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EDINBURGH TALES.

CONDUCTED BY

MRS. JOHNSTONE.

VOLUME III.

WILLIAM TAIT, EDINBURGH.
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SCOTT'S HISTORY OF GREAT BRITAIN

BY SIR JOHN SCOTT

IN THREE VOLUMES

THE HISTORY OF GREAT BRITAIN
FROM THE END OF THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY
TO THE PRESENT TIME

EDINBURGH:

Printed by WILLIAM TAIT, 107, Prince's Street.

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THE
EDINBURGH TALES.

CHRISTMAS AMUSEMENTS; STORIES AND CHARADES.*

BY MISS MITFORD.

My readers must remember, that Annie, "charming Annie," like so many other charmers, liked of all things to be "puzzled;" and her good-natured brother Tom promised, that if their clever sister Sophy would lend her assistance, in the next charade Annie should be delightfully perplexed; and moreover, that it should be a love story, such as young ladies like, and also please their father, (provided he kept awake during the performance,) for it should be of the date of the Commonwealth. Sophia assented; and, at Tom's instigation, Charles fetched from the armoury a weapon of the gun or musket genus, solemnly promising the ladies not to fire it off. On this, the brother and sister retreated behind the screen, and emerged in the guise of a pair of lovers of the seventeenth century.

CHARADE THE THIRD.

SCENE THE FIRST.—*An old-fashioned Garden, with Terraces, Fountains, Yew-hedges, &c. — A large Mansion in the back-ground. — Time, eight in the evening. A.D. 1657.*

MABEL GOODWIN—(alone.)

Mabel. So! Master Alfred Montresor! He promised to meet me here by eight, and the great clock in the hall wanted but five minutes full half-an-hour ago. It must be half-an-hour. I have been pacing up and down this walk, from the yew-hedge to the fountain, twenty times at least, besides going twice to the little door in the garden-wall, to be sure that it was unbolted. It can't be a minute less than half-an-hour. He had as

well stay now in his hiding-place at the village, for I'll never speak to him again. Never! And yet, poor fellow—No! I'll never speak to him again!

Enter ALFRED MONTRESOR.

So, Master Alfred!

Alfred. So, my pretty Mistress Mabel! Why turn away so angrily? What fault have I committed, I pray thee?

Mabel. Fault? None!

Alfred. Nay, nay, my little Venus of the Puritans, my princess of all Precisians; if thou be offended tell me so.

Mabel. Offended, forsooth! People are never offended with people they don't care about. Offended, quotha!

Alfred. And is it because people don't care for people that they bridle, and flounce, and toss, and put their pretty selves into such pretty tantrums—eh, Mistress Mabel? I am after time, sweet, but—

Mabel. After time! I have been here this half hour!—and my father fast asleep in the hall! After time! If thou hadst cared for me—But men are all—all alike. There hath not been a true lover in the world since Amadis his day—the mad Paladin that my old nurse was used to talk of, and that was but a false legend. After time!—Why, if thou hadst cared for me only as much as I care for this sprig of lavender, thou wouldst have been waiting for me before the chimes had rung seven. Just think of the time thou hast lost. Now thou may'st go thy ways: leave me, sir!

Alfred. Nay, mine own sweet love, do not

* Continued from Vol. II.

offer to snatch thy hand away.—I cannot part with thee, Mabel, though thou shouldst flutter like a new-caught dove. I must speak with thee : I have that to say which *must* be heard.

Mab. Well?

Alf. I have been dogged all day by a canting Puritan, a follower, as I take it, of thy godly father.

Mab. Jeer not my father, Alfred, though he be a roundhead and thou a cavalier. He is a brave man and a good.

Alf. He is *thy* father, and therefore sacred to me. Where didst thou say he is now?

Mab. I left him in the hall, just settling quietly to an after supper nap. Why dost thou ask?

Alf. I have been watched all day by one whom I suspect to be a spy; and I fear me that I am discovered.

Mab. Discovered in thy visits here? Discovered as my—friend?

Alf. No, no; I trust not so. Therefore I delayed to come to thee till I could shake off my unwelcome follower. Not discovered as thy lover, thy *friend*, if such name better please thee, but as the cavalier and malignant, (for so their phrase runs,) Alfred Montresor.

Mab. But granting that were true, what harm hast thou committed? what hast thou to fear?

Alf. Small harm, dear Mabel; and yet in these bad days small harm may cause great fear. I have borne arms for the King; I have never acknowledged the Protector; I am known as the friend of Ormond; and, moreover, I am the rightful owner of this same estate and mansion of Montresor Hall, its parks, manors, and dependencies, bestowed by the sequestrators on thy father, Colonel Goodwin. Seest thou no fear there, fair Mabel?

Mab. Alas! alas!

Alf. Then my deceased father, stout old Sir Robert, was meddled in every plot and rising in the country, from the first year of the Rebellion to this, as I well trust, the last of the Usurpation, so that the very name sounds like a firebrand. 'Twould be held a fair service to the state, Mabel, to shoot thy poor friend; and yet I promise thee, albeit a loyal subject to King Charles, I am hardly fool enough to wage war in my own single person against Oliver, whom a mightier conqueror than himself will speedily overthrow.

Mab. A mightier conqueror!

Alf. Even the great tyrant Death, he who levels the mighty and the low!

Mab. Death! Art thou then in such peril? and dost thou loiter here? I beseech thee, away! away this moment! What detains thee?

Alf. That which brought me,—thyself. Being in England, I came hither, more weeks ago than I care to think of, to look on my old birth-place, my old home. I saw thee, Mabel; and ever since I have felt that these halls are a thousand-fold more precious to me as thy home, as thy inheritance, than ever they could have been as mine. I love thee, Mabel.

Mab. Oh go! go! go! To talk of love whilst thou art in such danger!

Alf. I love thee, mine own Mabel.

Mab. Go!

Alf. Wilt thou go with me? I am not rich; I have no fair mansion to take thee to; but a soldier's sword and a soldier's arm, and a true heart, Mabel! Wilt thou go with me, sweet one? I'll bring horses to the little garden door. The moon will be up at twelve. Speak, dearest?—and yet this trembling hand speaks for thee. Wilt thou go with me and be my wedded wife?

Mab. I will.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE THE SECOND.—*The same Garden. A high wall on one side, with a small strong door in it. The house in the back-ground.*

Enter ALFRED from the side-door.

Alf. Mabel! Not yet arrived! Surely she cannot have changed her purpose? No, no! It were treason against true love but to suspect her of wavering: she lingers from maiden modesty, from maiden fear, from natural affection, from all that man worships in woman. But if she knew the cause I have to dread every delay!

Enter MABEL, from the house.

Mabel? Sweetest, how breathless thou art! Thou canst hardly stand! Rest thee on this seat a moment, my Mabel! And yet delay—Sit here, dearest! What hath startled thee?

Mab. I know not. And yet—

Alf. How thou tremblest still! And what?—

Mab. As I passed the gallery—Only feel how my heart flutters, Alfred!

Alf. Blessings on that dear heart! Calm thee, sweetest.—What of the gallery?

Mab. As I passed, methought I heard voices.

Alf. Indeed! And I, too, have missed the detected spy who hath been all day dogging my steps. Can he—but no! All

is quiet in the house. Look, Mabel! All dark and silent. No light save the moon-beams dancing on the window-panes with a cold pale brightness. No sound save the song of the nightingale—dost thou not hear it? It seems to come from the sweet-briar, which sends its fragrant breath in at yonder casement.

Mab. That is my father's chamber—my dear, dear father! Oh, when he shall wake and find his Mabel gone, little will the breath of the sweet-briar, or the song of the nightingale, comfort him then! My dear, dear father! He kissed me after prayers to-night, and laid his hand on my head and blessed me. He will never bless his poor child again.

Alf. Come, sweetest! The horses wait; the hours wear on; morning will soon be here.

Mab. Oh, what a morning to my poor, poor father! his Mabel, his only child, his beloved, his trusted! Oh, Alfred, my father! my father!

Alf. Maiden, if thou lovest thy father better than me, remain with him. It is not yet too late. I love thee, Mabel, as well as man may love on this side of idolatry; too well to steal thee away against thy will; too well to take thy hand without thy heart. The choice is still open to thee. Return to thy father's house, or wend with me. Weep not thus, dear one; but decide, and quickly.

Mab. Nay, I will go with thee, Alfred. Forgive these tears! I'll go with thee to the end of the world.

Alf. Now then.—What noise is that?

Mab. Surely, surely, the turning of a key.

Alf. Ay, the door is fastened; we are discovered.

Mab. Is there no other way of escape?

Alf. None. The garden is walled round. Look at these walls, Mabel; a squirrel could scarcely climb them.

Mab. Try the door again; I do beseech thee try. Push against it—push manfully.

Alf. It is all in vain; thou thyself heard'st the key turn; and see how it resists my utmost strength. *[Exit.*

SCENE THIRD.—*The same Part of the Garden.*

Enter ALFRED *and* MABEL *from the side.*

Mab. See! The household is alarmed! Look at the lights! Venture not so near, dear Alfred! Conceal thee in the arbour till all is quiet. I will go meet them.

Alf. Alone?

Mab. Why, what have I to fear? Hide thee behind the yew-hedge till the first search be past, and then—

Alf. Desert thee! Hide me! And I a Montresor! But be calmer, sweetest! Thy father is too good a man to meditate aught unlawful. 'Twill be but some short restraint, with thee for my warder. — Calm thee, dearest!

Enter Colonel GOODWIN *and a Servant, from the House.*

Good. Shoot! Shoot instantly, Jonathan! Slay the robber! Why dost thou not fire? Be'st thou in league with him? What dost thou fumble at?

Jon. So please your worship, the wind hath extinguished the touch-paper.

Good. The wind hath extinguished thy wits, I trow, that thou could'st bring nought but that old harquebuss. Return for a steel weapon. *[Exit. JONATHAN.]* Meantime my sword—I see but one man, and surely a soldier of the Cause and the Covenant, albeit aged, may well cope with a night thief. Come on, young man. Be'st thou coward as well as robber? Defend thyself.

Mab. Oh, father! father! Would'st thou do murder before thy daughter's eyes?

Good. Cling not thus around me, maiden? What makest thou with that thief, that craven thief?

Alf. Nay, tremble not, Mabel; for thy sake I will endure even this contumely.—Put up your sword, sir; it is needless. I yield myself your prisoner. At this instant, suspicions, even as degrading as those uttered by Colonel Goodwin, may, perhaps, be warranted by my equivocal position; but when I make myself known to him, I trust that he will retract an aspersion as unworthy of his character as of mine.

Good. I do know thee. Thou art the foul malignant Alfred Montresor; the abettor of the plotting traitor Ormond; the outlawed son of the lawless cavalier who once owned this demesne.

Alf. And knowing me for Alfred Montresor, could'st thou take me for a garden robber?—Could'st thou grudge to the some time heir of these old halls a parting glance of their venerable beauty?

Good. Young man, wilt thou tell me, darest thou tell me, that it was to gaze on this old mansion that thou didst steal hither, like a thief in the night? Alfred Montresor, can'st thou look at thy father's house and utter that falsehood? Ye were a heathenish and blinded generation, main props of tyranny and prelacy, a worldly and a darkling race, who knew not the truth;—

but yet, from your earliest ancestor to the last possessor of those walls, ye had amongst the false gods whom ye worshipped one fair idol, called Honour. Alfred Montresor, I joy that thou hast yet enough of grace vouchsafed to thee to shrink from affirming that lie.

Alf. But a robber! a garden thief!

Good. Ay, a robber! I said, and I repeat, a robber, a thief, a despoiler. Hath the garden no fruit save its apricots and dewberries? No flower save the jessamine and the rose? Hath the house no treasure but its vessels of gold and silver? the cabinet no jewel but its carbuncles and its rubies? If ever thou art a father, and hast one hopeful and dutiful maiden, the joy of thine heart, and the apple of thine eye, then thou wilt hold all robbery light so that it leaves thee *her*, all robbers guiltless save him who would steal thy child. Weep not thus, Mabel. And thou, young man, away. I joy that the old and useless gun defeated my angry purpose—that I slew not mine enemy on his father's ground. Away with thee, young man! Go study the parable that Nathan spake to David. I believe that there is warrant enough for thy detention, but I will not make thee prisoner in the house of thy fathers. Thank me not; but go.

Mab. Father, hear me!

Good. Within! To-morrow!

Mab. Nay, here and now. Thou hast pardoned him; but thou hast not pardoned me.

Good. I have forgiven thee—I do forgive thee.

Mab. Thou knowest not half my sins! I am the prime offender, the great and unrepenting culprit. I loved him, I do love him; we are betrothed, and I will hold faithful to my vow: never shall another man wed Mabel Goodwin! Oh, father, I knew not till this very now how dear thy poor child was to thy heart.—Can'st thou break her's?

Good. Mabel, this is a vain and simple fancy.

Mab. Father, it is love.—Alfred, plead for us!

Alf. Alas! I dare not. Thou art a rich heiress; I am a poor exile.

Mab. Out on such distinctions! Plead for us, Alfred!

Alf. Mabel, I dare not. Thy father is my benefactor; he has given me life and liberty. Would'st thou have me repay these gifts by bereaving him of his child?

Mab. We will not leave him. We will dwell together. Alfred, wilt thou not speak?

Good. His honourable silence hath pleaded for him better than idle words. Alfred Montresor, dost thou love this maid?

Alf. Do I love her?

Good. I believe in good truth that thou dost. Take her then from the hand of her father.—There is room enough in yonder mansion for the heir and the heiress, the old possessor and the new. Take her, and Heaven bless ye, my children!

Mab. Now, bless me, mine own dear father! and bless all the accidents of this happy night—Our projected elopement—and the little door that would not let us elope—and the wind that blew out Jonathan's spark of fire—and the old useless gun that, for want of that spark, would not shoot my Alfred. Blessings on them all!

"Well, Annie," said Tom, "are you sufficiently puzzled?" "Yes," replied Annie, looking graver than usual. "Pray," said she in a whisper to Mr. Mortimer, "is there such a word as matchlock? Is matchlock the name of that old gun?" "Yes," said Mr. Mortimer, taking the weapon in hand, and proceeding to explain to her the construction of the lock. "Then that's it!" said Annie; "*matchlock's* the word."

ON the whole the charades had gone off sufficiently well to induce a pretty general desire for a repetition of the same amusement. "Oh, yes," said Annie, when the question was started, "more charades, pray! more! more!" added she, dancing, and clapping her hands, like a child of four years old, when asking for another sugar-plum, or another story. "More! more!" cried Annie; and her brothers and sisters assented to her request, on condition that she herself took a part. "We want you, Annie," said Sophia; "we can't do without you; you must be my daughter." Annie demurred to this not a little,

And laugh'd, and blush'd, and oft did say
Her pretty oath, by yea and nay,—
She could not, would not, durst not play.

At last, however, she relented, conditioning in her turn that Mr. Mortimer should play too!—Every body was astounded, first, at the liberty, and then at the extreme discrepancy of so grave a personage as Mr. Mortimer the bibliomaniac figuring in a charade. But the gentleman took the demand in excellent part; smiled, hesitated, apologized for his probable awk-

wardness on this his first appearance on any stage, and immediately joined the dramatis personæ behind the screen, from whence he emerged, to our great amusement, saucepan in hand, in the character of an old German Baron.

CHARADE THE FOURTH.

SCENE THE FIRST.—*A Dining-room in a Country Mansion.*

Baron Von Blumack, Mr. Collins.

(*The Baron is engaged in stirring, the contents of a saucepan on the fire.*)

Mr. Collins. It does not signify talking, Baron! You do as you like, of course, in my house—Liberty Hall! No lady to interfere with you. But I cannot help saying that you are spoiling the perch.

Baron. My very good friendt, you know noding of de mattere.

Mr. C. Nothing of perch! Have not I been a "brother of the angle" any time these thirty years? Are not these very fish of my catching? And were they not half an hour ago leaping alive in my basket, little dreaming, poor things, that they should ever be turned into water zootse—or whatever you call your confounded slop? Know nothing of perch!

Bar. Noding of de cookery. To cache is von ding—to vat you call dresse is anoder.

Mr. C. A pretty dressing, truly! But did not Philips, my housekeeper.—I suppose you'll admit that she knows something of cookery?

Bar. No—she vas know noding eider.

Mr. C. Philips know nothing! Really, my dear Baron, I should have thought that the dinners which you have done me the honour to eat in this house might have carried with them a practical conviction, that the cook who dressed them was no ordinary kitchen drudge. But the dressing of perch is no disputed point in the gastro-nomic science—no "debateable land." All the world knows that they ought to be fried with Scotch oatmeal in fresh butter. Not that I care for the dish—I never touch it—but being the produce of my own rod, I have a kindness for the fish, and don't like to see them spoilt. Now, if you had suffered Philips to fry them—you'll allow that Philips can fry, I suppose?

Bar. Mistress Philippe is very clevere. It is moche piti dat she do not be teche to make water zootse. Here is de recepe in her own book—Lissenne—(*reads.*)—"First cache yore fish, den—"

Mr. C. Trash! trash! Philips knows that no cook would stay long in my house, who dressed fish according to that recipe.

Bar. Will you ring de bell?—(*Mr. Collins rings.*)—De water zootse is almost be do.—(*A servant enters, and goes to assist the Baron.*)—Stay—you will nocke down de pot. I will take it op.

Mr. C. What do you want?

Bar. A deepe dishe, and two plaite, and bread, and boottere, and parsley, if you please, sare.—(*Exit Servant, and returns immediately with the things required by the Baron.*)—It is moche piti you have no Hambro' parsley, my good friendt! Now my dishe is done. Eat, and taste how nice it is. Taste a leetel in von spoon.

Mr. C. Taste! My dear Baron, I don't want to put you out of conceit of your luncheon—but the sight's enough for me. No tasting, thank ye. You don't really mean to eat all that slop of fish liquor?

Bar. Unless you will lete me give you a leetel. Now, my good friendt, onely von leetel drope, von drope in de ladel.

Mr. C. I! Heaven forbid I should spoil your appetite, my dear Baron, but I'd as soon take a ladleful out of the hog-tub. He's actually discussing the whole concern! fish, fish-liquor, bread, and butter, and parsley,—a precious luncheon! For my part, I shall never conceit the sight of a perch again, dead or alive. Even in the stream they'll have a twang of that infernal water zootse.

SCENE THE SECOND.—*A Lady's Morning Apartment.*

Mrs. Cuthbert, and Emily, a girl of fourteen years old, who is standing by a cage with a dove at one end of the room.

Emily. Oh, mamma! mamma! Pray come here, my dear mamma?

Mrs. Cuthbert. What is the matter, Emily?

Em. My dove, mamma! my dove! My beautiful dove!

Mrs. C. It is not dead, I hope?

Em. Oh, mamma, it's dying! Can't we do any thing to help it? Only see how it droops its poor pretty head; and the bright scarlet eye, so like the cornelian you showed me the other day, is almost closed, and the wing hanging down, and the soft plumage stained and ruffled, and the dark ring round its neck ruffled and displaced. Oh, it must die, my poor pretty dove!

Mrs. C. Nay, Emily, it is reviving. See, it is gathering itself up. No! you are right, it

is really dying,—shivering, and gasping, and rocking on its perch. Poor bird! quite dead!

Em. Every thing that I love is sure to die. I'll never have a bird again.

Mrs. C. I was afraid that this one would not live long after it had lost its companion.

Em. Ought not we to have got another, mamma? Why did we not get another?

Mrs. C. That would not have saved it, Emily. These beautiful creatures have within them the beautiful instinct of constancy, and are faithful in life and in death. Don't cry so, dearest. Come with me to the greenhouse, and Richard shall bury your poor favourite under the great myrtle. Did you never hear the old Italian story of the Pot of Basil? I'll read it to you this evening. And we'll bury your poor faithful bird; and your brother Henry shall write its epitaph. Think how he'll celebrate the tender bird that died of love and grief! Your dove will be as famous as that of Anacreon. Come, my own Emily, dry your eyes, and come with me to the greenhouse. [Exit.

SCENE THE THIRD.—*An Hotel in Plymouth.*

HARCOURT and CORBYN, meeting.

Corbyn. Ha! Tom! how d'ye do? I'm glad to see thee, faith! I did not think to be so glad to-day; for poor Fanny and the little ones are just gone—and parting—I won't talk of it—Oh, it's a terrible tug to the heartstrings, and makes a man's throat feel as if he was choking. But I won't talk of it. How has the world gone with you?

Harcourt. Passably.

Cor. I'm almost as glad to see thee as if poor Fanny—but we won't talk of that now. Where have you been these two years? I have not set eyes on you since the poor old Zenobia was paid off, and we were turned adrift on the wide world. What quarter of the globe have you been in?

Har. Cruising about France and Italy. Civil people, Jack, and a fine climate; but nothing like old friends and old England. The women, to be sure, are handsome and tight rigged.

Cor. Handsome! Zounds, you have never seen my Fanny! If you had only come an hour sooner—and yet her dear eyes were swelled out of her head with crying—you'd not have seen half her beauty.

Har. I'd have given a quarter's pay, Jack, to have seen the wife of your heart, beautiful or not.

Cor. Would you? You are just the good

fellow you always were. Many a time Fanny and I have talked of Tom Harcourt; of the pranks we played together when we were Mids on board the Ardent—we were sad wicked young dogs, Tom; of the drubbing we gave the Yankees in the dear old Zenobia, and of your good nursing when the splinter wounded my leg—no woman could have nursed me more tenderly—not even her dear self. Many a time has Fanny laughed and cried at the name of Tom Harcourt. Poor Fanny! I won't talk of her any more—only somehow I can't help it.

Har. I like to hear of her. Where did you first meet?

Cor. At Harry Morris's. You remember Harry Morris? I went to spend a month with him as soon as I came ashore, just, as he said, to recover my land legs; and there was Fanny on a visit to Mrs. Morris. I fell in love with her the moment I saw her sweet face, not altogether on account of its prettiness, pretty as she is, but because she seemed so good and so merry, such a kind, innocent, laughing creature. Before the end of the week I had popped the question, and before the month was out we were married.

Har. And her friends, did they consent?

Cor. Why, there was a little difficulty. Her parents were dead, and her uncle, Sir Charles, (for she's a baronet's niece,) talked of the offers she had refused, and the offers she might still expect, and lectured, and quarrelled, and threatened never to see her again. But Fanny was of age, and stood firm. And now the old gentleman is quite reconciled. We had neither of us much money; but her little joined to my little, and the hope of a war, and her good management, kept all things comfortable. God bless her! Oh, if you could but have seen us in our little cottage in the midst of the Devonshire hills—such a nest! Can't you run over and see her? The walls all covered with roses, and passion flowers, and jessamine; all within so neat and bright; then the little ones—two such cherubs! and the mother an angel. Oh, she has made my home a paradise, Harcourt! Do go and see her. I wish I could go with you; but I can't, for I am under orders.

Har. So am I.

Cor. What ship?

Har. The Alfred.

Cor. The Alfred, Captain Hanley?

Har. The same.

Cor. Well, that is a comfort! That is a blessing! To think of our sailing together again!—Give me your hand, Tom. The man

I love best in the world! To think of our meeting in the same ship!

Har. I am as glad of it, Jack, as you can be for your life.

Cor. I'll write and tell Fanny directly.— Shake hands again, Tom— I'll write to her instantly.

Har. And tell her that we'll talk of her every day, and drink her health every evening.

Cor. You're the best fellow on earth, Tom. To think of our meeting! [Exeunt.]

The two debuts had given a great interest to this charade, and had even kept Mrs. Wilkins attentive, and Mr. Wilkins awake. Nothing could be more different than the success of the two new performers. Mr. Mortimer had astonished every body with his cookery and his broken English, and was admitted

on all hands to be one of the best comic actors ever seen in any theatre: it was the very perfection of quiet humour, without a touch of caricature; and, as Tom observed, his happening to be a rich man and a gentleman, must be considered as a public loss.

Annie, on the other hand, had been delightfully bad, laughing where she ought to have cried, and putting her sister out by her blunders. Sophy forgave her, on condition of her not repeating her performance; and her father inquired of Mr. Mortimer, whether their scene had not reminded him of the extempore play in Shirley's Bird in a Cage? To which Mr. Mortimer replied, that it had; adding, with a gallantry as unexpected as his good acting had been, that the part in question was by far the most charming of Shirley's charming old comedy.*

THE HUNGARIAN MAIDEN AND THE TAVERNICUS.†

BY MRS. GORE.

CHAPTER I.

Alas! there's far from coats of frieze
To silk and satin gowns, —
But I doubt if God made like degrees
'Twixt courtly hearts and clowns.

Hood.

"It does not matter a *kreuzer*, I tell you Johann Blaschky," said the worthy host of the *Blaué Igel*, the chief inn of the little village of Dorogh;—wiping as he spoke, with his apron, the waxed cloth cover of the table, and seating himself opposite to his taciturn friend and neighbour. "Verily it doth little good to discuss the business, — troop I will, and troop I must. Four thousand florins, — four thousand! Heard ever man of such a demand between Christian and Christian? Four thousand florins!" and he indignantly shoved aside the pitcher of wine which old Johann had insinuated towards him; and looked into the countenance of his friend for some token of sympathy to encourage him in his Jeremiad.

Johann Blaschky thus apostrophized, put forth as vehement a bodily exertion as his undemonstrative nature would permit. He

puckered up his yellow-morocco cheeks, and then distending them to enforce a more than usually voluminous puff of smoke, gently removed his pipe from the left corner of his mouth to the right!

Mine host of the Blue Hedgehog, who, like other persons apt to wax prosy in personal details, had little need of whip or spur on his favourite course, was satisfied with this evidence of interest, and resumed his oration.

"Time was, Johann, — and a good time too, — that when the reverend Chapter of Gran thought fit to raise the rent over an old tenant's head, they would speak of a score or so of florins; and if, in an extreme case, a cool hundred were in question, every tongue in the Comitatus was set a-wagging against priestly extortion. But now that my masters the Canons must amble on a pacing nag, and cut their bands from the most delicate Bohemian cambric, like a lady of the land, — thousands, neighbour Blaschky, — nothing less than thousands will serve their turn! Here am I, now, who have toiled early and late these six-and-thirty years past, for the interests of this good hostel of the Blue Hedgehog, — I, who kept my wed-

* Miss Mitford leaves her young readers to guess the solution of this charade.

† The Tavernicus, or President of the *Sedes Taverniculis*, is one of the chief officers of the Hungarian treasury; and possesses considerable ministerial influence.

ding cheer in this same *speise-saal*,*—I, who have seen my children born within these walls,—who know every beam and joist, nay, every nail of the old house, as if they were a part of my bodily substance,—here am I, about to be driven forth in my old age by the avarice and rapaciousness of the Chapter of Gran! Well do I remember that fifteen hundred florins covered the annual rent-fee, when my poor wife first brought the inn into repute by her hand at flavouring *schnitzel*; and as soon as our industry had set it going—two thousand florins was the cry,—nothing under two. And after a dozen years had enlarged our family and straitened our means,—my Reverend Lords, hearing that the red wine was not spared in old Matthias's *speise-saal*, and that scarce a traveller of mark but tarried at Dorogh to prove the texture of his home-spun sheets, came peering hither with their cunning eyes and smooth courtesies, under pretence of bettering the stabling, and suiting the premises to my enlarged scale of business. And what was the result, neighbour, of this flight of ravenous ill-omened birds settling upon my roof-tree?"

* Blaschky growled interrogatively.

"Why truly they found that their much-respected servant Matthias, was called upon to increase the revenues of the church out of his manifold profits, by paying three thousand florins for the rent of the Blue Hedgehog!"—

Johann, whose pipe, maugre his dilatory husbanding, was now exhausted, took the opportunity of edging in a comment.

"I thought, Matthias, I had heard your late house-dame, of blessed memory, relate that the Chapter of Gran had just completed the new out-buildings of the farm, when they made their last demand?"

"Tut, tut! Blaschky, mere woman's gossip! A paltry hen-roost or so, they might have added; a sty or a goose-pen perhaps,—nothing more! And even if it were so, what stone have they now laid, or what plank have they added, to justify their present demands? By righteous St. Stephen! who at the judgment-day will disown the pampered clergy of his kingdom, I do verily believe, friend Blaschky, that were I to accede to-day to the demands of the Chapter, the Canons would come ambling back at Candemas, and doffing their three-cornered hats to old Matthias, their '*lieber freund*,'

bid him add another yearly thousand to the sum of their exactions. Heaven guard us from the priesthood; and the priesthood from ungodly coveting of other men's goods, say I!—Four thousand florins!"—

"Master Matthias!" screamed a thin, gritty voice from the other end of the *speise-saal*, "I pray of you to restrain these indecent revilings in company where they are not acceptable. It were unbecoming in the master sexton of Dorogh to hear uncourteous terms heaped upon a profession of which he claims to be a collateral member.—Soh!"

"Sexton Pál!" replied Matthias in a still louder voice than before, and waving his head aside through the circling smoke of the eternally-reeking *speise-saal*, to discover the person of the animalcule by whose shrill tones he was incensed,—“be pleased to note that this chamber is,—with submission to the chapter,—at present my own; and I do not consider your nightly *seitel* of mead a fair purchase of my honest thought and free speech. Wherefore if my argument, man, pleasure you not, take your professional self out of the Blue Hedgehog at once and for all. For I would say it again, Master Sexton, ay! if the Primas himself stood behind your stool to back such peevish opposition, that the clergy of Hungary are noted to be covetous, oppressive, partial——”

"My good friend," interrupted Johann in a tone of remonstrance.

"My dear father!" whispered a still more persuasive voice, "do not let the Chapter of Gran, or even Master Pál's officious interference, provoke you to speak irreverently of our good, our venerated Primas! Who so sensible of his humble piety, of his heartfelt fatherliness as yourself? Who loves him better, or reverences him more truly? Nay! dear father, speak not harshly of our beloved Primas."

"I was wrong child, and you are right thus to stop my prating. And now thou art here, Suzsi, tarry and see the guests served, and the cellar-door watched, while I oversee the stabling of the kine. Franzl is not yet returned from Gran. The boy is loitering away an idle hour in the town, leaving me to shift trenchers in his room. But look thou to his business, girl; and I will finish mine in the farm, while yonder buzzing, strutting, meddling mend-all, is finishing his meagre cheer. My house is poisoned while he breathes within it!"

Suzsi nodded obedience; and while old Matthias hobbled out of the *saal*, she turned

* The common eating-room of an inn.

towards the buffet, and with a diligent hand began to polish the ancient spoons and cumbersome forks which Franzl's absence had surrendered to her care.

Suzsi, the heiress of the Blue Hedgehog, was one of the fairest, gentlest, and most popular damsels in the county of Gran. The trimness of her well-turned figure derived a coquettish airiness from the dark Hungarian jacket, jingling with silver buttons, which was closely fitted to her slender waist; and her glossy hair was braided with a nicety and elegance, which accounted for the absence of the knotted kerchief that ought to have completed her costume. Franzl, indeed, had told her that those glistening locks must not be covered; and from Franzl's fiat there was no appeal. It is true he sometimes expressed a directly contrary opinion. But it was only when some young and handsome *herrschaft* descended from his *britschka* under the arcade of the Blue Hedgehog. And on such occasions it was useless to note or heed the fanciful suggestions of his suffering spirit; for Franzl, although a favoured and accepted lover, was, like the Moor of Shakspeare, "perplexed in the extreme" by the workings of his jealous temper.

That he should venture to indulge in so aristocratic a passion, was the more remarkable, as his station was that of a mere hiring, a waiter to old Matthias. While the lady of his love united in her proper person the pretensions of a beauty and an heiress,—the heiress, not presumptive but apparent, to all the ancient, most domestic furniture of the *Blaue Igelische Gasthof*, as well as to several of the most reputed vineyards on the mountain of St. Matthew, the best growth of the celebrated red wine of Buda.

The thrice padlocked cellar of old Matthias's vineyard, was moreover said to conceal within its bank of sand certain weighty barrels, more strongly staved than any destined for vintage-service; such, in short, as are hourly rolled into the Rothschilds' treasury. Whether, however, the contents were hard *thalers*, or doubloons, or even ducats, these concealed fruits of his early industry made no difference in his views of the rights of the Gran Chapter. He had sworn never to pay an increased rent for his inn; and neither excommunication, nor confiscation, nor any other *ation*, would have induced him to break his vow. —

"An oath,—an oath; he had an oath in Heaven!"

But in fairly acknowledging that worldly self occupied no small share of the sturdy

Matthias's considerations, how shall we account for the cordial sanction he had bestowed on Frank Westermann's courtship of pretty little Suzsi?

The fact was, that he cherished a passion strong enough to overpower even the love of gold; and that, in reiterating Shylock's cry of "my daughter,—my ducats," the emphasis still lay upon "*my daughter!*" Suzsi was the sole survivor of a large family, which had not brought into the world sufficient strength of constitution to bear up against the feverish temperature of a double-casemented, double-stoved, and triply-populated Hungarian *speise-saal*. — Like other forced plants, they had withered before they reached maturity; and the stock of paternal affection which Matthias had laid in for the benefit of eleven, was condensed and appropriated, with all his other belongings, to his only remaining child. He literally doated upon Suzsi; whose kind heart, gentle bearing, and lovely person, more than justified the excess of his partiality.

Now it happened that the dangers and molestations which beset the female department of *gasthofic* life, had never become apparent to old Matthias until the fair flower of his blighted garden had budded into maturity. His wife,—Heaven rest that housewifely soul, whose departure had given rest to all hereunto belonging!—was at once the most notable and least attractive dame in the parish; and even had the charms of her face, which was "bearded like a pard," attracted the assiduities of Matthias's wine-bibbing, and therefore not clear-sighted customers, she had a tongue withal which might have put a regiment of bombardiers to flight; and being perpetual president of the culinary council, she was usually armed with a brass ladle, as murderous an engine as a Slowak battle-axe.

Mine host of the *Igel*, therefore, had lived secure from all apprehensions of conjugal weakness; and it was not till Suzsi's graceful head had risen above the reach of his benedictory touch, that he had been disturbed by the certainty that she would see more, and be more seen among the roisterers of the *speise-saal*, than his paternal anxieties could endure to think of.

Now there is no European country where matron fame is less carefully guarded than in Hungary; and none where the spotlessness of maiden reputation is more sacredly valued. Matthias was therefore both nationally and affectionately concerned in the

maintenance of poor Suzsi's character; and the charge became in the end so painful to his anxious feelings, that, when he discovered his handsome and intelligent and spirited *kellermeister*, Franzl Westermann, to have won his daughter's affections by an unqualified surrender of his own, the old man felt perfectly satisfied to resign his treasure to the keeping of a more vigilant eye, and to the defence of a more powerful arm. He only required that their union should be deferred for six months, that the question of the Chapter's exorbitant demands might be previously decided.

