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LOCHANDHU

A TALE OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.

"De nos jours ceux qui aiment la Nature sont
accusés d'être romantiques"

Chamfort.

IN THREE VOLUMES

VOL. III.



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LOCHANDHE.

CHAPTER I.

Oh mother, yet no mother!—'tis to you
My thanks for such distinguished claims are due.
You,—unenslaved to Nature's narrow laws,
Warm championess for Freedom's sacred cause,
From all the dry devoirs of blood and line,
From ties maternal, moral, and divine,
Discharged my grasping soul;—pushed me from shore,
And launched me into life without an oar.

Savage.

Estos rasgos de mi tan conocidos,
Esta carta, estos tristes caracteres,
Por tan preciosa mano dirigidos,
Cien veces los he visto.

JOJOE.

ON his arrival at Sanderson Mains, Amherst was disappointed to find that Cleaver had gone with his friend Macauley, to visit the town where that officer was stationed; and he felt his friend's absence still more, when he, the next morning, received the following letter:—

“TO AMHERST OAKENWOLD, ESQ.

“How shall my pen tell that which my lips could not utter! How shall I address you, whose name recalls those happy visions, once deemed substantial, but now faded for ever!—Yet they are sweet for memory to dwell upon!—To deny that I have loved—that I still love, would now be impossible. How, then, can I bring myself to divulge the agonizing secret, that must for ever crush all hope, and convert even the inward throbbings of my heart into a species of criminality?—For, Amherst, I never can be yours!—the proud and ancient house of Oakenwold never can admit into its bosom the tainted child of infamy.—How shall I proceed?—I am not the niece of Lord Eaglesholme,—I am his daughter,—the daughter of Lady Deborah Delassaux,—born during her husband’s life.

“The dreadful truth is told, and my heart is broken!—May Heaven dispose you to forget the existence of a wretch who cannot long burden this earth!—On you may its choicest blessings be showered!—And—yes—I may at least look for

that; for, surely, though visited by the cruel condemnation of mankind, I am yet faultless in the eye of an all-just and merciful Being.—That we may meet without offence in Heaven, is the only prayer, the only hope that clings to the decaying heart of her, who (though now without a name) once called herself

“ ELIZA MALCOLM.”

This communication was the grave of Amherst's lingering hopes. He threw himself down on his bed in an agony of despair, where he lay almost without consciousness for nearly an hour. Ten thousand contradictory thoughts then darted across his mind, like the flashes of lightning athwart the troubled sky, leaving, like them, no trace behind them. Recollecting how very proud his father was of the high antiquity, and the unsullied purity of his ancestral descent, he felt convinced, that no marriage, not having high family connection to recommend it, would be palatable to him. But to think of nuptials calculated to produce a positive blot in the family escutcheon,—of a description, too, so very objectionable!—it would drive the old man mad!—Yet to aban-

don all idea of Eliza Malcolm!—never again to see her, whose candour, magnanimity, disinterestedness, and love, had been so powerfully shown, even in the very sacrifice she was making!—

A faint flash of hope again succeeded. Like the spark, at first almost imperceptible, but gradually rising into a flame, spreading and widening until it sets the mighty forest in a blaze, it quickly grew into strength, and again illuminated the darkness of his soul. “She has all along passed as the niece of Lord Eaglesholme,—why may she not still do so? The truth has never yet been suspected, and why may not so justifiable a deceit be kept up for ever? Yes, yes, my adorable Eliza!—mine you shall be! Merciful Heaven never could have placed such a treasure of beauty, virtue, and pure attachment, almost within my embrace, and then forbid me to enjoy the bliss!—Dolt—fool that I was, to overlook so simple a remedy. I will write to her directly—not a moment shall be lost. We may live together in Scotland;—or we can go abroad, until the cruel Lady Deborah, and all those who are old enough to throw a suspicion over her birth, have ceased in the course of nature to exist. Better

that we should bury ourselves in the wild woods of America,—that I should become a hunter of the forest for her sake,—and that her sustenance should depend on the exertions of these limbs,—than that we should be rent for ever asunder to the certain destruction of both. 'Twas noble in her to write as she has done. But I must now do my part."

Filled with these romantic thoughts, he snatched up a pen, and sat down to embody them on paper; and dispatched O'Gollochar with a letter, as remarkable for the delicacy of its expression, as for the tenderness and strength of the passion it displayed. He ended an eloquent appeal, by saying, that he trusted all obstacles would vanish before the plain and happy expedient so naturally suggesting itself, and by imploring Miss Malcolm to permit him to wait on her immediately.

Having taken this step, his mind became calmer, and he was enabled to present himself at breakfast, where, to his no small surprise, he found Sir Alisander seated, who, in defiance of his habits of indolence, had risen several hours earlier than usual in compliment to his guest's return.

They had hardly sat down when the voice of

Cleaver was heard upon the stairs. Even Sir Alisander started up to meet him with a welcome. He entered the room with a shout of good natured salutation, followed by the hearty squeeze and shake of the hand, that spoke the honesty as well as the warmth of his expressions.

“Well, my Lady!—well, Sir Alisander!—glad to see you again, from the bottom of my heart!—Amherst, my boy, what cheer?—Overjoyed, upon my soul, to see you safe in harbour before me—We sailed last night with a fair breeze—wind chopped round in our teeth, and so have been beating about all night.—What! at breakfast, eh?—I an’t sorry for that—though I did have a slice or two of excellent grilled salmon this morning by way of a damper.”

With these words he sat down,—and what with eating, and talking of his expedition, and asking news from those around him, he managed to wile away a couple of hours very agreeably, to others as well as to himself. Amherst was the only one who felt any impatience, and he was much relieved when he and his friend were permitted to retire together.

When they were alone, Cleaver expressed his

eager desire to learn all that had occurred to Amherst during his trip to the Highlands, and he endeavoured to satisfy him, by giving him an abridged account of his adventures since they had parted. Many a strange exclamation was drawn from Cleaver by the recital. Having brought his narrative down to the moment of his parting with Miss Malcolm at the gate of Eaglesholme Castle. “Well,” said Cleaver anxiously, “and have you yet received the promised communication from the young Lady?”

“I have, indeed,” said Amherst, with a deep sigh; “and to you, who have been so much my friend, I shall communicate its contents without reserve, trusting that with you they will be like the secrets of the grave. I must be candid, however, and tell you, that, were it not that your friendly advice may be of the utmost importance to me in the perplexity of my affairs, as you are much better acquainted with the probable issues of my father’s temper than I am, I should not have considered myself entitled to divulge the secret even to you.”

Saying so, he put the letter he had that morn-

ing received into Cleaver's hand without farther comment.

Cleaver was petrified by the contents.

“ Eh !—what !—strange !—this is a cruel disappointment indeed. But there is nothing but disappointments in this world—I have had 'em myself, my dear boy. Poor Mary of the Isle of Wight !—I never told you that story,” continued he, wiping from his eyes a small tribute partly due to his friend's distress, and partly to the memory of an early tenderness.—“ She was the only child of a widowed clergyman—I was but a lieutenant at the time—We loved !—I need not say how truly—she was the fairest lily in her father's garden, and I was sincere. I was sent on a long voyage, and the first place I went to on my return was her father's house. The front of the parsonage was gay with roses and jasmines ; their sweet odour came fresh upon me as I lifted the latch of the little garden, and the flowers, methought, laughed with joy to see me. Mary's lovely innocent eyes seemed, to my fancy, to greet me with gladness from among them wherever I turned.

“ Some strange faces were at the parlour win-

dow. I entered, and was saluted by a gentleman I had never seen before. He was in deep mourning—he had buried his brother the clergyman that very morning. A villain had robbed the father of his fair flower, and had trodden it under foot. He died of a broken heart—I rushed out of the house—and how my stubborn heart stood it I cannot tell!”

But it was not difficult to guess ; for even now Cleaver’s voice trembled as he spoke,—he became almost inaudible, and his veteran cheeks were plentifully bathed ere he had done. But Amherst was so much absorbed in his own misery that he heard him not.

“ Cleaver, I cannot give her up !” said he at last ; “ to resign Eliza Malcolm would be to give up existence itself, for mine is alone nourished with the hope of being united to her.” He then told Cleaver of the letter he had written to Miss Malcolm.

“ My dear boy,” said Cleaver, with a sad and serious face, “ I fear much you are a little romantic in the scheme you have formed, and in the hopes you have founded on it ; for if your plan goes adrift, the hopes attached to it must be

wrecked along with it. I can perceive that your love for Miss Malcolm is of no light nature, and from all I have heard regarding her, I am led to believe, that, independent of her beauty, which, like the outside-ornaments of a merchant ship, I take it, is but the least part of the value of a woman, she carries a cargo of virtue and discretion rarely to be met with in so young a person; and which will prevent all risk of her capsizing from want of ballast during the voyage of life. Were you a plain sailor, sprung from a piece of junk, like Ned Cleaver, you might, nay, you ought to marry her at once. What should I care for the taunts of the world? Or why should the innocent child be punished for the crimes of her parents? But with you, who are the shoot of an old and venerable tree, that has drawn nutriment from the soil of Kent ever since the Heptarchy, and in which not one blasted or bastard branch appears, the case has a very different complexion. 'Tis prejudice all, I grant you, and her virtuous conduct does in reality bring her as much up to your level, or that of any body else, as it would do to mine. But how far you could persuade your father, who is as proud as Lucifer of his

family-tree,—how far, I say, you would succeed in persuading him to overlook such prejudices, and peacefully to submit to the insertion of this spurious graft, in the vain hope that nobody will examine into the history of its production, I leave it for yourself to judge. To expect that Amherst Oakenwold could marry without the busy world finding out who his wife is, would be to expect that the tongues of silly fools and gossiping women would be for ever dumb; and how far your descendants will thank you for giving them so questionable a stock, I think you may easily decide. But what is the use, after all, of my preaching, or of my giving opinions or advices, which Miss Malcolm's answer will render superfluous? I think you were rash in writing without more mature deliberation. But since you have so written, deliberation is now of no avail; for should the young Lady accept of the proposals you sent her this morning, your honour cannot now permit you to recede, and you must marry her in defiance of your father, and all man and woman kind; and if, on the other hand, she should persist in what I must call her highly laudable, her magnanimous refusal, your hopes of

prevailing with her to yield to persuasion must be at an end."

Whilst the friends were thus engaged, O'Gollochar tapped at the door. He was the bearer of a letter to Amherst, that was indeed calculated to put a period to all his air-built visions. It ran in these words:—

“ She who can call herself by no other name than that of Eliza Malcolm, is deeply affected by the noble generosity displayed in Amherst's communication. She freely confesses that it has raised him, if possible, higher than ever in her estimation; but, for that very reason, she is but the deeper impressed by the sense of duty, now more than ever imperative on her, never to sully, by the impurity of her blood, that which has flowed uncontaminated for so many generations in his family. No! never can Eliza Malcolm be his wife! —yet dear, while she lives, shall his remembrance be to her, and the only earthly comfort of her broken heart will be to think of the virtue, and to pray for the happiness, of him whom she loved too much to permit him to sacrifice himself for her. She now bids him solemnly and fondly farewell for ever!!!”

These words seemed to have been written under great agitation, for many of them were almost illegible. Amherst's doubts as to the possibility of their union had dissolved before the ardour of his passion, and he could hardly even yet be persuaded that Miss Malcolm's answer was so very decisive of his fate as it really was. For some time he argued wildly with Cleaver, until at length being compelled to admit the truth, even from the very weakness of his own unsubstantial arguments, he threw himself in an agony on the bed, and wept unceasingly. Cleaver did all in his power to comfort him. But his affliction was beyond all comfort, and his sympathizing friend saw the necessity of allowing his grief to take its own course. Unfit for society, he was obliged to make slight indisposition an apology for keeping his own apartment for the rest of the day. All night long he tossed unceasingly, the blood in his veins boiling, and his temples throbbing, from the effect of his mental sufferings.

In the morning he was still in so disturbed and unhappy a state, that Cleaver proposed to him to return to England, hoping that change of scene, and above all, absence from objects calculated to

excite associations, keeping up the fever of his passion, might soon restore him to himself. Amherst rather obeyed than consented,—exhibiting every symptom of the most listless carelessness as to what might now become of him. Cleaver undertook to apologize to the hospitable Baronet, and Lady Sanderson, for their sudden departure, which he proposed should take place next day; and thus all their arrangements were speedily made.

When O'Gollochar heard of their purpose, he was frantic. He went straight to his master, and with his eyes swollen with tears, begged of him, in the most pitiful manner, to remember how his honour had promised to allow him time to settle his little love matters before he should return to Kent. Amherst was too deeply occupied by his own miseries to attend to those of his servant. With a frigid apathy, O'Gollochar had never seen him exhibit before, he carelessly told him that he might go and do what he pleased. The Irishman, who had been sobbing very audibly, whilst he expected that his master was to refuse him time to go to Eaglesholme, having now interpreted his words and manner into some-

thing tantamount to a dismissal, stared at him for some time in silent astonishment,—and then striking his hands violently over his eyes, he burst out in a fit of vociferous complaint, more powerful than any he had ever before exhibited.

“Och, then, is it this way that your honour’s honour would be after using me?—Sure, sure, and I hav’n’t a bit o’ me desarved to be traited in this manner!—Och, what is it I have done that you should be so cruel?—Och, sure I’ll never win over it!”—and his sobs actually put a stop to his further utterance.

Amherst was amazed.—“What, in the name of Heaven, is the matter with you, my good fellow?” said he to him.—The expression, “good fellow,” pronounced in a tone of voice in itself extremely soothing, did more to reassure O’Gollochiar than a volume of eloquence. He took his fingers from his eyes, and surveying Amherst’s countenance with attention, and reading there mingled astonishment and compassion, he burst into a fresh ecstasy of tears,—but they were tears of joy.

“Och, sure after all, your honour has maybe

been joking me?—Sure you wouldn't go for to turn me off so carelessly,—I that would follow your honour all over the world, in spite of all the Pingles or Spindles, aye, or Pegtops, that may be whirling on its surface? And sure I love her too, (as I'll make bould to say,) as much as man can love woman.—But your honour has been so kind to me, taking me when I had no charackter, out o' the very dirt, as a body may say—that I would not go for to leave you for all the wives in Britain, aye, or in Ireland itself,—or France into the bargain. But if I could but have half an hour to go and see Ma'amselle now,—who knows but she might maybe consint to be Mrs O'Gollochar on the spot? or if not, maybe she might come after me by and bye to Kent,—for sure and sartain she has tould me, over and over again, that she will marry no one else. And if your honour would only give me your consint now to my giving myself away, sure I wouldn't be a bit worse a sarvant, becaise herself would be sitting at home, making, maybe, your honour's shirts, or tacking lace to your ruffles,—for she is a mighty handy body at all them soort o' things."

So saying, he set off, full of hope, to make his

last assault, *par coup de main*, on the tender heart of Mademoiselle Epingle.

“How happy is that poor fellow!” thought Amherst,—“and why am not I so too? Bitter, bitter fate!”—and he relapsed into his former state of despondency.

CHAPTER II.

He said, and wept; then spread his sails before
The winds ———

DRYDEN.

IT was towards evening before O'Gollochar returned. His face betrayed a somewhat mixed expression, making it more difficult to interpret than usual. It might have escaped Amherst altogether, had not the thought that his servant came from Eaglesholme, made him instinctively put some questions to him.

“ Well, Cornelius,” said he, with a serious air, and a half suppressed sigh, “ how have you settled *your* love affair !” laying the emphasis in spite of himself upon the pronoun.

The Irishman was full of his information, and only wanted to be tapped by one leading question.

“ In troth, and sure enough she is to be Mrs

O'Gollochar," said he; "but then it won't be just yet awhile, bekease your honour sees as how she is a good soort of a kind-hearted little soul, and faith, though she be a Frenchwoman, it would bother an Irishwoman's self to be kinder. And so you see, your honour, she made me sensible, that she awes as much duty to her Lady as I do to your honour,—and so not a budge will she budge from her at the present time, bekease she says that her Lady is in sore grief, and sad affliction, that would be enough to kill the merriest cow in Kilkenny, and that it would be barbarious to lave her till she plucks up her spirits a bit;—so I couldn't say nay to that, as your honour knows. I couldn't ask the poor thing to desart her mistress in her misfortunes. Och, and maybe, says I to her, it 'il all come round about yet.—'Troth,' says she, 'Corney, (only she didn't spake such good English as I am doing,) and the not a prospect of that I seen at all,' says she, 'at the present time, anyway,' says she; 'so we must e'en bide a turn,' says she, 'till we see how things fall out.—But,' says she, 'as sure as the Bog of Allan is in Ireland, I'll be yours, and not a body else's.' Wid that I kisses her,

and outs with a lily-white tester, and breaks it into two bits, and swears to each other, and are, for a matter of that, as good as married. So I parted from her with some ado, and she is to write to me at Oakenwold, and to tell me all about herself and her mistress, poor soul !”

Amherst’s heart bled afresh. His misery, indeed, became so acute, that it drove him almost distracted. His servant had hardly left him, when he suddenly took the wild determination of going to Eaglesholme, in the hope of seeing her.

Without covering his head, slipshod, and in dishabille as he was, he ran, or rather flew towards the castle, with his mind so occupied, that he felt not he touched the earth, and noticed not the objects he passed, until its drawbridge rang beneath his hasty tread. He pulled the chain of the great bell. The old Swiss came,—but he no sooner perceived who gave the summons, than with his thick lips firmly pressed together, he shook his huge head solemnly and sternly, and then, with the most imperturbable gravity, slowly and silently retreated round the angle of the wall into his lodge. Amherst rang furiously a second time, but he was altogether unattended to.

Not a step was heard within the walls. He surveyed the buildings all over, but not a human being was visible. His wounded heart sank within him. His extravagant attempt had been like the unnatural effort, sometimes made in the last hours of life, and the failure of his energy was great in proportion to the magnitude of the previous exertion. His strange figure now struck him for the first time. Filled with shame, and with a soul subdued almost unto death, and a head throbbing with a thousand antagonist emotions, he turned away from a gate which had so often opened to admit him to happiness—that gate, which he felt enclosed all that could ever give him joy,—nay, all in which he could ever feel interest on earth, but which was now for ever shut against him. To attempt to describe his sufferings would be impossible. In a state of delirium, he rushed towards Sanderson Mains, and regained his chamber without having been missed.

Next day, at Cleaver's entreaty, he summoned resolution enough to go down stairs to thank Sir Alisander and Lady Sanderson for all their kindness, and to participate in their last hospitable meal previous to his departure. He, indeed,

could hardly on this occasion be said to partake of it. But Cleaver did ample justice to it for both. He made the grand tour of all the good things, taking an affectionate leave of such of them as were dainties peculiar to Scotland, and, like a lover who returns to bid farewell again and again, each parting salutation being kinder and more prolonged than the last—

“When to say farewell, he finds so sweet a sorrow,
That he could say farewell until to-morrow.”

He stole another, and another morsel, till, unable to do more, he besought Mr Brouster to remove the temptation from him, if he had any regard for his life, declaring that he had laid in a sufficient store for the whole voyage.

“I have given orders,” said Sir Alisander, “that your sea-stock shall be attended to, and I have particularly directed some of those things you liked to be put on board your yacht; and you must allow us to send you, now and then, some of our Scottish rarities, as occasional remembrances of the very agreeable friendship accident has enabled us to form with you. Mr Oakenwold, I have had much less of your excellent company than I could have wished. But I trust

you will not forget Scotland, and that you and your friend will soon return, to make the inmates of Sanderson Mains again happy in your society."

But I shall wave all description of the warm parting of Cleaver, and the distress of mind Amherst experienced in being compelled to bear up, and to rid himself of that abstraction, which must have given him an appearance of coldness of manner, had he not made an effort to struggle against it. Suffice it to say, that the regrets on both sides were many, and that the dejection Amherst betrayed, from the more powerful though secret cause, passed very well off in conjunction with the "God bless you, my dear Sir,—I shall never forget your kindness and hospitality;"—"May you enjoy every happiness, my dear Lady!" that (with a round drop in each eye) accompanied Cleaver's last hearty shake of the hand.

The gentlemen got on board, and as they were standing round the headland, they observed a waving of handkerchiefs from a group of people on the summit of it. By the aid of his glass, Cleaver discovered, to his surprise, that Sir Alexander, though in general little disposed to move, had actually had himself and his Lady transported

thither, in order to have the pleasure of wafting to them, in that manner, a last adieu. The honest sailor's heart filled again. He called to his lads to stand to their guns, and to give a royal salute, a piece of service honest Jack Markham performed with the greatest alacrity and pleasure. They scudded along, with a fine breeze, and the group of figures on the headland, and then the bold rock itself, and all its grand accompanying features, melted into distance, and, like the passing events of human life, they dissolved as perfectly away from the visual orb as if they had never existed as realities before it. How often, alas ! does it happen, that even the very image of those kind beings, who have been thus left behind, vanishes with the substantial form of the land that holds them ! But theirs were not hearts of such materials as to allow grateful remembrances to be thus transient. There was, indeed, one individual beneath those fleecy clouds hanging over the misty mountains, from which they were so fast retreating, whose form and face was ever present to the mind of Amherst. With her he held such intercourse as two kindred souls will hold with each other, however distant, or however divided they

may be in body ; and this rendered him quite unfit for every other species of converse. Cleaver had judgment enough to perceive that it would have been cruel, as well as vain, to harass him by attempts to break in upon his thoughts. Besides, his whole mind was engaged in the navigation of his little vessel, so Amherst was left to the undisturbed possession of himself during the voyage, which was prosperous, and devoid of all adventure.

The old Admiral was so rejoiced to behold his son again, that for a time he quite forgot to upbraid him for the decided step he had taken, in quitting Oakenwold Manor.

After his first parental embraces were over, however, and Aunt Margery had pressed forward to have her share, and was in the act of loading her nephew with every possible term of endearment, in her shrill and piping treble, Sir Cable's deep grumbling thorough bass was heard to come rolling in, like the growl of the approaching storm, becoming louder and louder, until it broke articulately forth.

“ Why, Ammy, my fine fellow, it was but a scurvy trick you and the old porpus Cleaver

served me after all, to slip your cable and go to sea, without giving your father and Admiral a signal of your intentions; above all, you, who both of you knew me so well. Why, zounds, Sir, what did you take me for? Did you suppose that I would not have listened to reason? You know very well that I am always disposed to lend an ear to sound argument, and to do what is fair and proper, when things are put in their true light. Then to be away in another country for so long a time, without so much as a scrape of a pen to let me know whether you were dead or alive, or to inquire for your old father! Why, Sir, I have been cursedly ill, Sir!—very ill, indeed, with the infernal gout,—all owing to your having ruffled my temper, too!—though, Heaven knows, I never get into a passion!—that is, except when I have very good cause! I swear I had a great mind to have married Miss Delasaux myself!”

“Dear me,” exclaimed Miss Margery, “dear me, brother Cable, that would have been a strange match!”

“Strange, you old goose! and what would have been strange about it?—Sure as old men as

I am have married,—aye, and have had large families too !”

“ Very true, brother Cable,—and to be sure, she is a fine, sensible, clever, sweet disposed girl, Miss Delassaux, and a great admirer of canary birds, for so she told me, the very last time she saw mine. Miss Oakenwold, says she to me——”

“ Pshaw ! damn it, Madge, never mind what she said !—You’re an old fool I tell ye !—Miss Delassaux is artful enough, I dare say, but as to sense, I don’t believe she has an ounce of it in her whole composition, after what I have heard of the manner in which she has ruined her fortune by her fooleries and gewgaws. And then as to sweet temper !—report belies her confoundedly, if she be not a very devil under the mask of an angel. Now, to tell you the truth, Amherst,” said he, turning again to his son, “ we have escaped a coral reef in steering clear of that same syren. Her singing, and her guitaring, and her soft looks, and long eye-lashes, might have made a hole in my heart, old and tough as it is ; but I have heard such accounts of her extravagance, as well as of her violent temper, (a fault, by the

bye, I particularly abominate, the more, perhaps, because it is one I never give way to myself, and, consequently, have less excuse for in others,) that you were not gone a fortnight, till I firmly resolved in my own mind, that you should have nothing to do with her. But heyday ! what's the matter with you, lad ? —you don't seem well, —surely you don't begin to regret that the match is broken off ?—though, zounds ! nothing is more likely, such is the perverse disposition of youth. But I don't care.—Remember I have said it, Sir, and I will be obeyed.—You shall never match with that damned Italianized piece of folly, if there were ne'er a woman in England besides,—so don't pretend to say you will,—I won't be made a fool of, I tell ye !—so don't put me in a passion !”——

And saying so, (though one foot still wore the large gouty shoe, and he was yet very lame,) he put his crutches under his arm, and with an alacrity he had not displayed since we last had occasion to notice him, he stumped backwards and forwards on his quarter-deck, fuming and fretting, and, at the same time, grinning and wincing with each new twinge of the gout, till, exhausted

by pain and passion together, he sank again into his easy chair.

Amherst, with whom a bodily disease, arising in a great measure from his mental sufferings, had been daily increasing during the voyage, and which the fatigue of his ride from Dover had brought to a speedy crisis, had really felt a faintness come upon him at the time his father had remarked it. He seized the moment of the Admiral's silence to explain this circumstance to him, and to assure him, that, so far from feeling distressed by the intelligence he had just conveyed to him, he was truly rejoiced to find that his father was at last aware of Miss Delassaux's character.

His indisposition rapidly increasing, he was compelled to entreat his father's indulgence, and to declare that he felt it necessary to retire to his apartment to endeavour to check it by taking a little repose.

Miss Margery was alarmed. "Take some of my dill-water, dear Ammy!" said she; "I'll fetch it in a moment—or some of my decoction of vervain, comfrey, and cardamums—nothing so good for keeping off faintness; or I'll get you"——

"Damn your dill-water and your comfrey and

cardamums !” exclaimed the Admiral in much alarm ; “ if he is really ill we must send for a physician.—Here, Cuddy ! John ! Thomas ! where are ye all ?” and ringing the bell like fury, the servants came running in, one by one in succession, from different parts of the old mansion, and each in his turn was dispatched a different way for medical assistance.

Amherst did all he could to prevent this, assuring his father that his illness was probably nothing more than the effects of the sea voyage, their passage from Scotland having been rough though speedy.

“ Impossible !” exclaimed Sir Cable, interrupting him. “ Utterly impossible, I tell ye. What ! you the son of a man who has lived, I may say, fifty years at sea ! Pshaw, nonsense ! I never had a squeamish minute at sea in my life. I took to the water from my very nest like a young wild duck—you sea sick ! you may as well talk of a young Newfoundland whelp being sea sick. I tell ye sea sickness is not in the breed. But do, my dear boy, go to bed, for you do look confoundedly ill, that’s certain. And, Margery, d’ye hear, send Mrs Glass to give the lad a warm cordial

drink, and none of your damned dill or ditch-water, d'ye hear !”

The Admiral, amidst all his violence, began at last to be really shocked by his son's appearance, which had not at first struck him so forcibly. His impatience of temper, that induced him to send express for medical advice, was most fortunate on this occasion, for it probably saved Amherst's life. A low nervous fever came on, with which he struggled many days. During great part of the time his recovery was considered by the physicians as very doubtful. Aunt Margery could do nothing but go about from room to room wringing her hands, and uttering most incoherent ejaculations of distress and apprehension. The Admiral was in the utmost misery. He forgot the gout altogether, and, with his chair placed by his son's bedside, he watched over him with the most painful anxiety. Every moment he looked cautiously within the curtains, and when his eyes rested on the emaciated face and sunken eyeballs of his son, who, for a great part of the time, was unconscious of his father's presence, the old man would fall back in his chair in an agony of grief, which all his affected heroism of character could not disguise,

and, hiding his face with his hands, would give way to feelings too violent to be suppressed.

How eagerly would he endeavour to read the fate of his son in the eyes of his medical attendants, at each successive visit they paid him, their hopes, but much more frequently their fears, being reflected from his countenance as if from a faithful mirror.—Often was he heard to curse Brokenhurst-Hall, its inhabitants, and his own folly, for having been the cause of the sudden step his son had taken in leaving home, and exposing himself, as he believed, to some accidental contagion.

At length the disease fortunately gave way, and hope began to dawn. The difficulty now was to keep the Admiral's growing joy somewhat within bounds, to prevent any injury to the patient in his weak state. The medical men had enough to do to accomplish this; but we must now leave them to their task, that we may bring forward the history of some of the other personages of our story.

CHAPTER III.

She was so expensive, that the income of three dukes was not enough to supply her extravagance.

ARBUTHNOT.

Why do they decorate themselves with artificial flowers, the various colours of herbs, needle-works of exquisite skill, quaint devices, and perfume their persons, wear inestimable riches in precious stones, crown themselves with gold and silver, use coronets and tiaras of various fashions, deck themselves with pendants, bracelets, ear-rings, chains, girdles, rings, pins, spangles, embroideries, ribatoes, versicular ribbands? Why do they make such glaring shows with their scarfs, feathers, fans, masks, furs, laces, tiffanies, ruffs, falls, calls, cuffs, damasks, velvets, cloth of gold, silver tissues? Such setting up with sarks, straitening with whalebone,—why, it is but as a day-net catcheth larks, to make young ones stoop to them. And when they are disappointed, they dissolve into tears, which they wipe away like sweat, weep with the one eye, laugh with the other, or, as children, weep and cry they can both together, and as much pity's to be taken of a woman weeping as of a goose going bare foot.

BURTON.

THE rumours regarding the Delassauxs which had reached the ears of Sir Cable Oakenwold soon after his son's departure for Scotland, were not

without foundation. For some years after the arrival of Lady Delassaux and her niece in England, and while Miss Delassaux was yet under age, she was made to submit, though with difficulty, to the haughty commands of her only surviving guardian. But being naturally of a fiery and ungovernable temper, which an injudicious and unsystematic control could hardly be expected to correct, the young lady began to presume upon her rights, and to exercise her own will, at a period much earlier than is usual with even the most forward of her sex. Some discoveries she cunningly made, enabled her to set Lady Deborah's authority at defiance, and to assume the government of herself and fortune. Although her aunt, perhaps, might have legally insisted on continuing the exertion of her authority for some time longer, she, on her part, had secret reasons for considering it prudent to give way.

Lady Deborah was conscious that had Miss Delassaux called her to account for the expenditure of her fortune, she would have found it a difficult matter to explain how large sums of money, deeply affecting her estate, had disappeared. Nature seemed never to have intended that her im-

perious temper should be placed under the subjection of another; but she was compelled to bow down her proud spirit, and to become the most submissive of human beings to a young girl, who treated her on every occasion like an obtrusive relation, an incumbrance both to her actions and to her estate. Sir Godmansbury's income had chiefly arisen from certain public situations he had held, and his Lady's high and extravagant habits were not such as to improve their precarious produce; she had, therefore, comparatively speaking, nothing left to live on at his death, the wrecks of her own small fortune having been wasted away. Her means of support, therefore, were drawn from her niece's estate.

The aunt and niece being so affected towards each other, it is no wonder that their intercourse should have been one of mutual irritation, and productive of frequent unpleasant scenes. On Lady Deborah's side there was something very peculiar in conduct; for though she scrupled not to show to others a disposition haughty, overbearing, and proud, so unlike the softness of human nature, and still more that belonging to the softer sex, yet she not only bent subservient to the will of her

niece, but instead of showing any dislike to her who tyrannized over her, she, on every occasion, where such a feeling could possibly be called into action, displayed a strong degree of attachment, too natural to be mistaken for any thing but real.

Notwithstanding her luxurious rustication, notwithstanding the conversion of Brokenhurst into something liker the fairy palace of an eastern romance, than any thing to which a parallel could be found on earth, time often hung heavy with Miss Delassaux in the country. She therefore spent a great part of her year in London, where, then as well as now, eminence in extravagance and folly was the only indispensable passport of admission to a certain circle of self-constituted select, who looked with contempt on every one around them, of whatever talents, birth, or fortune, who were without these undefinable somethings, forming the free-masonry of their society.

