the character of Miss Delmore despicable, and confirm the opinion of her having voluntarily accompanied sir Cyril Musgrove to France. These vile fabrications constantly meeting the eye of the earl of Torrington, his faith in Cecilia's purity and principles began to waver; though lord Rushdale, with all the generosity of confiding love, persisted in declaring her traduced; and if indeed with sir Cyril Musgrove, his compulsory companion.

The earl of Torrington's commerce with the female world had not given him the most exalted opinion of their virtues; he had, in early life, met one angelic mind, but that

he had basely deserted, and ever after he had been made the dupe of the artful, the ambitions, and the mercenary; and the anguish of lord Rushdale's feelings was rendered more painful by perceiving that his father grew every day less warm in advocating the cause of Cecilia, and less anxious to ascertain her real situation. At last, wrought up to agony by the severity of the earl's remarks on her absence, he declared his resolution of setting off for Paris; and if, as his lordship suspected, she was proved to be the companion of sir Cyril Musgrove, he would force her from the arms of her seducer.

The earl made many objections, observing, that when a female had thrown off all delicacy, and shewn such an utter contempt of virtue and propriety, he thought her unworthy of the trouble.

"And can you really believe Cecilia guilty?" said lord Rushdale; "can you indeed conceive it possible that, educated as she has been, her whole life passed without the shadow of reproach, that she can at once have become depraved and abandoned to vice? If it is possible that she has fallen from the proud eminence on which she stood—if her virtue has slumbered, let us not believe it totally extinct. Oh, my father! let us hasten to snatch her from infamy—to restore her to peace, which, I am certain, she never can enjoy while leading a life debased by the protection of sir Cyril Musgrove."

Won by the distress and supplications of the heart-wounded Oscar, the earl of Torrington consented to accompany him to Paris, and to assist his endeavours to separate the deluded Cecilia from her supposed seducer.

The day being appointed for their quitting London, the earl had been to inform lady Welford of what he termed Rushdale's romantic scheme, and of his own design to visit Mrs. Doricourt, who had hitherto been uninformed of Miss Delmore's having quitted the protection of her friends. Crossing the square to approach his own mansion, the earl was accosted by a person whom at first he did not recollect; but when the gentleman announced himself as the reverend George Dacres, and added, that he had intelligence of a very important nature to communicate, lord Torrington's emotions were so violent, that he was constrained to accept the offered arm of Mr. Dacres, to enable him to reach his home.

Having closed the door of the library, the earl sunk on a seat, and covering his face with his hands, shuddered convulsively.

"I remember the time," said Mr. Dacres, "when Wilfred Rushdale would have met his friend with expanded arms; I am now, I perceive, an unwelcome visitor."

The earl's reply was a deep groan.

"Before I quitted England," resumed Mr. Dacres, "I joined your hand with that of a young, innocent, confiding creature—I left you, as I supposed, a happy husband, at the summit of felicity; for your wife was lovely, gentle, and virtuous. I find you now surrounded by rank and wealth, but your appearance bears no evidence of your happiness. Where is your lovely wife? where is Edith?"

"Dead!" replied the earl, with a still deeper groan—"Oh, Dacres, Dacres! severe have been my sufferings since we parted."

"Can you, with an unreprieving conscience, say they have been undeserved?" asked Mr. Dacres. "I came not to flatter your vices, or palliate the enormity of your offences—I come to display, in all its glaring colours, the guilt of your past life—to demand from you the orphan's long-withheld right."



"I have wronged no orphan," replied the earl—"who dares accuse me of such guilt?"

"I dare," returned Mr. Dacres—"I am your accuser."

"Of this crime," said the earl, "I shall be found guiltless."

This assertion Mr. Dacres staid not to contradict; but with a severity of tone and look from which the earl shrunk in dismay, he asked—"Did you not, with vows of love, and promises of eternal fidelity, persuade Edith Saville to quit the protection in which her brother left her? Did you not, in a few short months, after obtaining her hand, abandon her, and, like a villain swayed by cursed lucre, contract an unlawful marriage with Miss Herbert, the affianced bride of your deceived, betrayed friend?"

"Go on," continued the earl; "your questions are daggers; but I deserve the pangs they inflict, even did they wound more severely."

"On the discovery of your baseness," resumed Mr. Dacres, "did not the forsaken Edith bury herself and her sorrows in a cottage, remote from the scenes where you had deluded her, with heartless vows and empty professions? There, with her infant—"

"She met a horrible death," interrupted the earl, wildly, large drops of perspiration rolling down his pallid face; "the cottage took fire—Edith, my ever-loved though deeply-injured Edith, perished, with her infant, in the flames. The dreadful picture of her sufferings never leaves my imagination; it has pursued me in the mazes of dissipation—it has been present at the banquet; waking and sleeping I have seen them struggling in the flames—I have heard the shrieks of Edith and her babe."

It was some time before lord Torrington was sufficiently composed to listen to the assurance of Mr. Dacres, that Mrs. Rushdale and her babe had escaped this horrible death, and taken shelter in a distant cottage.

The earl burst into tears, and grasping the hand of Mr. Dacres, with strong emotion, asked—"Does Edith, my injured Edith, live?"

Mr. Dacres mournfully shook his head, and replied—"No—she has long been released from the sorrows of this evil world. But, answer me, lord Torrington—where is that child you adopted at Torrington Castle, Cecilia Delmore?"

The earl gave Mr. Dacres a brief account of every circumstance relative to Miss Delmore, her engagement with his son, lord Rushdale, down to her supposed elopement with sir Cyril Musgrove.—"I had," said the earl, "overcome every prejudice, for in my eyes her virtue, beauty, and accomplishments, were equivalent to rank and fortune; and had she not thrown off the mask of purity that artfully veiled the vices of her character, she had before this been the wife of my son."

"Be grateful to Heaven," replied Mr. Dacres, "that you are spared that horrible affliction; Cecilia is your daughter—the child of Edith—the heiress to your fortunes."

The earl sunk back on his seat, his eyes closed, and for some moments he appeared to have lost all sense of present or future sorrows; when again recovered, he wept bitterly.—"Oscar, my noble-minded Oscar!" said he, "how will he support this intelligence?"

"That son, lord Torrington," resumed Mr. Dacres, "of whom you speak so feelingly, is illegitimate; and however this unfortunate girl may have erred, I fondly loved her angel mother, and for that mother's sake I will seek her out—I will, if admonition and persuasion can prevail, restore her to virtue, at the same moment that I instate her in her rights, for remember she is your lawful heiress; and while I reflect on all that I have heard

in Cumberland respecting her goodness, and the high character bestowed on her by persons of rank and reputation here, I am inclined not only to hope, but to believe her innocent, notwithstanding newspaper reports, which have frequently been proved false and scandalous."

"Would to Heaven that I could prove Cecilia innocent!" said the earl; "for I have ever loved her with the affection of a father; and have felt more anguish than I have language to express, since by withdrawing from the protection of lady Welford, she has given licence to the venomous tongue of scandal."

"No time must be lost," replied Mr. Dacres; "Cecilia must be found. You are imperiously called upon, lord Torrington, to recover your daughter, and, if possible, restore her fame."

"My daughter!" repeated the earl, relapsing into incredulity—"no, I trust you are mistaken; I will hope I have not the shame of her disgraceful conduct to endure; the degraded Cecilia Delmore, sir, is—"

"Your daughter," interrupted Mr. Dacres, sternly; "if she is disgraced, receive the affliction as a punishment for your offences; but seek her out, lest her continuance in guilt add weight to your crimes. I am here to establish the rights of Edith's child, and bring with me incontrovertible proof."

"I confess," said the earl, "when I first beheld Cecilia in her infancy, I was struck with her resemblance to my lost Edith; since grown to womanhood, the expression of her countenance, her voice, her smile, have continually reminded me of her whom my heart has never ceased to love and lament; but this likeness may be accidental—it does not confirm your assertion that she is my daughter; and before I consent to deprive my noble, generous Oscar, of rank and possessions so long considered his right, I must indeed have proof."

"You shall," replied Mr. Dacres, "for the requisition is just." He then drew forth a pocketbook—"Do you recognize this memorial of love?"

Lord Torrington examined the book; in the cover was written—"Edith Saville, the gift of her adoring Wilfred Rushdale."

"Can you deny," asked Mr. Dacres, "that being your writing?"

The earl acknowledged the pocketbook to have been a present of his to Miss Saville, and the writing in the cover to be his also.

"These letters too are yours," said Mr. Dacres, "in which you subscribe yourself the faithful husband of Edith."

The earl clasped his hands, and in a tone of agony exclaimed—"Oh! would I had continued her faithful husband! how many years of misery had this lacerated heart been spared!"

"And here," resumed Mr. Dacres, "is a letter addressed to 'Wilfred Rushdale, esquire,' and though the hand that wrote, and the woe-fraught heart that dictated, are mouldered to dust, you cannot have forgot the characters of Edith."

The earl pressed the paper to his lips; he endeavoured to peruse its contents, but a mist swam before his eyes, and he desired Mr. Dacres to read it.

Mr. Dacres, with a tremulous voice, read as follows:—

"WILFRED,

“The pulses of the heart your perfidy has broken beat faintly—I shall soon sink to the grave, and be at peace; but you, false, ungrateful, and perjured—merciful Heaven! will you ever know peace? Will not the injuries of the forsaken Edith—the remembrance of your deserted lawful wife, poison the enjoyments you hope to purchase by the sacrifice of all that is honourable in man? Yet I mean not to upbraid you—we are taught to forgive, as we desire to be forgiven; of the full extent of this heavenly precept I am aware; yet only on one condition can I promise to forgive you—receive and acknowledge your child, my innocent Cecilia—bestow on her the tenderness I was denied—rescue my fame from infamy. As you perform these my last requests, you have my pardon, or my malediction. These, the last dictates of my breaking heart, will be delivered to you by John Delmore, when my eyes are closed in the sleep of death. His roof has sheltered me since the devouring flames consumed all my little property, except the Indian casket, which I bequeath my cherub child.

“Farewell, Wilfred, once the idol of Edith’s heart! be careful of the happiness of my Cecilia.”

The earl wept, and Mr. Dacres turned to the window to hide his emotion, and recover composure. After a pause of some moments, he subdued his feelings sufficiently to produce a small square ivory and gold casket; it contained a miniature picture of the earl, painted in the early days of youth, before care had impressed its furrows on the smooth open forehead, and another of Edmund Saville, folded in a paper, on which was written—“The best and most deceived of men;” a locket set with pearls, and two brilliant rings, were the contents of the casket.

“This locket,” said the earl, “I have seen hang on her ivory bosom; it was the parting gift of her brother—oh, Edith, Edith, for ever we are separated! neither here nor hereafter, I fear, will thy pure spirit seek alliance with the guilty Wilfred. But where have these sacred memorials of a departed angel been so long hid? why was I not sooner informed that the wretched erring Cecilia was my daughter? Alas, alas! heavy, though just, is the punishment of my offences! Both my children—must I be punished in both? one debased by an illicit connexion with a villain, the other devoted to misery by an incestuous passion! Why did not this intelligence reach me before my boy became a sacrifice?”

“The present is the earliest opportunity that has occurred,” replied Mr. Dacres. “You may remember that soon after your marriage with Miss Saville I left England. To relate my vicissitudes of fortune for eighteen tedious years, would be irrelevant to the present subject; suffice it, I was on my voyage from Hindostan, when the ship in which I sailed fell in with a boat, in which were three almost-famished men, the sole survivors of a foundered vessel. Two of these unfortunate creatures recovered, the third lingered a few days, and finding his end approached, expressed a wish that some Christian would pray beside him, as he lay pale and expiring in the hammock where the humanity of our sailors had laid him. I hastened to administer the holy consolations of religion to the dying man, who told me his name was John Delmore.”

“Merciful Providence!” exclaimed the earl, “and from him—”

“I learned,” continued Mr. Dacres, “that Mrs. Rushdale, bearing her infant in her arms, had sought shelter in his cottage from the conflagration that destroyed her property and her servant. Delmore had been absent some months, and on his return to his home he

found his wife in the last stage of a consumption, with two infants, her own puny and sickly, which expired in less than a week after his return. The little Cecilia was lively, beautiful, and healthy, and from his wife he learned that her mother had been buried about a month; she had left a letter behind her, with a request that the little girl might be conveyed to its father; but his wife had forgot the name, and in the bustle of the funeral had mislaid the letter. John Delmore confessed he had always been fond of drink, and finding, to use his own expression, 'his wife wasted to a notamy, and scarcely able to crawl, and every thing at sixes and sevens, he drank harder than ever to drown sorrow.' In a few weeks his wife died, and shortly after he had an offer to go out captain's clerk to America. Throwing every thing portable that belonged to his wife into his chest, he prepared for the voyage, his only trouble being how to dispose of the poor little girl. At last it struck him that his wife's sister was the housekeeper at Torrington Castle; and as he thought he could prevail on her to take charge of the child, if he passed it upon her for his own, he lost no time in taking the journey, sometimes carrying the child for miles on his back, and sometimes getting a lift outside a coach. At last he arrived at Torrington Castle, and succeeded in his project to his wish; Mrs. Milman took the little smiling Cecilia, and for her dead sister's sake, promised to be a mother to her. When at sea, John Delmore had time to overhaul the contents of his chest, among which he found this casket, and the mislaid letter, which disclosed the name of Cecilia's father, to whom he determined to deliver his child, and all that belonged to her, on his return to England. While in America, in a drunken frolic, he engaged to go to the East Indies. Arrived at Bengal, being an able navigator, he had a lucrative offer from the owners of a vessel that traded to China; and though every year resolving to return to England, he still remained, making money, and drinking like a fish, till a storm drove the ship to which he belonged out of her course, and at last, after ineffectual efforts to save her, drove on a reef of rocks, where she beat to pieces, himself and two others only escaping of all the crew. You may judge," said Mr. Dacres, "with what interest I listened to this narrative, and with what earnest entreaties to see the motherless Cecilia righted, the expiring Delmore consigned to my care the important documents that were to assert her birth. On my return to England, I visited the grave of Edith, and the cottage that had sheltered her; I found the man-servant who lived with her when you deserted her, and who had assisted to remove her to the solitude where she became a mother. Anxious to perform the wishes of Edith, I hastened to Torrington Castle, where I heard from your domestics such accounts of Cecilia's amiable qualities, and your affection for her, as left no doubt on my mind that you would rejoice to learn the child of your adoption had real claims on your heart and fortune."

"Yes," replied the earl, "I have loved Cecilia with all the fond affection of a father—I have been proud of her transcendent beauty, and have felt pleasure in drawing forth her various accomplishments; but now, wretched Cecilia, how art thou fallen! and how terrible is my affliction, to learn our affinity, at a time when disgrace and infamy sully the character I once believed above the reach of error or vice! Oscar, too, my beloved, noble-minded Oscar, must he resign the right of succession to a sister so unworthy? Oh, Dacres, once my friend, have pity on me—do not crush to earth this high-spirited youth; already his heart is tortured with a passion for this erring girl, whom he had my sanction to make his wife; think of his blighted hopes; he loves her, spite of her unworthiness, with a most sincere and fervent passion; spare him, I conjure you—conceal

from him, from the world, that he is illegitimate—I will settle on Cecilia any sum you shall name; and you, my friend, my preserver, you shall command my services—my fortune.”

Mr. Dacres surveyed the earl with a glance of scornful rebuke—“Could you bestow on me the empire of the world,” said he, “it would not bribe my integrity; the sainted Edith was the beloved of my youthful heart; she preferred you—I buried my passion in my own bosom, and I constrained myself to join your hands, because I believed the union would make her happy; how you fulfilled your vows, let your conscience answer; for myself, I stand here determined to do her fame justice—to assert the rights of her child. I pity the feelings of your son; but if he is indeed the noble-minded youth you describe, he will disdain a title and possessions to which he has not a legal claim.”

“Must I then endure the reproaches of my son?” exclaimed the earl; “must I appear a wretch, destituted of principle and honour in his eyes—the betrayer of his mother? Oh, Edith, this—this is retribution!”

“Poor worldly-minded man,” replied Mr. Dacres, “you shrink from the reproaches of your son—you dread to encounter the censures of the multitude; yet when you abandoned and left to wretchedness the lovely, amiable Edith—when you deceived Miss Herbert with an unlawful marriage, you felt no compunction—you feared not to offend the Almighty Power whose altar you profaned—you fear not to offend me, a minister of the Gospel, by offering to bribe me to an act of base injustice; wretched man! the vials of wrath are pouring out upon you; bend your proud spirit—own the mercy that has so long withheld your punishment, and humbly supplicate the pardon of offended Heaven!”

“My son, my son!” exclaimed lord Torrington, in frenzied accents, “who shall bear to thee the heart-rendering intelligence, that thou art illegitimate—that the titles to which, from thy birth, thou hast been considered heir, are not thy inheritance? Who shall tell thee that Cecilia, the tenderly-beloved though erring Cecilia, is thy sister? For me, overwhelmed with sorrow and disgrace, I feel unable to make these disclosures; I cannot, dare not meet his just indignation; conscious of the guilty part I have acted, I shrink from the reproving glance of his eye.”

“It is the duty of my office,” said Mr. Dacres, “to reprove the guilty and console the afflicted; painful as will be the task of communicating to a son events that must place a parent’s conduct in a reprehensible point of view, I will see the young man, and endeavour to dispose his mind to submit to privations that honour and justice render unavoidable. Where shall I find Mr. Herbert?”

The earl started.—“Call him not by that detested name, I conjure you,” said he; “to my ears it is agony; oh, what will it be to his!”

“Is not his mother’s name Herbert?” demanded Mr. Dacres, coldly.

“You know it was,” replied the earl; “but—”

“Say not,” interrupted Mr. Dacres, “that your mock marriage gave her title to any other: her name is still Herbert; and the children of unmarried women always bear the mother’s appellation.”

“Barbarous, cruel man!” said the earl, “in your inflexible severity, you forget compassion and mercy.”

“Where,” asked Mr. Dacres, “was your compassion, when you deserted your unoffending wife, a young innocent creature, who hourly expected to make you a father?”

Where was your mercy, when, to possess yourself of old Blackburne's wealth, you persuaded the affianced bride of your friend to break her plighted faith, and deluded her with a marriage you knew you were not at liberty to contract? For you indeed I feel but little compassion; but I pray Heaven to have mercy on you! for your son, whose estimable character I have heard from lips whose praise confers honour, my heart bleeds; but I will not suffer pity to overcome my sense of right. Cecilia, the daughter of Edith, your lawful wife, shall not be defrauded by compassion of her inheritance; she shall be acknowledged the heiress of the earl of Torrington, even were her errors greater than the world represents them."

"Oscar dashed from the pinnacle of greatness his virtues so eminently adorn—Cecilia, whom I believed all that was chaste and amiable in woman, sunk in infamy!" exclaimed the earl, wildly; "my punishment is more than I can bear. Hark! that is Oscar's voice! he comes to learn his father's infamy and his own disgrace."

"Wretched man, be calm and patient," said Mr. Dacres; "the sooner these disclosures are made the better."

"The tale of dishonour will destroy him," replied the earl; "the knowledge of his father's guilt will be death to him. Honour is Oscar's idol, and bereaved of that, he will abhor existence. Inexorable man, fulfil your purpose; proclaim me a villain, but ask me not to face the resentment of my guiltless boy."

As lord Rushdale entered the library, the earl rushed wildly past him, leaving the resolved, though deeply-affected Mr. Dacres to introduce himself.

Oscar listened with the calmness of desperation to the disclosure of his father's guilt, on which he made no comment; neither did he seem moved, when he was told he must resign the titles and possessions to which he had believed himself heir. Cecilia alone occupied his heart and imagination; the terrible idea of their affinity seemed to possess his thoughts entirely, and the words—"Cecilia my sister!" alone murmured from his lips.

The expression of deep melancholy that clouded the fine countenance of Oscar induced Mr. Dacres to speak of his father's vices in as gentle terms as possible; and when the tale of guilt was at an end, he endeavoured, with every soothing argument that religion and piety could suggest, to reconcile the heart-wounded youth to his unavoidable destiny. He expressed his belief that Cecilia was the involuntary companion of sir Cyril Musgrove—still innocent and virtuous.

A momentary ray of pleasure lightened in the melancholy eyes of Oscar; he pressed the hand of Mr. Dacres, and fervently exclaimed—"Yes, my Cecilia is innocent; a thought of impurity has never contaminated her angelic mind."

Mr. Dacres spoke of the pleasure it would afford him, to be the means of restoring to fame and to her friends a young creature so much beloved; and declared his intention of going to Paris immediately, in search of her—"I am assured," said Mr. Dacres, "she has been conveyed from England by force; and nothing shall prevent my bringing sir Cyril Musgrove and his agents to punishment."

The wretched Oscar listened, while Mr. Dacres enjoined him to subdue his feelings, to avoid the indulgence of sorrow, and, above all, to respect the penitence of his father, and harbour no resentment against him. "I need not request you to exert all your powers to conquer your unholy passion for Cecilia," said he, "which divine and human laws forbid."

The eyes of Oscar were fixed on Mr. Dacres as he spoke, but he understood not a syllable; the agony of his mind had before produced fever, and as he again thought of Cecilia as his sister, he fell senseless at his feet.

For several days, the lives of the earl of Torrington and his son were despaired of, and Mr. Dacres, anxious as he was to ascertain the fate of Cecilia, was compelled by humanity to remain in London, dividing his cares between the wretched father and no less unhappy son. The earl of Torrington's health again gave signs of renovation, but the hapless Oscar, though free from fever, sunk into profound melancholy; no sound or object seemed to attract his attention—his brain was unsettled—he seldom spoke, and would sit for hours with his arms folded, and his eyes fixed on vacancy; to the self-upbraidings of the earl, and his unceasing entreaties for pardon, he would make no reply, except a hollow groan burst from his bosom, or his pale lips unconsciously murmured—“Cecilia, the adored of my soul—Cecilia is my sister.”

The earl's physicians pronounced an immediate voyage to Lisbon the only measure likely to promote the recovery of lord Rushdale, to whose depressed mind change of scene, and a warm climate, were necessary.

Preparations were directly made for the voyage, and the earl, still an invalid, deputed to Mr. Dacres the charge of seeking out Cecilia, while he watched over the health of his son, now dearer to his heart than ever, since visited by misfortune.

On the same day that Mr. Dacres began his journey to Paris, the earl of Torrington and his son, the shadow of his former self, set sail for the shores of Portugal.

The sea air had a good effect on the debilitated constitution of the earl, but the sunk eye of Oscar would follow the rolling billows, unconscious that their course bore him from his native land. To him neither the wide expanse of ocean, nor the blue arching sky, brought health or pleasure.

The earl of Torrington bore from England letters of introduction to most of the families of distinction in Lisbon; he engaged a splendid mansion, and established himself in a style consonant with his rank; but for many days the unfortunate Oscar remained utterly unconscious of passing events, while the earl, apprehensive that his reason was for ever extinguished, watched over him with a heart tortured by remorse and anguish, the late-obtained knowledge of Cecilia being his daughter adding acuteness to the misery her dereliction of virtue occasioned.

The health of the earl again sunk in the conflict; sorrow and pain are ill sustained by persons whose lives have been passed in ease, affluence, and pleasure; yet the remembrance that his crimes had destroyed the health and felicity of his son, urged the earl, though scarcely able to quit his couch, to insist on being supported to his apartment.

The evening of a sultry day had closed in, and lights had been placed, when the earl, in removing towards an open lattice, fainted in the arms of his valet. This circumstance seemed to rouse a momentary attention in Oscar, who, having mournfully gazed at his father, was again relapsing into gloomy forgetfulness, when the earl, being restored to sense, in a faint voice, said—“Oscar, my son, I believe I am not long for this life; let me not, I conjure you, pass into eternity unblessed by your forgiveness.”

Oscar raised himself on his elbow; he placed his hand on his forehead, and seemed to try to collect his scattered thoughts. At last he said—“Now I remember all; I am illegitimate, and Cecilia is my sister; would that I had died in Cumberland! I had then sunk to my grave, in the happy blessed assurance that—But, alas! alas! Cecilia is my

sister! My lord," addressing the earl, "the gentleman who told me this unhappy story is a clergyman; he said Cecilia is the daughter and heiress of the earl of Torrington; he told me also, that Heaven commands we should forgive each other; my brain wanders, and my heart is broken, but I believe I harbour no resentment, except against the villain who has murdered the fame of my Cecilia. My Cecilia! oh no, no, she is your daughter—my sister; and to love her is become criminal: yet while my heart throbs— while memory survives, I shall bear in my wretched bosom incurable passion."

"Oscar, my beloved Oscar!" said the earl, "give not way to unavailing tenderness; remember this unhappy girl is your sister."

I never can forget it," replied Oscar; "that she is my sister, is my grief—my misery; were she not your daughter, I would still seek and woo her for a bride; for here, in the sight of Heaven, I solemnly protest I believe her chaste, innocent, and incapable of deceit."

"Grant it, gracious Heaven!" said the earl, with a look and tone of indescribable sadness; "grant me to behold you restored to health, and Cecilia returned with unblemished fame, and I care not how soon I sink to—"

"The grave," interrupted Oscar, with a bitter smile. "No, my lord, you must live to see your base-born son stripped of his borrowed honours, pointed at, laughed at, scorned; but I can bear all this; the loss of titles, public favour, wealth, is nothing; no, no, there was a treasure dearer to Oscar's heart than all the pageantries of fortune; but that is wrested from me; and now, despoiled of all, the grave remains my only place of refuge."

The earl, during this speech, had again fainted; and when the eyes of Oscar fell on his countenance, he beheld it fixed, as in death.—"Wretch that I am," resumed he, striking his forehead, "my inhuman reproaches have murdered my father." He then flung himself at his feet, and, in the frenzied accents of delirium, entreated him to live and pardon him.

The attendants having summoned the earl's physicians, he was borne to his bed, where he remained for some time in a state of such suffering, that every moment was expected to be his last.

During this melancholy period, lord Rushdale's health became better, but his dark blue eyes regained not their sparkling intelligence; his spirits had entirely lost their animated tone—his cheeks were pale, and his figure attenuated. Silent and melancholy, he constantly attended the couch of his father, whose sufferings and penitence made him sincerely accord the forgiveness he unceasingly supplicated; his hand smoothed his uneasy pillow, and administered the medicines, which he feared were prescribed in vain. Many a prayer for the earl's recovery was breathed by the sorrowing Rushdale, whose heart, though lost to happiness, and keenly sensible of his disgraceful birth, gratefully remembered the unvarying affection of his father—the indulgence lavished on all his wishes, and the care bestowed to form his mind on the firm principles of virtue and humanity.

Softened by these grateful recollections, Oscar struggled with the misery of disappointed fortune and hopeless love, that he might not increase the anguish of his father, who having the comfort of seeing this son, so deservedly beloved, constantly beside his couch, and hearing him directing the services of his attendants, again gave hopes of recovery.



When sufficiently convalescent to venture abroad, the earl endeavoured to divert the melancholy of his own and Oscar's mind, by cultivating an acquaintance with the nobility of Lisbon, and by an examination of all the antiquities and curiosities of the country.

To these pursuits, entered into with avidity by the earl, Oscar, neither by word or look, objected; he saw the intention, and was willing that his father should believe his sorrows were diverted; but insensible to the beauties of nature and art, the poisoned arrow rankled in his bosom; his disgraceful birth, seldom absent from his memory, continually flashed the indignant crimson of shame across his pale cheek, and his heart was tortured with the anguish of hopeless love.

Still no intelligence from Mr. Dacres reached them; and while, out of respect to the feelings of each other, the name of Cecilia never escaped the lips of the earl or his son, yet both were anxious and impatient for an express from France.

The earl of Torrington was by nature mutable and inconstant; he had several times in his life believed himself in love; he had also felt, to a certain degree, the unhappiness of disappointed passion, but in general he had consoled himself for the perfidy of one mistress with the charms of another; the only real affection he had ever felt was for Edith, the lovely wife he deserted; but even her image, indelibly impressed on his heart, had not prevented him from forming various other attachments. Judging Oscar's disposition by his own, he believed that time and new objects would console him for the loss, if not entirely obliterate the passion for Cecilia from his bosom; and to effect this most desirable purpose, even while his health was unequal to the fatigue, the earl made frequent visits to those families where youth and beauty held forth their attractions.

To gratify the wishes of his father, Oscar was a guest at many splendid entertainments, and various places of public resort, where the handsome melancholy Englishman was the admiration of many a fair one, while he, pensive and regardless of inviting glances shot from the eyes of beauty, thought only of his own blighted prospects and the lost Cecilia. For him the ball, the concert, had no longer charms; music, once the delight of his enthusiastic fancy, was now discord to his ears; and when he saw the gay bolero danced, his feelings amounted to agony, for he remembered the graceful form and sylph-like step of Cecilia, and with what animation he had seen her wind through the mazes of the dance.

To the wretched Oscar, sounds of mirth and scenes of gaiety were hateful; and whenever he could steal from observance, he would climb the mountains, or hide himself in the lone recesses of the rocks, where, uninterrupted, he could indulge in recollections of those happy days, when prosperity, like a brilliant sun, shone above his youthful head—when, high in rank and honour, he was surrounded by friends—when love, hallowed by virtue and blest by paternal sanction, seemed to invite him to happiness.—“The vision, bright with the gay colouring of youthful hope, fades,” said Oscar, mournfully, “and a sad certainty of wretchedness succeeds; my birth disgraceful—my love a crime, what solace can the world afford me?—what recompence for the treasures I have lost? Yet were I assured that Cecilia is innocent—could I learn that she is safe, it would be some alleviation of my misery. Innocent! dare I believe that she is guilty? Can I remember the bashful modesty, the blushing timidity, with which she always received my avowals of affection, and believe that Cecilia is the voluntary companion of a villain? Oh, never! Angel of purity, forgive me! My sister—Cecilia is my

sister! Would that I could banish from my mind the remembrance of those blissful hours, when we wandered in the groves of Torrington—when Cecilia blest me with the assurance of her love—when she promised to be mine. Mine—never! Alas! alas! we are already too nearly allied; another shall woo and call her his, while I, condemned to unavailing repinings, shall wretchedly waste my days, torn by the pangs of jealousy and disappointment. Yet, gracious Heaven! though I am visited by sorrow, grant I may see her happy; let me behold her restored to fame, and I will strive to bear the load of woe that presses on my heart; I will vanquish pride—I will endeavour to forget that she was my affianced wife—when love was not a crime, and the future presented smiling years of tender confidence and wedded happiness.”

With the miserable Oscar, what a fearful change a few short weeks had made! to him, whose eyes were clouded by misfortune, the sky, the ocean, and the earth, presented their beauties and their wonders in vain. Cecilia, the splendid planet that illumined his existence, was sunk, and lost to him for ever, and nature had no longer a charm to attract his eye or interest his heart. Sometimes, starting from the wild delirium of disappointed passion, he would endeavour to reason his distracted feelings into calmness, he would force himself to consider Cecilia the daughter and heiress of the earl of Torrington, and struggle to bend his spirit to bear the stigma of illegitimacy with patience; but still, as the circumstance of Cecilia quitting the protection of lady Welford, and the newspaper reports, rose to remembrance, his sunk eyes would elicit sparks of indignant fire, and the blush of wounded pride would redden on his pale cheek; the fame of the house of Torrington, sullied by her supposed dereliction of virtue, would swell his bosom, and he would then, in the frenzy of rage, pour heavy execrations on sir Cyril Musgrove, and vow revenge for a sister’s ruined reputation; then suddenly recollecting his illegitimacy, he would throw himself on the earth, and weep in all the bitterness of sorrow.—“Not by me can the villain be called to account!” he would exclaim; “not by my hand can the seduction of Cecilia be avenged! Oh, no, no, not by the base-born son of a wanton! Wretched, wretched Oscar! the sins of my parents are severely visited on my head; I am become a mark for scorn—every eye will now behold me with contempt; never again can I mix in the scenes, where once I was received with friendship, respect, and homage; the heir of Torrington, to whom all deference was paid, has vanished, and in his place a wretched, disgraced, unhappy being stands, undone in fortune and in love; yet though my interference should be despised and rejected by sir Cyril Musgrove, who, no doubt, would cast in my teeth the opprobrium of my birth, what withholds her father tearing Cecilia from the arms of a villain? he has claims upon her which none will dare dispute; he has honourable birth too, and may demand satisfaction for injury, without apprehending contumelious rejection.”

Sunk in the deepest despondency, hours would pass away unmarked by Oscar, who, amid the wildest scenes of nature, would sit, with his eyes fixed on the fathomless ocean, oftener vindicating than accusing Cecilia, picturing to his irritated fancy her probable distress and misery, detained by compulsion from those endeared to her by friendship and by love; for, spite of appearances, the unhappy youth, in his calm moments, clung to the idea of her innocence, and cherished the fond belief, that he still possessed the pure and unaltered affection of her heart. Wrought to agony with the thought of her sufferings he would rush into the presence of his father, to urge him to make a personal search after Cecilia, whom he felt certain was forcibly detained by sir

Cyril Musgrove; but when the pale, feeble, drooping form of the earl met his eye—when he considered him weakened and emaciated by recent illness, he saw the impossibility of his quitting Lisbon in the present state of his health, and he buried deep in his fevered bosom the boiling passions that hurried him to rage and impatience, lest he should precipitate from its frail tenement the life of his father, who yet seemed scarcely a step removed from the verge of eternity.

While Oscar piously and duteously did his utmost to conceal the anguish of his heart, and never suffered the name of his mother to pass his lips, he thought of her with feelings that excited his own wonder; for while contempt and indignation rose in his bosom against her frailty, he was sensible of but little wounded affection; he considered, that however deceived by the earl of Torrington in the matter of her marriage, she never had cause to doubt being legally his wife, and he had always behaved towards her with indulgence and unbounded generosity. From the hour that Oscar was capable of reasoning on passing events, he had thought the conduct of the countess highly reprehensible towards all that concerned his attendance and accommodation—she had manifested abundance of pride, but not the least tenderness; and though a sense of duty had always governed his conduct, he never had felt for her either the affection or respect a mother ought to command; he had observed, with much displeasure, her behaviour while the count del Montarino was her guest, and her elopement with major Norman had concentrated his feelings; all she now excited was disgust and contempt.

His mother's certain infamy, and the clouds of suspicion that hung darkly over the character of Cecilia, had rendered England hateful to the melancholy Oscar, and he secretly resolved never again to visit a country that had witnessed the disappointment of his dearest hopes, and the disgrace of his birth: there were many persons in England of whom he thought with respect and regard; but circumstances were sadly changed with him; he had frequently heard that the unhappy had no friends, and he determined to avoid meeting supercilious pity from those who had once thought themselves honoured by his acquaintance—for the future he had been able to arrange no plan, except that of resigning the title he had so long usurped.

While the nights and days of Oscar were devoted to regret and sorrow, the mind of the earl was suffering all the pangs of remorse, for conscience perpetually displayed, in all their hideous forms, the consequences of his vices—the dreadful spectacle of the noble-spirited Oscar, bowed to the earth by the disgrace of illegitimate birth, was present to his tortured sight, and the distracting idea of Cecilia made the victim of a villain, who would not have presumed to approach her with dishonourable wishes, had she been the acknowledged daughter of the earl of Torrington, added poignancy to his feelings.

Fearful of explaining their thoughts to each other, they had each to regret those delightful hours of confidence, when every wish of Oscar's met the approval of his indulgent father, and friendship of the most exalted kind subsisted between them. This happy interchange of sentiments, feelings, and opinions, was now at an end; the earl felt abashed in the presence of his son, for conscience loudly proclaimed, that Oscar, formed by nature to fill the most exalted rank, was disgraced by the vices of his father; and to shun his society the earl forced himself to accept invitations, when his health and spirits required tranquillity, and the tender soothings of filial affection.

At the splendid mansion of don Emanuel di Torrismond the earl was most anxious to engage Oscar, for there the most polished society of Lisbon met, attracted by the

graces of don Emanuel's daughter and niece, whose beauty was the theme of universal praise; but neither the melting sensibility expressed in the dark oriental eyes of donna Ismena, Emanuel's heiress, nor the animated glances of the little wild Isabella, his niece, for a moment charmed the sorrows of Oscar, or made him forgetful of Cecilia, whose person was the perfection of loveliness, and whose attainments excelled the most accomplished maids of Portugal: yet in obedience to the wishes of his father, Oscar went frequently to don Emanuel's; he appeared to listen while donna Ismena sang or swept the strings of her lute, but his fancy, at those moments, recalled the lovely graceful figure of Cecilia, bending over the harp, and accompanying its tones with the rich warblings of her angel voice.

The heart of Oscar was dead to the fascinations of beauty; the world had lost its allurements, and he often meditated on retiring to the solitude of a cloister—"For where," said he, "can the wretch, whose desolated prospects and blighted wishes render society hateful, where can he seek consolation, but in the holy stillness of a monastery? There religion may subdue the agonies that an intercourse with the world increases—the tranquillity of the cloister may impart its quiet to my perturbed feelings, and I may become patient and submissive under the heavy chastisement of adversity."

When his intention of renouncing the world, and pronouncing the vows of a monk, was hinted to the earl, it threw him into such agonies, that fearful of becoming the destroyer of his father, Oscar solemnly promised to relinquish the idea.

"To become a monk" said the earl, "you must renounce the faith you were educated in—you must adopt new beliefs; have you considered this?"

"I believe," replied Oscar, "that the ceremonials of religion will neither forward or deter us on the road to heaven; the purity of our intentions, and the performance of our duties, will alone, according to my judgment, lead us to happiness."

"A monk," resumed the earl, "flies from the performance of his duties. Man was placed on earth to assist his fellowman—to—"

"Proceed no further," said Oscar; "I guess what you would say; but though I consent to mingle with the world, I shall never perform the duties allotted to man—I shall never be a husband or a father."