All that either of the lovers could do to expedite the termination of the affair, had hitherto proved unavailing. The landlords were firm in uncompromising power; the obstinate tenant remained equally steady in his determination to quit; and on the day in question, Franzl had obtained his master's permission to visit the neighbouring town of Gran, that he might bring back the definitive reply of the reverend Canons, to the tender he was commissioned to make in his master's name, for a renewal of the lease.

"I wish," observed Suzsi, who had now occupied herself for some minutes in polishing the ponderous plate of the Blue Hedgehog, "I truly wish, Master Johann, that you would do your utmost towards persuading my father to accede to the proposals of the Chapter."

"How can he do that which would sear his conscience?" shrieked the little sexton, who had remained unobserved in his remote corner. "Are we not all aware that the tenant who gives four thousand florins rent for the Blue Hedgehog, must toil and sweat, waste and want, and still lose by his bargain? The steam-boats on the Danube have wrested the wheels off fifty pack-wagons that used to pass along the road, from Buda into Austria. Dorogh is not what it was; and the promised railway will still further diminish the traffic of the village; and who, I pray you, would give four thousand florins for an inn with failing custom? — Soh!"

"I thought you had gone forth, Sexton Pál," answered Suzsi with some show of dislike, "or I should not have consulted my old friend and godfather here, on our family affairs."

Ur Pál, not a whit abashed by the rebuke, continued his oration. "And even what your father has amassed by his inn,

Suzsi, he must have lost by his vineyards. Verily he is an obstinate soul! I have never been able to persuade him to follow my experience in their cultivation; and while all his neighbours are blessed with overflowing vintages, which have rendered *Nesmühler* wine as plentiful as Danube water, *his* only have been scanty these three years past. *Nicht wahr, liebes kind?* So that Matthias, already a falling man, would be utterly ruined by remaining in this inn at an advanced rent.—Soh!"

"Do not *liebes kind* me, Master Paul! I am a plain Hungarian girl, and wish to have as little connexion as possible with your half-Austrian blood, and whole-Austrian treachery. We are not ignorant that your brother is bidding against us; and that he has boasted of being able to possess himself both of the *Igel* inn and of Suzsi's hand, at his will and fancy. Now take notice that I defy him in both instances. Cunning never prospers."

Pál stretched his hand upwards to the peg on which his greasy sheep-skin capote was suspended. But touched by the remembrance that a premature return home would cause the expenditure of half a fagot and an inch of rushlight, he swallowed his indignation and his last mouthful of mead at the same time, and sat down again.

Suzsi, despairing of his removal, now approached the table where old Blaschky was luxuriating over his thin potatoes; and leaning on the back of the chair her father had deserted, recommenced her appeal to his friend.

"You may perceive how sore my father is becoming on the subject of the Chapter. But it is not when he is irritated, and speaks as he did to-night, that I am grieved for him, neighbour Johann. It is when I hear him moaning and lamenting the livelong night; and can even distinguish through the boarded partition, that he calls on my poor mother's name, and those of my brothers and sisters; telling them that he shall be driven forth in his old age to bide in a strange home, far from the grave-yard of Dorogh!—Then, what can I do but weep in my turn, and feel that I would give up every thing to induce him to comply with the terms of their reverences; or, dismissing all his cares, settle at once in the town of Buda, within sight of his own vineyards——"

"While thou, Suzsi, with Franzl for thy helpmeet, would take his place at the *Blauwe Igel?*" observed her godfather, reproachfully.

"Heaven forgive you for the thought," exclaimed Suzsi, blushing with indignation. "Well might you know, — *you*, friend Blaschky, who have watched me from my baby-days, — that if the Palatine would make me a court lady, to flaunt in brocade at the palace, I would not leave my father alone in his grayheaded years. And why do I wish him to remain here, rather than retire to the city, but that Franzl with his book learning, and civil speech, and ready welcome to the gentry who frequent the inn, can do him better service than as a vintager; in which capacity, all his scholarship would not render him stronger or more active than a common Slovak labourer."

"So—so!" interrupted Blaschky, striving to deprecate her wrath, "I believe thee, girl, — I believe thee."

"Leave my father!" continued poor Suzsi, almost in tears; "leave my dear kind old father? — No! not for the mines of Lipto! Not to be queen over Hungary!"

"Well spoken, and bravely felt," said a strange voice from beside the stove. And Johann and Suzsi, looking towards the spot, perceived that during their discourse, a stranger had entered the *saal*; a tall, well-looking young man in a somewhat rusty riding cloak and cap.

"What is the *gnädiger Herr's* pleasure?" said Suzsi, recovering the civil tone of her vocation, and going towards him. "Will you eat, — or do you choose a bed?"

"Eat? ay, like a cormorant, and sleep afterwards like a marmot! — I have ridden all day over your detestable roads, till every aching joint cries shame on the *comitatus*. Pray, does it ever occur to the worthy inhabitants of Dorogh, that the masses of rock they scatter on the surface of a ploughed field, and dignify by the name of road, may break the neck of some unlucky traveller?"

Blaschky, whose Indian-rubber feelings were seldom overstretched except by a reproach against Hungarians in general, or Doroghians in particular, fixed his glassy, projecting, hare-like eyes upon the stranger, and twisted the limb which served him for a nose into a gigantic expression of contempt, as he replied — "The worthy inhabitants of Dorogh have little occasion to serve the whims and fancies of vagrants and strollers, whose incomings and outgoings are equally indifferent to them. We fare well, live happily, and under an indulgent lord, even the Primate of Hungary; and the crosier is an

easy sceptre!* Our corn-fields and maize-grounds give us bread, young sir, our hill-sides wine. What more we require, the Danube brings at our bidding. And why, I pray you, should we mend our roads that the vile Austrians may be tempted to pour like locusts on our land, and waste its substance?"

"You say truly—descendant of the Vandals! — But would not better roads enable you to convey your magnificent cattle, and the produce of your corn-fields and wine-gardens to a better market?"

"Your Emperor," answered Johann doggedly, for he had petulantly settled the stranger to be an Austrian, "takes care that his Hungarian subjects shall profit as little as possible by the fatness which God has poured upon their land. Look to the exportation duties, the *dreysigstgefälle*. Look to the tax which our wine, our herds, our meal, must pay for the privilege of being devoured in Vienna! You will see that better roads form not the one thing wanting to extend our commerce. Bavaria may thrust her superfluities into the Austrian dominions, and be thanked for her pains. But poor Hungary may close the door of her overloaded granaries, — or make stove-wood of her wine-presses.—*Their* produce is rejected by her oppressors.—Mend the roads, quotha! — mend the Emperor's councils! What! shall the poor Hungarian peasant be summoned from a distant home, with his wallet on his back and his maize-pouch at his waist, to crush the stones of the earth with hammer and mallet, in order that the magnats who prey on his substance may be borne more smoothly from one idling-place to another? — No! young sir, — no such German fashions for Hungary!"

"You have not chosen your *vesper brod*, *gnädiger Herr*?" said little Suzsi, anxious to terminate this warm debate.

"My choice depends on yours, *mädchen*! But I conclude you will arrange my supper on the usual Hungarian terms,—veal soup, veal *schnitzel*, roast veal, stewed veal, boiled veal, fried veal —"

"We will do our best," said Suzsi, patiently, for she perceived she had to deal with an uneasy customer. "But perhaps you will prefer a fagot taken to your sleeping-room that you may sup there?"

"By no means! The society of this excellent old gentleman decides me to remain

* German proverb: "*Man lebt gut unter dem Krummstab.*"

where I am." And without further delay, or any encouragement from old Blaschky, he drew a chair, and established himself at the same table, while Suzsi proceeded to the kitchen to superintend his supper. She had scarcely established herself among the bright kettles, and steaming tripods, when her father, who had been busied with the stranger's horse, entered the *saal*, in time to establish peace between the belligerent parties.

"A good night and once more welcome to you, fair sir," said he to his guest, on entering, without noticing Blaschky's lowering countenance. "You are, I presume, a stranger in this country,—umh?—Perhaps from the Empire—umh?—Towards Turkey, probably—umh?—The cabinet couriers have been somewhat slack of late: are you charged with despatches to the *Pforte*—u-m-p-h?"

The young stranger, thus pertinaciously interrogated, replied,—not indeed by Dr. Franklin's celebrated preliminary announcement to his Yankee questioners,—but by the final member of the sentence,—“Bring me a boot-jack!”

Matthias, unused to the imperative mood even from the lips of his customers, instead of obeying the command, approached the tallow-candle which burned in rank exuberance upon the table before him, and, plunging his fingers into the grease, began to apply it liberally to his long tawny mustachios; pointing and shaping them as it seemed him good, without further notice of the stranger.

“On my honour, you are a complaisant old gentleman!” observed the young man, more diverted than displeased. “But since my request does not seem to meet your approbation, will you, having ended your toilet's greasy task, condescend to bring me a flask of your very best wine, and a roll; lest I should famish while the calf is slaying for my supper.”

Matthias departed readily on a profitable errand, and returned with more expedition than might have been expected, bearing a bottle of his favourite Ofener vintage, bright as a ruby, and soft as *mandel-milch*.*

“You have brought but one goblet, old Trojan! I shall require three.”

“Three!”—retorted Matthias, looking earnestly at the traveller to ascertain whether any Cerberian attributes announced him, like Mrs. Malaprop's definition, to be “three gentlemen in one;” when, perceiving that the

very handsome head upon his shoulders was a solitary one, he naturally concluded that the two bright glasses he now placed on the table were destined for his own use and that of Master Johann.

The young stranger filled them to the brim, then rose from his seat as he exclaimed, “Pledge me, friends, in a toast dear to us all. ‘HUNGARIA! our native land! and may she learn to know her friends from her enemies!’” Having waved his glass, and drained its contents, he dashed it against an opposite wall. “Let it never be filled to a less noble cause!” said he, in reply to the inquiring looks of the elders, who, having deliberately finished their own, replaced them quietly upon the table.

Blaschky nodded to the *wirth*, as much as to say, “You have a pretty innmate to deal withal; a precious scatter-brains!” Then, turning to the stranger, he observed aloud, “So then, after all your railing at our customs and abuse of our rough roads, you are yourself an Hungarian?”—

“To the heart's core!” replied the young man, warmly; “and I said that myself, which, had a stranger uttered, he should have swallowed the words again at the point of my sword.”

The withered elders smiled in gracious approval. For there is no exaltation of spirit, no degree of wild enthusiasm, nay, even no disgraceful excess, which an Hungarian does not consider justifiable in the cause of national pride. “But although my birthplace may excuse my vaunt,” continued the stranger, “I will frankly acknowledge that Hungary is at present as little known to me as China or Mexico.”

“We will fill another cup to your better acquaintance!” said Matthias; and the proposal was accepted by the other two with hearty good-will.

“In spite of your friendly wishes,” observed the young man, “methinks I am little likely to reach the heart of my unknown mother, if all the avenues prove as stony and repellent as that I have passed to-day. In Heaven's name, what can induce the *comitat* to abandon these shameful tracks from year to year, though the established commerce of centuries should have secured a royal road from Buda to Vienna.”

“We are poor, sir,—sadly poor!”

“Poor!—with every richest gift of a bountiful Providence scattered over your lands!—Is not the earth beneath your feet teeming with mines? Have not the gold, silver, opals, and diamonds of Hungary, procured

* Almond milk.

her the name of the Peru of Europe? Have you not the best vineyards, the richest marble, the finest race of cattle in the world? Your very lands would task you with trifling toil, to pour forth their fruits twice in the year; and there are districts lying waste, yielding only the thistle, and feeding but the marmot and the lizard, which might victual an army."

"We do not complain of the country, young gentleman.—There lies not a finer under the light of the sun. But it is with its masters and ours, with the nobles and their Emperor, that we have an account to settle. Were our harvests to be reaped *thrice* in the year, they were insufficient to balance our heavy taxation; while the nobles,—the moths that fret our garments, the idle drones that fatten on our undoing,—contribute not one thousandth fraction of a *kreuzer* towards the imperial revenue. There was a time when the Bohemian merchants, or the speculators from Fiume and Trieste, poured annually into our vineyards to compete for their produce. Who will come, now that a quadrupled duty will diminish their profits? or what will render back to our deteriorated cattle the strength and sleekness they have lost for want of salt?—But a new day is dawning! We have friends in the Diet now sitting at Pesth, who will see our wrongs redressed; or no more supplies for the Austrian troops!"

"Ay, ay!" interrupted Blaschky, "the Emperor kept us forty years without a Diet to regulate our laws, and control our controllers. And now he has once opened the sitting, let him close it when he can."

"Let him put a dam in the Danube!" retorted Matthias. "I have nothing worse to say of the Emperor than that I wish his public faith were as good as his private word, or that it were *his* word at all which governed our destinies. Had all his edicts been as just and favourable to our interests as his choice of our new *Tavernicus*, we should have less reason to grumble."

"Verily, yea!" said the double-edged voice of the Sexton, roused by the energy of the disputants from a refreshing dose.—"The frogs have gotten the king they sought from Jupiter, and let them make the most of their wooden idol. They have imposed upon their sovereign a man who wants only courage to be a rebel, and years to be a traitor. Ragótski began but as Count Er—"

"Now hold thy scandalous breath, thou imp of evil!" said old Matthias, seizing the Sexton's collar, and expelling him from the

room, "for thou shalt not raise thy voice here against the hope of our times. The *Tavernicus* is young, and as they tell in the country, wild and wayward. But he has the blood of our best and bravest in his veins, and bids fair to do it honour; and we owe the Emperor a dutiful and thankful word for putting him in authority over us."

"At least," observed the young man, "let us not hope to settle, in an hour, those subjects of dispute, and redress those grievances which the Diet finds it difficult to conclude in twice as many years.—But you speak of poverty, my worthy host, where no evidence of its existence appears?"—

"We suffered much during the war."

"I thought the French army penetrated no further than Comorn?" *

"That indeed—and why?" said Matthias. "The old fortress kept them away. 'Come again to-morrow,' quoth she, 'for ye shall not take me to-day. *Come to-morrow!*'—But they did not accept the challenge."

"You speak of the French army, young man," said Blaschky; "we of the Austrians, who, for our curse, were quartered two years on our land. *Who* spoiled our vineyards, robbed our cellars, insulted us, harassed us, pillaged us?—The Austrians—the Austrians—the Austrians!"

"Ay!" shouted old Matthias, warming with energy, till the grease distilled from his mustachio tips,— "and had we not our own people pouring in upon us at all hours, from all quarters,—from Hochstrass,—from Raab,—fugitives before the French? In this very chamber, sir, slept one hundred and thirty-officers for weeks together. My house was peopled, from the cellar to the pigeon-loft: all craving, all eating, drinking, swearing, smoking,—every thing but paying! My poor wife melted away before the kitchen fire, which was heaped and heaped through day and night alike. But where was the pleasure of spicing broths for those who gave not even thanks in return?"

"Why, truly," quoth Blaschky, "our poor countrymen who wandered in, with their household goods strapped to their backs, had some claims on us; and the distant roar of the cannon besieging Comorn, spoke home to our hearts.—Bome! bome!—I think I hear them now, overcoming the murmurs of discontent which then filled this very *speise-saal!* But what had the Austrians to

* Comorn, the strongest fortress of Hungary, derives its name from a corruption of the German, *Com'morgen*, come to-morrow.

look for at our hand, that *they* should claim free quarters, break our bread, and drain our cup, without fee or payment?—The pillagers! they came not to fight for the Hungarians, but to defend their master's kingdom.”—

“Or supposing,” added Matthias, “that the French *had* prevailed—what then? Theirs had been the gentler tyranny. Napoleon threatened us with no greater evils than an amended constitution, and a native and resident sovereign.”

“He tendered the crown to Esterhazy!” said Blaschky, respectfully raising his cap in honour of the name held dearest in Hungary; “and truly his highness considered his allegiance to the Emperor far before the interests of his native country, when he refused it. Would to Heaven he had thought otherwise!”—

“But surely the Austrians did not proceed to acts of violence among their defenceless fellow-subjects?”

“I tell you, *Herr*, I dared not remove my wine into the capital of Gran, lest I should be waylaid and plundered by the white coats!”—

“Supper is served,” said little Suzsi's silver voice, anxious to terminate this stormy discussion. “*Ich wünsche Sie einen guten appetit zu speisen!*” followed, of course, as a salutation from all present, as the traveller seated himself beside a table more daintily spread than might have been expected. The tureen smoked auspiciously. A dish of the limbs of fowls delicately crumbed and fried, was flavoured with lemon juice and the bright red native *paprika*, or powdered capsicum, which forms an excellent substitute for the coarse pepper used in the empire. The bread was fresh and light,—an important point to those accustomed to the heavy yellow loaves full of aniseed, and glazed with glue, which prevail in the Austrian states.* Above all, a well-cobwebbed bottle of Matthias's *supernaculum* stood beside the pile of plates.

The stranger had scarcely seated himself to his repast, when a band of *zigeuner*, who were passing through the village, having noticed the lights still burning in the *saal*, entered without further invitation, and established themselves in the background, for the performance of one of their singular concerts. A dulcimer, two violins, a monochord and a bass, were the instruments employed,—all of

their own manufacture; and without knowledge of counterpoint, or of music as a science, they contrived to maintain a decent degree of harmony; each in turn improvisating a variation upon the motive sustained by the others, a beautiful and characteristic national melody.

At the conclusion of their concerted piece, old Matthias, who was vain of his daughter's talents and sweet voice, desired one of the violinists to repeat alone the accompaniment of the same air; which he called upon Suzsi to sing in her best manner, for the entertainment of his guest.

Unused to disobey, the young girl came forward without delay or affectation; and save that she held the corner of her plaited apron for support and countenance, without any remarkable show of timidity.

Her voice was sweet and touching; and, after breathing a prelude whose tripled notes closely resembled the call of a quail, she sang the following—

HYMN OF THE WACHTELSHLAG.

I.

What lowly voice repeats with plaintive wail,
Ama Deum,—ama Deum!
 So sings amid the corn the lowly quail,
Ama Deum,—ama Deum!
 There, crouching in her loneliness,
 Her feeble accents humbly bless
 The Giver of the fields around.
 Oh! let me breathe the same soft sound,
Ama Deum,—ama Deum!

II.

List! as the evening sun sinks low and dim,
Ama Deum,—ama Deum!
 The patient quail renews her vesper hymn.
Ama Deum,—ama Deum!
 And while beside the turfen nest
 Wherein her callow fledglings rest.
 I nightly bend my wandering feet
 Let me her holy strain repeat—
Ama Deum,—ama Deum!

Suzsi who, in the interest of her song, had lost the coy shyness arising from singing it to a stranger, had dropt the protecting corner of her apron, while she sweetly repeated the triple notes, which were modulated so as to simulate the quail-call with remarkable exactness; and stood with her right hand extended, her head bent forward, with flushed cheeks and sparkling eyes, when Franzl, having concluded his diplomatic labours, entered the *saal!*

The first object that met his inquiring eyes, was the handsome young stranger leaning back negligently in his chair, his supper standing untouched before him on the table, and his eyes fixed, with no equivocal expression of admiration, upon those of the

* The bread in Hungary derives a mouldy taste from the pits in which the corn is deposited. In many places it is trodden out by oxen or horses.

heiress of the Blue Hedgehog! Poor Franzl felt an indescribable thrill dart through every vein at the sight; and, disdaining to hush the echo of his heavy footsteps in compliment to the singer, he stalked towards the table with the air of a Bajazet, twisting his mustachios with a demonstration of mental martyrdom that Kean might have envied.

The egotism of Matthias's heart warmed at the sight of his ambassador; and turning hastily from his guest, he demanded to know the issue of his negotiations. "I am ready to acquaint you with every circumstance when all this accursed noise and scraping is over," replied Franzl, peevishly, "and when the *fraulein* can spare time from her exertions to listen to so unimportant a communication."

"Silence—instantly—silence there!" bawled honest Matthias to the astonished musicians. "Drink a cup, friends, and begone. I must not have junketing and fiddling here in my *speise-saal*, and the Friday morning so near at hand."

The dulcimer player thus apostrophized, began patiently to strap up his instrument, while one of the younger musicians advanced with an extended cap towards the traveller; who was somewhat astonished at the peremptory manner in which, without reference to his inclinations, his diversion had been terminated. But having tossed a ducat into the gipsy's hat, he was recalled to himself by the amazement depicted on the countenance of the *zigeuner*.

"Yes!" said the stranger, affecting to interpret the look, "change,—certainly; a *zwanziger* for each of you, and bring me the rest in white money."

In the meanwhile, Franzl, his master, and his master's daughter, had retired to the end of the chamber, and were engaged in earnest discourse; of which their guest could gather nothing but the exclamations of the old man—"O, *weh—weh—weh!* Troop I will, and troop I must. O, *weh, weh!* So sorely shall I miss my old haunts! So sorely shall I yearn for my early home! But the blow is struck and the hour;—and I must forth!" while murmurs of regret and sympathy from his daughter filled up the pauses of his lamentation.

The traveller directed his attention, therefore, exclusively to his own wants; and as they had now journeyed through various courses towards the dessert, he sat emptying a case of Oedenbourg sweetmeats, and sipping a glass of *Tokayer*, till host or waiter, or

Suzsi herself, might be pleased to return to their attendance. "A cup of *schwarz*,* as hot as *paprika!*" he at length exclaimed in despair; directing his commands to Franzl, as an excuse for amusing himself with a deliberate survey of his person. The waiter could not but obey. 'Twas his vocation; but he "did his spiriting *un-gently*," and strode out of the room with an energy which made his spurs ring again. The stranger took this opportunity to note that if the handmaidens of the *Igel* were sprightly, and graceful, and sweetly-voiced, its waiter was nothing inferior in personal endowments. Franzl was indeed a splendid-looking creature, melo-dramatic and picturesque, and highly national in his appearance; and the traveller interpreted without much difficulty, the air of affected unconcern with which Suzsi's soft footsteps followed him out of the *saal*.

A minute afterwards, however, she returned, flushed and panting, with surprise and indignation in her countenance; and the young traveller concluded from the alteration of her manner, that Franzl was not only her lover, but jealous, and jealous probably of himself,—for old Blaschky had left the chamber at the first chord of the *zigeuner's* music.

Now even those who are most painfully aware that jealousy is one of the bitterest drops polluting the cup of human happiness, have little reluctance in assisting to poison the chalice of another. The jealous meet with no compassion. A privileged butt for the whips and scorns of the human kind,

"Sufferance is the badge of all their tribe!"

And thus, in pursuance of time-honoured custom, the malicious guest, who had till now remarked in Suzsi, only a cunning compounder of *schnitzel*, a pretty animated *grisette*, and a very obedient daughter, began to pay her certain little attentions, which were hellebore and arsenic to poor Franzl.

He spoke his commands respecting the adjustment of his chamber in a whisper hard to be endured; and begged her to sweeten the coffee she had set before him, in a tone of gallantry such as had rarely been breathed before in the *Igelische Gasthof*; and which would have alarmed old Matthias himself, had he not previously rushed into the village to breathe his tale of woes into his drowsy neighbour, Johann Blaschky's sympathetic ears. He returned, however,

* Black coffee.

to the *saal* just as Suzsi had taken the candle to light the stranger to his chamber; and, after a cordial "*schlafen sie wohl, gnädiger Herr,*" to the traveller, seized Franzl by the arm, and careless or unconscious of his resistance, insisted upon dragging him through every department of the farm, to exhibit the ability with which he had executed his delegated duties of the day; and renew in each his lamentations over the necessity of soon quitting them for ever!

Meanwhile Suzsi, with gracious good will, displayed to the strange guest her cares for his accommodation;—the snow-white and frilled sheet she had stretched over the hair-matress which formed his bed, and of which the black spikes shone lustroously through the linen;—while a ticking sack of loose feathers afforded the upper covering which replaces, in Hungarian economy, both quilt and blanket and eiderdown. Scarcely had she entered his chamber, when the young man threw aside his air of idle compliment, and looking upon her with the grave and friendly interest of a superior, exclaimed, "You have been weeping, *mädchen!* Who has offended you? What can have grieved so good a girl,—so dutiful a daughter?"

The tears that had been standing in poor Suzsi's eyes, poured down at this inquiry. But she answered not. When still more kindly urged by the stranger, she replied, "Alas! *Herr,* my poor father is about to leave the dwelling which he has looked on as his own these six-and-thirty years. The oath he has sworn, never to increase his rent-fee, binds him to his determination, and the Chapter of Gran have already formed theirs!—This very evening my father commanded me to prepare for our removal to Buda!"

"And is this all, my poor child? Why 'tis a mercy to thee, Suzsi! Compare the mud huts of the village, and the boors who dwell therein, with the stately mansions of the city, and their polished inhabitants! Compare the waste of sloughs and miry tracks round Dorogh, with the *Stadt-Waldchen* of Pesth, and the gay sports of the *Margariten Insel!*—Think of the merry meetings that will shorten thy long days,—the masked nights of the carnival that will prolong thy joyous nights,—and tell me not of thy desire to tarry in this desert."

"I pray you, gentle sir, speak not to me of these things," answered Suzsi, modestly,—“they belong not to my degree. I have been so happy here, so beloved, that

to leave Dorogh will grieve me no less than my poor father.—Will the stony ways of the city repay me in the summer-season for the fresh fields and springing flowers, and the acacia-trees which hang their blossoms over the thatched roofs of the village? The drums of the fortress will wake me on the Sabbath mornings, instead of the sweet sounds of promise which here reach us from the church that rises close beside our gate. My mother sleeps in the grave-yard,—*gnädiger Herr,* and my sisters and brothers lie fast by her side.—Who will keep their graves clear from weeds, and the turf freshened during the summer heats, when Suzsi is gone?"—And she hid her face with her hands at the thought.

"My poor child, will nothing avail to alter thy father's determination?"

"Alas! nothing."

"And that of the Chapter?"

"Still less."

"Methinks," continued the stranger, half-aside, "I might do something with the reverend confraternity—"

"*Gnädiger Herr!*" exclaimed Suzsi, throwing herself upon her knees, "I know not how I should address you,—for sure I am that I speak to one of the noblest in our land. Your generosity to the *zigeuner,*—your table choiceness,—your air;—noble sir! pray you, declare yourself to your poor servant!"

"Suzsi," said the young traveller, raising her from his feet, "I thought not, in entering your dwelling, to be tempted to throw aside my disguise. But the sentiments I have heard from your lips convince me that I may trust to your discretion. Know then that I am commissioned by his Imperial Majesty to bear his reply to the appeal of the Diet, now sitting at Pesth; and it is necessary that I should remain unknown, till I have prefaced my public duty by a private interview with the leading magnats. Therefore, pretty Suzsi, I exact your solemn promise that till my return towards Vienna,—a fortnight, or possibly a month hence,—you will betray no suspicion of my real condition. Remember,—I must still be treated as a traveller of low degree and scanty means."

"But I am still ignorant"—faltered Suzsi—

"Of my name and rank?—True!—Remember me then in your prayers as Alexis Er—, your Tavernicus of the Hungarian crown. Good-night, good girl—let my coffee and my horse be ready at day-break."

Suzsi kissed the hand extended towards her, but still lingered.

"I see you have not courage to give voice to your wishes,—and it were needless. Rest happy, Suzsi: I promise you that your father shall not leave the Blue Hedgehog unless by his own desire. Trust the affair to my management, and once more, good-night."

CHAPTER II.

Was ever woman in this humour wooed?

Richard the Third.

On the following day, many hours after their midnight guest had bestowed his parting salutations upon the blushing and conscious Suzsi, in presence of Matthias, and far worse, in presence of Matthias's secretary of state for the home department,—Franzl Westermann,—the travelling carriage and *suite* of Count Er—, the *Tavernicus*, passed through Dorogh.

As soon as the name of its patriotic and popular proprietor was borne into the high-place of the village upon the wings of rumour, or more plainly, upon "the most sweet breaths," of half a dozen withered mendicants, whose palsy, serpigo and rheum, had entitled them to a begging station at the gate of the post-house, a shout of acclamation was raised by the labourers who chanced at that moment to be enjoying their noontide suspension from toil. A thousand noisy "*Vivats!*" urged the pace of the stumbling horses along the wretched road leading to the *Post-haus*.

The *calèche* halted under the gateway, and the *post-meister* flew to make out a certificate for so honoured a traveller; and while the postilions slung on their tasselled horns, and burnished their mustachios, a crowd of villagers, the most national perhaps, or possibly the most needy and rapacious, gathered round the carriage, in hopes that its leathern curtains might unclose, and discover the object of their enthusiasm. To achieve so desirable an event, they had recourse to all possible modes of invocation,—to all manner of soothing appeals. "Long live your Excellency, the representative of a bold and fair race!—God prosper your Highness's endeavours for the cause of Hungary! Heaven retain your lordship in his majesty's councils! *Vivat Tavernicum!*" &c.

For some time, these and such acclamations rent the air, subsiding at intervals into a flattering murmur of applause. But the hoarse and weary throng, observing that

their efforts were crowned with indifferent success, united at length in a final yell of enthusiasm, which fairly roused the sole tenant of the *calèche* from his peaceful slumbers; and lo! the visage of the Count Alexis's Swiss valet, lank, rueful, and unshorn, protruded itself from the vehicle, with a "*Blait-il mes pons amis? Qu'est ce q'uil y a bour fo? serfice?*"

The discomfited patriots in shaggy sheep-skin mantles, shook their larded locks with indignation, and were half disposed to resent with fierceness their own misapprehension. They retreated, however, with hasty strides, from the scene of their mortification; while, as the carriages rolled on towards Buda, the upper house of Dorogh legislature,—consisting of Johann Blaschky, Pál the sexton, Onsky the post-master, and other worshipfuls of the village, who usually took their noon-day pipe under the linden trees that overspread the gateway of the latter, stared after the departing equipage with almost equal indignation. The order of the day,—the decision of the Gran Chapter and *déménagement* of Matthias and his family,—were hastily discussed, in order that the impatient oratory of the speakers might expend itself upon the inexplicable absence of the *Tavernicus*, and the mysterious jargon of the animal he had delegated to represent him on the journey.

Meantime, scenes of disastrous moment were passing in the adjoining *wirthshaus*. Matthias, who, like many of his betters, "took misfortune as an affront," and knew no distinction between the feelings of anger and sorrow, had scarcely waited the early departure of his guest to issue contradictory edicts and decrees innumerable, to the various members of his establishment. Intent upon exhibiting the earnestness of his resolution to depart, he seemed to consider, that since the thing was inevitable, "twere well it were done quickly;" and he therefore enforced, with unwonted peevishness and vociferation, the marshalling of his household. "Such marchings and countermarchings," such opening of presses, such rattling of crockery, had rarely tasked the ears or patience of his daughter. But it was neither her father's captiousness, nor the measure of her own labours, that brought the tears into Suzsi's eyes, and rendered her incapable of fulfilling her manifold duties with exactness.

In the course of her morning's toil, Franzl had not only forborne his usual proffers of assistance but when their respective occu-

pations brought them together, had averted his scowling brow, started from her touch as from that of the loathliest reptile, and finally looked upon her with an expression of contempt which could not fail to penetrate the innermost cells of a tender heart.

He had remained silent and unaccusing, it is true; but there was speech in his flashing eye more eloquent than verbal reviling,—there was an oratory in his curling lip, which words could not have rivalled! She resolved not to be grieved a second time by such a glance of disgust; and feeling ill-used, indignant, turned heroically away. But woman's affection is omnipotent; and, retracing her steps with tearful eyes and tremulous voice, Suzsi addressed her petulant lover.

"Franzl!" she began, "dearest Franzl!" but the words choked her, and, bursting into tears, she held out her hand in that pleading, humbled, deprecatory manner, which love only can suggest, and which an obdurate heart could alone repulse. That of Franzl Westermann was surely of the most adamant texture; for, instead of being touched by her sweet submission, he dashed away the pledge of peace with malignant violence, accompanying the action with a look and epithet still harder to be endured.

Suzsi's spirit was now roused in its turn. Dashing the tears from her flushed cheeks, she raised up her head like a flower after a storm; and, if she did not threaten "the angry boy" with a deep and unavailing repentance, she secretly assigned him as bitter a portion of remorse and penitence as her gentle mind could picture, before he might regain that love and that confidence, against which he had sinned so cruelly.

Poor Suzsi! She little knew that her power to punish had accompanied the gift of her whole heart; and that of all the slaves upon earth, the woman who loves with fondness and intensity is the most incapable of self-defence.

The evening came at length; and the disorganized family no longer gathered itself round the cheerful board in happy household union. Their accustomed guests feelingly forbore to break in upon old Matthias's first day of disturbance and mortification. For the first time during thirty years, Johann Blaschky filled and emptied a solitary evening bowl in his own homestead; and even Ur Pál was shamed into screening his selfish exultation from Suzsi's notice, at the expense of logs and a light in his lonely dwelling.

The night, too, came; and the young lovers parted without salutation or word of grace; they, who had been wont to indulge in the "sweet sorrow" of good-night, as tenderly as ever did that enchanting pair, whose love is of all ages and all nations. The morning dawned; and they met again, still silently, and still coldly. The renewal of toil seemed to be only a signal for the renewal of discord or estrangement; and their mutual dissatisfaction became as evident to others as it was to themselves.

How darkly comes the first grievous cloud of suspicion over the fair heaven of youthful love! With what profound disunion may a word, a look, an inference, sever the ties of confiding affection,—those sweet and holy bonds which, of all human impulses, appear the worthiest of immortality. The peevishness of an idle hour will overcome the remembrance of years of untiring patience and exclusive devotion; and like the son of Thetis, Love is doomed to perish by a puerile wound, however bravely he may have resisted fiercer attacks and a more heroic enemy.

Poor Suzsi was but the child of the landlord of a country inn. But so gently, so purely, had run the current of her young existence, so solely devoted was her kind heart to the duties of a tender daughter and Christian maiden, that her claims to commiseration are nowise inferior to those of a more classic or courtly heroine. The heart is of no degree; and neither the one nor the other could have been more sensible to the value of an honest man's affections, or have drooped with more heart-stricken affliction under the evil interpretation of a jealous lover. Hers was not a tearful sorrow; but it was deep, and tender, and overcoming.

Matthias, meanwhile, absorbed in selfish regrets, beheld in the mournful looks and unassured footsteps of his child, indications of decent sympathy in his personal troubles; or, at most, a natural expression of her grief at leaving the haunts of her childhood and the companions of her riper years. He dreamed not that there existed, at that moment, sorrows on the earth that had not their origin in the avarice of the Canons of Gran; and, even had his mind been enlightened, would have regarded the *brouillerie* of the irritated pair as singularly ill-timed and disrespectful towards himself. He was unsparing of complaints in his conversations with his daughter; who, bound to secrecy by the commands of the Tavernicus,

presumed not to soothe his affliction by that balm of hope which her confidence in Count Er—'s power and will to serve her imparted to her own feelings. She dared not even suspend or modify those preparations for departure which she fondly trusted would prove unnecessary.