For this circle Miss Delassaux was, indeed, supereminently qualified, and the orbit she moved in was high and conspicuous. There, in a series of balls, masquerades, and gay parties of every description, she ran the feverish and tasteless round of heartless dissipation, to the no small

deterioration of her fortune, as well as of her face. As to the latter, its features being young, and naturally exquisite, were easily restored to more than their pristine lustre, by the use of artificial means ; but the former was not so easily refitted. Nothing seemed so likely to put matters to rights in this particular as an advantageous marriage, and various schemes were accordingly laid for this laudable purpose, during a winter in town ; but the campaign ended without any thing effectual having been done, notwithstanding the great expenditure of *matériel de guerre*.

It was after returning to the country, that the idea of a marriage with Amherst Oakenwold suggested itself to Miss Delassaux, and we have seen the artifices she employed to accomplish it. But after the distressing scene at the hovel on the edge of the race-ground, she saw that the game was decidedly up, and having become really attached to Amherst during their short acquaintance, she retired to her room in a despair that kept her weeping bitterly for one whole day. Whether any tears of remorse mingled with those of disappointed love, we cannot tell, nor is it our business to inquire how long the recollection of

Amherst remained. Lady Deborah's ephemeral influence expired the moment her services ceased to be of avail, and she was again thrown aside, like an old shoe, which, long since dismissed from its legitimate services, has been resumed as a temporary slipper, until no longer wanted.

It was but a little while before the return of Amherst to Oakenwold Manor from Scotland, that a certain Count Alonzo di Montemarone, an Italian, whom Miss Delassaux had accidentally met in London, and to whom she had given a kind of general invitation, arrived at Brokenhurst. This nobleman was said to possess large estates in the Neapolitan territory. His person was handsome, and his manners, though not such as characterised the English man of fashion of the day, were yet of that smooth, easy kind, that covers every Italian from his birth like his skin.

The arrival of this Count appeared to renew and augment those unpleasant scenes, so frequent between the aunt and niece, previous to the formation of their league against the Oakenwold estates. The Count's attentions to Miss Delassaux were extremely marked, and her reception

of them was far from discouraging. But her aunt, though she showed so much attention and civility to the stranger, as might almost have been mistaken for an approbation of his suit, yet, when in private with her niece, she employed her utmost eloquence to prejudice her against him.

But this was not easily done; nay, the very circumstance of Lady Deborah appearing to dislike him, made Miss Delassaux, from the sheer spirit of contradiction, more determined than ever to encourage him. After one of their daily disputes regarding him, Lady Deborah would leave the room with a countenance, where her efforts to preserve serenity could but ill disguise her strong expression of distress and mortification.

This sometimes struck Miss Delassaux so forcibly, as to do more in shaking her resolution, than all her aunt could have said, and often made her think, and hesitate for a time, as to the course she was pursuing. But then again came the handsome Italian, with his tender compliments, his harmonious voice, and his protestations of entire devotion—his fascinating canzonettes, so delicately accompanied by his guitar—his glowing descriptions of enchanting Italy, in

the genial climate, and under the cloudless sky of so elysian a country, the fair flower he worshipped had first seen the light, and where nature had intended it to bloom. His frequent, though careless and apparently accidental talk, about the magnificence of his Palazzo at Naples, the beauty of his villas, and the grandeur of his *Castell sopra la Montagna*, commanding some of the richest scenes of the Apennines; his immense territories, and his splendid retinue, from the tedious parade of which he professed himself so happy to have escaped for a time, by his visit to England,—these were with her resistless, and love having already taken possession of her heart, all her aunt's prudent cautions were disregarded.

Matters were in this state, when Miss Delasaux signified her intention of giving a splendid masqued ball. Cards were accordingly issued to the different families in the neighbourhood, and to ensure the assemblage of a sufficient crowd, invitations were even dispatched to London, to be dispersed in the circle the young lady had so lately moved in there. The house was magnificently decorated, and Mr Hawkins, the worthy steward,

made many difficulties about obtaining money for the vast expenditure it required.

This gentleman has been already introduced to the reader by name, nor is it necessary that he should know much more of him now, except that on all such occasions as the present, he took especial care to deal with those who were most likely to be pressing in their demands on his mistress, that his own pecuniary assistance might come with the greater effect. But Miss Delassaux took little concern in such matters. If these vulgar considerations are ever entertained at all by the votary of fashion and pleasure, they are generally conjured away by the first twinkle of the lights of the ball-room, and the first notes of the violins which put the dancers in motion.

In taking Miss Delassaux's directions, Mr Hawkins never once exalted his voice above the whining tone of a most obsequious servant, and upon this occasion, as upon every other, he carefully avoided the introduction of any thing so unpalatable as advice.

The ball then was got up in a style of splendour, outdoing every thing Miss Delassaux had ever before exhibited. It was difficult to say

whether the decorations of the magnificent mansion, arranged under the immediate eyes of the Lady and the Count, were more to be admired for the richness of the materials they were composed of, or the taste with which they were selected and combined. Then the surrounding grounds were peculiarly well calculated to receive and give proper effect to those magical illusions produced by multiplicity of lights—music—and gay draperies—and moving figures in fanciful costumes, dispersed here and there amongst the trees, the temples, and along the verdant banks of the pieces of water, under the obscurity of a deliciously mild night, and a balmy air, breathing a mingled perfume from extensive shrubberies, filled with exotics. So inviting, indeed, was the pleasure of rambling unconfined by any walls but those of leaves, that superb as every thing was within doors, the house was in a manner entirely deserted, and its thousand lights continued to blaze in comparative silence and loneliness, while the continued buzz of voices, and the frequent laugh of joy ran through the varied alleys, that swarmed with human beings beneath the pale glimmering of the lamps, almost as thickly as

they had done with those myriads of bees that came to plunder the flowers of their honey in the broad sunshine of day. But more of the poison than of the nectareous fluid was extracted by these nocturnal insects.

Miss Delassaux walked out, hanging upon the arm of the tall and handsome Italian Cavalier. They were unmasked, but very gorgeously attired in the costume of Spanish Grandees. Their dresses shone with jewels, which, if not all of real value, had at least the appearance of being of price almost inestimable. However that might be, made up as they were, by every thing that dress and ornament could do, it was impossible to look on them without admiration, so perfect were the forms, and so noble was the bearing of both. As they promenaded through the various walks, the masks instinctively gave way, and all eyes were turned upon them, whilst the queen of the entertainment, her soul swelling with conscious pre-eminence, returned the bows and compliments of her guests with an air, where self-approbation and condescension were delicately blended. Admiration it was indeed impossible to refuse, but as the libation was poured out in their path, en-

vy and malignity lurked at the bottom, and were expressed in loud and bitter whispers as the crowd closed behind them. Such is fashion, that amongst all those groups who were revelling in frenzied mirth at the expence of the mistress of the demesne, there was hardly one individual who did not join in the gibe and the sneer that followed her.

Lady Deborah, who had strongly opposed this fête while it was yet in contemplation, was peculiarly out of humour on the night of its taking place. Seeing, however, that there was now no remedy, she endeavoured to assume a placidity to which her soul was of late very much a stranger. According to the etiquette prescribed by her niece, which she was obliged to adopt, she too, though dressed in the character of a lady abbess, was unmasked. Her manner and her looks so far corresponded with the recluse habit she wore, that she seemed, amidst all the surrounding noise and gaiety, to be entirely wrapped up in the gloomy thoughts of a religieuse. Nor was the fact very much at variance with appearances. The wild merriment of the scene recalled to her some of those nights of a similar description which she had

passed in her earlier days, when her feelings were very different, when, borne on the bosom of the triumphant tide of prosperity, she commanded the gratification of every passion as it arose; but the recollection now filled her bosom with adders. Good Heavens! what would she now have given to have had her years to live over again! To religion she had indeed at one time turned with the hope of consolation. But, ignorant of the grand principles of our faith, she could not participate in its rational hopes, and her malady was rather augmented than allayed, and her guilty mind was filled with the most horrible anticipations of the future.

These she endeavoured to banish whenever they arose, but generally without effect, and on this night they came upon her, and adhered to her with an unusual degree of tenacity. She even seemed at times to be unconscious that she was not alone; and in the midst of the most perfect seeming abstraction, she would suddenly start away, as if stung by some fresh remembrance, and then, pressing after her niece through the mazes of the pleasure-ground, she would hang on her rear, as if in anxious contemplation

of all her actions, and as if afraid to lose her. Now and then she would join her for a moment, but when she did so, she was but ill received, and there was always an evident inclination on the part of the young Lady to escape from her.

CHAPTER IV.

But the long pomp, the midnight masquerade,
With all the freaks of wanton wealth arrayed,
In these, ere triflers half their wish obtain,
The toiling pleasure sickens into pain,
And, even while Fashion's brightest arts decoy,
The heart, distrusting, asks if this be joy?

GOLDSMITH.

The prophecies of wizards old,
Increased her terror, and her fall foretold.

WALLER.

MISS DELASSAUX was sitting with the Count in the Temple of Venus, which, at the moment we are now speaking of, was illuminated by a glory of lights, that might have done sufficient honour to the festival of the goddess herself, in her own Paphian bowers. The trees immediately inclosing the grassy recess where the temple stood, were hung with tastefully disposed garlands of coloured lamps,

the reflection of which faintly glimmered from the surface of the artificial lake in front. On the water floated a vast and dark body, indistinctly seen against the deep shadows of the groves lining the opposite shores, where the impenetrable gloom was unbroken by a single ray of illumination.

A grand flight of rockets suddenly shot up from the mass on the water, penetrating the dark vault of Heaven to an immense height, and a general shout was immediately heard from all parts of the gardens. This was instantly followed by a rush of many feet towards the lake, and particularly towards the temple, where Miss Delassaux and the Count were seated.

“ Let us quickly embark, Count,” said she, “ we shall otherwise become embarrassed by the crowd. Let them enjoy the view of the fireworks from the shore, whilst their groups will tend to heighten their effect to us, as we shall, in our turn, contribute, by the addition of our figures, to embellish the spectacle about to be presented to them ;” so saying, she hastened with him to a gilded boat in waiting for her, manned by six rowers in white dresses.

Miss Delassaux was so glad to escape from the throng, that she hurried on board the boat, without perceiving she was followed by her aunt. Her plan had been to rid herself, by this manœuvre, of Lady Deborah, who had appeared to watch her very closely during the early part of the evening, and she was so provoked to find herself defeated, that her anger knew no bounds. She went so far, indeed, as to order the rowers to return to the shore, with the intention of relanding her aunt, when happening to reflect that she could not do so, without subjecting herself to the chance of being overwhelmed by a swarm of applications for permission to get on board, and remembering that it was absolutely necessary to keep the boat with her, to prevent being followed, she reluctantly and angrily permitted the boatmen to pursue their course.

They had no sooner ascended the steps of the immense floating body, than a discharge of guns took place, and it was almost instantaneously illuminated by a glare of light, that exhibited every part of it minutely. It was, in fact, a huge raft, covered by a light superstructure of wood, very naturally shaped and painted to represent a

rocky islet. It was covered over with evergreens and flowers, happily disposed, and several small trees were placed on it, in so picturesque and natural a manner, as to appear growing from its crevices and inequalities. These had an incalculable number of lamps hanging amongst their leaves, which being lighted all at once by some unknown and ingenious contrivance, had produced the magical effect of its sudden illumination.

On a prominent part of an artificial rock at one end, sat Miss Delassaux and the Count; and as neither of them seemed disposed to make room enough to accommodate her, Lady Deborah was compelled to take her place lower down, near their feet, and close to the mouth of a cavity communicating with the hollow interior of the machine. This was made to represent the entrance to a cavern, the dark mouth of which produced a powerful effect, when contrasted with the full glare of the lamps.

The unwieldy pile was towed slowly along by people in boats, and then made to perform various evolutions, within a short distance of the shore, amidst loud shouts of applause from the gay multitude. From time to time, very bril-

liant and beautiful fireworks were displayed from the summit of a pigmy mountain, that rose from the end of the islet opposite to where Miss De-lassaux sat ; and, after these had been continued at intervals for a considerable time, a grand artificial explosion, followed by a magnificent jet of flame, burst from the summit of the peak, whence the fire-works had been discharged. This very superb *feu d'artifice* was intended to represent a volcano. It illuminated the whole surface of the sheet of water, and even the trees on its banks, and lighted up the dense phalanx of faces on the shore. Reiterated acclamations were excited by it. By means of fresh supplies of various combustibles, administered by people concealed below, it produced an imitation of all those various changes in the eruption, exhibited by nature in the real volcano.

Whilst the men, who managed the fire-works, were all employed, and out of sight, the trio were suddenly alarmed by the appearance of a figure from the dark mouth of the cavern. It was a tall and majestic man, habited in a green and yellow Moorish dress, its sweeping drapery giving an imposing effect to his height. In his hand he held

a long white wand, and his face was partly covered by a ghastly bearded mask, leaving his dark and piercing eyes fully disclosed, and giving to the rest of his visage the cold and pallid hue of death. The figure stood motionless for a few minutes, the blue light falling strong upon his face; the eyes of the party were fastened on it with astonishment, not unmingled with horror, and even apprehension. Fixed as a statue, his head erect, his arm extended, and the end of his rod resting upon the ground, it seemed as if a corpse had left the grave to place itself before them.

There was something so appalling in this apparition, that, although the plan of the amusements of the night fully authorized every species of disguise, it was some time before any of them could command sufficient recollection to question it. At last, Miss Delassaux assuming a language and tone suitable to the humour of the evening and the occasion:—

“ Whence come ye, reader of the stars ?” said she, “ for so thy looks and habit would proclaim thee ; deign to answer us—whence come ye ?”

“ From the tomb !” uttered the figure in a deep sepulchral voice, to which the mask gave

additional solemnity by the immobility of its lips.

“Unfold thy name and purpose,” said Miss Delassaux, in a more tremulous voice.

“Abulcassim the Magician, who, after having descended to the world below, to dive into the secrets of the grave, now comes to warn thee of thy folly!” said the spectre in the same solemn tone and immoveable manner.

“Go on then, good master,” said Miss Delassaux, endeavouring to hide her alarm, but at the same time edging herself nearer to the Count; “but let not your admonitions exceed the gentle licence of this night of revelry.”

“I come not to flatter, Lady; there be enough here to minister to your diseased appetite by hailing your approach with honeyed words, but only that their envenomed stings may the more certainly pierce thee. If dread warning from the grave can awaken virtue and wisdom in thy bosom, my errand is to rouse thee!”

“Surely,” said the Count, with a foreign accent, “surely you do not mean to be so rude as to accuse this beautiful and all-accomplished lady of a want of either of these qualities? The licence of the evening goes not to such a point; and”——

The Magician seemed to hear him not ; with his eyes still bent on Miss Delassaux, he proceeded, as if he had not been interrupted,—

“ Leave the flowery but deceitful road of pleasure, Lady, if folly like thine can be called by such a name. Leave the road that leads thee to destruction. Seek, if thou can’st, though late, the rugged path of virtue and of wisdom ; its thorns and rocks alone can now afford thee shelter. Sunshine will depart, and storms will come anon. Think !—deeply think ! and nerve thee for the adverse blast :—One sole protector yet remains, whom future reformation alone can secure. Then, once again, resolve !”

Miss Delassaux was so much confounded by these portentous words, as well as with the solemnity of the appeal, that she was unable to reply. Her knight, too, felt either too much astonished, or too much alarmed to answer for her. Lady Deborah, however, who had been listening with very great attention, and who naturally enough imagined that this prophetic speech proceeded from some one who guessed at the perplexed state of her niece’s affairs, and who wished to mortify her in the midst of her glory, now made an

attempt to turn the direction of the stranger's attack.

“ Most renowned Magician, thy sage advices shall not be forgotten. Yea, unbeliever though thou art, thy stern but moral warning shall not be lost. Myself, the Lady Abbess, shall take our erring daughter within the holy precincts of our sanctuary, and there, by mild instruction, shall we wean her from the world. Thy Saracenic tongue gives chastisement too rough for such a gentle maid. Be mine the task to lay some softer penance on the tender girl,—yea, and to give her mild instruction;—a duty most delightful to Religion's voice.”

“ Religion's voice!!!” exclaimed the Magician, now, for the first time, starting from his fixed position as she spoke, and regarding her with a full and fiery eye, as he repeated her last words in a tone of thunder, that made even the proud and dauntless Lady Deborah quail before him, “ Darkest thou then talk of religion with hell itself in thy bosom? Speak not again, I tell thee, or I unfold the past horrors of thy guilty life—thy yet unexecuted crimes—thy future fate!—Thou bearest not now that petrifying Ægis on thy breast, which once as ill disguised thy lack of virtue as those

holy weeds do now befit thy foully feigned religion!—Beware!—thy inmost thoughts are known—the blow threatened by thine uplifted arm has fallen innocuous; else had thy full cup of wickedness overflowed, and dreadful and ignominious would have been thy punishment. Shrink, then, at the thought; for, know, thy future fate hangs on thy future conduct,—therefore Beware.”

Whilst the Magician was pouring forth this terrible threat, Lady Deborah sank down on her knees, and, with a look of bitter agony, that drew together her large eyebrows, and half hid her dark eyeballs, clenching her hands as he proceeded, she shrieked aloud, and, just as he had concluded, she fell backwards in a fit of strong convulsion. Meanwhile, Miss Delassaux and the Count had listened with astonishment to the vehemence of the stranger, whose words had become much too serious to be mistaken for those of mere sport. They were so much petrified by the result, that some moments elapsed before they ran to Lady Deborah. At length they raised her up, and chafed her hands and temples, and, by means of their exertions, her vital spirits were gradually recalled.”

“Where, where is he?” exclaimed she, her eyes rolling about with an air of frenzied anxiety and apprehension, as if desirous again to see, yet afraid to meet those of the Magician.—Where is he?” But he was gone!

The people on the float were all engaged within the artificial volcano; and the men in the boats, tired with towing the unwieldy mass after them, having rested on their oars for some moments, the floating island had been gradually drawn towards a grassy point, jutting into the lake from one side of the slope where the temple of Venus was situated. The Moor seizing this opportunity of escape, had sprung with one bound to the land. Now they could observe him clearing, with firm but solemn step, and folded arms, the gaping crowd, that gave way before him, as if the cold damp air of death had enveloped him, and carried pestilence along with it; and soon afterwards he was lost among the trees.

Lady Deborah, though somewhat recovered, remained in so faint and agitated a state, that she required the assistance of servants to enable her to reach the house, where she immediately sought her chamber, and was no more seen dur-

ing the night. The company who witnessed the scene at a distance, had, naturally enough, considered his appearance as no other than some auxiliary part of the performance of the evening. Lady Deborah's illness disquieted them not, nor perhaps would her death, or even that of Miss Delassaux have made much impression on such holiday hearts.

The amusements in the gardens being over, the ball-room was soon filled, and the pompous minuet, and the lively cotillion, alternated with each other. A superb supper was then announced, where there appeared every thing that luxury could desire. To preside over this, Miss Delassaux led the way, handed by the Count, who whispered a thousand common-place compliments in her ear. But notwithstanding his attentions, she retired jaded and dissatisfied to bed, and the last dregs of the company dispersed, lighted home by the broad morning sun, and flouted by the song of the early lark.

CHAPTER V.

How rev'rend is the face of this tall pile,
 Whose ancient pillars rear their marble heads,
 To bear aloft it's arch'd and ponderous roof,
 By its own weight made stedfast and immoveable.

CONGREVE.

Give but the word, we'll snatch this damsel up,
 And bear her off.

CATO.

Their mighty strokes their habergeons dismay'd,
 And naked made each other's manly spalles.

FAIRFAX.

THE reader is, no doubt, by this time desirous to know something of Lord Eaglesholme. The contusion he had received in his head from the pistol ball, gave him considerable uneasiness for a day or two, but he was soon restored to perfect health by the medical skill and attention of Dr Partenclaw, who, as it was the first time he had found footing within the castle, took particular

pains to prove himself worthy of having been called in, and the fee he received was such as to make him the less regret the rooting out of the nest of smugglers, and the temporary annihilation of his hopes of cheap claret and brandy.

All Lord Eaglesholme's attempts to discover his daughter in Scotland having proved ineffectual, he was no sooner convalescent, than he set out for London, where he had some hopes of gaining intelligence of her. After much minute and anxious inquiry, however, he began to be convinced that he had been mistaken in his conjectures, and in the deepest despair he was about to return to Scotland, when he received a letter from Madame Bossanville, giving him the soothing intelligence, that Eliza was again safe within the ancient castle of Eaglesholme.

Immediately on receipt of this happy news, he not only determined to remain in town to conclude the settlement of certain affairs demanding his attention, but for reasons best known to himself, he also resolved to write to Eliza to leave Eaglesholme as soon as circumstances would allow, and journeying by easy stages, to join him in London with all convenient speed.

It was long after the departure of the Dasher, that this paternal command reached Miss Malcolm. It found her in a state of low, nervous irritability, vainly endeavouring to occupy her mind by the employment of her hands, for she found it impossible to read. She succeeded, indeed, in busying her fingers mechanically, and her mind too was occupied; but it was with something very different from the work her fingers were engaged in. It was with her one cruel and continued struggle, to forget him whom she was doomed to have in her thoughts, as long as thought should remain with her. But this could not last long, for the struggle was fast wearing her away.

The letter of Lord Eaglesholme came in some measure as a relief, and in obedience to its command, she lost no time in preparing for her journey; with the faint hope that change of scene might do something to alleviate her sorrows, and trusting that she should be able to prevail on her father to permit her to retire with Madame Bosanville into the sanctuary of some foreign convent, where she might reside as a boarder, and

so spend the wretched remainder of her existence, if not in peace, at least hid from the world.

The knowledge she had obtained of the disreputable nature of her origin, had induced her, ever since the cruel discovery, to discontinue many of those gorgeous decorations so bountifully lavished on her by Lord Eaglesholme, which she had always taken a pride in wearing as his gifts, but which were now, she thought, as ill suited to her birth, as to her present feelings. She endeavoured, indeed, altogether to lower her state, and in this species of humiliation, she felt an indescribable sort of gratification. Under happier circumstances, she would have taken one of his Lordship's carriages for the journey, as well as such a number of attendants as might have befitted the niece of an Earl. But as in the hasty epistle which his Lordship had written to her, he had merely desired that Robertson should accompany her, as also Ferdinando, an Italian servant whom he particularly named, she felt that in taking them, she should be obeying his orders to the letter, and that after arranging thus much, she might, in all other respects, choose her own mode of travelling.

She accordingly signified her intention of performing the journey on horseback, accompanied by her maid, and the individuals we have mentioned.

This being by no means an uncommon mode of travelling, even for ladies, at the time we speak of, excited no great surprise, though Mr Robertson used the freedom of an old servant, to suggest the superior convenience of the coach, but without effect. Those were not the times when, as at present, post-horses and a travelling chariot could convey the traveller in four days to the metropolis, even from the distant spot where Miss Malcolm then was. So slow and tedious was the journey then rendered by bad roads, and bad machinery, that perhaps to a young lady of her equestrian powers, there was no way in which she could have got on so expeditiously and with so little trouble.

They travelled by easy stages, and little worth notice occurred until they reached the city of York, where Miss Malcolm resolved, on her own account, as well as on that of her attendants and their horses, to take a full day's rest. Having reposed at the inn for a great part of the day, she

walked out in the evening, attended by Robertson, to enjoy the effect of sunset upon that magnificent pile, which gives so venerable and dignified an air to the ancient city surrounding it. She had already surveyed it with great attention during a visit she had paid to it in the early part of the morning, and the holy and peaceful solemnity of its interior had been gratifying to her wounded soul, and awakened reflections, harmonizing with her future plans, and confirming her intentions. It was peculiarly gratifying to her in this second visit, for the twilight without deepened the shadows within, and by causing the more minute parts of the architecture to disappear, increased the sublimity and grandeur of the whole.

After loitering till the hour and the decaying light warned her away, she was in the act of leaving the interior, in a temper of mind much more calm and resigned than she had for some time enjoyed, and she had already got beyond the entrance, and into the open air, whilst Robertson, who was considerably behind, was doing all he could to hasten after her, his aged steps echoing feebly under the immensity of the vault, and at-

tended by a garrulous cicerone yet more infirm than himself, when she observed two men advancing hastily towards her from a projecting buttress that had hitherto concealed them. They were armed ; and before she had time even to scream for assistance, or at least before she could do so effectually, she was seized,—her mouth gagged with a handkerchief,—her eyes and her whole person shrouded up,—and she was forcibly carried off through a bewildering labyrinth of narrow unfrequented lanes, until she fainted away.

When she recovered, she perceived that she was in a vaulted apartment. The two men who had carried her off, and whom she now, to her increased horror, discovered to be the villain Antonio and his associate Brandywyn, were hanging over her, as if watching her countenance, whilst a third ruffian, whose face she had never before seen, held a lamp on high, that threw a more glowing and fierce expression over the features of the others. She thought she read murder in their eyes,—and the blood forsaking her heart, she again fainted.

How long she remained in this state, she was of course ignorant ; the consciousness of exist-

ence had no sooner returned, than she felt she was in rapid motion on horseback, borne in the same rude way she had been when she was carried off in Scotland; but being muffled up as before, she had no means of determining whither she was carried.

She endeavoured to scream, but her ineffectual efforts only produced a volley of Italian oaths from the person behind whom she was carried. She could distinctly hear the tramp of another horse, and the sound convinced her they were galloping along a road, for although the riders talked loud to each other, the clatter of the horses hooves rendered their words unintelligible.

They continued to ride in this manner for a considerable time, until at length the horses seemed to be suddenly turned off into some bye path, where the badness of the way compelled them to go more leisurely. From this circumstance, she was now able to gather some occasional words passing rather angrily between the two men.

“Why have you turned thus from the main road?” demanded Brandywyn rather sharply.

“*Corpo di Christo!* and why do you ask?” demanded the other in return. “Am I not re-

sponsible, and may I not manage the thing in my own way? What right have you to interfere with me?"

"By Heaven, I will give myself a right," said Brandywyn, "and I will exert it too. Had it not been for my information, the existence of this poor thing would never have been known; nor should it have been known for me, had I not believed that all you intended with her was to send her abroad to be out of the way."

"Out o' the way?" said the other, with a hellish ironical laugh.—"*Per Dio l'avete toccato.*—That was all that was wanted indeed, and that is all I have to look to now, so make yourself easy, *amico!*"

"That answer wont do with me, Antonio—you must speak plainer, as I shall do. Bad as I am, I have long since done with such deeds. I will have no more blood on my conscience,"

"Well, well!" said the other gruffly, "walk away with your conscience, and leave me to the management of mine;—nobody asks you to dip your's deeper than you please."

"No, no," said Brandywyn hastily, "you shall not persuade me to leave you, I promise you!—

I will ride with you to the world's end; and, mark me! by all the powers of hell, you shall not lay a finger on her, farther than may be necessary to convey her in safety to ——."

"Ugh! hold your tongue!" cried Antonio, "methinks, you have grown tender-hearted *al miracolo* of late!—But what you say, I tell you, is not worth a *baiocco*. *Ditemi*, was it your information that made me smell her out, and pounce upon her so cleverly at York?—*Corpo del Diavolo!* what have you to do with her now? Where was the good of all your information, which occasioned abundance of trouble, and ended in smoke after all?—But it will be my own fault, if I don't make things sure enough this time, especially since I am now more certain of having the right bird by the neck.—Ha! ha! ha! I should be *schiocco davvero*, were I to allow the partridge to slip out of my net a second time.—*Credemi questo non è il modo mio*.—I am little used to being twice fooled.—This wood seems sufficiently lonely for the purpose—and if I can only find some hole or pond large enough to hide ——."

"By Heavens!" cried Brandywyn, interrupting him, "you shall not touch a hair of her head!

—So, at your peril, I insist upon your turning back into the great road without a moment's delay!"

“ Say ye so? *il mio bravo Camarado?*” replied Antonio, in a sort of quiet taunting tone.—“ *Per Baccho! siete troppo ostinato!*—*mandiamo dunque*—and since I must submit—”

For a moment, there was a cessation of words, and they seemed to be in the act of turning their horses to retrace their steps, when the sudden report of a pistol, roused Miss Malcolm from the chill torpor which had taken possession of her in the dreadful suspense the men's dialogue had thrown her into. Her scream of despair followed instantly after the shot:—

“ Ah, traitor!” cried Brandywyn, “ I might have looked for this much at your hand; but for once you have failed;” and immediately a tremendous blow of a sabre from the sinewy arm of the smuggler, fell at once on the head, arm, and side of the Italian, and hurled him from his saddle upon the ground.

The horse, alarmed by the pistol-shot, the shock of the blow, and the sudden fall of his rider, all which took place nearly in the same

breath, darted off with Miss Malcolm into the wood. But he had not proceeded more than ten or twenty yards, when having no power of keeping his back from being so muffled up, she was swept down to the ground by a horizontal branch, and though she luckily fell on a mossy bank, and the shock was in some degree shielded off by the drapery that enfolded her, she was so stunned and confused, that she lay for a time unable to avail herself of her freedom to escape. She had sufficient presence of mind left, however, to free herself, and creep into a bush where she heard, rather than saw, a most tremendous conflict between the two ruffians.

Antonio having risen without much injury from the soft ground he was thrown on, was enabled to scan the figure of his antagonist on horse-back, with the sky above him, much better than Brandywyn could see him. By a wary and well directed thrust of his sword, he gave his opponent's horse a mortal wound in the body, that brought him immediately to the ground, and before the rider could extricate himself from the fallen animal, Antonio succeeded in wounding him also very desperately. But this only roused Bran-

dywyn to greater exertion, for starting up, he attacked his enemy with the utmost alacrity.

The combat then raged with dreadful fury, and for some time without advantage to either party. Several severe wounds, chiefly cuts, however, were given and received on both sides, guards being altogether neglected, as of little avail in the obscurity. Many were the random blows that fell without effect. Their rage increased. The most horrible imprecations broke from them amidst the clash of their weapons. The whole length of their blades occasionally shearing against each other, produced entire sheets of flame, that for a moment rendered even their demon-like countenances visible.

At length, whether from some new wound, or owing to the loss of blood from some of those he had already sustained, Brandywyn became faint. He gave way before the renewed blows of Antonio, and as he retreated, staggering, but at the same time defending himself to the last against the invigorated onset of his enemy, he fell backwards, over the dead body of his horse, uttering a deep groan.

The ruffian flew towards him with a hellish

and exulting shout, making sure of his victim, when in his eagerness, he also tumbled headlong over some impediment lying in his way, and ere he could recover himself, lights appeared rapidly flaring into the thicket, and horses came galloping, and he had just time to regain his legs, and dart off into the deepest part of the wood, before the scene of their combat was surrounded and filled by about a dozen horsemen.

“ This way with your lights !” cried an official-looking person, who was at the head of a party of constables. “ Here seems to be a man on the ground murdered. Scour the wood some of ye, and do you Gaston, Willis, and Burton, gallop in different directions around the outside of it. Look sharp, d’ye hear, and if you see any one flying, stop him in the King’s name, or shoot him if he wont stand on your order.—Where can they have conveyed the Lady, Mr Robertson? Can she be hereabouts, think ye? or have we been misled by some fresh adventure? I hope she may have come by no harm !”

“ God in his mercy grant that she may be safe !” replied the attached old servant. “ I cannot think but we have hit upon the right

place, for Ferdinando here tells me he tracked their horses, by the light of his torch, fresh along the road from the very spot where he first lost sight of them, nearly all the way to the edge of this wood ; and, moreover, he says he observed that one of the hinder shoes had a bit broken off its heel, and here you see this dead horse, with his heels up, has the very broken shoe he speaks of. God grant they may not have murdered my young mistress !”