"Time," replied the earl, "will, I trust, change your present sentiments; time, my son, blunts the keen edge of affliction, and reconciles the mind to disappointment."

"Time may effect all this," returned Oscar, incredulously—"it may dull my memory—it may render my feelings torpid, but I am convinced it will never restore me that tranquil happiness, that innate peace, which was once mine."

The earl read the despondency of Oscar's thoughts in his countenance, and he proposed a visit to don Emanuel's, but Oscar excused himself—his mind was not disposed to bear the sentimental conversation of Ismena, or the badinage of the playful Isabella—he wished to enjoy, in solitude, the luxury of grief, to indulge in visions of the past, and sigh over departed happiness.

After many days of tedious suspense, letters arrived from the reverend Mr. Dacres, describing a fruitless journey to Paris, and several other places in France, celebrated by tourists and pleasure-hunters. Mr. Dacres had not obtained the least account of Cecilia, and concluded his letter with observing, if she was in France, he must have heard of her; but that he was now positively convinced that sir Cyril Musgrove had concealed her somewhere in England.

The letter of Mr. Dacres gave the earl a transient pleasure—"I am now satisfied," said he, "that Cecilia is innocent; the newspaper paragraphs, that so confidently spoke of her being at Paris with sir Cyril Musgrove, are proved to be scandals invented by some secret enemy."

"And that enemy," replied Oscar, his lips quivering, and his whole frame agitated, "that enemy is my mother; knowing my attachment, she has, by an artful scheme, decoyed the lovely girl from her friends, to prevent my contracting a marriage which did not accord with her ambitious views—she has barbarously invented scandals to destroy Cecilia's reputation, and prevent her return to the world. Yes, I am now fully convinced that the woman I blush to call my mother, holds the dear suffering angelic girl in confinement."

The earl acknowledged there was probability in the idea, but was at a loss to trace her route, and saw no possible means of ascertaining the fact, or liberating Cecilia.

"She is your daughter, my lord," returned Oscar, "and woe for me, she is my sister; humanity and duty call upon us to do our utmost to restore her to fame and happiness. I remember, before I left London, Mr. Drawley told me that he had been informed by a friend of major Norman's, that he had carried the wretched partner of his guilt to Naples; suffer me to go—I am persuaded I shall find Cecilia."

"We will both go," replied the earl; but as yet he was unable to undertake the fatigue of travelling; yet that no time might be lost, and to satisfy the impatient Oscar, he wrote to some persons high in rank and power at Naples, who would, he was certain, make every inquiry, and give him speedy intelligence.

Much as the mind and feelings of Oscar were at variance with amusements, he was constrained to join the unthinking throng, who make pleasure the business of their lives. A grand entertainment, given by the cardinal patriarch, had assembled all the youth and beauty of Naples at his palace, where various amusements were displayed, to enchant the senses, and call forth the graces and accomplishments of the company. The earl of Torrington had accepted the patriarch's invitation for himself and son. In magnificent costume they presented themselves at the palace, but to the woe-distempered Oscar, Pleasure offered her glittering bowl and waved her enchanted wand in vain; he saw not the glance of love shot from the dark melting eye of beauty, or the smile that dimpled round the rich coral lip of youthful gaiety; in a palace, decorated with a magnificence that spoke the wealth of the owner, surrounded by the fairest maids of Portugal, each eager to attract his notice, Oscar thought only of Cecilia; her image possessing his imagination, he was insensible to their attractions—his ears closed against the melody breathed from a full band of various instruments, and Cecilia confined, asspersed, and suffering, possessed his mind.

Perceiving the company about to form the dance, he moved to the lower end of the hall, where folding doors opened on a spacious lawn, intersected by groves of lemon and orange, which were now shedding their fragrant blossoms, white as snow, on the short smooth turf; the yellow moon sailed majestic over a deep blue sky, studded with innumerable glittering stars, and a soft breeze wafted the odour of the flowers on the throbbing temples of Oscar.

As he left the giddy, laughter-loving throng, incapable of joining in their mirth, or taking a part in the dance, the grove through which he unconsciously wandered led to the rocks that overlooked the harbour; here all was lonely and silent, for no sound met the

ear, save the murmur of the waves, as they stole in gentle undulations along the beach; the night was calm, and the white sails lying at anchor, reposed in the moonbeams. An angle in the road presented a little romantic spot, shadowed by a tall fantastic rock, which forcibly reminded the unhappy Oscar of that beneath whose beetling front he used to wait for Mrs. Doricourt's yacht, to waft him to love and Cecilia.

A thousand tender and painful recollections swelled the heart of Oscar; he drew from his bosom her ring, which he wore attached to a ribbon, and pressing it to his lips, exclaimed, in tones of anguish—"Lost! lost to me for ever!"

Stretched on the turf beneath the rock, for some time he watched the beautiful fire-flies, floating like living diamonds in the air, and listened to the rippling of the waves.—"Were Cecilia here," said he, with a heavy sigh, "how her taste would be gratified with this scene—those groves of orange and lemon, breathing fragrance on the air—those distant spires glittering in

'The silver light, that, hallowing tree and tower,  
Sheds beauty and deep softness o'er the whole.'

"These would call forth her admiration, they would afford subjects for her pencil; but to me they offer no charm, for the misery of my soul darkens every object, and renders me alike incapable of feeling, or delineating the beauties of nature; yet here all is tranquil—all is lovely; no sound of sorrow—no groans of anguish are heard, save those that burst from my bosom. Cecilia, beloved of my soul, in such nights as these we have wandered in the hallowed groves of St. Herbert's Island—we have gazed upon the stars—we have watched the brilliant course of the moon, and together adored the great Creator. We have spoke of our future prospects, and laid down plans of felicity that now are destroyed. Alas! yes, all our hours of bliss are vanished; we are separated, my adored, and all that remains for the miserable Oscar, is the remembrance, that his prospects were once bright and joyous, and the sad certainty that they are darkened for ever; yet surely I may gaze upon thy beauty—I may press thy hand—I may claim a brother's right. A brother's! no, no; the claim will not be admitted, for I am illegitimate—my birth stamped with disgrace—myself an impostor, set up as the earl of Torrington's heir, then branded with infamy, and stripped of my mock honours. Cecilia, we must meet no more—another shall call thee his—another shall enjoy thy smiles—shall possess the affection that once was mine; while I, forsaken, despised—madness would then be happiness; but where, Cecilia, where, my sister, art thou confined? The honours and wealth that once glittered round thy betrothed Oscar are now thine, and the selected of thy heart is debased, degraded; Oscar, the base-born son of thy father, is become the scoff of fools, the scorn of pride, and, oh, affliction harder to be borne than all the rest! thy love, that formed the joy of my existence, must no more be indulged—Cecilia, to whom my heart clung with all the fervour of affection, is, alas! my sister."

Starting wildly from his stony couch, with eyes bent on the earth, Oscar hurried forward; the past, the present, and the future, occupied his burning brain, and, heedless of the path he had taken, or the distance at which he was leaving Lisbon, he paused not till he had gained the centre of a forest; fatigue now restored him to recollection, he gazed round him as if newly awakened from a dream; on every side he was surrounded with thick woven trees, and various paths, intersecting each other, presented themselves in

every direction; to retrace his way appeared impossible, as he had not remarked a single object that might assist his recollection to regain the road to Lisbon.—“I can die here,” sad Oscar, sinking to the earth; “my erring father will regret me, but the disgrace of my birth will be buried with me, and all uneasiness on my account will be forgotten in my grave; and when the gentle Cecilia learns the fate of him she once loved, she will embalm my memory with her tears; but joy shall revive in the bosom of Cecilia, when the turf covers the remains of the miserable heart-broken Oscar.”

A chilling torpor stole on the senses of the unhappy youth, as, unable to support himself, his head sunk on the root of a wide-spreading chestnut.

The earl of Torrington left the patriarch’s palace at an early hour, and retired to rest, as was his custom, pleased with the supposition that his son had been prevailed upon to join the dancers in the ball-room; but when morning came, and he learned from his attendants that he had not yet returned home, a thousand apprehensions seized his imagination: inquiries were made at every place where the earl visited, but without gaining any intelligence. Many of their friends had seen lord Rushdale at the patriarch’s palace in the early part of the evening, but none afterwards.

The day past, and no tidings arriving, the almost-frantic father believed that the unhappy despairing Oscar had terminated his own existence. The dreadful idea of suicide was too horrible for endurance, and too feeble, from recent illness, to combat this shock, the earl of Torrington was again confined to a sickbed, from which, in the bitterness of sorrow, he prayed that he might never more arise. To his particular friend, the earl of Portland, then resident at Lisbon, lord Torrington expressed, without reserve, his fear, that the distracted Oscar had deprived himself of life; an idea which was fearfully confirmed by his handkerchief being found on the projection of a rock that overhung the sea.

Within the mansion of the earl of Torrington all was gloom, horror, and grief, the domestics, his own valet excepted, believing that their young lord had destroyed himself; but he persisted in the opinion that his master was too pious and too good to commit such a wicked act, though he had troubles enough to turn his brain.

The sun had just risen, and was darting his golden beams through the thick tangled branches of the forest, when a young peasant, driving a mule before him, which he was cursing in a language half English and half Portuguese, arrived at the spot where Oscar lay extended, and to all appearance dead. The richness of his habit convinced the peasant that he was a grandee; and he stood for a moment, gaping and wondering how he came there without attendants; the notion then struck him, that he had been robbed and murdered; but the ornaments about his dress contradicted the idea of his having been robbed, and soon a groan, and convulsive catchings of his limbs, convinced the astonished peasant that he lived. Stooping down, he endeavoured to raise him from the earth; but finding his strength inadequate to the task, he hastened home to call assistance.

The peasant’s mother, an Englishwoman, and his father, a Portuguese, hurried to the forest, and soon bore the insensible Oscar to a neat pleasant cabin, on the sunny side of a mountain, where industry had raised a blooming garden, and vineyard of the choicest grapes of Portugal.

Having prepared a clean though homely pallet, Suzette laid the burning head of Oscar on a pillow, and hastened to brew for him a posset of herbs, which she knew were

efficacious in fevers; and that the stranger had a fever was certain, from his parched lips and burning palms.

Lopez, her husband, was going to the convent, two leagues distant, to fetch father Juan; but this humane intention Suzette strongly opposed, declaring herself certain that the young gentleman would do well. The truth was, Suzette hated monks, and father Juan in particular, for he had more than once called her a heretic, and said she would never reach heaven, unless she adjured her Protestant errors, and embraced the Catholic faith. Suzette disliked father Juan's doctrine, and, determined against fasting and mortification, chose to go to heaven her own way, in spite of the fryings, burnings, roastings, and broilings, with which he threatened her heresy.

Three days elapsed before the fever-posset of Suzette evinced its virtues, by making Oscar sensible of his situation; and when he had regained the power of reasoning, he was too weak to inquire how he came to the cabin, or to direct the humane peasants to relieve the anxiety of his father with a knowledge of his safety and existence.

Another day passed, and having taken a little goat's milk, he inquired how far he was from Lisbon? being answered, he asked if he could be supplied with writing materials? There was nothing of the sort to be had nearer than the Franciscan convent, two leagues distant.

Oscar recollected he had a pencil about him; tearing a leaf from his pocketbook, he wrote a hasty assurance of his safety to his father. He then folded the paper, and giving it to the son of Suzette, directed him to the mansion of the earl of Torrington at Lisbon.

Suzette said it was many long years since she left England, but she remembered to have heard of the earl of Torrington—"You, sir," continued she, "I suppose, are his son?"

Oscar replied in the affirmative.

"And lady Torrington," resumed Suzette; "she was called a great beauty—is she alive?"

"The countess of Torrington," replied Oscar, "is dead;" thinking, at that moment, of the lovely unfortunate Edith.

"Dead!" repeated Suzette; "why bless me! she was but young; but, to be sure, death spares neither young nor old. Pray, young gentleman, had she any children besides you?"

"Yes," replied Oscar, "lady Torrington had a daughter."

"A daughter!" said Suzette; "I am very glad she had not a son."

"You are glad!" returned Oscar—"why what difference, my good woman, could the sex of lady Torrington's children make to you?"

"None in the world," said Suzette, quitting the cabin.

Oscar thought her inquiries strange; but she was an Englishwoman, and any thing relative to a family she had known in her youth might be interesting.

With languid eyes, Oscar beheld the rays of the setting sun gild the brow of the mountain, and tinge the western horizon with rich shades of purple and crimson—he heard the industrious peasants cheerfully singing as they returned from the labours of the day.

A young girl, the daughter of a neighbouring peasant, entered the cabin soon after sunset, and inquired for Lopez?

"He is gone to Lisbon," replied Suzette, "and will not be back before midnight."



The young girl's countenance was instantly clouded.—“It was very odd,” replied she, “that he should go without telling me; and very unlucky that he went this evening at all, for my father has at last consented that Inis shall marry Pedro, and we thought to make merry on the occasion, and have a moonlight dance in the lime grove; but no one hereabouts can play the piquedilla except Lopez, so there is an end of our evening's merriment.”

“Happy peasants!” exclaimed Oscar, as Suzette and the young girl left the cabin together, “happy Lopez! thou art beloved, and it is thy absence, not the loss of a moonlight dance, that will spoil the evening's merriment. How blest should I have passed my life in this seclusion, had Cecilia shared my cabin! but destiny has placed an insurmountable bar between us. With some more fortunate youth she may experience the felicity of connubial love, but I shall remain lonely and wretched during life, for never can another female interest the heart that adores her with an unconquerable though hopeless passion.”

Oscar had expressed an intention of sitting up to wait the return of Lopez from Lisbon; but weakness and fatigue opposing his wish, he was obliged to seek repose on his humble pallet; weariness soon lulled his senses, and he enjoyed a calm refreshing sleep, that lasted till morning.

On opening his eyes, he beheld, to his great astonishment, his friend Drawley sitting beside his couch, watching his slumbers. The surprise and joy of this unexpected meeting having given way to inquiries for his father, Oscar learned that grief and terror on his account had occasioned a relapse, and that the earl of Torrington was again confined to his chamber.—“But the happy intelligence brought by the young peasant last night will do more for the recovery of his health,” said Drawley, “than all the prescriptions of his physicians; the earl, I am satisfied, will do well; and all we have at present to think of is removing you to the Franciscan convent, where you can be accommodated till you are able to return to Lisbon. You can be carried by a relay of peasants, for no carriage can reach this mountainous spot.”

“I am perfectly satisfied, and will remain here,” replied Oscar, “till I am able to mount a mule. In this little cabin I have met kindness, hospitality, and attention; and though my food is not luxurious, it is wholesome, and my coarse pallet is clean and comfortable. Remember I am no longer the heir of Torrington; and it is necessary that I should accommodate my wants and my desires to my depressed fortunes.”

Mr. Drawley warmly remonstrated, but finding Oscar determined to remain at the vineyard cabin, he ceased to urge his removal to the Franciscan convent.

Suzette, with matronly tenderness, assisted to bear the invalid to the shelter of a mulberry-tree, where, with his friend Drawley, he partook of a breakfast of milk, cakes, and fruit.

Drawley declared he had never ate so delicious a meal.—“The tranquillity of this pleasant spot,” said he, “and the cheerful contentment that seems to glow in the faces of these kind-hearted people, would almost tempt one to resign pride, vanity, and pomp, and turn peasant.”

Suzette having removed the remains of the breakfast, Oscar expressed a curiosity to know what had brought his friend to Lisbon?

"The duchess of Aberdeen's health, being prescribed a change of climate," replied Drawley. "Lady Arabella, knowing how anxious I felt on your account, kindly persuaded her mother to take a voyage to Lisbon."

"Amiable, generous lady Arabella!" exclaimed Oscar; "her loveliness is her least perfection."

"Come, come, my friend," returned Drawley, "be less ardent in your praises, or I shall grow jealous. A young handsome man, recovering from illness, is a very interesting object, and my wife—"

"Your wife!" interrupted Oscar.

"Even so, my friend," replied Drawley; "and I marvel much you did not read married man in the gravity of my countenance. I have exchanged for the white hand of Arabella all my whims, follies, and eccentricities, and solemnly vowed to be her loving husband, till death shall us part."

"I give you joy with all my soul," said Oscar; "may you never experience an abatement of your present felicity!"

"Thank you, thank you!" returned Drawley; "you will also have to give lord Alwyn Bruce joy on a similar occasion, for he has taken Miss Sedgeley to wife, in spite of all his sister could urge respecting their family being royally descended, and the mortifying degradation of unequal alliances."

"Miss Sedgeley's amiable qualities," said Oscar, "will soon reconcile lady Jane Bruce to her want of rank."

"Your lively little favourite, Jessy Graham," continued Mr. Drawley, "has persuaded sir Middleton Maxfield to put on matrimonial fetters."

"And Miss Macdonald?" asked Oscar.

"Still studies Grecian attitudes and antique draperies," replied Drawley; "the marriage of lord Alwyn Bruce was a terrible disappointment; the *Chronique Scandaleuse* said she had strangled herself in a fit of jealousy, with lord Alwyn's military sash; but in utter contradiction of this report, she officiated, a few days after, as one of her cousin Jessy's bridesmaids, in costume *à la Euphrosyne*, and is now trying all her graceful attitudes to win the classical lord Belgrave. But, my good friend, you must prepare to receive a visit from the new-married folks, for after my report of your convalescence, you may depend that nothing will prevent their coming hither."

"Are they at Lisbon?" asked Oscar.

"They are," replied Drawley, "and impatient to see you."

"They do me honour," said Oscar, a faint blush colouring his pale cheek as he recollected his illegitimacy.

"Honour—nonsense!" returned Drawley; "they will do themselves pleasure and honour; and Arabella, who is so partial to the country, will be delighted with this hilly region."

"It is indeed a charming spot," said Oscar; "and if happiness were to be found on earth, one might expect to meet it in this place, where, remote from the contagion of cities, and removed from temptation to vice—"

"Hold there!" interrupted Drawley, pointing to a young girl at a distance, who was laughing as she ran from the pursuit of a peasant—"don't speak of being removed from temptation, when these olive-coloured beauties continually cross your path."

“To me,” said Oscar, with a sigh, “they offer no temptation. You have not mentioned Cecilia, and your silence assures me you have obtained no information on that distressing subject.”

“The fate of Cecilia is still involved in mystery,” replied Mr. Drawley; “I have heard nothing.”

A deeper shade of melancholy fell on the countenance of Oscar; and Drawley, unwilling to encourage the regret and distress of his friend, began to describe, in his own ludicrous way, the sickness of his companions, their unfounded terrors, and all the incidents that had attended their voyage from England, to the moment of their casting anchor at Lisbon.

END OF VOL. IV.

LOVERS AND FRIENDS.

A NOVEL.

Printed by J. Darling, Leadenhall-Street, London.

LOVERS AND FRIENDS;  
OR,  
MODERN ATTACHMENTS.  
A NOVEL.  
IN FIVE VOLUMES.

BY  
ANNE OF SWANSEA,  
AUTHOR OF  
CONVICTION, GONZALO DE BALDIVIA, CHRONICLES OF AN ILLUSTRIOUS HOUSE,  
SECRET AVENGERS, SECRETS IN EVERY MANSION, CAMBRIAN PICTURES,  
CESARIO ROSALBA,  
&c. &c.

“I hold a mirror up for men to see  
How bad they are, how good they ought to be.”

VOL. V.

LONDON:

Printed at the Minerva Press for

A.K. NEWMAN AND CO. LEADENHALL STREET.  
1821.

## LOVERS AND FRIENDS.

### CHAPTER I.

“How noiseless falls the foot of Time  
That only treads on flowers!  
What eye with clear account remarks  
The ebbing of his glass,  
When all its sands are diamond sparks,  
That dazzle as they pass?

“But, ah! how slow Time steals along  
With those condemn’d to woe!  
For them how dark the brightest day  
Who muse on pleasures past,  
And as the moments creep away,  
Wish each sad hour their last!” Z.

“The world is ever ready to believe evil of us, but it is slow to give credit to our virtues: happy are they who, when falsely represented, have the consolation of innocence.”

*Villany disappointed—A Citizen and his Famil  
—Covent Garden Theatre—A Scholar not al-  
ways an agreeable Companion.*

THE virtuous spirit with which Miss Delmore repulsed every attempt made by sir Cyril Musgrove against her honour, the undisguised censure she passed on his licentious conduct, and the contempt with which she constantly treated him, had effected a change in his sentiments surprising even to himself. Accustomed to meet but little opposition to his wishes, sir Cyril had taught himself to believe that every woman was to be obtained by assailing her vanity or her avarice; but a steady perseverance in refusal, though every offer had been made that could seduce and bribe a weak or venal mind, compelled sir Cyril to retract this illiberal opinion, and confess that Miss Delmore’s mind and principles were incorruptible. Her beauty and accomplishments the admiring world had universally acknowledged; to her virtue, fortitude, and patience, he was obliged to bear witness, and fully persuaded that she was the only woman he could endure as a wife, and that he must be miserable without her, he at last, after many struggles with pride and profligacy, made her an offer of his hand.

Cecilia replied— “I know not, sir Cyril, whether your penitence, and proposal to make me your wife, is not a new stratagem to lull my suspicions, and get me more completely in your power; but of this I assure you, whatever may be your design, you will reap no advantage from it. I have before told you my affections are irrevocably engaged; my hand is promised: but were I at perfect liberty, and I was certain you are sincere in your present offer of marriage, I should with scorn reject it. The man who has presumed to confine my person, and dared to assail me

with dishonourable proposals, is entitled only to my disdain; and rather than be your wife, sir Cyril, I would prefer to labour in the most menial servitude for the means of existence."

During this unexpected declaration, sir Cyril bit his lips, frowned, and looked a good deal disconcerted; but stifling his mortification, he affected good-humour, and with forced gaiety replied—"You now speak, my charming Cecelia, under the influence of resentment, for which, I confess, I have given you some cause; but I trust you will forgive the little harmless stratagem I used to get you into my power, and kindly attribute it to the excess of my passion for you, particularly as I now offer you the *amende honorable*. Consider, my fair tyrant, I lay my title and fortune at your feet; and as to my person, I do not, I trust, flatter myself in supposing to that you can form no objection."

"In my eyes it is hateful," said Cecilia, "and now, and for ever, I reject any and every offer you can make me, unless Heaven should touch your heart with remorse, and induce you to offer me liberty."

"Nay, lovely inflexible," replied sir Cyril, "be not so hasty in your resolves; be calm, and take time to consider, before you so peremptorily reject."

"No time will prevail on me to accept your proposal, sir Cyril," returned Miss Delmore; "reflect on the time you have detained me a prisoner. Do you think your *amende honorable*, were I debased enough to accept it, will restore my ruined reputation, destroyed by your little harmless stratagem, or persuade the world to believe me innocent, after having passed near four months under your roof?"

"The world, my fair inexorable," said sir Cyril, "is too polite to be severe in scrutinizing the actions of persons of rank and fortune. When you are lady Musgrove, depend upon it, all your former friends will be happy to renew their intimacy."

"You are mistaken, sir," replied Miss Delmore; "my friends are all of them persons of honourable mind, and would shun me, however high my rank, or elevated my fortune, were I capable of renouncing an affection that was avowedly the pride of my existence, and breaking promises voluntarily plighted. No, sir Cyril, when I reflect on the noble generous character of lord Rushdale, yours must lose by the comparison; and however protracted may be my separation from him, my respect and affection can never know abatement. Whatever may be your motive for offering me marriage, I repeat, with the honest feeling of sincerity, I dislike your person, I abhor your principles, and never will be your wife."

"You may, when too late, repent this rejection, madam," said sir Cyril, reddening with resentment; "you may dislike my person, for certainly there is no accounting for taste; but I like yours, and if you will not marry me—if you will compel me to other measures, why the consequences must not be attributed to me, who would have acted honourably by you."

"Whatever are the consequences, I am prepared to meet them," returned Cecilia, with an assumption of spirit she was far from feeling. "You have already proved yourself capable of actions disgraceful to the character of a gentleman; beware that you do not add murder to the catalogue of your crimes."

"Charming heroine!" exclaimed sir Cyril, "your very anger is beautiful, and armed with a dagger, or a bowl, you would rival Miss O'Neil. But surely you do not suppose me fool enough to believe you would destroy yourself, rather than comply with my wishes?"

Cecilia did not deign a reply to this insulting speech; she hastily retired to give vent to the tears which she with difficulty prevented from gushing from her eyes in the presence of her persecutor, and to supplicate the protection and assistance of that mighty Power whom she was confident she did not address in vain.

More than a fortnight had elapsed, and she believed the words marked on the handkerchief which she placed in the bosom of the child had passed unheeded, or been seen only by persons unable or unwilling to assist her escape. Of lord Rushdale's feelings she thought with an agony that whirled her brain, for remembering the malicious newspaper representations, she was aware that appearances were indeed very much against her, and she trembled and wept, lest he should have yielded belief to slanders that indeed seemed too probable to be doubted.

Sir Cyril Musgrove had never in his life passed so long a period at Frome Hall, which, though an ancestral seat, was not in a fashionable neighbourhood, and was therefore seldom honoured with his residence for more than a month every summer. He was now heartily tired of the place, as well from want of society, as from the conviction that every servant in the house was assured of Miss Delmore's innocence, that they all pitied her, and were certain she was kept there against her will; he was also convinced that they all condemned his conduct, and would oppose any violence being offered to her. His prime minister, Mr. Samuel Sparks, had strongly recommended his taking Miss Delmore to France, where he might easily persuade monsieur she was a refractory wife, and national politeness would prevent any interference between *mi lor Anglais* and his domestic concerns.

This advice sir Cyril considered too good to be neglected, and he resolved to adopt it without loss of time, for his pride was offended, and his resentment influenced. He would have condescended to take the low-born portionless Cecilia to wife; but she had treated his generous proposal with insolent contempt, and he resolved to humble her haughty spirit, by arrogating all the privileges of a husband as soon as they landed in France.

Mr. Samuel Sparks, with much secret satisfaction, received sir Cyril's orders to prepare for quitting England, and every arrangement being made for a year's absence, Cecilia was informed they should quit Frome Hall, and begin their journey to Poole the following morning, where a vessel waited to convey them to France.

Against this fresh outrage in forcing her to quit the kingdom, Cecilia remonstrated in terms of bitter reproach, at which sir Cyril laughed, and insultingly said, as she was weary of Frome Hall, he thought to have received her thanks for projecting a trip to Paris, where he trusted she would forget her indignation—"I expect, when you breathe the air of France," said he, "that you will throw off all your English prudery, and display only the loves and graces."

Cecilia perceived that sir Cyril was indeed fixed on quitting Frome Hall, for trunks and packages filled all the rooms; and to prevent her from exciting commiseration in the servants, Mr. Sparks was her constant attendant. Never did Cecilia pass a night of such hopeless agony; her eyes were not, for a single moment, visited by sleep; but the long hours were passed in tears and supplications to Heaven, to enable her to preserve the consciousness of virtue in the midst of her future trials.

A dark rainy morning succeeded this miserable night, and sir Cyril remained in bed beyond the hour he proposed setting off. When Cecilia was informed that breakfast waited, and descended to the parlour he remarked that she looked unwell; as the wind swept boisterously over the flowering shrubs, and the rain beat against the windows, he drew near the fire, and protested that the morning was so unpleasant, that, 'pon his honour, he felt inclined to postpone their journey to the next day.

To this Cecilia made no reply; but she felt like a wretch reprieved, though she saw no good that could possibly arise from the delay of a few hours.



“What say you, my charmer,” said sir Cyril, snatching her hand, and rudely kissing it, “shall we remain another day at Frome Hall, or pursue our intended journey, in defiance of wind and rain?”

Struggling to release her hand, which he tightly grasped, Cecilia replied, whether she remained or went, it was equally repugnant to her will, and against her consent. “You are a dear perverse creature,” said sir Cyril, “but I hope every thing from the love-breathing air of France. ’Pon my honour,” staring her in the face, “you look pale, and your eyes are heavy, as if you had not rested well.” Releasing her hand, he looked at the sky— “No hope of the rain going off—cloudy, thick, and gloomy; perhaps to-morrow the sun and Cecilia may both look bright. In the hope it will be so, I will spare my horses, for, ’pon my honour, I should be extremely sorry to expose them to bad weather; the pair that run in my travelling-carriage cost me a thousand pounds; but for figure and action, they are not to be matched in England.”

When the breakfast-things were removed, Miss Delmore would have retired, but sir Cyril insisted she should remain, and play chess with him— “The morning,” said he, “is so confounded dull, that you shall stay and entertain me.”

“I should suppose, sir, you have found, before this, that compulsion fails to make an amusing companion,” replied Cecilia. “Release my hand. I am very unwell, and wish to retire.”

“Mere obstinacy and perverseness,” returned sir Cyril; “but I shall find a way to subdue this froward spirit, to bend you to my will.”

“Never,” said Cecilia.

“Yes,” continued sir Cyril, still grasping her hand, “I shall very shortly see this disdain exchanged for looks of humble entreaty. This hand, which now obstinately resists my clasp, and struggles to free itself, will press mine in fond endearment, and those lips, that now utter reproach and refusal, will soon put on their most inviting smiles, and solicit my kiss.”

“Release me, sir Cyril,” said Cecilia, as, covered with indignant blushes, she evaded his clasp; “never will you be other than detestable in my eyes—never will my lips utter other than reproach for your unmanly conduct.”

At the moment when sir Cyril forcibly held her in his arms, and her shrieks of terror provoked him to snatch kisses from her neck and cheek, a postchaise, followed by four horsemen, drove furiously towards the house. The eyes of Cecilia caught the figure of her friend Wilson, and a loud shriek of joyful recognition burst from her overcharged heart.

Sir Cyril turned in confusion towards the window to reconnoitre his unwelcome visitors, and Cecilia, rushing towards the hall, exclaimed— “Heaven has not forgotten me! deliverance comes!”

Before she could reach the hall, she was met by Mr. Samuel Sparks, who would have hurried her into the passage that led to the servants’ offices; but her cries for help soon brought a young naval officer to her assistance, who, laying a thick cane over the head of Mr. Sparks, left him prostrate on the floor, while he bore the terrified Cecilia to the breakfast-parlour, where sir Cyril Musgrove, in attempting to escape from the window, had dislocated his shoulder, and so severely lacerated his leg, that he lay on the carpet groaning, covered with blood, and unable to reply to the invectives and menaces of the enraged Wilson.

When Cecilia was sufficiently composed to be sensible of the happiness of her deliverance, and had expressed her pleasure at so unexpectedly seeing her early friend, she was introduced to lieutenant Melrose, and two gentlemen of the law, to whom she was requested to relate every circumstance of her being decoyed from the protection of lady Welford, with all that had occurred since sir Cyril Musgrove had confined her person.

Miss Delmore's deposition being ended, Mr. Samuel Sparks was brought forward, and ordered to confess the share he had taken in decoying Miss Delmore from London. Under the influence of fear, the gay bold Mr. Sparks became mean and cowardly; falling on his knees, he entreated mercy, and declared that he had been employed by sir Cyril Musgrove to carry off Miss Delmore from Torrington Castle, but having failed in that attempt, he had received a bribe of three hundred pounds from sir Cyril, and the promise of three hundred more, and to be set up in a grand hotel at Paris, as soon as Miss Delmore accepted the offers of sir Cyril.

All this being sworn to, Mr. Sparks was given into the charge of a constable, to be held in custody till he had found sufficient bail for his assault on the person of Miss Delmore. Sir Cyril could only reply to the questions he was asked with groans; and having also left him properly guarded, Cecilia, eager to quit the scene of her sufferings and detention, was led to the chaise by Mr. Melrose, leaving sir Cyril Musgrove and his agent, Mr. Samuel Sparks, bound over to answer at law for their offences.

Seated between Mr. Wilson and his young friend, Cecilia learned that her handkerchief had fallen into the hands of an ignorant but worthy woman, who brought it to the mother of Mr. Melrose to read.

"When in London," said the young lieutenant, "I had heard of the mysterious disappearance of Miss Delmore, and I wrote immediately to Mr. Scroggins, the brother-in-law of Mr. Wilson, to inform him of the discovery brought about by the handkerchief. I was certain Mr. Scroggins was much interested, and anxious to know what had become of Miss Delmore, and I waited with no little impatience for his instruction how to proceed for her liberation."

"You are the best-hearted lad in the world," replied Wilson, "and I will use all my influence to promote your marriage with Marian, for though you are not rich, you are a worthy brave fellow, and I would rather see you her husband, than the stupid hunks her father has cast his eye upon; but Scroggins would have answered your letter directly, only he expected me in town, and wished to consult what he is pleased to call a wiser head than his own on the business. Egad, Cecilia, I was half mad with joy to get that account of you, distressing as it was, and I lost no time, I promise you, in taking a counsellor's advice how to proceed, and in posting to your deliverance."

Cecilia gratefully pressed the hand of her friend— "Even from my earliest remembrance," said she, "you have heaped obligations on me; when, or in what way, shall I ever evince my sense of your kindness?"

With a good-humoured smile Wilson replied— "By recovering, as fast as you can, your health and your spirits, for I am sorry to see the rose on your cheek is not as bright as it was when we parted in Cumberland."

Cecilia's eyes filled with tears; with the mention of Cumberland, a thousand tender remembrances associated days of innocence, of friendship, and love— "But they will return again," said she, mentally; "the Power that has hitherto protected will not abandon me to wretchedness."

Cecilia learned with regret that lady Welford was in Somersetshire with her brother, who was on the point of marriage, and had invited her to assist at his nuptials; and what was still more distressing, that the earl of Torrington, and his son, both in bad health, were gone to Lisbon; that most of her particular friends were absent from London, and Mrs. Doricourt was still in France. Mr. Wilson did not say that either the earl of Torrington or his son were in a dangerous state, but attributed their illness to vexation and regret on account of the ill conduct of the countess, and to her strange departure from lady Welford's. Other communications he could not make, for the

very important disclosure of Mr. Dacres was not known to him, or any persons, except the most particular friends of the unfortunate Oscar. But the apprehensive mind of Cecilia instantly took alarm, and though delicacy restrained the outward expression of grief, and the utterance of her thoughts, she believed that her unaccountable absence, and the vile reports of the newspapers, that so soon appeared after her quitting London, had affected the health and peace of her beloved Oscar; yet ever resigned, and piously relying on the directing wisdom of Providence, she endeavoured to overcome her fears, and having listened to Mr. Wilson's account of all her friends being absent from town, she said— "We shall then, of course, proceed immediately to Cumberland. How I shall rejoice to see my dear aunt Milman again, and to feel myself in safety among the friends of my infancy at Torrington Castle!"

"I have business that will detain me in town for a month," replied Wilson, "and as I think it will be highly improper to suffer you to travel alone, I shall, if you approve, place you under the protection of my brother-in-law, honest Matthew Scroggins, who has a wife, not a fine lady to be sure, but a well-meaning good sort of woman, and two daughters, tolerable well-looking girls—Marian particularly so. Eh, Melrose!"

"Marian is a very amiable girl," said the lieutenant, "and will, I am certain, be happy to do all in her power to render Miss Delmore's visit in Abchurch-street agreeable."

Had the mind of Cecilia been at ease, she would have been gratified with the variety of scenery that met her view on the road, which she had before travelled at night; but grief and anxiety so occupied her heart, that she was no longer sensible to the charms of spring, and would have passed the most romantic spots without observance, had they not been pointed out by young Melrose.

The journey to London was safely performed, and having been but very seldom beyond Cheapside, Cecilia was not a little astonished to find the chaise stop at the door of a grocer in a narrow dirty street.

A good-looking elderly man, in a full-bottomed powder wig, received her as she descended from the chaise, and saluting her with a smacking kiss on the cheek, and a hearty shake of the hand, said— "You are welcome to London, Miss. I am very glad my brother-in-law has succeeded in setting you free. Here, Mrs. Scroggins—Jenny—where are you?" bawling loud enough to be heard into the garret, at the same time opening the door of a small parlour— "Mrs. Scroggins—Jenny, I say, why don't you come down stairs? Here is Miss Delmore arrived! Plague on these here women folk, they take such a long time to dizen themselves! Walk in, Miss—pray walk into the parlour. My wife and daughter will be with you in a twinkle. So, Melrose, my hero, you are returned to London again, I see; hankering after Marian, I suppose; but I shall keep a sharp look-out. You need not expect to marry my daughter till you are made a post-captain, and as them there promotions go by favour, more than by merit, why you stand but a poorish sort of a chance."

"It is very true, sir," replied Melrose, "my present visit to London has Marian for its object. I expect to be ordered to sea, and I wished to see her, to assure her—"

"Nonsense," interrupted Scroggins; "you are a fine young man, and I don't wish Marian to listen to your love-tales. You can't marry, for your pay is not more than sufficient to maintain yourself. Marian must marry a husband that can support her; and to be plain with you, a wealthy neighbour of ours has taken a liking to the girl, and as he is an honest, sober man, no reasonable objection can be made to the match."

"Yes," replied Melrose, warmly; "the strongest objection. He is old enough to be her father, and Marian dislikes him."

"She will alter her mind," said old Scroggins. "He has a handsome house at Putney, keeps a gig, and will settle half his fortune upon her."

"She will never accept him," replied Melrose.

A customer drew Scroggins to the counter.

During the conversation between him and the lieutenant, Wilson had been settling with the postboy, and Cecilia had sunk sick and fatigued on a chair in the little dismal-looking parlour, where a nearly-expiring fire made the room appear still more forlorn and comfortless. Presently a rustling noise at the opposite side of the parlour made her start, and perceive a glass-door, covered on the outside with a green curtain, from the concealment of which she perceived she was peeped at by persons who were gratifying their curiosity at the expence of good manners.