The days went laggingly along. Her very existence appeared to have acquired a new character. She began to think that it might be endurable to abandon Dorogh and its green pastures, since Dorogh could wear so dull and joyless a seeming. The house was full of discordant noises, the air seemed to hang heavily upon her, when—

Like an unrighteous and unburied ghost,
She wander'd up and down those long arcades.

The paths of the village looked dusty and uninviting when her restless heart prompted her to wander forth ; and all the uses of this world seemed as flat and unprofitable to Suzsi, as they have done to every victim of discontent from the days of Hamlet until now. A thorn was in her heart. A struggling pain haunted her parched throat. The tears came quivering importunately over her eyes : and never more painfully than when striving to assume a tone of merriment with her father's guests, in the hope of disguising the secret anguish of her feelings.

If the wayward author of her affliction felt conscious of the change which every succeeding day wrought in poor Suzsi's hollow eyes and pale cheeks, —and, with a due allowance for the proverbial blindness of love, He must surely have done so,—he considered any degree of suffering she might endure to have been fairly earned ; and regarded her altered countenance with that intensity of gratified hatred which belongs to the alternation of the fondest passion. He remembered the pride he had taken in her distinguishing and lavish affection ; the fervour with which he had watched over her happiness ; the deep joy with which he had recognised the superior purity of her mind ; the hope, the trust, the ardour, with which he had anticipated his marriage hours : and shuddered as he contemplated his present frame of feeling. Alas ! the miser believed himself to be despoiled of the treasure of his secret hoard ! The fond confiding friend seemed greeted with ingratitude and betrayal, "there where he had garnered up his heart." Was not this an excuse for his knitted brows and compressed lips, and an apology for the bitter torment he was inflicting upon her who loved him, as woman only loves, with equal

pride and humility :—with humility, in regard to the object beloved ; with pride, in regard to the whole world beside ?

"And this," thought Suzsi, as one afternoon, escaping from the turmoil of her home, she took her solitary way up the hill-side towards her father's vineyards,— "this misery is all the fruit of a trifling concealment, of a single deviation from the ordinary frankness of my heart. Strange that I, who so utterly abhor deceit, —I, who would unbosom my own most secret thoughts to Franzl, should have been betrayed into participating in the mysteries of a stranger. Wo worth the night which tempted the noble Tavernicus to sojourn in our dwelling ! Better had it been for my father to quit his inn, —better that our worldly prospects should have been blighted, —better that aught should have arisen, than that Franzl should be abused with the thought of my unworthiness, and be tempted to treat me thus harshly. Till now, there existed not between us a single painful remembrance. There was not a cloud on the horizon of memory. And now !—" And having sat herself down on the stone steps of the vineyard, Suzsi sobbed bitterly.

It was the month of May, and the air came balmily through the swelling vine-sticks. The young shoots, of a pale downy green, were springing tenderly from the knotted stems of the vines, and gave a floating vapoury softness to the outline of the hills around, till a cloud appeared to hover over the vast surface of the vine-gardens. Here and there, interplanted at regular intervals among the vines, appeared rows of peach-trees, blushing with blossoms ; and cherries, with their leafless rods, completely hidden by flowers of a bridal whiteness. The birds were wheeling through the soft air, as though it were a joy to float upon its buoyant sweetness. The butterflies were fluttering among the vines, as if waiting the unfolding of their honeyed bloom. And the cuckoo, that "winged voice," was heard from among the maple trees, far in the valley below.

Suzsi was roused from her fit of despondency, as these and other sweet sounds of spring forced themselves upon her observation. It is so difficult to despair when Heaven's resplendent daylight is shining round us, and Nature's lovely promise bursting into reality beneath our eyes. The past, with its images of the lost, the dead, the estranged, is not with us then. It is the

future, the flattering future, bright with fitful dreams and fancies, which rules the hour. Despondency should hide its head in the dark stagnant dens of the city. The hill-side has a breeze which quickens the blood into action, and the fragrant fields a music of their own, which overpowers the ominous croak of its augury.

Impossible to despair when Nature's smile is reflected from the objects around us; and it could scarcely fall more brightly than under Suzsi's gaze, upon the rock on which the little fortress of Gran affected to frown in the distance, or upon the mountains which veil the course of the Danube beneath its walls. The whole landscape was unfolded before her, like a page of the choicest poetry.

The young Hungarian arose, cheered and comforted, from her deliberate perusal of its characters; and bent her way towards the brow of the hill, where a small votive chapel, one of the numerous structures which gratitude or suppliant piety have erected among the vineyards, lifted its humble head above the trim vines. A low bench stood before the grating, that the country maiden might lay down her burden, and breathe her simple prayers during her brief repose. There, daily, the aged labourer veils his bonnet as he passes; there the child suspends its play to lift up its guiltless hands; and many a supplication is uttered before its humble shrine, and many a self-reviling confession poured into those bright heavens spread over its roof, which mightier fanes and more hallowed altars could never have inspired.

Long did Suzsi kneel upon the springing grass before its gate; and patiently and sweetly did she smile when she rose from her orisons. But as she turned towards her homeward path, an unwelcome companion advanced to meet her: Ménesatz! the brother of Ur Pál the sexton; whom fame assigned as the future *wirth* of the *Blaue Igel*, and whom her conscious disgust had long taught her to look upon as a presuming and distasteful suitor.

Vexed at the untoward chance which brought him there at such an hour, Suzsi was well aware that the little manœuvres with which she usually parried his attacks, must prove unavailing in this lonely interview. She could not, in the still seclusion of the vineyards, affect blindness or deafness, as in her father's clamorous dwelling. All her innocent *manège* of village coquetry was at fault. Suzsi saw that it would be use-

less to gaze vacantly upon the dim distance, as if unconscious of the smiles that were bent upon her lovely face; or to hazard with affected unconcern, a casual observation, when words of pressing and fervent courtship were ringing in her ears.

"Well met, sweet one!" said Ménesatz, joining her side with assiduity. "It is becoming a rare sight even to look upon you, Suzsi,—much more to be indulged in the happiness of a solitary ramble by your side. You saw me advancing towards you when you prolonged your walk. Is it not true, *kintsásó*?—say so, and bless me with the confession."

"So little true," replied Suzsi, with indignation, "that had I dreamed of the possibility of meeting you, I would have—"

"Hush, hush!—words of course,—a fitting show of maidenly decorum. Trust me, I can appreciate the delicacy of your reserve. Well, Suzsi, it seems certain that your father will cede his post at the Hedgehog to some less worthy occupant?"

"To a worthier he could not."

"Umph! certainly—certainly. But it would appear, Suzsi, that the prospect of leaving old Dorogh is grievous to your feelings. You have lost all your fine bloom. Your eyes are even now red with weeping. But cheer up and look for brighter days, sweet Suzsi. Even should the Chapter of Gran decide on accepting my tender, you shall *never* remove from the home you love. Nay! turn not away; you cannot escape me. The occasion is a favourable one, and you shall hear all I have to say. You shall know that notwithstanding my brilliant prospects, notwithstanding the favour with which my friend and patron Count Széchényi forwards my views, I am resolved, Suzsi, without delay, to make you my wife. It is true, your village breeding will scarcely fit you to preside over such an establishment, or to do justice to such a style of business as I intend to set on foot in Dorogh. But still, under *my* instructions,—my former situation as *hofhausmeister* in the Count's family having of course qualified *me* for the charge,—I do not despair of forming you to better things."

"Master Ménesatz," replied Suzsi, indignant at the tone of superiority he had assumed, which so ill became a suitor, "I have still and ever prayed you to forbear such instances and declarations as these, seeing that they are altogether unwelcome and unavailing. When I leave Dorogh, it will be to share

my father's home, wheresoever it may be appointed."

"No, Suzsi, no! you will think better of it, I am persuaded. You will not refuse to bless a heart that loves you, to preside as mistress in the home you cherish, to live and die in the village wherein you were born; and this, too, for the sake of a beggarly waiter, who has nothing to endow you withal, but his poverty and irritable temper."

"Nothing!" replied Suzsi, in a voice of emotion. "*Nothing?*—Is an honest heart nothing? Is a brave, upright, generous mind nothing? Is it nothing to have gifted the poor with the hard-earned fruits of patient industry,—to have saved the life of an enemy at the peril of his own? Go—go!—those who rise by creeping, those who wax prosperous through cunning, and intrigue, and speculation, and the favour of the great, *are* nothing—less than nothing!—But my good, frank, generous Franzl may boast——"

"*Your* Franzl!" retorted Ménesatz, livid with suppressed fury, "*yours*, maiden? Those who are *one* in heart and troth rarely look upon each other as Franzl Westermann gazed upon yourself an hour ago, when together we noted your rambling footsteps from the valley yonder below."

"Franzl saw me then?"

"Ay! and saw *me* also depart on your track! I told him, archly enough, that the hill-top was a well chosen spot for love-whispers."

Suzsi wrung her hands. "And Franzl, what said he in reply?"

"He laughed aloud! But not, to my thinking, for any pleasant thought that tickled his mind, for his brow the while was dark as the Krapaks. 'No matter,' he said, 'tis no matter. Come one, come all. The wanton wind blows upon every one; shall a wanton woman be less free?' And so he bad me go and speed my wooing."

Suzsi shuddered as she listened! To be made a mock of,—her weakness, if such it were, to be noted even to a vain babbler like Ménesatz! It was too much for patience.

"Ay, Suzsi," continued the wily one, pursuing his advantage, "this it is to be subjected to starts of passion, and prompted by the suspicions of a fretful, jealous temper. A precious companion, in sooth, were Master Westermann, with his ghastly, scornful laugh, and angry, faltering voice, during the long days which make up the sum of

life! Well, an easy heart and a peaceful hearth for me! Harsh words never yet straightened a woman's crooked pathis; and a kind hand, and gentle speech may do much to lead the wanderer into a better track."

Suzsi felt that she had just then much need for the soothing of a kind hand, and gentle speech. But she said not a word.

"And your father, Suzsi, how would he brook to be thwarted in the weariness of his age, by a fractious, contradictory temper? To be bearded on his own hearthstone, by one who has taken hire at his hands? To behold his child,—the lamb of his flock,—harassed and evil-entreated by such a churl as Franzl is like to become? Then, if the world go but hardly for a season, if the vines should suffer from April hail, or the maize lack moisture to swell its sheaves, straight should we see Master Westermann with folded arms and leaden looks, bearing about his sullen despondency from hall to granary; spiting his customers, and rating his meek wife for the niggardliness of the skies. Give me a frank, easy heart, Suzsi, and a sanguine cheerful temper,—for blessed are they who inhabit therewith."

Suzsi was provoked to find in the insidious comments of her companion much that was unanswerably true. But she loved him not the better for proving that she had fixed her affections imprudently. Few women can endure to be put in the wrong. She had determined from the first, that she would not enter the village in friendly companionship with one whom she so little affected as Ménesatz; and as soon as they came in sight of the smoke curling above its budding acacias, paused abruptly to inquire which path it was his pleasure to take, in order that she might select another.

Ménesatz expostulated with her upon this ungracious declaration; enforcing his remonstrances by taking her resisting hand within his own, and setting forth, with more explicit detail, the splendours about to accredit his temporal prosperity, and his earnest hope and intention of sharing them with her beloved and lovely self.

"Master Ménesatz," replied Suzsi, withdrawing her hand from his pressure with more self-command than was implied by her tremulous voice, "I could not fail to compassionate such sentiments, were I not persuaded that their existence mainly depends upon the amount of the sparings of my father's industry; and I should blame *myself* for the

freedom of your present address, did I not well remember that from the first hour you came glazing and fawning to our home in Dorogh, I expressed my unequivocal opposition to your suit. You spoke not indeed openly of your will towards me, nor named the name of love. But so far as you could infer your passion, without committing your prudence, you showed me your intention, and I acquainted you with mine. Nay, more, to spare you the pain of hearing my plain opinion in plain words, I overstepped the reserve of a woman's heart, and told you I loved another, —even though that other had not then sought me of my father."

"Do I deny it?" replied Ménesatz with varying colour, and concentrated voice. "Do I deny it? you said you loved Franzl Westermann, the hireling! But will you, can you, Suzsi, say so *now*?—now that he, hath thought you, ay—and has called you in the ears of men, that which I dare not repeat to your own?"

Suzsi started as though she had been stung by a venomous reptile. "He has called me so? has spoken lightly of me?" said she, clasping her hands together. "May God forgive him! And can I say I love him still? I *can*—I *do*! I love him tenderly,—truly,—against my judgment,—against my very will,—but still, with a changeless affection. Dream you that the love of years is rooted out in an hour,—that feelings which have engrossed my whole heart, my whole existence, can be blown away by a blast of angry breath? No, no! if I knew that I should look on him no more,—if I knew that he had given heart and faith to another, I should say, as I say now, that the love of my youth will be the love of my age; and that my duty shall be vowed to no other husband than him whose name for long, long years, I have joined with my father's, in my nightly prayers to the Almighty."

Suzsi's tears flowed fast and free as her declaration ceased. Her mind was too much occupied by images of past affection and present sorrow, to take much heed of its effect upon her mortified suitor. The first words she noticed from his lips were, "then shall the remembrance of this hour hang heavy upon your bosom, when you see his gray hairs laid in the grave. Pine as you list after your former home, grieve as you may, you will perish an alien, an exile, and an orphan."

During this stormy dialogue, Suzsi had

unconsciously reached the high-place of the village by the side of the infuriated Ménesatz; who parted from her in presence of the little tribunal at the *Post-haus* gate, uttering the single and signal word,—*"Remember!"*

As she entered the paved court of the *Blau Igel*, her father himself met her by the way. "How now, mistress!" said the old man peevishly. "Is this a time of day, or a day at all, to be wandering in the pastures with a gallant? Is it not enough, Suzsi, that thy father must toil here, and labour there, and find nor *hausknecht* nor *bauermädchen* to do his bidding, but that thou, the daughter of his bosom, the blood of his heart's-blood, must prove a vain rebellious gadthereout, and leave him to his troubles? In, and shame thee, girl,—in!" said he, with no gentle voice or action;—regardless of Suzsi's heaving boddice and brimming eyes.

The poor girl would have spoken,—pleaded,—remonstrated,—had grief and surprise left her voice to defend herself. It seemed as if every degree of bitterness were to be mingled in her cup of tears! The misconstruction and ungenerous usage of a jealous lover,—the menaces of a malicious ruffian,—and the undeserved reproof of her angry father, conspired to depress her spirit and overcome her resolution; when Franzl himself, who had been an unseen and gratified auditor of Matthias's reprimand, officiously opened the door of the *speise-saal* to admit the seeming culprit.

The evening was closing, and Suzsi involuntarily raised her eyes as the candle-light from the interior of the chamber fell upon his person. She actually started back with horror on perceiving the alteration which two short weeks had wrought in his countenance. There was a marble fixedness in his fine forehead, which rendered its unearthly paleness frightful to look upon. The curls hung matted on his temples, and his compressed lips and troubled eyes revealed the struggles of mental anguish. It seemed as though he were suffering from the secret agency of some deathly disease. And it was so;—for what disorder of more agonizing tendency can rack the human frame, than the discovery of the worthlessness of a beloved object? Nor leech nor drug, nor time nor patience, have power to minister to such an ailment!

"And is it so?" murmured Suzsi as she retreated into the inner chamber appropriated to her use, pressing her hands upon her forehead. "Is it so in truth? Am I so

estranged from all who loved me, that I dare not vindicate myself to my kind father,—that I may not venture to sue for Franzl's pardon! But wherefore should I seek it? I who have never voluntarily offended? Altered as he is, he must surely *believe* in my guilt;—caprice, or captious waywardness would never have changed him thus. Alas, alas! how long, how sadly must certainty have forced itself upon *my* mind, ere I had endured to condemn *him* as criminal and shameless,—*him*, for whom I would peril my life, and glory in the hazard!

“And still, this mystery must endure!—Still must I live in his thoughts as a lost and outcast wretch. Every day and every hour must *I* grow more miserable, and *he* more cruel and wretched. No!—not if strength and courage may assist me!” exclaimed Suzsi, rising from her oaken settle with sudden energy. And having braided her hair, and adjusted her disordered garb, she resolutely re-entered the *saal*.

As she turned the creaking door upon its hinges, she felt, disgusted for the first time in her life, by the rude sounds of hilarity which burst upon her ear.

Perhaps, however, the noisy drinking song which jarred so discordantly upon her feelings, acquired its chief demerits from the voice of Westermann, which might be distinguished in the chorus.

The words, though rude, were little calculated to offend her.

TRINK LIED.

I.

Ay! put it round, to thee, to me,
To all!
The cup should circle fair and free,
And deep and clear its draught should be
For all!

II.

A health, as bright as summer hours,
To all!
May treasure fall in golden showers,
May pleasure prank her paths with flowers
For all!

III.

May labour lend his lightest load
To all;—
May quiet haunt each calm abode
Where love's best blessings are bestow'd
On all!

IV.

Our prince!—not such as lords it now
O'er all,—
But he who last, with crowned brow,
In battle saw his life-blood flow
For all!

V.

Our land!—not scorn'd as now she is
By all;
But as when tameless energies
Bade her, of old, aspire to rise
O'er all!

Suzsi, who had fixed her expectations upon discovering her godsire old Blaschky seated among the “*all*,”—the merry group who bore the burden of the song,—and whose hopes were equally bent upon finding him in that happy intermediary stage of exaltation of mind, which lends itself freely to any extraordinary project, without being sufficiently tongue-loosed to render confidence dangerous, was grieved to perceive the old gentleman seated, pipe in hand, at a solitary table; the great wolf-dog of the household lying at lazy length upon his feet, and his countenance lowering through the dusky fumes by which he was encircled. In truth, the worthy man had much personal cause for immediate sympathy in the pains of his friends; for his comfort was strangely broken since the harmony of the Blue Hedgehog had been “cracked and out of tune.” He had lost a patient listener in his god-daughter,—a jovial boon-companion in Matthias,—and in Westermann himself, that cheering exhibition of animal spirits and youthful energy, which had been wont to animate his apathetic existence. He had ended by becoming as ill to please and as sullen as themselves.

“Master Blaschky,” said Suzsi, softly approaching him, and covering her whispers under the tumult of the drinking chorus, “kind friend Blaschky!—I have much need of your services. Am I right in believing that you will somewhat trouble yourself to comfort and assist your poor god-child?”

“Speak out, girl!”—said the rough old man, “and do not stand there, chirruping your words like a wren. Pray Heaven you have not learned this mincing courtesy of some stray *Wienerfrecht*, among the coxcombs who have lately travelled hitherward.”

Suzsi was silent for a moment. “How!” said she at length, “have *you* also, my tried and oldest friend,—have you also conceived this thought of me?—Nay, then, it were useless to say further.”

“Suzsi!” said old Blaschky, in a hoarse hollow voice, which rendered his words still more touching, “you were a very little child when first you climbed upon my knees;—a very young and tender creature,—and fair withal, and good, and gentle. I loved you, girl, in those days, for your parents' sake;—I have loved you since, Suzsi, for your own. You seemed to me a remembrance of my youth, and a promise for my elder years.”

Suzsi's tears fell silently and fast.

“You have been a well-doing maiden,” continued the old man, his voice breaking as

he spoke. "Light word had never rested upon you, nor light thought seemed to harbour with you, till,—until,—Out on you!" said he suddenly interrupting himself, as a big tear gathered under his shaggy eye-lids. "I would give my right hand, Suzsi, that I had not lived to think of my old friend's last-living daughter, as I think of *you*;—or that some other wanton had been found to swell the triumph of yonder bragging vagrant from Vienna."

"This is too much!" exclaimed Suzsi, tottering to the wall for support; and remaining speechless for many minutes.

"Johann Blaschky!" said she at length, trembling with indignation, "so hear and help me God, I am guiltless of this thing! My mother whom you loved,—your own, whom you delight to honour,—went not more spotless to their graves, than I should do, were this night

The maker of the lonely beds of peace
To open one of the deep hollow ones
Where misery goes to rest, and put me in."

Blaschky looked steadily and impressively upon his god-child. "It is enough," he observed. "Truth has a tone and a seeming of her own; and those, Suzsi, who look upon your brow and listen to your words, may not doubt their sincerity. Say on, then, dear Suzsi, what would you of the old man?"—

"Simply that he will permit me to accompany him to-morrow as far as the fortress, on his way to Pesth. Do not deny me,—my errand is of blameless import.—Trust me, Johann,—trust the poor girl who never yet swerved from honesty and truth. Nay! you must even seek and gain my father's consent to my journey; for do we not all know that he will deny you nothing?"

"The girl's tongue has bird-lime on't!" muttered old Johann, secretly pleased and flattered by her request; and he lost not an opportunity which soon presented itself of making the demand, which was readily granted by the prudent Matthias. It occurred indeed to his habitual forecast, that the pretext for the journey put forth by Blaschky,—his wish to make a gift of head-gear to his god-daughter, or some other bauble of her own choosing at the fair of Pesth,—was an earnest of future generosity. Accordingly he failed not to jest with Franzl, when they retired for the night, upon the old farmer's gallantry towards his future bride; and to acquaint him with the morrow's projects.

"I should not mightily marvel, Franzl," said he, "were our good friend Johann, whose care and thrift must have hoarded a heavier penny than bachelor housekeeping can task the spending, I should not much marvel were he to bestow something solid and comfortable upon Suzsi, towards your house and homestead."

Westermann cut short the covetous calculations of the old gentleman, by a hasty retreat to his sleepless bed, his gloomy retrospections, his blighted hopes; and he ground his teeth for very agony, as he bethought him that the morrow's morn might lead the beloved of his heart into the embraces of his rival.

What else could tempt her to Ofen? What but the detested traveller now harbouring there, could attract her so far from home? she, who since her betrothing had never left his side, but relinquished every pastime befitting her age to content his jealous humour.

He slept not. How *should* he sleep with such suggestions and such expectations rankling in his mind; and when the daylight broke, and he saw Johann Blaschky's *fuhrwagen*,* with four long-tailed ponies trot into the yard, himself arrayed for the expedition in a new brown sheep-skin mantle, the seams welted alternately with green and scarlet morocco leather,—and his tight jerkin beneath, rattling with silver buttons as large as crown pieces, while his flapped felt hat was adorned with a bunch of artificial flowers gallantly stuck on one side,—Franzl's spirit waxed hot within him. His first angry emotions, however, were followed by a train of images,—the mourners supplied by memory for the funeral of love,—which, dark and inauspicious as they were, thrilled him to the soul.

"If I were to speak with her,—to remonstrate with her gently,—I might yet be in time to save her," thought Franzl. "And though her future existence is to me vain as the wagging of a reed in the wind, yet for her father's sake, her blind doating father, I will remonstrate with her this one more time."

He threw open, therefore, the door of the *speise-saal*,—at that early hour cold and tenantless; and seeing that the *hausknecht* had placed a cup of coffee upon the table

* A Hungarian farmer in even moderate circumstances, never puts to fewer than four horses. They are driven in hand, and resemble the beautiful race bred by the late Duke of Argyll.

devoted to Suzsi's use, stood beside it, waiting with forced courage for her arrival.

The high-minded Hungarian was angry with himself to find how strongly his heart beat against his side, as he listened to the sound of her coming footsteps; when lo! hastened by the impatient cracking of old Blaschky's whip, she entered the chamber in all the pride of her loveliness; her hair interwoven and braided with the most becoming nicety, her mantle gracefully slung on, and her cheek flushed with hope and anxiety.

"Suzsi," said Westermann, stalking proudly to meet her, lest his courage should cool by delay, "I know how little prayer or sorrow of mine may prevail with you. Full well I know how different are the thoughts and feelings you have lately nourished. But if you still remember the day when you pledged me a vow of better promise,—when you owned nor will nor wish save mine, and gloried in the submission,—let me still so far influence you, as to arrest your steps in the career of infamy. Your mother,—have you forgotten her?—Your father,—can you forget him?—Your own fair fame, Suzsi, the boast and reverence of Dorogh,—is it become altogether valueless in your eyes? But yesterday, keeping tryst in the vineyards!—To-day, flying to the arms of a city lover.—To-morrow—oh! who can say what new shame to-morrow shall bring forth! Restrain your steps, go not to Buda——"

Suzsi dashed the glittering tears from her eyes, and vehemently interrupted him. "The hour is past," said she, "when words such as these could move me to your will. You have seen me bear your unjust suspicion with meekness. You have seen me live on from day to day, without food, without sleep, without hope, and yet you spoke not. You saw me pining and wasting under your estrangement, but yet you spoke not. Even now, you have but uttered these entreaties as a plea to insult me with the expression of your unseemly fancies. Go, go! The hour is past for submission; for henceforth, as I live by the breath of Heaven, I will act as my conscience dictates. *I will go to the city!*—*I will follow my own good liking!*—Nay more, I tell you, Franzl Westermann, that I go but to meet the traveller whom you have so unbecomingly reviled; and that the sound of his voice and the aspect of his face will be the first comfort I have known since they passed from my presence. And so,—God speed me!"

As she concluded this startling declaration,

she leaped like a fawn into the *fuhswagen*; and Blaschky's cunning hand had cleared the gateway, and put his impatient horses into that running pace in which the speed of the Hungarian steeds chiefly consists, before Franzl Westermann had moved from the posture of amazement into which he was thrown by the warmth of Suzsi's eloquence.

It was in sooth but "the tender fierceness of the dove;" and as he noted the proud look of conscious rectitude with which her words were uttered, an unquiet, misdoubting spirit woke within him, whispering that he had been rash and over-susceptible. Content to leave him to his perplexities, let us follow the steps of the travellers.

CHAPTER III.

Sophia. But suppose I pardon
What's past, who can secure me he'll be free
From jealousy hereafter?

Mat. I will be
My own security! Go,—ride where you please,
Feast, revel, banquet, and make choice with whom,
I'll set no watch on you! *Massinger.*

The morning mists were slowly rising from the dull plain that extends itself between Dorogh and the fortress of Gran, as Suzsi and her venerable charioteer were whirled along the road towards Buda; and when the thin gray veil of vapours was slowly updrawn, a clear bright-eyed morning seemed glancing from beneath it. The vast *steppe*,—which no actual mode of Hungarian agriculture can redeem from the overwhelming shoals of sand dispersed every winter over its surface by the swelling of the mountain-brooks that traverse its pastures towards the Danube,—looked cheerless as a desert. The slender spring-shoots of the Turkey corn or maize, scarcely served to tinge its dark furrows with green; and the dry maize stalks of the preceding year, gathered into heaps for fuel, alone diversified the monotonous level over which they were dotted.

But as the last wreath of mist disappeared from the landscape, how beautifully the heathy hills by which it is bounded, and the rocky cliffs which surround Gran, displayed their vine-covered heights and sharpened edges, against the clear blue sky? How proudly they seemed to announce themselves as the ancient bulwarks of the majestic river that hurries its tumultuous waters along their base! Those who are called to admire the beauty of the site of Gran at such an hour, can pardon the prodigal predilection which has induced the late Primate of Hungary

to adorn it with a temple,* whose splendours ill become a mean provincial town; a temple which, with the new Chapter-house and college entitle it to compete with, "Tyrnau of the many Towers," for the appellation of "the minor Rome."

Suzi and her companion, however, were insensible to the beauty of the weather, and the improving aspect of the scenery. If indeed she noticed either, it was to welcome the mild spring breezes which seemed to burst from the coppices they traversed after leaving the village, pouring their welcome freshness upon her fevered forehead.

There, the graceful birch hung its streaming fibres from the clefts of the rock, while the maple's red shoots were sheltered in their warmer nooks. The stern upright walnut trees seemed willing to withhold the tardy shade of their budding leaves from the road they had been planted to shelter; while that dingy parasite, the universal juniper, unfortunately enlaced its straggling boughs with the offsets of every prouder aristocrat of the forest.

Here and there, clinging in bright patches to the crumbling *breccia*, the shrubby heath put forth its hardy blossoms. Even the humble varieties of moss seemed touched into more cheerful existence by the newly-awakened breath that smelt so wooingly around them. Their "flings of sunshine" were scattered in tenderest vegetation among the broken crags; for—

The darkest rock upon the lonely heath
Feels in its barrenness some touch of spring;
And in the cheering light and dancing ray,
Its moss and lichen freshen and revive.

"And now, Suzi," said Johann to the damsel by his side, when, after a contemplative silence of many leagues, they entered the stony road leading to Alt Ofen, "where do you intend that we should part? Where would you rid yourself of my observation?"

"I trust we need not part at all," answered Suzi, cheerfully, seeking to rouse herself from her fit of abstraction. "You will not,

I am persuaded, refuse me half an hour for a visit at the fortress; and I will afterwards, *ha isten akarja*,† cross the bridge with you, and share your business and pleasure at the fair."

"That is," answered old Johann, in a measured tone of interrogatory, "you purpose that I should take a bath in the Turkish steam-pool,‡ while you seek some separate recreation?"

"By no means," replied Suzi, patiently; "I entreat you not to leave my side. I need your protection. Be kind and fatherly to me, oldest of my friends! and do not pervert my words and distort their intention. Nay," said she, as they passed the monastery of Sz. Pölten, and approached the suburb of the city, "here is the post-house!—Leave your horses for breathing-time and water, and let us ascend the hill on foot."

Old Blaschky obeyed her rapid commands in silent astonishment, and followed her light steps up the steep heights towards the fortress, without further question or comment. Together they reached the brink of the hill.—Together they passed the well-sentinelled gates of the ancient and diminutive city or fortress of Buda.—Together they entered the very court of his Imperial Highness the Palatine of Hungary's palace; and as Suzi advanced towards the principal entrance, old Johann, for the first time, spake with his tongue, and began in no very moderate terms to upbraid her with light-headedness.

Suzi, no whit moved by his spirited remonstrance, boldly assailed the door of the stately pile; and having rung at the porter's bell, inquired whether Count Er—, the *Tavernicus*, still sojourned at Buda, and whether she could be admitted to his presence.

The important *Suisse*, in his broadly-belted crimson tabard, leaned majestically upon his coronetted *bâton* of office, to contemplate at his leisure the very extraordinary visitors he was summoned to announce; and the result of his examination displayed itself in the

* I inquired of the peasant who served me as guide at Gran, in the year 1820, how long a time would be required to complete the church. "It will be finished in my life, I trust," replied the man; "for it is to contain a miraculous Virgin, and they have promised us famous miracles." The church was built at the sole expense of the Primate, whose revenues amount to £36,000 per annum. The revenues of all vacant Prelacies fall to the share of the Emperor, as king of Hungary; and after the decease of the last Primate, his place was left unsupplied during *nineteen* years! The Emperor also inherits the unbequeathed property of the Hungarian prelates; and it is only by particular sanction of the crown, that a Bishop can dispose, by testament, of his acquired fortune. Even the property of such peasants as die without a will, or immediate male heirs, reverts to the Emperor. The distant aspect of Gran is said to offer a singular resemblance to that of Athens.

† *Ha isten akarja*, Hungarian, please God.

‡ The warm mineral baths of Buda retain the name of the Turks by whom they were constructed. They are much frequented by the lower classes.

significant smile with which he bade a *jäger* who was traversing the court, acquaint his Excellency the *Tavernicus*, that a pretty maiden entreated an audience. Suzsi was equally perplexed by the smile and tone assumed by the imperial menial. But she was becoming inured to mortification; and having heard, even in the seclusion of Dorogh, of the mean and interested usages of German households, proceeded liberally to "*graisser la patte à la valetaille*," as the most certain means of reaching their master's presence.

The Swiss, astounded by her generosity, took off his laced hat with as much reverence as though her boddice of serge had been a velvet tunic; and pointing out the way up the stately staircase to the apartments of the *Tavernicus*, bad her enter his Excellency's ante-room and do her errand. He appeared less willing, however, to admit the uncouth presence of the gaping Johann to the honours of "*les grandes entrées*." But Suzsi was obstinate on this head, and succeeded in obtaining grace for her companion.

"She would venture to the Emperor's throne,—she would claim courtesy of his Holiness the Patriarch!" exclaimed Blaschky, as the tramp of his boots resounded through the arched corridors that led to the chamber of Count Er—. "The girl has been looked on with the evil eye,* and I was an ass to bear her company."

He was fain to follow her airy footsteps, however, into a chamber of which two splendidly-liveried attendants held open the folding doors; just as a voice within, which appeared unaccountably familiar to his ears, exclaimed to his companion, "Suzsi! my flower of Dorogh! You must have thought that I had forgotten you! I have not so far wronged my conscience, *süsses mädchen*. Even in the press of weighty affairs committed to my charge, your own have not been neglected.

"And you, too, my Demosthenes of the *speise-saal*,—my Mirabeau of Hungarian *sans-culotisme*,—how has gone the world with you since we drained a measure together at the Blue Hedgehog?" continued the young *Tavernicus*, turning towards Johann Blaschky, whose great eyes were fixed in utter consternation upon a vast mirror that reflected the whole interior of the gorgeous chamber. "How fares it? What, dumb—speechless altogether?—You, in whose reproof was wisdom,—in whose rhetoric was conviction?"

"Johann Blaschky!" faltered the old man,

* A common Hungarian superstition.

aghast. "Johann Blaschky himself," he reiterated, as the *Tavernicus* perceived that his distended eyes were riveted upon the reflection of his own shape in the mirror before him.

Suzsi, meanwhile, had advanced towards the writing table by which the *Tavernicus* was seated; and having humbly kissed his hand, and thanked him for his honourable remembrance, she proceeded to acquaint him with the sorrow and humiliating suspicions to which she had been exposed in her faithful preservation of his secret.

"Noble sir!" said she, smiling through her tears, "may you never know such grief as that which has made my cheek so pale, and my heart so heavy, since I was honoured by your lordship's countenance. Trust me, *tekintetes Gróf*, nothing less than this would have emboldened me to trespass on your goodness, that I might crave permission to explain the truth to—to—my father, and to—"

"My father's daughter's jealous lover? Why, Suzsi, I had rather my name had been bruited in the very ears of the captious Ur Pál,—rather my titles had been proclaimed by all the heralds of the empire,—than that one tear of thine were wasted to secure my incognito. Here," continued he, taking a parchment from his secretary, "here is the lease. I fought a good fight with my worthy friends the Canons to carry my point.—A bloodier battle has not chanced in Hungary betwixt priest and layman, since the fatal field of *Mohacs* saw seven bishops left stiff and stark upon its turf. But no matter. The Chapter of Gran has added, at my instigation, another life to the renewal of the lease, which is granted in the name of Suzsi Westermann, *edés kintsem!*† What hast thou to object?"

Blaschky, who had by this time sufficiently recovered from his trance to comprehend the wonderful past, as well as the still more miraculous present passing before his eyes,—approached Count Er—, exclaiming, "Now God preserve your Highness! I know not whether it be greater pride to me to see your Excellency thus face to face, or to hear you breathe such comfortable words to an honest man's honest daughter."