The Italian servant, who had dismounted, now held his torch over the face of the lifeless man, as he lay on his back doubled across the body of the dead horse, and signified in Italian to Mr Robertson, that he knew him to be one of the ruffians he had observed. But all doubt was speedily put an end to, by the appearance of Miss Malcolm herself, who, recovering in some degree from her deadly apprehension, and being reassured that she had friends near her, crept from her concealment, and came forward, to the infinite joy of the good old Robertson, who went upon his knees to Heaven for this providential restoration of his Lady, whom he considered as by far the most

precious charge his master could have confided to his care.

Preparations were immediately made for mounting Miss Malcolm on one of the horses, and she slowly returned to York, very much oppressed by the agitation, the terror, and the fatigue she had undergone.

CHAPTER VI.

Ease to the body some, none to the mind
From restless thoughts, that like a deadly swarm
Of hornets arm'd, no sooner found alone,
But rush upon me thronging, and present
Times past, what once I was, and what I'm now.

MILTON.

A rogue upon the highway may have as strong an arm, and take off a man's head as cleverly as the executioner; but then there is a vast disparity, when one action is murder, and the other justice.

SOUTH.

THE day succeeding the ball being necessarily employed as a substitute for night, by those who had, on that occasion, turned the night into day, found the mansion of Brokenhurst Hall, which had so lately shone with dazzling splendour, and rung with the merry sounds of mirth and revelry, sunk in darkness and silence. The doors and windows were locked and barred, the chimneys

were smokeless, and the wrecks of the entertainment lay scattered about; and the suffocating stench of spilt oil, and half exhausted lamps, and candles,—the atmosphere of dust, which had hardly yet settled down on the floor,—the confusion of the furniture,—the shreds of artificial flowers and feathers,—and the fragments of torn drapery, which littered the apartments within,—and the traces of the numerous wheel ruts deeply marked in the gravel in front of the house, and the impression of many a hoof from the impatient stamp of the horses, wearied out with the long tarrying of their masters, were the only indications of the bustle that had so recently animated the premises.

Yet rest or repose was by no means general within its walls. The worn-out menials, indeed, who had no cares of their own, were drowned deep in those sweet and refreshing slumbers, sometimes the only solace of the plebeian, and for which the head that wears a crown is often said to sigh in vain. But the gay, and, as they would have conceived, the happy Lady of the mansion, though sufficiently jaded both in mind and body, had carried with her to bed such

thoughts as precluded the possibility of slumber. The words of the stranger, who had so unaccountably secreted himself, in a place where every precaution had been taken to exclude every one but herself and her present favourite, still haunted her mind, and originated a train of thought, she found it impossible to get rid of.

There was something much too marked, and much too serious, in the manner, as well as in the matter of the stranger's warning, to be the mere result of any of those exhibitions of assumed character, permitted by masquerade,. She applied the stranger's words to the state of her finances, and her fears on this subject reached farther than they had ever done before. Fancy wants but a few materials to begin her fairy web, and having got these, she weaves it to an extent that will embrace an ideal world within its folds. No sooner was her mind fairly set a-working on this touching theme of the possibility of her own future distress, than all her selfish feelings were roused, and bitter self-reproaches, for the folly of her past life, and the ill success of all her plans, rose one upon the other, as billow rises over billow.

What was to be done? Even supposing the words of the Necromancer to have proceeded from mere wanton malice, as she was sometimes disposed to think they did, it was evident that the failure of her fortune was already no secret; and should the tongue of scandal spread the tale widely, it would put an end to all hopes of redeeming her fortune by marriage, and sheltering herself in the arms of a wealthy husband from the difficulties she had so much cause to dread.

Aware of the motives that guided herself, she was too well acquainted with the nature of fashionable love to believe it could long endure where interest did not in some measure go hand in hand with it. She had been in the habit of considering the Count rather as a *dernier resort* than any thing else, but she now almost began to suspect that the time for seizing that *dernier resort* was arrived. The necessity of the case, and the hope of finding an asylum abroad in those splendid possessions of which he talked so much, contributed to bring her to the resolution of speedily yielding to his incessant importunities. Such were the reflections that kept Miss Delas-saux awake.

But Lady Deborah's mind was harassed by a series of recollections of the darkest description, giving birth to a train of the most agonizing thoughts, which harrowed up her very soul. In vain she tried to stretch her limbs on the soft down. It was to her like the red-hot iron bed of martyrdom. The very absence of light, occasioned by the officious zeal of her female attendant, who, careful to ensure the repose of her mistress, had curtained and barricaded every aperture against the intrusive rays of morning, till she had succeeded in producing an artificial night in the apartment, was in itself too much for her. A thousand terrific phantoms filled her disordered brain, swam before her eyes, and muttered dire forebodings in her ears. She could bear her tortures no longer; springing in a phrenzy from her bed, she rushed to a window, and, in her eagerness to undo those barriers which kept out the blessed light of day, she tore down a part of the drapery.

The glorious sun was beaming in all his splendour; she looked forth upon the smiling landscape, where woods, and shrubberies, and resplendent sheets of water, and lawns, and more distant

fields, richly cultivated by the hand of man, and smoking cottages, and towers, and glittering spires, were beautifully thrown together. It was a scene that might have gladdened the coldest heart. But it gave no joy to that of Lady Deborah. Her's sickened at the spectacle, and she was preparing to retreat from the window, when an object caught her eyes, and at once anxiously fixed them.

A man came galloping from a great distance up the approach leading to the house. As he drew nearer, she observed that his horse looked as if it was jaded and quite blown by the unnatural speed to which it had been pushed. He was yet a quarter of a mile nearly from the mansion, when the animal seemed to flag in his pace. The horseman lashed and spurred him without mercy, but the poor creature, as if suddenly failing, staggered to one side, and rolled himself and rider upon the grass. The man quickly extricating himself from the saddle, started upon his legs, and gave the animal a violent kick in the belly. But the poor horse felt it not; his heart was broken, and he was already dead. The man eyed the inanimate carcase for a moment, then, casting a

long look backwards, he, with great exertion, dragged it, saddle and all, into a thicket a few paces distant from the road, and, hiding it behind the bushes, he ran at full speed across the lawn towards the back entry to the house.

Lady Deborah paced her room backwards and forwards for some minutes in great agitation. She stopped to listen. A footstep came stealing along the passage towards her door. It opened, and Antonio, pale, haggard, worn out by fatigue, his face disfigured by a dreadful gash, his arm bound up with a handkerchief, his clothes bloody in some places, and torn in others, and his whole person begrimed with dust and dirt, threw himself, almost fainting with hunger and thirst, into the sofa before her.

With a trembling hand she shut and bolted the door of the apartment. .

“ A cup of water, for Mercy’s sake !” exclaimed the wretch, in a voice hardly intelligible. “ *Ho il fuoco d’inferno nelle mie viscere!*—Hell!—hell is here!—ugh!”

“ Where !” exclaimed the terrified lady, looking wildly around her.

“ *Sangue del Diavolo!*—here !” exclaimed

he, again striking his breast, with the violence that always characterized him.

Lady Deborah sprang towards her toilet, and pouring some cordial into a large cup, she filled it up with water, and he drained the draught to the bottom.

“Compose yourself, my good Antonio,” said the lady to him, as he was drinking it, whilst, at the same time, she seated herself on the edge of the couch he occupied, and assumed an air of calmness she was far from feeling; “compose yourself, and let me know your history since the time you parted hence; but first, to satisfy my impatience, is the girl in my power?—How has your errand sped?”

“Sped!” cried he, looking in her face with the horrible expression of a disappointed demon, “why, like the errands of those the devil deserts after they have become irrevocably his own.”

“Have you failed to secure her then?” inquired the Lady, shuddering at his speech, but at the same time with a look of intense anxiety. “Did your informant deceive you? or was the fool mistaken after all?”

“Marry, we failed not to secure her; and, an

it had not been for those damned scruples which have haunted you of late, as if the blood-red deeds of your youth could be whitened by a little lily-livered mercy now, she had been sound asleep in a sack at this moment, forty fathoms down in the black abyss of a Highland loch. But to have the quarry snatched from one's very beak by having one's talons muffled by a woman's weakness, and then to be leagued with a chicken-hearted *poltrone* to boot!—*Furie d'inferno!* I have been well served, truly!

“Then the Captain has not turned out the trusty person we had reason to suppose him?—But be calm, Antonio, I beseech you, and recapitulate as briefly as may be the circumstances of your journey to Scotland.”

“Trusty!” exclaimed Antonio, in reply to her question; “trusty!—no, hell-hound that he is!—aye, hell-hound that he is, I tell ye, for to hell I have certainly sent him—ha! ha! ha!—He is beyond the reach of telling tales—at least I have revenged myself on him—at least I have that satisfaction.” And as he said so, his expanded lips, and grinding teeth manifested the fiendish delight he received from the thought.

“ Is he dead, say you ? ” demanded the Lady with great earnestness.

“ Aye, ” replied Antonio, “ dead enough, I warrant you ; and well for you that he is so, for his carcase is in the gripe of the kites of the law by this time, and, *cospetto !* it were hard to say what stories he might have told had not his tongue been silenced.”

“ ’Tis indeed well ! ” said the Lady, shuddering, “ ’twas indeed most fortunate.”

“ Soh ! ” replied Antonio with a malignant glance, half raising himself from the reclining posture to regard her. “ So, after all, you can bear to hear of a bit of bloodshed, when it rids you of one who knows too many of your secrets ?— Eh !—*Cospetto del Diavolo !* I doubt not but you would grin with joy were some others of your sharper tools to be sacrificed,—hah ? ”

“ I do not grin with joy, Antonio, ” replied Lady Deborah, with assumed calmness, “ I do not grin with joy, Antonio ; but I confess it is some relief to me, to find that you are freed from any apprehension regarding the tales he might have told. I am anxiously alive for your safety, as much, indeed, as for the pre-

ervation of my own character. I am too sensible of your services, as well as of your fidelity, not to feel grateful and secure. But hasten to relieve my mind, I pray you, by telling me your whole adventures."

"They are soon told," said Antonio gruffly; and he shortly recapitulated the circumstances of his adventures in Scotland, the capture and escape of Miss Malcolm, and his accidental discovery and seizure of her at York. He then gave all the particulars of the scene in the wood, and the murder of Brandywyn,—the sudden appearance of the officers, and his escape. He described the perils he ran of being captured in the thickets, and he told her, that just as he was about to break from the covert, a horseman came galloping round the skirt of it. He had no other alternative but to throw himself flat on the ground, and trust to the darkness which then prevailed. He lay in the very path of the horse, but in his haste the creature sprang over him, and left him unhurt.

The horseman had no sooner swept by, than he jumped to his legs, and rushed forward over fields and hedges, until just before day-break he

came to a small paddock, near a cottage, by the side of a great road, where a tolerable nag was feeding, and what was somewhat surprising, he had most invitingly a saddle and bridle on. Such a mode of escape was too valuable to be neglected. With some difficulty he caught the animal, and was in the act of mounting him near the gate of the enclosure, which stood opportunely open, when up started a herculean farmer-looking man, who had been asleep under the hedge, and rubbing his eyes.

“Foy ! foy ! deary me !” said he to Antonio. “Sure an I hanna been sleepin’ a’ noight under the blessed skoie ! This cums o’ Farmer Barnes’s home-brewed—Was never the loikes seen !——Thank ye, sur, for cotching moy harse. I be mainly obligated to ye !”

“Brother !” said Antonio sternly, “I must borrow your horse for a mile or two.”

“Barrow moy harse, neebur—noah—yere joakin, sure ? I canna spare moy harse not by no manner o’ means.”

But Antonio, without minding his reply, sprang into the saddle.

“Hoity toity, neebour ! are ye a gawin to rab

me o' moy harse?—Then mun I try a tussle wi' ye—gi'e me moy harse—cum doun I tell thee, else I'll bring thee!" quoth the farmer, laying the grasp of fate upon the bridle with one hand, and on the rider with the other.

Antonio had one loaded pistol in his breast,—he drew it,—the flash of death ensued,—and the powerful countryman, having received the fatal ball in his heart, sprang into the air from the convulsive energy of the death pang, and falling upon the grass without a groan, his huge form lay inanimate across the gateway.

Antonio stopped not to remove the body. The inhabitants of a neighbouring farm-house might be alarmed with the shot, therefore it was no time to tarry. Digging his unfeeling spur into the sides of the horse, he made him spurn his late master with his heel, and gallop off at the top of his speed; and by following the least frequented paths, and avoiding all towns as much as possible, and by riding night and day, as unceasingly as he could force the creature to go, hardly tasting food himself, or allowing the wretched animal to pasture, he arrived at Brokenhurst in

the manner we have described, in an incredibly short space of time.

“ My good Antonio,” said Lady Deborah, vexed and disappointed, and much alarmed for the probable issue of his rashness; “ my excellent friend, you have permitted your hasty temper to get too much mastery in this business; I tremble for the consequences.—What if you are traced?—Merciful powers! had you not better fly immediately to the coast and embark for France.”

“ *Fico!*” said Antonio, “ I defy the devil to track me. Besides I am not just in a humour to commence a new *viaggio di piacere*.—*Anima mia!* do you take me for a wizzard to be able to ride from one end of the world to the other without breathing?”

“ Unfortunate,—most unfortunate!” exclaimed the Lady, for a moment forgetting, in the panic she had been so suddenly thrown into by Antonio’s communication, how much she was in his power. “ Had you been contented with executing my orders,—nay, had you even followed the prudent and proper counsels of your companion, all the wanton atrocities of which you now

speak might have been saved ; their direful effects yet to come might have been averted, and she, whom fortune threw so happily into your hands, might have been now safe in mine."

Antonio looked at her for some time in silence, his dark eyes flashing fire,—those of Lady Deborah sank before them.

"What!" said he, at length, in a furious tone, "am I to be upbraided then after all?—*Per Dio sono ben pagato!*—*Corpo del Diavolo!*—'tis the reward I might have looked for."

"Do not be angry, Antonio," said Lady Deborah, in great alarm, and in a soothing voice ; "do not, I beseech you, fly off in this manner.—I mean not to upbraid you.—No!—On the contrary, I am fully aware of the zeal you have always displayed in my affairs, and am perfectly disposed fully to appreciate it, though, upon this occasion, it may, perhaps, have carried you a little farther than prudence might have required. The services you have rendered me shall never be forgotten. They shall, moreover, be splendidly rewarded. Fear not, my worthy friend, that you will find me ungrateful!"

"*Per Dio!*" said Antonio, "I will be trifled

with no longer. Empty words shall not satisfy me. I'll have deeds. I heard that Lorenzo had made good his footing here. Is it true?"

"The Count is here," said Lady Deborah, with great placidity of manner; "he has been here for some weeks. But surely your good sense will induce you to be contented with some recompence,—some arrangement of a different description from that which, pardon me, you must allow me to call a somewhat wild scheme.

"Talk not to me of wild schemes," cried Antonio, in a tone and manner sufficiently evincing the extent of his determination; "*fuoco d'inferno!* I will have your promise—I will, by all the powers of hell, or"—and, as he paused for a moment, he turned his head towards her, and thrusting it emphatically forward, he glared with his eyes full into her face, and grinding his teeth together, as his features blackened by the accumulated venom of his passion, he added, in a deeper tone,—“or,—you know what is Neapolitan revenge!! Life to me is nothing in comparison with the gratification of revenge;—and, if I shall find that you have deceived me, the struggles of death will be

to me the thrillings of extacy, should I only be able to fix my half-strangled gaze upon the last agonies of her, who, condemned to the same ignominious end, shall dangle from the same tree with me. Oh it were a dance of exquisite joy !!!” And throwing himself back in the couch, he ended his sentence with a demoniacal laugh, that ran cold through every fibre of Lady Deborah’s frame. She trembled, grew pale and faint, and tottered to a chair.

“Antonio,” said she, in a tone that spoke all the horrors of the apprehension with which his expressions had filled her,—“for mercy’s sake do not talk so! Let not such dreadful thoughts haunt your mind. I did but try to reason with you. But you are certainly the best judge of your own wishes. Be assured, I shall no longer seek to impede a marriage you are so resolved on. She is herself, too, already won. The house and gardens blazed last night with the splendour of a magnificent fête she gave in honour of the Count, and she and all in the house are still buried in sleep, after the fatigues it occasioned. I only, from my extreme anxiety for your safety, which has robbed me of repose for many a night past,

was occupied in——But, hark! some one comes this way along the gallery—quick!—to your concealment!” And Antonio, hastily starting from the couch, had just time to hide himself in a closet within the apartment, when the voice of Miss Delassaux, demanding entrance at the chamber door, compelled Lady Deborah to hasten to open it.

Miss Delassaux entered with her usual haughty air, and with the blush of pride upon her cheek.

“ I come, Madam,” said she, as she seated herself upon the couch so lately occupied by Antonio, and which was placed with its back towards the door of the closet he had retreated into, “ I come to inform you that it is my intention to change my condition. I have now resolved to yield myself to the eloquent pleading of the Count Alonzo di Montemarone, and to shorten that time of probation to which custom usually subjects lovers. In fine, Madam, we have just had an interview, and the result is, that we are to be married in the evening of the day after to-morrow.”

Lady Deborah seemed to be struck with con-

fusion at this so sudden determination, for which she had been by no means prepared.

“Olivia!” said she, “is not this rather a hasty resolution? Will it not be considered rather strange that”——

Here she paused abruptly, for the closet door slowly opened, and the ruffian head of Antonio was thrust forward into the room, his features charged with a fury of expression not to be mistaken.

“But, to be sure,” continued Lady Deborah, after some hesitation, “I need not advise; your own prudence is sufficient to direct you to what is right; and where the merits of the person on whom you have permitted your affections to rest, are in themselves so conspicuous, perhaps the sooner your happiness is secured the better.”

Miss Delassaux, who had entered the room fully prepared to expect as determined an opposition to her plans from her aunt, as the subjection to which she had now, in a great degree, reduced Lady Deborah, might have warranted her looking for, was perfectly astonished to find her so passive. Her feelings were absolutely those of disappointment. They might have been compared to those of a person, who, de-

scending a stair in the dark, has his feet suddenly met by the ground at the bottom, whilst he believes he has two or three steps more to descend. A certain degree of confusion came over her, and she stammered out something, rather incoherent, about her proposed plans. The marriage was to be quite private, she said. A servant had been already dispatched for a licence. The clergyman also had received notice. Nobody was to witness the ceremony, but Lady Deborah and the servants. It was then their intention to set off for London, where they meant to spend the honeymoon.

Here the head of Antonio again appeared for an instant, with the face relaxed into a horrible smile of triumph and exultation.

“ But what is the matter with you, aunt ? ” exclaimed Miss Delassaux ; “ you look very ill.”

“ I am, indeed, not well, Olivia,” replied her Ladyship, faintly ; “ I am, indeed, by no means well. My health has been declining for some time ; but the prospect of seeing so speedy a termination put to the parental care I have so long had of you, were of itself a sufficient explanation of these emotions. Then I slept ill—ve-

ry ill, last night, and the effects of the fatigue I underwent still remain."

"I believe I had better leave you, then, to enjoy a little rest. But say, can I do any thing for you?" said Miss Delassaux, in a much kinder tone than any she had addressed Lady Deborah in for many a long day; "you had better ring for your chocolate, and then go to bed to endeavour to procure a little sleep. I shall give orders to have the house kept quiet. You must really take more care of yourself." So saying, she left the apartment.

The sound of her feet had hardly died away in the gallery, when Antonio came forth from his concealment. Lady Deborah had sunk into the depth of an arm-chair, where she sat in mute mortification, with her eyes fixed upon the ground.—The Italian looked at her for some moments without speaking.

"*Cospetto del Diavolo!*" said he at length, with a malicious grin, "you seemed to waver, methought?—But now things are in the right train, and I may soon hope to call you my connection—ha! ha! ha!—But I'll to the larder,—*per Dio sono affamato!*"—

The haughty but humbled Lady Deborah, was stung to death by the impudent and insulting tone of triumph assumed by the villain in whose power she felt herself. Even his absence was in some degree a relief to her, though it only gave her leisure for greater self-torment. Her thoughts, by a very natural chain of association, reverted to those circumstances which had thus placed her life, and her fame, at his mercy; and conscience again began its work of torture. Rest was now for ever divorced from her pillow. Nay, she even dreaded to go to bed, where she knew that a repetition of the torments she had lately so often endured, most certainly awaited her.

“Yes,” said she to herself after a long pause, as she started up and began to pace the room, “I must rid myself of him.—One crime more!—nay—not a crime—’tis but becoming the willing instrument of Heaven’s vengeance against him,—against one whose life must soon be forfeited, if he should be detected in these his recent crimes. Yet for whom has he sinned?”—She shuddered at the thought. “But no matter—to this I must wind up my resolution. The secrets he

holds are too important,—and were he to become the prey of the law, his poisonous breath would blast my reputation for ever. He must not be allowed to fall into the hands of justice; my safety, and what is to me more than all, the safety of my high name demands that he shall be removed from its grasp. By what a labyrinth am I surrounded? and how ill have I been requited by her for whom I have thus plunged into the abyss?—Yet,” continued she after a pause, during which better feelings seemed to have arisen,—“yet she was kind but just now,—and how lovely she looks when she is kind! Her kindness comes, indeed, but seldom; but when it does come, it rekindles all my foolish fondness. Were conscience silent, I might have been contented and happy with her kindness alone, could I have had it. But to be trampled upon by her for whom I have sacrificed myself!—Oh my proud heart cannot stand it!——”

CHAPTER VII.

Proper deformity seems not in the fiend
So horrid as in woman.

SHAKESPEARE.

Justa razon, enganàral enganador.

Spanish Proverb.

UNTIL the arrival of the day that was to unite him to Miss Delassaux, the Count di Montemarone never left his fair bride. The young Lady employed herself in giving orders for the speedy preparation of splendid dresses; and the handsomest equipage she possessed was directed to be in readiness, it being the intention of the young couple to set off on a pleasure tour immediately after the ceremony, and to terminate it in London.

Very imperative orders were issued to Mr Haw-

kins, to be prepared by a certain hour, with a large sum of money, to enable the bride and bridegroom to travel with proper eclat. Mr Hawkins had returned rather an unsatisfactory answer as to the money; but he promised, with a grin upon his thin usurious-looking physiognomy, that he would certainly come to wish the happy pair joy. Various were the thoughts that ran through the mind of Miss Delassaux. More than once the image of Amherst Oakenwold crossed her imagination, and she could not help contrasting his noble, open, generous countenance, with the sly expression she observed at times, in the man who was so soon to call her his. Many fears and doubts assailed her, but they were quickly overcome by the pride and obstinacy of her temper; and when the hour for the ceremony arrived, she entered the drawing-room with an air of gaiety, in spite of a certain something that secretly weighed down her heart.

She was surprised to find that her aunt was already there before her, and her surprise was augmented, by observing, that Lady Deborah seemed to be in earnest conversation with the Count, with whom she seldom chose to have much inter-

course. But what was most wonderful of all on the present occasion, she found Antonio, whom she had known to be absent on some business of her aunt's, and of whose return she was not aware, bearing his full share in the dialogue, and with an air of freedom too, much beyond that to which long services sometimes entitle a domestic to presume.

“ No, no !” Miss Delassaux heard him say just before the conversation was hushed by her entrance, “ the trick is too stale ; she may be somewhat leaner than she was, but, *per Baccho!* she is a good quarry yet,—we must have her !”

“ Of what do you thus speak, Antonio ?” inquired Miss Delassaux, with too much eagerness to permit her to assume her usual haughty air, and at the same time glancing at the party to endeavour to read their countenances : that of her aunt, pale and haggard, betrayed in no small degree the internal torture she was enduring. Confusion appeared for a moment on the Count's, and even the stern visage of Antonio was disturbed for an instant. He made a bow, however, of the most obsequious description, and, after a

little circumlocution, adroitly introduced that he might have time to collect his ideas, he told Miss Delassaux that he talked of a heron which frequented a particular pond in the grounds, that he had let fly a favourite pet hawk of Lady Deborah's at it without success. "But," added he with more signification in his dark expression than the nature of the subject warranted, "she must be ours at last, or——"

"Or what?" asked Miss Delassaux, somewhat astonished with the savage look that accompanied this broken sentence.

"Or," continued he, finishing it with a forced look of mildness, and a submissive bow to Miss Delassaux, whilst his set teeth were heard to grind against each other,—“or I will wring the neck of the old hawk Signora, that is all.”

Lady Deborah started, and walked towards the door. The Count approached Miss Delassaux, and took her hand.

"My life!" said he, "let us not think of such trifles at a moment like this. We lose precious time. The clergyman is here, the servants are in attendance, and every thing is ready. Let us

proceed with that ceremony which is to make us both happy for life."

"Happy!" exclaimed Lady Deborah, involuntarily shuddering as she echoed the word. "Heavenly powers!——"

But she had not time to finish her sentence before it was most unaccountably taken up by Antonio, with a Jesuitical air of the utmost seriousness and fervour, though accompanied with a frown, which, however, he took care should be perceptible to no one but Lady Deborah.

"May the powers of heaven indeed shower down their choicest blessings on them both!"

Lady Deborah looked at him with an agonizing glance, and then made an effort to subdue her rising emotions, or at least to hide them, by burying her face in her handkerchief. The clergyman, and then the servants entered, and the ceremony proceeded.

It was hardly more than begun, when a confused noise of voices was heard, as if of several persons entering the house.

"Officers!" exclaimed a voice Miss Delassaux knew to be that of her faithful steward, "secure the carriage and the horses—they are worth

something ; and then let us proceed as fast as we can within doors. Arrest every thing, do you hear, without loss of time, for there may be other creditors upon her before long, and I don't want any one to go snacks with me."

The astonishment and consternation that seized upon the party met to celebrate the marriage, and, most of all, upon the bride and bridegroom, may be more easily conceived than described. Miss Delassaux, who was not much versed in business, was at first disposed to imagine it merely some of those necessary perhaps, but troublesome legal forms, to which Mr Hawkins was every now and then subjecting her. On those occasions, particularly of late, she had been glad enough to get money, even although it was accompanied by so harassing a tax upon her patience. But now she thought his time for such vulgar ceremonial had been particularly ill chosen ; and, breaking off abruptly, she walked with great irritation towards the wide and splendid staircase, to inquire into the meaning of the steward's intrusion.

There she found Hawkins, attended by a train of clerks and bailiffs, employed in taking a list of

the marble statues and busts, the bronzes, the pictures, and the various other items of vertu decorating the hall and the landing-places.

“ Mr Hawkins !” cried she, with an intemperance of voice corresponding to the storm that agitated her mind at the moment, “ I cannot understand how you should dare thus to disturb my house at such a time, by the introduction of so many strangers. If you have any thing of importance to transact, I think you might have waited until I had been gone. This rudeness is what I did not expect of you. But, Sir, you must allow me to tell you, I will not suffer such improper intrusion.”

Hawkins lifted up his little red eyes from the small memorandum book in which he was inscribing the articles of furniture one by one, and looking at her askance, but without permitting her presence to disturb him, he went on repeating,—

“ One stove, with fire-irons to match,—two cariatides of bronze, bearing lamps,” and so he continued to write down the items, one after another, as if he heard not a word she said to him.

The Lady could bear his provoking conduct no longer. “ Mr Hawkins,” said she, with still

greater vociferation, “ I insist on your leaving my house directly, and I desire you will take with you the rude rabble that has followed you hither. Begone, Sir, instantly! I am resolved at least to be mistress in my own house,”

“ One gilt bracket, with an alabaster temple thereon,” said Hawkins, continuing his operations with the most perfect indifference. “ One statue in white marble of the Heathen god Apollo,—one drunken Satyr pressing grapes into a cup, carved out in red marble”——

“ Beast!” cried Miss Delassaux, now altogether forgetting herself in her growing rage.—“ You are yourself a Satyr!—quit my house this instant, I tell you. I discharge you from this moment; and if you do not leave my house immediately, I shall call down one, to whom I must in future look for protection, to rid me of your presence.”

Hawkins seemed to hear at last. “ Your house, Madam!” said he, “ I suspect you are disposed to be merry when you call this your house, and talk of turning me the owner of it out of it. You cannot have forgotten all the friendly efforts I have made for you; the risks I have run to raise

money for your need; nay, you must remember the very last transaction between us, when, in order to enable me to procure cash for your emergencies, you signed this deed of conveyance, making over the house of Brokenhurst-Hall to me in mortgage. The estates, you know, were already mine by various transactions of a similar nature, which took place between us at different times before, all of which you cannot fail to recollect. My advances have been to an extent which, you must be aware, is by no means trifling; and now you cannot wonder that I should endeavour to secure myself in as small a loss as may be, by arresting the furniture, moveables, and trinkets, which might else, perhaps, fall a prey to other creditors." And so saying, he continued his operations with imperturbable *sang froid*.

That certain legal forms had been gone through, as security for large sums of money, Miss Delasaux was well enough aware; but, bad as she had believed her circumstances, she had not the most distant idea that they were so utterly wrecked as Hawkins now represented them. The whole of his rascality at once flashed upon her. Her fury

against him went beyond all bounds, and she lost all command of herself.

“Villain!” she exclaimed—“wretch!—monster!—demon!” and forgetful of appearances, as well as of all modesty and dignity, she sprang at him like a tigress, and would have probably torn out his eyes with her nails had not those who were about him interfered.

Hawkins was for a moment disconcerted, and betrayed some signs of terror; but, retreating behind two of the bailiffs,—

“Miss Delassaux!” said he, at length—“Madam!—do not put yourself into a heat; I have hitherto done much to prove my devotion to you, both by the good advices I have given you, the which, I am sorry to say, you did not take, and by the large sums of money I have advanced to you, the which you never hesitated to accept of. I am now—ahem!—prepared—I say, I have made up my mind,—to do you a generous action—and,—ahem!—ahem!—although neither your language nor your actions have been quite civil, d’ye observe me, upon this occasion, yet I will not go back from my intentions. Your estates, this house, and all it contains are mine,—mine by law

as well as in justice. But I feel for you from the bottom of my soul, Miss Delassaux.—I cannot see you, who have been so long the pride of my heart, turned out to beg your bread in the streets; and therefore I have, look you, made up my mind as aforesaid, to make you again mistress of them all.”

Here the little thin, red-faced, pink-eyed man paused for a moment, his mouth pursed up, and his nose peaked, and Miss Delassaux, who had listened to him at first with an impatience and rage that moderated as he went on, by the time he reached these last words, stood petrified by his unexpected generosity. Her wonder, however, was not yet at its height, for he went on—

“ I say, d’ye observe me, I have made up my mind to restore you to your estates, and home again—that is—and be it so clearly understood—that you resume them by the name and title of Mrs Hawkins, that is—ahem!—by forthwith becoming my wife.”

Miss Delassaux’s rage, somewhat moderated by the seeming generosity breathed in the first part of Hawkins’s speech, now rose with double fury, as she listened to its presumptuous conclusion.

“What! the blood of the Delassaux’s to match with the worm!”—Then seeing herself restrained from making a personal attack upon him by the people of his party, who placed themselves before her, she burst into tears, and, turning to the Count, who, with her aunt, Antonio, and the servants, had been brought to the landing place by the noise,

“Signore,” said she, in an upbraiding tone, “will you permit me to be insulted by such a wretch, at the very moment when I am about to become your wife. Suffer him not to remain an instant in the house!”

But the Count seemed chained to the spot, as if by some strange and unknown enchantment. Meanwhile, Hawkins drew a paper from his pocket-book, and putting it into the hands of the bailiffs,

“Arrest him instantly,” said he, “for the sum of fifty pounds, lent to him three weeks ago on promise of immediate payment, but which I have now no chance of recovering. Instantly seize his person, I tell you!” He had no sooner said this, than the bailiffs rushed in a body upon the broad steps to lay hands on the Count. But, with an

alertness that perfectly confounded every one, he made a somerset clear over all their heads, with the perfection of a harlequin of the very first qualifications, and, lighting on his feet on the landing place at the bottom, he darted off by a back-door, and was lost in a moment.