Mr. Wilson, on entering the room, and finding Cecilia alone, rang the bell furiously. Presently a dirty-looking servant girl appeared, and asked— "What is your will, sir?"

"My will is to see your mistress and the young ladies," replied Wilson, in no very complacent tone. "Do they know that Miss Delmore is arrived?"

"Yes, they do, sir," said the girl; "my mistress will be down as soon as she has settled her head a bit, and Miss Scroggins has put on her new dress."

"Where is Marian?" asked Mr. Wilson, impatiently.

"Gone to pay a bride visit, sir," replied the girl, with a simper; "but here comes my mistress."

Mrs. and Miss Scroggins now bustled into the room, and having, with coarse familiarity, congratulated Miss Delmore on her release from confinement and safe arrival in London, apologized for not being ready to receive her.

"Well, there you have said enough in the way of compliments," said old Scroggins, thrusting his little purple face in between his wife and daughter; "but fine words go but little way towards filling empty stomachs. Jenny, take Miss Delmore up stairs to your badwire, as you call it, and let her have some refreshment, for I dare say she is almost famished."

"La, papa!" replied Miss; "sure I know what belongs to good manners, without your instruction."

Miss Scroggins then invited Cecilia up stairs, who, weary and unhappy in mind, followed her conductors in silence to Miss Scroggins's *boudoir*, a low, dark, old-fashioned room, absurdly furnished with Grecian draperies, Egyptian couches, and Italian lamps.

"Now, my dear Miss Delmore, you will find yourself at home," said Miss Scroggins, casting a glance of proud satisfaction round the apartment, "because I know this *boudoir* resembles what you have been accustomed to."

At another time, when her mind was happy, Cecilia's smile would have contradicted the assertion of Miss Scroggins, and declared that the furniture of the room was unlike any thing she had ever seen—a jumble of articles crowded together, without taste or design; but heartsick, she complained of fatigue, and expressed a wish to retire to bed.

"Not till you have taken some refreshment, Miss," said Mrs. Scroggins. "My husband would never forgive me, if I did not make you take something. Would you like a sandwich, and a glass of warm port negus, or a cup of strong coffee or tea?"

Finding she should not be allowed to retire before she had taken some refreshment, Cecilia chose tea. Mr. Wilson, the lieutenant, and old Scroggins, attended the tea-table, where, to Cecilia's great annoyance, she was questioned by Mrs. Scroggins and her daughter, and compelled to give them an account of her being decoyed from lady Welford's, a description of

her journey to Frome Hall, and the behaviour of sir Cyril Musgrove, down to the last moment she remained under his roof.

Mr. Scroggins often repeated—"Well, I never heard the like! what wickedness! Sir Cyril Musgrove deserves hanging."

Mr. Scroggins wished to tar and feather him. Young Melrose said he should like to see him brought to the gangway of the Alfred, where the boatswain handled a cat-o-nine tails famously.

"If the cowardly rascal had not put his shoulder out, and tore the flesh from his leg in trying to make his escape, I would have horsewhipped him famously," said Mr. Wilson; "but it strikes me he has got such a punishment as will prevent his running away with another lady in a hurry."

Miss Scroggins was curious to know if sir Cyril Musgrove was handsome?

"Not in my opinion," replied Cecilia; "but his person might pass, did he not render himself hateful by his vices."

Miss Scroggins thought sir Cyril must be greatly in love with Miss Delmore, before he would have ventured on such a daring plan.

"In love!" repeated Mr. Wilson; "why, Jenny, you surprise me. What love can a man feel, that seeks to bring the object of his pursuit to disgrace? When a man is in love, child, he acts generously and openly, and makes his proposals in the face of day. Sir Cyril Musgrove is a scoundrel, and I hope to see him trounced for his villany."

A knock was now heard at the private door, and Mrs. Scroggins exclaimed—"That, I am sure, is Marian's genteel rap."

Presently footsteps were heard in the passage, and Melrose, with joy in his countenance, advanced to open the door, when, to his extreme mortification, he beheld Marian, attended by a military beau, whose dress and manner denoted a complete coxcomb.

Hardly waiting his introduction to Miss Delmore, he threw himself on the couch beside Miss Scroggins, and in language composed of bad English, and worse French, he informed her that her sister Marian was a prude and a simpleton—that she had been terrified to death at the idea of playing silver loo, and had actually insisted on quitting a gay party, just as they had set the card-tables, and were preparing to spend a pleasant evening.

"All the result of her very confined education," said Miss Scroggins, "and knowing nothing of the customs of the west end of the town. But pray, my dear captain Seaford, how did the bride behave?"

"As brides generally do," replied the military beau. "She blushed very often, and looked very silly and bashful."

"How ridiculous!" exclaimed Miss Scroggins; "but I always thought Harriet Morley a very prudish formal girl, quite old maidish in her manner. She never was a favourite of mine, and when she married Howard the waxchandler, I made up my mind not to visit her; but Marian and her, you know, were always particularly intimate; indeed, in their ways, they are very much alike."

The captain declared the resemblance was striking. "But you will not," said he, "be so cruel as to absent yourself from the ball her aunt intends giving on the happy occasion of her marriage. Surely, my dear Miss Scroggins, you will not be so barbarous as to deny me the happiness of waltzing with you?"

"I really have not given the ball a thought," replied Miss Scroggins; "but as I am immensely fond of dancing, it is probable that I may be there, that is, if I approve the company;

for really the idea of mixing with cheesemongers, tobacconists, and cornfactors, and fishmongers, is intolerable.”

“Certainly it is a great bore,” replied the captain, “particularly so to you, who have been accustomed to company so very superior.”

“Oh dear, yes,” resumed Miss Scroggins. “When my godmother, lady Meldrum, was alive, I was suffered to associate with none but persons of rank and family; never was seen in public but with a titled arm to lean upon: then on our gala nights—”

“For goodness’ sake, Jane,” said her mother, “don’t begin to talk about them there galleys, for if you do, nobody else will be able to put in a word edgeways.”

“Ay, ay,” rejoiced old Scroggins, “nobody wants to hear nothing about lady Meldrum’s grand doings. I wish, with all my soul, she had been dead afore she took you to live with her, Jane, for she has just made you good for nothing at all but to lie a-bed half the day, and be as proud and fantastical as she was, and to despise tradespeople.”

“Very true, Mr. Scroggins,” resumed his wife; “and as to them there galleys as Jane loves to talk about, they does no sort of good, as I know of.”

“I beg leave to differ in opinion with you there, ma’am,” said the captain, with a look between a smile and a sneer. “A gala, ma’am, let me tell you, does a great deal of good; it puts money into tradesmens’ pockets.”

“Yes,” observed Scroggins, “when they have the good luck to get paid, which does not happen above once in half-a-dozen years.”

“And then,” resumed the captain, “it pays the newspaper writers for puffs, in which the dresses of the ladies, and the quantity devoured of green peas, grapes, and pine-apples, are mentioned, besides all the *bond mots and jews pres* that passed between certain persons of quality.”

During this conversation, Marian had been seated next Miss Delmore, who was as much pleased with her modest unassuming attention as she was disgusted with the rude familiarity of her sister. The gentle Marian had been paying a bridal visit, where she met captain Seafood, the avowed admirer of Miss Scroggins, who, having five thousand pounds at her own disposal the day she was twenty, the legacy of her godmother, lady Meldrum, thought proper to encourage his addresses, much against the approbation of her father, who constantly asserted, that when Tom Seafood attended to his practice as a surgeon and apothecary, and minded his shop, he was a well-behaved creditable young man, and he had no objection to him for a son-in-law; but since he had got made a captain in the Smithfield Volunteers, he had become a fool and a jackanapes, talking a lingo that neither himself nor nobody else understood, and instead of getting forward in the world, he was going backwards, neglecting his business, and running in debt— “A pretty sort of a fellow for a husband!” said Scroggins: “if I can prevent it, Jane shall never throw away her five thousand pounds upon him.”

But while he openly and on every occasion expressed his dislike to captain Seafood, it was evident the old man had no other objection to Melrose than that most formidable one, his being poor; with Marian this circumstance did not appear to lessen the lieutenant’s merits; and Mr. Wilson, to whom the whole family, Miss Scroggins excepted, looked up with respect and awe, was so much pleased with his open countenance and manly behaviour, that while he eyed the military beau with disdain, he determined to promote, with all his influence, the fortunes of the lieutenant, to whose good sense and bravery he was so much indebted in the recovery of Cecilia.

In defiance of the prohibition of her mother, Miss Scroggins continued to entertain captain Seaford with the characters of the great people with whom she had been on terms of intimacy while under the protection of lady Meldrum, described the operas she had attended, and the galas where she had been in such delightful crowds, that she was nearly suffocated and squeezed to death, till Miss Delmore, sick of her vulgarity and ridiculous pretensions, as well as much fatigued from her journey, begged permission to retire.

Mrs. Scroggins entreated she would sit up to supper, which should be ready early.

Cecilia again pleaded fatigue, and retired attended by Marian.

Mr. Wilson also declined taking supper, which, he said, was an unwholesome and superfluous meal, and requested to be shewn to his chamber.

Miss Scroggins and the captain now uttered their opinions aloud and unrestrained, declaring, if sir Cyril Musgrove would have married Miss Delmore, she was a great fool to refuse him— “Unless,” added the captain, “she had an attachment elsewhere, and in that case, you know, my dear Miss Scroggins, what is wealth compared to love?”

“It bears no sort of comparison,” observed Mr. Scroggins, “for with money you may purchase every comfort the world can afford; but with love, nothing but hunger, rags, and poverty.”

“Miss Delmore’s rouge is not good,” remarked Miss Scroggins.

“Bless us, Jane! do you think the young lady paints?” asked Mrs. Scroggins.

Miss smiled disdain at the ignorance of her mother.

The captain, taking upon himself to answer her question, said— “My dear ma’am, you will recollect Miss Delmore has been accustomed to the society of persons of rank, and I give you my word of honour, no lady of fashion can possibly appear in public without rouge.”

“I don’t like such fashions,” replied Mrs. Scroggins; “folks ought to let their faces remain as nature made them.”

“You read of Jezabel in the bible painting herself, and she came to the dogs.”

“I don’t think Miss Delmore a good figure,” resumed Miss Scroggins; “she is not near as tall as I am.”

“She is half a head taller,” said her mother.

“Why certainly, ma’am,” replied Miss Scroggins, angrily, “I must appear a dwarf in your eyes.”

“No, no, not a dwarf, Jane,” returned Mrs. Scroggins; “but you are not as tall as Miss Delmore.”

“Have done with this dispute, and let us have supper,” interrupted Mr. Scroggins.

“Not here, sir, I promise you,” replied Miss Scroggins, “to grease the carpet, and fumigate the draperies with the effluvia of tobacco, which I know you will call for as soon as you have swallowed your supper.”

“The cloth is laid in the parlour,” said Mrs. Scroggins; and catching up a candle, she led the way down stairs, followed by the grocer, who kept muttering against the absurdity of furnishing rooms just to look at.

Picking the pinion of a chicken did not prevent Miss Scroggins from pulling the person of Miss Delmore to pieces— “I declare,” said she, “from uncle Wilson’s description, I expected to see a perfect beauty, and after all, she is nothing so extraordinary. I can’t think what induced sir Cyril Musgrove to run away with her.”

Captain Seaford's interest would not allow him to discover Miss Delmore's beauty; he protested, upon his honour as a gentleman, Miss Delmore was not to be mentioned in the same year with his divine Jane for beauty, and really, for his part, he thought her stupid and inanimate.

Mr. Melrose, provoked at their illiberal comments, observed it was impossible to judge of Miss Delmore from the very little they had seen, either of her person or manner— "Just off a long journey, she is doubtless greatly fatigued; besides, it should be remembered she is a stranger to the present company, and female reserve and timidity would prevent the display of spirit and animation."

"Oh dear!" interrupted Miss Scroggins, "people, Mr. Melrose, that are accustomed to high life, and have kept good company, are not troubled with awkward feelings of reserve and timidity."

"I am very sorry to hear it, Miss Scroggins," replied the lieutenant, "for in my humble opinion, modesty and timidity are so beautiful and desirable, that it would be quite impossible I should ever admire or love a female in whose conduct they were not conspicuous."

Marian blushed for her sister, who, giving her head a disdainful toss, observed, that persons who had passed the greatest part of their lives at sea, and had never had the good fortune to be admitted into the higher circles, had generally queer notions respecting women.

"Have done with this nonsense," said Scroggins; "I neither know, nor want to know, how the women behave in the higher circles, though, if report is to be credited, a good many of them would be the better for a little modesty and reserve. I wish, with all my soul, that fantastical godmother of yours had never introduced you to her company, for I am certain they have learned you to be disobedient to your parents, and rude to your acquaintance. I wish lady Meldrum had taught you a little good manners, for you have done nothing for the last hour but pull Miss Delmore to pieces, in which you have been manfully assisted by that fribble of a fellow that calls himself a captain; and I wonder what your uncle would say if he knew how you have been abusing his favourite."

"Uncle Wilson would act more properly if he found favourites in his own family," replied Miss Scroggins, "though, for my part," affecting an air of indifference, "I don't care a straw who he leaves his money to. I am sure I don't want his dirty cash, and I think, papa, it is not a very grateful return to lady Meldrum, to treat her memory so disrespectfully, after having educated me, and treating me as if I had been her own child, and leaving me a handsome fortune; a person of her quality, that kept the very best of company, and always—"

"Don't provoke me, Jenny," retorted the grocer. "Hold your tongue, and don't provoke me: I know well enough what sort of company she kept—a parcel of half-starved persons of title, with little or no fortune. A party of eight or ten of these poor devils she used to call a rout, and a pretty sort of a rout it was—tea and muffins, two or three glasses of raisin wine, a few biscuits, and turn out."

"It was no such thing, sir," returned Miss Scroggins, swelling with rage; "my godmother, lady Meldrum, was—"

"Half mad and half foolish," said Mr. Scroggins. "Zounds, girl! you will persuade me soon that I don't know a fig from a raisin. I say she has filled your head full of pride and conceit. What are you good for? You don't know how to mend a hole in your stocking as it should be. You will never be fit for a tradesman's wife, Jane, and I am certain them there knights and lords, as you are so fond of bragging about, will never think of you in the way of marriage."



Mrs. Scroggins endeavoured to pacify her husband, who was getting into a passion, by turning the conversation to her son's expected arrival on the morrow—"I dare say Solomon will be mighty glad to see his uncle," said Mrs. Scroggins.

"If he is not, he will be an ungrateful rascal," replied the grocer, "after all he has done for him since before he was the height of a sugar loaf."

"What a pleasure it will be to my brother to hear him talk Greek and Latin," said Mrs. Scroggins, "just the same as if it was his own natural tongue!"

"Perhaps my brother-in-law may understand them there languages," returned Scroggins, "or else it will give him but little pleasure. To be sure, it is a very fine thing to be a scholar; but when Solomon was at home before, he almost put me beside myself with his Homer, and his Virgil, and his cramp words; but he is a year older now, and I hope he has learned how to behave himself better, and can talk to be understood; at any rate, I hope he will be obedient to his uncle's wishes, and fall in love with Miss Delmore as soon as ever he sees her."

Young Melrose stared, and the captain, twirling his watch-chain, asked if she had a good fortune?

"Nothing to you, I suppose, whether she has or not," replied the grocer, "and it is a matter I don't trouble my head about. My brother-in-law means to marry the young lady to my son, and to give them all he is worth, which is no trifle, I know."

"Bless me! how fortunate some folks are!" said the captain. "I have got a rich uncle too, but I never heard the old codger meant to make me his heir."

"Most likely he has heard how you neglect your shop," resumed Scroggins, "and lie in bed when you ought to be attending your patients. Business won't take care of itself, I can tell you. I am sure it is getting late," yawning and pulling out his watch—"wants only three minutes to eleven—time for every body that has a shop to open in the morning to go to bed."

Melrose immediately took the hint, pressed Marian's hand, wished the rest of the party good-night, and departed.

The captain protested it was a prodigious bore to be turned out at so early an hour, just when he was beginning to enjoy himself.

"It is abominably vulgar and ill-bred," said Miss Scroggins; "but I shall not always be tied down to city hours, I trust."

The captain, in a half-whisper, replied—"You know how to get rid of this disagreeable slavery whenever you please."

Miss Scroggins said she detested going to bed so early, and would give his proposals serious consideration.

Old Scroggins, yawning again, exclaimed—"Zounds! will you never have done whispering? It is time to go to bed."

The captain hoped Miss Scroggins would have pleasant dreams, bowed affectedly, and took his leave.

Old Scroggins did not retire to rest without giving his daughter a lecture on the folly and imprudence of giving encouragement to Tom Seaford, who had laid out his whole fortune in a pair of gold epaulets—"For as to the drugs in his shop," said the grocer, "they are not worth a pound of hyson bloom; and as to his book-debts, they do not amount to half enough to pay his own creditors."

Miss Scroggins had heard of the effect produced by silent contempt, and she did not condescend to make a reply to what she considered a very impertinent interference in her father. Captain Seaford was, in her opinion, the most stylish dashing young man she had seen since her

return to the city. She certainly had not made up her mind to marry him, because she had higher views; for in lady Meldrum's house she had been flattered by men of rank, and it was not impossible but she might match with a title; but till something better offered, she was determined to retain the captain as an admirer, in spite of her father's dislike and remonstrance.

The chief part of the next day Miss Delmore employed in writing to the earl of Torrington and Mrs. Doricourt, and when in the evening she joined the family party, which had then the addition of Mr. Solomon Scroggins, she found nothing to reconcile her to remaining a month with them, but the mild obliging manners of Marian, who, without any of her sister's affectation and folly, was a genteel-looking interesting young woman. Mr. Solomon Scroggins was a pale thin young man, with large grey eyes, and lank dark hair; he spoke but little, was very awkward, and appeared quite out of his element.

The grocer, seeing him sit twirling his thumbs, gave him a hearty slap on the shoulder—"Why, you are in a brown study, Solomon," said he. "What are you thinking about?"

"I was just then, sir, ruminant," replied the young man, "on the Scholium to Cicero, page thirty-seven, volume eight."

"Never mind the scholars now," said his mother; "let us hear you talk a bit. Remember, you are not at college now."

"And instead of thinking of your books, nephew," rejoined Mr. Wilson, "turn your attention to the ladies; you will find them a very pleasant study."

"I believe not, sir," returned Solomon, "for I remember Martial says—"

"Never mind what Martial says," interrupted Mr. Wilson; "for the sake of making yourself agreeable to the fair sex, you must forget the ancients."

"Forget the ancients!" repeated Solomon, in a tone of astonishment. "Then for what purpose have I spent so many years in study?"

"Why to make you a clever fellow, to be sure," said his father, "and to make you a proper partner for the young lady whom your uncle and I have fixed upon for your wife."

"Woman," returned Solomon, "has never interfered with, or made any part of my studies."

Miss Scroggins tittered, and thought her brother Solomon more than half a fool.

"Woman," resumed the scholar, "is a theoretical subject, and requires a mansuetude, and various marital qualities and properties, which are by no means miscible with my pursuits; and though it is my wish to be marigerous—"

"Well, if it is your wish to be married, Solomon," said his father, "what are all these cramp words about?"

"You mistake my meaning, sir," replied Solomon, with increasing gravity. "Marigerous—"

"Stop, Solomon," said the grocer— "stop till Marian fetches me Bailey's dictionary."

"Our college prefers Johnson," remarked the scholar.

"Now," resumed old Scroggins, "if it is English you are speaking, I may possibly get at the meaning of your words, for at present I understand them as little as if you were talking Dutch."

"I am exactly in the same predicament," rejoined Wilson. "Do, nephew, let your hard words alone, and recollect that you are not at college now, and that neither your father nor myself are great scholars."

Solomon appeared vexed, as he replied—"I seriously lament that my nescience in the common terms of conversation should render it necessary to apply to a nomenclature; but my

fellow-students and myself have always had a volition to enter into nugacity, and on every subject aspire to express ourselves in ornate language.”

Old Scroggins threw down the dictionary in a rage, wishing the inventor of hard words at the devil, and swearing that Solomon’s came so thick and fast upon him, that he could not find the explanation of one before he was puzzled with another.

Miss Scroggins said, that her brother should have brought an interpreter with him from college; Marian felt inclined to weep; and Miss Delmore pitied the young man, whose education had rendered him unfit for the society of any but professors and graduates; Mr. Wilson looked disappointed, and the young scholar disconcerted.

Mrs. Scroggins said, it was a great pity they did not all of them understand Hebrew and Greek, because they could then converse pleasantly together.

Mr. Wilson began to perceive that his keeping Solomon so very strict to his learning, instead of making him a gentleman and a scholar, had produced only a stiff, formal pedant, who uttered a learned jargon, that would make him the ridicule of his own sex, and the detestation of the other; he wished that his nephew knew less of Hebrew and Greek, and was less conversant with the ancients, as his intimacy with them was likely to shut him out from modern society, and actually rendered his conversation unintelligible to persons of common education and capacity.

A thousand times in the course of the evening Solomon wished himself at college again; while Mr. Wilson lamented the waste of his money, which had been expended to form a learned fool, for Solomon had not an idea or opinion but what he had borrowed from books; Miss Scroggins ridiculed her brother’s awkwardness and formality; old Scroggins swore at his hard words; and Cecilia rejoiced when the hour of retiring released her from a party, from whom she could derive neither instruction nor amusement.

The following morning lieutenant Melrose called, and Cecilia again expressed her grateful sense of the generous and active part he had taken in her liberation from Frome Hall. Melrose declared himself happy in having had the power to be of service to her, and evaded any further praise or thanks, by inviting the ladies to go that evening to Covent Garden theatre, to see the representation of Reynolds’s *Dramatist*, a comedy which, he said, he had heard much commended.

“I am very glad it is not a tragedy,” said Miss Scroggins, “for I hate every thing horrid and dismal.”

“If you were to see the tragedies of the immortal Æschylus represented,” replied Solomon, “you would alter your opinion, and you may be certain they are worthy attention, for they have undergone philological examination.”

“I agree with Miss Scroggins,” said Melrose, “in preferring comedy, for we have real sorrows and troubles enough, without paying to be made unhappy by fictitious distress.”

“The comedies of Terence,” resumed Solomon, “are allowed to be unequalled in chastity of idea, and elegance of style. Terence was the slave of a Roman senator, who manumitted him for the brilliancy of his genius. His eloquent simplicity in describing the native independence of man, will always be remembered; that single line,

*‘Homo sum, humani nil a me alienum puto,*

has rendered him immortal. The Greek comedy—”

“The present company know nothing about,” said the lieutenant. “The comedy to be performed to-night, sir, is by a living author, and whimsically delineates the follies, manners, and extravagances of Englishmen of the present age.”

The present age, and living authors, created no interest in the mind of the scholar, who took out his pocketbook and pencil, and occupied himself with writing.

Miss Scroggins declared at once the pleasure it would afford her to go to the theatre. Marian hesitated to assent, and appeared to wait Miss Delmore’s decision, who, not considering the family of Scroggins exactly the sort of people she would wish to go into public with, was about declining being of the party, but the entrance of Mr. Wilson changed her determination. He so strongly pointed out the necessity of her proving to the world that she was not with sir Cyril Musgrove, that she reluctantly yielded up her own opinion, and consented to go.

Nearly the whole of the day Miss Scroggins was in the bustle of preparation, and her hair was twisted into a variety of forms, and ornamented with chaplets and feathers out of number, before she could determine on the most becoming. At length she descended to her boudoir extravagantly dressed, and highly rouged, where, to her astonishment, she found Miss Delmore and Marian attired with the utmost simplicity.

Her father having surveyed her from head to foot, observed, that she looked like one of the showfolks at Bartholomew fair; and Wilson, who did not at all approve of her dress, expressed his disapprobation in unequivocal terms.

Miss Scroggins said, that lady Meldrum always made her dress to go to the theatre, and if other people chose to attend public places as plain as Quakers, that was no reason she was to follow their example; that probably she might see some of her former acquaintance, and she should not choose them to believe that her circumstances were altered for the worse.

At an early hour, Mr. Wilson handed Miss Delmore into a hackney-coach, and invited Solomon to take a seat with them, leaving lieutenant Melrose to take care of the sisters. Mr. Wilson said, for his own part, he preferred the pit to any other part of the house; but as he knew Cecilia was accustomed to sit in the boxes, he should not think of his own gratification where she was at all concerned.

Cecilia felt repugnant to go to any place of amusement, particularly the theatre, where she had never before been but with lord Rushdale, the earl of Torrington, and lady Welford, and her heart reproached her for having consented to be present at any place of entertainment, while her friends were suffering from illness, and beheld her conduct in a doubtful light.

The house was very thin when they entered; but the box next to the one they sat in was occupied by a party of young men, who, far from sober, talked very loud, and stared so rudely in the face of Cecilia, that she was under the necessity of requesting Solomon Scroggins to change places with her. It was some moments before she could make him understood her wishes, for he was deeply engaged in considering the difference of the dimensions and decorations of Covent Garden theatre, and the amphitheatres at Rome; but after a repetition of her request, he suffered her to take his place.

The oddness of Solomon’s look, and the awkwardness of his manner, soon attracted the notice of the bucks in the next box, who assailed him with their quizzing-glasses, and made a thousand impertinent remarks on his lank hair, his grave countenance, and bare bones, all which never reached the ear of Solomon, who was occupied in reflections on the comedies of Plautus, Terence, and Afranius, compared with whose productions, the piece he came to see would, he supposed, be trifling, insipid, and unworthy the attention of a mind conversant with ancient writers. The curtain having drawn up, Solomon was very attentive to the stage, though he did not

appear to be at all gratified with the representation, for he every now and then shook his head and groaned, and muttered— “By no means classical—no unity preserved. Where is the elegance of Terence—the wit of Aristophanes?”

Marian was too happy in the company of Melrose to pay much attention to the play; and Miss Scroggins finding Miss Delmore was not to be drawn into a conversation respecting the merits of the actors, and gave no encouragement to her ill-natured remarks on the dress and persons of the audience, became quite restless and disagreeable, declaring to Marian, that Miss Delmore was as proud as if she was a person of consequence—that she had said nothing to her, more than yes or no, since she entered the theatre; but, for her part, she had no notion of such airs from her indeed, who had been brought up and educated for charity.

Marian said she did not think Miss Delmore proud, and that, no doubt, her silence proceeded from a wish to attend to the play. Miss Scroggins protested she had never known the theatre so dull; she did not see a creature she knew, and would not have come for the world, if she could have guessed the house would have been so empty.

At half-price the boxes began to fill, and to the infinite joy of Miss Scroggins, two or three young men took their places beside her. Having examined her face, which she took no pains to conceal, they glanced at Marian, and then took much pains to get a peep at Miss Delmore; but her eyes were bent on the stage, though her thoughts were full of lord Rushdale, and her own unpleasant situation.

Presently an elderly man, dressed with all the foppery of youth, addressed Miss Scroggins with— “Heaven and earth, child, where have you hid yourself this age? I thought you were married, or turned nun.”

“Not either, sir Charles, I assure you,” replied Miss Scroggins, delighted at last to have obtained notice; “but I have not gone into public much since the death of lady Meldrum.”

“Don’t mention the old hag,” said he, “unless you wish to annihilate me; she was always my aversion; and whenever I remember her crooked figure, her bare bones wrapped in yellow skin, her shrivelled face, and indigo lips, I am ill for a month after. But inform me, my sweet creature, in what part of the town do you conceal your beauties?”

“In the city, sir Charles,” replied Miss Scroggins. “I reside, at present, with my father.”

“In the city!” repeated the old beau, “horrible! What can induce you to live in the city, where you must be continually annoyed with noise, bustle, and dirt? I hate the city, and all the stupid plodders in it.”

“I am sure so do I,” returned Miss Scroggins; “I have been quite miserable ever since I have been there.”

Marian looked the reproof her timidity would not allow her to utter; and Solomon, roused by a conversation not carried on in whispers, forgot, for a moment, the superior excellence of Plautus, Terence, and Aristophanes, to wonder at the intrepidity of his sister, who continued to talk aloud, notwithstanding she had drawn upon herself the gaze of all the persons in her vicinity.

“It is a confounded bore,” resumed the old beau, “to live in the city. Why don’t you take lodgings at the west end of the town? A devilish fine girl like you might establish a faro bank, keep a dashing equipage, and live in the first style—”

“And lose her reputation,” said Wilson, throwing an angry glance on the antiquated fop. “My niece, sir, will, I hope, have more prudence than to follow your advice, which, I must take the liberty to say is very improper, and comes very bad indeed from a person of your years.”

“Years, sir!” repeated the offended beau, “years! You are a d—d impertinent fellow! Do you know who you presume to address? I am sir Charles Chapman.”

"You are not a proper chap for my niece," returned Wilson, angrily, "and you may spare yourself the trouble of introducing yourself, for I promise you I shall not be ambitious of your acquaintance."

"Why, who the devil are you," asked sir Charles, "who presume to address a person of my consequence so familiarly?"

"I am used to address your betters," said Wilson, "and I don't wish you to remain here."

"Bless me, uncle," rejoined Miss Scroggins, "what a rage you are putting yourself in about nothing! Sir Charles was merely joking; I have had the honour of his acquaintance a long time; he used to visit at lady Meldrum's. Pray, sir Charles, be pacified; my uncle is a very good sort of man, but living always in the country, he is unacquainted with fashionable manners."

Sir Charles sat down by Miss Scroggins, notwithstanding the repelling looks of Wilson, whom, muttering between his teeth, he called country put. Having again questioned Miss Scroggins respecting the street where she lived, he exclaimed—"I remember that ugly witch, lady Meldrum, used to say, that old Scroggins, your father, was as rich as a Jew; the grocer has made a plum of his raisins, I suppose. If he would come down handsomely, I know a dashing sprig of nobility who would have no objection to take a wife out of the city."

"My father," replied Miss Scroggins, "is too fond of his money to part with it during his life."

"Who," asked sir Charles, applying his glass to his eye, "who is that demure looking little thing? Is she of your party?"

"My sister, sir Charles," replied Miss Scroggins.

"Not at all like you," said the beau; "she should wear rouge—pale faces are unfashionable. And is that another sister?" pointing to Miss Delmore. "Fine bust; I wish she would turn her face this way—very inanimate—sits as motionless as a statue."

"That lady is no relation of mine at present, sir Charles," replied Miss Scroggins; "but I understand the old folks have laid their wise heads together, and design to marry her to my brother. Her name is Miss Delmore; she is tolerably pretty, but intolerably proud."

"Miss Delmore!" repeated sir Charles; "what, the celebrated Miss Delmore, the late *protégée* of lady Welford, that was said to be on the point of marriage with lord Rushdale, and went off with sir Cyril Musgrove to Paris?"

"Hush! hush! not so loud," said Miss Scroggins. "It is the same Miss Delmore; but you are a little mistaken in her history."

"Not at all, my sweet creature," resumed the old beau, with increasing familiarity. "All the world knows she went to Paris with sir Cyril Musgrove. How came they to separate? Had they a quarrel? Was sir Cyril jealous, and the lady inconstant? or did he grow weary of her caprice and extravagance? which is likely enough to be the case, for mistresses are in general expensive and insolent, as I can answer by experience; but tell me, my dear creature, when did they part? How long has she been in England? Has she obtained a handsome settlement? for, without that, I suppose the money-loving cit, your father, would not consent to the match?"

"No, nor with it," replied lieutenant Melrose, who, with boiling blood, had overheard the insolent questions to which Miss Scroggins listened with perfect complacency. "The lady of whom you presume to speak," said Melrose, "in such degrading terms, was never the companion of sir Cyril Musgrove; nor would the family, a part of which you have grossly insulted by your insolent questions, admit her into it, nor be seen with her in public, if they were not convinced of her propriety. Begone, sir, instantly, and do not compel me to disturb the audience, by turning you out of the box."

Sir Charles Chapman eyed the young lieutenant with a look he designed to express ineffable contempt; then turning to Miss Scroggins, said— “My dear creature, you are positively surrounded by bears. Do you never appear in public without this savage guard?”

“Beware of the bear’s hug,” replied Melrose, seizing him by the collar. “I insist that you quit this box instantly!”

A scuffle ensued, the performance was interrupted, and “silence!” and “turn them out!” were loudly vociferated from every quarter of the house. A friend of sir Charles Chapman struck Wilson, who returned the blow with such interest, that he lost his footing, and falling against Miss Scroggins, almost separated the skirt of her dress from the body.

Cecilia, whose wish was to avoid notice, who had never raised her head from her hand during the last act of the play, was now constrained to quit her seat, to avoid the combatants. In moving to the front of the box, her eyes met those of lady Eglantine Sydney, now marchioness of Beverley, who, with a fashionable party, some of whom had been Cecilia’s intimate acquaintance, occupied the next box; but not one of them now appeared to know her, or to compassionate her distress; and while Miss Scroggins affectedly screamed, Cecilia, mortified and abashed, sunk fainting on the shoulder of Marian, who clung to Solomon to prevent his joining in the affray, for, roused from his learned trance, he wished to make one in the tumult, though he did not clearly understand what it was about.

Sir Charles Chapman having been dragged away by his friends, Cecilia, still insensible, was borne to the saloon, to wait while Melrose and Solomon went in search of a coach, which, as the night proved rainy, was difficult to be procured.

While Marian held a smelling-bottle to the nose of Cecilia, Wilson severely lectured Miss Scroggins on the great impropriety of her entering into conversation with sir Charles Chapman, a person out of her own sphere of life— “But the foppish old baboon has got a good drubbing,” said Wilson, “and will, I fancy, take care how he intrudes his company again among well-conducted people.”

“Well-conducted people!” retorted Miss Scroggins, casting a rueful look on her tattered finery; “if all of us had been well conducted, this riot would not have happened, and I should not have got my dress torn in this manner. I am sure this is the first time in my life that ever I was obliged to quit a theatre on account of my party being improper characters; and, for my part, I wonder how you, so near a relation, could think of bringing me and Marian into public with a person whose conduct has been so notorious.”

Wilson, in an angry tone, bade her be silent, adding, he hoped she was as innocent as the poor suffering girl, who was just then unconscious of her wicked insinuations.

The lieutenant and Solomon Scroggins now returned to say, that they could only procure one coach, and that it rained as hard as it could pour.

Cecilia being lifted into the coach, Wilson placed Marian next her, observing, that she seemed to possess a little Christian charity; but for her sister, she was an unfeeling baggage. To all his inquiries after her health, Cecilia replied only with deep sighs and smothered groans; while Miss Scroggins declared she was very ill, and almost squeezed to death. Six persons jammed into a filthy hackney-coach, it was enough, she said, to kill a person who had never been used to ride in such a way.

“You need not ride, if you prefer walking in the rain,” said Wilson.

“The luxury of coaches,” remarked Solomon, “was unknown in the reign of——”

“I hope you don’t pretend to call a hackney-coach a luxury,” said Miss Scroggins; “you may as well talk of the luxury of riding in a wagon.”

“Sister Jane,” returned Solomon, “it is wisdom to make a virtue of necessity; and, as Hesiod says——”

“Pray keep his sayings to yourself,” said Miss Scroggins; “I am vapoured to death already, and don’t want to be edified with your learning.”

On their arrival in Abchurch-street, Cecilia, unable to converse, retired immediately to bed, where anguish of mind, and an excruciating headache, prevented her closing her eyes, and she passed the night in a state of restless misery, that brought on a nervous fever, and confined her to her chamber.

Wilson, very much offended at the conduct of Miss Scroggins, expatiated in very strong language on the extraordinary latitude she allowed herself, which, he insisted, was unbecoming her situation and pretensions; he said her behaviour at the theatre was unbecoming a modest young woman, and was the sole occasion of the riot there, and of Miss Delmore’s illness. Melrose had his thumb put out, and his arm dreadfully bruised in the scuffle, all which Wilson laid to the charge of his niece, whose insinuations and reflections on Cecilia had irritated him beyond patience.

Old Scroggins knew that his brother-in-law Wilson was rich, and he did not wish that he should find cause of offence in his family; the grocer protested, that it was his belief that lady Meldrum’s legacy had turned Jane’s brain, and his anger rose in proportion with Wilson’s, who repeated the conversation between her and the antiquated fop, sir Charles Chapman, till Miss Scroggins, flaming with rage, declared that she had a great mind to take the advice sir Charles had given her, and look out for lodgings, as she found her father’s house so disagreeable; “and I tell you plainly,” said Miss Scroggins, “as soon as I am of age, I will marry captain Seaford, and by my own mistress.”

“Perhaps not, if you marry him,” said Wilson.

“He is too good natured to contradict me in any thing,” said Miss Scroggins. “I will marry, I am determined, and be my own mistress; I am tired of being called to account, and reprimanded just as if I was a child, and dictated to about my acquaintance and conversation, which I never was accustomed: when my godmother, lady Meldrum, was alive, poor dear woman,” continued Miss Scroggins, “she had no idea how I was to be huffed and snubbed, or she never would have appointed my father my guardian.”

Solomon wished himself back at college again, where nothing had happened to disturb his tranquillity since his matriculation.

This was the first visit Wilson had paid his sister since her children were grown up, and he was much disappointed to find his eldest niece a termagant, and his nephew an absolute idiot in the customs of the world: in his person puritanical and formal, his language composed of far fetched words and Latin quotations; he was disappointed beyond measure, to find the sums he had given to make Solomon a gentleman and a scholar, had transformed the once-lively boy into a disagreeable pedantic blockhead.