"And Suzsi!" continued the *Tavernicus*, without noticing his interruption, "I feel that I am still something in thy debt for the vexation and sorrow which I begin to see

† *Edés kintsem!* a term of endearment equivalent to the German *mein schatz*, my treasure.

revealed in thy hollow eyes and fevered lips. Here!" said he, tossing into the hands of old Blaschky a purse heavy with gold, "let it be thy task to convey our little friend safely to Pesth, and see that she is the best provided bride that ever garnished her homestead in Dorogh. And stay,—my worshipful monitor,—my doughty champion of Hungary!"—the Count took a richly-ornamented pipe from the table as he spoke, "Refuse not to accept this token of friendship from Alexis Er—; who presumes to suppose that thou wilt not prize it the less, for having served his need during the last campaign. And shouldst thou hear poor Suzsi's name unworthily spoken of by the village gossips, give boldly thine evidence in her favour. The Tavernicus pledges his word of honour as a man, and as an Hungarian, that his regard for her hath been that of a tender brother."

He kissed her cheek as he concluded; and inquired whether her marriage could be solemnized within three days. It was his wish to be present at the ceremony when he passed through Dorogh on his return to Vienna.

"My gracious lord," replied Suzsi despondingly, "So great an honour may not be. Franzl and I are parted to unite no more."

"Tut—tut—child!" said old Blaschky chuckling with glee, "I wager my best team that one word of mine, and one smile of thine, will clear up this matter in a second. Surely, my lord! surely—in three days the ceremony may take place."

"On Wednesday then, towards evening, expect my coming," observed the Count. "Suzsi! remember, sweet! I shall have no time to spare for maidenly tears."

Suzsi, confused and startled, bowed assent; and was about to accompany her parting obeisances with a renewal of thanks, when the Tavernicus, having summoned an attendant from the ante-room, to whom he spoke a few words in a foreign language, proceeded to detain his guests by pointing out to their notice several objects of curiosity contained in the chamber. He bade them note the costly table on which he leaned, and whose curiously wrought slab of silver and turquoises, announced it of Turkish manufacture.* "'Twas one of the baubles with which the tent of Kara Mustapha was enriched, when the troops of the Sultan traversed Hungary in triumph, to besiege Vienna. As thou mayest chance to know,

* This table exists in the Ambras collection.

orator Johann! the caravansarai of a Pacha then stood upon the site of this same palace; which the Hungarians afterwards constructed for the son of Maria Theresia, in hopes to allure a resident sovereign to the heights of Ofen. And this lamp of fretted gold, Suzsi,—'tis such as the ladies of the West—"

The *valet-de-chambre* re-entered, and delivered a message in the same foreign language. "It is well!"—said the Tavernicus. "Suzsi, I am now about to present you to a lady, a noble friend of mine, a friend of all who love Hungary. Remember that whatever she may inquire or require of you, must be answered and done without hesitation. She is of the rank of those unused to resistance or delay."

The attendants of the Count now threw open the inner doors of the apartment. Other, and still loftier, and still more gorgeous chambers, were successively opened, as the two Doroghians followed the steps of the Tavernicus; arched galleries resplendent with crystal and gilding,—cushioned saloons, to adorn which a Pachalick seemed to have been rifled; and finally, the stately chamber called the Hall of Battles, passed before the eyes of the amazed Johann.

At length Suzsi felt her feet fall upon a substance softer than the moss of her native woods; and though the tender verdure of early summer scantily clothed the shades of the island of St. Margaret, which might be seen from the windows beside her anchored in the mighty Danube below, she felt the fullest fragrance of summer burst upon her startled senses;—orange flowers, tuberoses, and plants of the scented olive, were disposed in the recesses of the apartment.

Two pages in fanciful costumes were stationed by the emblazoned door of an interior chamber; which, flying open like the rest, Suzsi lifted up her eyes to find herself in a saloon less brilliantly decorated than many she had passed, but adorned with such graceful and simple elegance as fitted it for the retreat of a young and lovely princess. Several ladies, richly attired, were gathered into a group near the entry; one of whom advanced graciously to welcome the Tavernicus.

She was of middle height,—pale, even to a fault;—but that fault was beautifully redeemed by the contrast it afforded to tresses black as "the raven down of darkness," and the perfect pencilling of her expressive eyebrows. Her "robes were loosely

flowing"—her "hair as free." But something adorned her high forehead, more commanding than gem or brodered coif,—even the dignity of high breeding and high intelligence; and as Suzsi listened to the sweet tones that fell from her lips in addressing the Tavernicus, she instinctively acknowledged the influence of majesty and loveliness, by kneeling before her, with her crossed arms folded upon her beating bosom.

The lady looked upon her with curious and steadfast attention. Then turning with an approving smile to the Tavernicus, tendered her "bluest veins" to be kissed by the trembling girl, ere she motioned her to rise. But though perplexed and overcome by the magnificence and strangeness of the scene, and still more so by the familiarity with which the ladies stationed behind the noble friend of the Tavernicus, gazed into her face, and seemed to comment upon her costume, Suzsi did not forfeit all presence of mind. She replied without hesitation to the numerous questions with which she was addressed; and the figurative diction of her Hungarian speech, as well as the graceful modesty of her attitude, appeared to delight the illustrious unknown, whose praises were echoed with rapture by the chorus of ladies in waiting.

At the first pause, Count Er— advanced, with the easy dignity of a favourite, into the circle. "I was anxious, madam," said he, "to see the claims of pure, native Hungarian beauty, fairly laid before you. Your Imperial Highness's decision has, I perceive, already suffered the graces of this field-flower, to weigh against the faded languor of those forced exotics which exhibit an artificial bloom at Vienna."

The dames of the palace now attacked the young Tavernicus with affected indignation and real vehemence; till Suzsi was wrought to marvel that ladies so delicately fashioned, and so richly attired, could be so loud and vociferous.

"I will even further venture to express my doubts," resumed the Count, amused by their affectation, "whether her Highness's practised ear and excellent discernment, will not prefer the wood-notes wild of my linnet of the Dorogh woods, to those of Sontag herself. May I entreat permission, madam, to decide the question?"

"Sing,—*liebes kind!*" said the Archduchess, kindly addressing the timid peasant. "Sing to me as you have done to the Tavernicus. I am not less indulgent."

Suzsi turned her eyes towards the Count, and having received a nod of encouragement, began to pour forth, in her sweetest and most touching tones, the imitative quail-call, and the song it serves to introduce; and the applause and murmurs of pleasure with which the first stanza was received, emboldened her to surpass her former excellence in the second.

"A most melodious voice,—a surprising facility!" said the Archduchess to Count Er—, on the conclusion of the ballad. "I trust," continued her Highness, turning to Suzsi, "that the Tavernicus has fulfilled his promises, Suzsi; and that so duteous a child is to be rewarded with the power of assuring her father's prosperity?"

"This hour, madam, is indeed the happiest of my life. All honour and all success have blessed it," replied the peasant of Dorogh, with deep feeling. "And may the great Ruler of Princes render those of your mighty Highness as consoling and as full of joy."

"Wear then this trinket in remembrance of the event of the day," said the Archduchess, taking a massive chain from her neck, and throwing it over Suzsi's shoulders. "And if, in future life, thou shouldst have aught to seek at the hands of the Palatine, this token will prove a passport to his protection."

Suzsi had made her lowliest parting acknowledgments,—had spoken her grateful farewell to her generous patron, the Tavernicus,—had even reached the outer court of the palace on her return homewards, before her companion sufficiently recovered his *saisissement* to breathe one word in utterance of his amazement.

During their visit to the Palatine's princely abode, the heart of the young girl had been awakened to sentiments of deeper interest than those of mere vulgar admiration. Her duty to her father, her devotion to her lover, her care for her own fair fame,—all were involved in the momentous change of her destiny. She was gratified,—triumphant,—clear from shame.—Could she be interested at such a time by gilded cornices or inlaid floors?—Could the splendours of a royal dwelling, or the flowing state of an Imperial presence, disturb the gentle current of her heartfelt gratitude and joy?

Not so old Blaschky. *His* wonderment, when indeed it expanded in words, dwelt only on the dazzling and inexplicable magnificence which had burst upon his bewildered senses;

and maugre the untrim shagginess of the national *capût* in which he was enveloped,—maugre the rustiness of the flapped beaver,—and still more, the uncollected mass of shapeless features it overshadowed, Master Johann descended the hill towards the suburb of *Wasserthal*, with an air of jauntiness, an elevation of head, and trippingness of step, which argued something of the self-delusions of Malvolio.

The spirit of feminine mischief had besieged the brains of the reverend elder. The giggling courtesy with which the court damsels had greeted his grotesque person and untutored demeanour, had tickled his vanity as effectually as a more favourable notice; and the “hyperbolical fiend which vexed the man,” prompted him to “talk of nothing but ladies.”

He could scarcely recover his self-possession sufficiently to escort Suzsi in safety through the crowded alleys of the fair of Pesth, or assist her in the selection of those household treasures which the liberality of the *Tavernicus* destined to her use. A suit, a wedding-suit for Franzl, was among the costlier articles whose acquirement taxed her well-garnished purse; and after she had expended her choicest care and invention in the distribution of the otter-skin, the delicacy of the filigree buttons, and the tint and texture of the kersey, she was not a little amused on beholding Johann, the sober, thrifty Johann, thrust himself forward into the tailor’s booth, in order that vestments exactly similar to those of the bridegroom, might be adjusted upon his proper person.

He assigned indeed as an apology for this unwonted expenditure, his desire to do honour to the bridal of his godchild, and the gracious presence of the *Tavernicus*. But Suzsi’s laughing eyes suggested other motives for his new-born coxcombicality.

As they approached Dorogh on their return, the warm-hearted girl was almost provoked to observe that the mind of the old man whom she so loved and honoured, was engrossed by the novel and ridiculous fancies acquired in his recent adventures.

“I have the lease close folded under my vest,” said she, as she caught the first glimpse of the steeple of her village church, “close,—close,—and carefully.”

“And the mercer’s wares, I pray thee, are they safely stowed in the *wagen*?” replied Johann. “Truly I had been glad, child, that thou hadst named to me yester-eve thy project to visit her Highness, that I might

have arrayed myself in a more seemly guise. Ill-interpreted will it be that Johann Blaschky entered the hall of the Palatine in his doublet of frieze, when his Sunday suit——”

“But thinkest thou truly, my old kind friend,” said Suzsi, impatiently interrupting his prolixity, “thinkest thou in truth that Franzl will yield conviction to thy testimony? Will he, in good sooth, acknowledge his injustice, and strive to repair his fault?”

“How can he choose but recognise our veracity?” demanded Johann, with an air of importance. “Have we not conversed, face to face, with her Imperial Highness, the Archduchess; a distinction which Master Ménesatz himself, though an *ex-hofhausmeister* of the household of a magnat, never achieved? Did not the portly lady in the silken mantle say to me——”

“True, very true, dearest godfather! But it is rather the discourse of the *Tavernicus* which in this instance imports my cause. The gentle bearing of her Highness is nothing compared with the zealous interference of Count Alexis, with the possession of the lease, and,” added she, in a lower voice, “with—my present prospects.”

“Ay, ay, right and natural enough! Thou ponderest on thine approaching bridal. A speedy wedding hath ever a smiling aspect to one of thy years. And now I think me, child, I marvel thou didst not buy thee a head-tire like that of the damsel in poppy-colour who kept her station at the Archduchess Palatine’s left hand. What deemest thou the fair creature questioned of me, when——”

“Stay!” said Suzsi, impatiently peering through the twilight, “is not yonder my father advancing to meet us?—It is—it is!” she exclaimed, hastily descending into the road; and flying towards him, she was upon his neck, and in tears, before he had found time to vent those reproaches which, at Franzl’s suggestion, he had sallied forth to pour into her ears.

Poor Suzsi’s explanation of the eventful occurrences of the day, was hurried, indistinct, and blended with more weeping than might permit mine host of the Hedgehog to comprehend at once the measure of his own good fortune, and of his daughter’s happiness. But as the truth gradually unfolded itself, the old man clasped his hands in gratitude; and again and again embraced the child, whose moral courage and sweet affection had been exerted to guard his worldly interests, and extricate herself from a perplexing and

humiliating position. Very readily did he and old Johann enter into her scheme of vengeance against one who had been so willing to distrust her, and so prompt to revile and afflict her, as the sensitive Westermann.

It chanced that at the very moment this malicious compact was entered into between the three, a horseman whom they speedily recognised as Ménesatz, the *Széchenyische ex-hofmeister*, passed the *wagen*; and Suzsi, with the ready spirit of female art, immediately whispered her father to bid him home to supper. Her terrors of his anathema had apparently subsided, or her estimation of his power to injure her father was diminished. The invitation was speedily, though not very cordially given by the old man; not cordially at least as a specimen of real Hungarian hospitality, which is the most extended, the frankest, and most indiscriminating between the desert of *Sahara* and the North Pole.

Ménesatz appeared at first sullenly bent on refusal; and answered in a negative growl, which drew from Suzsi some of those gentle and persuasive accents, irresistible in every ear. Perhaps some latent desire to include *him* in her project of retributive justice,—to punish at once the refractory temper of her plighted lover, and the base insidious spirit of her discarded one,—prompted her coquetry on the occasion; for she certainly had him welcome, as they entered together the *piátza* of the inn, in a tone which might well warrant his air of delighted surprise, and explain the hectic spot that brightened the pale cheek of his rival.

Never had Suzsi appeared more lovely in the eyes of either, than when she threw off her heavy mantle of martin-skin to seat herself upon the oaken bench of the *speise-saal*. Her cheeks glowing from the evening air, or flushed by the excitement of her dawning prosperity,—her eye, alternately sparkling with triumph, and moistened by the consciousness of coming events,—her lips, now lightened by smiles, now tremulous from suppressed emotion,—her very voice melting and varying under the influence of an overflowing heart,—all these beauties seemed overwrought by the gentle and happy feelings that seemed to animate

This fairest thing that ever grew
Beside a cottage door.

But the more such charms and the sweet qualities from which they sprung, became apparent, the darker grew the brow of him who had been urged by jealous pique to resign her troth-plight into her father's hands.

The moment she addressed to him her spirited reply of the morning, something like a consciousness of error smote upon his feelings; and the unprecedented absence of a day,—of a lingering, tedious day,—had probably assisted to reveal to the young *kellermeister* how nearly and dearly she was twined round his heart.

How indeed could he choose but love her! Did not every thing in Dorgh love Suzsi? Did not the drowsy cattle lift up their heads and low to her call, as she passed their shed? Did not the guardian dogs,—the fierce Hungarian wolf-dogs,—run fawning to her feet as she entered? Did not house-knave and maiden fly to kiss her hand as fervently upon her return, as though she had been a whole year alienated from her home?—Did not her father leave his cellar-wicket ajar, to loiter by her side, and watch the changeful smiles of her sweet face?—Did not old Blaschky sit sniggering opposite, with the arch consciousness that becomes the confidant of a portentous secret?—And did not—alas! the while,—did not the courtly Péter Ménesatz condescend from his dignity, to beset her with his most honeyed flatteries, his most serpent-like adulation, before his very face?

And she,—the loved of so many hearts,—thus sought of all—thus caressed of all,—had she not deigned to enrich him with her first, her pure affections; to wait upon his wayward will with untiring patience; nay,—to sue to his obdurate heart for pardon and peace?—And he had refused it!—Had refused *her*!—scorned her,—reviled her,—cast her from him as a worthless thing!

He began to fancy it possible he might have been in the wrong, and estimate the sacrifice made by his rash petulance. By the time he had gazed a lover's hour upon Suzsi's open countenance, and listened to the music of her varying voice, a deep and painful repentance began to oppress his feelings. His head grew dizzy,—his eyes became dim. Strange sounds rang in his ears, and he was at length fairly forced to seek the freshness of the night air for revival.

The duties of such a calling as his do not lend themselves to the indulgence of sentiment. The hated iteration of his own name recalled the unhappy man from his reverie; and on returning to the *saal* he was required by his master to bring forth "flagons three of good red wine." The unwonted prodigality of Matthias struck him dumb with surprise. But his astonishment was deepened into consternation, as he listened to the toast

which consecrated the libation. "The future landlord of the *Blaue Igel!*—May he do justice to a fair wife and flourishing trade, when Matthias's last score is wiped away!"

Suzsi's cheeks blushed crimson as the words were cordially echoed by her god-father;—and Ménesatz, who had good reasons of his own for believing himself secure of the preference of the Chapter of Gran, hesitated only whether it would be becoming to drink to a pledge that so plainly pointed at himself. He resolved however to give the most gallant turn to his perplexity; and having kissed the cup, and bowed reverentially to little Suzsi, drained the contents with enthusiasm.

The remainder of the evening was devoted to joyous merriment; and the following morning witnessed only a renewal of elated and boisterous glee on the part of Matthias and his leathern-cheeked Pylades.

Suzsi, meanwhile, in obedience to her father's commands, hastened to put the mansion into the neatest order. Blaschky brought in cart-loads of juniper and holly from the woods, to decorate the chambers. The fatted calf was slain; and the choicest stores of Suzsi's thrifty housewifery were lavishly poured into the *Mundküche*. The oldest *antal* of wine in Matthias's cellar was carefully brought down from the vineyard, adorned with a *lesekrantz*, or triumphal garland; and towards evening, Suzsi stole out into the village, to invite her friends and playmates to her wedding,—which she announced for the following afternoon.

It is true the communications were made under promise of secrecy,—a promise as faithfully fulfilled as most others of a similar character. Each flew to her nearest neighbour, as soon as the bride had quitted the house, to discuss the suddenness and mystery of the arrangement, and conjecture the name of the groom, which Suzsi had refused to disclose.

Her *brouillerie* with her affianced lover had been the wonder of the village during the preceding nine days; and one and all among the chartered gossips of Dorogh, decided that his successor could be none other than the thriving Péter Ménesatz, who, as they believed and lamented, was about to become *wirth* to the *Blaue Igel*.

The absence of this doughty hero, who had been compelled to journey towards Caschau on the day succeeding Suzsi's visit to the fortress, seemed to confirm the report; and while he was occupied in obtaining accredited

securities to proffer to the scrutiny of the Chapter, the dames of Dorogh settled over their distaffs that he was busy in purchasing tokens for his bride, and household stuff for his future *ménage*. As they could not attack him with questions, they consoled themselves by bestowing their inquisitiveness upon Franzl.

This luckless hero had now attained the climax of his miseries. His master kept him at such disdainful distance, that there was no possibility of seeking at his hands a solution of the enigma. Old Blaschky passed him by on the other side, whensoever he approached him. The handmaidens of the house were too busy in preparing their bridal finery to notice his iniquitude; and even Suzsi herself, appeared entirely occupied in compounding cates and delicacies for the coming feast, and obeying her father's injunctions that nor cost nor care should be spared to do honour to their guests.

She stole indeed at times from her task, and threw her arms around her father's neck, to conceal "some natural tears that fain would fall." But oftener still, he marked her whispering in a corner with old Johann; who was so altered in his address, so gallant in the cock of his rusty hat, and so juvenile in the indulgence of a newly-acquired cackling laugh, that Franzl misdoubted, more than once, whether his "frosty pow" were not fated to share the *braut-krantz* of Suzsi.

Sometimes he was sufficiently vain to suspect that the looks of the bride were covertly fixed upon himself, with more intentness and concern than became her position. "The more like her sex," thought he; "the more like herself,—to be casting artful glances upon one over whom her triumph is so complete. Like *herself*, said I? Alas! when was my Suzsi artful, or self-assured.—*My* Suzsi? No, no! another's now;—and that other!"

Towards twilight on the last interminable day of suspense, just as the single star of evening shone out brightly upon the sky, and the hush of the village brought back the remembrance of those delicious hours when they were wont to go forth together into the stillness, to look upon the fields and skies, and build their future prospects alternately in either,—poor Westermann, weary and despairing, wandered into the *Piátza*, and leaned himself against the wall of its arcade.

A light step passed beside him. A quick breathing trembled on his ear; and he started ás, through the shadows, he recognised Suzsi! "Franzl!" said the maiden in a suppressed

voice, but very gravely, "We are friends,—are we not?—'Tis no fault of mine that you have refused to become something nearer and dearer to me; and I trust we may at least remain on a kind and friendly footing."

No reply.

"And surely, Franzl, you will not refuse to make one at my bridal? 'Twere an unlooked-for mortification to miss one of my most valued friends at such a trying moment."

No reply.

"To-morrow evening, in the dear old church where we have so often knelt side by side, the ceremony will be performed."

Franzl summoned his utmost resolution to his aid. "I will be there," said he — But he could not add another word.

"I was yesterday at the Pesth fair," resumed Suzsi; "and wishing to offer you some trifling remembrance of one towards whom you have professed to feel kindly, I ventured to select you, Franzl, a gift—a wedding-garment. You will find it to-night in your chamber, Franzl; and will wear it, I trust, to-morrow!"

"To-morrow," exclaimed he abruptly, and in a broken voice, "if indeed I live to see the day, shall be my last of suffering. Think you I will dwell in the land, to witness the happiness which should have been my own? Think you I will patiently live to bear about a blighted heart, and cling to existence, when its spirit and hopes have passed away?"

What Suzsi "*thought*" upon the occasion, was all that a forgiving, loving, womanly heart could suggest; and her artless reply was all that could best soothe, and most clearly undeceive the irritable mind with which she had to deal. Her father and Johann, who had been hidden auditors of the explanation, applauded it to the echo; and even master Blaschky's fantastic merriment was subdued by the deep feeling which prevailed among the parties.

There breathed not that night in Hungary a happier man than Franzl Westermann. Not only did he forbear to listen to half old Johann's details of Suzsi's visit to the palace and discourse with the *Tavernicus*; but of his own free will he acknowledged that she had done well and wisely in keeping a secret which involved the interests of her country, and the credit of her country's friend.

The following day, when he awoke to the sober certainty of bliss,—when he saw the whole village unite to welcome the arrival of the *Tavernicus*, by whom his happiness and prosperity had been so undeservedly secured,

—when he heard his sweet bride smilingly recount to her gracious protector her past troubles and present joy,—glancing lightly over his *foible* in her narration, and striving to create a favourable impression of his character,—he stepped frankly forward, publicly recanted his heresies, acknowledged his errors, and mingled his declarations of unqualified happiness with earnest promises of future confidence and kindness.

The young *Tavernicus* would by no means permit the wedding of Suzsi to exhibit a dereliction from national usage. He not only insisted that the young couple should parade their bridal finery through every path of the village, preceded by the gipsy band with its violins, and tabors, and *dudelsacks*, (that abominable modification of the Scottish pipes!) but accompanied the gaudy procession. Garlands were suspended from the thatched roofs of the cottages, banners streamed among the acacia branches by which they were overhung; and as a welcome rumour had preceded Count Er—'s arrival, of the termination of the sittings of the Diet, of taxes repealed, of oppressive edicts revoked, and extraordinary bounties accorded by the Emperor for the encouragement of Hungarian commerce,—all which benefits the *Doroghians* were fond to attribute to the exertions of the *Tavernicus* in their behalf,—his popularity was for the moment unbounded.

But their "loud luzzas" were silenced for a time, when they learned that their venerated Primate had condescended, at the request of their idol, to pronounce the nuptial benediction of the fairest, humblest, and most virtuous of his flock; and during the performance of the holy rite, in honour of which the church was brilliantly illuminated, a reverential and impressive silence gave effect to the trembling voice of the good old man.

There was not a clouded brow in the whole edifice, save that of Pál the Sexton. And even he felt so exalted and bewildered by the honour of performing "professionally" in presence of his Eminence, that the discomfiture of his brother's hopes, both as a wooer and a man of business, became of secondary import.

Among the gaudy specimens of national costume exhibited in honour of the occasion, none showed more splendidly, or was worn with a more decided air of self-content, than that of the worthy Blaschky; nor did his spurs fail to jingle with spirit and address in the mazurka of the evening.

To this day, under favour of his memorable visit to the Palatine, he retains his post as *arbiter elegantiarum* of the thriving village of Dorogh; and recent *on dits* have asserted, that his courtly breeding has made some progress in the affections of one of its fairest daughters; nay, that could Count Alexis be prevailed upon to honour the wedding with his coun-

tenance, Johann would willingly renounce his single estate.

Perhaps this might be as well; for his vivacious gallantry and amended toilet might otherwise renew, at some future hour, the jealous torments of Franzl, and demand once more for the Hungarian maiden the interposition of the Tavernicus.

THE PROFESSIONAL VISITS OF LE DOCTEUR NOIR.

A STORY OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION.

FREELY TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH OF THE COMTE ALFRED DE VIGNY.

BY EDMUND LOVEL, ESQ. AUTHOR OF "MOUNT SOREL," THE "TWO OLD MEN'S TALES," &c. &c.

PRELIMINARY NOTICE.

AMONG those victims of the fatal years 1793-4, which the French nation still lament as a loss irreparable to their country, they turn with a fond regret to the home of André Chénier, rather from the promise held out by his early genius, than for any thing very remarkable which he really effected.

His history is singular and affecting, and the disgrace which long attached to his brother, Marie Joseph Chénier, on his account, it has been the attempt of several French authors to clear away; and this historic sketch seems an endeavour to account satisfactorily for the apparent indifference to his brother's fate with which he has been reproached.

But it is not so much on account of the story of the two Chéniers, as that it represents in detail some of those terrible scenes, of which, in the general, we have all heard so much, that this story, it is thought, will interest the English reader.

The moment chosen, as it will be seen, is some time subsequent to the destruction of the Girondins, of the Hébertides, and finally of Danton, when Robespierre, St. Juste, and Couthon, exercised, through their influence in the committees, the commune, the Jacobin Club, and their organ the Revolutionary Tribunal, that tremendous power which even at this moment it appals us to look back upon.

The passive submission with which the better part of the nation yielded to this unmitigated and unexampled tyranny, that "reign of terror" which succeeded, has excited the astonishment of all the world. After a pause of mingled dread and horror, however, men began to breathe, to recover

their spirits, and to resolve upon a last effort at emancipation. A secret conspiracy in the Convention was now upon the eve of declaring itself; at the head of which was Tallien, who, steeped in blood as he was, seems not to have been prepared, or perhaps was not invited to share in the proscriptions and the despotism of the moment, and who probably anticipated for himself the fate which had overtaken so many of his companions.

The contest was decided upon the well-known ninth Thermidor, and it is a few days before that event that this characteristic tale begins.

Our *Docteur Noir*, it will be seen, possessed opportunities more than common for becoming acquainted with the interior machinery and the true character of the different actors concerned in these strange scenes, which appear to the imagination of the present day like some fantastical tale of monsters for the nursery, rather than the sober history of a race of actual men.

The judgment he passes upon this terrible dictator himself, and his fellows, whom it has been of late somewhat the fashion to dignify as great men, shall be given nearly in his own exact words.

"Le Comité de Salut public marchait librement sur sa route, l'élargissant avec la guillotine. Robespierre, et Saint Juste, menaient la machine roulante, l'un en jouant le grand prêtre, l'autre le prophète apostolique.

"Comme la Mort fille de Satan l'épouvante lui même, la terreur, leur fille, s'était retournée contre eux, et les pressait de son Aiguillon. Oui, c'étaient leurs éffrois de chaque nuit qui faisaient leurs horreurs de chaque jour.

"Ayant fait peur à tant de gens on leur

a supposé du courage, sans savoir combien de fois ce fût un lâcheté.

“ Leur nom étant une fois devenue synonyme d’ogre on leur sut gré de tout ce qui sort un peu des habitudes du burreau. Dans l’un, ce fût tel plaidoyer hypocrite, en l’autre tel ébauche de système, tous deux se donnant un faux air d’orateur et de législateur. Informes ouvrages ou le style empreint de la sécheresse, et de la brusquerie du combat qui les enfantent, singe la concision et la fermeté du génie.

“ Mais ces hommes gorgés de pouvoir, et soûlés de sang dans leur inconcevable orgie politique, étaient *médiocres et étroits dans leurs conceptions, médiocres et faux dans leurs œuvres médiocres et bas dans leurs actions.*

“ C’est en effet une chose toute commode aux médiocrités qu’un temps de révolution.”

To return to André Chénier, as he was usually called, though his family was noble.

He was the eldest son of the Marquis de Chénier, an aristocrat by principle and by prejudice as well as by birth; and who was inconsolable at seeing both his sons embrace the party of the Revolution,—André, merely as a Girondist, but Joseph as member of the Convention, and attached to the Jacobins and the Mountain. André fell with his party, and was thrown into the prison of St. Lazare; from whence, it was thought, that his brother, as one of the ultra-partisans of the Mountain, then in the ascendant, might, had he been so inclined, have released him.

It is certain that if any efforts on his part were made, such efforts were ineffectual, and a stain has rested upon the name of the younger brother in consequence. Literary jealousy has been, among others, assigned as the cause of this apparent inactivity, for both the brothers were poets: the one, André, was, and still is, esteemed as a man of first-rate genius; the other, Joseph, seems but to have possessed that sort of talent which ministers to the spirit of the times. He was the author of Timoléon, Charles the IX., and Fénélon.—E. L.

CHAPTER I.

The interior of a French Physician's house.

It was the fifth of *Thermidor, L'an deux de la République*; in other words, July, A.D. 1794. A day I shall not easily forget.

It was about eight o'clock in the morning, and I was sitting quite alone by my window, which looked out upon the *Place de la Révolution*. I had my snuff-box in my hand,

and was turning it idly between my fingers, when I heard my door bell ringing violently.

My servant in those days, was a tall, thin fellow, of the most peaceful and quiet temper you can conceive, though he had served for ten years in the artillery, where he had the reputation of being a terrible fellow. A wound in the foot had, however, rendered him unfit for service, and he had been in a manner discharged.

As I did not hear him stirring to open the door, I got up to look into the antechamber, and see what my man of war was about.

He was slumbering as peacefully as an infant with his long legs reared against the stove.

The incredible length of these said long thin limbs had never so forcibly struck me before. I knew that he was about six feet three high, but I seemed never to have remarked the excessive length of his prodigiously thin legs, which were now exhibited in their full extent, and reached from the marble of the stove to the straw chair on which he was reposing the upper part of his body, and his long thin head falling and forming a sort of hoop as they rested upon his crossed arms. I forgot the bell for a moment as I stood contemplating this innocent creature, peacefully asleep in his accustomed attitude—I say accustomed, for never since it has been the good pleasure of lacqueys to dose in antechambers did man enjoy so sweet and profound a repose.

Unvexed by dreams, untroubled by nightmare, so slept my Blaureau, and awakened in a sweet and perfect good humour which was inimitable.

Blaureau had long been my admiration, and the magnificent character of his sleep was to me an eternal source of curious observation. During the last ten years the worthy fellow had enjoyed the same delicious sleep in every possible situation; I never could understand that he found one place preferable to another. It is true in the very midst of summer he has been known to complain that the barrack-room was too hot, and, going down into the court below, to put a paving stone under his head and fall asleep again. He never caught cold upon these occasions, rain or fair it was all one to Blaureau. It must have been a heavy shower that could have awakened him.

When he was standing up, he always reminded me of a tall Italian poplar tree, undermined at the root, and just tottering to its fall. His chest was what we here call

voutée, that is, his breast-bone seemed drawn in till it almost seemed to meet the spine : as for his face, his complexion was of a pale soft yellow hue ; his skin being something of the texture and colour of parchment. I never observed any change in its expression, be the occasion what it might, except that there were moments when it became slowly illuminated by a sort of quiet, simple, almost rustic smile—*niais fin et doux*. During the last ten years he had assisted at the burning of plenty of powder, having had his share in all that had been going on at Paris ; but, provided his piece was adjusted to his satisfaction, and in a masterly manner, little troubled he his head against whom it was directed. He managed his cannon admirably ; and, in spite of all the choppings and changings of opinions and authorities, (which he never seemed able to comprehend,) he persevered in the use of the dictum in days gone by, current in his regiment ; and still persisted in saying, *Quand j'ai bien servi ma pièce, le roi n'est pas mon maître*—(when I have done my business well, the king is not a greater man than I.)

He was an excellent marksman, and had long been *chef de pièce*, when, on account of an injury he received in his foot on the day of the *Champ de Mars*, he was invalided. This circumstance had afflicted him beyond measure ; his comrades, however, who were much attached to him, and had often occasion for his assistance, still continued in the habit of employing him, and consulting with him on all the important occasions which occurred in Paris.

These occasional services in his capacity of artilleryman, and his duties to me, coincided perfectly ; for I spent very little of my time at home, and even when we were at home, he was so often asleep that I waited chiefly upon myself, for I could not find in my heart to disturb him : and so the citizen Blaireau had for two years acquired the habit of absenting himself whensoever it seemed him good, without the ceremony of asking leave ; but he never failed to be in his place at the *appel du soir*, as he called it,—that is to say, when I came home about midnight, or maybe two o'clock in the morning, as I usually did, there I was sure to find him fast asleep by the fire.

There were times when I was not sorry to profit by the protection of his buckler, which he was always but too happy to extend to me. At a review, a battle in the streets, some little revolution going on in

the Revolution, I was well-pleased to take shelter under the potent shield of his influence. I am a curious observer, and in the worst of times I might have been seen perambulating the streets in my suit of black, and with my cane in my hand, just as I go about now. On such occasions I always looked about for the cannons—you know some little things of that sort are always called for even in the most philanthropic revolutions—and as soon as I found them I was certain to behold the long, thin head of my peaceful Blaireau towering above the caps and short plumes of the men ; he always at such times resumed his uniform ; his soft, sleepy eyes would be looking round for me, and as soon as he saw me he would smile, and desire the people about to make way for a citizen, a very good friend of his—then he would take me under the arm, and show me every thing that was to be seen, pointing out to my observation, if they chanced to be present, any of those great men who had gained, as the saying was, in *la lotterie de St. Guillotine*.

When we met again in the evening, we never exchanged a word of remark upon what had been passing before our eyes—there seemed to be a tacit agreement upon this point between us : to make a long tale short, he served me for his amusement, and his country for honour, that is, when it so pleased him ; taking up arms and laying them down at his good pleasure, like a *grand seigneur* of former days. The plan suited us both admirably.

While I was thus contemplating my servant, (I correct myself, and just remark to you by the way, that I call him *servant* to make myself understood by you, but that in the year 2 of the Republic there was no such thing, it was called *un associé*,) well, while I stood musing, the bell continued to ring with redoubled vigour ; but Blaireau slept only the sounder, so it ended by my going to the door myself.

I opened it.

CHAPTER II.

The Ci-devant.

Two very different sort of looking personages were standing at the door—an old man and a child.

The old man was neatly powdered, and wore a livery coat, upon the shoulder of which the place of the discarded shoulder-

knot was still visible. He took off his hat with an air of much respect, looking round him at the same time with a certain constrained, suspicious, fearful air, and seemed to be watching whether any one was coming out after me; at the same time he stood up against the wall to let the boy pass before him.

The lad had still hold of the bell string, and was pulling it with all his might to the measure of the Marseillaise hymn. (It is possible you may some or other of you have heard of that tune.) And as he rang, he whistled the air, looking at me all the time with a sort of defiance, and ringing away till he had finished the last stave.