“As I shall answer, Tummas,” said one of the bailiffs, “that be the very fellow as jumped over seven horses, and seven men with fixed bagonets, in the show at Canterbury fair, summer was three years ago! I thought as how I knowed him again. My gomms, what a jump and a whirl!—Why, he spun in the air like a cock-chaffer!”

“*Sangue del Diavolo!*” exclaimed Antonio, lifting up a chair, “what hinders us from ridding the house of these vermin?—down with the damned sharks!” and setting his teeth together, he whirled the chair over his head, and was in the act of bringing it down with so much force upon Hawkins and the group about him, that half a dozen skulls might have been cracked at once, like so many nut-shells, had not one of the bailiffs interfered in the most intrepid manner, and warding off the descending ruin with a well managed turn

of his pole, bestowed the weight of it with so much alacrity on the right temple of Antonio, before he could recover his arm, that he rolled down the steps to all appearance lifeless.

Miss Delassaux shrieked, and ran up stairs to her apartment; but Lady Deborah, with an eagerness no one could account for, rushed forwards, and bent over his inanimate body. The bailiffs also hastened to examine him, from anxiety to know his real state; so revolting is it even for such men to put a fellow-creature to death, though, (as in the present instance,) in the discharge of their duty. But Lady Deborah scanned his face with increased earnestness. She gazed in his distorted features and fixed eyes, and stooping down, laid her ear close to his mouth, to listen if she heard him breathe; then uttering a loud nervous laugh, she sank down up the steps, exclaiming wildly,—“ He is dead! he is dead! then all is safe!”

“ Dead! Lady,” cried the bailiff who had given him the blow,—“ I hopes not! I never killed a human soul in all my life afore, and I should not like to have the blood of this here un on my conscience; though, for the matter of that, had I

not brought un down, Master Hawkins's skull, and some others, might have been split. But stay, methinks he breathes—lift him up a bit."

"Aye, aye," said the other man, "no fear o' un—he's only in a swound after all. See—he's beginning to come round already! Lord, such a queer twist that was un gave with un's mouth,—he'll soon gather un's legs again, no fear o' un."

"Is he not dead then?" said Lady Deborah, and bending anxiously forwards to look again in the countenance of Antonio, now beginning to display the horrible nervous contortions frequently accompanying returning life; "is not the wretch dead then?"

"Dead!" cried the Italian, gnashing his teeth in frenzy, as his consciousness came back to him, and flashing a lightning glance towards Lady Deborah,—“Who thinks me dead? Hah! was it you who spoke? Give me a knife——”

As he said so, with the countenance and voice of a maniac, he made a desperate effort to rise; but Lady Deborah, in terror, rushed up stairs to her apartment; and the men, throwing themselves together upon the culprit, soon bound

him, and after some consultation, dragged him towards a vaulted cellar, where, as a matter of precaution, they locked him in; and Mr Hawkins, after recovering from the alarm he had experienced, began to go on with his inventory undisturbed.

Whilst matters were in this state below, and the servants were running about full of curiosity, peeping every where, and putting many an unsuccessful query to Mr Hawkins and his assistants, Lady Deborah, who had bolted the door of her apartment, happened accidentally to cast her eyes out of the very window, from which she had looked a few mornings before, when she had descried Antonio, and witnessed the death of the horse that carried him. Evening was now approaching, but the landscape was not yet so much obscured as to prevent her observing a body of men, some on foot and others on horseback, who seemed to be cautiously approaching the house from the same direction whence we formerly described Antonio to have come. Such a sight being altogether unusual, she was led to watch their motions. They advanced at a slow pace, the riders seeming to wait for the pedestrians, when just as they came opposite the thicket

into which Antonio dragged the carcase of the wretched animal, the steeds of two men, who rode in front, suddenly reared and started to one side, and one of the riders came to the ground. The horseman did not seem to have suffered materially from his fall, and his horse being immediately caught, the curiosity of the party to discover what had occasioned the accident, seemed to be awakened, for one or two of the men on foot ran off the road into the thicket. Lady Deborah felt an agonizing interest in all the movements and motions of the men. Her breath came short, and she stretched her very eyeballs by the intensity of her gaze.

The motions of the men now indicated that something had been discovered, for the whole party crowded together into the thicket. Then afterwards some of them appeared engaged in drawing forth the carcase of the horse, which they laid on the grass by the way side, and after some apparent consultation, they left two of their number in the thicket as if to watch, whilst the remainder, to the number of eight or ten, stole off in the direction whence they had come, frequently looking behind them as they went.

Lady Deborah no sooner saw that they had

retreated, than she left the window, and with a speed far beyond what her years warranted, she rushed down stairs. Luckily for her intention, Hawkins and his people were by this time in some other part of the house, and she hastened across the hall, and went along the passage leading to the servants' apartments.

She had already made three or four rapid strides along the passage, when her ear caught some lowly muttered curses, coupled with her own name. She stopped to listen. The sound came from the vaulted cellar to her right.

“*Maledetta sia la femina!*” cried a voice she immediately knew to be that of Antonio. “Ten thousand curses on the woman!—*ebbene benissimo!*—But revenge,—*ha! ha! ha! vendetta! vendetta stupenda!*—*ugh!* *Davvero*, it will be high revenge, ha, ha, ha!—She wished me dead!—*hah!*—Hell itself would be nothing to her—but infamy! Aye, aye, just so—that is the way to—but fool that I am,—*animalaccio!*—my rage makes me think aloud.”

He had already said quite enough for Lady Deborah; however, she felt the necessity of soothing him. She paused a moment to recollect her-

self, and then approaching the door with a few marked and audible steps, as if she were returning from that part of the house occupied by the servants.

“ Antonio, said she, in a half whisper, “ Antonio, are you there ?”

“ *Ah scelerata ! eccoti !*”

“ I am here,” said she, without seeming to observe the epithet ; “ I have been searching for you every where, and only this moment caught your voice, by accident, as I was returning from the servants’ apartments. I have flown to save you—your liberty, your life is sought. The officers of justice are after you,—quick, come forth, and let me find some speedy means of saving one on whose existence mine depends.”

“ Hah ! say ye so, tigress ? in faith you speak true, for you think, no doubt, that the security of your life depends on the sacrifice of mine. But mark me, I shall not hang alone ! ha, ha, ha !

“ What strange delusion has bewildered you, Antonio, that you should thus so unjustly accuse one who, being bound to you as I am, by the strongest ties of gratitude, has uniformly done all in her power to manifest it to you. Even now I

am here—anxiously here, to save your very life; but we lose time,—already, perhaps, the house is surrounded by a band of officers in search of you. They must have traced you, as I feared, from Yorkshire. The horse—the horse! I saw them from my window, examining the carcass. Not a moment is to be lost,—quick, quick!” said she, opening the door of the cellar, in the lock of which the key had been left, and, unbinding him; “let me hasten to save you by the glass door, leading from the library into the garden and shrubbery,—you may yet escape to the coast.”

“Humph!” said Antonio, doubtingly, “could I trust to you,—this, to be sure, does look like a desire to save me, though, *per Dio!* there may be something selfish lurking under it, after all.—*Ma non importa!*—*Ebbene!* I will follow you, then,—it may be just as well to get out of the way of these villains for the present. Since I have escaped so long, ’twould be a pity to be hanged at last, for the paltry sin of borrowing a sorry hackney, and blowing out the brains of the rascally clown who owned him.—*Andiamo!*” and, so saying, he quickly followed Lady Deborah.

The lady led him first to her apartment, where

he was hastily disguised, and where, with a show of kindness that half led him to believe his suspicions had been groundless, she melted into tears, and pressed upon him a purse of money, a flask of wine, and half of a pretty large cake, to prevent the necessity of his going near any human habitation for food, so that he might steal down to the coast without being traced, and then get on board some skiff, or smuggling vessel, which, she trusted, he would certainly have an opportunity of doing early in the morning, if not during the night, and thus secure his retreat into France, whither her bounty should quickly follow him. Then, throwing a shawl round her, and, groping her way without light, she reconnoitred the approach to the glass door leading to the shrubbery, and conducted Antonio thence by a winding path, to a door in the park wall, nearly half a mile from the house, where she parted with him, with so much well dissembled regret, and anxiety for his safety, that the villain left her, almost, if not altogether, convinced that he had been deceived in the symptoms of joy he imagined he had detected, after the blow he had received from the bailiff.

“ Get thee gone, fool !” said Lady Deborah to herself, as she double locked the door in the wall, and moved towards the house. “ Thank my fates I am now freed from that blackest of villains—the vile tool of my schemes that would have turned its point upon me, and pierced me to the heart,—so necessary for a time, and of late so vexatiously burdensome, and hazardous to me ! To have thus rid myself of him is like plucking out a rankling sting, the poison of which gradually consumed me. Misery enough I yet have to endure, but to have shaken off this burden, makes me feel as if all were again well. Whatever may happen, my good name will be safe ! But, ah !” continued she, after a pause, as the momentary reflection again overcame her—“ she for whom I have done so much—for whose happiness I have sacrificed my own peace of mind—for whom I have —— but let me not think of it ; she would be to me punishment enough should no other remain. But, alas ! I must carry an eternal punishment here—here—here !” said she, striking her breast with violence. “ The grave cannot extinguish this never ceasing fire. Here it must

burn with quenchless fury for an eternity of existence !”

Overcome by her feelings, she now sat down, for a few moments, in a garden chair, by the side of the wall, to recover herself, hiding her face within the folds of her mantle, as if with the vain hope of excluding thought. On lifting up her head, she was surprised, and somewhat alarmed, to observe a small human figure standing before her, enveloped in loose drapery. She had so far recovered from her astonishment, as to be able to demand what this strange person wanted, when a letter was thrust into her lap, and the figure was gone, with a silence and rapidity of motion almost supernatural. The lady grasped the letter as if to convince herself that the whole was not an illusion ; then anxious to ascertain the contents, she started up, and hastily pursued her way homewards.

There she found that her precautions in getting rid of Antonio had not been too soon taken, for a large party of the officers of justice had already surrounded the house, and were in the act of searching every where for him. On the first entrance of these men, and as soon as they had

declared their errand, the bailiffs, who were employed by Hawkins, led them forthwith to the cellar, where they had already, as they thought, secured the prisoner, by accidental anticipation. But he was gone ! Not a corner of the house was left unsearched, but he was no where to be found. At length, seeing they could do no better, they set a watch, under the idea that he might probably return during the night.

After the bustle and confusion excited by this circumstance had in some degree subsided, Lady Deborah retired to her apartment, where we shall leave her to indulge her curiosity, by breaking open the paper she had so mysteriously received.

CHAPTER VIII.

Some feelings are to mortals given,
With less of earth in them than Heaven.

SCOTT.

But in that instant o'er his soul
Winters of memory seemed to roll,
And gather in the drop of time
A life of pain, an age of crime.

BYRON'S *Corsair*.

As Miss Malcolm left the wood to return to York attended by her escort, those of the party who remained behind lifted up the corpse of Brandywyn, and laying it across the back of a horse, they proceeded to carry it to the city. As they went slowly on, they were surprised to hear a groan, and laying down the body on a bank, they soon perceived that animation was not entirely extinct. Hastening to procure a rude litter, that he might suffer as little as possible, they bore him on their shoulders to the city jail.

Miss Malcolm was so much exhausted by anxiety and fatigue, that she did not quit her bed the ensuing morning till a late hour. Her first inquiries were about the fate of Brandywyn. She reflected, that, villain though he was, he had at least been the immediate instrument of saving her from murder. Her generous mind dwelt upon this circumstance alone, and she forgot all those sufferings he had so much hand in producing.

Before resuming her journey, she resolved to demand permission to visit the prison to which Brandywyn had been consigned, and where he was said to remain in a very doubtful state. She accordingly lost no time in dispatching Robertson with a note to the Mayor, containing a request to that purpose. A visit from the chief magistrate himself was the reply, and he came for the purpose of attending her to the jail.

As they approached the walls of this abode of wretchedness and guilt, the young Lady's attention was attracted by the appearance of a female who sat on a step near the massive door. She was clad in a red hooded mantle, by which her face was so much shaded that her features were hardly visible. A little basket rested on the

pavement beside her, containing pincushions, garters, laces, small looking-glasses, ballads, combs, and other such trifling articles of merchandize. She sat with her elbows on her knees, and with her cheeks supported on the palms of her hands, whilst her eyes were directed upon the ground, as if in a sort of stupor.

The approach of steps occasioned her to start, and, as she raised herself, her hood fell back and exposed her face. The lovely features, ravaged by grief, were but partially seen through the profusion of fair tresses that every where descended from her well-formed head. Her eyes were languid; but there was a certain expression in them almost indicating the craze of partial derangement, and as they fell upon Miss Malcolm, the lurking fire of its influence seemed to light them up with a wild eagerness.

In an instant she sprang to the young Lady, and taking hold of her arm, though without violence, "He's in there!" said she, with an hysterical laugh, at the same time pointing with her finger to the prison door; "he's in there. Lang, lang hae I been seekin' him; but I ha'e seen him at last. Thir een saw him as they took

him in yestreen; but, oh! he was pale, pale, pale!" continued she, and then, with a convulsive sob and a hollow voice, "he looked as if they were carrying him to his grave.—Just let me in—Oh! let me gang in till him!—Oh! let me gang to the grave itsell wi' him!!"

"Compose yourself, my poor girl," said Miss Malcolm, with the most touching kindness of manner; "and tell me of whom it is you would speak."

"Do ye no ken him, Lady?" said the girl, with great earnestness. "But hoo should ye ken him, after a'? He's mine, Lady—he's my husband. Our wadding was on the wild waves—the winds were our witnesses—the whistling ropes our music, and the dancin' billows were our merry bridal fook.—Find my heart hoo it's beatin'," continued she, laying Miss Malcolm's hand on her side. "It has fluttered for him alane sin ever I first left my puir mither's warm biggin to brave the stormy ocean wi' him.—But what ha'e they putten him in there for?—Sure he never did ill to ony ane but me; and yet I love him, love him as I did when his bark buir me bonnily ower the saut seas. Aften hae I thought, sin he parted

frae me, that it wad hae been better for him an' me too, gin they had been the grave o' us baith while we were still happy thegither ; for they tell-ed me that he had been fause to me, an' that was warst o' a'—for sair, sair has my puir heart been sinsyne !”

A train of thought seemed to come over her here, and, assuming a pensive attitude, she dropped Miss Malcolm's hand, and with her fore-finger applied to her lip, she stood musing, with her eyes fixed on the ground, as if in a great degree unconscious of what was passing near her.

Miss Malcolm availed herself of this opportunity to ask some account of her from a turnkey who stood at the door of the prison ready to admit her. All he knew of the girl was, that she happened to be passing the building with her basket of trifles, just as they were conveying Brandywyn into it the night before. The light of a lamp fell on his face as he was borne under it. She shrieked out, and began beseeching them to let her follow him in. But this they had no authority to permit ; and, accordingly, being shut out, she had seated herself, in great agitation, on the steps, where she had remained all night crying bitterly,

and talking incoherently by fits and starts, and occasionally praying earnestly for admission.

Miss Malcolm immediately interested herself to procure admittance for the poor woman into the prison, and the mayor gave orders to one of the turnkeys to see her taken care of, until such time as their interview with the prisoner was over. The girl seemed to have fully comprehended all that passed, for she stretched forward with breathless attention from anxiety as to the result, and when she heard she was to be allowed to enter, she clasped her hands together in an ecstasy, exclaiming—

“ Heaven bless ye, my bonny leddy ! Heaven’s best blessin’ be about ye !—Dinna fear me ; I’ll sit me down ony where ; I’ll be patient, very patient—and hush ! gang ye in saftly for fear he be sleepin’—What if he should be dead ?” said she, wringing her hands. “ But mind I maun see him, though it were but his corpse—Hush !—whisht !—stap saftly !” And so saying, and waving her hand after Miss Malcolm, who was proceeding along a narrow passage towards a cell at the further end, where Brandywyn was confined, she followed a turnkey into an open side apart-

ment, where she seated herself quietly upon a bench.

Brandywyn lay in a small vaulted cell, lighted by a narrow grated window high up in the wall, the thickness of which was so great, that the light with difficulty sent in a few straggling rays between its approaching angles. Miss Malcolm shuddered as she beheld the numerous gratings, iron doors, massive bolts, and chains, and rings, put in motion by the jailor to enable her to reach the object of her visit.

In a dark corner of this dismal place was a wretched pallet-bed, filled with straw, and covered by a blanket. In this was the unfortunate prisoner, sufficiently fettered by the wounds he had received. Over this miserable couch a sort of rug was thrown like a curtain, an addition made by order of the surgeon who had visited him the night before, rather to increase the quiet of his patient, than for the usual purpose of excluding light where it was so little offensive. The poor wretch seemed to be at present in a state of repose. But he had spent a dreadful night, the full torments of which were only known to himself. His bodily wounds were indeed sufficient to

account for enough of sleepless misery. But great as his pain had been, it was almost unfelt by him, when compared with those pangs arising from reflections upon the events of an ill spent life. Having been for a considerable part of his earlier years the inhabitant of foreign countries, his deeds, whether good or evil, had, during that period, escaped observation. He had therefore passed with those into whose society he was thrown by his lawless trade as a bold and daring, but a free-hearted and generous man, possessing all the rough good qualities of a sailor, and only guilty of doing that which they were equally desirous, though more cautious of doing themselves. His boldness and uniform success in this illicit traffic, being considered by those who profited by it as a proof of his clear head, admirable adroitness, and determined resolution, necessarily raised him high in their estimation. Then as to his dissipation and his dissolute life, those who had dealings with him were not the people most likely to object to such trifles. As he dashed on, therefore, through the foaming billows of life's ocean, without the least threatening of wreck or failure, he managed, amidst his unvarying prosperity, to silence "*the*

still small voice," and to drown the recollection of the earlier and darker scenes of his life, and, wildly enjoying the gales while they blew fair, and the tide whilst it set in his favour, he dauntlessly contended with every occasional adverse storm, cheered by the loud though worthless applause of those he served, and never bestowing one thought upon the future.

But, good Heavens! what years of past time did he not think over in the course of one single night, now that, for the first few hours of his life, he was stretched, desperately wounded, and a prisoner, on what, as far as he knew, was to be his bed of death! One may fancy the rapidity and variety of his thoughts, but the horrors and agonies which shot through his terrified memory it is impossible for us to know or describe.

The rug that hung over his pallet being drawn close, Miss Malcolm, on entering the cell, supposed that he might be asleep, and therefore, being unwilling to disturb him, she occupied herself in putting questions, and giving numerous little orders to those who were about her, all having reference to the cure of his wounds, and his future comforts. She was deceived in supposing

that her words were only heard by those to whom they were addressed. Though, from being exhausted with useless tossing to and fro, he was now lying quiet, yet he was not asleep, and hearing, as he now did, her who had suffered so much from him, and whom he had intended so deeply to injure, thus exerting her angel voice in accents of pity for his present state, and in words of charity and mercy towards him, he slowly and feebly pushed away the rug.

There had always been something handsome in his bold, manly, and determined countenance, though his features had been brutalized by reckless profligacy. But now, how altered was their expression!—Fear, a fear far above that of mere death; and torment, greatly more than that arising from common bodily suffering, seemed to have taken complete possession of them. But through all this there beamed a faint and solitary ray of gratitude, shooting feebly from his languid and distorted eyes towards Miss Malcolm, like the pale and momentary moon-beam amidst the horrors of a stormy ocean.

“Surely,” said he, in a hollow and almost unintelligible voice, “surely if thou canst pardon;

me, angel upon earth, there may yet be mercy for me in Heaven!—But no! no! it cannot be,” continued he, after a pause, “it cannot be! Oh for an endless night of oblivion, for mercy never, never can be for me!” With these words, dropping the rug, he again shrouded himself in darkness, and sank down on the bed, the violence of his mental agonies being manifested to all around by his deep and repeated groans.

Miss Malcolm advanced towards the pallet, and hung over it like an angel of peace. In words dictated by the purest religious faith, she endeavoured to pour the balm of consolation upon his guilty and tormented soul; and her kindness, as well as her eloquence, seemed to operate powerfully upon him. He wept plentifully, and the big tears chased one another rapidly down his weather-beaten cheeks. They were like the refreshing rain drops to an arid soil, where good seeds had long lain dormant, until its quiescent energies were put in action by the fertilizing fluid. Ten thousand painful, but beneficial emotions were awakened in his bosom. He sobbed audibly, and sitting up in his bed, he continued to wring his hands without uttering a word, but

with a countenance completely subdued from its former fierceness, and that sufficiently indicated his internal sufferings.

Shocked by his agony, but, at the same time, gratified with the change that seemed to have been produced upon his mind, where contrition had manifestly begun to operate, Miss Malcolm promised to send some pious clergyman to converse with him, which afforded him inexpressible comfort. Meanwhile, she endeavoured to soothe his distracted mind with all the consolation she could urge, exhorting him to endeavour to prepare himself for the reception of those divine truths which God's minister should unfold to him. The miserable man listened with eager attention, and with his eyes fixed upon her as if he would have drank up her words.

Suddenly, however, they wandered beyond her as if to some object in the door-way, and all their former wildness was restored to them.

“What do I see? Can it be real? or do the phantoms of the past night return to torment me? Come then,” continued he, as if assailed by sudden frenzy; “come you, too, and be revenged. There is enough here to glut the vengeance of

you all !—To you I have been ruin. You were young and innocent as the lamb of a month old. I fondled you as a child, and you loved me. You became a woman, and I stole your unsuspecting heart, nay robbed you, and your poor mother of yourself, soul as well as body. Yet still you grew to me,” added he, in a less violent tone ; “ you sighed often, but you blamed me not, and climate, and storms, and hardships, and dangers, were set at nought in the ardour of your affection ; and though amidst the bustling scenes of my daring trade, I often treated you harshly, yet I have loved you, and love you still as truly as ever sailor loved !”

Miss Malcolm had turned round at the beginning of this abrupt address, and on looking towards the door, she beheld the poor girl for whom she had procured admission into the prison, standing with her head thrust within the doorway of the cell, as if afraid to venture further. Her countenance was working with a combination of emotions, as Brandywyn continued speaking. Throwing the door wide open, she attempted to rush towards the miserable couch, but ere she had reached the middle of the cell, her feet tot-

tered, and she fainted away in the arms of some of the people of the prison, who only reached her in time to prevent her receiving a dreadful fall on the pavement. She was speedily conveyed to a bench in the wall, the only seat the cell afforded, where Miss Malcolm did all she could to restore her, and she soon began to recover.

The wounded man was so violently agitated by the suddenness of her indisposition, that he endeavoured to spring from his pallet to her assistance; but his strength being gone, the effort was vain, and he sank back into his straw.

The Mayor already beginning to think the scene far too much for Miss Malcolm, urged her departure, and as she now saw she could be of little further use, she left the prison, recommending Brandywyn and the unfortunate girl to the care of those iron hearts generally found within these iron gratings, whose base and stubborn metal she endeavoured to soften by the application of gold.

CHAPTER IX.

I will clear their senses dark
 What may suffice, and soften stony hearts
 To pray, repent, —————.

MILTON.

Shall I again, a renovated soul,
 Into the blessed family of the good
 Admittance have ? Think'st thou that this may be ?
 Speak if thou canst : O speak me comfort here !
 For dreadul fancies, like an armed host,
 Have pushed me to despair. It is most horrible—
 O speak of hope ! if any hope there be.

MISS BAILLIE'S *De Montfort*.

It was heavenly charity that led Miss Malcolm to the prison, and she nobly fulfilled its dictates. As the Mayor attended her home, she besought him to do every thing for the prisoner that circumstances would allow, and she put into his hands a sum of money to be employed for that purpose. She left it with him to select one of the ablest members of the church, to visit Brandywyn,

and the good Mayor readily promised to see all her orders attended to. After making these arrangements, the young lady left York to proceed southwards.

Miss Malcolm could not have entrusted the care of such matters in more humane hands, than in those of the excellent Mayor ; and it so happened that he had a son-in-law, Rector of one of the parishes of York, whose benevolent heart, zeal for his sacred profession, and exemplary piety, made him always ready to fly to the consolation of the meanest wretch in affliction ; and the large sums he bestowed in assisting their temporal wants, shewed his sincerity in the ministration of those of a spiritual nature, and tended to render his exhortations the more effectual. This good man was not slow in obeying the call of duty upon the present occasion.

On entering the cell where Brandywyn was confined, he found the unfortunate man asleep, having been overpowered and exhausted by the violent agitation he had undergone, in his interview with her who had been introduced into the prison by Miss Malcolm's means. The poor girl sat on the side of his miserable pallet, where she

seemed to be watching his countenance with extreme solicitude, yet with an anxiety no longer attended with any appearance of irrationality. Her countenance was now like the face of some beautiful garden, lately swept over by a violent tempest, where, though many leaves, and flowers, and tender stems, lie torn and broken, all is again repose.

“Hush,” said she in an underbreath, whilst, at the same time, she motioned to the clergyman to step softly; “whist, dinna wauken him! its just but ye noo that his een ha’e steekit—for mercy’s sake saftly, Sir, an dinna disturb him! a wee bit sleep may gi’e ease baith to his wounded body and soul, and Heaven kens hoo muckle they baith want it, or what they may yet ha’e to gang through.”

As she said this, she allowed the rug to fall down over him, and moved gently from the bedside, motioning to the clergyman to seat himself on the stone bench, and taking her place at a little distance from him.

“Is this unfortunate man your brother?” said the clergyman to her in a mild tone.

“Eh, na, Sir, he’s nae brither o’ mine.”

“ A more distant relation, then ? ”

“ Na, na, Sir, he’s nae kin to me.”

“ Your husband then, young woman ? ” inquired he again.

The poor girl threw her eyes to the ground, blushed deeply, and replied in a hesitating manner.—“ Aye—ou aye, Sir, or maybe, I should rather say he has promised to marry me.

“ You are his betrothed bride then ?—Poor girl ! your situation is a cruel one—cruel indeed ! But this world is a theatre of trial, and if we are patient and virtuous here, though we may suffer for a time, we are sure to receive comfort one day from the same wise hand that afflicts us. Nay, were your brightest hopes blasted for ever in this world, remember that there are hopes still brighter, dawning beyond the grave, for those who have led, as I trust you have done, a life of purity and innocence ——”

He paused to await her reply. But she answered not ; and hiding her face on her knees, her voice was only audible in an unremitting convulsion of sobbing.

“ What is it that so deeply affects you ? Do not hesitate to unbosom yourself to me. Your pre-

sent affliction seems to arise from something more painful than mere temporal misfortune. If your mind is diseased, I come as your physician—lay open its inward malady then, and I will endeavour to minister to its cure. These groans are the most powerful language in which contrition can speak; and where repentance is deep and sincere, mercy, and pardon, and peace, are not far distant.”

He waited to watch the effect of his words, and he was glad to see that they were not thrown away. After an interval of some minutes she raised her head, and a flood of tears gave relief to the bitter pangs of her bosom.

“ I can speak noo !” said she, after a deep sigh, “ I think I can speak noo,—though my heart was ower grit at first. But, though my tale is nae lang, I think unco shame to tell it. Twa or three days syne, my best hope was, that I might ha’e died in some lone place, whare neither it nor me were kenned, and been buried at the back o’ some auld country kirk-yard, whare no even the sun himsel’ wad ha’e comed to look upon the rank sod that covered me. But your kind words ha’e brought back some o’ the fresh days o’ lang syne,

when I was a blithe lassie, doing my poor minnie's bidding,—and when our good minister used to clap me on the head after I had said a' my questions till him, and ca' me the best, as well as the bonniest, lamb o' his flock. Then I could ha'e read my Bible; and aften wad I ha'e sat on some bit daisied spot on some sandy know, wi' the broom bloomin' sweetly, and the whins castin' their pleasant scent about me, greetin o'er the story o' Joseph and his Brethren, or the Prodigal Son. And then, too, I could ha'e prayed.—But I darenay pray noo!" and again she burst into a flood of tears.

“Compose yourself, my poor girl,” said the compassionate clergyman, wiping the tears from his eyes—“compose yourself, I beseech you. Be assured I feel deeply for you, and that the interest you have awakened in me is of no idle sort. Compose yourself then, and endeavour to unfold at least so much of your history, as may enable me to afford you all the temporal, as well as all the spiritual assistance in my power. Fear not that there is mercy in store for you! Remember for what purpose our Saviour delivered that beautiful parable of the Prodigal to his disciples!—do not

forget how much joy prevails in Heaven over one sinner that repenteth,—and reflect, that the poor publican himself, who could only dare to whisper Lord! Lord! was not left unjustified, though he had no other sacrifice to offer but the sincerity of his heartfelt repentance. Nor is there less hope for you. To the Almighty Creator and Ruler of the Universe, then, let your contrite prayers be addressed, and be it mine to temper your thoughts and direct your supplications.”

“ And do you think I might daur to pray, Sir ?” demanded she eagerly.

“ Prayer is at all times our duty as well as our noblest and most inestimable privilege,” answered the good clergyman ; “ but, to render its influence effectual, it must be preceded by repentance. But what are those sins which thus seem to oppress your soul ?”

“ I will tell ye, Sir,” replied she—“ I will tell you a’ as weel as my puir heart will let me. But, oh ! dinna blame him. I canna bear to hear him blamed ; for I am sure he still lo’es me weel—and I ken he will right my wrang after a’ that is, unless his life be ta’en frae him.” The idea that now crossed her, again renewed her tears.

“ My duty teaches me to comfort, not to blame,” said the clergyman ; “ and I am here for the purpose of fulfilling that duty.”

“ Then, Sir, I’ll tell ye a’,” said she, with a profound sigh, and wiping the tears from her eyes, she proceeded,—

“ I was born in the north o’ Scotland. My father was the skipper o’ a bit tradin’ brig ; and at his death he left my mother a gay piece o’ money, the produce o’ his honest industry, as I ha’e aften heard hersell say, and as she was aye a thrifty wife, I’m thinkin’ that she was no that ill to live in the warld. She kept a bit public house, and mony was the braw gentlemen o’ the kintra-side that came to birl his penny siller on the tap o’ her claret hogshead ; forbye a pour o’ sailor fouk, and sic like, that gied her house gude custom. I was her only bairn, and muckle she made o’ me, —mair maybe than she should hae dune, and far mair than I ha’e deserved ; for maybe, an she had been harder on me, and keepit me sairer at wark, or sent me to service, I might ha’e been an honest lassie in her house at this precious moment. But though I aften helped her wi’ my ain good will, she had sae muckle pride in me, that she keepit

me gentle, and had aye a woman to help her. But for twa or three years or sae, after I became a 'grown' lassie, I eased her hand a good deal, and did weel eneugh. . . .

“ But at last the men fouk that cam about the house began to ca' me bonny, and mony was the lad that wad be courtin' at me, and some o' them had siller eneugh too. My mother wad ha'e fain had me marry a dominie body that gade till the Wast Indies, and cam back wi' a hantle o' siller. But nane o' a' them that cam about me did I care for, and as for Dominie Macflae, I likit him waur nor any o' the lave. But at last the Captain came. He used aye to be kind to me as a bairn, and mony a cake o' gingebread, and mony a rusk biscuit had he gi'en me. I had been awa' frae hame at an auld auntie's o' mine, in the burrous town, for the twa or three times that his ship had been last on the coast, so he had seen me a bairn, and he fand me a woman or ever he kent. When he came to the house, a' body ran to serve him. He brought a suit o' ribbons for this ane, and shawls for the ither, coral necklaces for anither, and sae sae; but when he saw me, he gi'ed me a bonny gowd watch, and a gowden chain, and here I ha'e it

still in my breast. I mind yet the very jumpin' o' my heart when he put it round my neck ; but the thoughts, and the sight o't hae gi'en me mony an aking heart since.