Wilson had dispatched an express to the earl of Torrington, to inform him that Miss Delmore was safe under his protection, and to ask his instruction respecting proceeding at law against sir Cyril Musgrove; he had also taken courage to mention the great learning of his nephew Solomon, and his wish to marry him to Miss Delmore, if the match met his approbation; at the same time informing his lordship, that he had not hinted the matter to Miss Delmore, till he was honoured with the knowledge of his pleasure. But though Mr. Wilson had not mentioned this long-cherished wish to Miss Delmore, he had opened his mind freely to his nephew, whom he frequently urged to throw aside his pedantry, and endeavour to make himself agreeable to his



favourite Cecilia, who was herself a great scholar, speaking five or six different languages, and playing on various instruments, besides being a fine painter. On the heart of Solomon her beauty, though frequently pointed out, made no impression; he was at that time busily engaged in solving a mathematical problem, and his uncle had to repeat again and again, that he wished him to marry Miss Delmore, before he made him any sort of answer on the subject.

"A man, sir, that marries," said Solomon, with much precision and gravity, "must make his mind up to endure much ademption."

"Now you are beginning with your confounded hard words," returned Wilson. "What a devilish thing it is you can't express yourself in terms that a man of common capacity may understand! Here, Marian, my good girl, turn over the dictionary for the word ademption, which may be Greek though, for all I understand of it."

The word being explained, Solomon proceeded to repeat—"A man that marries must make up his mind to much ademption; he must be content to have his morning studies and his lucubrations disturbed, which will by no means adjuvate his improvements in the sciences."

"Another cramp word," exclaimed Wilson. "Do, Marian, look for adjuvate." Having obtained its explanation, he desired Solomon to proceed.

"Nor do I perceive," continued the scholar, "what adscititious happiness can possibly result to a man's life from being married—"

"What the plague," interrupted Wilson, "do you mean by adscititious? Look for the word, Marian."

"I must therefore beg leave," resumed Solomon, "to decline this adunation."

"I wish to Heaven I could decline your hard words," said Wilson, looking over Marian's shoulder at the dictionary.

"I am sure, sir," replied Solomon, "I am at much pains to avoid abstruse phrases and altiloquence."

"Oh, the devil!" exclaimed Wilson, "here is another word that would puzzle a parson. Turn to altiloquence, Marian."

Marian obeyed, though weary of her office, and ready to weep, to think that her brother's great learning made him unintelligible to his family, who, unable to converse with him, and kept at a distance by his reserve and frigid manners, would never feel towards him the affection of relations.

Solomon's mind was again busy with the problem; and on his uncle urging him to make himself agreeable, and to speak in simpler language, as nothing was so hateful to women as a bookworm, he replied—"I never intend to marry, sir; and I should be glad if this declaration would satisfy you, because I wish to avoid ambages; not that I am deterred by fear of matrimonial amaritude."

"Matrimonial what?" asked Wilson.

"Bitterness, sir," said Marian.

"Hem!" returned Wilson, pretending to cough.

"Neither," resumed Solomon, "am I a misogamist."

"I am in a mist," said Wilson—"in a thick fog. Solomon, you are a d—d fool! Marian, shut the book. I wish, with all my soul, I had given the money bestowed on this fellow's education to the Foundling Hospital. Answer me, Solomon, and without any of your hard words. Will you be a parson?"

"I will reply to you, sir," returned the scholar, "without any pseudology, I have no prurience towards divinity; theology, sir, has never been a favourite study of mine, and I am

fixed in the intention of taking a voyage round the world in search of knowledge, with my erudite friend Erasmus Peters. I will visit the huts of the negroes in the wilds of Africa—I will become acquainted with the Indians of America—I will converse with the Goubres of Persia—I will gain information from the Bramins on the banks of the Ganges—I will go—”

“Go to the devil in your own hand-basket,” said Wilson, rushing out of the room, and slamming the door with violence after him.

“I do opine,” said Solomon, “that all the people in this great city are insane. I will go back to college with all possible expedition, for if I remain here a month, I shall entirely forget the dignity of a scholar, and become either a hunter after the dross of the earth, or a follower of women.”

“I wish, my dear Solomon,” replied Marian, with tears in her eyes, “you would follow your uncle, and adapt your language to his understanding; for recollect, my dear brother, you are the first of the family that has had a college education.”

## CHAPTER II.

—————“His the adoring air,  
The attentive eye that dwells upon the fair;  
His the soft tone to grace a tender tale,  
And his the flattering sighs that will prevail;  
His the whole art of love—but all is art,  
For kindly nature never touch’d his heart.”

By fancy’s fairy charms undone,  
I vainly hop’d to find  
A form as radiant as the sun  
Contain a spotless mind.

*Simple Minstrelsy.*

The heart can easier reconcile itself to the death of a beloved object, than to beholding them disgraced by vice, and leading a life of infamy.

*American Letters.*

*Pedantry inimical to Love and the Graces—Unexpected Meeting of Friends—Innocence justified—Adventures at Marseilles—Fatal Consequences of Vice—Death the Absolver of Injuries.*

THE plain good sense of Mr. Wilson pointed out the absurdity of believing that Miss Delmore would ever be brought to like his nephew Solomon Scroggins, who was so stiffly buckled in an armour of Greek, Hebrew, and Latin, that he was absolutely invulnerable to the charms of youth and beauty. To pay the slightest attention to dress Solomon considered absolute waste of time: on all the graceful parts of education he turned an eye of contempt, and asserted that dancing, singing, and playing on musical instruments, were puerile accomplishments, beneath the dignity of a scholar.

With his very awkward person and such ideas, Wilson knew it was impossible that Solomon could recommend himself to the favourable notice of a female, particularly to one whose taste was refined as Miss Delmore’s; he therefore reconciled his mind to the disappointment, and ceased to urge him on the subject of matrimony, but was still earnest in persuading him to turn his thoughts to divinity, as he believed he had interest enough with the earl of Torrington to provide for him handsomely in the church. But Solomon peremptorily declared against taking orders, and persisted in the intention of exploring every part of the habitable world in search of knowledge.

The vexation this obstinacy on the part of his nephew occasioned Mr. Wilson was in some degree removed by a message from sir Cyril Musgrove, who, in dread of a mortification from his bruises, had arrived in London to have his arm amputated, and sent for him previous to the operation, to make a full confession that he had himself written the paragraphs in the newspapers, to impress the public mind with a belief that Miss Delmore had voluntarily gone off with him from lady Welford’s, and had accompanied him to Paris.

Unable to write himself, and under the apprehension of death, sir Cyril dictated this acknowledgment of his guilt to his solicitor, fully justifying the reputation of Miss Delmore, and strictly commanding, whether he lived or died, her innocence should be manifested to the world, by a contradiction, in his name, of the various paragraphs he had caused to be inserted, to deprive her of other protection than his own.

The health of Cecilia had undergone a severe shock while struggling against the licentious designs of sir Cyril Musgrove at Frome Hall, and neither her health nor spirits were amended by her anxiety to hear from Lisbon and France. Lady Welford had answered her letter in the most affectionate manner; she had congratulated her escape from the machinations of sir Cyril, and expressed her concern that she was not at liberty to invite her into Somersetshire, where she was constrained to remain during the whole of the approaching summer; and concluded with observing, as sir Alexander Stuart's family were gone abroad, and Mrs. Doricourt was still detained in France, she thought it would be most prudent for her to return to Cumberland with all possible expedition.

This advice was entirely consonant with Cecilia's feelings; she was extremely anxious to quit London, for her residence in the family of Mr. Scroggins was altogether unpleasant, though Marian was unobtrusive and politely attentive to her accommodation, and the old people were even troublesome with their kindness.

Mr. Wilson knew that Cecilia's delicacy rendered her reluctant to speak of sir Cyril Musgrove; but as soon as his confession appeared in the public prints, he contrived to place them before her; and though her modesty was wounded at being made a subject of general discussion, she was infinitely gratified to see the whole affair properly stated, and her character justified by sir Cyril Musgrove at the expence of his own.

Miss Scroggins was now very urgent with Miss Delmore to go to the opera, for she imagined that all the great people with whom she had been acquainted while under lady Welford's protection, would eagerly recognise her, if it was only to ask questions and gratify their curiosity, and that being seen to be on such intimate terms with Miss Delmore, she should herself be noticed by persons in high life; but the mortifying adventure at the theatre was too recent, and Cecilia firmly resisted the wishes of Miss Scroggins, whom she quite offended by her refusal.

Among men of rank, Miss Scroggins flattered herself her beauty would be noticed, and she might have the offer of a husband that would enable her to oblige her father by dismissing captain Seaforth; but Miss Delmore's mind still retained the remembrance of the insult she had received at Covent Garden Theatre, and she resolved never again to visit a public place, till she could go with society whose rank would ensure her from similar mortification.

Lieutenant Melrose had received orders to join his ship, and Marian soothed the jealous apprehensions of her lover, by a solemn promise to seek the protection of his mother, rather than become the wife of the man her father had selected for her.

Wilson, at parting with the worthy young man, bade him be courageous and faithful—"And rely," said he, shaking him by the hand, "on my friendship and good offices."

Marian neither shed tears, nor spoke of her regret; but it was obvious to Cecilia that she felt the separation from Melrose with a grief that sunk deep, though it was not audible. There was just then a similarity in their situations; they were both deprived of the presence of persons sincerely beloved; and while Cecilia pitied the artless gentle Marian, she wished it was in her power to ensure her happiness, by bestowing on the deserving Melrose as much wealth as would satisfy the worldly prudence of old Scroggins.

The month Mr. Wilson designed spending in London had elapsed. He was convinced of the impossibility of bringing about a marriage between his nephew Solomon and Miss Delmore, and making the best of the disappointment, had reconciled his brother-in-law to relinquishing a project with which they had delighted themselves ever since the parties had been mere infants. But as he, by sending his nephew to college, had spoiled him for ever for a tradesman, he generously provided him the means of visiting the four quarters of the globe with his friend Erasmus Peters, and promised Marian, when Melrose returned from his cruise, he would see what could be done to make her happy.

Miss Delmore, having sent for her trunks from lady Welford's, made such presents to Mrs. and Miss Scroggins as she thought would amply repay her obligations to them, while on the interesting Marian she bestowed several valuable mementoes of her friendship, assuring her that if it ever was in her power, she would gratefully remember the kindness and attention she had received from her.

Mr. Wilson had appointed the following Thursday for leaving London, and Cecilia, weak and depressed, thought that at Torrington Castle she should recover her health, and be able to wait with more patience the decision of her fate. Wednesday noon had arrived, and every preparation being made for her journey, Cecilia was reflecting with melancholy satisfaction that the next morning she should bid adieu to London, the scene of all her sorrows and mortifications, when an elegant carriage drew up, and she beheld her beloved friend Mrs. Doricourt alight, and enter the house attended by a gentleman.

Overpowered by joy, Cecilia was unable to move, and the clasping arms of her friend were twined round an insensible form. The tears and repeated embraces of Mrs. Doricourt evinced how dear Cecilia was to her heart, who, being restored to sense, would have entered into an explanation of all that had befallen her since they parted, but Mrs. Doricourt was already informed of every particular circumstance. She had seen sir Cyril Musgrove and the worthy Wilson, who, sincerely rejoicing in her return to England, resigned to her the guardianship of his favourite Cecilia.

Mrs. Doricourt's emotions having subsided, she introduced Mr. Saville, whose melancholy eyes, moist with tears, had for some time been fixed on Cecilia— "While gazing on this lovely creature," said he, "I forgot the many years that have elapsed, and fancied that Edith stood before me, so perfect is the resemblance; but may the mercy of Heaven grant that in person only you may resemble her, for, though innocent and lovely, her fate was misery! Sweet, amiable Miss Delmore, may yours be happiness!"

Mrs. Doricourt, with that politeness and generosity that characterized all her actions, thanked the family of Scroggins for their hospitality to Miss Delmore. On the female part she forced presents, which the delicacy of Marian would have declined. To the grocer Mrs. Doricourt gave a large order for articles in his line, assuring him of her future custom.

A hint was at all times sufficient to the comprehensive mind of Mrs. Doricourt, and agreeable to the wish of Cecilia, she gave Marian a pressing invitation to visit Miss Delmore, promising to send the carriage to fetch her in the course of a few days.

Cecilia having written a few lines to Mrs. Milman, and made up a parcel of lace, silk, and muslin, as a confirmation of her affectionate remembrance, she gave the package in charge to Mr. Wilson, of whom she took leave with the sincerest good wishes, and assurances of esteem and gratitude.

Miss Scroggins, finding that her sister had been invited to visit Miss Delmore in Portland-square, endeavoured, by gross flattery, to obtain the same notice; but, incapable of

deceit, Cecilia could not assume a regard she did not feel, and she left Abchurch-street, without attending to the hints thrown out by Miss Scroggins, who had the mortification to see Marian, who knew nothing of life, and was utterly ignorant of fashionable behaviour, preferred before herself, and likely to be introduced into the first company.

Mrs. Doricourt made it a point to give splendid entertainments at her magnificent mansion, and to take Cecilia to every place of fashionable amusement; and again, her reputation being cleared from the shadow of suspicion, Miss Delmore was envied by the women, and adored by the men. But though restored to fame, and more than ever the darling of Mrs. Doricourt, the piety and resignation of Cecilia often gave way to temporary fits of melancholy, which was increased by an intimacy with Mr. Saville, whose language was frequently wild, and whose manner and countenance bore strong evidence of the habitual sorrow of his mind.

No letters had arrived from the earl of Torrington or lord Rushdale, and Cecilia was persuaded that they believed her guilty, and acting from that impression, had utterly disclaimed her. But Oscar was still the beloved of Cecilia's heart; every wish, every hope, was identified with him, and while he appeared to neglect and despise her, she found it was impossible to think of him with indifference, or to forget that moment of confidence and love, when he placed his ring on her finger, and in a tone of hallowed tenderness whispered—“Cecilia, I am thine for ever!”

While listening to a recital of the mournful revolutions that had taken place since her absence from England, Mrs. Doricourt did not fail to remember the gloomy presentiments that had filled her mind when parting with Cecilia at Teignmouth. The sorrow that had then darkly gleamed upon her brain, had already in part been verified, and it appeared highly probable to her that the child of her affection had yet much to endure of mental agony, for the silence of the earl of Torrington and his son, protracted far beyond the time when letters might have arrived, seemed to prove their intention of breaking through an engagement that youthful inclination had formed, and parental approbation had sanctioned.

Mrs. Doricourt saw, with infinite concern, the grief that heavily weighed on the spirits of Cecilia, who no longer derived amusement from books, from music, or the pencil; though fearful of giving pain to the bosom of friendship, in the presence of Mrs. Doricourt she strove to appear cheerful; but all her charming animation was gone, and her loss of appetite, her languid eyes and faded cheek, spoke volumes to the apprehensive mind of Mrs. Doricourt, who had herself endured, thro' lingering years, the misery of disappointed love.

Marian Scroggins had a pretty musical voice, and sang, with affecting simplicity, “Robin Adair.” Perceiving that it increased Miss Delmore's melancholy, to evade singing it, Marian mentioned having the day before received a letter from lieutenant Melrose, in which he had charged her with respectful remembrances to Miss Delmore.

Cecilia's spirits were that morning extremely depressed, she burst into an agony of tears, and, in a tone of unusual impatience, exclaimed—“All are remembered but the unfortunate Cecilia. You are happy, Marian; your affection is not thrown away: Melrose is worthy your regard; he is certain you are anxious for his safety, and neglects no opportunity of writing.”

Mrs. Doricourt having soothed this burst of grief, and allowed Cecilia time to recover her composure, said—“I have often heard it observed, that our sorrows are lessened by a comparison with those of greater magnitude; you must not, my Cecilia, believe that you alone are wretched from the perfidy of man; thousands of females have, do, and *will* feel the misery of neglect—of broken promises and disappointed hopes. I have never told you my history; it is a most disastrous one; but as I am convinced it will prove to you that my trials have far exceeded

yours, I will now relate it; and because I desire to convince you how much the mind, by exerting its energies, may rise above adversity, and teach you to believe that Providence is merciful, even while it afflicts, I will embrace the present time to speak of my family and myself."

Cecilia took up her pencil, and Marian employed herself with her needle, while Mrs. Doricourt brought down her memoir to the period when she embarked with sir Alan Oswald for France.

"I found my property at Marseilles," said Mrs. Doricourt, "entangled in a way I had not foreseen, and of which I had received no intimation, and my uneasiness and vexation were considerably increased by sir Alan resolving to remain at Marseilles as long as my affairs should detain me, and in a manner compelling me to devote the hours I might have employed in recreation or amusement, in attendance on him, whose prejudices, pride, and ill-temper, put my patience to a most severe trial for many weeks. At last he was taken ill, and humanity constrained me to remain at his lodgings till a late hour every evening.

"In descending the stairs that led from his chamber, I had several times met a man muffled in a great-coat, with his hat flapped over his eyes; but as he always politely made way for me to pass, the circumstance created neither wonder nor alarm. I supposed he was a lodger in the house, whose apartment was on the same floor with that occupied by sir Alan Oswald: but one evening, when I met this stranger, in passing me I fancied he pronounced my name. I started, for 'Julia,' in the never to be forgotten tones of Henry Woodville, murmured on my ear. I looked round, but the stranger had disappeared.

"When I entered sir Alan's chamber, he was sleeping, and I had time to reflect and reason away my agitation; I believed that my fancy had deceived me, as it had in many instances before. I persuaded myself it was beyond probability that Henry Woodville and myself should again meet where our acquaintance had commenced, and after a lapse of so many years; neither did the figure of the stranger appear to my imagination like his; but of that I could not judge with any precision, as he was enveloped in a riding-coat.

"When sir Alan awoke, his extreme impatience at his confinement, and the ungracious manner in which he arrogated my attentions, drove away all recollection of the stranger, whom I did not see on my return. The writings of the estate purchased at Marseilles by Mr. Doricourt, and settled on me, were supposed to want some particular form, the deficiency of which rendered them invalid, and prevented my selling the estate as I wished, while the brother of the person from whom the property had been bought, put in a claim, and was employing the most unjustifiable means to disannul my right. This vexatious lawsuit took up a large portion of my time, and prevented my mind from dwelling on past occurrences, in which Henry Woodville had borne a conspicuous part.

"My stay in France was now unavoidably lengthened, for I found it was absolutely necessary that I should remain on the spot till the affair was brought to trial, which, after many tedious delays, terminated in my favour, and I was enabled to sell the mansion and grounds where I had passed my married life—where the first sorrow my heart ever experienced was occasioned by the death of my beloved mother, and where I laid up for myself a store of misery, by yielding my affections to Henry Woodville, a man every way unworthy their possession.

"Nothing now retarded my return to England but the illness of sir Alan Oswald, whose petulance and impatience tired out all his attendants, who, weary of his ill temper, and disgusted with the homage he continued haughtily to exact, would have left him to die helpless and alone, but for the pains I unceasingly took to secure their services, by presents and conciliatory representations of his sufferings and great age.

“One day I was preparing, as usual, to visit my grandfather, when a gentleman sent in his name, and earnestly requested to see me. It was Mr. Saville. Time and sorrow had so much altered him from the handsome young man I had once known, but the expressive character of his countenance remained unchanged, and I recognised at once the brother of my loved, regretted Edith.

“Our conversation was for some time confined to the misfortunes of the lovely friend of my youth, with whose mournful story, my Cecilia, you are acquainted, and whose fate seemed to have impressed itself indelibly on the heart and brain of her brother. At length, after some preparation, Mr. Saville informed me, that he came to entreat my compassion for an erring man, who was sincerely penitent; and, sensible of his unworthy conduct, humbly solicited to hear me pronounce his pardon, before he was called from a world which his own errors had rendered hateful to him.

“The idea of Henry Woodville flashed at once on my imagination; I was greatly agitated, and the quick changes of my complexion persuaded Mr. Saville that I should faint; but long accustomed to the painful task of subduing my feelings, in a few moments I was sufficiently composed to say— ‘There can be but one person in existence, to the peace of whose mind my pardon may be necessary, for only one of all mankind has betrayed my confidence, and for esteem and kindness has returned me perfidy and ingratitude. I cannot see him, Mr. Saville; but tell him, I forgive his offences against me, as sincerely as I hope to be forgiven mine against Heaven—tell him, sir, I wish him health and happiness, but cannot consent to see him.’

‘You have already seen him,’ replied Mr. Saville; ‘you have repeatedly met Mr. Woodville on—’

‘I know I have,’ said I, eagerly interrupting him, ‘on the stairs, and in the lobby leading to sir Alan Oswald’s apartments;’ for I was now certain that the person I had so often met was Henry Woodville; ‘but convinced, as I am, that an interview will only tear open the wounds that time has healed—that it will be productive of useless retrospections and unavailing regrets, I must repeat, I cannot—will not see him.’

“Finding me so utterly averse to an interview, Mr. Saville ceased to urge it; he informed me, that Henry Woodville, about two years after his marriage, being in necessitous circumstances, had gone out to India as a writer in the Company’s service, but that being himself thoughtless, and his wife incapable, either by good sense or good management, to reclaim him, they had lived together most unhappily, always in poverty and difficulties, brought on by indolence and imprudence.— ‘Woodville,’ continued Mr. Saville, ‘had just buried his wife, when a distant relation of his bequeathed him a handsome fortune; the chief of which lying in my hands, brought me acquainted with Mr. Woodville, who now plunged into excesses that put the finishing stroke to a constitution weakened by the early pernicious habit of inebriation. Fancying that his native air would restore him to health, Woodville returned in the same ship with me to England; but on a constitution destroyed by the continued use of ardent spirits, no air could have effect. He grew every day worse; and, restless and unhappy, he prevailed on me, who have neither home, friends, nor connexions, to pass over with him to France. On our arrival here, in spite of my remonstrances, he drank brandy instead of wine, and in his moments of intoxication related to me his former engagement with you. With execrations on his folly, he acknowledged that he had weakly yielded to his mother’s persuasions, to meet at a friend’s house a young girl, to whom he had, when quite a boy, paid his addresses. This girl he neither respected nor loved, yet in a drunken frolic he was villain enough to marry her. This guilty act, by which he was perjured, he confessed he committed out of mere bravado, and to prove to his bottle companions,



that he who possessed no fortune was preferred to an admirer with whom his wife had a certain, though distant, prospect of affluence. Marseilles,' continued Mr. Saville, 'renewed on the unhappy Woodville's memory the guilt and ingratitude of his conduct to you. For days he wandered round the mansion, and about the grounds, where he had become acquainted with the most amiable of her sex; and at night he constantly swallowed bumpers of brandy, to drown the anguish of a reproaching conscience.

'Such,' said Mr. Saville, 'was Woodville's conduct till he learned your arrival at Marseilles, when sir Alan Oswald engaged apartments in the house where we lodged. He was for quitting it immediately— "Mrs. Doricourt must abhor me!" exclaimed he; "the angel, whom I deceived and deserted, must not behold me. Should I, by accident, cross her path, she would spurn me from her, and with justice, for I have been to her the basest of villains."

'Supposing from his own confession of guilt,' continued Mr. Saville, 'that you would rather wish to avoid than meet him, I encouraged his wish to remove; but giving way to the natural mutability of his temper, he suddenly changed his mind, and declared, that come what would, he would remain where he was, and gratify his feelings with a sight of you, but that he would be careful you should never be sensible of his presence.

'Several times this unhappy man has indulged himself with beholding you, but the effect it has had on his mind is dreadful, and the quantity of brandy he swallows astonishing. After a night, the greatest part of which he passed in strong convulsions, he this morning entreated me to bear to you the request I have had the honour of preferring. I will now report to Mr. Woodville your reply.'

'And my hope,' rejoined I, 'that he will abstain from the practice of inebriation, which not only renders him unfit for this world, but incapable of making preparation for the next.'

"Mr. Saville shook his head— 'Rooted habits,' returned he, 'are not to be eradicated by advice, nor yet by suffering.'

"I did not invite the society of Mr. Saville, whose mournful voice and pensive manner much interested me, because I did not wish him to believe that Henry Woodville was of any consequence to me, or that I wished to make inquiries respecting him.

"Supposing that having so positively refused to see him, he would no longer seek to throw himself in my way, I did not let my feelings interfere with what I considered my duty, but went, as usual, to attend the sickbed of sir Alan Oswald.

"On my return, just before I reached the hall, where my servant waited for me, Henry Woodville presented himself before me, in a most disgusting state of intoxication. No longer master of his reason, grasping my hand, he swore that I was his affianced wife, and that he would never again quit me. My spirits had before been shocked by Mr. Saville's too faithful account of his depravity; and in the struggle to escape his hold, I fainted.

"When I recovered, I found Mr. Saville and a respectable looking woman applying volatiles for my relief. I had just regained strength enough to express my thanks, and had ordered my servant to have the carriage drawn up, when Mr. Saville was requested to hasten to Mr. Woodville, who, in a paroxysm of rage and grief, had burst a blood-vessel, and was to all appearance dying. It is impossible to describe to you, my Cecilia, the horror I felt at that tremendous moment; my own injuries were all forgotten in the dreadful reflection, that the wretched, guilty Woodville was hastening to appear before his Heavenly Judge, with all his unrepented sins upon his head.

“Unable to quit the house, I remained till Mr. Saville returned to assure me that no immediate danger was to be apprehended from the haemorrhage, and that Mr. Woodville was then tranquil, and appeared inclined to sleep.

“Three days more the wretched Woodville lingered between life and death. On the fourth, convinced that his death was rapidly approaching, he again entreated to see me; it was then no moment to remember injuries, or indulge resentful feelings; the soul of Henry Woodville was on the wing for eternity, and only waited to be dismissed by my forgiveness.

“When I entered his chamber, he was reclining on a sofa; but, oh, how fearfully altered from the handsome, animated being, on whom my youthful heart had lavished all its tenderness! His deep blue eyes were sunk; their melting intelligence had given place to a glassy stare, his features were no longer the same, and in the voice alone could I recognise Henry Woodville. Our interview was painful and affecting. In terms of the deepest contrition, he confessed his errors, and declared, that after his marriage, he had never known a moment’s happiness, which he considered as the just punishment of his perfidy and ingratitude to me— ‘But you,’ added he, mournfully, ‘you were fortunate in my desertion, even when I most professed my affection. I was unworthy of you; for even from boyhood I drank deeply, and so confirmed was the habit, that at the period when you honoured me with your confidence, I seldom retired to rest sober.’

“Shocked at his altered appearance, and moved by his self-accusations, I assured him of my forgiveness. His cold clammy hand feebly pressed mine; I shuddered as his pale lips touched it. Oh, never shall I forget the tone of unutterable woe in which he uttered, ‘*Julia, farewell for ever!*’

“I returned home in an agony of grief that affected my health, and confined me to my bed for several days. When convalescent, I was informed the erring Henry Woodville was no more—that he had bequeathed the whole of his fortune to me, his mother having paid the debt of nature some years before, and having no relations who had any claim on his affection or his gratitude.

“Mr. Saville now became my frequent visitor; his habitual melancholy was better suited to my feelings than the thoughtless gaiety of others with whom I was at times obliged to associate. We conversed, without reserve, on our mutual misfortunes; and while I remembered the character, abilities, and attainments of Henry Woodville, I was astonished how it was possible he could have gained such an ascendancy over my heart, for surely, young as I was at the at the period of our acquaintance, had reason been allowed a voice, he never could have enslaved my imagination, till every hope, idea, and pursuit, had only him for their object, and the world presented no enjoyments, life no felicity, but what was to be derived from him.

“Alas! for me, I indulged these feelings too long. Possessed with an ardent, romantic passion for the heartless, ungrateful Henry Woodville, I shunned the amiable and deserving; but the error has been severely punished, and my heart, while suffering for its misplaced affection, derived conviction from its pain; and I can now, with sincerity and thankfulness, declare, that all my privations and disappointments were merciful interferences of a wise and gracious Providence, to preserve me from fiercer trials and worse misfortunes.

“This,” continued Mrs. Doricourt, presenting to Miss Delmore the identical miniature which she had seen on the altar of the chapel at the Hermitage, “this was a striking resemblance of Henry Woodville when he deserted me. When I last saw him, no one could have believed the picture was ever designed for him, so dreadful were the ravages made by intemperance.”

Cecilia gazed on the miniature till her eyes filled with tears, for in every point, the hair alone excepted, it resembled lord Rushdale; but she made no remark; and Marian having admired

the deep blue eyes, and rich serpentine lip, returned it to Mrs. Doricourt, who resumed her narrative.

“The death of sir Alan Oswald shortly followed that of Henry Woodville, and enabled me to return to England. By the will of my grandfather, I was to possess the chief part of his fortune, provided I conveyed his body to the family monument in Dorsetshire, and removed my mother’s ashes from France to repose with his. Need I say I performed these duties with mournful satisfaction, particularly that which concerned my dear mother, because I believed her immortal spirit would rejoice in the knowledge that her father had proved the sincerity of his forgiveness, by desiring that her ashes should mingle with his.

“I say nothing, my Cecilia, of the uneasiness your silence occasioned me, or of the excuses made by lady Welford for your not writing. I was certain that something wrong had occurred, and that you were unhappy. Your letter written since your return to London followed me to Dorsetshire, from whence I hastened to relieve, as far as human consolation can relieve, the sorrows and misfortunes of my beloved child.”

Cecilia clasped the neck of Mrs. Doricourt, and wept on her bosom.

“When I related to you my history,” resumed Mrs. Doricourt, “it was not, my Cecilia, to indulge an idle egotism, or make a parade of the misery I have suffered from the perfidy of man, but to prove to you the truth of that axiom, ‘WHATEVER IS, IS RIGHT.’ Do not then, my beloved child, do not, I entreat you, give way to regret and sorrow; endeavour to enjoy the blessings that remain to you; be cheerful, and with pious resignation confide in Him, whose dispensations, however afflictive, are ordered with wisdom and mercy, and who will assuredly turn our sharpest disappointments into benefits.”

Cecilia promised to do her best to profit by this advice; and Marian, who had wept frequently during Mrs. Doricourt’s recital, wondered how it was possible for any man to forsake a woman so eminently adorned with all that was beautiful in person, and excellent in mind.

Some company unexpectedly dropping in, the day passed to Mrs. Doricourt’s extreme satisfaction, without affording Cecilia leisure to brood over her disappointments.

Marian, in the evening, returned to Abchurch-street in Mrs. Doricourt’s carriage, sincerely pitying Miss Delmore, who was suffering from undeserved misfortunes, and admiring the character of Mrs. Doricourt, whom she thought superior to any female she had ever seen.

Miss Scroggins was always out of temper when her sister had an invitation to Portland-square; and her ill-humour was that evening particularly excited by Marian telling her mother, that Mrs. Doricourt had promised to interest herself in getting lieutenant Melrose promoted, and that she was invited to go with her and Miss Delmore to the opera on Friday.

“You are greatly in luck, I think,” said Miss Scroggins, spitefully; “but I am sure I don’t at all envy you the honour and pleasure of going into public with Miss Delmore; I have reason enough to remember Covent-Garden theatre, where I got a new dress torn to tatters through her.”

The envy and ill-nature displayed in this speech occasioned the scholar to remark, that it filled him with dolour to perceive, where consanguinity ought to produce colligation, there was a disunion of mind, occasioned by the malevolence and commentitious grievances of his elder sister, who had no just cause of complaint to allege against Miss Delmore, who, if antoptical evidence could be depended on, was a modest young woman, highly to be commended for her observance of taciturnity.

“Nobody asked your opinion on the subject, Mr. Solomon,” returned Miss Scroggins, flaming with anger; “though you are Solomon the second, you don’t at all resemble your

namesake in your knowledge of women. I would recommend you to confine your judgment to Hebrew and Greek, which, I fancy, you know more about."

Solomon looked astonished—"Xantippe, the wife of Socrates," said he, "is recorded a termagant and a scold, but with her acetosity his philosophy enabled him to bear; but it is apodictical to me, that whoever has the misfortune to marry you will, without amphibology, have more occasion for patience and philosophy than ever Socrates had."

Miss Scroggins bade him spare his breath, for she was not at all inclined to search the dictionary for the meaning of his cramp words.

"I will not abnegate," replied Solomon, "that my language is somewhat ill suited to a capacity like yours; but suffer me to ingeminate that you, by your own perverseness, hebetate your understanding, having the folly to prefer bombulation to improvement; and suffer me to indigitate to you, that every man of erudition will evitate a clamorous woman, with the same abhorrence as he would plague and pestilence, or any other scourge of humanity; and though Socrates did, as we are informed from undoubted authority, submit to genecocracy, his patience and forbearance will not in this age be taken as an example."

"You are an example of absurdity," replied Miss Scroggins, "and have entirely worn out my patience. Sooner than I would marry such a learned ass as you, I would prefer living single all my days."—Miss Scroggins bounced out of the room.

Mrs. Scroggins had listened with gaping wonder to the learning of her son, which, though quite incomprehensible to her, she had no doubt was extremely fine; and as her daughter left the room, she observed, that no doubt Solomon had given his sister very proper advice on her ill-temper and disagreeable ways, but she wished he had spoken plainer, that she might have understood his meaning, for among them his learned words was just like casting pearl afore swine; though, to tell the truth, all words were alike that came in the way of counsel to Jane.

"I plainly discern," said Solomon, "the alogy of her temper, which makes her appear even worse than bibacious, and will tend to absume all esteem her relatives may desire to feel towards her. For myself, I ought to be diaphorous in what concerns her, because we shall soon be on the opposite sides of this terraqueous globe; and such is the uncertainty of mundane affairs, it is possible we may never behold each other again."

Mrs. Scroggins begged he would not make her unhappy by talking in that way, for she hoped to see him return a very rich man—"And then, who knows, my dear Solomon," continued, she, "but your great learning may make you lord mayor of London? Dear, how proud and how glad I should be to see you in your scarlet robe and gold chain!"

For such honours Solomon had no ambition; the ragged Diogenes in his tub was, in his opinion, a far greater man than the vain, splendid Heliogabalus in his palace; to be Artium Baccalaureus, Philomathes, and Philomatheticus, were the dignities to which he aspired; and to render himself worthy their attainment, in a few days he took leave of his family to join his erudite friend Erasmus Peters, with whom he embarked for the Cape of Good Hope, for the purpose of exploring the laws, customs, and religion of the Hottentots.

Miss Delmore had now resigned all hope of ever again hearing from lord Rushdale, though his was a character differing in every point from that of Mr. Woodville; she soothed the poignancy of her disappointment, by reflecting that Providence, for wise and gracious purposes, had separated her, as it had Mrs. Doricourt, from a person not calculated to ensure her happiness.

The spring was far advanced, and Mrs. Doricourt had sent orders into Cumberland to have the Hermitage prepared for her reception—"For my own part," said she, musing, "I shall return to my little island with a heart infinitely more at ease than when I left it; but my Cecilia

will meet there innumerable objects to remind her of the felicity deceitful fortune once promised her; she will again wander through the groves of St. Herbert, but no longer with a heart untouched by sorrow."

Miss Delmore had entered the drawing-room unperceived, and overheard part of this soliloquy.— "True, my dear madam," said she, "for only when I cease to remember, shall I cease to regret lord Rushdale is no longer the being I believed, all truth and honour; but I will not give myself up to sorrow—I will recollect your trials, and think, as you do, all that has happened is for the best—I will also be grateful to Heaven for permitting me to escape the licentious designs of sir Cyril Musgrove, and thank its mercy that I return to the home of my infancy with innocence."

Mrs. Doricourt's reply was tender and approving.— "The papers of to-day, my Cecilia," said she, "announce that sir Cyril Musgrove, having suffered the amputation of his right arm, intends, as soon as he is able to travel, to remove to a warmer climate. What a dreadful punishment must this mutilation be to a man so vain of his person!"

Cecilia prayed that his sufferings might produce a thorough reformation of his morals—"I pity and forgive him," added she, with a deep sigh, "though he has for ever blighted my hopes, and destroyed my happiness."

Mrs. Doricourt was about to reprove the despondency of this speech, when Mr. Saville, who had for some time discontinued his visits, was announced.

"We have wondered," said Cecilia, "what had become of you; why, my dear sir, it is more than four weeks since you have favoured us with a call."

"I am much flattered, my lovely friend," replied Mr. Saville, "to find that you have numbered the days of my absence; believe me, I have frequently, since my unavoidable absence, thought of Mrs. Doricourt and yourself; but a melancholy engagement has employed all my time, and rendered me unfit for society."

Mrs. Doricourt expressed her concern that any thing should have happened to deprive them of the pleasure his visits always afforded them, and sincerely hoped the melancholy circumstance he alluded to was not connected with himself.

"To you," replied Mr. Saville, "I need not say how unavailing is the effort to obliterate from the heart affections imbibed in youth. However unworthy the object, a lingering tenderness will remain, even when we fancy injury has erased it; and if we behold them in sickness or adversity, our compassion overcomes resentment, and we only remember they are unhappy, and require our assistance."

Cecilia felt a dread, undefinable to herself; she expected to hear some afflictive tidings, but feared to ask what had happened.

Mrs. Doricourt perceived Mr. Saville was greatly agitated, and seeing him apply his handkerchief to his eyes, she remained silent also.

"A variety of sorrows," resumed Mr. Saville, "have affected my nerves, and made me weaker than a woman; and now that the grave has closed over her errors, I have scarcely power to tell you the countess of Torrington is no more."

The intelligence was sudden and unexpected. Mrs. Doricourt felt shocked, and Cecilia wept, for she remembered how lately she had seen her in health, full of gaiety, surrounded by magnificence, and considered the patroness of taste and elegance.

"Yes," said Mr. Saville, "the vain erring Emily is indeed dead! Her sufferings, I trust, purified her mind—and that her repentance, though late, was accepted. She was once the idol of

my heart, for youth but seldom looks beyond the exterior, and the person of Emily Herbert was a model of female beauty; had she possessed a virtuous mind, she had been an angel!"