I waited my young gentleman's time with proper submission, and then gravely stretching out my hand presented him with a two *sous* piece, saying quietly, "Let us have that over again, my good fellow."

He perfectly understood the irony of my present, but did not seem one whit disconcerted; beginning his strain immediately again as if to defy me. He was a handsome lad, and wore his little red cap of liberty hanging smartly over one ear, the rest of his dress being dirty and ragged to the last degree; his feet and arms were bare; he was the very model of a young *sans culotte*.

"Citizen Robespierre is ill," he began, and in an abrupt imperious tone of voice, knitting his little blond eyebrows, "You must come and see him at two o'clock."

And as he ended he flung the two *sous* piece with all his might against one of my panes of glass; broke it into ten thousand pieces, and then, jumping step by step down the stairs, whistling *Ca ira*, he took himself away.

I turned to the old livery servant.

"What do you want?" I said; and seeing he seemed to stand in need of encouragement, I took him by the elbow and ushered him gently into the antechamber.

The poor man shut the door of the antechamber, with an appearance of much anxiety, looked round him again, and advancing in a hesitating manner said, "It is—sir—Madame la Duchesse is not quite so well to-day."

"Which Duchess?" said I. "Come, come, speak quicker and louder. I don't know you—I never saw you before."

The poor man seemed quite terrified at my rude, blunt manner; he had evidently been disconcerted by the presence of the little boy; he seemed quite upset by my way

of speaking; his poor pale cheeks were suffused with a faint crimson blush; he was obliged to sit down; his knees were trembling.

"Madame de St. Aignan," he whispered timidly.

"Oh, very well," I said. "Fear nothing, I have attended her before; I will go to the prison of St. Lazare. Be easy, my good friend; do they think her a little better?"

"Just the same," said he, with a sigh. "There is one there, perhaps, that is able to infuse a little courage—but there is only too much reason to fear for that person—and then—ah yes, then—"

"Bah! my good friend, and what then? we must all learn to support ourselves in these days—men, women, and children—but I have certain little philosophical ideas which may serve to assist the weak. I will come and see Madame de St. Aignan this morning."

I was turning away; the poor old man seemed to wish to detain me a little longer, but I took him by the hand and said, "Here, my good friend, waken my good servant, will you?—that is, if you can—and tell him that people usually want their hats when they go out of a morning."

I was going to leave him in the antechamber without taking further notice of him, when, on opening the door of my room, I found him following, and he entered with me. I saw, as he crossed my threshold, that he cast a terrified glance at Blaireau; Blaireau, however, continued fast asleep.

"Well," said I, "what do you want here? are you mad?"

"No, sir, I am *suspect*," * said he.

"Ah! that is a different thing. It is," I continued, "a position sufficiently disagreeable, but thoroughly respectable. I might have guessed how it was from this mania which you all seem to have, of disguising yourselves as livery servants—quite a monomania!—Well, sir, I have the usual roomy wardrobe empty, and at your service, if it so please you to enter." I opened the two doors of my huge wardrobe, and I bowed as if I were doing the honours of my house, and introducing him to his bed-chamber.

"I am afraid," I added, "that you will not be particularly comfortable in this apartment; but such as it is, it has already lodged six persons in succession."

* *Suspect*—the eye of the government upon them, liable every instant to be arrested.

That was true enough faith.

But no sooner were we alone than my old gentleman assumed quite a different air and manner from his first. He seemed to grow larger in person, and easy and polite in his tones and gestures; and I beheld, in fact, a very fine and gentleman-like old man, with much dignity in his countenance, though he was still deadly pale. On my assuring him solemnly that he was perfectly safe in bestowing his confidence upon me, he sat down and seemed to breathe.

"Sir," said he, casting down his eyes a moment, and then calmly raising them with the dignity becoming his rank; "Sir, I will without hesitation acquaint you with my name, and the purpose of my visit. I am Monsieur de Chénier. I have two sons who have both unhappily adopted principles—to my everlasting regret—in short, they have both attached themselves to the Revolution. One is a member of the Convention—he is the worst; the other, the eldest, is in prison—he is the best. Sir, he has somewhat recovered from his intoxication,—his insanity; and I don't exactly understand why they have shut my poor fellow up—for his writings have been very revolutionary—such as ought to have pleased these execrable, bloodthirsty——"

"Sir," said I, "just give me permission to observe, that one of these execrable, bloodthirsty—— expects me to breakfast with him this morning."

"I know it, sir; but I thought it was simply in your quality of physician—a profession for which I have the greatest respect—for, after those physicians of the soul, the priests, and all ecclesiastics indeed, for I wish to except none, certainly the physicians of the body——"

"Ought to arrive in time to save it," interrupted I, shaking his arm to awaken him from the sort of dozing dotage into which he seemed sinking. "I have the honour to know both your sons."

"To be brief, sir, the only thing which consoles me is," said he, "that the eldest, the prisoner, the officer, is no poet like the author of 'Charles IX.;' and therefore, if I can once get him out of this scrape, by your assistance, if you are so very good as to afford it, there is no danger of his attracting the eyes of the public as an author."

"Right," said I, making up my mind to listen in patience.

"Is it not so, sir?" continued the poor

old gentleman. "André has talents; he it was who drew up the letter of Louis XVIII. to the Convention. Sir, I have assumed this disguise out of consideration for you, who frequent those wretches—that I might not compromise you in any matter that——"

"Independence and disinterestedness are not easily compromised," said I, merely as a passing remark. "Go on, sir."

"*Mort Dieu!* Monsieur," cried he, with a certain military warmth and spirit. "It would be terrible to compromise a gallant gentleman like yourself——"

"I have already had the honour to offer you my best accommodation," said I, pointing to my wardrobe with an air of ceremony.

"That is not what I am in need of," said he. "I do not attempt to conceal myself: on the contrary, I rather wish to excite notice."

"Sir," he continued, "we are living in times when every one ought to exert himself. What care I for the safety of these poor scattered gray hairs? But my poor André!—that is the point, sir—I cannot," looking at me in an earnest beseeching manner—"I cannot bear the idea of his remaining in that horrible prison of St. Lazare."

"He must be content to stay in prison," said I, rudely. "It is the best thing he can do."

"I will go——"

"Don't think of going."

"I will implore——"

"Don't think of imploring."

The poor father was struck dumb; he joined his hands between his knees with an expression of grief and resignation that would have softened the heart of a tiger. He looked at me as some poor criminal at the *Question* might look at his judge during an interval of suffering. His aged forehead was slowly covered with wrinkles, as a calm sea is crisped over by small waves,—astonishment and grief contended for expression upon his countenance. After a little pause he began again, "I see," said he, sorrowfully, "that Madame de St. Aignan was mistaken in you. I don't blame you, sir; in times such as these, every one must take care of himself. I only hope that you will keep our secret—I shall not trouble you again—*citizen.*"

This last word affected me more than all the rest: it was with evident effort that the old man pronounced it. Never, since the world began, has the word *citizen* been uttered in such a tone. The first syllable

was like the hissing of a serpent, and the two last fell into a hoarse, gurgling, almost inarticulate croak. There was an indescribable contempt, a suffocating grief, a despair so intense, in the word *citizen*, as he pronounced it, that it made my blood run cold. The poor old man now prepared to go: placing his thin, blue, veiny hands against his feeble knees to assist himself as he rose from his chair; but I stopped him, and with much gentleness replaced him upon the cushion.

"Madame de St. Aignan was *not* mistaken in me," I said. "You are in safe hands, sir. I have never betrayed the confidence of any one. I have seen much sorrow. It has been my fate to receive the last sigh——"

My brutality made him shudder.

"I understand better than you can do the situation of the prisoners, and above all, the peculiar position in which your son is placed. No exertion on your part can save his life; but you may be the cause of precipitating his fate, if you go on *exerting* yourself, as you call it. Remember, my good sir, during the agitation of an earthquake, the best thing a man can do is to remain perfectly quiet."

He answered by a slight reserved bend of the head; and I saw that my unhappy roughness of manner had altogether lost me his confidence. His eyes were rather closed than cast downwards, as I continued to urge upon him the necessity of the most perfect silence and inaction; adding, as gently and politely as I could, that every age had its peculiar temptation to imprudence, every passion to extravagance,—and that paternal love was almost a passion; that he ought to be aware, without expecting me to explain myself in detail, that I should not presume, in such an important and affecting circumstance, to advise him, without the most absolute certainty of the danger that would arise from his taking the least step in the matter;—that it was impossible for me to explain myself farther, but that he might confide in me, for that no one was more intimately in the confidence of the present rulers; and that it had been my good fortune to find opportunities for rescuing a few from their claws;—that, however, upon this occasion,—one of the most interesting that had ever occurred to me, (because it related to his eldest son, and to the dear and intimate friend of those to whom I was most sincerely attached,)—I assured him solemnly that it was absolutely necessary that he should keep quiet, and leave all to fate—as a pilot without a compass, and on a starless night, aban-

dons himself to the chances of the wind. No, it was in vain. It is written that characters shall exist, so polished, ground down, worn out, attenuated by the mere effect of excessive refinement and civilisation, that they can hear nothing; and that a word a little too rude, a tone a thought too rough, pains them so excessively, that they draw back, and fold themselves, as it were, together, like the sensitive plant. I cannot help it,—at times I *am* too rough. It was, as I said, in vain now to weary myself with speaking: the mischief was done. He agreed to every thing I said; but I felt the hard rock of immovable obstinacy beneath this calm politeness. It was the obstinacy of old age,—that sad resource of a crippled free will, which seems to survive the wreck of all the other faculties.

The Hieroglyphics of Blaireau.

It is the happy peculiarity of my temper, that I exchange one idea for another, as easily as the eye exchanges light for darkness. As soon as I felt certain that all I could urge was of no avail, I stopped. M. de Chénier rose; and I attended him, without speaking another word, to the outer door. But, arrived there, I could not help making one other effort. I took his hand and pressed it affectionately. Poor old man!—he was touched at this. He turned and said, in a low gentle voice, (but what is sometimes more obstinate than gentleness?) "I am very sorry to have troubled you with my petition."

"And I am grieved that you *will* not understand me; and that you mistake my advice for a defeat. But you will reflect upon what I have said, I do hope."

He made a low bow, and went away. I shrugged my shoulders, and came in to prepare for my visits.

A huge giant stood in my way. It was my artillery-man,—it was Blaireau,—as wide awake as it was possible for him to be. Perhaps you imagine he was coming to attend upon me?—Not in the least. To excuse himself?—Still less. He had stripped up his sleeve, and was very gravely employed in finishing, with a needle, a certain symbolical sign upon his left arm. His way was to prick his skin till the blood came, then to rub in gunpowder; a slight inflammation ensued, and he was as perfectly tattooed as a New Zealander. It is an old custom, common among our French soldiers. I could not help losing three minutes more, while I examined this original. I took hold of his arm, which he surrendered to my inspection

with a certain air of secret satisfaction, looking down upon it with a quiet smile of gratified vanity.

"Hallo, my friend!" cried I, after a little examination, "your arm is both a court almanack and a republican calendar."

He rubbed his chin with a quiet smile,—that being his favourite gesture; and he spat on one side, putting his hand before his mouth,—the last action serving as a substitute with him for all sort of useless discourse. It passed as a sign for consent or hesitation,—for reflection or distress,—*manie de corps, tic de regiment*. He then suffered me to examine the heroic and sentimental arm. The device last inscribed upon it was, I found, a Phrygian bonnet, placed above a heart, and round it the words, "*Indivisibilité ou la Mort*."

"I see," said I, "you are no *Fédéraliste*, like the *Girondins*."

He scratched his head. "No, no," said he; "nor the *Citoyenne* Rose neither."

And he showed me a little rose very delicately drawn, and situated close to the heart and under the cap.

"Ah, ah!—I understand your incurable lameness very well, at last," said I. "But I'll tell no tales to your captain."

"Ah, dame!" said he,—“an artilleryman need not have a heart of stone. Rose is the daughter of a *dame tricoteuse*, and her father is jailor of St. Lazare.

I seemed to take no notice of this hint, which he had the air of letting fall without the least premeditation. We understood this tacit arrangement perfectly. I went on examining his hieroglyphics with the attention of a miniature painter. Immediately above this devoted republican heart was pictured a great sword, held between the paws of a little rampant badger, (*Blaireau* badger;) and above it, in large characters, "*Honneur à Blaireau le bourreau des crânes*."

I looked up suddenly, as if to see if the portrait resembled.

"This means you. Nothing to do with politics,—merely a trophy?"

A slight smile stole over the long yellow face of my artilleryman, and he said quietly, "Yes, yes,—it means me. The *crânes* are three *mâtres d'armes*, that I taught to laugh on the wrong side of the face."

"Meaning killed, I supposed?"

"It's our way of saying it," replied he, with an air of the most ineffable innocence.

In fact, this original had, like a hero of Otaheite, engraved upon his long yellow arm, at the end of *Blaireau's* sabre, six foils,

reversed, and bending forward in a sort of attitude of adoration.

I wanted to proceed and see what was above the elbow; but I saw he had no inclination to raise his sleeve farther.

"Pooh, bah!—that was when I was young and foolish."

I understood the reason of his reserve, for I beheld an immense *fleur de lis*, and above it, *Vivent les Bourbons et Sainte Barbe; amour éternel à Madeleine*.

"Always wear long sleeves, child," said I, "if you mean to keep either Rose or your head in your possession."

"Bah, bah!" said he, with affected simplicity; "so long as her father doesn't turn the key upon me—sometimes there are times when the wicket—"

I interrupted him, that I might not be obliged to question further. "Come, come," said I, striking him slightly upon the arm; "you are a good fellow,—you have done nothing amiss since we came together,—you are not going to begin now. You must go out with me this morning; perhaps I may have something for you to do. You will follow me at a little distance; and you will do as you please about entering the houses which I mean to visit.—But let me find you in the street when I come out."

He dressed himself with two or three tremendous yawns, rubbed his eyes, and prepared to follow. As I went out, I found him at the door. He had his three-cornered hat perched on one side of his head, and a white rod in his hand as long as himself.

CHAPTER III.

The Prison of St. Lazare.

ST. LAZARE is an old house, of a dull dirty mud colour. It was formerly a priory; and, if I am not deceived, was finished in the year 1465, on the site of the ancient monastery of St. Lawrence, celebrated by Gregory of Tours in the sixth book of his history, as perhaps you know very well. The kings of France tarried there twice;—first, at their solemn entry into Paris they there rested; and secondly, at their last departure they there made a station, on their way to St. Denis, be it understood. In course of time, this priory was converted into barracks; and afterwards it became a state prison, a house of correction for monks, conspirators, and disorderly people of every description. This dirty, ruinous, wretched, unhealthy-looking place had from time to time been added to

and enlarged, but had lost nothing of its peculiarly villainous appearance.

I was some time in walking from the Place de la Révolution, to the Rue Faubourg St. Denis, where the prison is situated. As I approached, I distinguished it by a sort of blue and red rag, which was washed almost colourless by the rain, and which hung from a great black pole planted above the door. Upon a black marble slab, in great white letters, was the following inscription, which was at that time universally placed upon all the public buildings, and which seemed to me like the epitaph of the nation :—

Unité, Indivisibilité de la République,
Égalité, Fraternité ou la Mort.

Before the door of this horrible place some *sans culottes* were sitting upon wooden benches, sharpening their pikes in the kennel, and singing the *carmagnole*; while others were taking away the lantern from the cord which suspended it across the street, in order to tie up a man in its place, whom I could see coming along, at some distance, dragged down the street, and surrounded by a crowd of *poissardes*, screeching out *ça ira*. I was a well-known person, and not altogether without my use, so they let me enter without molestation. I knocked at a ponderous door which terminated the vaulted porch. The door opened a little, as of itself, and, as I stood hesitating and waiting for it to open entirely, I heard the voice of the jailer calling out, "Well, what are you about?—why don't you come in?" The moment I had crossed the threshold, the door banged violently to behind me. I shuddered. It seemed as if this heavy, iron-welded, nailed door, with all its garniture of locks and bolts, had closed between me and the living world for ever.

The jailer laughed at my air of consternation, and muttered between the three teeth he yet had left. The old wretch was huddled up in a huge, black leather chair, something like a porter's chair, but so contrived, that the back could be let down, so as to form a bed : it was called a *cré maillère*. There the Cerberus slept and watched, without troubling himself to move. His yellow, wrinkled, ironical face, projected above his knees, on which it was supported by his chin; his two legs rested one on each arm of his chair; in his right hand he held his enormous bunch of keys; in his left the lock of the door; so that he managed to shut and open it without much trouble.

Behind his chair there stood a young girl,

with her hands in the pockets of her jaunty little apron. She was fair, blooming, fresh-coloured, with a little, saucy nose, the pouting lips of a child, white arms, and an appearance of health, good-humour, neatness, and pertness, strongly in contrast with every thing that surrounded her. Her dress was a sort of red stuff, relieved with black; a cap, white as snow, upon her head, surmounted by an immense tricolored cockade. I had often seen her before, but had never looked at her with much attention; but to-day, full of my artilleryman's *demi-confiance*, I examined his friend Rose with considerable interest, for I had not an instant's doubt that Rose it was.

The pretty girl had an air of lively good-humour, which had the effect of increasing, by contrast, the melancholy of the place. This blooming young creature reminded you of the sweet, free air of the open country,—of wild thyme and daffodils;—and many a sigh, I doubt not, has her presence occasioned, as she recalled to the unhappy victims around her the blowing wind, the open plains, and the waving corn of their home fields.

"It is mere cruelty," I said, stopping for an instant,— "double cruelty, to show that child to the *détenus*."

She understood what I said about as well as if I had spoken Greek; but I did not intend to be understood. She opened her large blue eyes; showed the most beautiful teeth in the world, without what could be called exactly smiling; her lips opened like a clove pink when you press it with your finger.

Her father growled; but he had the gout, and he said nothing. I passed on, and entered the corridors, which were so dark that I was obliged to feel my way before me with my cane; these damp and gloomy avenues being lighted, at mid-day, only by one or two murky lamps.

It is a different thing at St. Lazare now. All is neat, polished, whitewashed, cleansed, well-ordered; but, in 1794, St. Lazare was rather like a huge cage for wild beasts, than a place fitted for the reception of civilized man. There existed at that time only the old weatherbeaten building which may yet be seen—an enormous cave of four stories high, filled to the very roof, as full as it could hold, with prisoners. On the outside, the windows were covered with grates, whose immense twisted iron bars almost completely excluded the air. Within were three large, ill-lighted passages, which traversed each story; the walls of each of which were pierced by forty

doors, opening upon kennels rather than cells, fit only to shelter wolves, and with a suffocating smell that was almost insupportable. At the end of each corridor were immense iron-grated doors, and in the door of each cell, little open grated squares, called *guichets*, which the jailers could open outside, so as to overlook the prisoner at any moment.

As I came in I crossed the great empty court, where every night those terrible carts were ranged, destined each morning to bear away their loads of victims to the guillotine. The carts were now absent. I shuddered as I passed, and clambered up the ruined flight of steps, by which the prisoners descended to this their last journey.

At length I entered what was called the *preâu*, a sort of central court, large and hideous, surrounded by lofty walls, and where the sun, reflected from some neighbouring roof, sometimes, but rarely, cast his beams. There was an enormous stone fountain in the middle; four rows of trees around it; and at the other end, an immense white Christ, upon a cross of deep blood-coloured red.

Two women were at the foot of the cross—one very young, the other very aged. The young girl was upon her knees, her hands clasped, her head resting upon her bosom, praying, in an agony of tears. She reminded me so much of the unhappy *Princesse de Lamballe*, that I turned away my head.

The elder lady was employed in watering two miserable vines, planted at the foot of the cross. Those vines are still there; what torrents of tears—tears of blood—have nourished their slender tendrils.

A turnkey (*guichetier*) was singing and washing his linen at the fountain.

I passed on; and, entering the corridor, I stopped at the twelfth cell on the ground-floor. A turnkey came; examined me from head to foot with his eye; recognised me; placed his great red hand on the lock of the door, and it opened—I stood before *Madame la Duchesse de St. Aignan*.

CHAPTER IV.

A Young Mother.

As the turnkey opened the door suddenly, I heard a little shriek, and I perceived that *Madame de St. Aignan* was taken by surprise, and was a little startled so to be. As for me, I was always taken by surprise with one thing, to which I never could accustom myself,—and that was the perfect grace and dignity of her demeanour, her calmness, her

gentle resignation, her angelic patience, and her sweet and womanly modesty. There was that in her, so rare and so exquisite, which commands respect and submission, without ever exacting it; and even her down-cast eyes were of power irresistible. At this moment she was, however, a little disconcerted at our sudden intrusion; but she soon recovered her dignity and composure.

Her cell was very small, and at this time of the year burning hot, exposed as it was to the southern sun, and in *Thermidor*, which I assure you was as sultry as any July you have ever been acquainted with. The only means *Madame de St. Aignan* had to protect herself, in some degree, from the fierce rays of the sun, which fell full upon the little apartment, was to hang her shawl before the window; it was the only article of dress of that sort which she had been allowed to keep. The dress she had on was of the simplest; but it was an evening dress, and with short sleeves; it might have been a ball dress. She rose up blushing with a slight "*Eh mon Dieu!*" and for a moment the tears stood in her eyes; but seeing I was alone, she recovered herself immediately, and throwing over her shoulders a sort of short, white dressing-gown, which lay near, she sat down upon the edge of her bed, offering me a straw chair, the only other article of furniture in her prison. I perceived that one of her feet was bare, and that she had upon her hand a small, delicate open-worked black silk stocking, which she was mending.

"Good heavens!" cried I, "if you had only given me a hint."

"Our poor Queen did as much!" said she; and she smiled sadly as she raised her beautiful eyes to mine with charming tranquillity. But soon her expression relapsed into one of mournful gravity, and I remarked upon that noble countenance a deep and solemn character, which was new to me, and which added force to its usual melancholy.

"Sit down! sit down!" said she in a hurried manner, and with a certain hoarseness in her voice. "Since my situation has been made known, thanks to you, and I owe you—"

"Enough, enough," said I, interrupting her; "I hate speeches."

"I have a reprieve," continued she; "but the tumbrils will come as usual, and they will not depart empty for the revolutionary tribunal."

Her eyes were fixed upon the window—there was a momentary wildness in them.

"The tumbrils! the dreadful tumbrils!" said she. "Their wheels shake the walls of St. Lazare to their foundations. The horrid noise makes me shudder. How lightly they roll under the archway as they come in! how slow and heavy they depart! Alas! they are coming this very day for their load of men, women, and children. Rose has given me the intelligence. Poor Rose! she has a sweet voice; it is a consolation to us all to hear it singing below our windows, even when it is to announce tidings grievous such as these. Poor little thing!"

She was silent a moment, passed her hand across her eyes, struggled a little for composure, and then resuming her own noble and confiding air:—"What I wished to ask you," said she, resting the end of her fingers upon my black coat sleeve, "is, to find me the means to preserve my poor unborn child from the influence of these horrors, these sufferings. I am in terror for it, poor little being. You men—even you, physician as you are—can never know the pride and tenderness which fills a woman's heart at such a moment!"

She raised her eyes to heaven.

"Good heavens! what a divine terror! what fresh and continued astonishment! Another heart beating within my own! An innocent, angelic spirit, in union with my own harassed and agitated being! A double mysterious life and sympathy, known and shared by me alone! But to think that my agitation is perhaps intense suffering to this tender, invisible creature—that my terrors are to him pain, my pains anguish, my anguish death! Ah! when I think of this, I dare hardly breathe!—I dare hardly think—I am afraid to move—I am afraid of my own thoughts—I reproach myself with my love, with my hate—I dare not be agitated—I treasure myself as if I were a saint—I do not know where to turn—this is how I feel."

She looked like an angel as she thus spoke, with a sort of divine terror and anxiety in her large eyes.

"Help me, doctor! furnish me with some idea that I can keep fixed here, in my mind," looking at me earnestly. "Save me from injuring my child. You are sorry for me; I see you are. You know, alas! that it is all in vain; nothing can harden our poor hearts; they will hurry, pause, tremble; oh, they will!—And what will be the fate of my child?"

"However," said she, after a pause, and letting her beautiful head fall with an air of

despondency upon her bosom, "one thing is certain. It is my duty to carry this poor little creature to the day of its birth, which will be upon the eve of that of my death. I am only allowed to remain on earth for that. I am the frail shell which surrounds the precious fruit, and which will be broken as soon as that is disclosed. I am nothing else! Nothing else now, doctor!—But do you think"—laying hold of, and pressing my hand—"Do you think they will let me see it?—Do you think they will let it be with me just for a few hours after it is born?—If they were to take and kill me directly, it would be very cruel, wouldn't it?—Oh! if they only give me time to hear it cry—to kiss it—and nurse it just through one day—I think I could forgive them all the rest; I do so excessively long for that one hour!"

I could only press her hands; I could only bend down and kiss them with a sort of religious reverence. I could not speak, and I was afraid to interrupt her.

She smiled through her tears, with the sweet radiant smile of a pretty woman of two-and-twenty, and then she went on:—

"I always fancy that you know every thing—that I have only to say, why? and you have an answer ready. Now, tell me, *why* is a woman more a mother than she is any thing else? friend, daughter, wife even—less vain, less delicate, perhaps less rational, than is in her nature? That a child, who is yet as nothing, is every thing! that those living already are less than it!—This is very wrong! This is very unjust! But so it is! Why is it so? I am angry with myself."

"Gently! gently!" said I. "You have a little fever. You speak too quick and too hurriedly. Gently."

"Ah, Heaven!" cried she, "and I shall never nourish it at my breast!" And turning suddenly away, she flung herself upon the little bed, and, burying her face in the counterpane, wept bitterly. Her heart was overflowing.

I looked at her as she lay weeping without constraint, and as if she had quite forgotten that I was present, and I reflected upon this total indifference to the loss of fortune, rank, and all the delicate refinements of her condition. I observed then, as I often had occasion to remark at that period, that those who appeared to lose the most, complained the least.

Habits of ease and refinement raise the mind above that very luxury which is a daily, unobserved habit of life. A refined

education gives a certain contempt for mere physical privations, and teaches a disregard for every thing but the sufferings of the heart and spirit. A mind, well matured by instruction and religious meditation, learns to estimate the true value of such things, and to look down upon them, as it were, from a certain habitual elevation of thought.

There was, I assure you, as much dignity surrounding Madame de St. Aignan, thus hiding her head, and weeping upon her flock coverlet, as ever I had seen in her when resting her noble forehead on cushions embroidered with gold. Dignity becomes a habit which ennobles every gesture, and is independent of circumstances. I waited patiently till this passion of regret should subside, for what could I say of comfort; besides, I am silent and shy on such occasions; I can only look on in a sort of embarrassed sympathy.

As I sat leaning my arm over the back of my chair, my eyes fell upon the leather back and black oaken frame of this miserable companion of so many successive sufferers. It was large, and dark with age, and covered with all sorts of marks, devices, and inscriptions, scratched in with a nail, with a pen-knife, with a pin, with a fork, with any thing,—a record of impatience, ennuï, despondency, despair—a confusion of names, sentiments, hieroglyphics—a melancholy album! The writers had all departed for that bourne, where, sooner or later, we must all arrive, and had left this miserable record of their last feelings behind them. I read,—

Mourir?—dormir.
Rougeot de Moncrif,
Garde-du-corps.

A little lower down, surrounded with a festoon of flowers and true lovers' knots:—

Ici a gèmi dans les fers Agricola Adorable Francoville, de la section Brutus; bon patriote, ennemi du négocianisme; exhuissier, ami du sans culottisme. Il ira au néant avec un republicanisme sans tâche.

Near this, in a little, delicate, woman's hand:—

Dieu protège le roi Louis XVIII. et mes pauvres parens.
Mario de Saint Chamans.
Agée de quinze Ans.

Poor child! I saw her name upon a list in the handwriting of Robespierre, which happened to fall into my hands: there was this note in the margin:—

Beaucoup prononcé en fanatisme, et contre la liberté, quoique très jeune!

Madame de St. Aignan still continued to weep, but her sobs were subsiding; and as I

read the following inscription, which was evidently quite recent, I found she had risen, and was resting her hand upon my shoulder. As I read,—

Souffie, ô cœur gros de paine, affamé de justice,
Toi, vertu, pleure si je meurs.

No signature.

"You will not efface those lines," said she, softly. "He was in this cell before me. M. de Chénier is one of our greatest friends, and this memorial is precious to me.—You know that M. de St. Aignan is only seven-and-twenty, and about the age of M. de Chénier.—You may have observed the strong attachment that subsisted between them; between us all three; and now this is all that I have left."

The Duc de St. Aignan had been, not very long before, separated from his duchess; and was now confined in a separate apartment, and upon a different story to that she occupied; so that they did not meet even at meals.

"We have enjoyed his most intimate friendship," said she, in a confiding tone. "And he has been in the habit of sending several of his little things to us, in strict confidence; but he will, if he lives, prove himself to be a man of the finest genius; trust me he will," added she.

"Indeed!" said I.

"No one but ourselves," she continued, "has been privileged to share in his ideas; and I have promised not to betray his confidence even to you. They are extraordinary and original, as you will easily conceive. He seemed to take pleasure in opening them to us."

"And Mademoiselle de Coigny?" said I, a little maliciously.

"Oh!" said she, "Mademoiselle de Coigny is a mere child, and so he regards her. She is quite incapable of appreciating such things."

CHAPTER V.

The Refectory.

THEY had locked me up, according to custom, with the gentle prisoner, and we were yet speaking when the lock turned, the door opened, and the *guichetier* cried out:—"Bérenger, femme Aignan! Hé! Hé! Come to the refectory. Ho! Hé!"

"Do you hear?" said she, with a very soft voice, and a little meaning smile, "my people! To summon me to breakfast!

I gave her my arm, and we went down together, and entered a great hall upon the ground-floor.

A long, bare, dirty table, without any table-cloth, laid with pewter dishes, tin drinking cups, coarse stone jugs, coarse blue plates, and with heaps of small round loaves placed at intervals upon the table, surrounded by greasy, worm-eaten benches, was what first met my eyes. I looked round the apartment; the roof was blackened with smoke, and supported by low heavy pillars; the walls were the colour of soot, their sole ornament being certain rude trophies, composed of rusty pikes and muskets; and the whole was lighted by four heavy, smoky lamps, and filled with the damp, unwholesome, suffocating air of a close cellar.

I shut my eyes for a moment, that I might see better afterwards. My gentle companion did the same. When we opened them again, we saw a small circle of persons standing, as it were, apart. Their low voices and perfect *tôn* soon assured me that they were people of birth and education. They saluted me as I entered, and rose when they saw the Duchess de St. Aignan. We passed them, and proceeded a little farther into the room.

At the other end of the table there was another and larger group, full, as it appeared to me, of excitement, talking and laughing, looking very like a party of young people in their morning undress, after a court ball. Some were sitting, some standing, whispering, murmuring, rallying. You might hear the little, affected laugh of irony or jealousy, mingled with opera airs hummed between the teeth, glissades, half-finished dancing steps and snapping of the fingers, in lieu of castanets; in fact, it was a regular circle. Something of peculiar interest seemed to be, however, at present going on among them. First there was an interval of silence, soon followed by a burst of enthusiasm or disapprobation, applause or murmuring, as if the place were a theatre. A head might be seen suddenly raised above the crowd, then as suddenly to disappear.

"Some childish game or other," said I, slowly making the tour of the immense breakfast-table.

Madame de St. Aignan stopped, leaned against the table, and let go my arm.

"*Eh! mon Dieu!* Don't let us go near them; they are at that horrible game," said she. "I have so entreated them not to go on with it? Can you conceive it? Can

you imagine such unheard-of indifference? Go you and look at them; I shall sit down here."

I left her sitting upon the bench, and went up to them.

I cannot say the thing shocked me so much as it did her. I could not help secretly, in a manner, almost admiring this prison amusement. I compared it to the games of the gladiators. Say what you will of the French nation, there is something of the antique, of the classic, yet remaining among them. We have all, at school, felt a certain admiration for the resolution which led the miserable Roman slaves to study, at least, *à mourir avec grace*. And here I saw precisely the same thing going on, without affectation, without pretending to any extraordinary courage, carelessly, idly, among these noble slaves of the sovereign people.

"*A vous, Madame de Périgord,*" said a young man, in a blue silk coat, striped with white, "let us see how you will ascend the stage."

"How you will manage such an awkward affair," said one.

"Oh! she will make no awkward affair of it," cried another.

"Nonsense!" cried a charming young woman of about thirty. "I protest I will not ascend at all, if you don't put the chair in a more convenient place."

"Oh! for shame! Madame de Périgord," cried another young lady. "The name of Sabine Veriville is on the list before yours. Where are you, Sabine?—*à vous*, let us see you mount the scaffold properly."

"I am not very much accustomed to such things, unfortunately," said she. "But let us see; where must I put my foot?"

There was a general laugh. They all pushed forward; every body was busy showing, describing.

"There is a plank here"—"No, there"—"Three feet high"—"Only two"—"Not higher than the chair"—"Not so high"—"Excuse me, you are quite wrong"—"*Qui vivra verra*"—"On the contrary, *qui mourra verra*."

A fresh burst of laughter.

"You spoil the game," said a young man, gravely.

"Come," resumed Madame de Périgord, "Tell me the conditions over again. If I understand right, the business is to ascend the machine—"

"The stage," interrupted a young lady.

"Just as you please," continued she;

"without blundering, or shuffling, or catching a foot in one's gown—there I am!"

In fact, she had lighted upon the chair like a bird, and stood the picture of graceful triumph.

There was a burst of applause.

"And what next?" said she, gaily.

"Next! ah! you have nothing to do with that."

"Next! the chopper!" said a coarse, heavy turnkey, who was looking on.

"Ay," said an aged lady of eighty years at least, the *Chanoinesse* of some noble order; "but now, pray don't next begin to harangue the people. Nothing can be in worse taste than that."

"Nor more entirely useless," added I.

M. de Loiserolles offered his hand for the fair exhibiter to descend from her chair; the Marquis d'Usson, M. de Micault, *conseiller au parlement de Dijon*, the two young Trudaines, the good M. de Vergennes, No. 76, pressed forward to help her. She sprang from the chair without assistance, light and graceful, as if she were stepping from her carriage.

"Ah! ah! now, for it!" cried all the party at once.

A young, very young, lady now advanced with the elegance of an Athenian virgin, and entered the circle. She moved with a light, swaying, half-dancing gait, like the half-child that she was. She seemed to perceive this, and tried to walk quietly; but she kept stepping on her feet so lightly, that it reminded me of a young bird trying its wings. Her black hair was arranged à l'*antique*, and bound and twisted with a gold chain. She looked like the fairest and youngest of the Muses. The Grecian mode had just begun to supersede powder. Her waist was so slender, that I think the bracelet of an ordinary person might have served this Venus for a cestus. Her small head seemed to bend forward her long, swan-like neck; her shoulders were a little rounded, like those of young people who have not quite done growing, and, with her slender, delicate arms, gave her an appearance at once elegant and interesting. Her profile was regular, her mouth small and serious, her eyes black, her eyebrows in a simple, almost severe arch, like those of a Circassian; and there was something resolute and original in her expression, that was excessively attractive. Such was Mademoiselle de Coigny, the young creature I had seen praying before the cross as I came in.