“ But I'm growin' langsome.—I listened to a' his brave stories about bonny foreign towns, and distant lands, and storms and tempests, till I had amaist glowered my een out wi' looking at him ; but, maist o' a', I listened to the tales o' love he telled me. He wanted to marry me ; but my mother wad na hear o' sic a thing ; and aye after that, whenever she saw me near him, she drave me awa' frae him. Then it was I first begud to ha'e meetings wi' him unkenned to her, and——But what need I say mair ? I left my puir mother, and gaed aff to the sea wi' him, and I never ha'e seen her face sin syne. On the wide waves I buir my bonny bairn, whase birth nae priest blessed, as nane had blessed its mother's waddin'. But, oh ! my heart was like to break whan it dwined awa', and died in my arms—my bonny bit lamb !—it smiled on me but twa or three minutes or it died, as if to forgi'e me for having brought it in shame into the world. I was sae frantic that I wadna believe that it was dead, and I held it to my breast lang lang after

it was gane, and when the sailors took it frae me, and rowed it in a sack, and drapt it in the sullen ocean,—when I heard the plash—and saw the white waves curlin’ over my baby’s fathomless grave, it was a’ the men cud do to keep me frae followin’. Three years did I sail upon the seas wi’ him. But Heaven let me ha’e nae mair bairns.

“ Aweel, after mony a hard day, and mony a danger, his bark was on the coast near my mither’s house, and himself ashore on some business o’ his ain, when she was attacked by a king’s ship, and the men that was left in her ware obliged to leave her for fear o’ bein’ ta’en. I got ashore too, I canna very weel tell hoo! I daur-dna gang to my mother’s. But I kent o’ a concealment o’ his in the ruins o’ an auld castle, so till it I gaed straight. Some o’ his men telled me that he had been there a whilie afore wi’ a bonny leddy. I thought my heart wad ha’e burstit at the news. But I had na’ muckle time for thought, for the place was assaulted wi’ men and guns, and there was sic a firin’ and a burnin’, and at last I slipit out frae amang them after the castle was ta’en, and got awa.’

“ But what was I to do wi’ mysell? I couldna

face my puir mother, and the very thought o' a' the scornfu' things the neebours might say o' me, was mair than I could bear, so I wandered awa' south, and to keep up an honest face, I bought a bit basket o' bonny dies and orra things, to sell to the women fook. Weel, I wandered into England, stoppin' here and there by the road whiles, and aften I thought I was na' just mysell, and aince or twice it happened, that I forgot for a day or twa what had become o' me, but mony was the kind house, and the kind heart I met wi', and muckle was the care ta'en o' me in my wanderins.

“ At last I came till this town yestreen, and I chanced to see him as they took him in, and never left the bit till that good angel o' a Lady garred the sour men let me in till him. And noo he's eased my heart about the Leddy that was wi' him in Scotland, for he says that it was anither's business he was on that night, and that the Leddy was to ha'e gaen passenger wi' him till England, had his vessel no been ta'en. But, oh Sir, d'ye think that he'll get weel through wi' this? and dinna ye think they'll let him out o' this place? Sure, sure, he can ha'e done naething to deserve this?”

“ I have not yet had leisure to inquire into his case,” said the clergyman, who had more than once applied his handkerchief to his eyes during her simple narrative. But how did he receive you when you again met after so long a separation?—”

“ Mair kindly than ever he did in his kindest days,” replied the girl. “ And noo he wants to marry me, for fear he should die o’ this, which God in his mercy forbid !”

“ Are you sure that he sincerely wishes to make you this reparation for the wrong he has done you ?” said the clergyman.

“ More than I ever wished for safe haven, amidst the storms of a wintry sea !” exclaimed the wounded man, who had listened to the greater part of their conversation, unwilling, until now, to interrupt it, and as he said so, he pushed the rug aside with uncommon energy. “ Even this small work of atonement would be as the pouring of a cooling stream upon my burning soul. If you have charity, Reverend Sir, extend your mercy towards me, and let me instantly repair as far as I now can, the injury I have done to that poor wench. I know not how soon it may be beyond my power to do even this little. If it be

possible, pronounce a blessing on us both.—At least,” added he, after a pause, followed by a deep groan, “at least it will rest on her, though it should recoil from me.—”

“And why should it not rest on you also?” said the clergyman. “This anxiety to do even so small a portion of good betrays a lurking virtue, which may have once governed you with all its plenitude of strength, and which, though long subdued by evil habits, and years of intercourse with wicked companions, may again resume its power.”

The prisoner fell back into his straw, and groaned deeply; whilst the clergyman approached the pallet, and sat down on the side of it. He took the feverish hand of the sufferer. His eye was sunk, and his look haggard, and his whole countenance strongly manifested the torture he felt.

“My friend,” said the good man, in a tone which of itself might have spoken peace—“tell me your story? I trust I have done much to compose the mind of your guilty, but contrite companion. Fear not, but I shall be able to make the living waters of comfort reach your

heart also. I am persuaded, that the roots of early sown virtue yet remain there, and that the plant only wants culture to be restored to its former state of active vegetation."

The prisoner again groaned deeply, and wept bitterly, until, at length, becoming more composed, he sat up among the straw, and resting his back against the wall, and leaning on one arm, he began, as it seemed, to recall events long since gone by.

"Indeed, it was not always thus with me," said he; "I am not now the man I was in my youth; even the name of Brandywyn I now bear, is not my own; 'tis but a *nom de guerre* assumed, to shield off the disgrace my conduct might have brought on a better. I was the son of a farmer in the north of England, a well-educated man of considerable wealth, and even possessing some influence in the district he lived in, acquired by his sound sense and sterling honesty. When I was about ten or twelve years old I had the misfortune to lose my mother, who was the daughter of a clergyman. But I remember her well even now, and I remember also the unwearied attention she bestowed on my early religious instruc-

tion, and, if I could have profited by her lessons, they adhere to me even yet. I think even now I see her venerated form hanging over me as I knelt to say my evening prayer ; and I shall never forget the day when the hearse bore her away, and I saw the grave close over her coffin for ever. She left only one other child, my brother Henry, then an infant. My father's affliction was so severe as to render him utterly unfit, for a time, to think of any thing but the bereavement he had suffered. When he began to feel himself able for exertion, he turned his whole attention to the education of me, his eldest boy ; and, resolving to spare no expence that his means could afford, he re-let the farm he then possessed, and removed into the city of Durham, that he might the more certainly secure proper teachers for me. There he placed me at a day-school where I had every advantage, and he moreover took care that I should partake largely of his own private instructions and admonitions during those hours I spent under the paternal roof. Under so wise a system of education, it might have been expected that I should have turned out a reward to him. But, alas ! it was far otherwise.

“ Having accidentally taken up with a number of idle and wicked boys, with some of whom, a good deal older than myself, I naturally thought it manly to associate, and whose wicked tricks I soon thought it a noble thing to imitate, I was led into two or three excesses not very creditable to me, but hardly worth mentioning now, and these, coupled with my total want of application to any honourable pursuit, gave my poor father the most cutting vexation. In vain he tried to make any lasting impression upon my thoughtless heart. There were times, indeed, when his admonitions, together with the heart-rending agony I saw he suffered, melted me even to tears, and produced protestations he vainly hoped were the forerunners of serious amendment. But I was no sooner met by those wicked associates, whose tool I had in a great measure become, than what they called the prosing of my over scrupulous parent, was laughed to scorn, and every trace of virtue produced by his lessons, was speedily effaced by the ridicule they threw on them.

“ After four or five years spent in this way, during which I continued to make considerable progress in wickedness, a plan was formed for robbing

the fish-pond of one of the dignitaries of the church, and I joined in it with some relish, from the malicious thought, that our plunder was to deprive the overgrown Dean of the carp on which he was said to feast. But what I entered into very much as a frolic, produced consequences serious enough in themselves.

“ Having proceeded to the spot with my comrades, on a moonlight night, with a drag-net sufficiently large to enclose a considerable sweep of the fish-pond, we commenced our operations. As the pond was very deep in the middle, I and three other lads were employed in wading in, two of us on each side, through the shallower part of the water, those who were innermost being furnished with long poles to keep down the ground-line, whilst two other lads on the shore, assisted in hauling the drag-lines to pull the net round towards the bank at one end. The eldest boy of all, the son of a butcher, who had planned the expedition, and whose father was probably to have benefited most largely by the spoil, walked backwards and forwards on a little hillock near the pond, as a centinel.

“ Whilst things were in this posture, and we,

in the water, were all busily engaged with the net, two game-keepers, who happened that night to be looking out for poachers, who had some nights before made depredations on the pheasant preserve, happened to descry us at work from a wooded eminence in the park, the moonlight on the water rendering our figures very conspicuous at a distance. Availing themselves of the concealment of a grove, stretching down from the hill to within forty or fifty yards of the knoll where our sentry stood, they got near to him without being perceived. Armed with bludgeons, they rushed forward with the intention of knocking him down, thinking, that if they could succeed in doing so, they would easily make sure of the rest of our party.

“ We, who were in the water, and engaged in dragging the net, were too much occupied to observe the approach of the men. But not so the butcher’s son. He drew from his breast a pistol he had armed himself with, unknown to any of us, and fired it at the foremost keeper. All our eyes were instantly turned towards the spot in the most desperate alarm. ‘ The villain has murdered me,’ exclaimed the wounded man, and

we saw him stagger backwards, and fall groaning into the arms of his comrade who was coming up behind him, whilst the lad who fired the fatal shot was making off.

“All was confusion and dismay in the water. I and two others having abandoned the net, with some difficulty reached the bank, and immediately fled after the three lads, who were already in full retreat, the keeper being too much engaged with his wounded companion to think of following us. But the fourth boy who had been in the pond with us, having, in his sudden and desperate alarm, taken by mistake into the deeper water, somehow got his feet entangled among the meshes of the half floating net, and being thrown forward, was now under water, and now above, in such a situation as to leave no doubt that he must perish. His drowning and half-suffocated screams came horribly upon our ears as we fled. A twinge of self-reproach came across me that I had not staid to save him. I halted for a moment, and even went back several steps through the thicket by which I was escaping. But there came one yelling shriek of despair, followed by a splashing, and a sound of choking,—and then a

death-like silence,—and then,—I knew all was over, and I fled without knowing very well whether I was going.

“After running for some time, I perceived that I had gained the great high road, and finding it necessary to pause for a few minutes to take breath, I turned aside into a meadow, and stretched myself down among some furze bushes, within eight or ten yards of a grassy path leading through it.

“As I lay trembling in my concealment, the thoughts passed rapidly through my mind, and a thousand horrible ideas crowded along with them. The murder so recently committed, in which I had been led to be in a certain degree a participator—and then the soul-harrowing yells of my drowned companion came so strong into my imagination, that I almost heard them again. The boy, who was considerably younger than me, was the only son of a lady, the widow of an officer, who had been left with this youth in very poor circumstances. I felt conscious that it was I who had seduced a naturally virtuous boy into a participation in my wicked pranks, and, above all, that my most earnest entreaty had been necessary

to induce him to join that evening's party. I thought of his poor mother, and the execrations which, in the anguish of her soul, she would probably pour out upon him who had misled and deprived her of the only stay Heaven had left her.

“ The moon was still high, and as I lay with my ear to the ground, I heard a slow and gentle brushing of the short grass, at if some light foot were advancing. I looked up, and how was my blood frozen in my veins, when I beheld the figure of the drowned boy pass slowly along the path. His head was bare, and his long locks, as well as his garments, were dripping wet, and his eyes seemed fixed, and his face had the blueness of death upon it ! I could not doubt that it was the ghost of him whose life had just been sacrificed by my folly and wickedness ; and though I have often since tried to reason myself out of this idea, all my attempts have been in vain, so strong was the impression made on my mind by the ghastly figure, and I have since often fancied I saw him in a thousand forms. Appalled by the sight, I followed the apparition with my eyes, as it moved on without sound, until it was no longer visible, and then starting from my hiding place, I regain-

ed the road, and fled with fresh wings of terror. In the transient catches of reflection that came upon me as I ran, I resolved never more to visit my father's roof. Indeed, the crime of murder, to which I was certainly an accessory, made it too dangerous for me to do so, and I urged my flight almost unceasingly, until I reached the nearest sea-port, where I immediately hired myself as a cabin-boy in a coasting vessel bound for London. I had no sooner arrived there than I fell in with a number of dissolute characters, with whom, during the time our ship was discharging her cargo, I frequented the gin shops and low tap-houses about Wapping: and there my education, you may easily believe, was but little improved. To support my expences I took the bounty, and entered as a man-of-war's-man on board a ship fitting out for a foreign station. Whilst loitering about, I happened one day to take up a newspaper in one of my places of resort, and my eyes being accidentally attracted by a paragraph headed Durham, I read as follows:—

“ ‘ The gamekeeper who was so desperately wounded in the nocturnal affray with the poachers of this neighbourhood, still lingers in such a state

as to leave no hopes of his recovery. As connected with this unhappy affair, we are sorry to be obliged to notify the death of Mr Harrison, long the wealthy and highly respectable farmer of Wickersmere in this county. This truly worthy old gentleman, whose loss to the circle he moved in is irreparable, is supposed to have died broken-hearted, owing to some existing suspicions implicating his son George in the above murder. The young man, who is said to have been very wild, dissappeared immediately after the commission of the crime, and has not since been heard of.

“Conceive what were my feelings, Sir, on reading this paragraph, knowing myself, as I did, to be that very George Harrison alluded to.—But—Good Heavens, Sir!—what?—what is the matter?—are you unwell?—Eppy! call for help, I—I beseech you!—he is going to faint!”

“No, no!” said the good clergyman, recovering himself, and speaking with great agitation—“do not call for help!—do not summon indifferent persons to witness my heart-rending emotions!—I—I am your younger brother Henry!!!”

He threw himself upon the miserable man, and embracing him, they mutually lost all power of

language for some minutes, until relieved by giving full way to their feelings.

The best medical advice was now procured, and the wounds of the unfortunate prisoner were ably dressed. For some days he gave the most flattering hopes of a speedy recovery; his pious and affectionate brother was unwearied in his attention to him; and his spiritual amendment advanced even more rapidly than that of his body. The performance of the marriage ceremony, that made Eppy his wife, gave him additional ease. All was going well. But an unexpected relapse took place,—and he died suddenly in the arms of his wife and brother.

To paint Eppy's grief would be a vain attempt. But the excellence of Henry Harrison's heart was never more tenderly displayed, than in the well-judged care and kindness he bestowed on his newly acquired sister.

CHAPTER X.

That pale, that white-faced shore,
Whose foot spurns back the ocean's roaring tides,
And coops from other lands her islanders.

SHAKESPEARE.

Life is all a variorum,
We regard not how it goes,
Let them cant about decorum
Who have characters to lose.

Here's to budgets, bags, and wallets,
Here's to all the wandering train!
Here's our ragged brats and callets!
One and all cry out, Amen!

The Jolly Beggars.

RETURN we now to Amherst, whom we left in a convalescent, but very weak state of health.

He had no sooner recovered, than, by the advice of his physicians, he went down to the coast for the benefit of the sea air, and took up his abode with his friend Cleaver, who, better aware of the nature of his malady than any of the

learned sons of Esculapius, did all in his power to divert his mind from brooding over its secret sorrows. He thus gave fair play to the exertions nature and youth made in his friend's favour, whose health of body, at least, was soon re-established, though his mind's disease remained.

His greatest pleasure now was to wander along the beach lining the base of those bold cliffs defending the southern coast of England, which frown defiance alike upon the anger of the waves, and the impotence of the continental foes of Britain. The wild roar of the infuriated breakers, or the low murmur of the more gentle waves, as they insinuated themselves slowly among the large loose rounded pebbles, were equally lulling to his misery.

It happened that, on the very evening in which the interruption of Miss Delassaux's marriage took place, Amherst was indulging in one of these his solitary rambles. He had extended it rather farther along the shore than ordinary, having been carried unconsciously onwards by the musing fit he had fallen into, that permitted him not to remark the unusual darkness of the sky, where large heavy masses of an inky hue came rolling on, giving

warning of an increasing storm. At length he was awakened from his walking dream by the sudden burst of the tempestuous blast, breaking, as it were, from the sailing clouds, with a fury irresistible as it was instantaneous ; and he wheeled round to retrace his steps as speedily as possible. His slow mode of advance, that, to an observer, might have had the appearance of the caution of a spy, and his guilty-like retreat, that was in reality owing to no other cause than a desire to turn his back on the storm, excited the alarm of three men who were at that moment skulking behind a mass of fallen rock, near the mouth of a natural ravine. Mistaking him for some one reconnoitring their actions with hostile intentions, they rushed upon him, and overpowering him before he was aware, bound his hands, stopped his mouth, blindfolded him, and forced him to ascend the ravine. Unarmed and weak as he was, Amherst was altogether unfit as well as unprepared for resistance. He believed that he was in the hands of robbers ; but he had become so careless as to what might befall him, that he moved passively up the ascent in the grasp of his conductors, who led him to a hovel perched on the summit of the cliff, con-

structed of planks, and covered with the inverted hull of a large boat, under which he entered with apathetical submission.

He was no sooner within the door-way, than he was released from his bonds, and the bandage they had tied over his eyes having been removed, he was enabled to observe the persons and things within the curious apartment he had been so strangely introduced into. He now perceived that the sailor-looking men who had seized him had taken post at the door behind him, as if to prevent all chance of his escape, and the pistols and other arms they exhibited, sufficiently warned him that it was necessary to act with prudence.

The hovel was small, and stuffed in every corner with strange looking pieces of furniture, all of them old, most of them very antique in their form, and many of them of foreign manufacture, and wearing the appearance of having made many a voyage. At one side was a large fire-place, built up with fragments of flint from the chalky cliffs, in which was piled a huge heap of burning billets, and a deal table of rude workmanship, plentifully covered with eatables, liquors, bottles, tall beakers, rummers, and Dutch tobacco-pipes, extended it-

self down the middle of the place. On one side sat a rather bulky man, like a foreign pilot, with a great, rough, seaman's watch-coat on, and his head ensconced in a huge brown wig, covered by a broad brimmed hat, which, with his black whiskers, mustachios, and a three weeks' beard, almost hid his face.

As to the other figure, if that might be called a figure which appeared at the upper end of the table, it was difficult to tell by the light of the single candle dimly illuminating the place, whether it was that of a man or of a sea-monster. It was elevated, or rather nestled in an arm-chair, amongst coarse, greasy checked cushions, and it presented the shocking spectacle of a body and head, without legs or arms, for what remains of limbs there were, appeared to be little more than stumps of half a foot long. The deficiency of the body in these respects, was amply compensated by the enormous bulk of the head, that nourished a profusion of black horse-like hair, hanging around the shoulders like the tails of a whole troop of heavy cavalry. The trunk, all upwards to the neck, seemed to be clothed in a sort of close made garment of checked stuff, the hue, material, and shape of it, being so

much like the surrounding cushions, that the enormous head appeared to be poised upon the top of a perpendicularly-placed bolster of enormous magnitude, and when put in motion, it seemed as if about to roll down upon the table. The broad face was of a red so furiously intense, that the whole tide of blood, once nourishing the extremities, seemed to have settled there. With one stump this monster supported a long Dutch clay pipe, with the bole resting on the table, whilst, with the other end of it in his mouth, he half enveloped himself in a cloud of smoke of his own raising.

This extraordinary object so much engaged the attention of Amherst on his entrance, that he had little leisure to look at the other personage we have mentioned.

On an old piece of canvas placed on the floor, at a little distance from the foot of the chair on which this animated head was propt, lay two savage looking bull-dogs, with squint eyes. They growled, and appeared disposed to fly at Amherst, until chid into quietness by the deeper growl of their master's voice, that sounded as if it came from the interior of an empty tun.

In another corner, not far from the dogs, lay a ragged little tarry-looking boy, fast asleep on some straw, covered by an old piece of sail-cloth.

Such were the inmates of this frail and whimsical cabin, against the sides of which the storm beat, as if it would have blown it away. The entrance of the stranger excited almost as much astonishment in them, as filled him at finding himself so suddenly brought there. The atmosphere of tobacco smoke was gradually allowed to clear away, from what might well have been called the head of the table. One enormous goggle eye, for there was but one, glared at Amherst, from the full moon of the face, with a look that seemed to demand some explanation of this intrusion upon their joviality.

“ Sam,” said he, rather sternly to one of the men, and the sound was like that of the deepest notes of a double bass, “ Sam ! what gemman is this here you have brought to spend the evening with us ?” and then, in an under voice, as the man moved nearer to him for the purpose of explanation—“ He is none of the kites of the coast here I’m sure—never see’d un before in my life !”

“ Mayhap not, Master Bellybags,” replied Sam; “ mayhap he be not none of un, and it may be an he had, I should hardly have ventured un here, and might ha’ bundled un into the sea, to save further trouble. But though no kite, as I knows on, he had a woundy suspicious look, and we catched un watching behind a rock, just an’ ’twere a very cat. And considering the job we have on hand, ’twas no time to stand shilly-shally, and allow him to take leg bail, and blow the speaking-trumpet on us. So we e’en brought un up here, that you might judge on un yourself.”

The head again turned towards Amherst, and the enormous eye fixed itself upon him for a few moments, and then with an inconceivable degree of adroitness, the monstrous trunk began to wriggle itself forward, and the right stump catching up a long can of grog, by pressing it against the breast, he poised it with wonderful precision within his arm-pit, and turning his head and it towards each other, he brought his mouth and the beaker into awkward, but very satisfactory contact; the other stump being employed beneath, as a lever to raise it gradually, as the li-

quor ebbed away. In this position the can remained for some time, not altogether for the purpose of prolonging the draught, but rather to afford time, for more effectually scanning the countenance of the young man, who was the subject of his inquiry.

“ Pshaw !” said he, at length, in a sort of half whisper, as he withdrew his mouth from the exhausted vessel, and turned it towards the ear of the man whom he questioned—“ I wish ye mayn’t ha’ done us some ugly turn here, Sam, wi’ your cursed haste. I see nought about the lad as is suspicious as you call it. You should not ha’ been so risky, without some werry strong cause. Now, ye ha’ brought un here, what a fiend shall we do wi’ un ? An we were to let un go now, our game would be up, for an he should blow on us, we should all be rooted out, neck and crop. Then as for any other way of disposing on un, ’twere as well not to do such a thing, unless when we cannot do without it. But, stay, I mun question un a bit, and, d’ye hear, look sharply to the door, for happen what may, he must not budge hence till the *Sans-pareille* is off. But, mark me,” added he with a wink,

“ mark me, how I shall sand his eyes, and gammon him.”

Then raising his voice so as to address Amherst, and throwing a sort of horrid smile into his broad ogre-looking face—

“ Young man,” said he, “ or mayhap I should call you young gemman,—but I am not much up to manners,—there must be some mistake here—your name bea’n’t John Larkins, be it ?”

“ No !” said Amherst, with cool dignity. “ I am no such person ; but I should be glad to be informed why I have been thus seized, and brought hither in so rude a manner ?”

The monster affected to burst into an uncontrollable fit of laughter, that shook the whole of the crazy tenement, and which he seemed with difficulty to subdue. Then appearing, at length, to gather the command of words—

“ A most whimsical blunder, ha ! ha ! ha ! a most ridiculous accident ! truly absurd ! trust me, young gemman, ’twas nought else than a joke on a neighbour of mine, and Sam has hit on the wrong person, that’s all. But, come, let us make some amends, Sam ; come, bear a hand, for I can’t, ye know,—bear a hand, I tell ye, and

trundle in that 'ere box, and let the gemman have a seat, and summat to drink, in this our castle of the cliffs, you understand.—You must know, Sir, that though I am nought now but poor Bellybags the mumper, without legs or arms, as jogs as far as the edge of the great road every morning, in this here chair drawn by them 'ere bull-dogs, with young Tarry-breeches yonder as my coachman, to beg a few pence, and to take the air, I have seed some service in my day, when I were all right and tight as to fins and pins, and could hop about the decks like a dancing-master. I were then a gay one, d'ye see. But thoff I be now a hulk, I ha' still gotten a shot in the locker. A can, ye rogue, Tarry," cried he, to the boy, who jumped up at his loud summons; "a can for the gemman on the box, d'ye hear. You'll take a drop of grog to wet your whistle, Sir, since chance has brought you here? and a pipe, Sir, won't ye? The 'bacco is real good weed. We can sing ye some rare chaunts, and tell ye some merry tales; and let me tell ye, our music will be more pleasanter than that 'ere howling wind, and battering rain, and this cabin better than the beach, just at this

moment, though mayhap not quite so good as the house that you may be customed to !”

These words issued from the cavernous lips of this gigantic head, with an air of so much good nature, and there was something so much like adventure in the affair, that Amherst felt very much inclined to accept of this strange invitation, in support of which inclination, the elements without were urging very loud arguments. But reflecting that his absence might occasion uneasiness to his friend Cleaver, he resolved to make the best of his way homewards, in spite of the storm, and he accordingly signified his intention in the civilest terms he could use.

The mumper seemed to be considerably perplexed, as Amherst was making his reply, and just as he was preparing to leave the cabin, the bulky man in the pilot's coat, and brown wig, who seemed hitherto to have endeavoured to conceal himself by slouching his hat, and leaning backward against the wall, suddenly started up, and calling to the two men who were stationed at the door—“ Let him not pass at your peril, my masters ! I must have more speech of him

ere he goes," he discovered to the wondering eyes of Amherst the features of—Lochandhu!!!

“ Macgillivray!” exclaimed Amherst with an astonishment which, as his action and expression sufficiently testified, had nothing feigned in it. “ Lochandhu here!—Good Heavens! when did you arrive in England? and what has brought you hither?—to meet you in such a place too!”

Thus far he was hurried by the recollection of the Highlander's hospitality; but other images crowding upon his mind, he paused, and a sudden chill, not of fear, but of horror, came over him, as he called to mind the desperate associates with whom he too certainly knew that Lochandhu was leagued in his own country, and as he now looked around him on those with whom he found him consorting in England.

Lochandhu gazed anxiously upon him in silence for some moments with a scrutinizing eye, as if he would have dived into his very soul.

“ No!” said he at length, “ it is impossible—I cannot be mistaken, your surprise is too natural to be that of an actor; besides, I have formerly seen too much honour in you to believe that you could ever bring yourself to betray the man whose

bread you had eaten, and whose cup you had drank."

"Betray you!" cried Amherst, in the accents of increased surprise; "until this moment that you discovered yourself, I believed that you were still among your native forests and mountains."

"'Tis well," said Lochandhu, after a short pause; "but even were it otherwise, I have sufficient security for my safety at present, since you can remain here until the French lugger arrives that is to bear me hence, an outcast exile from my country; she need not tarry long now, and perhaps even at this moment she waits the signal-light—Jem, let it appear!"

The sailor whom he addressed began immediately to add some billets of dry wood to the fire, intermingled with pieces of pitched wreck timber, and it soon blazed up with great violence; after which, with the assistance of the other man, he moved the table a little out of the way, and, opening a slipping pannel in the side of the cabin, next to the sea and opposite to the fire, he disclosed a large aperture in the planks of the wall, of a triangular form, the base of the triangle being uppermost, so that the bright gleam of the fire being

seen through it, must of necessity have produced to those at sea a luminous object of that very remarkable figure, running no risk of being confounded with any ordinary light.

The storm was louder than ever. "Surely," said Amherst, "you do not mean to go to sea in such a night as this. It blows a perfect hurricane, and methinks I even feel the salt mist coming through that hole, as it rises from the spray lashed up by the furious waves dashing in mountains against the beach below."

"Let it blow!" said Lochandhu, with a calm smile; "I have faced as bad before; besides, I question whether the lads who are now tossed on the heaving bosom of yon angry ocean, and are about to carry Cæsar and his fortunes, would have ventured hither, had they not spied all this turmoil a-brewing. But sit down, Mr Oakenwold, and take some refreshment; we may yet have an hour or two to wait for these dolphins of the waves, who are to carry me presently to France. Sit down, I beseech you, and let me have all your news. What, I pray you, became of you after the hasty retreat you made from the glen?—and, by the way too, how came you to decamp so

abruptly, and in a manner so little like what I had reason to expect from a gentleman? Be not offended, I beg of you, at this question, nor scruple to speak plainly to me, for I had my suspicions against Sandy on this head, and it would be some satisfaction, at least, for me, before I leave England, to know whether these suspicions were really just or not. I, too, may perhaps give you some light in matters of which you little think me aware, and which may be of some interest to you." Having said this, Lochandhu was silent, and waited his reply with an air of extreme curiosity.

It was some time before Amherst could satisfy himself that he was right in holding amicable converse with a man whom he had reason to believe a robber and a murderer, and who was apparently even an outlaw. The recollection, however, that he must himself have been murdered, but for the interference of this very man, who had for weeks given him all the protection, as well as all the hospitality due to a guest, left him little inclination to give voluntary information against him, even if it had been in his power. He therefore yielded to his desire of gaining intelligence that might elucidate some of those mysteries which sur-

rounded him while in Scotland, and, sitting quietly down, and beginning his narrative, he gave the whole secret circumstances of it to Lochandhu at full length. Nor had he any other auditors: for the boy Tarry had retired to his lair; the mumper, overcome by the soporific effects of his deep draughts, had closed his one eye in slumber, immediately after a long and last powerful embrace bestowed upon the can of brandy punch; and the three sailors were dispatched by Lochandhu to patrol the beach, and to watch at the bottom of the ravine for the signal from the expected lugger, and to guard the place where the landing was to be effected.

Then it was that their conversation became most interesting to both, and hours passed away without their being sensible of the lapse of time.

When Amherst told Lochandhu of what he had overheard in the hut, of the plot laid against his life, the attempts made to get information from his servant, and the *ruse de guerre* he had been compelled to adopt in consequence of it, and how much the necessity of his manœuvre had been proved from the circumstance of Alexander Macgillivray, the miller, and the rest of the party,

having so readily become dupes to his stratagem, Lochandhu seemed to devour his words.

“ Ah, scoundrel that he was !” cried he, with apparent bitterness of heart, “ I always said he was a wolf,—a brutal hyæna, whom there was no humanizing,—a savage, who never could be made to understand that delicate distinction, which honourably secures protection and hospitality to the guest who seeks our hearth, whilst it gives a fair licence to carry on a petty warfare, necessity driving us, against the mere herd of mankind, or those who, coming not thus within the range of our affections, may be fairly treated as foes. By Heavens ! I pity the rascal the less, since I know that what I so long suspected was in reality true, I mean that he continued to carry on his nefarious plots to the wreck of my reputation, notwithstanding all the injunctions I laid on him to the contrary. By my faith, he would have made but short work with you and the Irishman in Glenmore !—But poor fellow !” said the hardy Highlander, with a tear in his eye, which he could but ill conceal, “ he is gone to his account,—he and the miller were hanged at Inverness, Mr Oakenwold,—and what is more,—

an it had not been that the warrant was entrusted to a very worthy man, who, after taking and handcuffing them, turned to me and said, ‘As for you, Sir, you are a gentlemen, I would advise you to make your escape as fast as you can,’ I should have made the topmost ribbon of the knot that dangled from the tree on the Gallow Hill. Trust me, I did not neglect the gentleman’s advice!—I did not let the grass grow at my heels,—for next night I eat a beef-steak at the lodge of Niddry coal-pits, to the south of Edinburgh. And so I soon reached this neighbourhood, where I have been loitering about in different disguises, and in different places known to myself, receiving shelter from some who have known me before. But you have said little about the partner of your flight, Mr Oakenwold?” said Lochandhu, stopping abruptly to watch the effect of his question.