Mrs. Doricourt inquired if the melancholy event had taken place in London?

"Grant me your patience," returned Mr. Saville, "and I will endeavour to give you the particulars. The evening that I declined lady Wilton's invitation, I went with a design of passing an hour or two with a literary character, a man of acknowledged genius struggling with poverty. I was sitting with the poet, listening to an account of his various disappointments, and the difficulties he had met in publishing his works, when the door being accidentally open, I heard a female voice loudly vociferating—'A pretty piece of work I have made of it, in letting my lodgings to you; but I want no sick folks in my house, that have not got money to pay for attendance; I have something else to do than to wait upon such fine madams as you for nothing; and if you was to die, who is to bury you, pray? But, I tell you plainly, out of my house you shall go, and that directly!'

'Not to-night! For mercy's sake, let me remain here till morning!' said a piteous voice, the distressful tones of which, as they met my ear, recalled to my shuddering memory Emily Herbert.—Where was now the wealth, the rank, the splendour, for which my faithful love had been sacrificed? But she was in want and misery, and that recollection erased at once from my heart every record of her guilt. I flew to the apartment, and beheld, gracious Heaven! It was scarcely credible, the so lately beautiful gay lady Torrington, pale, attenuated, meanly attired, and apparently very ill. At sight of me she shrieked aloud, and covering her face with her hands, exclaimed—'You, whom I have most injured, you are come to behold my punishment; do not add to my wretchedness by your reproaches, for I feel the deep conviction of my sins!' Then suddenly falling at my feet, she supplicated my forgiveness, and, in the bitterest agony of woe, confessed that she was deserted, sick, and in want.

"I cannot repeat to you what followed this humiliating confession. The unfeeling woman, who would have driven her out in a stormy night, without the means of procuring food or shelter, now offered her best apartment, and every other accommodation; but I instantly removed the unhappy Emily to lodgings near my own. She was no longer the beautiful girl for whom my doating heart had endured all the agony of disappointed passion; but it was grateful to my feelings to be enabled to pour consolation on the wounded spirit of an erring creature, and to administer to her wants.

"But the nourishment and tenderness that I hoped would restore her health, were offered in vain; she every day became weaker, with the deepest contrition and acknowledgment of the justice of her punishment. She informed me, that immediately on her quitting England, major Norman had persuaded her to marry him, and, by the most artful means, had got possession of the writings of settlement made upon her by her uncle Blackburne, on which he raised a very considerable sum of money, to the amount of many thousand pounds. With a very trifling part of this money he purchased an old chateau, a few leagues from Paris, to which he confined her, with the bare necessities of life, while he plunged into every extravagance, was absent for days together, leaving her to all the misery of self-reproach. When they met, his behaviour to her was brutal in the extreme, for he even descended to insult and upbraid her with the weakness and wickedness of her conduct, in eloping from the earl of Torrington with him; and he frequently compelled her to entertain at the chateau females of the most abandoned character, on whom he lavished his attentions, while he treated her with contempt and indignity. From this brutality the miserable Emily fled. In the disguise of a *paysanne* she reached Dover; there she was seized with a fever, brought on by sorrow, agitation, and fatigue; the contents of her purse were nearly

exhausted, when she took the lodgings where I was directed by Providence to her relief, where not being able to satisfy the rapacious demands of the landlady, had occasioned the violence I overheard.

“Of lord Torrington Emily very rarely spoke; but she lamented, with deep contrition, the disgrace her conduct had brought upon her son, on whose excellent heart and noble qualities she dwelt with a tenderness and feeling I never before believed she possessed. Frequently she expressed a wish to see him.—‘Could I but hear his lips pronounce my forgiveness,’ said the wretched penitent, ‘it would greatly sooth the pangs of my dying hour! But this consolation Heaven thought fit to deny her; she expired,” said Mr. Saville, “as I was reading to her, at her own desire, the service for the dead. Two nights ago the mortal part of the erring Emily was consigned to the grave.” Mr. Saville wept.—“It is many years,” said he, “since I shed tears before; and though to weep may be called an unmanly weakness, these drops are salutary, for they assuage my burning brain; nor do they flow from sorrow, for I rejoice that the woman I idolized can no longer wound me with a knowledge of her errors, and I gratefully bless Heaven for the certainty that she died a sincere penitent.”

Mr. Saville supposed it would be proper to inform the earl of Torrington of this melancholy event, and said, that he should request his lordship’s solicitor to write him the particulars of her decease.

Miss Delmore was so much shocked by the knowledge of lady Torrington’s death, that she was for some days unable to go abroad; and when she again regained her health, she felt more than ever reluctant to appear in public, conscious that her connexion with the Torrington family, her known engagement to lord Rushdale, and his unaccountable absence, made her the subject of universal conversation.

But neither Mrs. Doricourt nor Mr. Saville, now their daily visitor, would allow of her seclusion; aware of the evil consequences of indulging melancholy habits, they constrained her to enter into company, and to visit public places continually.

“We are not to live for ourselves,” said Mrs. Doricourt; “it is not sufficient that we relieve the distresses of our fellow-creatures, we are required to instruct them how to bear their calamities, and to aid them by our example.”

“It is true,” rejoined Mr. Saville, “Heaven requires all this of us, and my conscience sharply reproaches me for having passed so many useless years of my life in the sinful indulgence of selfish sorrow.”

During the indisposition of Miss Delmore, Marian Scroggins, by her affectionate solicitude, and unwearied attention, had won the warm regard of Mrs. Doricourt; and when Cecilia was again sufficiently recovered to venture abroad, she remembered her promise respecting the opera, and the carriage was sent to Abchurch-street, to fetch Marian, greatly to the mortification of her sister, who said, she should not be at all surprised to hear that another riot had taken place about Miss Delmore—“And I am sure, Marian, if you will take my advice,” added she, “you will not put on your India muslin, to have it torn off your back.”

Marian replied—“I am not at all apprehensive of any such consequence.”

“Why, to be sure,” resumed Miss Scroggins, “as you are going with Mrs. Doricourt, she will take care to give you another, if your dress should be demolished—I had no such luck though; but some people are much more fortunate than others.”

From these ill-natured remarks, Marian was heartily glad to escape, while the goodness of her disposition caused her to regret the disagreeable manners and envious temper of her sister,

which prevented her from making friends, and deprived her of the amusements which would, in her mind, have received additional pleasure had she been invited to partake them.

A select party dined in Portland-square, by whom Marian was treated and noticed as the particular friend of Miss Delmore, who, after dinner, retired to her dressing-room, to make some trifling addition to her dress. And Mrs. Doricourt presented Marian with a chaplet of elegant French flowers for her head, and a pearl necklace, with a locket, containing her own and Cecilia's hair.

When Miss Delmore descended to the drawing-room, attired with graceful simplicity, Mr. Saville gazed at her for some moments with mournful earnestness; then heaving a sigh, he said—"Sweet Cecilia, you have awakened in my heart an interest I thought I should never again feel, for you strongly resemble my dear unfortunate sister. At this moment I could fancy you my sainted Edith, my beauteous blossom, blighted by villany, and consigned to a premature grave! I fear I distress you with these bursts of grief; but your gentleness will, I trust, bear with a wretched man, whom sorrow renders unobservant of the forms of society. Wounded by the treachery of the friend I trusted, and the falsehood of the woman I adored, I detested the world, I shunned society; abhorring all of human race, I lived in solitude and woe, till circumstances of a very peculiar nature roused me on a sudden from this misanthropic trance. My compassion was strongly awakened by the unhappy erring Woodville; I had neither relatives nor local interests to attach me to any country—all places were alike to me, whom grief made a wanderer. I consented to go with Woodville to Marseilles; there I met Mrs. Doricourt. Her gentle persuasions and admonitions have in some degree restored me to my former self, for the knowledge of her trials and sufferings made me blush to think a delicate female had fortitude to endure misfortunes great as had fallen to my share. I am aware," continued Mr. Saville, "the company of a man, melancholy and abstracted as I am, cannot be pleasing to youth; but your likeness to a dear lost sister, the sweetest, gentlest of her sex, makes me hover near you; for though I am certain that no trace of her remains on earth, yet I would fain delude my heart with the wild improbable belief that you are her child."

Mrs. Doricourt and Marian entering the room, the thoughts of Mr. Saville were diverted from the melancholy recollection of his ill-fated sister.

It was a fashionable night at the opera, and the beauty of Cecilia, and the interesting diffidence of Marian, had many admirers. At the end of the first act, Mrs. Doricourt directed Miss Delmore's attention to the marchioness of Beverley, who, with smiles of recognition, saluted her.

"Such is the world," said Cecilia; "it is full of summer friends: when I really wanted protection and notice, the marchioness of Beverley did not honour me with her recollection; now, when her countenance is of no consequence, she condescends to remember me."

Mrs. Doricourt smiled—"Remember, my love!" said she; "at the time to which you allude, your radiance was under a cloud, and the marchioness, not being very clear-sighted, could not distinguish false from true."

Marian was delighted with the company, the music, and the ballet; and even the melancholy Saville declared himself entertained.

After the ballet the duke of Arvingham introduced the marquis of Beverley, with whom neither Mrs. Doricourt nor Cecilia were much pleased; there was a freedom in his manner too bold even for the latitude allowed by fashion, and the eye of a modest woman found it impossible to endure his stare. His look quite disconcerted the bashful Marian, who, though she



did not express her dislike, rejoiced when he went to pay his unmeaning compliments to another party of ladies.

The duke of Arvingham was a pleasing elegant young man; he had been one of the warmest of Miss Delmore's defenders during her mysterious absence; and no one felt more satisfaction than he did to find her fame cleared from every suspicion of impropriety.

The duke of Arvingham had conversed with sir Cyril Musgrove, and had learned from his lips her incorruptible virtue, and the undeviating propriety of her conduct; the duke had also heard that lord Rushdale continued abroad, to avoid fulfilling his engagement with her.

In the duke of Arvingham's eyes, Miss Delmore was more beautiful than ever, and doubly interesting, from the severe trials her virtue had undergone. It was true she had rejected his addresses, but that was at a time when her hand was promised, and she believed herself positively engaged; it now appeared, from public report, that she was free; again the duke encouraged the delusions of hope, and determined on endeavouring to gain her affections; with this intent he engaged her in conversation, and hovered near her the whole time of the representation, and was ready, at the conclusion, to hand her to the carriage.

Mr. Saville had not been unobservant of the duke's attention to Cecilia; and when they were seated in the carriage, he said—"Among all the fops that come to stare and talk loud at public places, I have not seen one more truly disgusting than the marquis of Beverley. I am a little astonished at the intimacy that appears to subsist between him and the duke of Arvingham, who is really a very fine young man."

"I am pleased you approve him," replied Mrs. Doricourt, "for he is a favourite of mine; he is really a fine young man. Though a duke, he has not been above cultivating his understanding, and when in public, is not ashamed of conducting himself with the politeness of a gentleman."

Miss Delmore's mind did the duke of Arvingham justice; his person, understanding, and conduct, public and private, were worthy praise, but approbation was all she could bestow, for lord Rushdale's person, his intellectual powers, his accomplishments, were all superior, and pangs of acute anguish, of bitter regret, shot through her bosom, as she thought he was lost to her for ever.

Marian Scroggins did not return to Abchurch-street that night, and the next morning Mrs. Doricourt proposed, as it rained heavily, that they should remain at home, and employ themselves in a rational way.

Cecilia and Marian employed themselves with the needle, and Mrs. Doricourt took up a book to read to them. But these pleasing avocations were soon disturbed by the superb carriage of the silly marchioness of Beverley stopping at the door.

At home was the order of the day, and the marchioness of Beverley, more affected than ever, and her husband's sister-in-law, lady Florence Lenox, entered the drawing-room.

Miss Delmore, as she received the compliments and congratulations of the marchioness on her restoration to her friends, felt disgusted at her deceit, and would have been better pleased with any other visitor.

The marchioness looked at Cecilia's work, and, with her usual childish lisp, wished that she could spare a little time to devote to her needle, it was so very pleasant to wear work done by oneself; but her engagements were so numerous, the thing was quite impossible, that she had not the least expectation of having a single hour to herself, while she remained in town.—"*A-propos*, Mrs. Doricourt," said she, "do you intend honouring Teignmouth with your company the ensuing season?"

Mrs. Doricourt expressed her intention of passing the summer in Cumberland.

"The duke of Arvingham has the same intention," said lady Florence. "I heard him say he would visit the lakes; but if there was no other attraction, I fancy his grace would prefer the gaiety of a fashionable watering-place."

"The duke is an admirer of yours, Miss Delmore," lisped the marchioness, "and report says, instead of being a countess, you are determined on being a duchess."

Cecilia blushed, and said, report certainly did her honour; but in this, as in various other instances, it was mistaken.

"Perhaps," rejoined lady Florence, "Miss Delmore intends bestowing herself on a more steady admirer; Mr. Saville, for instance, who can settle on her lacks of rupees, and bushels of yellow star pagodas. I heard yesterday at lady Ashmore's, that he had bespoke a splendid set of diamonds to present to his intended bride."

Cecilia felt confused and vexed.

Mrs. Doricourt replied—"Mr. Saville will, I fancy, be as much astonished as I am, when he hears this report, which I can venture to assert is utterly unfounded; and really I am a little offended to think that he is considered Cecilia's admirer, when his time of life, and very serious disposition, would, I should have supposed, been better adapted to me."

"The world," lisped the marchioness, "gives you credit, Mrs. Doricourt, for the declaration you have made against a second marriage; but as it is well known that Miss Delmore's engagement to lord Rushdale is at an end, why, it is supposed, and indeed positively asserted, in the circles of fashion, that the money bags of Plutus have smothered poor little Cupid, and that Mr. Saville's Indian wealth—"

Mrs. Doricourt was hurt at the indelicacy of the marchioness, who paid no attention to the evident distress of Cecilia, and hastily interrupting her, she said—"Miss Delmore, lady Beverley, has not announced to the world having broken off her engagement with lord Rushdale, and I am not a little astonished that any person should presume to assert for fact what is mere conjecture; but were this actually the case, Mr. Saville would be by no means an appropriate match for Miss Delmore, who is young enough to be his daughter; besides, I can with certainty answer, that matrimony makes no part of Mr. Saville's intentions."

"Mrs. Doricourt is perfectly correct respecting Mr. Saville, I have no doubt," returned lady Florence; "the duke of Arvingham," added she, colouring with jealousy, "is much younger, and infinitely handsomer, and his rank will besides render him a more desirable match; but unfortunately there is very little dependence to be placed on his professions of love. I know a young lady of rank and fortune, whom he led to believe he was seriously her admirer; to be sure he did not exactly tell her so, but he looked and sighed, and always contrived to be of her party, go where she would; but when she was momentarily expecting an offer of his hand, she found him attracted by a new face, and equally as attentive to another as he had been to her; all the world knows the inconstancy of the duke of Arvingham's disposition, and would rather ridicule, than pity, any one for being deceived by his adoration."

A servant at that moment announced the duke of Arvingham and the marquis of Beverley. Lady Florence seemed confused; she liked the duke, but was certain that he had never paid her any more attention than politeness demanded; and the consciousness of having slandered him out of jealousy, made her feel awkward, in spite of fashionable assurance.

The marchioness did not thank the duke of Arvingham for introducing her husband at Mrs. Doricourt's, for it occurred to her memory, that she had often, when speaking of Mrs. Doricourt and Miss Delmore, indulged her ill-nature at the expence of truth; and besides, though

caring for her husband as little as any lady of the *haut ton*, yet she felt jealous of Miss Delmore's superior attractions. With a sneer, she asked—"How could your lordship think of making a call upon Mrs. Doricourt this morning, when you saw my carriage at the door?"

The marquis, affecting good humour, replied, that not having had the pleasure of seeing her for some time, the novelty of the interview rendered it doubly agreeable.

"I sent to your apartment this morning," said the marchioness, "but was informed you had not then rung your bell."

"I did not return from lady Gordon's till it was daylight this morning," returned the marquis; "I left the opera to keep my engagement—a glorious squeeze, and a most ridiculous set of old tabbies, and pretty Misses just emancipated from the nursery."

"The latter, I imagine, were extremely attractive," said the marchioness, "as they kept you from your rest till daylight."

"No, 'pon my soul," replied the marquis, "I took very little notice of the blushing, awkward things; no, my attention was occupied by a lively Frenchwoman, madame de Cortes, who sang, and danced, and laughed inimitably."

"Laughed inimitably!" repeated the marchioness; "do you suppose that any person will attempt to imitate her laugh?"

"Without doubt she will be the rage for some time," returned the marquis; "for myself, Wilton, and Horton, have pronounced her handsome and attractive, and her laugh, her frown, her walk, her dress, will all be eagerly copied; she is a charming creature—all life and caprice."

The marchioness put up her lip, and wondered how long madame de Cortes would, in his capricious fancy, be considered a charming creature.

"Till some other more charming creature supersedes her," replied the marquis; "but positively you must invite her to your masquerade; she will draw all the world in her train."

"You are vastly obliging," said the marchioness, "to propose such an attraction to me; but I shall beg leave to decline it, being desirous to see whether the marchioness of Beverley has not sufficient attraction to fill her rooms, without calling in foreign aid."

The marquis saw she was piqued; declared he admired her resolution, and turned to the table, where Marian sat quietly engaged at her tambour frame. The marchioness was mistaken in the idea that her lord had designs on Miss Delmore; he was too certain of a repulse, to venture a trial of seduction there; the fact was, the gentle, unassuming Marian had excited his licentious wishes; he understood she was the daughter of a grocer, and supposed that her love was to be purchased, and the offended honour of her family appeased, by the judicious distribution of a little of his superfluous wealth.

Lady Florence did all her possible to engage the attention of the duke of Arvingham; but she had the mortification to find that Cecilia was the magnet that attracted him: with pleasure she could have given her poison; and in the bitterness of jealousy, she lamented that sir Cyril Musgrove had not carried her off, as it was now too evident that she had nothing to hope or expect, for the duke had neither eyes nor ears but for Miss Delmore.

While the marchioness conversed with Mrs. Doricourt, she was observant of her husband, who, in a boyish manner, kept annoying Marian, by putting her cotton and scissors out of the way, and telling her, that such intense application would spoil the brilliancy of her eyes; yet though he did not appear to notice Miss Delmore at all, the marchioness was not the less persuaded that she was the object of his visit, and that his teasing Marian was only meant to blind her to his real design. The jealousy of pride swelled the bosom of the marchioness, the jealousy of love, that of lady Florence; it is difficult to say which felt most uneasy, and anxious

to conceal their feelings. Neither was the mind of Cecilia more tranquil than theirs; she was certain they would set down the visit and particular attention of the duke of Arvingham to love for her, and wherever they made their next call, would industriously spread the report, which, reaching the ears of lord Rushdale, who doubtless had correspondents in London, would still more alienate his affection from her.

Mrs. Doricourt inquired of the marchioness, if she had lately heard from lady Jacintha Cheveril?

"No, really," replied she; "and to confess the truth, I have almost forgot that I have such a relation; for when the honourable Mrs. Mabel Oldstock's will bequeathed the whole of her possessions to me, lady Jacintha Cheveril chose to give herself airs on the occasion, with which I was offended, and a coolness took place; she now resides entirely in Devonshire, and has, I fancy, resigned herself to her fate, and has become content to mope away her life in the country with her penurious husband."

"The vulgar wretch is immensely rich," said the marquis, "and so careful of his wife, who promises to present him with an heir, that he will scarcely allow her to go to church, to pray to Heaven to make her a widow."

"Church!" repeated the marchioness; "to the conventicle, I fancy your lordship means, for the last letter she wrote me was so intolerably methodistical, that it made me quite low spirited, and for fear I should receive another in the same preaching style, I never answered it."

"How kind and friendly!" said the marquis.

Lady Wilton was announced.

"For Heaven's sake, Arvingham," said the marquis, "let us begone! that horrid snuff-taking old woman is my detestation. She is prodigiously jealous of her husband, and fancies that I lead him astray from his conjugal duties."

"Some truth perhaps in her suspicions," replied the marchioness.

"Hush!" said lady Florence, "here she waddles, her ruby face reflecting or receiving lustre (which you please) from her scarlet velvet pelisse; and, mercy on me! she has certainly robbed a hearse for the enormous raven plumage of her bonnet."

"Bonnet!" whispered the marchioness; "it is the tremendous helmet celebrated in Walpole's Castle of Otranto."

Lady Wilton being seated, began to regale her nose, to the great discomposure of lady Florence, into whose eyes some particles of the snuff found their way. Lady Wilton was very sorry, but assured her ladyship that it would increase their lustre—"A particular friend of mine," said she, "assures me that snuff will brighten the intellects, and kindle the fire of genius."

"Pray," asked lady Florence, "has your ladyship used snuff long?"

The sarcasm contained in the question did not strike lady Wilton, who having answered many years, informed the company that she had just parted from lady Melvil, who *was in the way that women wish to be who love their lords.*

"What a happy fellow Melvil is!" said the marquis.

"Her husband absolutely doats on her," rejoined lady Wilton.

"Ridiculous and sickening!" exclaimed the marchioness.

"I am told," said lady Florence, "that Melvil is, to the full, as attentive a husband as he was a lover; but, to be sure, that is not saying a great deal, for lovers are in general negligent enough."

"I wish I could say all husbands are attentive," said lady Wilton; "but more is the pity; any thing takes their attention rather than their wives."

"I wonder," lisped the marchioness, "you can wish any thing so extremely absurd. The Melvils are ridiculed and laughed at by all their acquaintance, who make a jest of their disgusting fondness."

"It does not at all disturb their happiness," returned lady Wilton. "Lord Melvil makes the best of husbands; he is sincerely attached to his wife, and he does not mind the ridicule of the world; he is a domestic character, loves home, never games, never flirts with, nor follows, other women."

"Neither does lord Wilton," said the marquis, with a look that contradicted his words.

"You are perfectly well acquainted with lord Wilton's practices; his gambling and amours are no secret to you," replied lady Wilton, the ruby of her face taking a deeper dye, "and I wonder at you, marquis, to seduce him into, and encourage, such profligate, licentious—"

"Hush! hush!" said the marquis, "you forget that lady Beverley is present, and your accusations may be the occasion of exposing me to tears, fits, reproaches, and all the tempest of female anger."

"Be under no apprehension," replied the marchioness, disdainfully, "for I promise you neither your passion for gambling, nor your gallantries, will ever create one moment's uneasiness in my bosom; I neither desire nor expect your attentions; all I request from you is politeness, and further than this, I assure you, I regard your conduct with all the tranquillity of indifference."

Marian looked astonished.

The marquis asked her, if she should feel equally indifferent when she was a wife?

"I believe not," replied Marian, ingenuously, "for I shall never marry but from affection, and should my husband run into excesses of any sort, it would break my heart."

The marchioness threw on the blushing Marian a glance of haughty contempt.

Lady Florence whispered—"What a simpleton!"

Lady Wilton, looking vastly grave, said—"Very true, Miss; the negligence and infidelities of a husband are enough to break the heart of a woman of feeling."

"There is no enduring this old woman's nonsense," said the marchioness.

Lady Florence, heartily tired of the visit, was anxious to go, and looking at the little gold watch that hung on her bosom, she said—"I believe, marchioness, you forget our engagement with the duchess of Stirling."

"Positively I had, and thank you for the recollection," replied lady Beverley; "I have been so agreeably entertained," glancing at Marian and the marquis, "that it escaped my memory."

The marchioness and lady Florence took leave, to the great delight of the designing marquis, who having got rid of the troublesome observance of his lady, thought he should now have an opportunity to whisper his flatteries in the ear of Marian, with whose *naïveté* he was so inflamed, that he determined to undermine her innocence; but knowing the character of the marquis, Mrs. Doricourt seated herself on an ottoman close to Marian, and obliged him to converse on general subjects. This disappointment of his design disconcerted the licentious marquis; even his bold eyes fell beneath the penetrating glance of virtue. Awed and restrained by Mrs. Doricourt, he began to think they had made a very long visit, and reminding the duke of Arvingham that they were to attend a sale at Tattersal's, he hurried him away.

Lady Wilton having sat a few moments, suddenly exclaimed—"Only think of lady Torrington being dead! nobody knew a word about her being in England, till they read of her funeral in the papers; but perhaps, though it is said she died at her lodgings in Pall-Mall, she may

still be alive and merry with that villain, major Norman, in France; for newspapers tell so many falsehoods, that there is no depending upon what they assert."

"In this instance they have spoken the truth," replied Mrs. Doricourt; "the countess of Torrington is certainly dead."

"Bless me!" returned lady Wilton, "and so you know all the particulars?" but not finding Mrs. Doricourt or Cecilia communicative on the subject, she wondered whether the circumstance of the countess's death would hasten the return of lord Torrington to England.

"I should suppose not," was the reply made by Mrs. Doricourt.

"Going abroad appears all the rage," said lady Wilton. "There is sir Middleton Maxfield and his lady, and the Stuart family, and half-a-hundred more of my intimate friends, gone to Lisbon. I am sure my health requires a warm climate, as much as any of my acquaintance; but I can't prevail on lord Wilton to quit England."

Hoping to hear some intelligence of lord Rushdale, Mrs. Doricourt inquired, if sir Middleton Maxfield had written to her from Lisbon?

"Sir Middleton is at present too happy to think of his relations," said lady Wilton; "besides, he would not write to me, for he knows I have such an aversion to a pen, that I should never answer his letters."

Cecilia rejoiced when the talkative lady Wilton bade them good-morning; and Mrs. Doricourt, without alarming the delicacy of Marian, by expressing a suspicion of the designs of the marquis of Beverley, sufficiently explained his character, to put her on her guard against his seductions.

The duke of Arvingham saw nothing in the manner of Miss Delmore to make him despair of success; she had conversed with him that morning with far less reserve than formerly, and when he took his leave, she had not withdrawn her hand from his gentle pressure. The fact was, Cecilia's thoughts were wandering far away, and she was entirely unconscious that he had pressed her hand; but this little circumstance gave rise to very flattering hopes in the bosom of Arvingham, and he spoke of Miss Delmore's virtues, elegance, and beauty, in a style of such devotedness, that the marquis of Beverley asked him, if he really intended to commit matrimony?

"Most certainly," replied the duke, "if Miss Delmore will accept my hand; with her the wedded life would indeed be happiness, for she has sense to charm, beauty to attract, and accomplishments to entertain."

"Bravo!" said the marquis; "you are deeply in for it, I perceive; now all these accomplishments that you have enumerated, I should adore in a mistress, but absolutely detest in a wife; the most stupid and homely are too apt to arrogate and be troublesome, but with a wife, beautiful, sensible, and accomplished, a man must sink into utter insignificance. I married lady Eglantine because she is a fool; she is sufficiently troublesome, I promise you; had she been a wit, she would have been actually unmanageable."

"When I marry," replied the duke, "my wife shall possess beauty and talent, and I will trust to my own conduct, and her sense and virtue, for our happiness."

### CHAPTER III.

There was a day, when simply but to be,  
To live, to breathe, was purest ecstasy;  
Then life was new, and with a smiling air  
Robb'd of his thorny crown intrusive Care:  
And o'er the drear path I was doom'd to tread,  
Beneath the little wand'rer's footsteps shed.  
Full many a beam of gay primatic hue,  
Add many a bud from Fancy's bosom threw;  
Pleasing, and pleas'd; still blessing, still most blest;  
In *life alone* each transport was possest;  
But now, in *life alone*, no charms I view,  
And, oh! Time, Hours, and Love, how chang'd are you!  
*Lay of an Irish Harp.*

They tell me 'tis my birthday, and I'll keep it  
With double pomp of sadness. SHAKESPEARE.

*A Family Déjeunée—Return to the Hermitage—  
Fashionable Assurance—A Duel—Birthday  
Discoveries.*

The marriage of captain Seaford with the rich widow of a city tailor, gave much satisfaction to the mind of old Scroggins, who had for some time apprehended that his daughter Jane, would, in defiance of his advice, perversely throw away her five thousand pounds upon him.

One morning, when the family had assembled at breakfast, he gravely placed his spectacles on his nose, and drawing a newspaper from his pocket, read—"Last Tuesday was married, at Grace Church, by the reverend James Forster, Thomas Seaford, captain in the Smithfield Volunteers, to Penelope Farnby, relict of Simon Farnby, esquire. After the ceremony, the happy couple set off with a party of friends, to pass the honeymoon at Hackney, where the bride has a handsome estate."

"Funny enough," said old Scroggins, laughing, "Simon Farnby, my tailor, called esquire! Lord, Lord! What will this world come to!"

Miss Scroggins let fall the coffee cup she was carrying to her mouth, and nearly upset the breakfast-table.

"What the dickens possesses the girl?" exclaimed Mrs. Scroggins, as she gathered up the pieces of the shivered coffee-cup; "you have spoiled my set of second best china with your foolish tantrums."

"What is the loss of a paltry coffee-cup?" returned Miss Scroggins, in a voice between weeping and screaming.—"What is the breaking of a whole set of trumpery coffee-cups compared with my disappointment?—Captain Seaford is married; ma'am! and did not the vile deceitful wretch, no longer ago than last Sunday, swear, if I would not engage to marry him as soon as I came of age, he would stab himself with his own military sword; and now to think of

his having married the dumpy widow Farnby, when he has told me a hundred times that he hated dumpy women—What is the loss of a coffee-cup?”

“A great deal to my thinking,” interrupted Mrs. Scroggins, eyeing the fragments, “especially when it breaks a set that cost a matter of five guineas.”

“Why don’t you use commoner ones?” said the grocer, “and then, if an accident did happen—”

“But this was no accident, Mr. Scroggins,” returned his wife.

“Be quiet; I know it,” replied her husband, “and I know all you can say about it wont join the pieces. But as to the loss of Tom Seaford, I tell you what, Jane, if you have only a quarter of an ounce of brains in your foolish head, you will down on your marrow-bones, and give thanks that you have got fairly rid of an idle fop of a fellow, who would soon have sent your money flying, and brought you to poverty.”

“There you are greatly mistaken, sir,” replied Miss Scroggins, “for I never intended to marry him, I assure you; and as to my liking him, I thought him as disagreeable a wretch as ever I saw in my life.”

Old Scroggins laughed heartily—“Stick to that, Jane,” said he, “I am glad to see you take the matter so well, though it is plain enough by your looks to see—”

“To see what?” asked Miss Scroggins, pettishly.

“Why that the ‘*the grapes are sour*,’ to be sure,” replied her father.

“He is an ugly, ignorant, conceited ape!” said Miss Scroggins, “and the grapes, sir, are not at all sour, for I would not have had the frightful, awkward wretch, if he could have made me an empress; I always hated him.”

“And have you broke my china coffee-cup, and put me in such a fluster I shan’t recover myself to-day,” asked the astonished Mrs. Scroggins, “and all about a man that you hate and detest? Well, I declare I never heard the like. Talk of deceit indeed! why, girl, you are Seaford’s match, let him be as deceitful as ever he will.”

“I am sure I should not have cared about the fellow marrying,” resumed Miss Scroggins, “only that he has acted so sly and so deceitful; I never heard even a whisper of his paying attention to the widow Farnby.”

“I recollect I heard somebody joke him about her at Mrs. Thornton’s,” said Marian; “but I never thought of it after the moment.”

“Ay, that proves the strength of your sisterly affection,” returned Miss Scroggins. “But what better could I expect from you, Miss Marian? Since you have visited the great folks in Portland-square, you have treated me with the greatest indifference, and no doubt are rejoicing in your mind that you shall have a fine story to carry to that proud upstart, Miss Delmore, about my disappointment; but you are greatly mistaken if you think I am disappointed. The loss of such an ill-bred puppy as Tom Seaford is nothing at all to me. I am not so old, or so ugly, that I need despair of getting a husband; and though you wish to see me miserable, I shall not gratify your malice. I will let you see that I am not vexed at his deceit, or at your spiteful airs.” During this speech, Miss Scroggins had raised her naturally shrill voice to so discordant a pitch, that Marian was terrified, and burst into tears. Mrs. Scroggins sat pouting over her broken coffee-cup.—

“Ay,” continued Miss Scroggins, with a sneering laugh, “that is always the way with Miss Marian. For my part, I have not my tears ready at command. It is a great pity Seaford did not marry you; I am sure you would have been well suited together, for you are both of you artful hypocrites.”



“What the devil is the meaning of all this noise?” said the grocer, throwing down the newspaper, over which he had been poring. “You say you don’t like Tom Seaford, and that you never intended to marry him, and yet you are raving like a bedlamite about his having married another, and quarrelling with your sister, and calling her names, that the poor child never deserved. I wish you were as good and as mild-tempered and as dutiful as she is, it would make things a great deal more comfortable.”

“Oh dear yes! I know Miss Marian was always your favourite, father,” replied Miss Scroggins; “but if my godmother, poor dear lady Meldrum, was alive, I should not be here to be huffed and snubbed about in this way.”

“Get out of my sight this instant!” said the grocer, rising from the breakfast-table in a rage; “get along to your own room; and if you can remember any good lesson your fine lady godmother ever taught you, try and recover it, for it appears pretty clear to every body that belongs to you, that you have forgot everything you ever learned, except the way to be idle, ill natured, and saucy.”

Miss Scroggins left the room, muttering—“Those belonging to me shall not be troubled with me much longer.”

Old Scroggins walked to the glass to settle his wig—a custom he had when any thing occurred to disturb the serenity of his temper; then pinching the cheek of Marian, he bade her not cry—“As to Jane,” said he, “she is just like the dog in the manger; she did not want the good-for-nothing fellow herself, and yet is angry that any body else took him. However, I am very glad he has got himself a wife, and that my family are fairly rid of him;” then looking at his wife, he asked—“Why, what the plague, Mrs. Scroggins, do you look so glum about? are the pieces of the broken coffee-cup sticking in your gizzard? Pooh! never be so silly as to fret after a bit of crockery ware.”

“Crockery ware!” repeated his wife; “real Worcester china, I promise you, Mr. Scroggins. Do you suppose I should grieve after crockery ware? I wonder at you, Mr. Scroggins.”

“And I wonder you should think it worth the while to be vexed about such a trifle, Mrs. Scroggins,” replied the grocer. “If there was none of this here brittlesome stuff broke, what do you think would become of the trade? Come, let us have no sulky looks; pour me out another cup of coffee, and I don’t much mind if I make you a present of a new set of china.”

The clouds dispersed from the brow of Mrs. Scroggins in an instant; like many other silly women she had a passion for china. Smiling kindly on her husband, she said—“Of the same pattern as Mrs. Alderman Drugget’s?”

“Of any pattern you like,” replied the grocer.

Peace was now restored; the broken coffee-cup was thrown into the slop-bason, and breakfast was finished in perfect good-humour, the grocer making himself merry at the expence of the foolish woman who had thrown herself and her money away on Tom Seaford.

Marian, when she left the parlour, went immediately to her sister’s apartment; but Miss Scroggins chose to be sulky, and without even condescending to look at her, said, she did not want her company.

Marian was much hurt at this conduct; and as she sat down to her needle, she reflected with no little sorrow on the very unpleasant summer she was likely to spend with a sister, whose temper was so bad, that she rendered every person in the family uncomfortable. Mrs. Doricourt was to leave town in a few days.

“Miss Delmore, whose disposition is all sweetness and affability,” said Marian, sighing, “will shortly be many miles distant, and I shall be constrained to remain at home with a sister,

who has, alas! no regard for any being except herself. Melrose too is absent, and when he may return, Heaven alone can tell. But Mrs. Doricourt says Providence orders all things for the best; and though my prospects are far from bright, I will endeavour to be content."

At this moment Mrs. Scroggins put her head in at the door, and, in a great bustle, said—"Go down, Marian; Mrs. Doricourt's carriage is at the door, and I am in such a pickle I am not fit to be seen."

Marian obeyed her mother, and hastened down stairs, but not as formerly, with a light heart, rejoicing to meet friends loved and respected, for she believed they were now come to bid her farewell previous to their departure from town.

Mr. Scroggins had bowed and scraped, and ushered Mrs. Doricourt and Miss Delmore to his daughter's *budwar*, as he called it; but Miss Scroggins had still a strong fit of the sullen on her, and did not condescend to receive her sister's visitors; she supposed they came to take leave of Marian, but she did not choose to wish them a pleasant journey. What were they to her? the proud creatures had never taken any notice of her; and if their carriage was overturned every third mile between London and Cumberland, it would not distress her feelings—no, truly, not if they got their bones broke."

Marian saluted, and was saluted by Mrs. Doricourt and Miss Delmore, with all the sincerity of real friendship.

Miss Delmore discovered by Marian's eyes that she had been weeping and inquired the cause; but Marian was too kind, and too much ashamed, to confess that her sister's ill-temper and undeserved reproaches were the occasion of her tears. But there was one part of her sorrow she could disclose, and that was the idea that she should see them no more.

"You surely could not believe us so unfeeling and ungrateful, my dear Marian," said Mrs. Doricourt, "as to leave town without calling to thank you for all your kindness, and leaving with our warm wishes for your health and happiness."

Marian's heart was before oppressed; her tears would not be restrained, and, in a voice tremulous with grief, she replied—"My happiness, dearest madam, will depart with you and Miss Delmore."

Mrs. Doricourt affectionately pressed Marian's hand, and said—"Dry up your tears my sweet girl; you shall go with us if we can prevail on your parents to trust you to our protection."

"Yes," rejoined Miss Delmore, kissing Marian's cheek, "for I cannot bear to part with my gentle friend, to whose kindness I have been so much indebted, and from whose society I promise myself so much pleasure."

Marian smiled through her tears, and exclaimed, in the fullness of her joy—"My sister may well envy me the honour I enjoy in being so distinguished; but will you, indeed, my dear madam, condescend to take me with you into Cumberland? and will Miss Delmore allow me to assist her in cultivating the flowers that adorn your paradise, and of which she is so fond?"