She looked as if she were entirely in what she was doing, and never thought of those who were admiring her. She advanced, with her eyes sparkling with pleasure. I love those sparkling, animated eyes at that age: it is the best sign of an innocent heart. Her animation seemed to electrify the others. There was that in her air which said,

Ma bien venue au jour me rit dans tous les yeux,
And

L'illusion féconde habite dans mon sein.

She was going to ascend.

"Oh no! no! Not you! not you!" cried a young man in a plain gray dress, whom I had not before remarked, and who now pressed forward. "Not you—not you—I beseech you."

She stopped, made a little shrug with her shoulders, like a pouting child, and put her fingers over her mouth with a sort of embarrassment. She glanced sideways at the chair. She did not like to give it up.

Just then somebody said, "But Madame de St. Aignan is there."

With the presence of mind and delicacy which marks good company, the chair was instantly abstracted, and they arranged themselves as if for a country dance, to hide if possible this singular rehearsal of the tragedy of the Place de la Révolution.

The women all went up to speak to her, gathering round her to hide this game, which was her detestation; and which might possibly strike her imagination in a dangerous manner. The attentions were delicate and polite, such as the young duchess might have received at Versailles. Habitual good manners are never lost. Shut but your eyes—nothing was changed—you were in a *salon*.

I again remarked among the crowd the figure of the young man in gray, with his pale and somewhat worn countenance, as he wandered silently among the different groups, his head bent down, and his arms crossed. He had immediately quitted Mademoiselle de Coigny, and he continued to walk up and down with hasty steps, looking from time to time at the walls and heavily grated windows, with the expression of a caged lion. He had the air of a military man, with his black stock, and his gray dress, which was cut like a uniform. The costume and countenance—the black hair flattened over the face, the black eyes, all were in exact resemblance of a portrait I had seen—it was André Chénier.

Madame de St. Aignan introduced us to one another. She called to him, he came

and sat down by her, took her hand and pressed it hastily to his lips, looking round with anxiety and agitation. She said no more and followed his eyes uneasily. He sat a little aside, in the shade, listening at intervals to the low murmurs of the busy talking crowd now walking about the room. They had all left us by degrees, and I remarked that Mademoiselle de Coigny seemed to avoid us purposely. We were sitting upon the black oak bench, with our backs leaning against the table. Madame de St. Aignan, who was between us, drawing a little back, in order that Chénier and I might converse together; he advanced his head a little before her, as if he wished to enter into conversation:—so I began.

“These meetings at meals, must be some little consolation in prison.”

“It seems to enliven them,” said he sadly, “it seems to enliven every one but myself—but I am proof—to me it is a fatal meeting—I can only think of the last social meal of the martyrs.”

I dropped my eyes—I was, alas! but too much of the same opinion.

“Don’t,” said Madame de St. Aignan, looking mournfully at him, “I have cause enough for sorrow and anxiety.—Don’t, don’t terrify me by your imprudence.”

And bending towards me, she whispered,—“There are spies every where.—Don’t let him commit himself. He does not mind me. He terrifies me every day by giving way to this irritation and ill-humour.”

I made no answer. I raised my eyes involuntarily to Heaven. There was a moment’s silence. “Poor young creature!” thought I. “Illusions of hope even here!—in this horrible place!—and seeing a *fournée* of your companions carried off every day before your eyes!”

André Chénier,—for so his name has remained consecrated, and so I shall leave it,—looked at me, shaking his head gently, with a mingled expression of pity and tenderness. I understood him,—and he saw that I understood him.

“Poor little thing!” it implied. “She thinks that I can still *commit* myself!”

Not to interrupt the conversation abruptly, so as to excite her attention, but to dissipate her ideas by rendering them general, I went on.

“I have always thought,” said I to André Chénier, “that poets had the gift of prevision.”

His eye sparkled, and answered to mine.—

It was but for a moment,—he looked at me with suspicion.

“Are you saying what you really think?” said he. “I can never understand you people of the world. I never know whether you are speaking seriously or not. The bane of the French nation is *persiflage*.”

“I am not altogether a man of the world, and I always speak seriously.”

“Well then,” said he, “I will confess honestly that I believe in it. It is very rarely, indeed, that my first impression,—my *coup d’œil*,—my *presentiment*, deceives me.”

“And so,” said Madame de St. Aignan, trying to smile,—“so you would not let Mademoiselle de Coigny mount the chair?”

“Ah!” said he, taking her hand in both his,—“I had hoped that we had succeeded in hiding our cruel amusement from Madame de St. Aignan. I had been so anxious that they should make an end of it;—and then that beautiful child—”

“Child if you please,” said Madame de St. Aignan, rather coldly. “But child as she may be, one who, with her carelessness, and imprudence, and coquetry, would make her mother but too uneasy if she were here.”

As she spoke, Mademoiselle de Coigny passed us, leaning on the arms of two gentlemen, who were laughing at what she was saying. She glided along, looking at her feet, and walking in a sort of measure as if she were beginning to dance. We heard her say to M. Trudaine as she passed,—

“Since, as you say, *women alone slay* before they are slain, I find it very proper that you should all submit humbly to your fate, as you will every one of you be obliged to do one of these days.”

André Chénier did not stop speaking; but he coloured, and bit his lips at this reproach, which was evidently intended for him, and which he could not help hearing, though Madame de St. Aignan, with a woman’s delicacy of feeling, raised her voice that he might not. She feared that he might be provoked into some fresh imprudence.

I saw some very ill-looking faces approaching us, and I tried to put a stop to this sort of conversation, which seemed quite out of place, and irritated me, who came from without, and who understood, better than any of them, their real situation.

“I saw your father this morning,” said I, abruptly, to Chénier. He started, and looked astonished.

"Sir," said he, "I saw him too, at ten o'clock."

"He had just left me," cried I. "What did he say?"

"What!" cried André, rising. "Is this the gentleman who——"

The rest was whispered in the ear of his beautiful neighbour. I guessed the prejudices which the poor old man had excited against me.

André rose suddenly; walked a turn or two, with a certain air of impatience; then returned, and standing before Madame de St. Aignan, crossed his arms, and said, in a loud passionate manner,—

"Since it is your high privilege, citizen, to be acquainted with these rascals, who are decimating us, you may repeat to them from me the words for which I have been arrested, — every thing that I said in the *Journal de Paris*, — every thing that I shouted in the ears of those ragged lictors, who arrested my friend in his own house. You may tell them it is written *here, — here —*"

"In the name of Heaven, stop!" cried the young duchess, seizing his arm; but he drew a paper out of his pocket in spite of her, and held it out to me, striking it with his other hand.

"I told them that they were *barbarous executioners, murderous perverters of the laws*; and that, if it was written '*that the sword of vengeance was never to glitter in my hands*,' that I had my pen, — *my precious treasure*, — and that if I lived, the day should surely come when I would dedicate their names to everlasting infamy, — (*cracher sur leurs noms*;) and that I hoped to live to celebrate their downfall, and the triumph of those who come, the triple scourge in their hands, to punish their infamous triumvirate. — And you may add, that I said all this to you, — yes, to you! — Surrounded as I was by a thousand other poor, timid, unresisting sheep, who are waiting to be slaughtered and served up as a sacrifice to *le peuple roi*!"

At this loud explosion, the prisoners crowded round him, as the poor timid animals he had compared them to are wont to do round the father of the flock. For the moment an irresistible change had taken place in him. He seemed to me grown taller, larger. Indignation made his eyes and countenance sparkle like fire. He was really noble.

I turned to M. de Lagarde, an officer of the *Garde Française*. "The blood runs too fast in the veins of this family," said I. "It

is in vain for me to attempt to moderate it." And I shrugged my shoulders, rose from my seat, and retreated a few paces.

The expression, *in vain for me*, seemed to strike him. He stopped speaking immediately; and leaning against a pillar, bit his lips. Madame de St. Aignan sat looking at him all the time, with the aspect of one witnessing the sudden eruption of a volcano. One of his friends, M. de Roquelaure, who had been colonel of the regiment of Beauce, came and tapped him on the shoulder,—

"Ah, well!" said he,— "you suffer yourself to fly into a rage against this *canaille régnante*; you would be much better employed in kissing these miserable comedians till the curtain falls—over us first—over them sooner or later."

And making a pirouette, he went and sat down at table, humming, — *La vie c'est un voyage*.

The entrance of an immense pitcher filled with boiling soup now announced that breakfast was ready. A sort of poissarde named, if I recollect right, *la femme Simon*, placed herself at the centre of the table to do the honours. She was the female of the animal called *jailer*, who sat crouching in his den at the prison door. The prisoners belonging to this side of the building sat down to table, in number about fifty. St. Lazare at that time containing about seven hundred. As soon as they were seated their air changed. They looked at one another sorrowfully. The murky glare of the huge lamps cast dark gloomy shadows on their pale faces—they had the appearance of miners in their caves, or the unhappy spirits in prison, — what was red, looked black; what pale, ghastly and blue—their eyes glared. The conversation sank to whispers.

Behind the guests were ranged the *guichetiers*, the turnkeys, the agents of police, and several amateur *sans culottes*, who came to enjoy the spectacle. Some *Dames de la Halle* were also there, carrying their children in their arms that they might enjoy the privilege of assisting at this feast, arranged according to the best democratic taste. Their entrance was signalized by a strong smell of fish, which spoiled the breakfast of some of the more delicate victims of these princesses of the day.

These agreeable spectators had countenances at once stupid and cruel; they looked, too, somewhat disappointed; they seemed to have expected something different from this subdued and dignified submission to the inevit-

able; this quiet *à parte* conversation which was freely carried on between next neighbours. As nobody blustered or threatened, they seemed not exactly to know how to behave. They maintained a sulky sort of silence, and some few seemed not quite to like showing their faces before those whose own servants they had waited upon and robbed.

Mademoiselle de Coigny had made herself a sort of rampart of five or six young men who stood in a circle round her, and stood sipping a *bouillon*, just as she might have done at a ball supper, looking down with supreme contempt upon the crowd of spectators.

Madame de St. Aignan took nothing; she was scolding André Chénier, and I saw she looked from time to time at me. She was telling him he had made a very uncalled-for attack upon one of her best friends. He bent his eyebrows and looked down with an air of submission. She made me a sign to approach.

"Here is M. de Chénier," said she, "who pretends that all this silence and tranquillity on the part of the Jacobins is a very bad symptom. But don't let him indulge in these explosions of passion."

Her beseeching eyes told me that she wanted us to be reconciled; André Chénier did his part politely and gracefully.

"Sir," he began, "you have been in England; should you ever go there again, and should you happen to meet with Edmund Burke, you may assure him that I repent my criticisms upon his work. He was quite right when he foretold the reign of the *porte faux*. This commission will be less disagreeable, I flatter myself, than the one with which I charged you just now. Forgive me—a prison does not sweeten our tempers."

He held out his hand:—by the way in which I pressed it, he knew that he had a friend.

At this moment a heavy, lumbering noise was heard, which shook the windows and made every one start and shudder. There was a sudden silence. It was the noise of the tumbrils. A sound but too well known; it was like thunder once heard, and never forgotten. It was not like the sound of common wheels; there was a sort of screeching, grinding noise like that of rusty chains, or the rattling of the earth upon our biers: I turned sick, "and the hair of my skin arose."

"Hé! make haste! Eat and have done

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with it," said the hoarse voice of la femme Simon.

No movement, no answer; we all remained as it were fixed in the position in which we had first heard that fatal roll. We were like the families of Pompeii and Herculaneum, surprised by death in the very attitude they were in.

La Simon changed plates, knives, and forks in vain; all remained fixed, no one stirred, the astonishment at this unheard of cruelty seemed to have petrified us. To have allowed them to meet once more,—to have permitted this friendly intercommunion of a few hours,—to have taken them from their dreariness and their solitude to enjoy once again society, friendship, even love! and all to render this sudden parting more inexpressibly bitter!—Oh, it was too much! It was the barbarity of tigers—of Jacobins!

The great doors of the refectory were flung open, and three commissaries entered. They were clothed in long skirted, dirty coats, top-boots, and wore red scarfs; and they were followed by a fresh company of the rabble in *bonnets rouges*, and armed with pikes. These last rushed in uttering cries of joy, and clapping their hands as at a pantomime. What they saw struck even them—the slaughterers fell back abashed before their victims—for, recovering immediately from their first sentiment of dismay and astonishment, contempt gave them courage to meet this supreme moment. They felt themselves so far above their enemies, that it almost filled them with a momentary satisfaction, and they turned their eyes, with composure, upon one of the commissaries who advanced, a paper in his hand, and prepared to read.

It was the *appel nominal*.

As soon as a name was pronounced, two men stepped forward, and led off the person mentioned. He was given in charge to the mounted *gens d'armes* outside, and immediately placed upon one of the tumbrils. The accusation was, that of conspiracy in prison against the sovereign people, and planning the assassination of the members of the committee *de salut public*. The first person accused was a woman of eighty years of age, the abbess of Montmartre, Madame de Montmorenci. She rose with some difficulty, and, when she was standing, saluted all present with a tranquil smile. Those who were near kissed her hands. Not a tear was shed: the sight of blood seemed to have dried up such vain demonstrations of sorrow.

No. 56.

She went out, saying, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do!"

A mournful silence ensued.

It was interrupted by the shouts and screams which announced that she had made her appearance among the populace outside, and a shower of stones struck against the walls and windows. In the midst of the noise I could distinguish the explosion, now and then, of fire-arms. There were moments when the *gens d'armes* could scarcely preserve the prisoners from being massacred.

The *appel* continued. The second name was that of a young man of twenty, M. de Coaterel, if I remember right, who was accused of having a son, an emigrant, bearing arms against his country. The accused was not even married. He burst out laughing. He pressed the hands of his friends, and went out.

The same shouts and clatter of stones.

A mournful silence round the table; all waiting the sentence of death at their post, as soldiers expect the fatal bullet. As soon as a prisoner went out, his plate was cleared away, and those who remained closed their ranks, as in a battle, smiling sadly at their new neighbours.

André Chénier was still standing by Madame de St. Aignan, and I was near them. As in a shipwreck the crew gather instinctively round the one who possesses the highest courage and energy, so the prisoners collected gradually round this young man. He stood, his arms crossed, and his eyes raised to Heaven, as if in apostrophe. "Did Heaven look on, and would not take their part?"

Mademoiselle de Coigny, standing at the other end of the room, saw, at every successive *appel*, the circle of her protectors diminish, till at length she was left almost alone. Then she slowly advanced, supporting herself upon the edge of the now empty table, till she came to where we were sitting, and placed herself at a little distance,—taking shelter, poor forlorn child! as it were, under the shadow of our wings. Her noble countenance preserved its dignity, but nature was giving way: her limbs trembled, and her knees were knocking together. The good Madame de St. Aignan held out her hand. The poor young creature burst into tears, and fell sobbing upon her bosom.

The rude and pitiless voice of the commissary continued the *appel*. The man seemed to take pleasure in prolonging suspense and suffering. He pronounced the baptismal names in a slow, affected, drawling manner—

dropping out syllable after syllable; then suddenly closing with the family name. It was like the fall of the axe.

He swore rudely at the prisoners as they passed him,—a preface to the cries and hisses outside. He was heated with wine, and could hardly keep his legs.

While the man was reading, I observed close behind, and crouching down almost under his arm, a woman's white cap, and above this white cap, with its large tricolored cockade, the long thin face of a man, who was tall enough to read the list over the commissary's shoulders. It was Rose and my artilleryman Blaireau.

Rose appeared gay and curious, like her friends of the *Halle*, by whom she was surrounded. I felt that I detested her. As for Blaireau, he had his usual half-sleepy, indifferent air; but his uniform, I saw, gave him much consideration among the *bonnets-rouges* and *sans-culottes*, with their pikes, who surrounded him. The list which the commissary was reading was scrawled upon several different sheets of paper, and the worthy commissary seemed to have some difficulty in deciphering them. Blaireau advanced his head officiously, as if to help him; taking off, at the same time, his hat, which seemed to be in his way. At that moment I saw, as I thought, Rose stoop suddenly down, and pick up a folded paper from the ground; but the part of the refectory in which she stood was so dark, that I could not feel sure of the fact.

The reading of the list continued. Men, women, and children rose up, and passed away like shadows. The table was now almost empty, and looked drearily vast and solitary. Thirty-five victims had departed. The fifteen who remained, scattered by ones and by twos, with large spaces between them, looked like the few scanty trees which are left standing, when a forest has been condemned to the axe. At last the commissary was silent: his list was finished. We began to breathe. For my part, I heaved a deep sigh of relief.

André Chénier said, "Go on!—I know I am there."

The commissary looked stupidly at him. He looked into his hat; into his pockets; in his scarf; and finding nothing, ordered the *huissier* of the Revolutionary tribunal to be called. We stood breathless with suspense. The *huissier* was a pale, dismal looking man.

"I will go and count 'em," said he. "If you have not all the *fournée*, (batch,) so much the worse for you."

"Ah!" said the commissary, very much embarrassed; "I remember there was Beauvilliers St. Aignan, *ex-duc*, aged seven-and-twenty years—"

He was going to repeat the whole description, when the other interrupted him, and told him he had mistaken the place, and that he had had a drop too much. In fact, he had confounded another part of the prison with this, where the young wife had been living alone, for nearly a month, separated from her husband. The two men went out together—one scolding, the other reeling. The mob followed them. There was a fresh burst of exultation from without, and a fresh shower of stones.

When the doors were shut once more, I looked round the deserted hall, and I saw that Madame de St. Aignan remained in the attitude she had assumed during this last scene: her arms crossed upon the table, and her head leaning upon her arms. Mademoiselle de Coigny lifted up her eyes, swimming in tears.

André Chénier whispered, pointing to the duchess, "I hope she did not hear her husband's name. Take no notice: let her weep quietly."

"You see," said I, "that your brother, who is accused of indifference, does well to keep quiet. You were arrested without a written order. He knows that: he is silent. Your name is not upon any list: if it were only mentioned, it would be immediately placed there. We must get through the time as well as we can: your brother understands what he is about perfectly."

"Oh!—my brother!" said he; and he shook his head sadly, with an air of distrust and sorrow mingled. For the first time I observed a tear moistening his eyelash. He recovered himself immediately. "My father is not so prudent," ironically; "he is not afraid of committing himself. He is gone to Robespierre this morning to demand my liberty."

"Ah, great heavens!" cried I, clasping my hands,—"I was afraid he would."

I snatched my hat,—he caught me by the arm.

"Stay," cried he,—*"she has fainted."*

In fact, Madame de St. Aignan was insensible.

Mademoiselle de Coigny busied herself about her. Two other ladies that were left came to her assistance. Even the jailer's wife offered her services, and I slid a lousidor into her hand. The duchess began to come to herself. Time pressed. I did not

wait a moment to make my adieus; but, leaving every body dissatisfied with me, as is my usual fate, I left the prison immediately.

CHAPTER VI.

The Fourgon.

I WALKED fast,—I ran through the street of the Faubourg St. Denis,—I was in agonies lest I should arrive too late,—the scenes I had witnessed still passing before my eyes. But, as my manner is, my ideas soon began to arrange themselves. I saw the miracle by which this man of so fine a genius had till now been preserved; and I trusted that it was the design of Providence to rescue him. I felt that even to have gained a day, was every thing in these bloody times. I calculated the chances in favour of those who had resolved to make one last desperate effort to overthrow the triumvirate and the committees; and I counted the days, and calculated the possibility of preserving these three precious prisoners till that moment, when the tyranny that had so long oppressed us all should be overthrown. But how was that to be effected?—by letting them be forgotten. We were at the 5th Thermidor. If I could but succeed in occupying the mind of my second patient, Robespierre, with other things!—make him fancy himself much worse than he really was!—absorb him in himself! But to do this, above all things, it was necessary to arrive in time.

I looked round for some carriage. There were few enough to be seen that year in the streets. Wo to him who should have been seen "lolling in his chariot" in the year 2 of the Republic. However, I heard the sound of two honest four-wheels following, which stopped as soon as they came up to me. I lifted up my head, and beheld the peaceful countenance of my Blaireau,—*"Oh, sleepy one! oh, gentle giant! oh, idlest and sparest of human beings! what dost thou want with me?"* cried I.

*"Pardon, Monsieur, si je vous dérange,—*but here is a little morsel of paper for you. The Citoyenne Rose picked it up—by mere accident." And he looked with the most ingenuous indifference upon the pavement, as he spoke.

"I took the paper; and with a sort of shuddering joy read as follows:—

"Number 3d, and last.

"C. L. S. Sayecourt, aged thirty years, born at Paris, *ex-baronne*, widow of Inisdal, rue du Petit-Vaugirard.

"F. C. L. Maillé, aged seventeen, son of the ex-vicomte.

"André Chénier, aged thirty-one, born at Constantinople, *homme de lettres, rue de Cléry.*

"Créguy de Montmorenci, aged sixty, born at Chitzlemburg in Germany, ex-noble.

"M. Béranger, aged twenty-four, wife of Beauvilliers St. Aignan, rue de Grenelle, St. Germain.

"L. J. Dervilly, forty-three years of age, grocer, rue Mouffetard.

"F. Coigny, sixteen years and eight months, daughter of the ex-noble of that name, *rue de l'Université.*

"C. J. Dorival, ex-ermite."

And several other names besides; it was the lost list, the list that the drunken commissary had dropped out of his hat.

I tore it in pieces—into atoms. I chewed the morsels between my teeth; then, looking at my gentle artilleryman, I seized his hand and pressed it, yes, I may as well confess it, with tears in my eyes.

Yes, the tears were in my eyes; but he scratched his head like a great lout as he pretended to be, and then said with an air as if he was just beginning to awaken, "Droll! It seems that the *Huissier*, that big, pale fellow, was in a rage with the commissary, that red, drunken sot, and so he put him into the cart in the place of the others. Droll enough!"

"Poetical justice," thought I; "but where are you bound for?"

"Oh! I'm going with this fourgon to the *Champ de Mars*, that's all."

"Then you'll take me to the *rue St. Honoré*?"

"Ah! *sacre!* Why not—get up—what do I care. *Quand j'ai bien servi ma pièce le roi n'est pas —*"

But he stopped short and bit his lips.

A soldier that was with him waited for us. I followed Blaireau, who went limping up to his *fourgon*, wiped the dust off with the sleeve of his coat, got up himself first, invited me to follow his example, and set off at full gallop.

We soon arrived in the *rue St. Honoré*, and stopped before Robespierre's door; but I have never yet been able to comprehend how I escaped being shaken to atoms.

CHAPTER VII.

The House of M. de Robespierre, Avocat au Parlement.

THE house I was about to enter was of the simplest description; if I recollect rightly, it

belonged to a cabinet maker, named *Duplay*. The ex-avocat had occupied it for some time; it is still in existence I believe. Nothing in its appearance bore evidence of its being the residence of the ephemeral master of France, except perhaps a sort of loneliness, and silence, and solitude, which seemed to distinguish it. Every outside shutter in the front was closed; the *porte cochère* shut; and not the slightest sound was to be heard issuing from the mansion.

Some groups of women were talking before the door—a thing regularly to be seen in Paris in times of trouble—they were pointing at the house and whispering together. From time to time the door opened, and a *gens d'arme*—a *sans culotte*—or a spy, (often a female,) might be seen to pass out. At such times the groups hastily separated, and the women ran within their own doors. The few carriages that came that way, made a sort of semicircle, going at a foot's pace, and as distant from the house as possible; there was straw before the door, it looked as if the plague was within.

No sooner did I put my hand upon the knocker, than the door was opened by the terrified porter, with a look of great anxiety lest the knocker should fall too heavily. He shut the door very slowly, and with the least possible noise. I asked him, describing the appearance of M. de Chénier, whether an old man, answering to that description, had been there that morning. The porter's face seemed to turn into marble upon this slight question. He shook his head negatively.

"I have seen nothing at all like that," said he.

I persisted; saying, "Pray call to mind all you have seen this morning." I pressed him farther, but I could only get, "I have seen nothing at all like that."

A little ragged boy was hidden behind him, and was amusing himself with flirting pebbles against my silk stockings, and I recollected him, by his thoroughly bad expression, to be the messenger of the morning. I went up a sufficiently dark staircase to make my way to the *Incorruptible*. The keys were in all the doors, I went from room to room, and found no one. At last, in the fourth apartment, I came upon two negroes, and two secretaries, seated at writing tables, and writing eternally; they did not even raise their heads as I entered. I cast a glance at the tables, they were covered with terrific lists *nominales*. My blood ran cold, as when I heard the rumble of the death carts.

I was introduced in silence, after crossing a very thick but much worn carpet.

The apartment was filled with a yellow murky light; it looked out upon the court, and great heavy green curtains shaded the light, and seemed to thicken the very air. The reflection of the sun upon the opposite wall, alone illuminated the large desolate looking room. Upon a *fauteuil* of green morocco, before a great walnut-tree bureau, my patient was sitting; he had an English newspaper in one hand, and with the other he was stirring, with a small silver spoon, a lump or two of sugar in a cup of camomile tea.

You may easily picture Robespierre to yourself.

One sees many men *of the desk* that are like him; no remarkable character of countenance distinguished him, or made one *feel* his presence. He was thirty-five, his face compressed between the chin and the forehead, as if two hands had endeavoured to squeeze them together; his complexion, the colour of whity brown paper, and sodden like moist plaster; deeply marked with the small-pox. No blood—not even bile, seemed to circulate there; his eyes were small, dull, and melancholy; he never looked any one in the face, and a perpetual disagreeable winking, made his eyes appear still less than they really were, when his green spectacles did not happen to be on. His mouth was contracted by a sort of convulsive sardonic smile, or rather grimace; Mirabeau compared him *à un chat qui a bu du vinaigre*. His head was very much and pompously dressed out, with a great air of pretension. His fingers, his neck, and his shoulders, seemed constantly agitated by a sort of involuntary contractions; as if slight nervous convulsions were perpetually passing through them. He had been full dressed all the morning; I never surprised him, during the whole time I visited him, *en négligé*. This day he wore a yellow coat striped with white, a waistcoat embroidered with flowers, a white frill, white silk stockings, and shoes with buckles, so that he looked quite *comme il faut*.

He rose with his accustomed politeness, and advanced two paces towards me, taking off his green spectacles, which he placed gravely on the table. He saluted me with the ease of a man of the world, sat down again, and stretched out his hand.

I could not, and did not take it like a friend, but I took it like a physician, raised his ruffle, and felt his pulse. "Fever," said I.

"That's not impossible," said he, biting his lips; and he rose abruptly, passed twice up and down the room with a quick, firm step, rubbing his hands; then he said, "Bah!" and sat down again.

"Sit down there, citizen," said he, "and hear what I have to tell you. Is it not strange?" And at every word he looked at me under his spectacles. "Singular enough! What do you think? This little Duke of York has presumed to insult me through the newspapers." He struck his hand upon the long columns of his English gazette.

"An affected anger," said I to myself. "Let us be upon our guard."

"The tyrants!" pursued he, with a voice at once shrill and harsh. "The tyrants! they cannot conceive even of the existence of liberty! A humbling consideration for human nature! See, this expression is repeated in every page. What affectation!" And he flung down the newspaper before me.

"Look!" said he, pointing to the passages with his finger. "*Robespierre's army! Robespierre's troops!* As if the armies were mine! As if I were king! I! As if France were Robespierre! As if all proceeded from me, centred in me! *Robespierre's troops!* What injustice! What calumny! Heigh!" Then sipping his cup of camomile tea, and pushing up his spectacles, and looking at me under them again:—"I trust they never use such expressions *here*. You never hear such things put about, I hope. Do you ever chance upon such expressions in the streets? No, no. I know well enough it is Pitt that invents and circulates these injurious calumnies. Who dares call me dictator of France?—Why, the vile counter-revolutionists—the Dantonistes—the Hébertistes,—wretches, whose presence still pollutes the benches of the Convention. But I will denounce them all, scoundrel minions as they are of George of England! Miserable conspirators, who only desire to make me odious in the eyes of the people, because they well know the incorruptible purity of my *civisme*; and that while I live, this voice shall be lifted up to denounce their vices and their crimes.—Corrupted as Verres, desperate and more depraved than Catiline, never resting from their endeavours to undermine and ruin the Republic!—Such men as Desmoulins, Ronsin, Chaumette, in conspiracy with those vile, degraded animals, styled *kings!*—They have the insolence to attempt at dishonouring me! And how? Why, by placing the miserable bauble of a crown

upon my head; in order to bring down head and crown at once, I suppose—a fate their own are most assuredly destined to! But, is it not a scandalous shame that they should find support here? ay, and from pretended republicans!—The rascals!

“I have been ill six weeks, as you very well know, and have never once appeared at the *Comité de Salut Public*. And where is my dictatorship, then, I pray? But what signifies talking? The Coalition persist in looking upon me as the centre of all things! My incorruptibility may be a little in their way, perchance, ha! ha! This Coalition has existed ever since the government began—a vile confederacy of cheats and rascals! They have dared, I understand, to circulate a report among the people that I was arrested!—massacred, if you please, but arrested!—No, no. They have asserted that St. Juste wanted to restore the aristocracy, because, forsooth, he had himself the misfortune to be born noble! Eh? As if it mattered what he was born, provided he lived and died in support of just principles! And is not he—he, himself—the very man who carried through the Convention a decree of banishment against the ex-nobles, declaring them the irreconcilable enemies of the Revolution? This cursed Coalition has presumed, also, to cast ridicule upon the *Fête de l’Etre Suprême!* and upon the story of Catharine Theos. It is pleased, too, to cast the responsibility of all the executions upon me! But it is plain enough what all this means! A mere revival of the old machinations of the Brissotins. My oration at the *Fête* was at least, I presume, as good as the doctrines of Chaumette and Fouché.—Don’t you think so?”

I nodded my head, and he went on:—

“My desire is, that the impious maxim, ‘Death is an eternal sleep,’ should be erased from our grave-stones, and to substitute, *Death is the gate of Immortality.*”

I saw by this harangue that he was meditating an oration upon the subject, and trying the effect in conversation upon me; according to the good custom of many other orators of my acquaintance. He gave a smile of satisfaction, and sipped his camomile tea; then set down the cup upon his desk with the air of an orator at the Tribune; and as I had not taken up his idea, he returned to it himself after a new fashion. He could not rest without a compliment.

“I know you think as I do, citizen, though you have a good deal of the air of a

ci-devant about you still; but you are *pure*, and that is every thing. Of this, at least, I am certain, that you would detest a military despotism as much as I should; and if I am not listened to, that will be, sooner or later, our fate. The reins of the Republic would soon be snatched up were I to lay them down; and the representation, already disgraced, would then be annihilated.”

“This appears to me to be a very just remark, citizen,” said I. In fact, it was prophetic.

Another grim smile.

“You would like *my* despotism better than *that*, I am sure? Hey?”

I made a somewhat sour grimace as I said, “Eh? but,” with as little meaning as one could put into the monosyllable.

“It would at least,” he continued, “be that of a fellow-citizen; one of equal rank with the rest, but elevated to pre-eminence by the practice of virtue; one thing only has he ever feared—to sully the purity of principles such as his, by contact with those perverted beings, who have contrived to introduce their own impurity and corruption amid the disinterested friends of humanity.”

He paused, looked up, and seemed to enjoy this delicious little phrase, and expect its effect upon me.

“You have not quite so many of these troublesome neighbours about you now,” said I. “You don’t feel particularly in danger of being elbowed in the crowd at present.”

He bit his lips, and put his spectacles on immediately, to hide the expression of his eyes.

“Merely because I, just at present, as you say, live retired; but I cannot escape calumny.” And as he spoke, he took a pencil, and scrawled something upon a sheet of paper. I learned five days afterwards, that the paper was a list for the guillotine, and the “something” my own name.

He smiled, and fell back on his chair.

“Alas! calumniated!” pursued he; “for, to speak plain, I have but one idol, *égalité*; and you may judge with what indignation these foul accusations fill me!—These newspapers, forged in the workshops of tyrants! And with a tragic air, he crushed and crumpled together his great English newspapers. I remarked, however, that he took especial care not to tear them.

“Ah, Maximilian!” thought I. “You will read these foul calumnies more than once; and be ready to worship the magical words, ‘*Robespierre’s army.*’”

After this little comedy on his part had terminated, he rose, and walked up and down his chamber, convulsively agitating his fingers, his neck, and his shoulders.

I rose and walked by his side.

"I wished to give you these things to read, and to talk these matters over with you, before I spoke of my own health;" and he showed me some manuscript papers. "You know my esteem for the author. It is a project of St. Juste's. I expect him every moment. We will go over them together. He must have reached Paris before this," said he, pulling out his watch. "I will go and inquire. Sit down, in the meantime, and read this. I shall soon come back again."

He gave me the manuscript, (it was a large quire of paper, covered with writing, in a bold, hasty, decisive hand,) and left the room. I took up the manuscript, but I marked the door by which he went out. I knew him well. I saw something made him thoroughly uneasy to-day. Either some enterprise of his own was in hand, or he was in fear of one from others. I saw, as the door opened by which he went out, certain faces belonging to his secret agents, whom I knew well enough; and I heard the noise of several different people ascending and descending the stairs. There was a murmur, as of voices speaking low. I listened, but could not distinguish a word.

I confess I felt somewhat ill at ease. I went to the door by which I had entered, intending to return home; but, either by accident or design, the key was turned.

When a thing is settled, I think no more about it. I sat down, and began to look over the manuscript Robespierre had left in my hands.

CHAPTER VIII.

Legislation.

THE manuscript, thus hastily scrawled over, contained neither more nor less than those immutable and eternal institutions which the present rulers intended, in their indisputable wisdom and tender benevolence, to bestow upon France: they were hastily thrown together, for the benefit of his country, by the Citizen St. Juste, aged just twenty-six years.

I glanced over the papers carelessly; but it was not long before I began to have some perception of their contents. I was electrified with surprise.

"Oh, tender-hearted executioner! Oh, gentle murderer!" cried I, involuntarily. "What sweet infantile simplicity is here? Whence come you, fair shepherd?—From the rural plains of Arcadia? Where pasture thy innocent flocks, oh, Alexis?"

And I read:—

"Children to be left to the inspirations of nature."

"Children to be clothed in white linen, at all seasons."

"Children to be fed in common, and to be nourished only with fruits, pulse, and pure milk."

"Those who have lived without reproach, to assume a white scarf on attaining the age of sixty years."

"Every man who has reached the age of twenty-one years, shall declare in the public temple who are his friends."

"Friends shall wear mourning for each other."

"Friends shall erect each other's tomb."

"Friends shall in battle stand together."

"He who has no faith in friendship shall be banished."