Amherst had, indeed, given but a slight sketch of the share he had in the escape of Miss Malcolm, indeed, he had introduced no more of this into his narrative than was absolutely necessary to illustrate the other parts of it, and he had endeavoured to allude to her, without permitting it to appear that he had any thing more than an

ordinary interest in her. Lochandhu paused for a few moments for his reply, but seeing that Amherst hesitated, "Well, well, Mr Oakenwold," said he, "be assured I have no desire to dive into your secrets, particularly at a time like this,—nor, indeed, was my question dictated by curiosity. I could tell you something of that lady.—But hark!—did I not hear the sound of steps? I must resume my disguise," and so saying, he hastily wrapped himself up as he was when Amherst entered the cabin.

CHAPTER XI.

One gives another a cup of poison, but at the same time tells him it is a cordial, and so drinks it off and dies.

SOUTH.

Both wind and tide stay for this gentleman,
And I, to blame, have held him here too long.

SHAKESPEARE.

LOCHANDHU had hardly time to conceal himself in his disguise when a low tap was heard at the door, and Amherst observed him thrust his hand into his bosom and seize a pistol, the large brazen butt of which, being partially discovered by his movement, showed that it was no child's plaything, and, at the same time, he raised the fore-finger of his other hand to caution his companion to be silent. The bull dogs under the table growled;—the tap was repeated rather more audibly;—the dogs uttered a short bark;—the latch was then slowly lifted, and the door

half opened, and a man's head appeared. It was Antonio !

The ruffian's dark and malignant eyes peered cautiously around the interior of the cabin.—“ *Sangue del diavolo !*” said he, in a muttering tone, “ strangers here !—Hollo ! old Bellybags ! Why you are asleep, methinks !—Dost hear I say ? Silence those cursed curs of thine,—they ought to know me by this time.”

The dogs seemed to give assent to this remark, for no sooner did they recognize him, than they changed their bark into a whine, and began fawning upon him.

“ Hey !” said he, looking more stedfastly at Amherst, as if he now recognized him—“ Hah !—*Cospetto del miracolo !* What make you here, young man ?” added he, regarding him with increasing fierceness.

“ Why, master Antony,” replied the mumper, “ he was fitched here by them nincompoops, Sam, and Jem, because they thought he looked somewhat like a shark in the dark. But he's nought but an innocent whiting after all, and a jolly companion he is, never trust me an he bean't. He and that 'ere gemman have drank me their

cans, and tipt me their melodisome chaunts, till I werrily think they have half bamboozled me, for I were sound asleep when you comed in. But what, in the fiend's name, may ha' brought ye down at this here hour?"

"You old fool!" cried Antonio, "you're as drunk as the ocean! How came you to admit people of whom you know nothing? *Dannazione!* this young cockerel is no guest for you, let me tell you. Mr Oakenwold," said he, turning to Amherst, and addressing him in a stern voice, "I must know, Sir, what you do here?"

"What right have you to question me, ruffian?" demanded Amherst, rising, his blood boiling within him at the recollection of the atrocious act he had been guilty of in carrying off Miss Malcolm, aggravated by his present impudence. "Villain that you are, you shall account to me, and to the laws of the country, for the infamous crimes you are guilty of."

"What right have I to question you, did you say?" replied Antonio. "Why, no other than that of every one, who has his own safety to secure. You talk of my crimes—so you are aware of all, are ye? and you mean to revenge your-

self on me for the chace I gave you in Scotland, by turning informer here. *Fuoco del grand inferno!*” added he, making a step towards Amherst, “but you have chosen a pretty trade for a gentleman! *Siete Galantuomo davvero! Ma —.*”

He plucked a poinard from a concealed part of his cloak, in such a manner, that his movement was perfectly unseen by his victim, and was in the act of drawing his arm slowly behind him to plunge it into Amherst's side, when the Highlander, who saw every thing, sprang over the table in the twinkling of an eye, and alighting just between them, as the glittering steel was closing on its aim by a powerful horizontal thrust, he received on the thick part of his thigh the wound intended for the heart of Amherst, whilst, at the same time, his whole weight descending upon Antonio, brought the assassin flat to the ground. Macgillivray immediately recovered himself, and drawing from his bosom the large pistol, the stock of which he had continued to grasp, he held the muzzle to the head of the prostrate Italian.

“Stir not,” said he, in a determined manner,

“stir not, Antonio ; at your peril, stir not, till you promise me to do no injury to Mr Oakenwold. His father saved my life. He has himself eaten the bread and salt, and drank of the cup of my hospitality, and I will sacrifice my life, rather than a hair of his head shall be touched !”

“ Lochandhu !! !” exclaimed the Italian, even more confounded by his appearance, than by the overthrow he had received from him—

“ Aye, Lochandhu !” replied Macgillivray, still standing over him in the same menacing attitude—“ Promise to make no farther attempt on Mr Oakenwold, and you shall be permitted to rise, for I would not willingly hurt you neither. On my part, I will answer for the honour of Mr Oakenwold. From him you have nothing to fear, while I am his warrant for your safety.”

Amherst readily declared that, as far as the present occasion went, he would pledge himself to keep the engagement Mr Macgillivray had just made for him ; he should not, however, hold himself bound to respect it farther, but, after the present night, should consider himself free to take measures at any time for the apprehension of Anto-

nio, that he might be brought to justice for carrying off a young lady from her friends in Scotland, and subjecting her to a cruel confinement.

“ Is that all you know against me ?” said Antonio, with much indifference of manner ; “ a *fico*, then, for your evidence ! and a *fico* for you now, though you knew the worst, since I saw the lugger lying off and on that shall land me safely in France before the day breaks. Then come let us be friends,” continued the villain, with a sneering laugh ; “ or, if you like not the word, let us be pot companions at least for half an hour, fellow-guests of mine host of the Saracen’s Head there.—Come, come, I promise to keep the truce—Lochandhu, the young fellow shall have no harm from me, *credemi vi dico !*”

Upon this assurance, Antonio was permitted to gather himself up, and Amherst now began to express his anxiety about the wound Lochandhu had so generously received in his defence. The poinard still remained in it, but the Highlander assured him that it was a mere scratch, and although, upon withdrawing the weapon, a pretty copious flow of blood appeared, it was discovered to have done little more than graze the skin, the limb

having been defended by the thick leather small clothes he generally wore, in which the blade had fixed itself. A handkerchief was bound round it to staunch the blood.

“ *Signore capo e corpo,*” cried Antonio, addressing the head of the house, “ have you nothing in your locker to stay a hungry man’s stomach?—I have had a tolerable scamper to-night, and could taste a bit of beef before my flask. I have half a cake here, which I brought with me, but I have no fancy for such kickshaws when I can get any thing that is more to my mind.”

“ Look into my larder,” said the mumper; “ you’ll find a round of corned beef there that will stand all your broadsides, an I mistake not.”

“ Then *corpo di me,* I’ll make this a present to Grappler and Growler,” cried Antonio, tossing the cake to the dogs, who instantly began to make an amicable attack upon it, whilst he proceeded to rummage in an old trunk for the round of beef the mumper had spoken of, and having found it, he cut some pretty large slices from it, and sat down at the table to satisfy his hunger.

After he had eat rapaciously, he pulled from his pocket a flask of wine.

“ Hah !” cried he, “ though I cared not for the eatable part of my travelling stock, *il bere non fa male*, I have no particular objections to the tipples ; ’tis Malmsey, if I mistake not, at least I think I should know the shape of the bottle ; but you shall all taste it, and judge for yourselves. Come,” said he, as he filled four large goblets that drained the flask dry ; “ come, and since two of us are just a going to cross the sea, let us have *buon viaggio*—But *cospetto del inferno* ! what is the matter with the dogs ?”

All eyes were now directed towards the animals, who were lying stretched upon their sides in strong convulsions, their tongues thrust out, their eyes and their jaws fixed, and a frothy saliva appearing from their mouths. Antonio rose hastily to examine them, and even tried to raise them up one after the other ; but after a few violent struggles, to the astonishment of all present, the creatures died. Scarcely a fourth part of the cake had been eaten by them.

“ There was poison in that cake,” said Antonio, “ mortal poison !—Drink not the wine !—doubtless it also is impregnated with death.”

“ How came you by it ?” demanded Lochan-

dhu in surprise. Antonio seemed to think for a moment. A desperate and fiend-like expression passed over his face, blackening his features from the operation of the inward storm that agitated him; his eyes glared, his teeth were heard to grind violently against each other—but he said nothing, until Lochandhu's question was repeated.

“Came by it!” replied he, “*Credemi*, I had it from one who meant me no good. It was intended that I should myself have been the victim of that deadly cake and this deadly draught, but the devil has been pleased to allow me to escape, and,” continued he, laughing horribly, “I trust he will help me to a glorious revenge. But come, come,” said he, dashing down with a sweep of his arm the four brimmers standing ranked up in a line before him, just as he had poured them out; “come, come!—let us think no more of this accident. Time wears!” cried he, seizing a large beaker that contained an ocean of punch, and, putting it to his head, began to drain its contents with a most capacious throat.

“Time does wear indeed,” said Lochandhu; “but was not that a swivel gun from the sea?—Hark!—a shout from the beach!—Again!—Nay,

then we have no time to lose; the lugger must be there, and we must be gone. Antonio!—*andiamo amico!*—We shall soon be beyond the reach of English law, which you, I imagine, have little less reason to fear than I have. Come along, I say.”

“ I go not with you, Lochandhu,” replied Antonio, gruffly; “ I cannot, on reflection, go to-night. I now remember I have some affairs to settle before I quit the British shore.”

“ Well, then,” replied Lochandhu, “ if you go not, I must. But, remember! no harm to Mr Oakenwold, or, by Heaven, I will return from the end of the world to make you suffer for it!—I must be gone. I have been too long loitering about to trust myself another moment here. I expect I shall meet you in France, Antonio,—in Paris, perhaps!”

“ Um!” said Antonio, doubtingly, “ we may! or—we may not—*Ma non importa!*—*Per adesso vi dono il buon viaggio.*”

Lochandhu hastily belted on his long sword, and buttoning his watch-coat, grasped his gold-headed cane, and hurriedly left the cabin. Amherst instantly started up and followed him. A

confused mingling of sounds came up from the beach below, and a long string of horses with bags and panniers, led by a number of determined-looking men, passed upwards through the ravine, and the men mounting, as each of them in succession reached the level ground at the summit, they scampered off in different directions.

As Lochandhu hurried down towards the shore, Amherst earnestly begged of him to tell what he knew of the lady to whom he was alluding at the moment they were interrupted by the unexpected entrance of Antonio. "I am interested in her, Mr Macgillivray," said he, "more than you can possibly be aware; indeed to a degree no human being can conceive. For Heaven's sake tell me what you know of her!"

"Young man," said Lochandhu, turning to him but for a moment, "her story is long—much too long for the few minutes now left me. For, see! there is the boat and the men,—and yonder dusky thing, rising upon the heaving billows of these wide waters, is the bark that waits to carry me; and, see! the storm is settling down, and the moon is clearing her way through the clouds, and the fair-weather sharks may now come afloat

after us if we tarry. But yet I will stop to satisfy you so far, and to tell you, that if you will but go hence directly to your father's, you may, as the newspaper advertisements sometimes have it, hear of something to your advantage. In short, there and there only, can your anxiety and curiosity be relieved. Forget not to tell your father that, outlaw as I am, I can never cease to remember that he once saved my life; and that there exists not a dog or cat of his for whom I would not willingly sacrifice it. And, now,—(coming, my brave lads!)—may you, Mr Oakenwold, enjoy all the happiness this world can bestow—and may I!—may I be forgotten for ever!!”

He snatched Amherst's hand before he was aware, and bestowing on it a short but hearty squeeze, struck himself violently on the forehead, and exclaiming, in half-choked words—“Farewell, my country!”—rushed on board the boat that was hauled close up on the beach. It was launched in an instant, amidst the roaring of the still mountainous sea, and was soon impelled beyond all reach of human voice or human eye,

leaving Amherst standing like a statue upon the shore.

He remained not long in this position, for, regaining his recollection, he hastily began to explore his way along the moonlight beach, the winds and waves lulling more and more as he advanced. But it seemed as if they had communicated a portion of their late agitation to his bosom, that had so long slept under a calm but unhealthy stagnation. A thousand hopes and fears, originating in the mysterious hint dropped by Lochandhu, now arose within him, and alternately displaced each other.

Amherst was encircling the margin of a little creek, when he beheld a figure standing on a fragment of rock, relieved against the clear sky. The place where it stood was near a salient angle of the cliff, where the full tide made the passage extremely narrow. Recollecting the suspicious characters who frequented the coast, he was staggered for a moment, but advancing with caution, he, to his infinite surprise, beheld *The Dwarfie Carline!*

“ Young man,” said she to him, as he approached, and stopped to regard her—“ young

man, I come not now to warn you of danger—I come the herald of glad tidings; joy awaits you; on the wings of the wind I come to tell you so.—Leave Dover to-morrow for Oakenwold without fail!—And now my errand is sped!”

She flew up an almost perpendicular part of the rock, by a crack in its front, and left Amherst astonished with her warning, and not the less so, that it agreed so well with what Lochandhu had hinted to him.

He hastened home, and having told his friend Cleaver of the strange adventures of the night, they agreed to set out for Oakenwold Manor next day.

CHAPTER XII.

Enfin parcourez toutes les passions, c'est sur les cœurs des Grands, qui vivent dans l'oubli de Dieu, qu'elles exercent un empire plus triste et plus tyrannique.

MASSILLON.

LADY DEBORAH DELASSAUX had no sooner retired to her apartment, than she lighted a taper, and opening the letter she had so mysteriously received, sat down eagerly to peruse the following appalling words:—

“ The day of retribution has arrived ; artifice can no longer avail !—Thou art called upon for restitution !—Resistance can but provoke deeper inquiry, that may unfold thy darkest secrets, and hurl thee to perdition !—Bow, then, to the will of thine offended God !—Be thankful that he yet permits thee to make tardy reparation for even a fragment of thy crimes !—To redeem all were as impossible, as for the earth and sea to yield up

their dead at thy puny command!—But mercy on high may yet be purchased by penitence!—Resolve, then!—for the vengeance of Heaven is unrolled, and already quivers over thy devoted head!!!”

The Lady Deborah’s eyes glared as they decyphered the characters of this strange communication. They seemed to her to blaze as she read them. Her countenance was distorted by the most horrible expression, and she sank back into her chair.

“ Mercy !” said she, in a deep soliloquy, mingled with incessant groans, “ mercy ! where can there be mercy for me ? Oh that indeed it were possible for the sea to give up its dead ! Oh that I could pluck back my years from the gulf of time into which they have irrecoverably floated ; or that an ocean of oblivion would roll over them to drown the memory of their events for ever ! From myself, alas ! I cannot hide them. I must still carry the burning remembrance of them in this tortured breast, until I am consumed by the fire it nourishes within its recesses. But I at least thought that my name would remain unsullied—that my reputation

would be safe from the taunts and insults of the vulgar world. My worst crime was known but to two in this country.—No, no,” continued she, after a pause, “it cannot be. One of these has fallen by the hand of the other, without any fresh guilt to me, and the arch-fiend Antonio, is by this time himself unconscious. How long have my life and reputation hung trembling beneath his threats, ready to be blasted at every moment by the breath of his malignity. But I trust that, ere this, his venomous tongue is put to sleep, by a poison yet more potent than its own; and then,—pooh! he died by his own hand.—A felon flying from the messengers of justice, by whom he was pursued for a double murder, and the pitiful robbery of a horse!—”I was most excellent!—Yet who can have known as much as this paper hints at? Antonio, however vacillating, cannot but have been faithful as yet. But his assistant,—I have but too much reason to think that he may have proved treacherous. But, then, granting that he has been so, he now no longer exists to support his own tale; and coming, as it must do, at second hand from him to whom it has been bequeathed, it can have but

little force against the high testimony of such a person as Lady Deborah Delassaux. I had no one to fear, save that viper whom I have so long cherished in my bosom, who threatened to sting me, but whose sting, I trust, is by this time harmless. My life and my character are still safe, and I may defy all empty, unsubstantiated accusations. That there will be some attempt to frighten me into concessions, this paper seems to assure me. Let me then be again that woman, whose very look could wither, and if any attempt should be made, a wary scanning of my way, must enable me to judge how far it will be prudent to yield or to resist. As for her, she must stand or fall, as circumstances shall unfold themselves; if my fame can but be preserved, she merits no sacrifice at my hand. Much have I done and suffered for her, and how ill has she requited me! If fate has resolved to punish her haughtiness, she must submit; and, in truth, she has so ruined herself by her headstrong misconduct, that little remains to be taken from her. At all events, come what may, when both are struggling in the sea of hazard, where life and fame with me are both in peril, she shall not tug

me down. I'll shake her strangling death-grasp from off my neck, and let her fortunes perish !”

After a night of tossing on a sleepless pillow, she was roused by the noise occasioned by the arrival of several carriages. She listened, and heard the steps of a large company ascending the staircase, while the names of Sir Cable Oakenwold, and Sir William Percival, were announced to her, accompanied with a request that she would honour them with a private conference for half an hour. She thought of Amherst, and her niece, and their union. But recollecting that the gentleman who attended the Admiral was one of the most active magistrates of the county, less pleasing anticipations broke in upon her mind, and she recurred to the paper of the previous night. As she dressed herself, however, she ran over her reflections upon it, and, summoning up all her courage, she descended to the drawing-room with a firm step. Before reaching the door, there was something in the very sound of her tread that prepared the gentlemen for her magnificent entrée.

She was habited in a long-waisted black velvet robe, clasped by a large and brilliant diamond buckle, and she wore a valuable necklace of the

same precious stones, set in massively-wrought gold. Her head-dress was of a height that added to her lofty and commanding aspect. The gentlemen rose and saluted her as she came in, and she curtsied to each of them with that formality, in former days considered as the *acmé* of grace. Her face was pale, and its pallidity was more remarkable from the contrast it afforded to her black drapery. Her piercing eyes were sunk and oppressed; yet haughty determination sat upon her brow. To an uninformed spectator she had all the appearance of being totally unsuspecting of what was about to occur.

“ Sir Cable Oakenwold,” said she, slowly advancing towards them with grand and easy motion, “ Sir Cable Oakenwold, it is so long since you have honoured my house, I mean my niece’s house, with your presence, that I had almost begun to fancy one or other of us had innocently given you umbrage. I am glad to see, however, that I have been mistaken, and that we are not entirely forgotten by the family of Oakenwold Manor.

“ Sir William Percival, I believe,” said she, turning to that gentleman with solemn reverence, “ I am happy to have the honour of seeing you,

for the first time, if I err not, at Brokenhurst ; for I do not remember that I ever before had the gratification of a visit from you. Pray be seated, gentlemen," added she, as she studiously selected and occupied an elbow-chair that stood with its back to the light.

The Admiral replied only by a silent bow, as he shuffled himself backwards into a chair ; but Sir William Percival entered immediately on business.

" On this occasion, Lady Deborah," said he, as he seated himself, " neither my friend, the Admiral, nor I, can be entitled to take credit for a complimentary visit. But although the subject on which we come to treat is of a sufficiently disagreeable nature, yet I trust the proposals we have to offer you are such, as will at least convince you of the friendliness of our intentions."

" I am utterly at a loss to understand what business you can have with me, gentlemen," said she, carelessly lounging back within the recess of her chair ; " but whatever its nature may be, I shall give it all the attention I am capable of, or that a racking rheumatic headache I now suffer from will permit me to bestow."

“ That we may keep your Ladyship as short a time in suspense as possible,” said Sir William, “ I shall, without farther preface, inform you, that certain rumours have gone abroad that the young lady, whom the world supposes, (and whom I am bound to believe that you also have all along considered,) to be your niece, and proprietrix of the Delassaux and Brokenhurst estates, has no just pretensions to either of these titles, but was in her infancy, somehow or other, imposed as such upon society!”

“ That is a good shot to bring her to,” thought the Admiral, as, in combination with Sir William, he employed himself in scanning her countenance, as narrowly as the unfavourable light she sat in would permit him. Lady Deborah started with a well-feigned astonishment.

“ Olivia Delassaux not my niece!!” she exclaimed, with a corresponding action; “ do I hear you correctly?—Oh it is impossible you can mean to say to!”—She paused, and Sir William paused also, and for such a time, too, as he was satisfied she would not have permitted to pass without further interrogation, had the subject been new to her.

“ I certainly said, Lady Deborah, that the young lady, called your niece, is believed to stand in no such relation to you.”

Lady Deborah started; but there was now more of nature in the movement. She seemed to listen more earnestly, and Sir William proceeded,—

“ In short, men believè that she is no daughter of the late Sir Marmaduke Delassaux.”

Lady Deborah had recourse to her essence bottle.

“ I’m confounded, gentlemen!” said she, after a pause. “ On what evidence, I entreat you, do you conceive yourselves authorized to make, what is to me, so incredible an assertion?”

“ It is on no unsubstantial ground that we do so,” said Sir William, willing to lead her on, and in some degree shifting her question for the moment. “ A claimant upon the Delassaux estates, and upon your affection as her aunt, has arisen in the person of a young lady now in the neighbourhood. It is understood,” continued he, after a pause, “ that a certain woman, who assisted on the melancholy occasion, when Lady Delassaux, your Ladyship’s sister-in-law, was deprived of her life in bringing a daughter into the world, is still able

to swear to the child she then saw born, of whom she has never since lost sight."

Lady Deborah was deeply moved for some moments. A lengthened pause ensued—after which, having apparently regained her presence of mind,—

"Gentlemen," said she, "you will easily believe that to discover that one whom I have so long cherished as my niece, and upon whom I have for so many years lavished all my affection, proves to be the bird of some strange nest, whilst she who is the real blood of my poor departed husband's family has been an outcast from her paternal hearth, and from these arms; you must grant me, gentlemen, that to make such a discovery as this, admitting the facts to be substantiated, must be to me most painfully embarrassing. On the one hand, I shall have a tender,—an exquisitely tender tie to break," and as she said so, she wiped her eyes; "whilst, on the other, I shall have duties to perform to one of whose habits, temper, and disposition, I am at present utterly ignorant. You will readily give me credit so far as to believe that, when the proof becomes convincing, I shall be the most anxious of all to do justice to her to whom duty will in that case demand, that my affections

shall be paid, whilst, on the other hand, I may be excused for feeling some lingering attachment to her who has so long engrossed my whole tenderness and care.—But proof, irresistible proof, will be required, before I can believe a circumstance so extraordinary.”

“ I can understand your Ladyship’s feelings on the present occasion,” said Sir William, with a look that penetrated to her soul; “ evidence shall not be withheld from you; and if you should wish to bring the matter to public investigation, I shall be most ready to indulge you; meanwhile, we shall take the liberty of leaving you for some little time to consider of what you have already heard, and we shall be at your Ladyship’s command when you are pleased to require our attendance.”

Upon this the two gentlemen arose, and, bowing to Lady Deborah, left her. Her eyes remained fixed on vacancy for a time; but she started on hearing the door of the inner chamber open suddenly, and looking round, she beheld,—the *Dwarfie Carline*!

The tiny figure stood proudly in the door-way on tip-toe, as if to make the most of her pigmy

stature, with her head thrown back, as was her common attitude, and her eyes, glaring fiercely on Lady Deborah, who sat petrified. She frowned silently for some minutes. Lady Deborah, though so much appalled, was the first to break silence.

“ Whence come you ?—monster ! of face and figure hardly human !—So many years have passed away since mine eyes have been cursed with the sight of those hideous features, that I had hoped they no longer blasted the earth. Comest thou to pour thy vengeance on me ?—Yet what can thy weak wrath effect ? Why should my bold heart quail before a thing like thee ?—begone !”

“ Lady Deborah,” said the figure with a harsh stern voice, “ you must hear me ere I go. Know that the thread of your life hangs in these hands, and were it not for one who bids me hold them, thus—thus would I rend its fibres !” and as she said so, she snapped in twain a cord she held stretched between them.

“ What mean ye, fiend ?” exclaimed Lady Deborah with considerable perturbation.

“ Fiend ! aye, fiend perhaps I would be,” cried she, with a laugh of mingled scorn and bitter-

ness. “ To see the noble lady whose hours of recreation were wont to be devoted to the torment, the bodily and mental torment, of the poor orphan dwarf,—to see her dragged in some sorry cart to where the assembled vulgar should stand in one dense mass, gaping with idle expectation to behold the ignominious end of all her black adultery and foul murders, and brought to that by me,—that would indeed be triumph!—And could I resist so great a satisfaction, were not my tongue tied down?—But why stand I thus in parley?—If she, whose fair domains have now so long been held by your accursed spawn, shall not be righted ere another hour, my tongue will then be free and fluent. Shall I glad you with a brief rehearsal now, to prove how much I know?—The arbour where the willing minister of your wickedness was tutored to your scheme of foul assassination!—the murder witnessed!—and the murdered——”

“ Hold, hold, for mercy’s sake!—all, all shall be restored!” cried Lady Deborah, sunk at once from the high pinnacle of dignity on which she had placed herself, by these dark hints of something so dreadful that she even feared to hear it

repeated. “ I see—oh horrible !—my fate is indeed in thy hands.—But have mercy on me !—oh have mercy !” said she, in a tone of the most abject and earnest entreaty, as she threw herself on her knees before the dwarf ; “ save, oh ! save my name from eternal ignominy, and all shall be restored !”

A grim smile of ineffable contempt shot, like the lurid glare of a meteor, over the wild features of the dwarf. The soul of the wretched woman was humbled to the dust ; she fell forward at full length on the floor, and lay for some moments overpowered by the poignancy of her feelings. Then, starting up, she clasped her hands, and again repeated—“ Oh, save me !—save the name of my house from eternal disgrace !” But the Dwarfie Carline had vanished !

The Lady Deborah gazed around, oppressed by a kind of stupor. Her eyes wandered into every corner of the apartment, afraid again to encounter the figure that had so lately filled them with dread, and returned, relieved by their ineffectual search after it. She slowly recovered herself so far as to rise from the humiliating posture her fears had thrown her into, and reclining for

some time in the chair she had formerly sat in, she gradually brought her mind to something like composure. At length she rang the bell violently, and ordered her maid to carry her compliments to Sir William Percival, and to request an immediate interview with him.

The gentlemen lost no time in obeying her summons, and they had no sooner entered the room, than, rising with all the majesty, she had formerly exhibited,

“ Sir William,” said she, “ from an interview I have just had with a person who was a domestic in my family while I was abroad, I have had such evidence as leads me fully to believe, that she, who has so long passed as my niece, has been imposed on me as such. She is, in truth, no niece of mine,—and I am willing to declare so, that she may give up her estates to the proper owner. I am yet so astonished, that I have not recovered my usual tranquillity of mind. I feel hardly equal to the agitating scene of a last interview with her whom I have hitherto believed to be my niece, and the first meeting with her who is so in reality, to whom my protection must now be given, and my life henceforth devoted.”

The two gentlemen looked at each other.

“Lady Deborah,” said Sir William Percival, “it gives me pleasure to observe, that you are already satisfied as to the true state of the case. Nothing now remains but to introduce the real Miss Delassaux to you, and that you should publicly acknowledge her unquestionable rights. Let me beg of you to retire to compose yourself, and to prepare yourself for the meeting. Meanwhile you may sign these papers.”

Lady Deborah’s frame shook from head to foot. She hastily glanced over the writings,—took up the pen,—and, with a trembling hand, attached her name to the documents Sir William presented to her. Her signature was immediately witnessed by the two gentlemen

She then bowed, and slowly left the apartment.

CHAPTER XIII.

Que les moments que delivrent tout d'un coup le cœur et l'esprit d'une terrible peine font sentir un plaisir inconcevable.

MADAME DE SEVIGNE'.

Joy is such a foreigner,
So mere a stranger to my thoughts, I know
Not how to entertain him.

DENHAM.

As Amherst and his friend, Cleaver, were preparing to start for Oakenwold, a servant arrived from the old Admiral, with the following letter to his son:—

“ MY DEAR AMHERST,

“ I beg that, on receiving this, you will ride over to meet me at Brokenhurst Hall, where I am going on the affairs of Miss Delassaux, which have now come to a crisis. I know she is particularly desirous to see you, and, at such a time, you cannot refuse to gratify her. I, therefore, hope you will be there in the course of the day.

“ Your affectionate father,

“ CABLE OAKENWOLD.”

“What is the matter,” said Cleaver, who had just sat down to breakfast, and was in the act of opening a cold venison pasty, “I beseech you tell me what is the matter with you.”

“The most unaccountable letter from my father,” said Amherst, “I know not what to say to it. He asks me to go immediately to visit Miss Delassaux, and he talks of her affairs having come to a crisis. Good God! what is Miss Delassaux, and what are her affairs to me?”

“Her affairs!” said Cleaver, helping himself to some of the jelly, “then I suppose she’s ashore at last. I hope the Admiral has no intention of trying to tow her off. If the old hulk and she get him fairly hooked on, he may get aground himself in his endeavours to warp them off.—Any thing wrong with the Delassauxs, Joseph?” continued he, with his mouth crammed full of pie-crust, and addressing the groom who had brought the letter,—

“Wrong! Aye, Sur,” quoth Joseph, “why they do say, that they have ruined themselves with them balls and vigaries, and that Hawkins, who has taken care of himself, has got possession of the estates, and that he went last night to seize every thing in the house, even to the very beds

the poor ladies were lying on, the precious rascal !”

“ And is it come to this then !” said Amherst, a gleam of pity crossing his mind as he remembered the once dazzling splendour of the haughty Delassaux. “ Good Heavens ! how can such minds bear it !—Well, then, it is but a duty of charity my father wishes me to join him in performing, and such being the case, unfit as I am at present for any meeting of the kind, I shall not flinch from it. The horses to the door directly ! Will you go with me Cleaver ?”

“ I will, my dear fellow, with all my heart ; but eat something in the first place, will you. I have just ordered a warm veal cutlet.—Do stump to the kitchen, Phillips, my lad, and give the cook a hint to make haste ; but don't let him spoil the dish with his hurry, d'ye hear ?”

Amherst snatched some hasty refreshment. The horses came to the door, and, desirous to obey his father, he hastened to mount. Cleaver followed most unwillingly. As he was passing outwards he met the veal cutlet coming from the kitchen, giving out from under its china cover a steam of the most delicious odour. It was irresistible.

“ My dear fellow, I will follow you in an instant,” said he. “ A knife and fork, and a spoon, in a moment, sirrah !” and snatching, at the same time, the dish from the servant, and seating himself on a garden chair, he began to gobble up the contents with all haste.

The impatient Amherst rode off at a hand-gallop, leaving his friend to follow at his own leisure.

On approaching Brokenhurst Hall he remarked a number of queer-looking men hanging on about the door. To one of these he gave his horse, and instantly entered. A girl, whom he recognized as Miss Delassaux’s maid, who had often experienced his bounty when his visits to her mistress were frequent, came from one of the rooms towards him.

“ Gracious me !” exclaimed she, “ if there isn’t Mr Oakenwold !”

“ Is Miss Delassaux visible ?” inquired he.

“ Lawk ! to be sure she is,—that is, I am sure she will make herself visible to you, Mr Oakenwold ; and overjoyed will she be, no doubt, as I am, to see you here again.”

“ Your lady is, I presume, in the drawing-room ?” said Amherst, interrupting her.

“ She is in her own apartment at present,” said the girl.

“ Is not my father here ?” said Amherst.

“ Yes—the Admiral is in the drawing-room.”

“ Then I will step there and wait Miss Delas-saux’s commands,” replied he, taking the well-known way up stairs.

Meanwhile the maid hastened to her mistress, whom she found, as she had left her, buried in bed-clothes, tears, and mortification, having slept none all night.

“ Ma’am, Ma’am,” said she, “ I have such news for you!—Mr Oakenwold is here, and has gone up to the drawing-room to wait for you.”

The Lady no sooner heard this most consolatory and unlooked-for piece of intelligence, than she dried up her tears, and proceeded to the labours of the toilette with all manner of alacrity.