Mrs. Doricourt assured the now happy Marian, that her present visit to Abchurch-street had no other object than to invite her to spend the summer at the Hermitage.

Miss Delmore could not suppress a sigh at the mention of her flowers; with them was associated many a tender and painful remembrance; some of them had been selected by lord Rushdale, who, himself a florist, had instructed her in their cultivation and several of the beautiful exotics that adorned the conservatory, had been presented to her by him. They had often together admired their expanding blossoms; but now, when she beheld their brilliant colours, and inhaled their odours, he would be far away, forgetful of those hours of bliss so precious to her recollection.

Mr. and Mrs. Scroggins, followed by the maid with a silver salver, loaded with refreshments, restored, by their apologies and bustling politeness, the smile to Cecilia's lips, that these painful thoughts had banished.

Mrs. Scroggins was by no means so delicate as Marian respecting the faults of her eldest daughter, for she at once said, she hoped they would have the goodness to excuse the appearance of Jane, who, to tell the truth, was at home, but in a very bad temper, which more was the pity, was too often the case, and had been quarrelling with Marian just before they arrived.

"My poor little friend, that accounts for the redness of your eyes," observed Mrs. Doricourt.

Marian blushed deeply for the loquacity of her mother, and would gladly have concealed the faults of her sister; but Mrs. Scroggins said, it was true Jane was of very unhappy temper, owing to her being too much humoured in her infancy.

"Bend the twig when it is young," said the grocer, "and it will grow as you wish; but Jane's quality bringing-up has ruined her disposition; it has made her proud, and indolent, and self-willed."

This declaration of his eldest daughter's faults was not altogether favourable to Mrs. Doricourt's design of taking Marian away with her, for Mrs. Scroggins might be apprehensive that Marian's disposition would be corrupted, as she ranked in the class he denominated quality.

But while she hesitated to prefer her request, Miss Delmore, with graceful and winning affability, mentioned the motive of that morning's visit; and Mrs. Doricourt added, she hoped Marian would be allowed to pass the summer with her in Cumberland.

Mrs. Scroggins replied, that the indolence and ill-temper of her eldest daughter rendered the company of Marian doubly necessary and agreeable at home; for, to be sure, she was the direct opposite to her sister in every particular, and was of very great service to her in the management of the family, for Marian was very clever, and ingenious, and active, and could undertake to do any thing that was to be cut with a pair of scissors, and sewed with a needle and thread; and she could pickle and preserve, and make jellies, and numberless nice and pretty nick-nacks in pastry and confectionary, all which Jane was above putting her hand to.

The grocer was ashamed that his wife should engross all the conversation, and prevented any further disclosure of Marian's qualifications, by saying—"Mrs. Scroggins, you have said quite sufficient, my dear; Mrs. Doricourt does not want to engage Marian as a housekeeper."

"Dear me, no; I know that, Mr. Scroggins," replied she, a little abashed, then pressing Miss Delmore to take a glass of wine to hide her confusion.

Mrs. Doricourt repeated her invitation to Marian.

Her father replied, bowing to the ground—"We are sensible, madam, of the great honour you do Marian by taking so much notice of her, and are very proud of the invitation, which we certainly can have no objection to her accepting."

But Mr. Scroggins was mistaken; his wife had a very great objection to Marian's going from home; she had just cut out a dozen shirts for him, and various other articles of family linen, which she wanted Marian's assistance to make up, as her daughter Jane absolutely detested the use of that vulgar implement, which she denominated the "*steel bar*." But Mrs. Scroggins had always submitted to her husband's will, who, though a very good man, was apt to be peremptory, could not bear contradiction, and would be master.

The permission being obtained, Mrs. Doricourt and Miss Delmore left the delighted Marian to prepare for the following Sunday, when she was to dine and remain all night in Portland-square, to be ready to begin the journey to Cumberland early on Monday morning.

Mrs. Scroggins, when left alone with her husband, did not venture to drop a hint how extremely lonesome she should feel all the summer without Marian, and how much she should miss her assistance, when the preserving and pickling time came about. But Mr. Scroggins had made up his mind to Marian's going, and his will was unalterable as the laws of the Medes and Persians; and he paid no further attention to his wife's hints, than to say—"What will you do, my dear, when the girl gets married? You can't expect her to remain single all her life, on purpose to pickle your cabbage and girkins, and make raspberry jam, and preserve damascenes. Besides, Mrs. Scroggins, to let you into a little bit of a secret, I have views of my own in letting Marian go into Cumberland; she will be near her uncle Wilson—and if he takes a fancy to her, and you know she appeared to be a favourite, it may prevent his marrying, and having children of his own, to leave his money to, and he is pretty warm, I can tell you."

This was unanswerable, and like a prudent woman, Mrs. Scroggins held her tongue, though she secretly lamented the loss of Marian, as her sister Jane had none of her serviceable qualifications.

When Miss Scroggins was informed that Marian was going with Mrs. Doricourt to her seat in Cumberland, she took to her bed, and artfully pretended illness, in order to disappoint and detain her at home; but the family apothecary being a sensible honest man, protested he could not find out any complaint Miss Scroggins had, and that he thought employment would be much more efficacious than physic.

After this declaration on the part of the apothecary, Marian received much good advice from her mother, and a twenty pound note from her father, and was permitted to keep her appointment of dining on Sunday with her friends in Portland-square; there she met Mr. Saville, who had also received an invitation from Mrs. Doricourt, to spend the summer at the Hermitage.

On Monday morning the travellers began their journey, and Marian, who had never in her life been ten miles out of London, was in raptures with the variety of prospects and beautiful seats of noblemen and gentlemen, that continually met her view.

Mrs. Doricourt, whose sorrows had subsided in content, felt real pleasure in the thought that every mile they passed brought her nearer to the spot, which she had been at so much pains and expence to fertilize and beautify, to which she had fled nearly heart-broken by the treachery of man, where she had wept in anguish and believed herself, of all created beings, the most wretched and unfortunate; she was now returning with different sentiments and feelings, with a mind purified from error, and disposed to enjoy the blessings so amply dispensed her, convinced that what she had lamented, as a grievous disappointment, had proved a real benefit, for which she could never be sufficiently grateful to overruling Providence.

But the heart of Cecilia did not participate in the pleasure of Mrs. Doricourt, for she remembered with what different prospects she had left Cumberland, and had then rejoiced in the dear and brilliant hope of a union with lord Rushdale.

Mrs. Doricourt read, in Cecilia's expressive countenance, what was passing in her mind, and with attentive kindness she endeavoured, by conversing on cheerful subjects, to withdraw her thoughts from dwelling on irremediable misfortune.

The pensive-minded Saville was enchanted with the bold majestic scenery of Cumberland, and joined with Marian in repeated exclamations of astonishment and admiration.

The town of Keswick was quickly passed; and as they drew near enough to discover the turrets of Torrington Castle, Mr. Saville became much disturbed, and seemed to shrink from beholding the place where the beautiful erring Emily had once presided, proud, and unthinking that her gay career was so soon to terminate in wretchedness and death. Then, as if ashamed of

his weakness, he leaned from the carriage window, and forced himself to gaze on the towers and massive battlements.—“How little of happiness,” exclaimed he, “does the title annexed to this bold edifice bestow on its possessor! A thousand times rather would I be Edmund Saville than the earl of Torrington! Unhappy man! the wealth for which he perjured his soul, for which he deserted my lovely innocent Edith, brought with it neither peace nor honour! His wife, too, the countess of Torrington, who—But let me not disturb the ashes of the dead; her guilt was punished—may her errors be buried with her in the grave!”

Miss Delmore had sunk back in a corner of the carriage, fearful that her eye should glance on the walls that had kindly fostered her helpless infancy—where she had been most happy, but which circumstances now rendered distressing to her thoughts and her sight.

Marian had never seen so noble a structure; but perceiving that Miss Delmore was agitated at the name of Torrington Castle, she contented herself with gazing on its magnificent entrance, till the winding road shut it from her view, without expressing her admiration.

Mrs. Doricourt felt for Cecilia and Mr. Saville, but she did not disturb the silent sorrow of the moment, by a comment or observation on past events, but was mentally moralizing on the fatal consequences attendant on vice, when the sound of rustic music caught her ear, joined with the joyful shouts of the Derwentwater peasantry, who, drest in their holiday clothes, had left their cottages, to meet and welcome the return of their benevolent friend and benefactress.

“I congratulate you, my respected, excellent friend,” said Mr. Saville, “on this triumph, infinitely more glorious, in my opinion, than that which greets the return of a hero from battle, for here neither tears nor regret mingle with the joy.”

The heart of Mrs. Doricourt was sensibly affected by this proof of respect and regard shewn by the honest people, who, in her absence, had not been deprived of her bounty. She stopped the carriage, and spoke with kindness to several of the old people, assuring them that she rejoiced to see them well, and that she returned among them with a pleasure equal to that they expressed at seeing her.

Cecilia also spoke to them, and they blessed her as the angel dispenser of Mrs. Doricourt’s charity, praying that Heaven might make her as happy as she was beautiful.

Charmed with this proof that Mrs. Doricourt had never, in her hours of sorrow, forgotten the wants and distresses of her fellow-creatures, Mr. Saville reprov’d his own selfish grief, reflecting that it was possible to diffuse happiness, even while the heart was itself insensible to its cheering influence.

The peasants, proud and elated with the condescension shewn them by Mrs. Doricourt and her guests, attended them with acclamations of praise, and shouts of joy, to the border of the lake, where the yacht, dressed with silken streamers, waited to waft them over to St. Herbert’s Island, then fragrant and glowing with all the fertility and beauty of early summer.

It was sunset when they landed on the Chinese bridge, where Mrs. Doricourt, with smiles of affability, welcomed her guests to the Hermitage.

Mr. Saville believed himself again in the—

“clime of the East,  
Where the light wings of Zephyr, oppress’d with perfume,  
Wax faint o’er the gardens of Gul in their bloom.”

And Marian began to fancy herself transported to those delightful gardens and groves that she had read of in the Tales of the Genii.

Mrs. Milman had been at the Hermitage best part of the day, waiting to see her niece, who, to her infinite chagrin and disappointment, had returned to Cumberland Cecilia Delmore, instead of a lady of title, though she consoled herself with the reflection that she was still very young, and might have better luck the next time she went to London.

After embracing, and expressing the pleasure she really felt at seeing Cecilia, Mrs. Milman observed that she was much thinner, and a great deal paler, than when she left Cumberland.—“Mercy bless me, my dear child,” said she, “I am afraid you are in a consumption.”

Cecilia, with a faint smile, assured her aunt she was quite well, only a little fatigued with the journey.

But Mrs. Milman set her thinness and paleness down to the account of racketing about, and keeping such late hours.—“I know people of quality keep sad hours in London,” said Mrs. Milman, “and though that wicked sir Cyril Musgrove did behave vilely, yet I can never believe that you fretted all the flesh off your bones, child, and wept all the colour out of your cheeks, while you was at Frome hall, which I have heard is a fine, airy, healthful place, like Torrington Castle, far from the smoke of any town; and then I very much wonder, indeed, as sir Cyril is a handsome genteel-looking man, and was sorry for his bad behaviour, and offered you marriage, that you did not accept him, as folks say he is very rich.”

Cecilia replied, the insult he had offered her was, in her opinion, a sufficient reason for rejecting him.

“Well, well, child,” resumed Mrs. Milman, “you know best, to be sure. It was not to be, I suppose. Yet you should have remembered rich baronets are not to be picked up every day in the week; though nobody knows—I may live to see you a countess.”

Mrs. Milman did not express much concern, when speaking of the death of the countess of Torrington, who had never condescended to take much notice of her. Mrs. Milman wondered if the earl intended coming to the castle that summer.—“He is a gay character,” said she, “and will, I dare say, marry again; and if he does, I hope he will have a wife with less pride and more virtue than the late countess, poor sinful creature! And, now I think of it, Cecilia,” added she, “I should not at all wonder if the earl was to offer himself to you, for every body noticed how fond he was of you, and that he was never happy when you were out of his sight.”

“Alas! he is strangely altered,” replied Cecilia; “I have not heard from him for many months; and as the earl has ceased to notice me, you will, I trust, my dear aunt, excuse my coming to Torrington Castle; Mrs. Doricourt will, at all times, be happy to see you at the Hermitage; but she does not approve of my going to the castle.”

Mrs. Milman thought this was carrying pride and delicacy too far, but having settled it in her mind that Cecilia should be the future countess of Torrington, she offered but little opposition to her not coming as usual to the castle.

Mr. Wilson was happy to see his favourite Cecilia in Cumberland again; for little guessing the secret sorrow nourished in her bosom, he thought the pure air would restore the roses to her cheeks, and make her animated as ever. He was greatly pleased and gratified at the notice she bestowed on his niece, which proved to him the extent of her regard for him, and the grateful remembrance she retained of his having rescued her from the villanous designs of sir Cyril Musgrove.

Mr. Wilson was in equal astonishment and perplexity with Cecilia, respecting the earl of Torrington, for he had received no answers to the letters he had written to Lisbon, and was quite at a loss how to proceed with the theatre and banqueting-room, which had been planned the preceding summer by lord Rushdale, who was to have given a drawing of the way he intended to finish the interior.

“Surely, if the earl of Torrington and lord Rushdale are dead,” said Cecilia, “we should, by some means, have been acquainted with the melancholy tidings; and better, far better, could I endure the terrible certainty that they are no more than this agonizing uncertainty.”

Mrs. Doricourt could not suppose they were dead, though their silence was unaccountable; yet, from Wilson’s not having letters, she drew the favourable hope, that the same cause which prevented the earl from writing to him, operated with regard to Cecilia, and that she was not wilfully neglected, or illiberally cast from the hearts that had once professed to adore her.

Mrs. Doricourt did not return to the Hermitage with an intention to seclude herself as formerly. Her mind was now tranquil, and though she was certain that the world contained much evil, she also believed it had an equal portion of good, and that it was shewing true philosophy to take things as they were. Thus reasoning, Mrs. Doricourt gave and received invitations from the neighbouring gentry, who proudly embraced an acquaintance with the handsome widow, and her lovely friends.

Marian every hour repeated—“I am delighted with every thing and every body in Cumberland; I never was half so happy in my life!”

“I would I could hear my Cecilia say the same!” replied Mrs. Doricourt.

“Do not believe me ungrateful,” said Cecilia, with a pensive smile; “are not you with me, the same tender, kind, indulgent friend as ever? Indeed I am happy, very happy!”

But a tear swelling in either eye, convinced Mrs. Doricourt that her heart was far from feeling the happiness her lips asserted; but time, she hoped, would do much in a mind grateful and pious as Cecilia’s.

If Marian admired Mrs. Doricourt in London, she was ready to worship her in Cumberland, for never had she witnessed such real goodness, such universal charity; she beheld the poor invoking blessings on her, and the rich looking up to her as an example of all that was virtuous and amiable in woman.

After Cecilia and Marian had paid a few visits, they became the toasts of Keswick, and more than one advantageous offer was made to the young friends by gentlemen, whose persons might have found acceptance with disengaged hearts; but Marian was faithfully attached to lieutenant Melrose, and Cecilia, though hopeless of ever beholding lord Rushdale again, considered herself as much his wife as if the ceremony of the church had united them.

The duke of Arvingham, while attending his family at Brighton, with lover-like impatience anticipated the hour when he should again behold Miss Delmore. His arrival in Cumberland gave Mrs. Doricourt much satisfaction; of all men, he was the most likely to banish the remembrance of lord Rushdale from the bosom of Cecilia; and, as no intelligence had arrived from abroad, she concluded that all was at an end, and that the earl had resolved his son should not keep his engagement.

Liberal as was the mind of Mrs. Doricourt, she could not help acquiescing with Mr. Saville’s opinion, that such conduct was consonant with the character of the earl, who had not himself scrupled to break through the most sacred engagements; and this being the case, she wished a worthier lover to obtain the affections of Cecilia.

Mr. Saville lost no opportunity of praising the duke of Arvingham.—“In mind and manners,” said he, “the duke is a gentleman; and had I a son, my most anxious wishes would be gratified, were his conduct and principles such as the duke of Arvingham’s.”

Cecilia heard these and similar sentiments often repeated, and, with all the candour of youthful innocence, she joined in his commendation, but without at all suspecting that her friends had any design by their praises to recommend the duke of Arvingham to her favour.

The grief of Cecilia had settled into tranquil pensiveness; she had returned to her books, her harp, and her pencil; and, under her instruction, Marian, attentive and docile, was rapidly gaining those accomplishments, which they merely pretended to teach at the seminary where she was placed for education.

In the improving Marian, and in forming concerts, in which Mr. Saville and the duke took part, Cecilia ceased to be miserable. Mrs. Doricourt had said, employment was the best antidote against sorrow—and when had Mrs. Doricourt erred in her opinion?

The duke of Arvingham had a pleasing voice—Miss Delmore sang duets with him. He had a taste for drawing too, and they took sketches together. The duke read with feeling and propriety; and when the weather did not permit their going abroad, he read alternately with Mr. Saville, while the ladies pursued the needle or the pencil.

As a friend, Cecilia greatly respected the duke of Arvingham, and valued his society; but had he once mentioned love, she would have relinquished every pleasure she derived from his acquaintance.

From never hearing Cecilia, on any occasion, mention the name of lord Rushdale, the duke was confirmed in the opinion that all was at an end between them; but, apprehensive that some lurking tenderness might still remain in her heart, for an object once avowedly preferred to the rest of her admirers, he resolved that time should entirely remove every former impression, before he ventured to renew his addresses, for he was not romantic enough to believe the female heart could love but once; and, as, from all he had learned of the affair, he thought lord Rushdale had acted extremely ungenerous and illiberal by Miss Delmore, it was less probable that she would long retain an affection for a person so unworthy. Time was to prove this, and by remaining her friend a few months longer, he should be able to judge whether her heart was at liberty to make a second choice, and whether it was likely he might succeed in obtaining her regard.

"This day month, my Cecilia," said Mrs. Doricourt, "is your birthday."

Cecilia sighed. She recollected that lord Rushdale, in their last conversation, had said, they should celebrate their next birthdays together. Alas! where was he then? In a distant country, forgetful of all he had proposed for their mutual happiness.

"I will have the day observed," said Mrs. Doricourt, "with rejoicings and festivity; I will issue cards of invitation to all our friends, and I will give Mr. Baldwin orders for preparing the conservatory for a ball."

Cecilia was grateful to Mrs. Doricourt for this fresh instance of her affection, but entreated she would suffer the day to pass unnoticed—"For who am I," said she, with graceful modesty, "that my birthday should be observed?"

"The child of my affection," replied Mrs. Doricourt, "the friend of my heart, and the heiress of my fortune; and it is my supreme will and pleasure to observe the day by giving an entertainment to all our Cumberland friends, as much to celebrate your deliverance from the wicked wiles and stratagems of sir Cyril Musgrove, as to do honour to your natal day: so let me hear no more of your modest objections; and, mark me, child, I expect that you will that day



discard for ever, sighs, regret, and sorrow, and resume your smiles and animation; for, believe me, love, the only purpose that sorrow answers, is to dull the eyes, pale the cheeks, and wrinkle the skin."

"Marian, do you love dancing?" asked Mr. Saville.

"Dearly, sir," replied she.

"I believe I shall take a few lessons previous to Cecilia's birthday," resumed he, "that I may solicit you for a partner."

"Indeed I should be extremely proud," replied Marian; "but you are jesting—you would not dance."

"I am not sure of that," said Mr. Saville, "for I have made a resolve to cast away sadness, and be gay as the gayest."

"And I will order dancing dresses exactly alike for Cecilia and Marian," resumed Mrs. Doricourt—"while silk and wreaths of pale roses. I shall not listen to a word of thanks or objections; in this affair I will be obeyed, and intend to be as peremptory as the sovereign queen of St. Herbert's Island ought to be."

Cecilia and Marian kissed her hand, and promised obedience.

Mr. Saville smiled, and professed himself ready to perform the commands of his liege lady.

"We command you, then," said Mrs. Doricourt, "to ride over to Keswick, and make inquiry what has become of our friend the duke of Arvingham, who having for two whole days absented himself from our palace of the Hermitage, we fear is unwell."

"I hope not," said Cecilia; "I should be extremely sorry to hear that the duke of Arvingham is ill."

"Indeed and so should I," rejoined Marian, "he is so sensible, and so affable, and not at all proud."

"He deserves your praise, my dear Marian," replied Cecilia; "There are very few young men like the duke of Arvingham; I should be sincerely concerned to learn that illness prevents his coming to the Hermitage as usual."

"If my ambassador reports that concern to the duke," rejoined Mrs. Doricourt, "I am persuaded he will 'throw physic to the dogs;' the charm contained in that little sentence, 'I should be sorry to hear that the duke of Arvingham is ill,' would, I have no doubt, effect a complete cure."

Miss Delmore could not mistake Mrs. Doricourt's meaning, but unwilling to understand, she merely said, she doubted the efficacy of her good wishes.

Mr. Saville having left the room, and Marian being employed in writing to her mother, Mrs. Doricourt said—"It is evident to me, my Cecilia, that the duke of Arvingham remains in Cumberland entirely on your account."

"I hope not," replied Cecilia; "certainly not—the duke can have no such motive; he knows that I declined the honour he designed me, and it is quite improbable. Oh, no, my dear madam! The lakes and their beautiful environs are so attractive, that a person, with half the duke of Arvingham's taste, might remain months without growing weary of admiring them."

"Granted, my love," returned Mrs. Doricourt; "a contemplative person, or one whose mind was tinctured with romance, or rendered pensive by calamity, might indeed wander for months among the lakes and mountains of Cumberland; but recollect, my Cecilia, the duke of Arvingham's character is neither contemplative, romantic, nor pensive; he is a lively, animated young man, whose life hitherto has had no acquaintance with misfortune, and who has no dislike

to join in those amusements that present themselves at places of fashionable resort. What then, but love, can detain him here, and make him content to resign his former friends and pleasures?—What can induce him to listen to the rush of streams, and climb the breezy mountains, but the knowledge that they are dear to Cecilia?"

"It would give me infinite sorrow," replied Cecilia, "to believe myself the motive that detains the duke of Arvingham in Cumberland, because I sincerely wish his intentions bestowed where they have a probability of success; I have rejected his addresses, and I hope he has no intention of renewing them."

"The duke of Arvingham is young, sensible, accomplished, and rich," returned Mrs. Doricourt.

"He is all this, I freely allow," said Cecilia; "but were he the most perfect of Heaven's creation, I could never regard him but as a friend."

"I flatter myself, my dearest Cecilia," replied Mrs. Doricourt, "that you will yet regard him with a warmer sentiment; the conduct of lord Rushdale does not merit the sacrifice of your youth and happiness; and, believe me, my sweet girl, it would give me infinite pleasure to see you the wife of the duke of Arvingham, whose steady attachment, and defence of your fame, when public opinion was swayed by the representations of a villain, demand not only your gratitude, but your affection."

"My gratitude," said Cecilia, "he possesses most sincerely; my love," added she, melting into tears, "my love, unfortunately, is not mine to bestow: however unworthy, I cannot withdraw it from Rushdale; neither, till he pronounces our engagement void, can I consider myself at liberty to accept other addresses. Spare me, I conjure you, my dearest, best of friends! allow me to believe it possible that Rushdale, having by a severe trial proved my faith, will return to claim the hand he appears to resign."

Mrs. Doricourt was moved by the distress of Cecilia, and while she tenderly represented the improbability of lord Rushdale renewing his claim on her affection, after so long a silence, and such glaring neglect, she promised not to urge her on behalf of the duke of Arvingham, till assured, under lord Rushdale's own hand, that he considered their engagement void.

This conversation occasioned Miss Delmore much secret uneasiness under the idea that the duke of Arvingham aspired only to her friendship; she had allowed his attentions, she had treated him with sisterly kindness, and was pleased with his stay in Cumberland. Under her present impressions, she was at a loss how to act; to encourage hopes that never could be realized, would be cruel and dishonourable, and to avoid or treat him with reserve, would now, after an intimacy of so many weeks, appear capricious, as he had not, by any declaration of love, caused her to treat him with less kindness: but while perplexed how to conduct herself, so as effectually to destroy any hope the duke of Arvingham might entertain of obtaining her love, without resigning his friendship, on which she set a high value, the heart of Cecilia was convinced that no future lover could ever supersede lord Rushdale in its tender affections.

When oppressed with painful remembrances, it was Cecilia's custom to seek relief from music. Her memory was now crowding the happy past upon her brain, and imagination was busily torturing reflection into forms of future suffering; she placed herself at the pianoforte, and ran over the keys with a rapid movement; she tried to play a lively air, but her fingers involuntarily sought a pensive measure, and with tears swelling to her eyes, she sung—

"Alas! we are parted for ever,  
The fault be it yours, love, or mine.

Shall I ever forget thee, love? Never,  
Though hope you have bade me resign.

"Oh! still will I faithfully cherish  
The thought, love, that once you were true,  
And though life's realities perish,  
Fond fancy thy vows shall renew.

"Alas! we no more shall be meeting,  
At morn, love, or close of the day;  
How soon, love, our pleasures are fleeting,  
While sorrow for ever will stay!"

Mrs. Doricourt perceived that the heart of Cecilia was deeply wounded; but she hoped much from offended pride, and more from time.

Marian's letters from home informed her, that captain Seaford and his wife lived in great style, and cut a prodigious dash among their city acquaintance, to the annoyance of Miss Scroggins, who never heard their names mentioned, without remarking that Simon Farnby, the tailor, must have cabbaged finely from his customers, before his widow could afford to drive a phaeton, and entertain so much company; yet for all their grand doings, she should not wonder if they were to come upon the parish at last. Marian's letter from her mother also said, that Jane was likely to rival her with Mr. Bignel, the common-council-man, for she took so much pains to court the old gentleman, that he seemed quite pleased and flattered, and had twice made parties, and taken her to Vauxhall and Sadler's Wells. Mrs. Scroggins concluded with wishing it might be a match, adding, if Jane marries Bignel, he will let her know her master, and cure her of all her airs and ill-tempers.

Marian had no objection to her sister marrying Mr. Bignel; so far from coveting his wealth, the notice he had taken of her had occasioned her many uneasy hours, because her father, in whose eyes money was every thing, wished her to pay more attention to Mr. Bignel, than her heart, which was devoted to Melrose, would allow her to do; and if Jane choose to marry the old gentleman, she wished them all happiness together.

The packet contained no news of Melrose; but perfectly assured of his fidelity, and convinced that he would lose no opportunity of writing to her, Marian satisfied her mind with the hope that they should meet in winter, and with the often repeated assurances of her uncle Wilson, who, every time he saw her, kindly repeated his promise, that he would interest himself for their happiness; and in what way could they be happy but in marriage?

On Mr. Saville's arrival at the duke of Arvingham's lodgings at Keswick, he found him quite well, and penning a letter to Mrs. Doricourt.

"Your visit, my dear sir," said the duke, "confers honour and pleasure, for it convinces me that I am not forgotten by my respected friends at the Hermitage, and believe me, I have not denied myself the felicity of paying my compliments there for two long days, without being sensible of the privation; but when I have explained to you my reasons for not riding over, you will, I am certain, be convinced that the motive was not disrespect."

Mr. Saville having accepted refreshment, the duke stated, that, to his infinite surprise and chagrin, the marquis of Beverley, and two of his fashionable associates, lord Wythers and sir James Holton, had unexpectedly arrived at Keswick, "to visit the lakes," said the duke, "their

ostensible motive; for the real one, that brought the marquis and his friends into Cumberland, I will not pretend to swear, but I fancy I can fathom the marquis of Beverley's designs: he had, or I am greatly deceived, taken this journey to seduce, if possible, the amiable Marian Scroggins; for, last night, when heated with wine, he let fall some expression that I entertained when in town, but did not mention, because I thought the innocent girl far enough removed from his designs. I have hitherto resisted his urgent request that I would introduce him at the Hermitage, where he has learned Marian is to spend the summer. I was, at the moment you entered, writing to Mrs. Doricourt on the subject, that I might know how to act with respect to the introduction of the marquis, and to assure her that I had not deprived myself of the pleasure of inquiring after the health of my respected friends without a sufficient reason."

Mr. Saville warmly approved the prudent conduct of the duke, and assured him of the thanks of Mrs. Doricourt, for refusing to introduce the marquis of Beverley at the Hermitage, as he was certain, were Marian entirely out of the question, Mrs. Doricourt and Miss Delmore would pointedly decline an acquaintance with a person of his profligate character. Mr. Saville then mentioned Marian's engagement with lieutenant Melrose, and added, "there is no greater security for the virtue of a young female, than an attachment to a deserving object. I have not the pleasure of knowing lieutenant Melrose; but report speaks highly of him, and Marian has too much sense, to give up her chance of being the wife of a man of honour, for the certain disgrace of enjoying the transient liking of a married libertine."

The duke would not part with Mr. Saville till after dinner; and it was night when he returned to the Hermitage, the bearer of an explanatory letter to Mrs. Doricourt.

The marquis of Beverley being at Keswick did a little astonish Mrs. Doricourt, for though she had in London disliked the familiarity with which he had addressed Marian, she had no idea that he would have followed her to such a distance, or, indeed, pursuing the course he did of racing, gaming, and drinking, that he would have remembered such a being existed.

Mrs. Doricourt was charmed with the conduct of the duke of Arvingham, which she spoke of in terms of the warmest approbation to Miss Delmore, at the same time observing, that she saw no reason why the duke was to absent himself from the Hermitage, on account of the marquis of Beverley, whose visits she never would admit. In the most delicate manner, Mrs. Doricourt informed Marian of the suspicion entertained by the duke of Arvingham of the marquis of Beverley's designs, who, he supposed, had made a pretence of visiting the lakes, merely to introduce himself to her, for the most villainous and licentious purposes.

The modest, timid Marian beheld in the marquis of Beverley another sir Cyril Musgrove, and weeping and alarmed, she expressed her dread of falling into his hands.

"Be under no apprehension, my dear child" said Mrs. Doricourt; "being aware of his designs, we shall be able to circumvent them, and assure yourself every precaution will be taken to prevent his approaching the Hermitage; my servants are incorruptible—on St. Herbert's Island you are perfectly secure, and whenever you return to London, myself will return you to the protection of your parents."

These assurances, in some measure, restored the tranquillity of Marian; but unable to conquer entirely her dread of the marquis, she never ventured alone into the groves or shrubberies, or considered herself perfectly safe, but in the presence of Mrs. Doricourt and Mr. Saville.

The invitation-tickets for Miss Delmore's birthday being issued, the marquis of Beverley, and the companions of his Cumberland tour, had the mortification to find themselves unnoticed; but the marquis was a character not easily repulsed, and though he had been unsuccessful in his

applications to Mrs. Doricourt's friends, who, supposing that she had her own private reasons for overlooking and excluding a man of his rank, excused themselves from introducing him at the Hermitage, his assurance suggested the expedient of writing a note—"A little flattery sometimes does well," said the marquis; and after having written what he thought a sufficient dose to satisfy the vanity of Mrs. Doricourt, he boldly expressed his wish to be allowed to congratulate Miss Delmore on her natal day, and finished his note with supposing that Mrs. Doricourt did not know that he had with his friends, lord Wythers and sir James Holton, been some days at Keswick, extremely anxious to pay his personal respects to her, and making unavailing applications to the duke of Arvingham, and other of her friends, to introduce him.

Mrs. Doricourt's reply was concise and decisive; she informed the marquis, in polite but plain language, that no visitor was received at the Hermitage whose moral character was at all doubtful, and that the company invited to celebrate Miss Delmore's birthday were all unmarried persons.

The marquis stamped, raved, and swore, called Mrs. Doricourt a methodistical, puritanical, sanctified old cat, crammed her note in the fire, and vowed he would not quit Keswick, till he had obtained an opportunity of trying whether Marian's virtue was as impregnable, and her morality as severe, as Mrs. Doricourt's, whom he protested was a very she-dragon.

The marquis had reconnoitred St. Herbert's Island from the opposite shore; he had even procured a boat, and endeavoured to effect a landing; but the rocks, steep banks, and artificial defences, rendered it impossible to approach the island, but by the Chinese bridge, and Mrs. Doricourt had strictly cautioned her porter, whose lodge was built on a rock at the extremity of the bridge, on no account or pretence whatever, to admit the marquis of Beverley (whose dress and person were too remarkable to be mistaken) within the gates. The marquis rowed his boat close to the bridge, offered a bribe to the porter, and was repulsed; he then cast a malignant glance over the paradise he could not approach,

"————— as when a prowling wolf,  
Whom hunger drives to seek a new haunt for prey,  
Watching where shepherds guard their fleecy flock,  
Gnashes his teeth in unavailing rage,  
Nor dares approach the hurdled cots."

The disappointed marquis cursed the vigilance and honesty of the porter, and returned in a very ill-humour to Keswick, to wait an opportunity of speaking to Marian; for the obstacles laid in his way only irritated and inflamed his determination to carry her off, if her vanity was to be flattered, or her venality bribed.

"I really see no reason," said Mrs. Doricourt, "for our confining ourselves to the island, because the marquis of Beverley remains in our neighbourhood; it is making him of too much consequence, and will give him an idea that we are afraid of him, which is far from being the case."

"Poor Marian actually trembles at his name," replied Miss Delmore.

"I have business at Keswick," returned Mrs. Doricourt, "and as Marian only thinks herself safe in my presence, she shall go with me."

"And if you have no objection," said Mr. Saville, "I will attend as your auxiliary guard."

"I do not exactly know what situation I am fit for," rejoined Miss Delmore; "but I beg to make one of the party."

Surrounded by her friends, Marian could not believe that the marquis would presume to speak to her; and the yacht being in readiness, they were soon wafted across the lake, and proceeded to Keswick, where the day being remarkably fine, they left the carriage, and Mrs. Doricourt having made her purchases, they were turning the corner of a street, with an intention of calling at the duke of Arvingham's lodgings, when they met the marquis of Beverley. Nothing daunted by the rebuff contained in Mrs. Doricourt's note, he immediately accosted them.

Politeness constrained Mrs. Doricourt and her party to return his salutation; after which they would have passed on, but, with determined assurance, he continued to walk by Mrs. Doricourt's side, protesting he was extremely fortunate in having met them, as he had no doubt but it would save him a cool hundred at least, for he was then going to see Wythers and Holton play billiards, and, no doubt, he should have made bets on one side or the other.

Mrs. Doricourt begged they might not detain him; but without appearing to remark the coldness of her manner, he talked of the dullness of Keswick, the beauty of the women, and the fineness of the weather, endeavouring, as he spoke, to catch the eye of Marian, who clung to Mr. Saville's arm—"You positively treat me cruelly, Mrs. Doricourt," said the marquis; "here am I, a stranger in this part of the world, and you take no sort of notice of me; the Hermitage, I am told, is the temple of hospitality, yet I am not permitted even to see the grounds; and as I am without society—"

"I thought your lordship mentioned lord Wythers and sir James Holton being here," interrupted Mrs. Doricourt.

"It is female society I wish for, my dear madam," replied the marquis—"charming, refined, elegant women, such as I have now the honour of conversing with; by the society of women, we are always improved; they give the highest polish to our natures, wean us from our follies, and—but I see by your looks you give no sort of credit to my reformation."

"Are you reformed, marquis?" asked Mrs. Doricourt, "for the good report, I confess, has not travelled into Cumberland; but if it is so, I am very glad to hear it for the sake of the marchioness."

"Confound the marchioness!" thought the marquis. While putting on a grave look, he said—"Quite reclaimed, I assure you; when I return to town, I shall sell off my racers and ponies, forswear White's, and go regularly to church. Does not this look like reformation? and you know *'there is more joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, than over ninety-and-nine just persons.'*"

"I know," returned Mrs. Doricourt, "that the devil can quote scripture for his own wicked purposes; but to Heaven, marquis, I leave the approval of your reformation; I have the honour to wish you a good morning."

"But you have not yet given me an invitation to your paradise," said the marquis; "and having no acquaintance here, it will be downright charity to extend your countenance and hospitality to me."

"Whenever you can bring a certificate, marquis," replied Mrs. Doricourt, "of your reformation, attested by persons whose veracity I cannot doubt, I shall be happy to invite you to the Hermitage; till then, you must pardon me if I desire we may be 'better strangers.'"

Mrs. Doricourt now entered a stationer's shop, in the hope of getting rid of further importunity. But the marquis was not to be shaken off—pretending to want paper and sealing

wax, he persisted in following them into the shop, where he addressed Miss Delmore, requesting that she would use her good offices to remove Mrs. Doricourt's prejudices against him.

Miss Delmore coldly answered, that she never took the liberty to dispute Mrs. Doricourt's judgment, which she had always found too liberal for prejudice.

"Was ever beauty so severe?" resumed the marquis. Then turning to Marian—"And you, Miss Scroggins, are you also impressed with an unfavourable opinion of my character?"

Marian blushed, and looked at Mr. Saville, as if she wished him to reply for her.

"Miss Scroggins, marquis," said Mr. Saville, "is too diffident to speak her opinions; but I can answer for her, they do not at all differ from those of her friends."

"Really," said the marquis, reddening with passion, "I am infinitely obliged to you, sir, for having so politely explained the young lady's sentiments." He then added, in a lower tone—"I will very shortly take an opportunity, Mr. Saville, of expressing my sense of your gentle manly exposition."

"Spare yourself the trouble, young man," replied Mr. Saville, with calm severity; "I set too high a value on my life to risk it in an idle brawl, though you will find I have sufficient courage to protect innocence from the profligate attacks of vice."