"A man convicted of ingratitude shall be banished."

("What emigrations!" cried I.)

"If a man is guilty of a crime, his friends are banished."

"Murderers shall be clothed in black, and shall be put to death if they quit that dress."

"Sweet soul!" cried I,—"What unjust wretches we must all be to accuse *you* of murder!—With thoughts pure as the morning dew upon the opening rose. And we have the absurdity to complain of the cart loads of men, women, and children, that you send every day to the scaffold! Good young man!—You don't see them depart,—you don't hear their groans,—you only write their names upon a little piece of paper! Often you don't even do so much as that!—You sign the list, at times, without even reading it!"

Then I began to laugh, loudly and bitterly, as I went over these *Institutions*, called Republican, and which are yet in existence, if any one has a wish to make himself acquainted with them:—these laws of the golden age, to which this blessed miscreant wanted, by main force, to submit our days of brass; a child's frock, in which he wanted to dress this great aged nation,—chopping off head and limbs to make it fit. Read it, if you will, and see with what barbarous madmen we had to do.

Alas! there is an insanity which is not shown by wild words and infuriated gestures,—a cold, calculating, dark, dangerous madness, concealed under the manners and gestures of ordinary life; and such madmen are the result of such times,—times which can elevate men of intellects so imperfect, and characters so feeble, to that intoxicating pinnacle—*irresponsible power*.

I continued musing in bitterness of spirit over the *Institutions* of St. Juste, and almost forgot where I was. I was plunged in thought, and indifferent to my own fate; for I had learned to despise life, surrounded by such scenes as met my eyes every hour,—when all at once the door opened, and a man of about thirty years of age, dressed in uniform, a fine, tall, spirited figure, entered abruptly. His military boots, his spurs, his riding whip, his large open waistcoat, his loose black cravat, gave him the air of a young general officer of those days.

“Ah, you don’t know whether he is to be spoken with,” said he, addressing, as he entered, the negro who opened the door,—“Tell him it is the author of ‘Caius Gracchus,’ of ‘Timoléon.’” The negro departed, shutting the door after him. The young officer came forward, walked up to the fireplace, stamping the heels of his boots upon the floor,—“Have you been waiting long here, citizen?” asked he. “I hope, as one of the representatives of the nation, that Citizen Robespierre will give me an audience:—I have but two words to say to him.” He turned away, and began to arrange his hair at the glass. “I am no petitioner!—I say what I think, and act as I judge right; and neither under the Bourbon tyrants, nor under these, have I been accustomed to make a mystery of my opinions.”

I laid down the papers I held in my hand, and looked at him with such an air of surprise, that he felt surprised himself.

“I should not have imagined,” said I, “that you came here for pleasure.”

He changed his look of defiance, as if by magic, and came and sat down in the *fauteuil* close by me.

“Ah! ça! to speak frankly,” said he, half in a whisper. “Were you sent for as I was?—I have not an idea why.”

“Yes,” said I, “I was sent for; but as that is not unusual with those of my profession, it does not give me any uneasiness,—at least so far as *I myself* am concerned,” I added with emphasis.

“Ah! *yourself!*” said he, striking his boots impatiently with his cane. He rose, and walked up and down the room; then returned to his place.

“Do you know whether he is busy?”

“I suppose so, Citizen Chénier.”

He seized my hand impetuously.

“Ca!” cried he,—“you don’t look like a spy. What does he want with me here? If you know any thing, tell me at once.”

I was in torture. I felt that Robespierre might return at any moment,—that perhaps we could be seen,—that certainly we could be, and were overheard. Terror pervaded the air, insinuated itself into every place, reigned in this particular chamber. I got up, and walked up and down the room, that at least there might be long intervals of silence between us, and the conversation appear casual. He understood me, and began to walk up and down the room in the opposite direction. We paced along like two sentinels upon guard, crossing one another. Each one appeared to be absorbed in his own thoughts, and we let fall just one sentence at a time as we passed.

I rubbed my hands.

“It is possible,” said I, in a low voice, as I walked from the door to the chimney, “that we may be shut up together intentionally.” And then, in my usual tone, “A pretty room this!”

“I believe so too.” And then, raising his head,—“Looks out upon the court, if I am not mistaken.”

I passed him.

“I have seen your father and your brother this morning.” In a loud voice,—“What delicious weather!”

He passed again.

“I knew it,—my father and I do not meet. But I hope André will not be *there* much longer.—A magnificent sky!”

I passed.

“Tallien, Courtois, Barras, Clauzel, are good citizens.” Then with enthusiasm,—“A noble subject that of Timoléon!”

He crossed me as he returned.

“And Collot d’Herbois, Loseau, Bourdon, Barrère, Boissy d’Anglas.—I like my Fénelon better.”

“But this may yet go on for some days.—Perhaps the versification *is* better.”

He pushed me with his elbow as he passed.

“The Triumvirs cannot last four days.—I have read the piece to the Citoyenne Vestris.”

I pressed his hand this time as I passed him.

"Take care not to mention your brother's name,—they have forgotten him.—The *dénouement* is particularly fine."

As we repassed, he took my hand and pressed it warmly.

"He is upon none of the lists. He must lie *perdu*. On the 9th I will set him at liberty with my own hands.—I fear it is scarcely unexpected enough."

This was our last,—we were at opposite ends of the room.

CHAPTER IX.

A Divertissement.

ROBESPIERRE entered; he held St. Juste by the hand. St. Juste was dressed in a dusty great-coat, and looked pale and tired; he was just arrived at Paris from the army. Robespierre cast a quick, sharp glance at us through his spectacles; the distance we were at seemed to satisfy him; he gave one of his grim smiles.

"Citizens," said he, "let me introduce a traveller of your acquaintance to you."

We moved to each other,—Joseph Chénier knitting his eyebrows, St. Juste in an abrupt haughty manner, while I bent my head, grave and composed as a monk.

St. Juste sat down by Robespierre, who placed himself in his leathern fauteuil before the writing-table; Chénier and I sat down opposite. There was a long silence, while I kept examining these three personages in turns. Chénier threw himself haughtily back in his chair, though evidently ill at ease. St. Juste looked perfectly calm, and sat bending his beautiful head a little forward: his expression was melancholy and sweet, his features regular, and his fine chestnut hair fell in abundant floating curls to his shoulders; his eyes were raised to heaven: he sighed, he had the air of a young martyr. There are persecutors in the world who assume the air of victims. Robespierre looked at us all three by turns, much as a cat might regard three captive mice.

"Here!" said he, breaking silence and assuming a frank, jovial air. "Here is our friend St. Juste, just returned from the army; he has annihilated treason *there*—he is come to do the same *here*. A pleasant surprise, eh, Chénier? You did not expect him back so soon perhaps?" And he looked askance at him as if to enjoy the other's embarrassment.

"You sent for me, citizen," said Marie-

Joseph Chénier sulkily; "if you have any business with me make haste—I am wanted at the Convention."

"I wished," said Robespierre, deliberately, "to make you acquainted with this excellent man, who, I believe, takes very particular interest in your family."

I was caught; Marie-Joseph and I looked at one another, and one glance expressed our mutual terror. But I was resolved to stand my ground.

"Faith, I am fond of letters; and I think Fénelon——"

"*Ah! à propos,*" interrupted Robespierre, "I congratulate you upon the success of *Timoléon*,—you don't know that piece, perhaps, St. Juste," with an ironical air.

St. Juste smiled contemptuously, and wiped his boots with the flap of his long riding-coat, without condescending to a reply.

"*Bah! bah!*" said Joseph Chénier, looking at me; "it's too much of a trifle to occupy *him*."

He meant to speak with indifference, but the blood of the author was tingling in his cheeks.

St. Juste now lifted up his large, calm eyes, and regarded him with admiration.—"A member of the Convention in l'an 2 de la République, who amuses himself in this way! I regard him as a prodigy!" said he.

"Faith, when one is not at the head of affairs," said Chénier, "it is the best thing one can do for the nation."

St. Juste shrugged his shoulders.

Robespierre drew out his watch as if he was expecting some one, and said in a pedantic, conceited manner, "You are aware, Citizen Chénier, what opinion I hold upon the subject of your *men of letters*. I except you, because I know your republican virtues; but in general I regard them as the most dangerous enemies of their country. What we want is a united will—a *single* will, (we are come to that,) and that *will* republican—and to effect this we want none but republican writings; every thing else only serves to corrupt the people. We must rouse the *people*, and vanquish the *bourgeoisie*, the source of all our internal dangers. The people must rally round the Convention, the Convention support the people. The *sans-culottes* must be well paid and well *excited*, (*colérées*.)—Who do I always find resisting my plans? The scribblers! the men of letters! the versifiers, with their noble rage in rhyme!—

'O mon âme, fuyons dans les déserts.' Such things discourage. The Convention ought to treat every one who is useless to the Republic as a counter-revolutionist."

"Pretty severe," said Joseph Chénier, rather alarmed, but still more offended.

"Oh, I am not thinking of you," pursued Robespierre, in a sort of soft, oily tone.

"You—you are a legislator, you have been a warrior; and when you have nothing else on earth to do you poetize."

"Not at all—not at all," said Chénier, singularly provoked. "I was born a poet; I have wasted all the time given to the army, or to the National Assembly."

I confess, in spite of the terrible nature of our present situation, I could not help smiling at his vexation. His brother might, indeed, have spoken in this manner with justice, but in my opinion, Joseph a little overrated the value of his verses. The *Incorruptible*, who was a good deal of my opinion, went on tormenting him.

"Come, come," said he, with a sort of sneering air of congratulation; "come, come, you are too modest; you refuse two laurel crowns for one of pomponne roses."

"But I thought you had a taste for those flowers yourself, citizen, once upon a time," retorted Chénier. It seems to me that I have a recollection of reading somewhere or other some agreeable verses upon a cup and a feast: let me see—

'Oh Dieux! que vois je, mes amis?

Un crime trop notoire.

Oh malheur affreux!

Oh scandale honteux!

T'ose le dire à peine;

Pour vous j'en rougis,

Pour moi j'en gemis:

Ma coupe n'est pas pleine.'

And a certain madrigal, wherein was written—

'Garde toujours ta modestie;

Sur le pouvoir de tes appas';

Demeure toujours allarmée;

Tu n'en seras que mieux aimée

Si tu crains de ne l'être pas.'

"Pretty! to say nothing of two essays upon the punishment of death,—one for, the other against; and the eulge of Gresset, where I recollect perfectly this prettily turned phrase:—

'Oh! lisez le Vert-vert vous qui aspirez au mérite de badiner et d'écrire avec grace, lisez le, &c. &c. Oh, une foule de héros est restée plongée dans un éternel oubli, parce qu'elle n'a point trouvé une plume digne de célébrer ses exploits. Mais toi heureux Vert-vert! &c. &c. Oh, Gresset! tu fus le plus grand des poètes, repandons des fleurs, &c. &c.'

"It was really very pretty indeed. I have it all by me, printed with the name of the author, *M. de Robespierre, avocat au parlement.*"

He was not quite the best man in the world to jest with. His face changed from the expression of a cat to that of a tiger. It made one's flesh creep.

St. Juste, quite *ennuyé*, took hold of his arm. "When do they expect you at the Jacobins?"

"Not yet," said Robespierre. "Be quiet; I am amusing myself."

The laugh which accompanied this, made one's teeth chatter.

"I am expecting somebody," added he. "But you, St. Juste, what do you say to the poets?"

"I read you that part," he replied. "It is in the tenth chapter of my Institutions."

"Well, what do you do with them?"

St. Juste gave a contemptuous sneer, and looked about upon the carpet as if he were seeking a small pin, or something of that sort.

"Why—" said he, "hymns, they may make hymns for the first day of each month, in honour of good citizens. Plato's idea:—1st *Germinal*, they may celebrate Nature and the People; *Floréal*, Love and Marriage; *Prarial*, Victory; *Messidor*, Adoption; *Thermidor*, Youth; *Vendémiaire*, Old Age; *Brumaire*, Immortality of the Soul; *Frimair*, Wisdom; *Nivose*, Our Country; *Pluviose*, Labour; *Ventose*, Friendship."

Robespierre applauded. "Perfectly well arranged," said he.

"And inspiration on pain of death," added Joseph Chénier, with a laugh.

St. Juste rose with gravity. "And why not?" said he, "if they have not patriotism enough to inspire them?—I know but of two principles of action—terror and virtue." And dropping his head upon his breast, he stood leaning tranquilly with his back against the chimney-piece, as if the subject were exhausted: he being most conscientiously convinced that he knew all that was to be known upon this, as upon every thing. His air was tranquil, his voice placid, his expression of countenance benevolent and composed.

"That is the man I call a poet," cried Robespierre, pointing to him. "He sees things on grand. He does not amuse himself with spinning out pretty phrases. His words flash like lightning through the darkness of the future, and he feels that it is the destiny of your second-rate men, busy with

the details of ideas, to work out ours; and that no race is more inimical to liberty, more adverse to equality than your *aristocrats of Intellect*, whose reputation enables them to exercise a partial influence, dangerous and destructive of that *unity* which ought to be our first and only object."

After this speech he looked at us both. We looked at each other.

St. Juste approved of all he had said, and sympathized heartily in these jealous and tyrannical maxims. Maxims proper to all usurped authority, which will always be found striving to depress and annihilate that mysterious power over the mind of man, derived from the exercise of pure intellect, and the enthusiasm which it excites.

These *parvenus*,—these favourites of fortune,—like Haman, detest, to the bottom of their souls, those who, like Mordecai at the palace gate, dare to refuse to worship.

Joseph Chénier found it difficult to recover from his surprise at what he heard; but the violent character of his family soon got the better of every thing, and he said, "Ah, yes! I have, in the course of my life, met with poets who wanted only one little thing to be most excellent, and that was—*poetry*."

Robespierre broke a pen he held in his hands, and took up a newspaper, as if he had not heard.

St. Juste, who was, after all, simple and *naïf*, like a great schoolboy that had not yet learned the world, took the thing quite seriously, and began a harangue upon the subject with an air of innocent self-approbation which almost made one pity him. "Citizen Chénier is right," he began, fixing his large eyes upon the wall before him, seeing nothing but his own ideas. "I feel that I was a poet when I said—'*Great men do not die in their beds*;' and '*Circumstances are too difficult only for those to whom the prospect of a tomb is appalling*;' and '*I despise this dust of which I am composed, and which now addresses you*;' and '*Worth is often a means of intrigue. Let us be ungrateful; but let us save our country!*'"

"These are fine Spartan maxims and paradoxes, more or less acknowledged by everybody," said I, "but not poetry."

St. Juste turned his back upon me, and looked affronted. We were all four silent.

The conversation had arrived at that point, that the next word must be followed by a blow, and Chénier and I were not the best prepared of the two for striking.

The silence was broken in an unexpected manner. All at once, Robespierre took up a

little bell that was on his desk, and rang it. A negro entered, and introduced an old man, who stood at the entrance of the chamber, as if petrified with astonishment and terror. "Here is another acquaintance, gentlemen," said the Incorruptible. "I have prepared a pleasant little meeting for you all."

It was M. de Chénier thus presented to his son. I trembled from head to foot. The father started back; the son bent his eyes to the ground; Robespierre laughed; St. Juste looked as if he could not guess what it was all about.

The old man first broke silence. All now depended upon him, and no one had the power to interfere further.—We waited as one waits for the fall of the executioner's sword. M. de Chénier advanced to his son with dignity. "It is long since I have seen you, sir: I do you the honour to believe that your business here is the same with my own."

Marie-Joseph Chénier, so lofty, so strong, so fierce, so haughty, was bent double with grief and constraint. "Father," said he, slowly, and pausing between each syllable; "Good heavens!—my father!—Have you well considered—what you are about to say?"

The father opened his mouth; the son went on speaking loud and hastily, endeavouring to drown his voice.

"I know—I understand—I comprehend the whole affair." And turning to Robespierre—"A foolish trifling matter—really not worth your attention." And to his father—"That you are so anxious about,—really a mere trifle,—Why can't you leave it in my hands? I am a deputy; I am—"

"I know very well, sir, what you are," said M. de Chénier.

"No, no," said Joseph, going up to him: "You don't know—You don't know in the least. It is so long, citizens, since he has seen me, poor old man! he has not the least idea of what is going on. Quite behind-hand, I assure you. If he pretends to have any business with you,—he is quite at sea about the matter," and he trod upon his foot; but the old man drew back.

"It is *your* duty, sir, which I am come to perform, since you think proper to neglect it."

"Oh, heavens and earth!" cried Marie-Joseph, in agonies.

"A curious scene enough," said Robespierre to St. Juste, in a harsh voice. "What are they making all this noise about?"

"I am—" said the father, advancing to Robespierre; "my heart is in despair at seeing—"

I rose hastily to lay hold of his arm.

"Citizen," said Joseph Chénier to Robespierre, "let me have a word with you in private, and let me take away this poor old man. I assure you he is ill; he is doting."

"Wretch!" cried the old man, indignantly, "Are you an impious son, as well as—"

"Sir," said I, interrupting him roughly, "it was useless consulting me this morning."

"No, no," cried Robespierre with his sharp, harsh voice. "No, no, Chénier, I won't have your father taken away. I promised him a hearing, and he shall have it. Nonsense! why should he go away?—What harm can he do? Don't you think I know all about it well enough, and am not ignorant *even of your prescriptions this morning, doctor?*"

"It is all over," cried I, sinking into a chair.

Marie-Joseph made one last effort. He advanced boldly, and put himself between his father and Robespierre. "After all," said he, "we are equals—we are brothers. Let me tell you plainly, citizen, what no one but a representative of the National Convention would have a right to tell you: I say that my good old father,—my poor father,—who detests me because I am a member of the Convention, has nothing to say. He is only going to bother you about a mere piece of family history, quite unworthy of your attention,—of yours, Citizen Robespierre; you, who are occupied in affairs of the first consequence, acting, as you do, as the main-spring of all things.—These are mere family quarrels; quite beneath your notice; and, happily for you, quite out of the course of your experience,"—and he pressed his hand with both his own. "No, no; positively it shall not be," (trying to laugh.) "Mere dotage. I don't like him to expose himself." And in a low hurried tone—"Some old complaints of my conduct: old monarchical nonsense he has got into his head. Mere dotage. Just listen to me, my dear friend;—great energetic citizen;—leader and master of us all. Yes—I confess it, master—and worthy to be master.—Go to the Assembly; you are wanted: you are wasting your time. Send us all away. Turn us all out of doors without ceremony; we are in your way.—Gentlemen, we are intruding: let us begone," and he took his hat; pale, panting, covered with sweat, trembling. "Come, doctor!—Come, father, I want to speak to you: we are intruding. And St. Juste!—just arrived from the armies—from the armies of the North! I say, St. Juste!"

He went up to him. He came again to

Robespierre; the tears were in his eyes: he took Robespierre by the arm—his father by the shoulders. He was beside himself.

Robespierre rose from his chair, and, with an air of pretended kindness which might well have become a demon, held out his hand to the old man.

The poor father thought all was saved: we knew that all was lost. M. de Chénier, like a weak old man, was subdued by this one kind gesture.

"Oh! you are too good!" cried he, "I see it is only a system that you have adopted. A system which makes you appear cruel. Give me back my eldest son, M. de Robespierre. Give him back to me. He is at St. Lazare. He is far the most precious of the two. Oh! you don't know him! He admires you very much. He admires all these gentlemen—he has often told me so. He has no exaggerated ideas, I assure you, upon my honour. The other is afraid of committing himself—he wants the courage to speak—but I am a father, dear sir, I am very old, what have I to fear? Besides you are a gentleman—I see it by your air—gentlemen understand each other at a word. I—"

Then to his son.

"What are you making signs for? Don't interrupt me! You are troublesome, sir. Leave monsieur to follow the dictates of his own heart; he understands these things better than you do. You were always jealous of André from a child. Let me alone, sir!"

The unhappy brother could not answer, he was mute with grief and despair.

"Ah!" said Robespierre, sitting down, and quietly taking off his spectacles. "So this is the grand business after all, St. Juste! It appears they had taken it into their heads that I had forgotten all about this pretty brother of his! True enough, I might not have troubled my head about him for a day or two. Very well," said he, taking a pen and scribbling, "your son's affair shall be terminated."

"There," said I, half suffocated.

"How! terminated!" said the father.

"Yes, citizen," said St. Juste coldly, explaining the matter to him, "terminated before the Revolutionary Tribunal, where he will have an opportunity of making his defence."

"And André?" said M. de Chénier.

"The same," replied St. Juste, "at the Conciergerie."

"But there was not even a warrant out against André," said the father.

"Very well, he may plead that at the Revolutionary Tribunal," said Robespierre, "so much the better for him." And he continued writing.

"But why send him there?" persisted the old man.

"That he may clear himself," said Robespierre, still writing.

"But will they hear him?" asked Marie-Joseph.

Robespierre put on his spectacles, looked fixedly at him, his green eyes staring like those of an owl.

"Do you dare to suspect the integrity of the Revolutionary Tribunal?" said he.

Marie-Joseph dropped his head, and sighing deeply, uttered, "No."

St. Juste, with much gravity, added, "Sometimes the tribunal pronounces an acquittal."

"Sometimes!" exclaimed the father.

"Look here, St. Juste," cried Robespierre. "This one was a poet too—it runs in the family. We were just talking about them, and they it seems were writing of us. Quite a happy accident. Hey, doctor! Look here, St. Juste, he calls us, *Bourreaux barbouilleurs des lois*."

"Only that," cried St. Juste taking the paper.

I recollected the paper too well: it had been stolen from André since the morning, by one of Robespierre's most adroit spies.

Robespierre rose suddenly, pulled out his watch, "*Two o'clock*," said he. And he bowed, and hurried to that door of the room by which he had entered with St. Juste. He opened it, leaned half-way into the next apartment, where I saw many men in waiting, and turning round with his hand upon the key, said in his sharp, falsetto, but resolute voice, "This is only just to show you that I am pretty well informed as to what is going on;" then addressing St. Juste, who was following, with his usual composed smile of ineffable sweetness,—“Look here, St. Juste; I understand, you see, how to arrange amiable domestic scenes, almost as well as the poets!”

"Stop, Maximilian!" cried Marie-Joseph, clenching his fist at him, and leaving the room by the opposite door, which this time opened of itself. "I am going to the Convention with Tallien."

"And I to the Jacobins," said Robespierre, proudly and coldly.

"With St. Juste," added St. Juste, with a terrible voice.

As I followed them out of the room,—

"Take your youngest son home again," said I to the father, "You have just killed your eldest." And we left the house.

CHAPTER X.

A Summer Evening.

My first care was to hide Joseph Chénier. In spite of the universal terror, no one was found to refuse the shelter of his roof to the proscribed. I had twenty houses at my disposal. I chose one for Marie-Joseph. He followed me, weeping like a child. Lying *perdu* during the day, he spent the night in running from house to house, visiting those representatives whom he considered as his friends, striving, by every means in his power, to animate their courage and resolution. He was wild with grief: his only consolation rested on the hope of precipitating the fate of Robespierre, St. Juste, and Couthon. I consoled myself with the same expectation, concealing myself as he did. I might be found every where, except at home. When Joseph Chénier went to the Convention, he appeared, both at his entrance and departure, surrounded by a body of his friends, whom it was not thought prudent to attack openly. Once in the streets, he disappeared; and even the spies of Robespierre, the most subtle army of locusts that ever infested Paris, could not trace him out. The fate of André Chénier had now become a mere question of time. Which question simply was, whether the revengeful projects of Robespierre, or the schemes of the conspirators, would be first matured.

The night after this last scene, that from the 5th to the 6th Thermidor, we spent in visiting all the members of the Convention, who were afterwards called *Thermidoriens*, Tallien, Barras, Lecointre, and Vadier. We carried messages from one to the other. We put them all in communication, without suffering them to meet. Individually, they seemed all resolved, but we could bring them to form no common resolution. I returned sorrowfully to my hiding-place. This was the result of my observations.

The Republic was mined and countermined. The mine of Robespierre began from the Hotel de Ville. The counter-mine of Tallien from the Tuilleries, where the Convention were then sitting. The explosion would take place when the two mines met. But on Robespierre's side there was unity of purpose; on that of the Convention complete disunion, to say nothing of their lying under the disadvantage of being upon

the defensive. Our efforts to urge them to commence operations without delay, were fruitless; and on the 6th and 7th, had only resulted in timid and partial conferences, where nothing was decided upon. But the Jacobins were ready, and on the alert. The Convention had determined to await the first attack; that was the only conclusion at which we had arrived upon the 7th Thermidor.

An indistinct heaving, an internal, ill-suppressed agitation pervaded Paris; it was like the mysterious warnings of an earthquake. The influence of the coming events seemed to pervade the very air of the small courts and small squares: knots of people, engaged in earnest conversation, might be seen in all the *Places*; the doors were ajar,—and busy, curious faces at the windows.

We could not gain the slightest intelligence of what was passing at St. Lazare. I had once attempted to gain an entrance; but the door had been furiously shut against me, and the authorities there seemed half inclined even to arrest me.

I had passed the day in vain and fruitless efforts; and returning through the streets towards six o'clock in the evening, beheld the whole city in agitation. Groups might be seen hastily assembling in all the public places. Men would approach, say a few hurried words to one another, and then as suddenly disappear. On every side was heard,—“The Sections are in arms;” or, “There is a conspiracy at the Convention;” or, “The Jacobins are in conspiracy;” or, “The Commune has suspended the decrees of the Convention;” or, “The artillery is coming up.”

A crier was crying the “*Grande pétition des Jacobins à la Convention en faveur du peuple.*”

Sometimes a whole streetful of people fled suddenly, and dispersed as if swept away by the wind. Children were falling down and screaming, women screeching, the shutters of the shops shut; then a universal silence would succeed to the rumour and hubbub of the multitude; till, as suddenly, some new cause of agitation would once more fill the empty street with wild and excited crowds. Heavy thunder-clouds hung threatening over the sky. The heat was suffocating.

I was lurking in the neighbourhood of my house in the *Place de la Revolution*, when all at once it came into my head, that, after two nights' absence, this would be the last place where any one would come to seek for me; so I took my resolution, passed under the arcade, and entered. All the doors stood wide open;

the porter was abroad. I went up the common stair, and found myself quite alone. Every thing remained as I had left it; my books thrown about, and slightly covered with dust—my windows were open; I sat down for a moment close by that which looked out upon the *Place de la Revolution*.

I was soon lost in thought.—I sat looking upon that dark and melancholy, but still imperial chateau of the Tuilleries.—The Convention was sitting where had been late the dwelling-place of kings.—I saw its long, many-windowed, gloomy front, stretching along the terrace of the *Feuillans*, with its rows of dark green chestnut trees, which, like the shrubs of the *Champs-Élysées*, were now white with dust. The *Place de la Revolution* itself was black with innumerable moving heads crowded closely together; while, towering in the midst, two huge objects of painted wood presented themselves—one was the statue of Liberty; the other, the guillotine.

The evening was most oppressively sultry. The sun sinking behind the trees, beneath the dark indigo clouds that hung like curtains above, darted his rays obliquely upon this crowd of black hats and *bonnets rouges*; these last casting a gleam of lurid red over the otherwise dark aspect of the crowd. To me it seemed as if the picture were spotted with blood.—The confused voice of the many-headed monster below reached to my window like the hoarse roar of many waters; while the low murmur of distant thunder added, from time to time, to the impressive gloom of the scene.

All at once the murmurs of the multitude became louder, and a prodigious noise and agitation seemed to arise on one side, and presently to spread over the vast assemblage. It proceeded from the streets leading to the Boulevards, which my window did not command; and every head was turned that way. Something coming from thence seemed to excite the cries, hisses, groans, and loud murmurs of discontent which resounded on all sides.—I leaned out of my window in vain; I could see nothing. I forgot my own situation in my invincible curiosity to learn what was going on; and I was about to descend into the *Place*, when I was arrested by hearing voices and the noise of a quarrel upon my staircase, which made me very speedily shut my door. Some men were insisting upon coming up, and the porter, who was convinced that I was absent, was endeavouring to persuade them, by showing

his pass-keys in his hand, that I no longer inhabited the house. Two fresh voices were heard asserting that it was quite true; that not an hour ago every corner had been searched, and *positively no one* to be found. I had but just arrived in time. At last they all went murmuring away; and by their imprecations, I easily learned to whom I was indebted for this domiciliary visit. I was now obliged to return sorrowfully to my window, a prisoner in my own house.*

The noise and agitation continued to increase every moment.

At last a low, dull, heavy sound shook the *Place*, like the heavy rumble of cannon. An immense stream of people, armed with pikes, mingled with the sea of heads that occupied the *Place*; and the cause of all this tumult and agitation slowly hove in sight.

It was an immense tumbril, or cart, painted of a deep, blood-coloured red, and loaded with *eighty-four* living victims! They were all standing, squeezed confusedly, one against the other. All sizes, sexes, ages, conditions, pressed together in one close, compact mass. Every one was uncovered; and heads bald, or clothed with locks of gray, were mingled with the little, round, blond heads of children; or with fair youthful ones, covered with their long flowing hair. White dresses, peasants' striped and woollen clothes, uniforms of different ranks and regiments, were confusedly mixed together. I saw infants at the breasts of the mothers from whom they were so soon to be parted, sucking or slumbering— young, slender girls—beautiful women—rude, amazed, staring clowns—men of fashion—priests—officers—children. I have told you before, this was what was called a *fournée*.

The load was so heavy that three large horses staggered under it, and could scarcely drag it along. Besides,—and this was the cause of all the noise and confusion,—at every other step the crowd stopped the cart with loud shouts and vociferations. The horses backed and staggered, one against the other, and the cart was, in a manner, besieged. Then, above the line of pikes, you might have seen the condemned stretching out their arms to their friends. It was like a vessel, on the verge of shipwreck, seeking help from the sympathizing crowd on shore. At every attempt made by the guards and

the *sans culottes* to advance, the people uttered a loud cry, and shoved and pushed them back with their arms, shoulders, and breasts, interposing at last their tremendous *veto* between the tyranny and its victims. The cry was long, loud, confused, increasing, invincible. It rose, as by one impulse, from the Seine, from the bridges, from the quays, from the avenues, the trees, the pavements.

Non! Non! Non!

As the cart passed, torrents of human beings rushed against it;—it reeled and shook as if about to be overset, like a vessel heaving on its anchors. Once it seemed as if it would be lifted up, with all its load. My heart beat with violence. Would it but upset! Regardless of my own danger, I stretched myself out of my window. I was intoxicated,—I was dying, with anxiety. I could hardly breathe; all my being seemed concentrated in my eyes. In the exaltation of my feelings, it seemed to me that heaven and earth took part in the spectacle. From time to time, a bright flash of lightning illuminated the overhanging cloud; and low thunder growled in the distance. The black front of the Tuilleries, facing the setting sun, looked red and bloody; the two great squares of trees, thrown back by a gust of wind, seemed to retreat as if in horror; the people groaned; and the deep, hoarse voice was again re-echoed by the low, rolling thunder.

The shadows deepened—the shadows of the approaching storm, rather than those of evening. From time to time, a light gust of wind raised a cloud of dust, which, for a moment, hid the scene from my eyes. Again it dispersed, and they were once more fixed upon the struggling cart. I stretched out my arms; I cried aloud; I invoked the people; I called out, "Courage! Courage!" I looked up to heaven; I almost expected a miracle; I cried, "Only three days! only three days! I ask but three days!" Oh, Providence! Oh, Power supreme! Only three days! Alas! alas!"

The cart advanced; slowly; with difficulty; obstructed at every step;—but it advanced! The troops closed round it. Between the guillotine and the statue of Liberty was now one mass of bayonets. There stood the fatal haven for which the vessel was bound.

The murmurs of the people, who seemed at

* The doors of the apartments at Paris at that time had no handles and locks, as ours have, but were merely opened by turning a key. The porter convinced the municipal officers of the impossibility of any one having entered, the door being closed, and he holding the key: the Docteur Noir was a prisoner in his own apartments, having shut to the door in the inside, without having taken out the key.

last weary of blood, and disgusted at these scenes of horror—grew deeper and deeper; yet, from some cause or other, their opposition seemed to become fainter. I began to tremble; my knees knocked together.

The *ensemble* of the picture was visible to my naked eye; to see it in detail, I took my perspective glass. The cart was already at some distance from where I stood; but I could distinguish a man in a gray dress, his arms behind his back.—I do not know whether they were bound or not. I recognised André Chénier. The cart was stopped again, while a sort of contest arose around it. Then I saw a man in a *bonnet rouge* mount the platform of the guillotine, and begin to arrange a basket.

The scene began to swim before me. I laid down my perspective glass, and wiped my eyes.

With every advance the cart made, the aspect of the picture changed. Every step the people felt as a defeat; and their cries became less furious and more sorrowful. The crowd, however, continued to increase; and the progress was retarded by their mass, though they offered no positive resistance.

I took up my glass, and looked again.

Again I saw the melancholy travellers, elevated by their whole height above the heads of the populace. The women were mostly unknown to me. I distinguished some among the unfortunate peasants, but not the women I dreaded to see. The men I remembered at St. Lazare. André was speaking, his eyes directed towards the setting sun. My thoughts followed his; and while my eye watched the movement of his lips, mine repeated aloud his last verses:—

Comme un dernier rayon, comme un dernier zépher,
Anime le fin d'un beau jour,
Au pied de l'échafaud, j'éssais encor ma lyre,
Peut être est ce bientôt mon tour.

A violent and passionate gesture on his part made me suddenly lay down my glass, and look upon the *Place*.

The cries had all at once ceased; the movement of the people had become retrograde.

The quays—so loaded, so crowded—emptied rapidly. The masses broke into groups, the groups into families, the families into individuals. At the extremities of the *Place* there was a cloud of dust, and people might be seen running away on all sides. Women covered their heads with their gowns, chil-

dren with their petticoats—all was confusion and rout. Sympathy was extinguished, rage and indignation quelled, opposition at an end.—It *rained!* Those who understand Paris will comprehend the scene; I was a living witness of it.

It *rained!*

I have seen the same thing upon other occasions, equally touching and equally important. The tumultuous cries, the imprecations, the passionate vociferations, were succeeded by hushed, plaintive murmurs, quick and brief exclamations; whose low notes, descending the scale, expressed the feeble and expiring resistance, and seemed to mourn over the weakness of this feeble race. The debased and humbled spirit of the nation yielded before the statue of violated Liberty, and before the red and real scaffold, dyed with the best blood of France.

It *rained!*

Those who now pushed forwards, were either endeavouring to see the execution, or to escape the rain! While the heavy drops fell fast and thick, the executioners seized their opportunity; the tempestuous waves had become calm, and the vessel arrived at its destined port.

The guillotine raised its bloody arm.

At this moment there was not a voice to be heard, not a movement to be seen, throughout this vast *Place*. The monotonous splashing of the rain was the only sound that reached me. The water in streams fell between me and the scaffold. My limbs shook beneath me. I was obliged to fall upon my knees.