As Amherst reached the door of the drawing-room he heard his father’s voice, and as he entered his eyes caught the bulky form of the Admiral, who had already established his quarter-deck, and was walking backwards and forwards across the apartment with his hands behind his back. Amherst was hastening to embrace the old man,

with an eager and affectionate smile on his countenance, when he was suddenly arrested midway, by the sight of an unexpected object.—He beheld—Miss Malcolm!—Miss Malcolm, as lovely and smiling as he had ever seen her, and attired in a dress, the richness and taste of which at once showed that her personal appearance was not altogether unattended to, notwithstanding the bitter distress and cruel laceration of mind she had undergone. So sudden and unforeseen a meeting produced a violent agitation in a frame lately so much weakened by disease. He felt conscious of his own feeble state, and he could not help internally contrasting it with the healthful, the sprightly, nay, almost joyous, countenance of her whom he now saw,—of her whom he had pictured to himself sitting in the lonely towers of Eaglesholme, pining in misery, or drooping like a broken lily on its retired terrace walks. His reflections, it may be easily supposed, were rapid, but they produced more of pain than of pleasure. “Can she have so soon forgotten me,” thought he, “me whom she once so loved, and who so loved her, that I never can love another?—Can she so soon have forgotten her situation; and can she have already overcome those feelings of wretchedness she

declared must sink her to an untimely grave?— Oh! woman! woman!—are all then alike?—are all then angels in appearance, and devils in deception?”

Miss Malcolm was seated in the depth of a window, tête-à-tête with Miss Margery, so that his entrance was observed by neither of the ladies. In another window were Lord Eaglesholme and Sir William Percival, also deeply engaged in serious conversation. These various personages were made aware of Amherst's presence by Sir Cable, who, after having stood opposite to his son for several minutes, as if very much enjoying his confusion, at last exclaimed,

“Why, in the name of God, what can have come over the puppy, that he should stand in that manner staring and shaking like a man who has been keelhauled?—Why, Amy! what a devil's the matter with ye?”

“I beg your pardon, my dear father,” said he, advancing to embrace the Admiral, “I expected to have found you alone, and was naturally surprised, at first, on discovering that you had company with you.”

“Company?” said the Admiral archly,—“why aye, I have company with me, indeed. Mayhap

you may, and mayhap you may not know them, But if you do not," added he, with a significant leer, " why I can introduce ye.—Lord Eaglesholme, let me introduce my scapegrace of a son here.—This, Amy, is Lord Eaglesholme."

" I have already the honour of knowing Lord Eaglesholme," said Amherst, advancing with great warmth of manner and expression to his Lordship, who was much moved on seeing him ; " I have had the good fortune to experience too much of his Lordship's kindness and hospitality, ever to forget the obligations I owe him.—My Lord," said he, as they cordially shook hands, " I am delighted to see you so near Oakenwold Manor."

" Oh ho !" interrupted Sir Cable, " so you are old friends I perceive ;—well, I have lost my labour in being your master of ceremonies as to his Lordship. But here," turning to Miss Malcolm, whose agitation at the sight of Amherst was now becoming very great,—" here is a young lady of whom, at least, I presume, you will want some preliminary information ;—I'll bet a Spanish galleon against a Thames wherry, that you don't know who she is !"

" Make no rash wagers, father," said Amherst,

with a forced smile ; “ for you would lose as certainly in this case as you would had you betted in the other. It was impossible to live so long as I did under Lord Eaglesholme’s roof, without feeling the beauty and merit—I mean,” continued he, hesitating, as if he thought he had said too much—“ I—I—mean it was impossible to be so long at Eaglesholme Castle, without enjoying the honour of Miss Malcolm’s acquaintance.”

“ Miss Malcolm’s acquaintance !” —repeated the Admiral, with an air of triumph. “ There now, did not I tell you !—Well, how cursedly confident the puppy is after all—Miss Malcolm ! Come, come, give me your hand, ye ninny—give me your hand !” And then, with a great deal of mock ceremony and grimace, he led Amherst to the window where the young lady was seated, and began with great pomposity. “ This, Ma’am, is my son, Amherst Oakenwold, Esq., a damned, confident, hasty, good-for-nothing fellow, who ran away from his father, a quiet, easy-tempered, old sailor, because he wished to marry him to Miss Delassaux : —went off to Scotland with a rebellious old son of a gun of a shipmate of the old boy’s, and without

even asking his consent, was nearly marrying some bonny Scotch lassie, whom nobody knew anything about. And now, Sir!" turning to Amherst, " (why don't ye make a bow, and be damned t'ye.) And now, Sir, let me introduce you, not to Miss Malcolm, as you, in your ignorance and confidence, were disposed to call the lady, but to Miss Delassaux, only child and heiress of Sir Marmaduke Delassaux, of Delassaux and Brokenhurst, the rightful possessor of this noble mansion, these magnificent grounds, and these widely extended and fertile plains, lying so conveniently contiguous to Oakenwold Manor; and, besides all this, present heiress apparent of the domains of Eaglesholme, with the prospect (if Lord Eaglesholme does not prevent her, by having heirs of his own body) of being one day Countess of Eaglesholme in her own right!—Down upon your knees, you puppy, and see whether you can prevail upon the lady to bestow herself, and her estates, on such a jackanapes as yourself, unless, indeed, you mean to bolt off to Scotland again, as you did when I last made you the same proposal."

The Admiral's artillery being expended, he stood aloof to enjoy the effect of the broadside he

had poured out. His son, stupified with mingled astonishment and ecstasy, obeyed him mechanically, dropped upon his knees, and seizing Miss Delassaux's hand, he imprinted a thousand kisses upon it, and, as might be expected, gave way to an incoherent effusion of broken murmurs of delight and passion, responded to with a smile expressive of perfect happiness, and with all that ingenuousness, chastened by modesty, so strikingly characterizing the lovely and interesting Eliza.

CHAPTER XIV.

Muchos hay en el mundo que han llegado,
A' la engañosa alteza desta vida,
Que fortuna los ha siempre ayudado,
Y dadolos la mano á la subida ;
Para despues de haberlos levantado
Derribarlos con misera caida.

ERCILLA.

WHILST Amherst and his Eliza were giving way to those ecstatic emotions, occasioned by their being again so happily restored to each other, a step was heard. It was the lady we have hitherto known as Miss Delassaux who approached. She came sliding and smiling in with all the air of a woman of the highest fashion, appearing for a moment surprised to see so many people, and dropping a sort of general curtsey, rather to the walls of the apartment, than to the personages within them.

“ Sir Cable Oakenwold,” said she, “ this is an unexpected pleasure. I am overjoyed to see you once again at Brokenhurst Hall. Miss Oakenwold, I hope I see you perfectly well. I trust you have left all your darling little pets—your canaries—your piping-bulfinches—and your gold-fishes in perfect health. Mr Oakenwold !” continued she, throwing a languishing glance towards Amherst, and walking up to the window, where he rose to acknowledge her, “ you have been a traveller since I had the happiness of seeing you ; indeed,” said she, with a half suppressed sigh, “ it is quite an age since I have had that pleasure—so long, in truth, that I own I feel quite as much fluttered, as if it were a new introduction. But,” continued she, without giving time for more than the common places of recognition from those she addressed, “ I see I have, indeed, some new acquaintances to make. This young lady—May I beg the honour of an introduction to her, Mr Oakenwold ?”

Amherst felt much embarrassed. Eliza grew pale and agitated. His presence of mind forsook him. He hesitated, and stammered out—

“ Miss Malcolm—I beg your pardon—a—a—
Miss Delassaux.”

“ Ha ! ha ! ha ! what is the matter with you, Mr Oakenwold ?” said the lady, mistaking his confusion. “ Well, ’tis no matter; Miss Malcolm. I hope we shall soon be better acquainted with each other; and, in the meanwhile, I beg to give you, as well as that gentleman,” bowing towards Lord Eaglesholme, (who, suffering under strong agitation, sat buried in an arm chair, as if wishing to escape observation,)—“ to give you my best welcome to this, my poor house. But, indeed, to any one introduced by our highly estimable friends of Oakenwold Manor, my welcome must ever be most cordial. Sir William Percival ! I beg your pardon for not sooner observing you.—But why have we not some refreshment ? Pray, do me the favour to ring the bell, Mr Oakenwold ?”

Amherst rose to obey her, when she immediately placed herself in the chair he had occupied by the fair Eliza, and began surveying her with an overwhelming steadiness of stare.

No servant answered the summons. These poor people of both sexes were all huddled toge-

ther in a knot in the hall, eagerly discussing their hopes and fears, as to their chance of receiving long arrears' of wages, which Mr Hawkins, more attentive to his own interest than to theirs, had permitted to run up, by feeding them with promises he never meant to fulfil.

A noise was heard among them. Mr Hawkins himself had arrived, and they immediately opened on him like a hungry pack of hounds, when the huntsman enters the kennel about feeding-time. But the important little man brushed them from him. He had something more interesting to think of than any concerns of theirs. One of the bailiffs, whom he had left in charge of matters while he went home for the night, had just told him, that his execution was interrupted by the authority of Sir William Percival! Alarmed by this intelligence, he hastened up stairs.

After two or three preparatory hems, he entered the drawing-room, with that vulgarly presuming, yet somewhat subdued air, a low-bred man cannot avoid wearing, when in the company of persons of superior rank and birth, even when he wishes to be important in their eyes. He made two or three awkward bows in succession, with his

turnip-head, and thin face, thrust forwards with a motion more resembling the butting of a ram, than any thing else.

“ Your humble servant, Sir Cable Oakenwold! —Gentlemen all!—Sir William Percival, your very humble servant!—Ladies!—Miss Delas-saux!—Madam! your most obedient.—A pleasant morning, Gentlemen.—Any news with you, Sir Cable?”

The old Admiral answered him with a humph, and continued his quarter-deck. The rest of the party stared at him, but seemed not to consider it necessary to rise from their seats, or, indeed, hardly to notice him. His mistress alone eyed him with a countenance suddenly inflamed, as if by no very gentle feeling, and addressing him in the haughtiest tone and manner she could possibly assume:—

“ Mr Hawkins,” cried she, “ what important affair may I ask has procured me a visit from you at this time? You see I am engaged with guests.—I cannot go into any kind of business at present. I beg you will retire, therefore, and wait below in the steward’s room, until my leisure enables me to order your attendance.”

The little man's rage was painted in glowing colours on his countenance—even his nose seemed on fire.

“Madam—Miss Delassaux,” said he, “I assure you, Ma'am, I didn't come here upon your affairs—not, by no manner of means. It was a regard for my own interest that led me hither!”

“Aye, aye, little Goosequill,” muttered the Admiral between his teeth, making a momentary halt in the middle of his quarter-deck, and eyeing Hawkins askance over his left shoulder; “aye, aye—right there,—you seldom go anywhere, without that loadstone to attract you. I'll answer for it, you will follow it down, you know where, some of these days.”

“Admiral,” grinned the little man of parchment, with a forced laugh,—“Sir Cable Oakenwold, you are pleased to be merry.—One of your excellent jokes, Sir Cable.—Your jokes are always excellent.—Always cut two ways, like a double-bladed penknife.”

“Sir!” interrupted his mistress, in a louder tone; “I desire,—I insist, Mr Hawkins, that, whatever your business may be, you will postpone it until a more favourable opportunity.—I must,

and will be mistress of my own house. Leave the room, therefore, Sir, directly."

"Madam!" answered the little man, with increased anger, which he had great difficulty in keeping within the bounds of decency, "I cannot leave the room: My business is with Sir William Percival;—my affairs are too important to be delayed—I cannot leave the room."

"I protest, Sir," said the lady, rising from her chair, and ringing the bell, "I will order my servants to turn you out, if no gentleman here will rid me of so impudent an intruder."

This hint was too evidently directed to Amherst to be mistaken, nor could his gallantry permit him to see any lady so beset.

"Mr Hawkins," said he, advancing sternly to the scrivener, "Miss Delassaux must be obeyed.—I insist upon your quitting the room directly, or, by Heaven, Sir"—

"Sir William Percival!" cried Hawkins, in great alarm, "I demand your protection; I demand your authority, Sir, to prevent a breach of the peace against a man in his own house."

"Your own house!" exclaimed one or two

voices, the loudest of which was that of his indignant mistress.

“ Yes ! my own house,” replied he trembling, and gradually edging towards a large chair, which he very adroitly placed between him and Amherst ; “ I say again, my own house. This lady knows, that she some time ago made it over to me in consideration of certain monies lent ;—and, farther, the estates are mine ;—and yet, after all these securities, my fidelity and generosity have made me a severe loser by the vast sums I have advanced to save the credit of the family.”

“ To save the credit of the family, you rascal,” cried the Admiral, in a fury,—“ you have done your best to ruin them !—O ! that I had you at the gangway !”

“ Softly, gentlemen !” cried the venerable Sir William, advancing between them and Hawkins,—“ allow me to speak to him ;” then addressing the steward, who had once been a poor boy in his kitchen, and who had afterwards been educated by him, and fitted to fill the situation of a clerk, “ Hawkins,” said he in an authoritative tone, “ I shall protect you from violence, but, at the same time, I must protect this company from inso-

lence and intrusion. I ask you where you found such enormous sums of money, as could enable you to advance an equivalent for the magnificent domains, and extensive estates of Brokenhurst?—you who, a very few years ago, had nothing.”

Hawkins was appalled. He hesitated—hemmed,—and either was, or affected to be troubled with something in his throat, that choked his utterance.

“ Really Sir William,—in good truth, Sir,—ahem!—why you know, Sir,—I have been an industrious pains-taking plodding man, Sir,—I have toiled late and early, Sir,—the pen has never been out of my hand, or from behind my ear ——.”

“ Pshaw, Sir,” exclaimed Sir William,—“ such an explanation as this will never do : were there no stronger bar to your demands on the estates of Brokenhurst, I, for one, should insist upon a most scrupulous examination of the documents, and proceedings, on which you have founded this pretended claim. But to cut matters short, I have to inform you, that if you really have lent money to that lady, you can have no recourse upon this house, and these estates, since neither of them ever were her property.”

The effect of this declaration it is impossible to describe. The astonishment it produced on the supposed mistress of Brokenhurst Hall, and her unworthy agent, was simultaneous, though we are condemned to describe its symptoms in each of them successively. The lady stared for a few moments at Sir William, as if she had not heard him properly.

“What is it that you say, Sir?” exclaimed she at length, utterly confounded,—“not my property!—this house not mine!—do I exist?—for as soon should I expect to find my very existence doubted, as to hear my right to these my patrimonial estates brought into a moment’s rational question; the only child of Sir Marmaduke Delassaux, of Delassaux and Brokenhurst,—the representative of blood as ancient, and as pure, as any this kingdom can boast!—Oh! ’tis some quibbling piece of merriment, and yet methinks,” added she, with considerable irritation,—“to a Lady of my birth and bearing, and in my own house, too, such boyish jests are more impertinent than amusing, and but ill befit the gravity of Sir William Percival.”

“Miss Delassaux never the owner of Broken-

hurst," cried Hawkins, with a sort of yell—"Phoh!—I beg your pardon, Sir William,—but it is impossible,—I never saw stronger tenures,—parchments as firm as a rock, Sir,—holding blanch of the Crown, for the payment of four pounds of white wax, never exacted now, but, in the days of Popery, burnt in candles before Thomas à Becket's shrine, on the eve of his festival, as a penitential offering in behalf of the king,—and perhaps, too, for one of the early Delassaux's, who was said to have had a hand in the death of the prelate. Dover Castle, under favour, Sir William, stands not on a foundation more sure or enduring."

"Sir," replied Sir William Percival, with dignity and determination, "I question not the stability of the rights of Miss Delassaux; they are, I believe, most unimpeachable; but, while it gives me very great pain to be compelled to communicate such cruel information to any one, I must tell that Lady that she is not the daughter of Sir Marmaduke Delassaux, that she is, in fact, not Miss Delassaux, and, consequently, that she has, innocently, I believe, been all along usurping the rights of another."

On hearing these words, the young lady, who was the subject of them, uttered a shriek which graduated into a momentary and hysterical laugh, and staggering back a few paces, she was only prevented from falling on the floor by the exertions of Amherst, who sprang forward to catch her. As for Hawkins, the intelligence seemed to produce upon him a temporary delirium. He rushed from behind the chair, his little scratch wig rising from his scalp, by the mere force of the muscles of his brow and temples, which were thrown rigidly upwards, by the horror and dismay that struck him, as Sir William pronounced these fatal words. With the most frantic gestures, he threw himself on his knees before him, embraced his legs with an energy that almost threw the old gentleman down, and exclaimed:—

“ Oh, my dear master ! oh, don't say so !—I'm dead !—ruined !—undone !—if you say so !—My all is gone !—my life !—my soul !—the fruits of all my industry !—of all my !—ugh !—what am I going to say ?—but I am mad,—stark mad !—dead, and damned, and ruined !—”

“ Unhand me, Hawkins ;” said Sir William,

with some anger, to this grovelling reptile; “ I cannot make things otherwise than they really are, and what I have said will soon be put beyond doubt, by proofs irresistible.”

Hawkins threw himself on the floor, and rolled about in absolute agony, like the clown in a pantomime. Meanwhile all the anxiety of the company was turned towards the Ex-Miss Delassaux, who was now in strong fits. Her maid was rung for,—and Amherst, and Lord Eaglesholme, who had also hastened to her assistance, carried her to her apartment.

CHAPTER XV.

All pleasure springing from a gratified passion, as most of the pleasure of sin does, must needs determine with that passion.

SOUTH.

AFTER the confusion occasioned by the sudden illness of the fictitious Miss Delassaux, Lord Eaglesholme and Amherst returned to the drawing-room, where they found Cleaver just arrived.

A long and most interesting conversation ensued, during which Amherst gathered, by fragments, the circumstances we are now to give the reader in more concise and connected narrative.

Lord Eaglesholme was not always the melancholy and abstracted being we have known him. His noble features were lighted up in youth, by the unvarying sunshine of unalloyed happiness,

to which the possession of health, a handsome person, high birth, ample estates, full freedom of will, and above all, an unrepublishing conscience, largely contributed. With buoyant spirits, he travelled over Europe, loitering wherever any prospect of instruction tempted him to remain,—drinking freely, but purely and virtuously, from the fountains of delight, springing up everywhere in his path,—and plucking the roses, without twining one thorny care into his wreath.

Of all the countries he visited, he found Italy the most interesting; and above all in that country, Naples had peculiar charms for him.

Soon after his arrival in that city, he was present at a magnificent masked ball, given by the king. The gardens were illuminated by millions of lights; and the bosom of the sea gave back so much radiance, that even the partial and fitful explosions of Vesuvius were lost in the blaze. As he wandered about, in full enjoyment of the brilliant scene around him, his attention was arrested by the appearance of a tall, and very elegant female figure, whose lofty air and mien marked her of high, if not of royal rank. He stepped aside from the centre of the walk along which she

was advancing, to permit her, and the companion on whom she leaned, to pass with greater freedom.

The Lady acknowledged his politeness by a graceful inclination, and moved on, leaving him transfixed to the spot, and following her elegant form with his eyes. The mask, who was habited like Minerva, did not allow her's to remain idle; he perceived, from the frequent looks she threw back towards him, that she had remarked him also with some degree of interest. But she was soon lost amid the gay stream of human beings, and he saw her no more that night, though he eagerly sought for her all over the gardens.

His curiosity was highly excited, to know who the goddess was who had made so powerful an impression upon him, even while her face was concealed under a mask; but all his attempts to find a clue to her name and condition were vain.

A week had hardly passed away, when the occurrence of another similar entertainment, gave him fresh hopes of seeing her. He felt that he should be able instinctively to identify her under any disguise. Having reached the gardens, among the very earliest of the revellers, he never

ceased to move about from one entrance to another, narrowly scanning each new mask, until the crowds came pouring in so fast, as to render hopeless all chance of his detecting her in that way. In despair, he now began to make the tour of the walks, staring silently at every woman whose superior height came near that of the lady he sought, his hopes being a thousand times alternately excited and destroyed, and his strange behaviour eliciting many a cutting jest at his expence.

As he was about to retire in chagrin, he was suddenly gladdened by the appearance of her he so anxiously sought, at the very moment when he least expected it. He could have no doubt of her being the same person, for, in addition to her fine form and majestic port, being, as he was now convinced, perfectly without a rival in the gardens, she was dressed in the very same character she had worn before, and accompanied by the same female mask.

The lady passed on apparently without observing him, towards a seat within a few paces of the spot where he stood.

“*Signora,*” said she, in Italian, and in a faint

voice, yet loud enough for Lord Eaglesholme's ear, "I am unfit for this crowd to-night. A sudden giddiness has come upon me. Would that I could procure a glass of iced water."

Lord Eaglesholme felt this opportunity of introducing himself too precious to be lost. He sprang off to one of the bowers where refreshments were provided, and, when he returned, he found the lady alone. She received the proffered beverage with a courtesy that showed his attention was not displeasing to her. She then, to his great surprise, expressed her gratitude very eloquently in English; and making room for him beside her, she begged him to afford her the benefit of his protection, until the return of her friend. The lady instantly recovering from her indisposition, a conversation of a very animated description followed; and they forgot the lapse of time, till the thinning of the crowds in the gardens, and the gradual decay of the lights, warned them of the late hour.

It was then that the lady for the first time expressed some vague apprehensions about her friend. Lord Eaglesholme would have flown in search of her, but to leave the stranger alone, at such an hour, was impossible. They therefore

set out on a tour of the gardens together, to look for her. But she was no where to be found ; and the lady satisfied herself with the idea, that Signora Bellocchi, having mistaken the part of the gardens she had left her in, had missed her way back, and concluding that she had retired, had driven home to her own palazzo.

Lord Eaglesholme was too much enchanted with the new acquaintance he had formed, narrowly to scrutinize the probability of the story. He handed the lady to her equipage ; and as the flambeaux were held up to show her the step, she turned gracefully round, and taking off her mask, whilst the blaze of light fell full upon her face, she again thanked him for his polite attention to her ; then, telling him the place of her residence, she begged him to call on her next day, to afford the Marchioness de Villecour (for so she called herself,) an opportunity of repeating more fully her expressions of gratitude.

The grand and highly expressive features she thus for a moment disclosed, which might have been those of the very goddess she personated, completed the conquest her noble air, and her brilliant conversation, had begun ; and he was so

wrapt up in admiration, that, after her carriage had driven off, he stood gazing after the lights that whirled along with it, unconscious of every thing around him, until the officious inquiries of his servants recalled him to himself.

Burning with a passion, which he now, for the first time, experienced, Lord Eaglesholme hastened next day to the villa, in the lovely environs of the city, which the lady had indicated to him. He was received in a manner that enraptured him. The lady soon contrived shortly to tell him her history, describing herself as an Englishwoman of family, who, having been married to a young Frenchman of high rank, had been left a widow about a year before.

Dazzled by her beauty, her conversation, her exquisite taste, and her accomplishments, soon bewildered his understanding, and from that moment all his hours were spent with the charming Marquise. In the delirium of his love, he very soon made proposals of immediate marriage to her. These, however, she laughed gaily off, telling him, that, having once known the weight of Hymen's chains, she was resolved never to bear the irksome load again; but soon afterwards,

she artfully contrived to lead Lord Eaglesholme to forget what was due to virtue, and a connection of a looser kind began between them.

Awakening in some degree from the first fever of his intoxication, he anxiously proposed to make her reparation for the injury he accused himself of having done her. But so completely had his reason been swept away by the strong tide of his passion, that he was neither shocked nor surprized by the levity with which these honourable offers were treated, until after several months, the effects of their intercourse began to appear in a manner too unequivocal. Then it was that reflection arose, and reason began to resume her seat in the mind of Lord Eaglesholme; then it was that remorse began to operate on his mind. He again offered her,—repeatedly offered her marriage, and then it was that he began to think it inexplicable, that, with reasons so urgent, she should still continue to reject it.

But time ran on, and the wretched fruit of her infamy was brought into the world; and then it was that Lord Eaglesholme discovered the fatal truth.

The enchantress, who had so long held him

within the magic circle of her fascination was,—Lady Deborah Delassaux—the wife of his earliest and dearest friend !

Horror seized upon the virtuous mind of Lord Eaglesholme. But how was that horror increased by the manner of the discovery ! It came from Lady Deborah herself.

Her husband, Sir Godmansbury Delassaux, when returning from his Grecian tour, died by the hand of assassins on the road between Torre del Greco and Portici. No sooner was Lady Deborah mistress of this intelligence, than her former train of deceit, and even common feeling itself was forgotten, in the relief she experienced at thus finding all obstacles to her marriage with Lord Eaglesholme removed. She rushed into his presence, and altogether unmindful of the character of the man, rudely snatched from his eyes the veil she had thrown over them, and with unrestrained, but ill-timed expressions of joy, declared her readiness to consent to an immediate marriage ; nay, urged him to it, in her turn, with all her eloquence.

The stupor Lord Eaglesholme was thrown into by her unblushing infamy, prevented his inter-

rupting her, and she was permitted to go on to the end with her disgusting appeal. Stung to madness by the sudden discovery of the depth of that abyss he had been plunged into, he loathed the very sight of her who had betrayed him. With the fury of a maniac he rushed from the house, and, in the delirium that ensued, fled from the city and the kingdom that contained her. Posting with the impetuosity of one who hopes to forget his misfortune in the speed with which he travels, he flew over the continent of Europe, and, at length, found himself, he knew not very well how, at Eaglesholme.

But we have not yet told the full extent of his misery. Some dreadful reports reached him, representing Lady Deborah as guilty of crimes, of which, though he had no share in them, he was innocently the cause. So agonizing was the torture, endured by the sensitive mind of Lord Eaglesholme, from this reflection, that his brain became partially unsettled, and produced those paroxysms, bordering upon insanity, of which he was afterwards at times the slave.

CHAPTER XVI.

Prima da un suo fedel Clorinda ascolta
 Del suo natal l'istoria — — —

— — — — —
 Io piangendo ti presi, e in breve cesta
 Fuor ti portai tra fiori e frondi ascosa ;
 Con arte sì gentil, che nè di questa
 Diedi sospetto altrui, nè d'altra cosa.

— — — — —
 Ed io giu scendo, e ti ricolgo, e torno
 Là 've prima fur volti i passi miei ;
 E preso un picciol borgo alfin soggiorno,
 Celatamente ivi nutrir ti fei.

— — — — —
 Mi gitto a nuoto, ed una man ne viene
 Rompendo l'acqua, e te l'altra sostiene.

TASSO.

WHILST Amherst was listening to the particulars of Lord Eaglesholme's story, Eliza had walked out. More impatient than ever to learn her early history from herself, he now hastened to follow her along one of those delicious shrubbery

walks, where he had often rambled with another companion.

He found her seated in that very temple of Venus, where he had once so nearly sacrificed himself to the artificial Olivia. A thousand recollections crowded on his mind. He shuddered at the narrow escape he had then made. Even his disagreeable dream at Eaglesholme shot across his memory. But these remembrances only made his present happiness the sweeter.

The free converse the lovers now enjoyed was exquisitely delicious, from the long train of misery they had both endured since they last parted in Scotland. They ran over all their distresses, and, after these, dwelt with delight on their first interview, and on those days of happiness, during which their infant love grew so rapidly to its full strength. They talked of the chapel scene—of the certain death from which she had been snatched by the exertions of Amherst;—and this led them to think of the wonderful being who had so providentially interposed upon that occasion, as well as afterwards, in enabling Amherst to effect the escape of Eliza from Loch-an-Eilan.

They were expressing their mutual curiosity to

have the mystery that hung over that extraordinary creature cleared away, when in an instant she stood before them.

Both started with surprise. Her countenance now bore a very different expression, from that which had so lately bowed down the proud heart of the Lady Deborah. There was a softness,—an affection,—a mingled sorrow in her face, never seen there, except when she addressed Eliza.

“ Offspring of her who is now a saint in Heaven!” said she, in a mild and tender accent—
“ daughter of my beloved mistress! the time is now at hand, when, having finished my task, I may creep into some hole to die, like the wasted and winter-stricken ewe, that bears the insolent buttings of the flock, till death relieves her from her misery. When justice shall have been done thee, my sweet dove, I may bid the scornful world adieu for ever.

“ It matters not where this hideous morsel of mortality my spirit has worn so long, shall moulder into dust, so that the night-fox, or the hill-raven, have it not for food. But yet, uncouth and fearful as my form appears, it does contain as much humanity as larger and more perfect bodies hold.

“ You talked of me as I stole on you, and I wondered much to hear kindly feelings, and grateful wishes uttered in the same breath that mentioned me, so long have I been used to hear the taunts and insults of those whom it has pleased their Creator and mine to mould more happily.

“ As you spoke, you reminded me of your mother, and of her I cannot think without these tear-drops.—But now I am composed. ’Tis fitting that you know from me what ties once held me to that saint, whilst yet on earth, and from whence sprung the care with which I have never ceased to watch your fortunes. I will sit me down on this green sod, and tell you all ; all, at least, that you ought to know ; and for once I will indulge in human feelings—for once I will revel in the consciousness of having done good, so gratifying to human nature.—Listen then :—

“ I was born amid the wild mountains of Wales. My father was a shepherd on the estate of the Earl of Llanstephan, the father of Lady Deborah Delassaux. The miseries I suffered from my wretched figure began almost from my cradle. I went to school, but I was soon driven from it by the hootings and insults of the rude

children. I began to assist my father in his charge ; but even this solitary occupation was no security from their wickedness, for, when a holiday came, they formed parties cruelly to hunt me on the hills.

“ Nature had given me unusual strength and powers of action, and fear and distress of mind so compelled me to exert these powers, that they became almost miraculous. I fled from the accursed troop with the swiftness of the roe-deer ; I leaped across yawning chasms, where the thunder of the torrent, far below, came upwards in a confused and softened murmur ; I climbed up cliffs into nooks, where the wild-cat could hardly find footing, and I crept into winding holes in the rocks, where the hill-fox could alone have forced a passage, and where mine was often disputed by his angry snarl.

“ It happened that Lady Deborah, and her husband, were one day riding on the mountains. Mr Delassaux’s object was the sport of shooting, and the Lady, always bold and masculine, came with him to witness and enjoy his slaughter. Fatigued and hungry, they came together to my father’s door, to procure some refreshment, and cu-

riosity led me to look upon them from an inner apartment. The Lady accidentally observed my hideous face, and, at her command, I was very unwillingly ordered by my father to come forward. She affected kindness for me—heard my history—gave me some little present—and, learning that my mother had died in giving birth to me, begged me of my father, making, at the same time, a thousand flattering promises.

“ My father, a stern unfeeling man, was glad to rid himself of an unfortunate being, who brought, as he thought, a disgrace upon him ; and I, who, for the first time in my life, then felt the sunshine of kindness, was so warmed by its deceitful rays, that my heart burned towards my benefactress. I clung to her with eagerness, and followed her home with joy.

“ I accompanied Mr Delassaux and Lady Deborah to Naples. For some time, my life, compared with what it had been, was easy. But I soon began to be used as a toy, for the sport of the lady and her companions, and even her servants. The tortures I suffered drove my fiery temper almost to madness, and often did I resolve to escape from my persecutor.

“ Your angelic mother, who then came to Naples, showed me so much pity and kindness, that when she and Sir Marmaduke were on the eve of returning to Rome, I threw myself on the ground before her, and, clasping her knees, I entreated her to take me with her. My appeal was forcible, and her excellent heart knew not how to withstand it.

“ I bade adieu to my tyrant, exchanging what might have been called infernal torments, for what was to me an elysium upon earth. To her benevolence I owe the light of education. I loved, nay, I adored her. I could never look upon her lovely countenance, where the kind and warm affections of her pure unspotted soul gleamed in perpetual sunshine, without believing that she was my good angel, sent to redeem me from the fangs of her who had so long acted the part of a demon towards me.—But this is a theme on which I could dwell for ever. Time wears, and I must hasten to conclude my tale.