Mrs. Doricourt was not apprehensive on Mr. Saville's account, the equanimity of whose temper she was certain the impertinence of the marquis would not ruffle; but seeing Marian turn pale, and seem almost fainting, she was about to insist on the marquis leaving them, when the duke of Arvingham entered the shop.

The reception the duke met from the ladies and Mr. Saville greatly chagrined the marquis, who suspected that his designs on Marian Scroggins had transpired through him, in whose presence he recollected having, more than once, offered to lay a thousand pounds that he would, in less than a month, bear her off in triumph from the watchful guardianship of Mrs. Doricourt.

Frowning, and looking defiance, the marquis scarcely replied to the duke's salutation, but, with a sneer, said, his grace was happy in possessing a moral character, but as he was unacquainted with the hypocritical cant of sentiment, he would, in the course of the day, call upon him for a lesson.

The duke was surprised, and would have demanded an explanation, but, bowing to the ladies, the marquis left the shop, saying to the duke, in a whisper, as he passed him—"Expect to hear from me in the course of the day."

The duke was glad this intimation of a challenge had not been overheard by the ladies, whom he shortly after handed to their carriage.

Mr. Saville much wished to give the duke his sentiments on the sinful custom of duelling, for he suspected that the marquis had whispered a challenge; but, as the duke was indeed a moral man, he hoped he would not be led, by a false notion of honour, to outrage his Creator, and risk his own life.

Marian was sinking with confusion at the thought of being the occasion of uneasiness, and of giving trouble to her friends; and it required all the affectionate assurances of Mrs. Doricourt and Miss Delmore, and much reasoning on the part of Mr. Saville, to recover her from the agitation the behaviour of the marquis had excited.

The following morning the duke of Arvingham sent an apology to the Hermitage, for not keeping his appointment to dinner, having, as he stated, met a trifling accident, that would confine him to the house for a few days.

Mrs. Doricourt's apprehensive mind instantly took alarm; but, fearful of distressing Marian, she merely said that the duke could not keep his engagement, and took an opportunity of placing the note in Mr. Saville's hand, who at once took her meaning; and, as soon as dinner was removed, he set off for Keswick, to ascertain the state of the duke, who they were certain had fought a duel with the marquis of Beverley.

As he had surmised, he found the duke of Arvingham confined to his bed. He had received a challenge from the marquis of Beverley, who, in very gross language, had accused him of meanly betraying his designs on Marian Scroggins, merely to forward his own purposes.

"This insulting language," said the duke; "was more than my temper could bear; we met, and exchanged shots. I am wounded in my right side, and the marquis in his left shoulder. The balls have been extracted, and we are both likely to do well."

Mr. Saville, with the true piety of a Christian, remonstrated with the duke on the sinful practice of duelling, and so convinced his mind of the moral turpitude, as well as impiety of the act, that he made a solemn promise never again to be provoked to put his own life, or that of another, to hazard.

The marquis of Beverley, while smarting under the hands of his surgeon, began to think he had lowered his dignity, and greatly degraded himself, by fighting a duel about Marian Scroggins, a girl of no consequence, the daughter of a grocer; he dreaded the ridicule that would follow the affair, and that he should see himself caricatured in all the print-shops in London, and therefore thought it would be the wisest way to make an apology to the duke, for the intemperance of his behaviour, and request him to keep the subject of their meeting secret, on account of the marchioness, to whom jealousy and irritation might, at that particular time, be of fatal consequence.

The marquis employed his friend, lord Wythers, who had been his second, to wait on the duke of Arvingham, with his apology and request, stating, at the same time, that he should leave Keswick as soon as his surgeon would give him permission.

The duke had neither intention nor wish to make their meeting public, and he commissioned lord Wythers to assure the marquis that he might rely on his not being the occasion of irritating the sensibility of the marchioness, or of disturbing his domestic peace.

Pain and the loss of blood effectually cooled the marquis's passion for Marian, and, as soon as he was able to bear the motion of a carriage, he left Cumberland, vehemently execrating his own folly, that had led him so many miles, and into such a cursed scrape, after an insipid creature, who had not spirit enough to commit an imprudence.

The departure of the marquis was soon known at the Hermitage, and Marian protested that she had never, in her life, heard news that gave her more pleasure, for now she should believe herself safe again.

Mr. Saville, conversing on the subject of his wound with the duke of Arvingham, said, he trusted that the pain the marquis of Beverley suffered would be salutary, and effect a serious reformation in his character.

The duke expressed himself hopeless.—"The habits of the marquis," replied he, "are too deeply rooted; the whole course of his life has been libertinism; though married, he prefers every other woman to his wife, and prides himself on having drunk more wine, and seduced more females, than any man of his age about town."

"Poor wretch!" said Mr. Saville, "I pity him. How dreadful will be his pangs, when sickness and age shall put a stop to his career of vice?"



Again the silken streamers waved from the painted boats that swam on the lucid surface of the lake; again the trees were entwined with variegated lamps, and the sun, as if in honour of Cecilia's natal day, shone forth in unclouded splendour. Every thing, on the delightful Island of St. Herbert, animate and inanimate, wore an appearance of gaiety and pleasure; all seemed happy and joyous, except her to whom the festivity should have been most gratifying. But the memory of Cecilia tenaciously recalled the day of exquisite felicity, when, previous to their quitting Cumberland, Mrs. Doricourt had, in a similar style, decorated the verdant groves of St. Herbert, when the graceful, still tenderly-beloved Rushdale had been her partner in the dance: where now did he wander, forgetful of his often-repeated vows of love? perhaps at that very moment, when her heart was wrung with anguish, he was making the same deceitful professions to some other credulous maid, who, like her, listened, believed, and loved.

Was it possible, with such sad reflections, that Cecilia could be happy? It was true, she smiled as she received the congratulations of her friends; but her smiles were like the gleams of sunshine, that play for a moment over beds of snow—they neither cheered nor warmed the desolation of her heart.

Among the earliest of her visitors, the duke of Arvingham arrived at the Hermitage; and never, in Cecilia's eyes, did he appear so interesting; he was pale, and still suffering from his unhealed wound; but pain was forgotten, for never had Cecilia bestowed on him such solicitude and attention; and this from mere gratitude; Cecilia knew that the duke was still unable to go abroad, and she received his visit as the highest compliment he could possibly pay her.

Much against the opinion of his surgeon, the duke had ventured abroad; but he could not deny himself the pleasure of being Cecilia's guest, and of witnessing the gay evolutions of the dance, in which he was unable to join.

The gentle Marian, unconscious of the share she had in the duke's accident, expressed the utmost anxiety for his accommodation. She assisted to place the cushions of the sofa for him to lean upon, and displayed so much kindness and feeling, that the duke more than ever rejoiced in having prevented the marquis of Beverley from insulting her delicacy with his libertine proposals.

All the youth and beauty of Keswick and its vicinity were assembled at the Hermitage, and many were the fair females who lingered near the duke of Arvingham, hoping to engage his attention; but Cecilia, more simply dressed than any of the guests, her light graceful form attired in white silk, her bright chestnut ringlets waving among the pale roses that failed to confine them, appeared to him infinitely more interesting and lovely than any of her youthful friends.

The conservatory, prepared for the ball, was tastefully hung with light draperies of green satin, intermixed with rich wreaths of glowing flowers; the French windows, opening on the lawn, gave a distinct view of the romantic cascade sparkling beneath an arch of artificial light—of the Chinese temple, splendidly illuminated—and of groves, glittering with variegated light.

A full band added the enchantment of music to a scene of unrivalled beauty, while the gaiety of the dance, and the smile of pleasure beaming on every face, reproached Cecilia with the ingratitude of her heart, which refused to share in a festivity instituted by the best and most affectionate of friends to do her honour.

Marian actually believed herself in fairy land, and thought, if Melrose were her partner in the dance, it would be impossible to add any thing to her happiness.

Even the melancholy Saville partook of the general pleasure, and, while seated by the duke of Arvingham, and listening to his praises of Cecilia, he forgot his own peculiar misfortunes, and those of his lamented Edith, whom she so much resembled, and secretly

condemning the conduct of the earl of Torrington and his son, he wished that he might see her bestow her hand on the duke of Arvingham, whom he alone considered worthy of her; for the amiable qualities of Cecilia's mind, added to her perfect resemblance of his unfortunate sister, had created in the bosom of Mr. Saville a parental regard; and having no relations or connexions, he had resolved to make her heiress to his ample fortune.

Mrs. Doricourt, whose attention had been politely divided among her guests, had for some time been absent from the ball-room. Miss Delmore was the first to remark the circumstance, and learned from the duke of Arvingham that Mrs. Doricourt had left the room with a servant, who presented her a card.

More than an hour had elapsed, and still she did not appear; it was very strange; wonder at length became fear; and Cecilia growing extremely uneasy at the lengthened absence of her friend, earnestly requested Mr. Saville to oblige her, by inquiring if any thing unpleasant had occurred to detain Mrs. Doricourt from the company.

Pleading fatigue, Miss Delmore took a seat near the duke of Arvingham, who entirely forgot the pain of his wound, while he listened to the magic tones of her voice, and in the delightful hope that he should one day call her his.

The eyes of Cecilia were often turned to the folding doors that led to the library, but they still remained closed.

The duke perceived her anxiety, and endeavoured to fix her attention on a party who were dancing Scotch reels; he asked her if ever she had seen lady Jane Bruce, with true national spirit, keep up a reel, or her friend Miss Graham, the only dancer of reels that lady Jane had failed to tire out?

Cecilia's answers proved the state of her mind; and at length her uneasiness at the absence of Mrs. Doricourt had so painfully increased, that she had risen from her seat, and was on the point of going herself to inquire what misfortune detained her, for that something terrible had happened, she felt assured; but, before she could make her apology to the duke for quitting him so abruptly, her suspense found relief in the entrance of Mrs. Doricourt, accompanied by a gentleman, whom she immediately introduced to Miss Delmore as the reverend Mr. Dacres, who, having received her complimentary welcome, exclaimed—"How like the voice and look! could the earl of Torrington behold this lovely creature, and not feel the resemblance?"

Cecilia wondered, and thought his manner very strange; but her mind being entirely relieved from the fear of any misfortune having happened to Mrs. Doricourt, she consented to join a cotillion set and was led away, to the regret of the duke, who envied her partner the happiness of touching her hand.

The dancing was kept up till past midnight with great spirit.

Marian was all animation, the happiest of the happy; sometimes wondering whether the galas, of which her sister so often talked, at all resembled the present entertainment.

At one o'clock supper was announced, and the splendid decorations of the tables, and the elegant arrangement of the viands, was a new astonishment to the company, some of whom said, they were inclined to believe Mrs. Doricourt was really an enchantress, for she appeared to have the animal and vegetable world at her command.

During supper, Cecilia thought she had never seen Mr. Saville in such lively spirits, or Mrs. Doricourt so thoughtful; but her astonishment was beyond description, when the reverend Mr. Dacres drank her health, addressing her by the title of lady Cecilia Rushdale; her heart throbbed, her eloquent blood rushed flaming to her cheeks, and, in the joyful belief of his truth and constancy, she forgot her actual reserve and timidity, and, in a tone of exultation, said—"He

is returned then! Lord Rushdale had not deceived my opinion of his honour! You, sir,” addressing Mr. Dacres, “are the bearer of these happy tidings.”

The duke of Arvingham felt that he had suffered hope to deceive him, for, in the glow of her cheek, and the sparkle of her eye, he plainly read, that Cecilia’s affections were still devoted to Rushdale, and he listened with equally as much anxiety for the reply of Mr. Dacres as she did.

“No, my Cecilia,” replied Mr. Saville, “for you are mine, by the dear and sacred ties of near affinity. Mr. Dacres is not the bearer of the intelligence you expect—he comes to announce to you, that you are the child of my sainted Edith, the daughter and heiress of the earl of Torrington.”

The duke of Arvingham’s blood circulated through his veins with joyful rapidity, as he felt the renovation of hope; but Cecilia clasped her hands, and, in the wildest tone of despair, exclaimed—“Oh, fatal, hateful discovery! then Oscar is lost to me for ever! Rushdale, my beloved, affianced husband, is my brother!”

Pale and senseless, Cecilia sank into the arms of Mrs. Doricourt, who, attended by the deeply-affected compassionating Marian, retired with her from the astonished company, to whom Mr. Saville apologized for the sudden indisposition of his niece; and Mr. Dacres explained at large the history of the earl of Torrington’s marriage with Edith Saville, the sister of the gentleman then present, for which marriage Cecilia was the offspring; he also, with great feeling and delicacy, spoke of the earl’s desertion of his beautiful wife, and illegal marriage with Miss Herbert, known to them as the countess of Torrington; he dwelt long on the noble qualities of her son, and expressed much sorrow that he was compelled to declare so deserving a young man illegitimate.

The female part of the company, who had crowded round Mr. Dacres, fearful to lose a word of this extraordinary discovery, shed tears, and, remembering the handsome person of the unfortunate Oscar, loudly lamented that he must relinquish the title to which, even from his birth, he had been considered heir.

The gentlemen drank bumpers to the health of lady Cecilia Rushdale, and gave loud and joyful cheers, after Mr. Dacres had proclaimed her the daughter and heiress of the earl of Torrington.

The duke of Arvingham, with much sincerity and warmth, congratulated Mr. Saville on the attainment of such a niece—“of whom,” said he, “an emperor might be proud.”

“She is the image of her mother,” replied Mr. Saville, “and I have loved her for the likeness she bore to my unfortunate Edith; you will judge, now I am certain of our affinity, how dear she will be to my heart.”

“There are other hearts,” said the duke, “which feel how worthy lady Cecilia Rushdale is to be loved.”

“I understand you, my young friend,” replied Mr. Saville, “and feel honoured in your confidence. Give my Cecilia time to overcome her unfortunate predilection, and I am persuaded she will not be insensible to your merits: of this be certain, I know of none I so much wish should win her regard.”

The approbation of Mr. Saville was gratifying to the duke of Arvingham. Mrs. Doricourt too, he was certain, would favour his suit; and he left the Hermitage, convinced that, in a mind like Cecilia’s, virtue would soon triumph over misplaced passion, and full of the hope, that a few months would make him her happy husband.

A burning fever succeeded the despair of Cecilia, and threatened her dissolution; but the fair unfortunate again recovered, and, with gentleness and piety, resigned herself to the will of Providence.

Mr. Wilson, shortly after Cecilia was able to quit her chamber, came to the Hermitage, to inform her that the earl of Torrington was in London, and that he would be at the castle the following week.

“And lord Rushdale,” said Cecilia, greatly agitated, “does he come also?”

“I have heard nothing of Mr. Herbert,” replied Wilson.

“My dear friend,” resumed Cecilia, laying her hand on Wilson’s, “if you really love me, as you have often professed, never, I entreat you, let me hear you call my brother Mr. Herbert; for if it can be accomplished, and I will exert all my influence, the title shall still be his.”

The tears started to Wilson’s eyes, for, as he gazed on the fair fragile form before him, he believed that the proud title of Torrington would soon be extinct.

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## CHAPTER IV.

Oh, Melancholy!  
Thy shades, thy silence, now be mine,  
Thy charms my only theme;  
My haunt the hollow cliff, whose pine  
Waves o'er the gloomy stream.

Whence the scar'd owl on pinions grey  
Breaks from the rustling boughs,  
And down the lone vale sails away  
To more profound repose.

For me no more the path invites  
Ambition loves to tread,  
No more I climb those toilsome heights  
My youthful hope misled.

Leaps my fond fluttering heart no more  
To mirth's enlivening strain,  
For present pleasure e'en is o'er,  
And all the past is vain!

BEATTIE.

"I mark'd the ray  
Of the first star that cheer'd thy early day,  
Pale yet unquench'd. Again its fires shall burn  
Unveil'd by clouds, and brighter in return."

*An important Confession—Loss of Rank the Restoration of Happiness—Adventure at Naples—Return to England—The usual End of a Novel.*

The earl of Torrington having dispatched the affairs that detained him in London, began his journey to Cumberland, in high spirits and greatly-amended health, with his young companion, Henry Woodville, and captain Melrose; but on the evening of the second day, the earl complained of excessive weakness and fatigue, which constrained them to remain two days at an inn, that he might recover strength; but finding himself grow worse, instead of better, he gave orders to proceed, persuaded that he must die; but wishing to see and bless his daughter before he resigned his breath, by slow stages they reached Torrington Castle.

The earl having taken refreshment, commanded the attendance of Mrs. Milman, who, apprised of the alteration in Cecilia's circumstances, had almost wept herself blind, to think that all relationship was at an end between them. The earl strictly interrogated her respecting the manner in which the infant Cecilia had been entrusted to her care.

Mrs. Milman perfectly well remembered, that John Delmore several times repeated—“Nobody knows what this little girl may be in the course of time. Take care of her, for she may turn out to be a great lady,” all which, Mrs. Milman said, she imputed to the father’s fondness for the child, and to her beauty, which being even then very conspicuous, she thought John Delmore expected would, when she grew to woman’s estate, make her fortune, and marry her to some great lord—“For, poor fellow,” added Mrs. Milman, “his head was always full of grand schemes. I am sure nobody rejoices more than I do to think the sweet creature is your lordship’s own lawful-born daughter, though,” bursting into tears, “it almost breaks my heart for all that, to think she is not my niece, because she was so affectionate, and so good, and so dutiful, and without the least bit of pride.”

“And do you suppose that the knowledge of her rank will alter the disposition of lady Cecilia Rushdale?” asked the earl.

“You may be certain she will now be more eminently good, for with enlarged means her virtues will be more diffusive; and I am sure,” continued Mrs. Milman, “I have shed oceans of tears to think of that sweet, dear young gentleman, that we used to call lord Rushdale; every body thinks it such a pity that he should lose the title.”

“If my son was present,” said the earl, “no doubt he would thank you for your concern; but, my good Mrs. Milman, I assure you, and authorize you to repeat it to every person of your acquaintance, that he parts with the honour so long considered his, without the smallest regret, and will rejoice to see them enjoyed by lady Cecilia Rushdale, their rightful possessor.

The earl having dismissed the sobbing Mrs. Milman, complained of being greatly fatigued, and rang for his valet to assist him to his chamber. Too ill for conversation, he merely gave orders that his arrival should the next morning be made known at St. Herbert’s island, where he understood the reverend Mr. Dacres and Mr. Saville were visitors to Mrs. Doricourt, to whom he wrote a few hasty agitated lines, expressive of his gratitude for her maternal care of his beloved child, and entreating her to come with Cecilia immediately to the castle, as he was struck with an illness that he was persuaded would be fatal.

Captain Melrose, impatient to see his adored Marian, requested permission to be his lordship’s messenger to the Hermitage, to which the earl readily assented, begging him to inform the ladies of all that had occurred since their separation from Cecilia, with the exception of Mr. Woodville’s history, which, for a private reason of his own, he wished to keep in reserve.

Henry Woodville knew that the earl of Torrington was much attached to him, and was uneasy if he even passed an hour out of his presence; and gratitude compelled him to remain at the castle, though his anxious thoughts and wishes were at the Hermitage with lady Cecilia Rushdale, whose hand the earl had solemnly promised to bestow upon him, if she herself did not object to the union.—“And who can tell,” said Henry Woodville, “she was taught to expect to marry rank and wealth—who can tell what change may have taken place, with her change of circumstances, in her mind? She may think, if in her humble state she was worthy to marry the son of an earl, that now she may aspire to the highest rank of nobility; and though I am honoured with her father’s approbation, she may despise the pretensions of the poor untitled Woodville.”

The impatient Melrose was “*stirring with the lark*” and expected to quit the castle before Henry Woodville awoke from dreams of future happiness; but, to his astonishment, he found him risen, and prepared to accompany him to the lake.

The young friends mounted their horses; and as they rode along, Woodville spoke with the utmost regret of the prohibition so strictly laid on him by the earl, that he should not attempt to see lady Cecilia Rushdale but in his presence.—“You may guess my impatience to obtain an

interview,” said he, “but my obligations to the earl forbid my indulging my own wishes contrary to his.”

Melrose could not but pity the situation of his friend, though he assented to the propriety of his obeying the earl.

Woodville would have given the world to obtain a sight of lady Cecilia, and he charged his friend with a thousand tender and respectful congratulations to her.

“Come, come, don’t look so melancholy,” said Melrose; “a few hours cannot make much difference; and most likely I may prevail on the ladies to return under my escort to the castle.”

“Heaven grant you may prevail, my dear fellow!” replied Woodville, “that this torturing suspense may be at an end. But you, Melrose, can never know the tumultuous feelings that agitate my bosom. You have never experienced the agony of doubt and fear—you have never felt—”

“No, Heaven of its mercy forbid!” interrupted Melrose. “I never feel inclined to anticipate misfortunes; I think lord Chesterfield says, it is a mark of ill-breeding to use trite maxims and old saws; but I have always considered ‘*sufficient to the day is the evil thereof*,’ too precious and valuable an axiom to be neglected or forgotten. Hope, my dear friend, is my motto, to which I will cling as long as I have life; and hope I recommend to you: cherish it till we meet again, and expect me to return with happy tidings.”

Henry Woodville sighed; and when they came in sight of the yacht, to which captain Melrose immediately made a signal, it required all his own resolution, aided by the arguments of his friend, to prevent his going with him to St. Herbert’s Island. At last he shook hands with Melrose, and in a voice tremulous with agitation, said—“Tell lady Cecilia Rushdale, if she will not be mine, I shall not consider existence worth preserving.”

When the yacht had received Melrose on board, Woodville lingered on the edge of the water, till doubling the rock, his straining eyes could watch its course no longer; and then, like another Leander, he was inclined to plunge into the lake and hazard his life by swimming to the island that contained the lovely object of his hopes, his fears, and wishes, from whose lips he was to receive the fiat of future joy, or certain wretchedness.

Though ashamed to confess his weakness to his friend Woodville, the heart of Melrose was not absolutely free from little uneasy feelings of doubt; the company Marian had lately been introduced to, might have effected a change of sentiment, and the grand offer her father mentioned might be accepted. This was now to be proved, and the pulse of Melrose beat quicker as he landed on the Chinese bridge.

Mrs. Doricourt received captain Melrose with warm and sincere expression of pleasure. The very great service he had rendered lady Cecilia Rushdale was sufficient to ensure his welcome, had Marian been entirely out of the question; but so tenderly and assiduously had she watched the sickbed of lady Cecilia, that Mrs. Doricourt felt doubly happy to see captain Melrose at the Hermitage, because she was certain his presence would restore to the lips of the gentle Marian the smiles that fear for the life of lady Cecilia had banished.

Mrs. Doricourt having ordered breakfast for captain Melrose, begged permission to retire to peruse the earl of Torrington’s note, promising to send Marian to pour out his chocolate.

Delighted with the reception given him by the still-beautiful Mrs. Doricourt, captain Melrose surveyed, from the open windows, the paradise around him; but yet Marian did not appear. He admired the pictures, took up a newspaper, but could not read; he listened, but heard no approaching step. The breakfast remained untasted, for he was too restless and impatient to

eat. At last the door opened, and the blushing Marian was received into his arms, and clasped to his brave and faithful heart.

The person of Marian was improved in grace and beauty since her residence at the Hermitage, and the enraptured Melrose thought her blushes infinitely more becoming than ever, as she read, with modest confusion, her father's letter, conveying to her his consent to marry captain Melrose, provided her uncle Wilson was agreeable to the match.—“And are you indeed a captain, William?” asked Marian, as she timidly bent her eyes on his face.

“Look at my uniform, love,” said Melrose. He then explained to her his introduction to the earl of Torrington and his son, by whose interest he had obtained promotion, and added—“Your uncle Wilson, my dearest Marian, previous to my quitting England, bade me rely on his friendship. I shall wait on him without delay, and I trust that his approbation will assure me this dear little hand.”

Marian was unable to speak, but her eloquent blushes, and the unreprieved kiss she suffered him to take, assured him of his happiness.

Melrose now inquired for lady Cecilia Rushdale.

“Alas!” said Marian, “never was title possessed with so little pleasure; she takes no pride in her rank, but continually wishes it had pleased Heaven to withhold from her honours she can never enjoy. My sweet friend,” continued Marian, her dove eyes filling with tears, “has been at death's door, but, she has been spared to their supplications. She is pale and thin, and Mrs. Doricourt fears is in a decline; but with faint smiles, lady Cecilia assures us she is quite well.”

“And in what way, my Marian,” asked Melrose, “does lady Cecilia speak of her brother? Has she conquered the attachment that once—”

Marian shook her head mournfully—“That attachment,” said she, “will, I am confident, expire only with her life; she will permit no one to call her brother Mr. Herbert, and persists in declaring that she will herself kneel at the feet of her sovereign, and never cease entreating till he consents that the title of Torrington and its succession be secured to him.”

“Angelic creature!” exclaimed captain Melrose; “she is indeed worthy the noble youth on whom the earl of Torrington intends bestowing her hand.”

Marian turned her soft eyes on her lover with a look of alarm—“I trust,” said she, “that the earl of Torrington has no intention of proposing any lover, however deserving, to lady Cecilia at present; her health and spirits have not yet had time to recover from the shock of discovering her brother in her affianced husband.”

“The earl is extremely ill,” replied Melrose, “so ill, that his son entertains fears for his life; and I am certain that his lordship will not only propose Mr. Woodville to lady Cecilia, but will be anxious to have their nuptials celebrated immediately.”

“This is distressing intelligence,” said Marian; “for I well know that lady Cecilia has no heart to give, however she may be driven to sacrifice herself to duty; and I am certain, if delicacy would permit their proposing a lover, her uncle, Mr. Saville, Mrs. Doricourt, and indeed all her friends, wish her preference to be given to the duke of Arvingham, who is a most elegant and deserving young man.”

“Were he ten times more deserving than he is,” resumed captain Melrose, warmly, “he would bear no sort of comparison with Mr. Woodville; and I am persuaded, that though the heart of lady Cecilia still retains its attachment to lord Rushdale, when she sees Mr. Woodville, who is, of all men that I have ever seen, the most elegant, graceful, and accomplished, she will, without repugnance, accede to the wishes of the earl her father.”



“You do not know lady Cecilia,” said Marian. “Her unfortunate passion for lord Rushdale will never be conquered. She may, in obedience to the earl’s wishes, give her hand to this Mr. Woodville, but her heart will never forget its first attachment.”

The entrance of lady Cecilia Rushdale with Mrs. Doricourt put an end to this conversation. Lady Cecilia extended her white shadowy hand to captain Melrose with the kindest action of esteem, and warmly congratulated him and Marian on their happy prospects.

Mr. Saville and Mr. Dacres being introduced, lady Cecilia, in evident agitation, said—“Captain Melrose, I am ready to return with you to Torrington Castle. I am certain my first interview with my father will be extremely painful, for strange and distressing alterations have taken place since we last saw each other. I wish this interview was over. But my uncle, and these my kind friends, will go with me; I shall need their support.”

Melrose was shocked to see the ravages grief had made in the beautiful person of lady Cecilia; but in the eyes of her father and her lover, he thought her pale cheek would be more interesting than when it glowed with the brightest tint of the rose.

Agreeable to the request of the earl of Torrington, captain Melrose related what had occurred to prevent his lordship receiving letters from England, which entirely removed the imputation of neglect on the part of the earl and his son.

As they drew near Torrington Castle, Mrs. Doricourt was obliged to chafe the temples of lady Cecilia with volatile essence, to keep her from fainting; and the earl, who had not above an hour risen from his bed, had several times clasped her in his feeble arms, before she was sensible that she was in his presence.

“Oscar, my beloved, my—brother!” said Cecilia, with difficulty pronouncing the word, “where is he? Does he shun the sight of the unhappy creature who, most unwillingly, deprives him of the rank he is so much more worthy to possess?”

Mrs. Doricourt entreated her to be composed; and the earl, taking her cold trembling hand between both his, said—“Your brother, my Cecilia, believing himself unequal to this interview, declines seeing you at present; but he has deputed me to beseech you, in his name, to bestow the affection he, as lord Rushdale, solicited for himself, on his friend Henry Woodville.”

Mrs. Doricourt started, and repeated—“Henry Woodville! what mystery is now to be unfolded?”

Not remarking Mrs. Doricourt’s astonishment, the earl resumed—“Yes, my Cecilia, your Oscar requires of you this proof of affection; he entreats you to give your hand to Henry Woodville, as you value his love.”

“His love! Oscar, my brother’s love! Oh, Heaven be merciful!” exclaimed Cecilia, “and be you merciful, my father!” said she, sinking at his feet; “urge me not to give my hand, for my rebellious heart refuses to forget that Oscar was its hope, its joy, its all of earthly happiness.”

The head of Cecilia sunk on the knees of her father; in an instant she was snatched from her suppliant posture, and a well remembered voice whispered—“Cecilia, my own Cecilia, turn and behold, not thy brother, but Henry Woodville, thy adoring lover, who, sanctioned, renews his claim to his affianced bride.”

Cecilia was some moments before she could believe her happiness, or understand that in the noble youth she had known and loved as Oscar lord Rushdale, she beheld Henry Woodville.

Mrs. Doricourt received his respectful salute, and again repeated—“Henry Woodville! how strange!”

The earl now observed how much she was struck with the name, and said—“The history of this young man, whose claims on my affection I proudly acknowledge, is indeed strange, and

its singularity might exceed belief, had it not been attested beyond the possibility of doubt. But will it not be proper to desire the presence of our friends?"

Mrs. Doricourt now mentioned Mr. Saville having, with the reverend Mr. Dacres, attended lady Cecilia to the castle.

The earl changed colour, and seemed disturbed; he would gladly have declined seeing Mr. Saville, but having mused a moment, he said—"Yes, let him come; let him upbraid me with my guilt; and oh, may the punishment of his reproaches appease offended Heaven!"

But the humane, generous minded Saville came not to upbraid or condemn, for religion taught him—

"All the souls that are, were forfeit once;  
And he that might the 'vantage best have took  
Found out the remedy;"

and Mr. Saville, while reflecting on the earl's guilt, with severity asked himself—

"How would you be  
If He, which is the top of judgment, should  
But judge you as you are? Oh, think on that,  
And mercy then will breathe within your lips,  
Like man new made."

Affected at the appearance of the earl, then only in the meridian of life, his brilliant dark eyes dim and sunk, his cheeks sallow, and his once firm-knit, athletic form, thin and feeble, Mr. Saville extended his hand to him, and in a voice that struggled with tears, he said—"Rushdale, all is forgiven; let us consign the past to oblivion, and be this dear child the renewal of our bond of friendship."

Cecilia pressed the clasped hands of her father and her uncle to her lips; and when Mr. Saville's feelings allowed him to consider the graceful elegant person of Henry Woodville, and his memory recalled his noble character, he ceased to wonder at the strong attachment of Cecilia; nor could he form a wish to separate two beings, whose mutual perfections rendered them deserving of each other's affection.

Mr. Saville, as well as Mrs. Doricourt, was struck with the name of Henry Woodville, and mournful recollections of the unfortunate man they had interred at Marseilles filled the minds of both. They were anxious to learn whether he bore any affinity to him, and their curiosity was shortly after relieved by lady Cecilia, who, having introduced Marian to the earl, entreated to be informed how the happy transformation had been effected of Oscar, for so she delighted to call him, into Henry Woodville. With the adventures of the earl and himself, to the arrival of their English friends at Lisbon, she had already been informed by captain Melrose; it was therefore only necessary to relate, that the society of lord Rushdale's friends, though highly gratifying to his wounded pride, failed to reconcile his mind to the severity of his fate, which separated him for ever from the hope of a union with his adored Cecilia. When he was able to quit the vineyard cabin, and return to Lisbon, he saw his father revive at his presence, and his friends unremitting in endeavours to divert his melancholy; but still the image of Cecilia clung to his heart, and the loss of rank, even the disgrace of his birth, became nothing, compared to the misery of knowing himself her brother.

The kindness with which Oscar had been treated at the vineyard cabin by old Lopez, and the maternal kindness and attention of Suzette, had met a munificent reward from the earl of Torrington; but this seemed insufficient to the heart of Rushdale, who, gratefully attached to the kind peasants, who had treated him with so much humanity, he frequently left splendid entertainments, and gilded palaces, for the honest simplicity of the peasants in the vineyard cabin. In the shade of the mulberry-tree, that grew on a little green eminence before the door, he fancied he felt more tranquil, more resigned to his misfortunes, than in crowded assemblies, where few hearts had sensibility to understand his feelings—"I hate the world," said Rushdale, "though I am forced into its busy haunts. I seek the calm of solitude, for there I can indulge thought—I can revel in memory—I can search the deep recesses of my brain, though in its maddening cells I pursue the fiend despair."

At the vineyard cabin, Rushdale fancied himself much more at ease than when in the gay parties which perpetually engaged his English friends, and to which the earl of Torrington endeavoured to allure and attach him; to bury himself in the thick tangled shades of the wood, or sit in melancholy silence under the mulberry-tree, was more soothing to his irritated feelings than the sounds of mirth, the heartless smiles, and unmeaning compliments, which he constantly met at the entertainments in which his friends tried to engage him. Under the long boughs of the mulberry-tree he could, undisturbed, think of Cecilia, and, unreprieved, press her ring to his lips.

One evening, Suzette observed to lord Rushdale, who was sitting absorbed in thought, that he must make haste, or he would not reach Lisbon before dark, and there was no moon.

"Alas! my kind Suzette," replied he, "darkness and solitude are most congenial with my mind."

"Good lack!" replied Suzette, "I am grieved to hear you say so. Why is this?—a young, handsome, rich lord, like you—"

"I must not suffer you, my good friend," interrupted Rushdale, "to continue in this error. I am no lord. Unfortunately I am the natural son of the earl of Torrington."

"The natural son!" repeated Suzette, anxiously. "What then became of the son of the countess?"

"She never had a son," replied Oscar. "Alas for me! her offspring was a daughter."

"Well, to be sure, this is mighty strange!" said Suzette; "I am quite puzzled! The countess only had a daughter! Why, how can that be when—Bless me! why I thought you was the son of the beautiful countess of Torrington, whose maiden name was Miss Emily Herbert."

"I am her son," replied Oscar. "Would that Heaven had given me any other mother! for, owing to that circumstance, disgrace and wretchedness are my bitter portion; my fame, my health, my peace, are all destroyed. Had I been your son, Suzette, I had been most happy, for then I might have loved without a crime; but now, eternal Providence! I am the most miserable of created beings, for I nourish in my bosom, without the power to erase it, a guilty passion for my own sister. Oh, had I not been the son of the earl of Torrington, I had been superlatively happy."

Suzette wept bitterly, and sobbing, asked—"Are you quite sure you should have been happy if you had not been the earls' son?"

"Yes," replied Rushdale, "yes; I am certain, for the innocent heart of Cecilia was all my own, the earl had consented to our marriage, and I should have been most happy. But now Heaven alone can tell what fate attends her. She, like me, may be wasting her hours in woe, in unavailing repinings at the cruel destiny that separates us for ever. Oh, Cecilia! my adored! when

shall I teach this rebellious heart to think of thee with calmness?—Oh, when shall I remember thee as my sister?”

“And do you really think,” asked Suzette, “that the earl would have consented to your marriage if the young lady had not been your sister?”

“The earl,” replied Oscar, “approved my choice. He had appointed the time for our marriage, when the fearful discovery was made that my heart’s adored was his daughter, the offspring of a marriage contracted before his engagement with my mother. I cannot enter into the particulars of this disgraceful story—I can only tell you, that my mother’s marriage not being legal, I am not the heir to his titles, though, woe for me! I am the earl of Torrington’s son.”

Suzette sat for some moments with her faced buried in her hands; she then started from her seat, and asked him if he had a scar on his left arm, just below the shoulder?

Oscar replied he had, and would have inquired the meaning of her question, but Suzette immediately darted out of the cabin, and did not return while he remained.

When he returned to Lisbon, he found the earl had spent the evening at the duchess of Aberdeen’s, and had left orders with the major-domo, that he should follow him there. But Oscar felt ill disposed to join a party whose gaiety would mock his wretchedness. He immediately retired to bed, to think of his lost Cecilia, till sleep should restore her to him with all the lovely innocence and sweet affection of their happy days.

The next morning Oscar did not quit his pillow till a later hour than usual; and on entering the breakfast-parlour, to his extreme astonishment, he found the earl of Torrington in earnest conversation with Lopez and Suzette, and a venerable-looking man in the habit of a monk.

The moment Suzette, whose eyes were red with weeping, saw Oscar, she ran to him, and clasping his hand, said, “You may now be quite happy, sir, for I have eased my conscience of a troublesome load: you may love the beautiful young lady you told me about yesterday with out a crime, for she is not your sister.”

Oscar was astonished at seeing her there but much more at her strange expressions of which he was on the point of asking an explanation, when the earl, falling on his neck, said—“Though no longer Oscar, nor my son, my heart will never forget its affection for you; and could we but find my lost Cecilia, she should yet be yours with a father’s fondest blessing.”

Oscar stood amazed and bewildered.—“What am I to believe?” said he, “Do I understand your words? Am I not your son?”

“No,” rejoined Suzette; “no; I call Heaven to witness the truth of my declaration. Oscar lord Rushdale, the infant son of the earl of Torrington, died on my knee; I was his nurse; and fearful that I should be blamed by the countess for neglect of the babe, I substituted you in his place.”

“Who am I then?” asked Oscar, anxiously, “and where are my parents?”

“The name of your parents,” replied Suzette, “was Woodville; “they went to the East Indies when you were little more than six weeks old. Your mother died at Calcutta; but whether your father yet lives I cannot answer.”

The earl entreated the agitated young man to be calm, adding—“Whoever are your parents, I shall ever consider you my son.” He then bade Suzette proceed.

“Your name, sir,” said she, “is Henry Woodville. You were placed by your mother, a giddy unthinking girl, with a distant relation, who lived a few miles distant from London; the son of this person a soldier, was at that time courting me, and when the countess of Torrington proposed sending the young lord from town to be inoculated, I proposed going with him to

Edmonton, where my sweetheart was then quartered, and where his mother lived. The countess had a great opinion of me, though I was at that time young and thoughtless; she relied on my care and suffered me, attended by a man-servant to take the child to Edmonton.

“On your arrival there, I found my intended mother-in-law in great trouble, for Mr. and Mrs. Woodville had just left England, without making any sort of provision for their child, or even paying her for the time she had already taken upon her to nurse him. You, sir, were then a fine, healthy, beautiful babe, so much resembling my little charge, that you might have passed for twin brothers, except that you were the largest of the two. Mrs. West fretted continually at the burthen left on her hands, as she was not in circumstances to support an addition to her family, and she was frequently reproached by her son for having undertaken to nurse the child of a person, who, though she was a relation, was too proud to acknowledge it, or to notice her at all except for her own ends.

“When I had been with Mrs. West a few days, I had the little Oscar inoculated. He appeared at the time in good health; but from that hour he sickened and every day grew worse. One evening as he lay in my arms, so ill that I expected every moment would be his last, Mrs. West said—‘It would be a great happiness if little Henry was as near death as that poor babe appears to be, for his parents, like brutes as they are, have forsaken him, and I am sure I have not the means to bring him up for my part, I don’t know what is to become of him.’

“Our own servant had gone to town, to inform the earl and countess of the child’s illness, and James West, for whom I had great regard, and who happened to be there, immediately said—‘Lady Torrington does not seem to have much love for her child, and as long as the earl has an heir to his title, why he will be satisfied; the young lord will certainly never recover, for he is now, you see, at the last gasp. Suppose you take Henry Woodville, who is a stout healthy child, and dress him in lord Rushdale’s fine laced robes; it will be doing a deep of charity to provide for the little fellow, and it will be taking a troublesome load off my poor mother’s back, who, you know, has scarcely enough to maintain herself.’

“Lord Rushdale, it was certain, could never recover, and I was sadly afraid his death would be imputed to my negligence and want of care; but I hesitated, and thought it would be a great sin to impose another person’s child upon the countess for her own; but the absence of the man-servant, who had followed the earl and countess to Ireland, and the joint persuasions of James West and his mother, at last overcame all my scruples, and I consented to exchange the children. James West bound a peppercorn on Henry’s little arm, just below the shoulder, which produced a mark similar to that of inoculation, but deeper. Poor Oscar, after lingering a few days longer, died, and was buried by the name of Henry Woodville, whom Mrs. West reported to have gone suddenly in convulsion fits.

“After staying at Edmonton the time I supposed would be thought necessary for the child’s perfect recovery, I returned to town with my young charge, and afterwards went with him to Ireland, where he was received by the earl and countess without the least suspicion of his not being their son, though the countess once remarked that she had thought Oscar’s eyes were dark, like his father’s—‘But I find I am mistaken,’ said she, ‘for they are blue, like my own.’

“I was loaded with presents for the care I had taken of the young lord. You sir,” said she, addressing the astonished Henry, “you were that child, and I had the pleasure to see you every day improve in health and beauty. The countess, it is true, was too much engaged with company to take much notice of your improvement, or spend much time with you; but the earl, though he was accounted a very gay man, never let a day pass without once at least visiting you in the nursery.

“At last I married James West; the regiment was ordered to Portugal, and I came with him. He died of a wound he received in battle. Some time after, I married Lopez, and little supposed, that after so many years had gone by, that Providence would lead you to our cabin, or that my conscience would give me no rest till I made a full confession of the deception I had suffered Satan to persuade me to practise.”

The monk crossed himself, and said, in very bad English—“Your confession will be good for your soul.”

“I was grieved to the heart of me,” resumed Suzette, “to see the melancholy that was sinking this poor young gentleman to the grave, and it pained me beyond bearing to hear him say he should be quite happy if he was not the earl of Torrington’s son. So not being able to rest, I opened my mind to Lopez, and he good honest soul, not knowing what was best to do in the affair, went away directly to fetch father Gomez, and he advised that I should lose no time, but make haste to Lisbon, and without the least concealment or excuse, make a full disclosure of my sinful conduct to the earl of Torrington. So here I am,” said she, falling on her knees, “and I am willing to endure any punishment your lordship may think I deserve.”

“Rise, my good woman,” replied the earl; “I am not displeased with you. It was the pleasure of Heaven to take my own child, and I sincerely thank you for giving me a son, of whose noble disposition I am proud, and to whose affection I am so much indebted.”

Henry Woodville embraced the knees of the earl, who raised him to his arms—“Ever my son,” said he, “respected, honoured, and beloved—never will we separate, for your affection is necessary to my existence. This joyful discovery seems to renew my health, and surely it will remove from your heart every trace of sorrow.”

“Cecilia!” exclaimed Henry—“my angel Cecilia! while doubtful of her fate; of her love, I cannot be tranquil or happy.”

The monk understood but very little English, though he was unwilling that Lopez should perceive that he was ignorant of the language; but he perfectly comprehended the value of gold, and having received a well-filled purse from the earl, and taken refreshment, he departed, telling Suzette, if she expected to be forgiven for her sins, she must embrace, without delay, the holy Catholic faith; for if she died an obstinate heretic, she would surely go to perdition.

Suzette being assured of the earl’s forgiveness, and having received a handsome present from Mr. Woodville, departed with her husband, for the vineyard cabin, with a heart lighter, and a conscience infinitely more at ease, than when she entered Lisbon.

The honourable Mr. Drawley being announced, was made acquainted with the happy turn in his friend’s affairs, and he sincerely rejoiced that the proud spirit of Henry was no longer depressed and more mortified with the idea of illegitimacy, and that his deep blue eyes again sparkled with the animation of hope; for the belief that Cecilia was in the power of the *cidevant* countess, and that he should assuredly find her in Naples, had taken firm possession of his mind; and as the earl was now in tolerable health, it was resolved that they should pass into Italy without further delay.

The duchess of Aberdeen, with Mr. Drawley and lady Arabella, designed to make a tour through Spain. Letters from lady Jane Bruce, fixing the period of her marriage with a nobleman descended, like herself, from royalty, recalled her brother, lord Alwyn Bruce, to England; and Miss Macdonald being pronounced in the last stage of consumption, the dreadful consequence of wearing damp draperies, to cling close round her Grecian figure, occasioned sir Middleton Maxfield, and his lively bride to take a hasty leave of the earl of Torrington and Mr. Woodville,

for whose future happiness, and the recovery of lady Cecilia Rushdale, they offered the sincerest wishes.

A prosperous wind soon wafted the earl of Torrington and Henry Woodville to the Bay of Naples, and no sooner were put on shore, than they waited on the prince de Albertini at his palace. The prince assured them that the countess of Torrington certainly had not arrived at Naples, for he had, in consequence of the earl's letters, caused a vigilant search to be made, not only in the city, but for some miles round, without any success.

These assurances by no means satisfied the anxious mind of Henry Woodville, who, leaving the earl to recover the fatiguing effects of the voyage, procured the disguise of a lazaroni, and with the recommendation of an old lute, penetrated into parts of the city where it was scarcely possible to believe the countess would confine Cecilia; but with the wild and improbable hope of a lover, he played the airs which he had composed for her, believing that if the notes were fortunate enough to reach her ear, she would give him some signal of her vicinity. But morning dawned on the successful Henry, who returned fatigued to seek a renovation of his spirits from the balm of sleep.

Again, on the following day, his search was renewed, and having failed to gain the least intelligence of their lost treasure, the earl of Torrington procured from the cardinal Andrea an order to the superior of every monastery in Naples, to deliver the person of Cecilia Delmore if concealed within their walls; but before this order was put in force, the earl received Wilson's letters from London, which had followed him from Lisbon to Naples.

Henry Woodville's joy was now unbounded; his spirits were exalted to a pitch of rapture; and while the earl rejoiced in the unblemished honour of his lovely daughter, he gave thanks that no obstacle now prevented the union of two persons so dear to his affection, and so tenderly attached to each other, for the thoughts of the earl did justice to the stability of Cecilia's attachment. But while reperusing Wilson's letters, his pride was greatly offended at his steward presuming to make him a proposal of marrying his daughter, lady Cecilia Rushdale, to his nephew, the son of the city grocer. But Henry's good humoured smiles soon brought the earl to a recollection, that supposing Miss Delmore the niece of Mrs. Milman, Wilson had certainly proposed no bad match for her in the son of a wealthy grocer, whom he intended his heir, particularly as he was a famous scholar, and had Greek, Hebrew, and Latin, at his fingers ends.

The next day the earl met with an English newspaper, in which he read the death of the countess of Torrington: though the earl had never loved the vain erring Emily Herbert, he was greatly shocked at the news of her premature decease, taking place too in the short space of a few months after her elopement from him. The paper merely mentioned her death and funeral, without giving any other particulars; the earl therefore remained ignorant of her marriage with and flight from the villanous major Norman, and also of the humane and generous conduct of the injured Saville.

Henry Woodville, though happy in the assurance that she was not his mother, was affected even to tears, when he was informed that her career of vanity, dissipation, and error, had met so fatal and hasty a termination. He paid the memory of her whom he had so long believed his mother the compliment of wearing mourning, as did also the earl at his suggestion.

"Unhappy Emily!" said lord Torrington, "deceiving and deceived, we passed the years of our youth together. Already the grave covers thy beauty and thy frailty. Oh! may thy sins be buried there, never to rise against thy eternal happiness!"

They had now no motive to detain them at Naples, and they prepared to return to England with a frigate then anchored in the bay. Melrose, the lover of Marian Scroggins, was the first

lieutenant of this frigate, and from seeing him on board, Henry Woodville was much pleased with his appearance and gentlemanly manners, an intimacy soon took place between the young men; and Woodville was not long before he found out how instrumental lieutenant Melrose had been in the discovery and rescue of lady Cecilia Rushdale from her confinement at Frome Hall.

Henry lost no time in acquainting the earl of Torrington with the extent of their obligations to the brave lieutenant, and the earl's gratitude did not evaporate in professions and acknowledgments; he exerted his influence with the lords of the admiralty, and in a very short time after his return to England, William Melrose was made a post-captain.

From young Melrose the earl had the satisfaction of learning that his darling Cecilia was again under the protection of her long-tried excellent friend, Mrs. Doricourt. Melrose, in his turn, was astonished with the intelligence of Miss Delmore being the earl of Torrington's daughter, and the recent discovery made by Suzette relative to Henry Woodville's birth; and as these events would ultimately conduce to the happiness of a most amiable pair, he ceased to regret that his friend was not the earl of Torrington's son, and the heir to his illustrious titles.

During the earl's stay at Naples, he heard much of the character of the count del Montarino, and of the illicit intercourse that had been carried on between him and the countess of Torrington, great part of which the earl's conscience accused him of being accessary to, by his own indifference and criminal attachment to other females.

Henry Woodville, in crossing the Strado Toleda one day, perceived the count del Montarino, but being at a considerable distance, he could not overtake him. On inquiry he found that the count had bought an estate at Baia, but that he passed the greatest part of his time at Naples, plunging into every dissipation, and entirely neglecting his wife, who, unacquainted with the language of the country, very seldom went into company, but led a very recluse melancholy sort of life, guarded by an old priest, who resided in the family.

Henry Woodville having informed the earl of Torrington of what he had heard respecting the count del Montarino's conduct, and the melancholy life led by his wife, remarked that the "Child of Nature" had been taught a few lessons by a son of art, for which he feared she had paid the high price of her happiness.

"Poor silly girl!" replied the earl, "I am sorry for her, and wish it was in my power to meliorate her situation; but being the count's wife it is quite impossible for us to interfere. I trust," continued he, "I shall by no accident meet the villain; for if no other cause of dislike existed, his robbing Cecilia (for what but robbery can it be called?) and his manner of quitting Torrington Castle, are sufficient reasons for considering him a detestable character."

Mr. Woodville and lieutenant Melrose were at the opera on the evening that this conversation took place. While the overture was playing, Henry pointed out to his friend the count del Montarino, in a splendid habit, seated between two ladies, the one young, pretty, and modestly, though handsomely dressed, the other some years older, showy, but not beautiful, and remarkable for the blaze of jewels that decorated her head and bosom.

The count appeared to be very attentive to the young lady, who appeared to regard him with fear and dislike, while the elder one seemed to pay him the most obsequious respect.

"Poor unfortunate Jemima!" said Mr. Woodville, "she has sacrificed her large fortune to a man whose principles are too corrupt even to repay her generous credulity with common gratitude. I have no doubt but those females are persons of depraved character."

This idea was confirmed by a gentleman, who said that the count del Montarino's companions were the widow and daughter of a deceased nobleman, who, leaving but a narrow



fortune behind him to support their extravagant habits, it was reported they did not scruple to admit the gallantries of any who had the power to pay a handsome price for their favours.

The entertainment being over Mr. Woodville and lieutenant Melrose remained a few moments in conversation with some friends: they were then retiring through a private passage, where they had ordered their carriage to wait for them, when they were again detained by the pressure of an immense crowd of persons rushing from the public entrance. It was in vain they inquired what had occurred; they were completely hemmed in, and the only answer they obtained was groans and shrieks. At length, having, with much difficulty, made their way to the middle of the crowd, they beheld the prostrate body of the count del Montarino covered with blood, and a female, of wild and fierce demeanour, gazing on the breathless corpse with savage exultation.

Mr. Woodville soon understood that this frantic-looking creature had stabbed the count in several places, as he was handing two ladies to their carriage, the youngest of which ladies she had also wounded in the arm. Two surgeons raised the body of the count from the earth, but he had ceased to breathe, and the perpetrator of this bloody act was given into the hands of justice.

Mr. Woodville now learned that she was a celebrated courtesan, who had once been the count's distinguished favourite; but inflamed with jealousy, from his having of late neglected her, she had been at much pains to watch his haunts, and having found out to whom his attentions were devoted, she determined on murdering her rival, but missing her aim, and only slightly wounding her arm, as she ascended her carriage, and having overheard the count say, as they came out of the Opera House, that he would be with her in less than an hour, jealous fury prompted her to stab him in the back, and before she could be seized she had repeatedly plunged a dagger in his neck and side.

Undismayed at the dreadful fate that she knew awaited her, she spurned the bleeding body of the count with her feet; and in a voice wild but impressive, said—"I have only sent that villain to perdition a short time before he expected to go, for he was certain, if there is judgment hereafter, that would be his sentence. You seem to pity him," continued she, looking round on the horror-struck spectators, "and consider me as a fiend, but if you knew the real character of the count del Montarino as well as I know it, instead of dragging me to torture, and branding me with the name of murderess, you would decree me public honours for having rid your city of a monster. By that villain, whose blood crimsoned my dagger, I was seduced from the bosom of a virtuous family. In the midst of disgrace and poverty I fondly loved him; but he abandoned me and my infant—forced me to lead a life of infamy—compelled me to allure and plunder those whom my yet-unfaded charms attracted. After an absence of five years we met again at Naples. He had forgotten Volunte Nevini, and again solicited my love. I discovered myself to him; he affected compunction—I loved—I was a woman—and with all my sex's credulity I believed the artful excuses he invented—I forgave his barbarous desertion, and presented to him his blooming boy. For a few weeks he deluded me with an appearance of affection; he promised to provide for his child; but again he abandoned me to the bitterness of disappointment—he devoted himself to another. Convinced of his cruelty and ingratitude, I swore that I would have revenge for my repeated injuries. I have murdered him. See there the seducer of innocence, the violator of faith, lies bathed in his blood, shed by my hands! Is there one among you, who from your hearts can say he did not deserve death from me? No, you cannot, for you feel the justice of the act. I gaze on his distorted face—I behold him lifeless at my feet—and I do not repent the deed; but for my poor hapless boy, I would say I rejoice in the doom that awaits me; only for the sake of my child will death be terrible!"

A murmur of pity ran through the crowd, as the wretched Volunte Nevini was dragged away to chains and dungeon.

Henry Woodville shuddered, for he remembered the days when the count de Montarino was a inmate of the Torrington family—the distinguished favourite of the volatile countess. They were now both gone to their account. Henry Woodville cautioned Melrose not to mention the horrible affair in the presence of the earl whose spirits and health, he thought, might suffer from the recital; but the earl, being at the cardinal Andrea's, had heard of the murder, will all its circumstances.

The detestable character of the count del Montarino being generally understood, the fate of the unfortunate Volunte excited much compassion, and the earl of Torrington was the first to propose that her dying moments should be consoled with the certainty that her child was placed beyond the reach of want.

The wretched Volunte Nevini died before the sentence pronounced on her as a murderess was executed, and the cardinal Andrea placed her orphan boy in the care of the abbot of Carthusian monastery, to be educated for the service of the church.

“The situation of poor Jemima is now deplorable,” said the earl of Torrington. “I remember our beloved Cecilia used to say she had an excellent heart. I believe we are the only persons here at all known to her. Humanity overcomes my dislike of her folly; we must offer her our protection.”

Henry Woodville and his friend lieutenant Melrose undertook to bear to the countess del Montarino the melancholy account of her husband's terrible death. On the arrival of the friends at Baia, they were directed to the mansion of the count del Montarino, into which they found it difficult to obtain an entrance, for the old priest, with many artful excuses, would have prevented their seeing the countess who, having already heard of the murder of her husband, he pretended to say was too ill to admit any company.

Suspecting that this smooth tongued venerable gentleman had private reasons of his own for refusing to admit them to the countess, Henry Woodville, recollecting that the cardinal Andrea's order to the superior of monasteries remained yet in his pocket, drew it forth, and shewing the seal to the priest, asked if he presumed to dispute that mandate?

The awe-struck priest bowed with more than his usual hypocrisy, and conducted them, without another word, to the presence of Jemima, who, in the transport of seeing an English friend, actually forgot to weep for her husband. Her situation was truly pitiable, for neither the priest nor the servants were sufficiently conversant in her language to comprehend her wishes respecting the count's funeral; nor could she restrain their rapacity, for knowing they would speedily be discharged, they were taking every unfair advantage of her ignorance, and plundering her without mercy of every thing valuable about the place; but the appearance of Woodville and Melrose, who had brought with them proper persons to take charge of the mansion and its furniture, soon restored order, and put an end to Jemima's troubles, who, having squeezed out a few tears, took up a handkerchief, and drying her eyes, said—“The count was not very old, to be sure, though he was much older than me. Dear! who would have thought that he would die so soon!”

Melrose was ready to laugh; but turning to the priest, he spoke to him in Italian, while Jemima clinging to Henry Woodville, said—“La! I have been so miserable ever since I married, you can't think; for the count, do you know, though he pretended to love me very much, used to call me a fool and an idiot—was not that very rude now? and never would let me go any where but to hear mass, and what was the use of that to me? for I did not understand a word that was

said, though, to be sure, the organ was very delightful, and the church very grand but do you know now, for all that, I would much rather hear Miss Delmore sing and play on the harp, would not you?"

Henry having replied—"Much rather," the countess resumed—"When I ran away with the count, I expected to dress and go to operas, and plays, and masquerades, and keep the first company; but I have been so disappointed, you can think for the count told me that the lord chancellor's lawyers were after me, and that, if they got hold of me before I was of age, they would shut me up in a nunnery, and never let me see him as long as I lived; and do you know, he cried sadly; and so I consented to live here moped up with that ugly, disagreeable, cross, old priest, who can't understand me when I ask him a question; and, do you know, I have not had a living soul to speak to, except the parrot, and that can only say, 'Pretty poll, and poor Jemima!'"

"Your life had been melancholy indeed," said Woodville; "but the earl of Torrington will now take you under his protection, and will safely convey you to England, where, I hope your misfortunes will all be at an end."

"I am sure they will," replied the countess. "La! I shall be so glad to get back to England again, you can't think! and now I am a widow, and a countess, I warrant I shall be thought of some consequence, for all lady Eglantine Sydney and lady Jacintha Fitzosborne used to treat me with such indifference, though, do you know, the count deceived me about his grand estate at Naples, his vineyards, and his mulberry plantation. He had neither land, nor house, nor any thing else that I could ever hear of; and he used to say that he must take me to England soon, to raise him some more cash, for the fifty thousand pounds I borrowed of the money-lenders would not last till I was of age."

"It is well for you," said Woodville, "that the count is no longer capable of deceiving or defrauding you; for I much fear, had he lived to gain possession of your fortune, you would have experienced a change in his conduct; he would no longer have thought it necessary to keep up an appearance of tenderness."

"To be sure, the count always spoke kindly to me," continued Jemima, "and he said he loved me; but I had very little of his company, for he was always full of business and engagements, which he told me it was not proper I should ask questions about; but I was so vexed, you can't think, because he never took me to Naples with him, for I thought, as I was married, and a countess, I ought to live at Naples, and drive about in grand equipage; and, do you know, I often used to wish I was with aunt Freakley again, and I used to cry and fret till I was quit sick. I often repented that I ran away with the count, for I had every thing my own way when I lived with aunt Freakley, and I am sure I have not had any thing to please me since I was married; and Middleton did not like the count, nor aunt, nor lord Wilton, nor any body that I knew of, except lady Torrington; and, do you know, after we were married, the count told me that Miss Delmore lent him the money to carry me off; and, la! only think that she should have been so much his friend, after all the advice she gave me, and all she said to set me against him!"

Mr. Woodville explained in what way the count had extorted the money from Cecilia.

"Well now," said Jemima, weeping again, "that proved how dearly he loved me. His putting a mask on his face, and carrying a pistol with him, all was for love of me. Poor man! I am so sorry he is dead you can't think;" then wiping her eyes—"Mourning will become me, I dare say, because I have such fair skin. Aunt Freakley used to say it was just like alabaster. Aunt will be very glad to see me, don't you think she will?"

"Undoubtedly," replied Henry, and then mentioned Mrs. Freakley's marriage with lord Wilton.

“La!” resumed Jemima, “only think that aunt should be married to a title! I am very glad, though I hate lord Wilton so you can’t think; and as to my brother, sir Middleton Maxfield, I will never forgive him, because he did not pursue me, and try to bring me back when I eloped from Torrington Castle. La! I have passed many and many lonesome hours since then, and though I never could abide reading in all my life, I have wished sadly for some English books since I have been shut up here at Baia; and, do you know, I used to go to bed about nine o’clock every night during the winter, for the count was never at home, and I had nobody to talk to, and I was so tired you can’t think, and so I used to go to sleep; but now I am a widow, I will invite what company I please, and go where I like, and I warrant I will not be in a hurry to run away and be married again, for I am sure I was happier by half when I was Miss Maxfield, than ever I have been since I was the countess of Montarino.”

Mr. Woodville, heartily tired of her nonsense, mentioned that evening was approaching, and hinted the necessity of her putting her seal on the valuables previous to their setting off for Naples.

Sometimes weeping, but often laughing, the countess collected her few trinkets, and telling the priest that she never would be a Catholic, she departed from Baia, hoping never to see the place again, with Woodville and Melrose, who safely conducted her to the palace occupied by the earl of Torrington at Naples, who, though he had always felt annoyed by her weakness and folly, was now so much moved to compassion at her forlorn condition, that he constrained himself to bear with nonsense, and humanely took upon himself to arrange the funeral of the count del Montarino and employed persons to turn her effects into cash, and settle her affairs, which being expeditiously effected, they took leave of Naples unreluctantly, for they had each of them a reason for wishing to reach England.

Having arrived at London, the earl of Torrington restored the “Child of Nature,” silly and imbecile as ever, to her overjoyed aunt, lady Wilton, whose loquacity was to him equally as tiresome as Jemima’s nonsense. Pleading affairs of importance, the earl scarcely staid to receive lady Wilton’s acknowledgements, but hastily made his bow, and left the “Child of Nature” to tell her own history in her own silly way.

Lady Wilton, having again and again questioned her poor dear Jemima relative to the murder of the count, declared he had justly merited the fate he met, and that such a base, inconstant, unfaithful wretch, was not worth shedding a tear about.

Jemima wiped her eyes, and said—“La! I am so glad you can’t think, aunt, for, do you know, crying makes my eyes red, and I look so ugly you can’t think.”

Lady Wilton protested she should now bear the coldness and neglect of her husband with infinitely more patience and temper, since she had her dear countess del Montarino to disclose her griefs to, who, having suffered neglect herself, would pity, and not laugh at her, as the marchioness of Beverley and others of her fashionable acquaintance did; and as long as that monster of a fellow, her husband, was dead, why she was not altogether sorry that Jemima was a countess, because her title would introduce her into the very best company, and recommend her to a better husband.

The earl of Torrington had not been many hours in London, before he wrote to Mr. Wilson his intention of being at the castle in the course of a fortnight. The few days the earl remained in town he employed in procuring the promotion of young Melrose, whose bravery and unexceptionable conduct being taken into consideration, he was raised to the rank of post-captain.

Mr. Woodville, having expressed a wish to see the family of Scroggins, of whom Melrose gave a ludicrous account, was invited by his friend to walk with him to Abchurch-street.

The grocer received Melrose kindly, but bluntly told him, he stood a very poor chance of obtaining the hand of his daughter Marian—"She is gone," said old Scroggins, "with madam Doricourt and Miss Delmore to Cumberland, and my brother-in-law Wilson writes me word that a very fine young fellow, with a handsome estate, has made Marian an offer."

"And has Marian accepted his offer?" asked Melrose, impatiently. "If she has, there is no faith to be put in woman." "Not much, I believe," replied the grocer, "for they are all of them pretty near as changeable as weathercocks."

"Marian," said Miss Scroggins, tossing her head with an air, which she intended Melrose should think contempt for him, "has been fool enough to refuse a man that can keep a carriage for her. The girl is out of her senses, I think; I wish I had been in her place."

"You certainly would not have married the gentleman merely for the sake of his money, Miss Scroggins?" said Woodville.

"There you are greatly mistaken, sir," replied she. "Any woman must be mad that marries a man without money. All for love may be Marian's notion—all for money is mine. I shall take good care, whenever I marry, to have a rich husband."

"A very good notion, girl," rejoined old Scroggins.

"If folks have enough to keep the wolf from the door," said Mrs. Scroggins, "that is quite sufficient. I think there ought to be love as well as money."

"Pooh! you are a fool," replied the grocer. "Love, nonsense! money is the grand article; and as you are, lieutenant, I would advise you, as a friend to look out for a rich wife: a fine tall fellow will stand a famous chance with widows and old maids; for, as to my children, I promise you I shall not give them a shilling till my death, nor then, if their mother happens to outlive me. But when we are gone, what we have scraped together by honest industry shall be divided among them, share and share alike; and you know I told you never to think about Marian till you got made a post-captain."

Melrose now explained his promotion.

Miss Scroggins stared.

Mrs. Scroggins declared she was very glad, and wished him joy.

The wary grocer said, he must inquire into the affair; but if he found things as Melrose stated, he would not go from his word, and he would write to his brother-in-law Wilson, and if he had no objection, why Marian might do as she liked.

Old Scroggins found the statement of Melrose correct in every particular, and further than the young man had mentioned. He learned that the earl of Torrington intended to present him with ten thousand pounds, as an acknowledgment of the service he had rendered Miss Delmore, whom the astonished grocer now, for the first time, understood was the earl's daughter and heiress.

The sunny prospects of captain Melrose immediately decided old Scroggins, and his hearty consent and blessing were written to Marian, of which the happy Melrose was to be the bearer.

Miss Scroggins was almost frantic when she found that Miss Delmore, whom she had so often called a proud beggarly upstart, was in reality lady Cecilia Rushdale, and that Marian still continued her friend and favourite companion. Miss Scroggins had actually engaged to marry Mr. Bignel, the common-councilman, in the course of the autumn; but her sister's good fortune, producing envy and dissatisfaction with her own arrangements, and believing it possible, that

through Marian she might be again introduced to persons of quality, and make a far better match, she quarrelled with her elderly lover, and absolutely refused to fulfil her engagement, telling him she had altered her mind, and did not intend to marry just then.

The common-councilman, highly offended, swore she should never marry him; and, after many severe reproaches for her jilting behaviour, left her, with a wish that she might die an old maid.

Mrs. Doricourt shed many tears during this recital, for she now remarked that Henry Woodville, in face and person very much resembled his unfortunate father. He had the same deep blue eyes, the same serpentine lip—"But he has not," said she, mentally, "his wavering mind, his heart of guile."

When the narrative was ended, addressing Mr. Woodville, she said—"I was well acquainted, sir, with your unfortunate father; he died only a few months since at Marseilles. But you must not believe that he was so unnatural as to forget he had a son. I well recollect hearing Mr. Saville say, that he many times mentioned the boy he left in England when he went abroad, and his sorrow to learn, after a long absence, that the child had died in infancy. Your father, sir," continued Mrs. Doricourt, "impressed with a belief that he had no relatives, bequeathed the whole of his fortune to me; but I received his property only in trust, making Heaven a solemn promise that I would restore it, whenever I found a person who had a just claim. His son has an undoubted claim; and I, believe me, shall feel the highest gratification in putting you in possession of thirty thousand pounds."

The earl of Torrington was satisfied that Mrs. Doricourt had a fortune out of which thirty thousand pounds would not be missed; he also knew that her delicacy would not be satisfied till Woodville was in possession of his father's fortune; he therefore made no objection to her honourable restitution; and when Woodville's acknowledgments to Mrs. Doricourt were made, he said—"And I also will make restitution; the wealth of old Blackburne shall return to his family; and when I have put from me the '*accursed thing*,' I will humbly hope that Heaven will accept my penitence."

The state of the earl's health did not permit him to receive company at the castle; but at Keswick illuminations and rejoicings took place, and congratulatory letters were continually arriving, in which every happiness was wished lady Cecilia Rushdale and Mr. Woodville.

Mrs. Milman was assured by lady Cecilia, that she would never forget her affectionate care of her infancy, and told her that if she found the office of housekeeper fatiguing or disagreeable, she had only to mention her wishes, and she should be provided for in any way most pleasant to herself. But Mrs. Milman chose to continue in her situation, for since all her castle-building had come to nothing, and she had lost the prospect of marrying highly, through her relationship to Cecilia, she thought she might as well remain where she was, for she hated idleness, and could not sit with her hands before her; and as she had now no chance that she knew of, to get a husband, having refused two offers that she did not think grand enough, why she thought she could be more content at Torrington Castle than any where else.

Mr. Wilson had confirmed the happiness of captain Melrose, by bestowing on him his hearty concurrence with his wish of marrying Marian, to whom he said he would give five thousand pounds on her wedding-day, "that her fortune," said Wilson, "may be equal to her sister's; and at my death I will divide my fortune between Solomon and her, for, poor fellow! I fear, for all his learning, when he returns to England, he will bring back only a ragged coat and an empty purse."

The earl of Torrington, after settling some accounts with his steward, jocosely said—"I am very sorry, Wilson, to destroy your prospects; but you see lady Cecilia Rushdale's heart is so entirely occupied by Henry Woodville, that your nephew, Solomon Scroggins, has no sort of chance."

Wilson looked confused, and stammered out an apology for his presumption, to which the earl, kindly shaking him by the hand, replied—"Do not believe, Wilson, that I am offended; as to Cecilia Delmore, your proposal was a generous one, and she herself will be proud to think that in her humble state you considered her worthy to become a part of your family."

"She is worthy of a crown," said Wilson, "and may Heaven shower its choicest blessings on her!"

When Wilson was dismissed by the earl, he went to pay a visit to Mrs. Milman, who had not yet exactly reconciled her mind to the disappointment of not being elevated into high life by Cecilia. After having listened for some time to her querulous observations, Mr. Wilson requested her to give him a glass of her peach brandy—"The weather is broiling hot," said he, "and I have been very busy to-day. I rode over early this morning to Keswick, to look how my workmen came on. Have you seen the houses I am building, Mrs. Milman?"

"Yes," was the short reply.

"I design the one at the corner of North-street," resumed he, "for a shop."

"It is a very good situation," observed Mrs. Milman.

"And the other, on the East Parade," continued Wilson, "I will have finished handsomely; it will just suit a new-married pair. And now," sipping the peach brandy, "and now, my dear friend," taking her hand, "I am going to make you an offer."

The mention of a house just fit for a new-married pair put Mrs. Milman all over in a twitter. What could he possibly be going to offer but marriage? She always believed he liked her, and she at once made up her mind to accept his offer. Blushing and bridling, she simpered, and waited till he had sipped up the peach brandy, with no little impatience.

Having drained the last drop, and said it was an excellent cordial, he again took her hand, and resumed—"My dear Mrs. Milman, you do not appear to be as happy here as formerly."

"Certainly I am not," replied Mrs. Milman; "things are greatly altered; Cecilia is no longer my niece, you know and——"

"I know all you would say," interrupted Mr. Wilson; "and as Torrington Castle is no longer agreeable to you, and as I have a very great value for you, and wish to see you happy, knowing you to be an excellent manager, and an exceedingly-clever woman, I am induced to make you an offer of——"

Wilson was seized with a fit of coughing, which the impatience of Mrs. Milman would scarcely allow time to subside, before she asked—"An offer of what?"

"Of the corner shop, my dear woman," returned Wilson; "it will be just the thing for the display of confectionary and pastry, and no person in the county understands the making of those sort of things better than you. A shop of that sort is much wanting at Keswick, and you have so many friends, I am sure it will answer."

"I am sure it will not," said Mrs. Milman, snatching her hand from his, and rising from her chair. "I thank you, Mr. Wilson, for your obliging offer; but whenever I choose to quit my present situation of housekeeper at Torrington Castle, I can be provided for, without troubling myself to keep a pastry-cook's shop."

"Just as you please, Mrs. Milman," replied Wilson, a little piqued at her scornful manner. "I had no intention of offending you."

“Offending me indeed! resumed she, colouring and smoothing her apron. “I had no notion, Mr. Wilson, that your offer was only to let me your shop after your pretending so much regard, I thought—“

“What did you think?” asked Wilson, perceiving her pause.

“Oh, no matter, Mr. Wilson,” replied she. “I meet nothing but disappointments, I think; but I suppose it is all for the best.”

The worthy, friendly-hearted Wilson had no guess at her meaning, when he observed that the other house would suit a new-married pair. He alluded to Melrose and Marian, and he never supposed Mrs. Milman would construe his offer into a matrimonial proposition.

Mrs. Milman continued to smooth her apron, and to settle her frills—a plain indication to Wilson that her mind was in a ruffled state; he therefore took his leave, assuring her again and again, he had no intention of giving her offence by offering the corner shop.

Mrs. Milman cried for vexation—“The barbarous man!” said she. “Many times he has led me to believe he was going to make me an offer of marriage, and then disappointed me with some silly ridiculous project or other. From this time I am determined never to think about a husband, but content myself to remain all my days the housekeeper of Torrington Castle.” Captain Melrose being in expectation of sailing orders, was urgent with Marian to name the day of his happiness—“Let me,” said he, “depart with the certainty that you are mine, and I shall meet the enemy with double courage.”

The friends of Marian warmly urged the suit of Melrose.

The earl of Torrington would gladly have had the ceremony of their marriage take place at the castle, but the house at Keswick was finished and furnished by Wilson for the occasion, who, after having officiated as father to the bride, gave it to her as it stood as a nuptial present.

The reverend Mr. Dacres united the happy pair. Mrs. Doricourt and lady Cecilia Rushdale, with two young ladies from the vicinity of Keswick, attended the bride; Mr. Saville, Woodville, and two other gentlemen, completed the bridal party.

The eventful history of Henry Woodville did not long remain unknown to the duke of Arvingham, and the perturbation of his mind occasioned an inflammation of his wound, which again confined him to his bed.

While in this state of mental and bodily suffering, he was constantly visited by the reverend Mr. Dacres and Mr. Saville, to whose pious and friendly arguments he was indebted for the resignation that enabled him, before he left Keswick, to admit a visit from Mr. Woodville, to whom with sincerity, he wished every happiness with lady Cecilia Rushdale.

The marriage of Woodville and lady Cecilia had been delayed on account of the earl’s health, though magnificent preparations were made for the happy occasion. One day, in the presence of Mrs. Doricourt and Mr. Saville, he appointed the day for their marriage, saying at the same time—“I know how much Cecilia desires her Henry to bear the title of Torrington; know then, my beloved children, that our most gracious sovereign has created him viscount Rushdale, and allows him, at my decease, to assume the title and rank of earl of Torrington.” Woodville and Cecilia embraced the knees of the earl, who joining their hands, continued—“My fervid blessing be upon you both, my children; and may the errors of your parents never be visited upon your heads, but may your virtues in the sight of Heaven atone for their guilt!”

On the appointed day, lady Cecilia became the bride of Henry Woodville, viscount Rushdale.



The earl of Torrington survived this happy event only a few months; he died a sincere penitent, and never after his decease did Mr. Saville revert to his errors, but often mentioned his virtues, holding him up as an example of liberality to his friends, and humanity to the poor.

Mr. Saville, at their earnest solicitation, consented to live with the young earl and countess of Torrington. Mrs. Doricourt continued fondly attached to the countess, who, in the midst of all the seduction of rank and wealth, remained chaste, humble, and benevolent.

Henry Woodville proved himself deserving the rank to which he was elevated; respected, admired, and beloved, he passed his life in the bosom of his family, adoring and adored, training up his beautiful offspring in pursuits worthy their rank. The countess frequently observed to Mrs. Doricourt and Mrs. Melrose, her favourite friends—"Henry still continues my lover, though some years have gone by since our marriage; and you," pressing a hand of each to her lips, "you remain my friends. How grateful I ought to be to Heaven for such blessings!"

"The virtuous and worthy, my beloved Cecilia," replied Mrs. Doricourt, "though they may be tried by misfortune, and visited by affliction, will never be destitute of lovers and friends."

THE END.

Printed by J. Darling, Leadenhall-Street, London.