“ My Lady becoming pregnant, returned to Rome, where Sir Marmaduke died of a malaria fever. Her affliction was more dreadful than human frame could stand. Violent and some-

what premature labour was the consequence; you were born; and the angel spirit of your mother winged its flight to Heaven. Before she became insensible, she entreated me to see her orphan child, friendless in a foreign country, conveyed to Naples, to be placed under the charge of her sister-in-law, Lady Deborah. I dared not disobey her, and I had no sooner executed my trust, than I was told to be gone. Anxious for the safety of the child, I condescended to plead humbly for an asylum in Lady Deborah's house; but it was peremptorily refused, and I was not permitted to see my former mistress.

“ I then heard strange rumours of her and Lord Eaglesholme, and of a child having been born. Some horrible suspicions flashed across my mind; suspicions which must not now be whispered, since we are taught to exercise mercy, and to forgive.

“ Finding myself excluded from the house of Lady Deborah, my attachment to the child of my beloved mistress led me to conceal myself in a small hovel, near her villa, and I watched it day and night.

“ One evening, just before sunset, I saw an English sailor loitering about among some orange trees, near the house. I crept slowly into a concealment, whence I could observe him more closely. As the twilight approached, he was joined by Antonio, a ruffian whom I knew to be much in the confidence of Lady Deborah. He carried something over his shoulder in a large silk bag, and I saw it move as he went. They walked off together in silence, and I followed them into a thicker part of the grove, where they seated themselves upon a bank.

“ ‘ Harrison !’ said Antonio, in a mixture of Italian and English, and placing the bag upon his knee, ‘ I thought she would be satisfied with exposing the child, but nothing will please her but your tossing it into the bay. So, come ! here it is, make up your mind to it. I hope you are tough enough not to mind a trifle of this kind ?’

“ Harrison was silent for a moment, and then, without giving a direct reply, he said—

“ ‘ Let us look at the child before we part.’ Antonio then took the infant from the bag. I looked keenly, and as my fears foretold, I saw it

was thee, my babe, the child of my beloved mistress.

“ ‘ *Cospetto di Baccho!*’ exclaimed he, ‘ the bantling is dressed, and, as I live, in her haste, she has forgotten to take off the gold necklace and locket which the little witch of Endor brought with the child from Rome ——’

“ ‘ ’Tis a pretty bauble, let me examine it more narrowly,’ said Harrison. ‘ There seem to be cyphers in diamonds and hair there’——

“ ‘ Aye, aye!’ quoth Antonio, laying it on the bank, to that side of him farthest from his companion, and utterly beyond his reach; ‘ ’tis a pretty bauble, but, look here!’ said he, holding up the babe, ‘ look at this young imp, how she smiles!’

“ ‘ She does so, by Heaven!’ exclaimed Harrison; ‘ and could you have the heart to ask me to murder so sweet an innocent?’

“ ‘ Heart!’ exclaimed Antonio, ‘ I don’t know what you mean by heart; but I know I have honour enough never to deceive my employer, and as we are to be paid here for making sure work on’t, by committing it to the deep, I cannot permit my conscience to let you off for less,

though I will not refuse you the gratification of putting it to any easier death you can devise. What think you, ha ! ha ! ha !' exclaimed he, with a fiend like laugh—' what think you of drawing a string tight round its neck first, and then lowering it gently down as a bait for the dog-fish ?'

" ' No, Antonio,' said Harrison, shuddering at the wretch's atrocity, ' I have robbed, and I have —— 'pshaw ! I need not say what I have done, but this I solemnly swear I will not do. I will undertake to see the child so disposed of, as will secure all that her death could effect, but for murdering that innocent, with that smile of Heaven upon her face !—no ! no ! no !—I could not bring myself to do it.'

" At this moment I crept breathless behind a tree, and resolving to attempt something for the rescue of my mistress's orphan, I glided forward unperceived, and with a long hooked stick, I twitched away the gold chain that lay beside Antonio, and, at the same time, I gave him a smart blow on the elbow, quickly concealing myself again. The villain started round, and missing the prize he had so artfully set apart for

himself, suddenly exclaimed, ‘Robbers!’ and, laying down the child on the bank, drew his sword, and rushed into the thicket, calling on Harrison to pursue the thieves. I slid round the bole of the tree as they passed me,—snatched up the precious babe,—and, putting her into the bag,—darted away with her.

“Lady Delassaux had providentially heaped money upon me at different times, which now contributed to the safety of her orphan. I hired a felucca, and sailed for Sicily that very night. I need not mention the various difficulties I encountered during my wanderings, but hasten to tell you that I at last arrived at Rotterdam, where I embarked for England, without knowing very well what plan I should afterwards follow.

“During the voyage, a storm arose that drove us to the north of Scotland. Our vessel struck, and went to pieces. I grasped my babe, and was fortunate enough to cling to a portion of the wreck, and, piloted by the hand of Providence, we alone, of all the souls on board, were safely wafted through the raging billows to the shore. We landed near the mouth of the Cave of Eaglesholme. There I sought a temporary shelter,

picking up some of the ship's provisions, and other necessaries, washed ashore by the storm.

“ Whilst engaged in looking for these, I was seen accidentally by some of the inhabitants of the neighbouring fishing hamlet, with my hair hanging down. Their superstitious fears led them to fly in the utmost alarm. My figure was thus associated, in their minds, with the storm and wreck. I resolved to avail myself of these circumstances, to make myself the terror, instead of the sport of the vulgar. The discoveries I made in the cavern enabled me to carry my plan into the most perfect execution. I found out a narrow hole immediately over the fallen fragments, heaped up at the further end of the larger outer cave, which, opening at a considerable height, and just over a projecting ledge, so as to be quite unseen from below, led through a series of magnificent natural apartments, and came out through an almost invisible crevice near the sainted well.

“ The belief in my being something supernatural became so fixed among the ignorant natives, that, to propitiate my supposed malevolence, they put down fish, and food of all kinds, and coins, and various other articles, by the side of

the well I was supposed to delight in. But something more was necessary for you than mere food; and I began to be unhappy that I had secured no asylum for you, where you might receive education fitted to your birth. Had I then known that your mother was the last remaining child of Lord Eaglesholme's only uncle, I should have thought that the hand of an all-seeing God had led me to him; but I was ignorant of this circumstance, and then looked upon him in no other light, than as a nobleman of whose history I knew something, and whose wretched and recluse sort of life, bespoke at least a sincere repentance for the errors he had been led into.

“ In the course of a few weeks residence in the cavern, I had various opportunities of gathering more about Lord Eaglesholme, and I finally made up my mind to convert him, by stratagem, into the guardian of my infant treasure. How to effect this, required some previous consideration. To accost him, and to tell him at once who you were, would have been to subject myself to the suspicions of imposture; and ignorant as I was of his connection with your mother, I only anticipated indifference on his part, to the pretensions

of one of whom he knew nothing. At last I resolved to awaken his remorse, and to move his tenderness for you, by giving you to him as his own child.

“ I soon found out, that he was in the frequent habit of rambling alone upon the cliffs after dark, and I resolved to avail myself of the rumours, spread over the whole district, of my strange appearance, and supernatural powers, to meet and address him, in a manner that should at least command his attention, if not inspire him with some portion of the general belief regarding me. I carried my scheme into practice with all the effect I was capable of. I started upon him near the sainted well, in so inexplicable a manner, that I saw plainly he hardly knew whether to believe me mortal or no ; but when I told him the history of his past life, he shuddered with horror, and was lost in astonishment. I then told him that the only punishment Heaven had assigned to him, was the care of his adulterous child ; and taking you from under a cloak in which I had laid you to sleep, I gave you into his arms, and disappeared before he had time to recover from his surprise, or to know whither I had

gone. He believed my tale; and, to hide the infamy of your birth, he gave you out to be the daughter of his widowed sister, who had died abroad.

“ Finding my place of concealment convenient for my purposes, I resolved to remain there to watch over your fate. I showed myself frequently to Lord Eaglesholme during his walks on the cliffs; and, keeping up the mystery in which I had first enveloped myself, I continued to have considerable control over a mind, remorse had rendered, in some degree, unsound.

“ It was not until after your being carried off, and when I was fully satisfied of the strength of his affection towards you, by his distraction at your loss, that, on his coming to seek me near the well, I at last disclosed to him the secret of your birth, and learned with surprise, for the first time, that it had pleased Heaven to direct me for protection to the very threshold where you had the best right to look for it. And now young lady, said she, in a melancholy accent, it only remains for me to give thee a wretch’s blessing, and bid thee farewell for ever—never again shall this disgusting form distress thee!”—

Amherst and his bride replied to her at once—
“No!” said they warmly, “no! we cannot let you leave us. Our lives shall be devoted to make yours comfortable.”

The poor creature gazed upon them both for a moment, and, seating herself again on the grass, from which she had risen, she burst into a flood of tears, and was for some time convulsed by the intensity of her feelings.

“This kindness,” said she, “is more than I can well bear.—But it will not do.—I cannot be a burden to you.—I cannot be a burden to myself.—I cannot again subject myself to the persecutions of my own species. I have been too long accustomed now to live in solitude, and to be free.—Yet, to leave you!” continued she, looking towards Miss Delassaux with inexpressible feeling, “to leave you who are the only living thing which chained me to the earth, is to break my last tie with it, and to pine in living death!”

“Why should you leave me then?” said Miss Delassaux, seizing her long and bony hand; through which she felt the warm pulses of a strong affection beating; “why should you leave me? A small cottage shall be fitted up in

the most retired part of the grounds. Walls and hedges shall enclose a space large enough, to keep away even the air contaminated by human beings. You shall possess the master-key of all around; and I shall be the only mortal who shall have power to visit you. Remember! old age must come on. You saved my young life, and it is my duty—my privilege—my pleasure—my right! —to watch over and protect you in your declining years!”

The Dwarfie was overcome by the warmth of Miss Delassaux's words and manner, through which her heart so eloquently spoke out. She leaned her head upon the hand and the lap of the only being who had really sympathised with her since the death of her angelic mistress. She wept copiously; her humanity returned full upon her, and, giving way to it at once, she yielded to Eliza's wish.

CHAPTER XVII.

My niece, my daughter, welcome to my care.

RAMSAY.

Such his fell glances, as the fatal light
Of staring Comets.

CRASHAW.

Ah! I'm betray'd, and all my guilt discover'd.

SMITH.

WHEN Eliza and Amherst returned to the house, they found the drawing-room again crowded. Lord Eaglesholme alone was absent.—A group of wondering servants were clustered together at the door,—and even Hawkins, had dared to show his face among them.

Eliza had no sooner advanced within the circle, where Lady Deborah was, than Sir William Percival took the young lady's trembling hand, and presented her to her aunt as the daughter and rightful heiress of Sir Marmaduke Delas-saux. The mighty Lady pressed forward to embrace her niece, with an artful flood of tears ;

but though she acted well, it was evident that it was nothing but acting.

“ Why,” said she, in a theatrical tone, “ why should I have been thus long condemned by a cruel fate, to estrange from my bosom her, whose right to the chief place there is so undoubted ?” She looked at Eliza with unfeigned astonishment, which she was unable to conceal.—“ Yes,” said she, “ there are indeed lineaments in that countenance, which, were there no other evidence, would, of themselves, be sufficient to mark you for a Delassaux—” She hid her face in her handkerchief for some moments as if deeply affected ; then, lifting up her head with an air of uncommon grandeur, and waving her hand round towards the servants, to command their attention,—“ you will henceforth,” continued she, “ consider this young lady as the representative of the ancient house of Delassaux and Brokenhurst, and as the only issue of Sir Marmaduke Delassaux, and Dame Isobel Magdalene St Clair, his wife ; and, consequently, as the rightful possessor of the house and noble estates of Delassaux and Brokenhurst. By the care of Providence she has been preserved, and I now, with pride and joy, welcome

her to her home, and to this beating bosom." So saying she again embraced her, whilst a buzz of approbation issued from every mouth but that of Hawkins.

The little man came slowly forward, and bowing, at some distance, in a cringing manner, began to address the lady who was thus formally installed in her rights:—

“ Hem !—Madam!—Miss Delassaux !—Miss Delassaux of Delassaux and Brokenhurst,—I humbly presume to offer my lowly duty to you—Madam—and to congratulate and felicitate you on your rightful accession to your property, and to express the supreme joy I feel on the glorious and joyful occasion, Ma'am, when Heaven has sent so beautiful, and so sensible, and so genteel a young lady to rule over us. And hoping that you may be induced to continue me in those services, which have been now for so many years devoted to the happiness and well-being of the very considerable population of your estates, as well as to the best interests of my employer, then in possession, I go to hasten the kindling of bonfires, and the ringing of bells, and the drinking of ale, that the glad tidings may speedily spread from

knoll to knoll, and from steeple to steeple, and from mouth to mouth, until the whole county of Kent shall resound them from one end to the other !”

Unfortunately for him, Eliza had already learned enough of the knavish and hard-hearted Mr Hawkins. She felt a new spirit animate her, as she contemplated the vast field of usefulness now opening before her, the idea of entertaining such a prime minister as Mr Hawkins was revolting to her thoughts. After kindly replying to the professions of her aunt, she turned round suddenly upon the astonished steward, who was still going on with his fulsome address, and instantly struck him dumb by her reply.

“ I know not, Sir, upon what grounds you presume thus to address me. Though a stranger, I am already well acquainted with your villainy towards the unhappy young lady, whom, for no fault of her's, it pleased fortune to place on an eminence only to give her the greater fall. Nor am I less aware of the tyranny you have exercised over the unfortunate people under your control. I thank Heaven, that, on committing to me so great a charge, it has placed you like a

beacon on a sunken rock, to warn me to avoid that on which she, who preceded me, was shipwrecked. I beg, Sir, you will immediately leave this house, and I trust you will not dare offend me by again showing yourself within the precincts of my estates."

These words, uttered with great dignity and determination, fell on the little man like a thunderbolt. He cast his eyes around, and as they glanced on the various faces in succession, he beheld in some the chuckle of triumphant joy, and in all the stern smile of inward satisfaction. His mouth was closed, though vexation was preying at his heart. Defeated and crest-fallen, but not abashed, he slunk out of the room followed by a suppressed but general hiss from the servants.

A noise was now heard in the lobby and on the stairs.

"Bring him this way! bring him this way!" cried several voices.

"Aye, aye! but *sangue del Diavolo!*" exclaimed another, "why do you drag me along at this rate? I shouldn't have delivered myself up if I had had any thoughts of escaping. Take me before the magistrate, for I have much to tell."

As the numerous footsteps came upwards, distraction fell upon Lady Deborah; she rose wildly, and took two or three rapid strides towards the door, but her purpose was prevented by the entrance of a large body of constables, bringing in a prisoner. Unlike the proud Lady Deborah Delassaux, she endeavoured to skulk behind the chairs of the party assembled.

“Where is she?” exclaimed Antonio, for it was he, “where is she I say?” whilst, with the eyes of a demon, he pierced into every corner of the room. “Ah,—hah!” he exclaimed,—“ha!—ha!—ha!—hah!—so I have you after all! Oh! this is almost beyond my hopes!”—and again he burst into a fit of laughter, for some time interrupting his speech, and sending a thrill of horror to the heart of every one in the apartment. “*Morte!* I thought you might have slipped through my fingers, and a pretty fool I should have made of myself, coming to dance at the gallows tree, and being jilted after all by my partner!”

Lady Deborah lifted her head slowly and calmly from the back of the great chair she had been leaning on, and raising herself to her full height, she walked forwards with a solemn majesty of step,

and with that proud air of superiority she knew so well how to assume.

“ Antonio !” said she calmly, “ is this madness or intoxication ? you were not wont to be thus.—You forget the respect, as well as the gratitude you owe me !” This she said in a tone peculiarly emphatic, and with a manner that showed she meant to convey something more than met the ear.

“ What !” said Antonio, aside to her in a half under tone, “ can you really believe me to be so simple as to let slip my darling revenge just as I have grasped it?—No, no, no, I am no such fool—so leave your nods and winks.—But let me not hasten my repast—let the feast be protracted, that I may feed slowly on your misery ; bitter as will be the reckoning, I will discharge it with pleasure after such a festival of revenge.—Gentlemen,” continued he, turning to the company, “ I have disclosures to make concerning this Lady,—important disclosures.”——

“ Listen not, gentlemen, I beseech you, to the ravings of this madman,” exclaimed Lady Deborah, interrupting him ; “ let him be carried forth from our presence ; there is something extremely

distressing in hearing this poor creature, who has been for some time out of his right mind, raving about I know not what."

"Gentlemen," said Antonio with a Satanic calmness, even more hellish than his fury or his laugh, "I beg you will listen to me. You already know I am the person who carried off that young lady from Eaglesholme, and who afterwards seized her at York. Both those attempts originated in orders I had from the Lady Deborah Delassaux. In the execution of them, I killed Harrison, and afterwards murdered an unfortunate peasant, for which deeds I know I must die, —But I have much to unfold first—"

"Gentlemen," again interrupted Lady Deborah hastily, "I insist upon this impudent ruffian being carried away; I can no longer listen to such ravings. Officers, take him away, I say—"

Sir William Percival evidently laboured under the most distressing embarrassment; but he said gravely,—“ your Ladyship is aware, that I must do my duty as a magistrate; that duty now demands that I go on with the voluntary confessions of this man. But you have your

remedy by retiring to your apartment until it is over."

"Let her not go, let her not go I beseech you, as you value justice!" cried Antonio,—
"justice— ha! ha! ha!—aye justice!—justice to me!—justice to all mankind; she last night attempted to poison me, —and she is the murderess of her husband!!!"

An exclamation of horror burst from every mouth; but it was perhaps rather horror at the accusation, than at any idea that there could be foundation for it.—Lady Deborah remained unshaken.—She reared her head up to more than ordinary height, and with eyes that darted lightnings,—

"Go!" said she, in a haughty tone. "No! —Lady Deborah Delassaux shall never flee before the envenomed breath of such a reptile!—My noble descent, and my high character, will, I trust, bear me above any suspicions this wretch's testimony may throw upon me.—A vile Italian—a Neapolitan of the lowest cast—his very nation and base quality are enough to forbid his word being credited; and then, a disappointed servant!—a man whose length of services has been more than recompensed, but who even

dared to plot the marriage of his son with her who was by me and all mankind believed to be my niece!—The marriage was actually to have taken place yesterday, but that the cheat was detected and driven forth, together with his villainous father who supported his imposture.”

“ My boy !” exclaimed Antonio, with an unwonted expression of feeling—“ my boy was the pride of my heart—what would I not have done for him !—Hear me gentlemen !” continued he with vehemence—“ hear me, or for ever bid farewell to justice !—There stands an adulteress !—there stands a murderess !—the murderess of her husband !—Thus do I accuse her—I, who now come voluntarily to suffer as the agent of her crimes—”

Lady Deborah arose—the blood had altogether forsaken her face—her eyes were haggard—she tottered across the room to where Antonio was standing, stopping for an instant, and looking at him with an expression of the wildest agitation, where anguish was mingled with entreaty. The ruffian glared upon her like a hyæna ; his teeth were heard to grind fearfully against each other ; and with a devilish laugh,

he called loudly on Sir William to order the officers to secure her.

Lady Deborah fainted away in the arms of her female attendants, and was carried to her own apartment.

A note from Lord Eaglesholme, earnestly entreating a few minutes conference, was now handed to Sir William Percival, who accordingly went to the apartment to which his Lordship had retired.

“ My friend,” said Lord Eaglesholme, as he entered, “ what is this I hear? Has then that wretch Antonio, disregarding his own fate, really returned to accuse his mistress?”

“ He has, my Lord, and of a crime so serious that I cannot now refuse it the fullest investigation.”

— “ Good God!” said Lord Eaglesholme, much affected; “ then all my efforts to save this unfortunate woman from eternal infamy are vain! I know too well the crime—the dreadful suspicion has long haunted me; how dark and intricate are the steps of Providence! But is there yet no way of saving her from the ignominious disclosure that now hangs over her?”

“ My Lord,” replied Sir William, “ I feel for you. But although the crime, from being committed in a foreign country, cannot affect her life, it is my duty,—as it is the duty of every one who would maintain the character of a British magistrate,—to leave no stone unturned to get at the truth, be the culprit of whatever rank or sex. Your Lordship may, however, witness the investigation ; and I shall be glad to listen to any suggestions of yours in conducting it.”

Lord Eaglesholme thought for a moment,—and making up his mind to endure to the utmost, he accompanied Sir William to the room, where Antonio was still standing guarded.

The villain started at the sight of Lord Eaglesholme, but recovered himself immediately; and the chief magistrate being seated, and silence commanded, Antonio was ordered to proceed.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Pris'ners and witnesses were waiting by ;
 These had been taught to swear, and those to die.

ROSCOMMON.

But in these cases
 We still have judgment here ; that we but teach
 Bloody instructions, which, being taught, return
 To plague th' inventor ; this even handed justice
 Commends the ingredients of her poisoned chalice
 T' her own lips.

MACBETH.

“ THE facts I am about to relate,” said Antonio, “ are not only necessary for bringing the guilty to justice, but some of them are essential for removing a delusion from the eyes of those, who perhaps think themselves best informed. I need not tell you who I am ; I come at once to my introduction to the Lady Deborah Delassaux. Her husband—*quel minchione !—quel becco !—*

went to Greece, and left his wife at Naples, to bud and blossom in that hot-bed of the devil. She was not long in coming to maturity in wickedness, and lacking a proper instrument for her purposes, I was introduced to her by a certain *Principessa* whom I had served, and immediately taken into her service, and her confidence.

“It is not necessary to mention all the intrigues this gay lady plunged into. You know, Lord Eaglesholme, how she inveigled you. While the ardour of her amour with you was at the highest, and its fruit about to appear, she received a letter from her husband, begging her to send out a small vessel to meet him at Corfu to bring him home.

“Dismayed at the prospect of his return, Lady Deborah held a conference with me in an arbour, where his death was determined upon, and planned. In the ship, went an Italian sailor, charged with his assassination. It was Sir Godmansbury’s intention to land at Paestum, to visit its ruined temples, and there the assassin intended to have dispatched him. But it so happened, as you know, Captain Cleaver, that he found the place occupied by a large party of British naval officers,

that rendered any attempt from his single arm utterly hopeless."

Antonio stopped, and having called on Captain Cleaver to support this part of his evidence, Sir William Percival requested that gentleman to tell what he knew.

"The fellow speaks truth," said Cleaver, "for a parcel of us were certainly engaged in jollification with our captain, in the Temple of Neptune, when Sir Godmansbury came in, attended by two servants, and an Italian sailor. We asked him to sit down with us; and he and the captain, who had a turn that way, had so much talk about temples, and amphitheatres, and baths, and all that sort of trash, that they became very intimate together in an hour's time. So happy, indeed, were they in each others society, that our captain agreed to stay for a couple of days there, partly to gratify his own taste, but chiefly for the sake of Sir Godmansbury, who wished to take some drawings, and measurements of the ruins.

"After they had fully satisfied themselves with these heathen remains, we struck our tent, and all set out together on our return to Naples. At Torre-del-Greco, where we arrived just as night

closed, we parted from Sir Godmansbury, after having dined jovially together. He was impatient to rejoin his lady at Naples, after so long an absence, and our captain's intention was to visit the summit of Vesuvius during the night. Guides and mules having been provided for our party, we followed, for some little way, the road Sir Godmansbury had taken, and at but a short distance behind him.

“ The moon was not up, but our attendants had torches, and we were jogging on slowly, when we were alarmed by the report of several muskets, at some distance in our front, and then confused cries reached us from the direction we were riding towards; and immediately afterwards a hired mule, on which one of Sir Godmansbury's servants had left the inn, came galloping back to us with an empty saddle, followed by the animal that carried his baggage, its halter trailing on the ground. We pushed hastily forwards, but before we had ridden fifty yards, the mule that had carried Sir Godmansbury himself came sweeping past us, without its rider. Some fifty or a hundred yards further on, we found a dead mule, and the two servants lying lifeless on the road. Half choked

shrieks came on our ears from the direction of the sea, then but a little way to our left. I instantly dismounted, and rushed towards the spot whence the sounds proceeded, being followed by several of our party. Vesuvius, which was then in action, seemed to aid my intentions, for the crater, just at that moment, threw up a grand column of flame, that illuminated the whole rocky coast of the Bay of Naples with a lurid glare, for several minutes. On a brink of the cliff, hanging over the waves, two men appeared dragging a third by a rope fastened to his neck. He was struggling hard for his life ; but he struggled in vain ; and as vain were my exertions to arrest his fate. The stiletos of the assassins drank his blood, and his murdered body was hurled amid the angry billows, chafing the rocks below. The horrible deed was hardly more than completed, when the ruffians, perceiving us just upon them, made an effort to escape. One of them, who was probably well acquainted with the intricacies of the spot, darted away, and escaped by some crevice unknown to us, and was instantly lost to view ; but the retreat of the other was cut off, and, being surrounded, he was taken after a desperate re-

sistance. He was immediately recognized by some of our party, as a man of the name of Harrison, who had lately deserted from a British man-of-war. I did all I could to make him confess the object of this assassination, and who were his accomplices; but he maintained a sullen silence. Our hopes were yet high, that, notwithstanding his present obstinacy, we might ere long obtain confessions from him; and we pursued our way to Naples, carrying our prisoner with us. But in these hopes we were disappointed. A body of at least twenty armed men came galloping after us. Under pretence of being *sbirri*, they demanded our prisoner, saying, that some preliminary investigation must be gone through in the affair, before the culprit could be sent forward from Torre-del-Greco. We earnestly desired to be present at this inquiry; but our request was peremptorily refused, on the plea that we should be required as witnesses against him; and our names being taken, we were told to pursue our way to Naples, and that there we should probably be examined next day as to what we knew of the matter, so soon as the prisoner should reach the city. But what was our confusion and vexation upon learning from our

landlord at Portici, that we had been deceived."——

“Aye! you were no match for me, *mio bravo capitano!*” exclaimed Antonio, as Cleaver had finished.—“*Il marinaio*, finding that he was foiled at Paestum, immediately dispatched information to Lady Deborah. She wrote to me to Portici, where I then lived. Here is the letter written with her own hand to seal his doom; I have preserved it; 'tis damning proof against her!—ha! ha! ha!”—

After this triumphant laugh, Antonio took breath for a moment, looking round him to watch the effect he was producing on his auditors. The dread silence of extreme horror prevailed.

“Lady Deborah, who now expected that every obstacle to her marriage with you, Lord Eaglesholme, was removed, raved like a maniac, to find all her schemes, and all her crimes, thus rendered abortive by your desertion of her; her disappointed love for you clung to the fruit of your amour. But this fondness for her offspring could not be indulged without the demolition of her character, an idol which her artifices had hitherto enabled her to keep unprofaned. Her infant

niece, the orphan daughter of Sir Marmaduke Delassaux, having been consigned to her care, by the last will of her mother, she resolved to make away with this child, and substitute her own for it, that one dexterous blow might enable her to bring up her daughter without shame, and secure her an ample fortune.

“ To find a hand to execute this new murder, was entrusted to my care. I sent for Harrison, and we met together at night in an orange grove near Lady Deborah’s villa, but when I was in the act of handing him the infant, some thieves coming behind us, snatched away a gold chain ornament, carelessly left upon the babe. Leaving the child, we rushed after the thieves; but they escaped, and when we returned, the child was gone. But as it appeared highly probable, that it had been carried off by the same gang for the sake of its clothes, we had no doubt that it would meet with the very fate to which we had doomed it. Lady Deborah’s child had been secretly put to nurse with my wife at Portici. I had not been there for some days, and when I went privately to fetch it, I found that it had been seized with some sudden illness

the day before, and had died in a few hours. I could not go back to Lady Deborah with this intelligence,—I could not venture to tell her that she had been again guilty of a fruitless crime,—nay, a crime worse than fruitless,—since, as she had now no niece, the Delassaux estates would have gone away to a distant relation, and all right to the management of them would have been lost to her for ever. My wife Teresa observed, that it was a pity our boy Lorenzo had not been a little younger, and a girl, that we might have substituted him for Lady Deborah's child. I bethought me of her cousin's wife, who had a daughter exactly of the age. We accordingly sent for the father and mother of the child, and an agreement was made between us, by which I was to impose the false child upon Lady Deborah, as her own infant; and as the man carried on a trade that yielded him plenty of cash, a large sum of money was to be given me for effecting this deception. The young lady, therefore, who has been so long the representative of the Delassaux family,—whom Lady Deborah Delassaux believed to be her own and Lord Eaglesholme's child,

—is in fact no other than the lawfully begotten daughter of an honest Neapolitan bandit !”

Murmurs of astonishment ran around the company at this unexpected *denouement* ; but they yielded to those of horror, arising from Antonio’s brutal narration of Lady Deborah’s crimes.—The proof of her guilt was too apparent ; it came home to the conviction of all.

“ Hah !” said Antonio, with the usual grinding motion of his teeth, “ by Heaven, she must swing !—Oh I shall die with joy, and cheat the gallows after all !—Ha ! ha ! ha ! was ever Italian revenge more complete ?—Ha ! ha ! ha ! ha ! ha !” —continued he, laughing horribly, until interrupted by the indignation that broke forth generally from the company.

At this moment loud screams were heard proceeding from Lady Deborah’s apartment, and every one rushed up stairs to ascertain the meaning of them. The constables had already opened the door to ascertain the cause. It was Lady Deborah’s maid who uttered them. Her mistress lay extended on the bed in the last gasp of death.

Silent awe fell upon all around at so instantaneous and dreadful a visitation. The last con-

vulsions had frightfully distorted the haughty features on which they had been working.

To the dismay of all present, a loud laugh burst from some one near the door, and a chill horror ran through every fibre of the spectators.

“Soh!” cried the ruffian Neapolitan, “soh! my accusations have not been altogether ineffectual, then?—she has sent herself to hell with all the stings of a blasted name rankling deep in her soul!”

“Wretch!” exclaimed several voices at once. “What mean ye, demon? what appearance is there of suicide here?”

“Ha! ha! ha! fools!” exclaimed Antonio, with a cool exultation, that made every one shudder,—“see ye not that?” said he, as he made way for himself to approach nearer the corpse, that he might the more easily explain what he meant; “see ye not this fragment of cake clenched in her hand?—nay, give it me,” said he, addressing the dead body, “ye need not grasp it so hard now; it has worked well on yourself; and now I am well content it shall do that it was originally baked for.” He instantly swallowed down some large morsels.

Suspicion flashed upon the minds of those nearest to him; they seized him; but their efforts were too late; the poison had already laid hold of his vitals.

“Hah!” said he, grinding his teeth with more horrible expression than he had ever before exhibited,—“hah!—I feel it—ha! ha! ha!—*è fatto!*—hell has already begun its work within me—I—I—I—I—I feel my heart burning—and my limbs growing cold—hah!—I”——His features became convulsed—his eyes rolled, as if they would start from their sockets—his tongue was thrust out, and his teeth set against it. He lost the use of his limbs, and fell on the bed, where he was laid beside his mistress a stiffened corpse. The spectacle was too horrible for the bystanders—they left the room in a body.

The rest of our story may be soon told. The reader, indeed, must already anticipate the happy union of Amherst Oakenwold and his Eliza. The joy,—the exuberant joy of Sir Cable,—and the calm, dignified, and placid felicity of the noble Earl of Eaglesholme, whose life of repentance was

now repaid by the thought that she, in whom all his affections had centered, had still the nearest and best claim to his tenderness. Miss Margery's colloquies with Mrs Glass, in her preparations for the wedding feast, and Cleaver's critical discussions on the various dishes composing it, mingled with his honest and hearty greetings, may all be readily imagined.

With respect to the faithful O'Gollochar and his joyous Epingle, though little apt in acquiring each other's tongue, they held matrimonial converse no less amusing than were their dialogues when lovers.

For the false heiress of Delassaux, ample provision was made by the munificent Eliza. With this she retired into Italy, and finally, we believe, became the Countess di Montemarone.

THE END.

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