So kneeling, breathless, my heart standing still, I looked and listened. The rain was still so transparent, that I could just distinguish the colour of the figures as they rose between the two beams. I could see a space between the block and the knife; and when a shadow crossed this space, I shut my eyes, till the cries of the spectators apprised me that I might look again.

Thirty-two times did I bend my head, uttering a passionate and despairing prayer, such as never burst from human heart before. After the thirty-third cry, I saw a gray figure standing on the platform. I resolved to honour his courage and his genius, and, at least, to have the fortitude to witness his death. I rose up——.

The head rolled away, and the spirit of life escaped in a torrent of blood.

CHAPTER XI.

“—— Give me a moment's time to breathe. The recollection is yet too much for me. Let me pause,—let me lay down my pen,—let this indignant beating heart be still.”

RAGE! a rage immeasurable, uncontrollable, suddenly took possession of my heart, on witnessing the fate of André Chénier! I burst open my room door, and rushed upon the staircase, crying out aloud, “The murderers! The scoundrels! Denounce me if you will,—Seize me if you please!—Here,—here!” And I wildly stretched out my neck as if seeking the executioner. I was out of my senses!

And what do you think I saw next? Two little children were sitting alone upon the steps, playing together. Every body else was gone out. Their innocent looks arrested me. They looked frightened; and hand in hand pressed up against the wall, to let the madman pass. I stopped and asked myself where I was going,—and why this one death should drive him to distraction, who had already witnessed so many. I became suddenly calm, and wondering how I could for a moment have clung to the insanity of hope, I returned to my room the same impassible spectator of events, which I had been so long. I asked these children what was become of my artilleryman. They said that, ever since the 5th Thermidor, he had come home regularly every morning about eight o'clock, had brushed my clothes, and taken his usual nap: and, as I never appeared, had gone away without asking any questions. I asked the children where their father was,—“He was gone upon the Place, *voir la cérémonie.*”

When I had altogether recovered myself, I stole quietly out again, to satisfy the excessive impatience I had to know what was to happen next; and whether the final triumph of Robespierre would be inexplicably added to this his partial success.

The crowd was still so great, and so attentive to what was going on, that I passed unobserved through the house door; and I set out, holding my head down, and walking quickly through the rain.

The night was now fast coming on. As I walked along, my ears were filled with the resound of the popular cries, the rushing of the wind along the streets, and the regular plashing of the rain. At every turn I saw before me the big statue of Liberty and the scaffold sorrowfully regarding each other,—the swaying living crowd of heads, and the rapid descent of the knife as it fell. I was still in a fever.

As I passed along in this manner, I found that I was continually impeded by troops marching from all quarters, and by crowds of men who were all hastily running one way. I stopped to let them pass, while my eyes were bent upon the wet pavement still shining with the rain. I saw only my feet advancing, I did not know where. I seemed to be able to reflect soberly, to reason logically, and yet I was acting like a madman.

The air had been cooled, and the rain had ceased without my perceiving it. I went along the quays, I crossed the bridges; I seemed to be trying instinctively to get out of the crowd, and I could not succeed. I had the people before me, the people behind me, the people on each side of me!—My brain swarmed with the people!—It was insupportable! I was pushed, squeezed, and driven about. At last I stopped; and sitting down upon the curb stone, I began to reflect. The picture, in its most vivid colours, still haunted me. I saw the red Tuilleries, the Place de la Revolution, black and lurid;—the heavy dark cloud, the statue, and the guillotine, looking at each other. It was insupportable. I started up, and went on again; and again the people squeezed, pressed upon, impeded, and embarrassed me. I made my way, however, without being interfered with,—for one is, perhaps, nowhere better concealed than in a crowd. But with my then feelings, I could have almost been glad that it had not been so: anything would have been welcome that could have delivered me from the almost insupportable burden of my own thoughts.

I passed the better half of that night in these purposeless wanderings. At last I sat down upon the parapet of a quay; and, looking up, found that I was in front of the *Hotel de Ville*. I knew it by its luminous dial plate, which was afterwards extinguished, and has since been once more relighted, and so remains to this day. The hand now marked twenty minutes after midnight. I thought I was dreaming; but looking up saw that I actually was surrounded by a number of people. The Place de la Grève, the quays, every place was overflowing. The crowd was densest before the *Hotel de Ville*, and every eye was fixed upon the great window which was bright with lights from within, for it was there that the council of the Commune was being held. Upon the steps in front was ranged a thick battalion of men, in *bonnets rouges*, and armed with pikes, singing the *Marseil-*

laisé; but the people in general seemed mute with expectation and astonishment.

I was seized all at once with a determination to go to Joseph Chénier; and I soon arrived at the narrow street of the *Isle St. Louis*, where he had taken refuge. An old woman, our confidant, who trembled as she opened the door, (which was not till she had kept me waiting a very long time,) told me that he was asleep; that he was very well satisfied with his day's work; that he had received ten representatives, though he dared not go out himself; that to-morrow they intended to attack Robespierre; and that on the 9th he would go with me to St. Lazare, and deliver M. André with his own hands.

Could I awaken him to tell him, "That brother is dead!—You are too late!" To hear him call upon his brother,—to hear him cry out, that he would have given the universe to have saved him; and know that he should never be believed, neither during life nor after his death;—that he should hear the same fatal sentence for ever in his ears, and read it in the eyes of others, "Cain, what hast thou done with thy brother?" Must I awaken him for this?—Would I? Oh, no?

"Let him sleep,—let him refresh his spirits," said I; "he will have need of them all to-morrow." So I renewed my nocturnal ramble, resolved not to return home until all was over. I passed the night roaming from the Hotel de Ville to the Palais National—from the Tuilleries to the Hotel de Ville. All Paris seemed in the streets.

The morning of the 8th Thermidor arose beautiful and brilliant. That was a long and eventful day; and throughout the whole of it, I watched the grand contest carried on within the Republic. Contrary to usual custom, the silence of expectation prevailed on the outside of the Palais National, while all was discord and loud contention within. The people awaited the result the whole day, but in vain. Each party was employed in concentrating its strength. The Commune was enrolling whole sections into the National Guard. The Jacobins were haranguing the mob; numbers of the people carried fire-arms; and a dropping shot might every now and then be heard here and there.

The day passed in this agitated and restless manner; the night shut in; and the news spread that Robespierre was more powerful than ever, and that he had confounded his adversaries by his speech at the Convention.

What!—Shall he escape! What!—Shall

he be suffered to exist!—to continue his bloody career!—to succeed in his wicked purposes!—to reign!!!

Through the whole of that next awful night, not one person did I see who sought for rest or shelter. As for myself, I never quitted the Place. I was rooted there.

The second day dawned at last,—the day of the great crisis! My wearied eyes saluted it from afar. The Palais National still trembled with the thunders of the loud debate. Sometimes a cry, sometimes a word of intelligence would escape. And the agitation without was inexpressible.

The dice were being thrown, and the stakes of the awful game were life and death.

Sometimes one of the pale combatants appeared, to breathe and wipe his forehead at a window; then the people anxiously asked how that game went, on which their own fate was depending.

The day was at length about to close, when, all at once, a loud, desperate, passionate cry was heard issuing from the Convention—*"A bas le Tyran!"*

And Robespierre, it was said, was in prison.

The battle without began immediately. Every one ran to his post. Drums were beating, arms glittering, and loud cries on all sides resounding. The Hotel de Ville was hurling forth the lugubrious sound of her tocsin, and calling, as it were, for her master; the Tuilleries were bristling with arms; Robespierre, rescued by his party, reigns once more in his palace, the Hotel de Ville; the majority of the Convention in the Tuilleries. During the night, the Commune and the Convention were busy assembling their various partisans. What might properly be called the mob, was divided between the two contending parties; while the *bourgeoisie*, filled with doubt and suspicion, were wandering in the streets, calling upon and interrogating each other. Dreading they scarcely knew what, both for themselves and the nation, they might be seen standing doggedly about, resting the butt end of their muskets upon the pavement, and their chins upon the barrel, waiting for the dawn.

It was now midnight. I was upon the *Place du Carrousel*, when ten pieces of cannon came up, rattling hastily along. By the light of their matches, and a few torches, I saw the officers arranging their pieces with an air of indifference, as if it were a field-day. Some of the guns were pointed at the Louvre, some towards the river. The men appeared to be acting under no positive or

decisive orders. They stopped, dismounted from their horses, and really did not seem to know what they were to do, or to which party they belonged. They mostly lay down on the ground by their pieces. I went up to them, and soon observed one, — probably the sleepest, and certainly the tallest among them all, — who had comfortably settled himself upon the carriage of his gun, and was already beginning to snore. I shook his arm : it was my peaceful warrior — my Blaireau.

He seemed embarrassed, and scratched his head for a moment ; looked at me askance ; recognised me, and rose languidly from his couch. His comrades, accustomed to respect him as *chef du pièce*, came up at the moment, as if to assist him in some manoeuvre. He stretched out his arms and legs, with a long yawn, and then said, “ Oh, *restez, restez!* — it’s nothing at all ; only the citizen there who is come *boire un peu la goutte* (to take a drop) with me. *Hein!*”

His comrades retired, and lay down again in their places.

“ Well,” I began, “ my Blaireau, what is going to happen to-day ?”

He took the match of his cannon, and began to light his pipe. “ Oh, nothing very particular — *pas grand chose,*” said he.

“ The deuce !” said I.

He filled his pipe ; put it to his mouth ; took it away again. “ *Oh! mon Dieu, mon Dieu, non!* — Nothing worth caring about.” He turned his head merely, and looked over his shoulder contemptuously at the *Palais National*, late the Tuilleries, with all its windows now in a blaze of light — “ A heap of lawyers squabbling there ; that’s all.”

“ Ah, that’s the way in which it appears to you, eh ?” said I, taking a cavalier tone, and endeavouring to strike his shoulder, but not reaching it.

“ Exactly,” said Blaireau, with an air of incontestable superiority. I sat down upon the beam of his carriage. I was ashamed to find myself so poor a philosopher in comparison.

But, philosopher or not, I could not help watching every thing that passed. I saw the Carrousel rapidly filling with battalions, who all drew up before the Tuilleries, reconnoitering each other suspiciously. It was the section *de la Montagne*, that of *Guillaume Tell*, of the *Gardes Françaises*, and of the *Fontaine Grenelle*, who were now ranging themselves around the Convention. But was it to attack, or to defend it ?

As I was asking myself this question, I

heard horsemen advancing at full gallop. They came up to the artillery.

A great coarse man, whom I saw indistinctly by the light of the torches, and who was squinting in a strange manner, came first. He brandished a great crooked sabre ; cried out, “ *Citoyens canonniers ! à vos pièces!* I am the General Henriot. *Vive Robespierre*, my boys ! There are the traitors, my boys ! — blow them to atoms ! *Hein!* let ’em see whether they are to make us brave boys dance to their music. *Hein!* here I am, Henriot ! *Hein!* don’t you know me, boys — *pas vrai?*” Not a word in reply. He tottered upon his horse, and, throwing himself back, supported himself upon the reins, making his poor wearied beast curvet and prance about. “ *Eh, bien!* where are your officers ? *Mille dieux!* *Vive la Nation!* — *Vive Robespierre!* *Sacre!* — *Vive Robespierre, mes amis!* Come, come ; we are all brave *sans culottes* and fine fellows : not to be caught with chaff — hey ? Don’t you know me ? — *Hein!* I am no whipper-snapper sniveller. Point your cannon at the old barrack, and blow to the d — I all those cheats and scoundrels of the Convention !”

An officer went up to him, and said, “ Go away to bed — the proper place for you. Get along ! — we have nothing to do with you.”

A second said to the first — “ But the old drunken scoundrel may be a general, after all.”

“ Ah, *bah!* what do I care if he is ?” said the first, and sat down.

Henriot was foaming with rage. “ I’ll cleave your skull like a melon — I will, you rascal, if you don’t obey orders ! — *Mille tonnerres!*”

“ Oh, I would not have you think of such a thing, my dear,” said the officer, pointing to the hilt of his sword. “ Be quiet, citizen, if you please.”

The sort of *aides de camp* who followed Henriot now interfered, and endeavoured to persuade (*enlever* was the term then) the officers ; but in vain. They cared still less for them than for their great drunkard of a general.

The villanous Henriot was now almost suffocated between wine and rage. He cried, he screeched, he swore, he cursed ; he struck his breast. He got off his horse ; he threw himself upon the ground. He remounted, and off fell his hat and feathers. His horse ran up and down, getting entangled among the traces : the artillerymen looked at him, and laughed. The armed citizens stood by, staring at him, and laughed too. Henriot

received the most insulting treatment, and answered with his drunken imprecations—"O, ho!—the great hog!—a great hog without his tusks! O, ho! what does he want with us?—*le porc empanache!*" In vain he screamed rather than cried—"A moi les bons *sans culottes!* Let us exterminate that scoundrel Tallien!—to the guillotine with that rascal Boissy d'Anglas!—down with Collet d'Herbois!—down with Merlin Thionville! Down with them all—a rascally pack of Conventionalists! Down with 'em, boys!"

"Come, come!" said the adjutant-major: "turn about, and get out of the way, you old fool!—we've had enough of this. Get along with you; you're not coming this way!" and he struck Henriot's horse upon the nose with the hilt of his sabre. The poor animal started off, and ran down the *Place du Carrousel*, carrying away his master,—his hat and sabre dragging after him,—and throwing down, as he passed, men, women, boys, and poor little children, who had crowded there, like all the rest of the world, to see what was going on.

Henriot, however, returned to the charge. The shock, and the cool air on his uncovered head, had in some degree sobered him. He said to another officer, "Mind what you are about, citizen; I give you orders to fire upon the Convention. My orders are from the Commune—from Robespierre, St. Juste, and Couthon. I command the garrison. Do you understand me, citizen?"

The other took off his hat; but he answered with perfect *sang froid*—"Give me a written order, citizen: you don't think me such a fool as to give fire without proof of my orders? Good enough—ha, ha! I have seen service before yesterday. Get along!—I am not going to get myself guillotined, I can tell you. Get me a written order, and I'll burn the *Palais National* and the Convention as readily as I'd burn a bundle of matches, do you see?" and he pulled up his moustache, and turned his back upon him. "Or, if you like it, order the men to fire yourself, and I'll keep your secret."

Henriot took him at his word. He came straight up to Blaureau. "Comrade," he said, "I know you."

Blaureau opened his great dull eyes, and said, "Good!—he says he knows me."

"I command you to point your piece against that wall there, and to—fire!"

Blaureau yawned; then he set himself to work. The piece was turned. He bent his long limbs, and with an experienced eye

began to point his cannon, putting his *deux points de piece* exactly opposite to the great lighted window of the chateau.

Henriot triumphed.

Blaureau raised himself to his full height, and said to the four men who stood ready at their posts to serve his piece—two on the right side, and two on the left—"Not quite right yet, my good fellows. Another *lectle* turn of the wheel."

I gazed at that turning wheel. I thought I saw the mythological wheel of Fortune, as it slowly revolved, and the cannon with it. Yes, it was so; it was that very wheel in sober earnest; on it were suspended the destinies of the world. If it turned one way, and pointed the piece, Robespierre triumphed.

At this very moment the Conventionals heard of the arrival of Henriot—at this moment, like the senators of old, they seated themselves to die in their curule chairs.

The people were flying in dismay from the tribunes, and were relating around us what they had seen. If the cannon let fire, the assembly was dissolved, and the united sections passed under the authority of the Commune. The reign of terror was established—and what next? perhaps a Richard the Third—a Cromwell—an Augustus—who knows?

I hardly breathed.

There was a little inequality in the ground; the men could not place the piece as they wished, the wheels turned the wrong way.

Blaureau crossed his arms over his breast, looking at his piece with the discontented and dissatisfied air of a discouraged artist.

He turned to the officer of artillery.

"Lieutenant! they're too young. These men don't know what they are about—too young. As long as you give me such lads as these I can't work my piece. There's no pleasure in it!"

The lieutenant answered in a tone of ill-humour, "Did I command you to fire? not I."

"*Ah bien! c'est different,*" said Blaureau, yawning. "*Ah bien! ni moi, non plus.* I've done—good-night." And giving his piece a kick, it turned on one side, and he lay quietly down to sleep upon the carriage again.

Henriot drew his sabre, which some one had picked up and given to him. "Will you fire or not?" said he.

Blaureau gave a whiff with his pipe, and lifted up his match. "My candle is out," said he.

Henriot was choking with rage, and struck at him a blow with his sabre enough

to cleave a wall; but it was aimed by a drunkard—it glanced aside, striking the sleeve of his uniform, and scarcely scratching the skin as I judged.

It was enough, however, to decide the business against Henriot. The artillerymen fell upon him; a storm of blows rained around; and, covered with mud, and shaking like a sack of corn upon a miller's ass, the unfortunate general was carried by his horse, as every one knows, to the Hotel de Ville, where Coffinhal the Jacobin flung him out of the window, to die upon a dunghill, his proper and natural bed.

At this moment the commissaries of the Convention arrived, crying out that Robespierre, St. Juste, Couthon, Henriot, were put *hors la loi*.

Magical words!

The sections answered with cries of joy. The Carrousel was illuminated as by a fairy wand; every musket carried a flambeau. *Vive la Liberte!—Vive la Convention!—A bas les Tyrans!* re-echoed on every side. Every one turned towards the Hotel de Ville; the crowd dispersed, the battle was won, all by that one magical cry, the revolutionary interdict—*Hors la loi*.

The Convention, so lately besieged, made a sortie, and went in their turn to besiege the Hotel de Ville. I did not follow; I no longer doubted of their victory. I did not go to see Robespierre fracture his own jaw in the attempt to blow out his brains; and lie there in haughty silence, receiving the imprecations showered upon him as he had received the homage lavished at his feet. He had remained at the Hotel de Ville, waiting for the submission of Paris, instead of conquering it for himself.

He was, after all, a coward in grain.

All was over with him. Neither did I see his brother fling himself upon the bayonets through the windows of the Hotel de Ville, nor St. Juste carried to that guillotine to which he had despatched so many innocent victims—his arms crossed, his eyes elevated to heaven, like the grand Inquisitor of Liberty.

They were overthrown—all the rest was indifferent to me.

I remained upon the *Place*, and taking the long, brown hands of my simple-hearted and passionless artilleryman in mine, I made this little oration. "Oh, Blaireau! thy name will not occupy the minutest corner in history—and little wilt thou care, provided thou mayst yawn and sleep the hour away, at the feet of thy Rose. Thou

art too simple and modest, my Blaireau, for few of the men surnamed *great*, by those who pretend to write history, have done a deed so signal as thine! Thou hast cut short an era of democracy—thou hast arrested the Revolution. Thou hast slain the Republic. This is what thou hast done, my sublime Blaireau! Other men will govern the world, and will assume to themselves the glory of thy deeds; men that 'your candle,' had it not been *out*, might have blown to atoms. Much, and long, and eternally will men write upon the 9th Thermidor, and who will ever think of naming thee! Thee, worthy of that adoration, of that meed of honour which is due to those men of deeds and not words,—who perhaps do not know, and certainly little reflect upon what they have effected, but who rarely are endued with thy sublime modesty and philosophic candour! I, at least, here offer thee my homage; for thou, oh Blaireau! thou art the man of destiny!" And so saying, I bent with unaffected reverence before the instrument of one of the greatest political events in the world.

Blaireau thought I was laughing at him; he withdrew his hand gently, scratched his head, and said, with much respect, "*S'il c'etait un effet de votre bonté*, just to look at my left arm."

"Right," said I.

He took off his sleeve, and I got a torch, "Make your best acknowledgments to Henriot, child," said I; "he has rid you of certain questionable hieroglyphics. The fleurs de lis and Madeleine have just been sliced off with the epidermis, and to-morrow you will be well and may be married."

I wrapped my handkerchief round his arm, took him home, *et ce qui fut dit fut fait*—(so said, so done.) But it was long before I could recover my sleep. The serpent, it was true, was strangled; but it had devoured the Swan of France!

And what became of Madame de St. Aignan and of Mademoiselle de Coigny?

The 9th Thermidor released them both. Madame de St. Aignan retired to the château de St. Aignan with her three children, and devoted her widowhood to their education. She was grave and melancholy, but preserved her usual sweet and gentle softness; and her impression will never be effaced from my memory. She has been long dead. Mademoiselle de Coigny married. I have heard not too happily,

DONALD LAMONT, THE BRAEMAR DROVER.

BY SIR THOMAS DICK LAUDER, BART.

THE late Sir John Inglis was in the habit of receiving, regularly every autumn, from Braemar, a flock of Highland wethers, to be fattened on his rich pasture at Cramond, near Edinburgh, for the supply of his table. A certain man of that Highland district, of the name of Donald Lamont, was the person who, for many years, had the charge of driving the sheep; and the care and fidelity which he displayed in the performance of this duty, added to the circumstance of his being remarkably shrewd and sagacious, and his having a certain spice of sly humour about him, made Sir John take a great liking to him. So much interest, indeed, did the worthy Baronet take in Donald, that he never arrived at Cramond, to make his annual delivery of sheep, that Sir John did not send for him, in order that he might have a talk with him; after which he always gave orders that every care should be taken of him, and every kindness shown to him in the servants' hall, whilst he remained there; and finally, it was ever his wont to dismiss him with some peculiar mark of his approbation. Donald's journey to Cramond, therefore, was always regarded by himself with very pleasing anticipation for many a long day before the time of his departure arrived; and when it did come, he turned out for the purpose of assuming the command of his flock, with his collies at his heels, with all the pride of a general attended by his staff,—dressed in his best bonnet and plaid, kilt, hose, and brogues, with his best badger-snouted *sporrán*, or purse, girt before him, and with his *skian-dhu*, or black-hafted knife, sticking in his belt. Though Donald was a little man, and rather insignificant in appearance, yet he had a dauntless spirit. He therefore always made out the journey alone, asking the aid of no other assistants but that of his dogs. Small pitcher as he was, he went and came thus to and from the well, for some forty years or so, without ever fulfilling the proverb, by being broken or injured during all that long period of service. He did meet with adventures now and then, however; and one of these I am now about to tell you.

The weather had been peculiarly sultry, and the roads unusually dusty, during one

of Donald's southern trips; and as he invariably made a point of adhering strictly to that laudable economy for which Scotsmen are, for the most part, so justly celebrated, he not only chiefly depended for his own support on the scraps of cakes and cheese afforded by a wallet which he carried at his back, but he also trusted the maintenance of his muttens more to those pickings which Providence provided for them by the wayside, than to any purchased provender. It was not wonderful then, on the occasion I allude to, that by the time the creatures had got so far on their journey as half way between Kinross and Queensferry, they were ready to halt and set their teeth very actively a nibbling on a piece of most inviting unenclosed pasture, the freshness of which would have been tempting even to the pampered palate of the most apathetical epicure of the wool-bearing race, that ever wore one of Mr. Culley's flannel jackets, or fed in an English paddock, or even in the fair fields of Phantassie; far more a ragged rout of half-starved, hairy-coated, Highland wethers, with black faces and huge horns, affording the very beau-ideal of the supposed countenance of that alarming personage whom our own immortal Burns addresses as—

Auld Hornie, Satan, Nick, or Clootie!

Donald, fully aware of the urgent necessities of his bleating battalion, beheld them rush upon their forage with a triumphant *Baa-a-a* that rejoiced his very heart. "Puir beasts!" muttered he to himself, as he heard the gratifying sound produced by their incisors as they cropped the herbage at a rate that would have ensured the annihilation of the whole patch in the course of a few hours,—“Puir beasts! she's sure ye be sair wantin' meat; and veel are ye wordy o't a'!” and then, casting the hesitating glance of a moment over his shoulder towards an adjacent field of wheat, where a large band of reapers were at work under the eye of the farmer—“Hoots!” added he, with a shrug, “she swarrants she'll no be muckle mindin' her,—ta puir beasts 'ill no do muckle skaith for a' tat they'll tak.” So saying, Donald was about to seat himself on a bank to chew a crust from his wallet, that the animals might have

the more leisure to fill themselves, when, having again cast his eyes askance towards the farmer, his Highland honour pricked him. "Tuts!" said he, with another shrug, "what for wad she be takin' ta man's grass, fan she may ha'e it for ta axin'?"

Giving to his fan-tailed aides-de-camp the temporary charge of the brigade, who were too well occupied not to ensure his finding them at his return, he limped away, with hot feet and tired legs, to where the fat and comfortable farmer was lounging after his reapers with listless steps, and with his hands in his breeches pockets, but with his eyes sharply occupied on the progress of the important work he was superintending.

Donald, with becoming modesty and deference, took off his bonnet while he was yet a far way off; and, as he drew nearer, he made divers obeisances before the eyes of the farmer were yet turned upon him. At length he "of the broad and furrowed land" caught a sight of him "of the misty mountains."

"Weel, friend, what are ye wantin'?" said the farmer.

"Wad her honour no be anghery," said Donald, bowing again with an air of great submission, "tat ta sheeps taks a bite o' ta grass yonder?"

"A bite o' my grass!" exclaimed the farmer. "Na, deil ae bit. D'ye think I can be gien' bites o' grass to every chield that passes this gate wi' sheep? 'Od, I wud be eaten up wi' them like the locusts o' Eegypp! Na, na, friend,—gang awa' on wi' your sheep: ye's get nae bites frae me, I promise ye!"

"Hoots!" said Donald, quietly, with a whimsical sort of half smile of entreaty on his countenance, and with another humble bow,—“hoots! she swarrants tat her honour 'ill no be sae hard—ta wathers sore hongrie.”

"Deil cares!" replied the farmer; "hungry or no, they may gang elsewhere to get their bellies filled,—deil ae pick shall they ha'e frae me."

"Oich!" said Donald, looking over his shoulder towards the spot where the sheep were making the best possible use of their time, and satisfied in his own mind that the objects of his solicitude had at least had some pickings already, and that the longer he could spin out the negotiation the better it wad be for them,—“Oich, oich, she's vera hard wi' her. Hoot-toot, but surely she'll let her puir bit wathers tak a bit plok o' ta grass: ta puir beasts sore hongrie, vera tired."

"'Od, but ye're a cunnin' chield," said the honest farmer, at once perceiving Donald's drift, and taking a hearty good-natured laugh at his ingenuity. "I see what ye're after, billy; sae, while ye stand haverin' there a' day to me, ye think, nae doot, that your wathers 'ill be *plockin'*, as ye ca' it, a' the time. But I tell ye aince for aye, that deil ae plock mair shall they ha'e; sae ye may just pack up your alls, and begone directly, sheep an' a'."

"Ta puir beasts like to starve," said the indefatigable Donald, still preserving the most perfect serenity of countenance, and with eyes still lighted up with a comical smile of entreaty,—“ta puir wathers sae hongrie—Toots! her honour 'ill no grodge ta puir beasts ta plock.”

"The deil's in ye for an obstinate chield!" said the farmer, extremely tickled with Donald's unconquerable perseverance. "Aweel, I'll tell ye what it is,—an' ye'll shak a fa' wi' Jock Meachgh, my bandster there, 'od, but your wathers shall ha'e a pluck till their weymes be fu'!"

Donald cast a look towards the grass, and beheld his muttons feeding busily upon it, and he was resolved. He then eyed the man who was binding,—a broad-shouldered fellow, nearly half as heavy again as himself,—and his quickly-formed resolution perished within him as soon as it was born; nor was its death the less sudden when he remarked the contemptuous glances of the hero of the harvest rig, and heard him mutter to himself, "Poof! —that bit body!" as if conscious that he could have devoured him.

Donald felt that he had no chance at all; and, turning to the farmer with a piteous visage, "Hoot-toot," said he, shaking his head, "troths, but she no be good at fightin', —but, och hoch! ta puir beasts be vera hongrie—be ta better o' ta plock; and sure, sure, her honour no be nane ta waur."

"Na, na!" exclaimed the farmer. "I've said my say,—an' ye dinna like my bargain, billy, ye're free to let it alane, an' ye may e'en gang your ways on to the Ferry. But what do ye speak o' fightin', man? Shakin' a fa' is no fightin'."

"Toots, but she be an auld man!" said Donald, eyeing his proposed opponent with an apprehension which it required all his ingenuity to conceal. "She no be fit to fights."

"Ou, that's a' nonsense!" said the farmer,—"Jock Meachgh is about as auld as ye are."

"Ou, na!" said Donald. "Sure she be a

purty young man, — sure she'll no be fit for her ava, ava."

"Tut, man, are ye a Hielanman, an' frightit to shak a fa' wi' that chap?" cried the farmer. "'Od, I'll tell ye what it is — ye shall ha'e fair play; an' mair nor that, forbye the pluck to your beasts, whichever chield throws the ither, shall ha'e this hauf-crown piece, an' it shall be placed in ony ane's hands ye like to name."

Donald eyed the glittering piece of money, — he cast another look at his sheep; and now, the advantages beginning to weigh heavily against the dangers of the combat, and the honour of the Highlands being concerned, his spirit was stirred up within him, and his resolution came again upon him.

"She be an auld man," said he, "an' she's no good at fightin' — but, since her honour maun ha'e it sae, — Fod, but she'll try!"

"That's a brave chield!" cried the farmer, giving him a slap on the back. "Weel, — wha's to haud the hauf-crown?"

"Hersel wad like ta bonnie lassie," said Donald, nodding towards a trig, rosy-cheeked, smiling girl, whom his eyes lighted on, and whose blushes manifested that she was by no means insensible to the compliment which the old man had paid her, though she, at the same time, certainly felt it to be no more than just.

"Wi' a' my heart," said the farmer, handing the girl the coin. "Hae, Bess! haud ye the stakes, lass. Come awa, Geordy, man, — let's see what ye can do against Hieland Donald here."

"Hu! the bit body!" said the bandster, tossing from him the sheaf, the straw ropes of which he had that moment tightened; and folding his arms across his breast, and looking at his opponent from top to toe, like Shakspeare's Charles the wrestler, with a gaze of utter despal, he seemed to convey to him the assurance that he could quite as easily toss him down in the same manner. But little Donald was not to be so daunted, — for, throwing off all his former diffidence, and knitting his brows, and summoning an expression of desperate determination into his countenance, he strode forward with a few bold paces towards his adversary, like a game cock, and eyeing him fiercely, he laid both his hands on the leathern belt of his own *sporrán*, and giving it first a powerful hitch to the right side, and then another powerful hitch to the left side, and then finally settling it forcibly in front by another twitch to the centre, he pulled out his *skian-*

dhu — looked at it earnestly — drew the blade of it through betwixt his finger and thumb — examined it narrowly again — again fixed his eye fiercely upon his man — stuck the knife energetically into his belt — and giving a loud "*huchhum!*" as if to gather all the wind he was master of — he again looked savagely at his man, and called out, in a voice like thunder, "*Come noo!*" —

But the self-confidence of Jock Meachgh the bandster was gone: he had watched Donald's every motion, and he liked not their import — "Na!" said he, with a shake of his head, and with an expression of dismay which there was no mistaking. "'Od, I'll hae naething ado wi' ye."

"What the deil's the matter wi' ye noo, Jock, man?" exclaimed the farmer, bursting into a roar of laughter at the success of Donald's manœuvre, whilst the whole harvest-rig of reapers joined in his shouts of merriment. "What the deil's the matter wi' ye, man? Come! — till him! Wad ye be cowed wi' a bit body like that? Come! — till him, man!"

"Na! — deil ha'e me an' I ha'e ony thing to do wi' him!" replied Jock, retreating two or three steps backwards to restore that proper distance between them which he now seemed to think essential to his personal safety, and which Donald had just at that moment diminished by as many bold steps forward, accompanied by another loud and tremendous *huchhum!* "'Od, I wadna be sure o' my life a minute in the hands o' siccan a red-wud wild Hielanman as that! — Na, na! — fegs, I'll ha'e naething ado wi' him!"

"Eh man, siccan a fugie!" cried the farmer, bursting again into a roar of laughter that was chorused by shouts from the whole reapers.

"'Od, man, ye war frunty enuch at first; but I'm thinkin' Hieland Donald's ta'en down ye're stamick a wee. Weel, Donald!" said he, at last, after his mirth had somewhat subsided, "troth ye're a brave chield after a'. Lassie! gi'e him his hauf-crown; I'm sure he's worthy o't: and as for the wathers, by my certy they shall eat, an' bite, an' pluck yonder till their weyms are like to rive again. An', d'ye hear, Donald! come ye in by wi' me to the house yonder that ye may get a bite an' a sup to yourself; an' I'll tell ye what it is, neither ye nor your wathers shall ever gae by my door wi' toom kites as long as the breath's in my body."

Donald made his approaches to the Queen

of Beauty who had been appointed to preside over the lists, with all the grace he could command, took from her hand the silver coin which she held out to him, and then, she nothing loth, he ventured to steal a kiss from her glowing lips, amidst shouts of applause from the whole harvest-rig of reapers.

The honest farmer was as good as his word; and as Donald in his future trips generally took care to arrive at his worthy friend's farm towards evening, his house and homestead became so certain a place of repose and refreshment for himself and his wethers, that at last he reckoned this place as one of his regular stages.

It happened, however, upon another occasion, that Donald, being on his return from Cramond to Braemar, was so desirous to get on to Perth the first day, that he contented himself with a short call on his kind friend the farmer; and though by no means now so active as he had once been, he fagged on doggedly along the dusty road till he got some miles beyond Kinross, when his feet became beaten and his limbs weary. "Och hone!" said Donald, as he sat him down to rest himself in a ditch by the side of the road. "Och hone! hoo lang ta Sassenach miles be growan! Och hone! but ae mile o' ta hard turnimspikes be waur nor twunty on ta braw heather o' ta Hieland hills!"

Whilst Donald was sitting with his face turned towards the hedge, thinking of home, and his native mountains, and the bonny Dee, and the long trudge which his legs must take before his eyes should behold its crystal stream, two horsemen came riding along the road; and as he turned his head to look at them when they came nearly abreast of him, one of them eyed him, pulled up his horse suddenly, and called to his companion, who wheeled quickly round and joined him; and then both of them, with their horses' heads turned towards him, remained for some moments surveying him very attentively, and talking all the time in a half whisper to each other. Donald was considerably alarmed at this extraordinary conduct, but he resolved at least to keep a *face* of courage over the fears that lurked within him. He therefore continued to sit apparently as unconcerned as if he had not observed them at all, munching at a morsel of hard cheese and dry oat cake, and with his face planted plumb against the hedge; whilst he still endeavoured to watch every motion of the two men, by throwing an eye backwards over each shoulder like a hare in her form. They were rather ruffian-looking

fellows, and instead of whips, Donald observed that they carried large bludgeons, so that he had not the least doubt that robbery was not only their usual trade but their present object; and, though he had not very much to lose, yet, he felt that to lose that little, and to have his life put in jeopardy at the same time, was by no means a very desirable denouement of the present mysterious encounter.

After much whispering and a good many significant nods and winks to each other—"Od, sir," said one of the fellows, "as sure as I'm alive, it's the very man."

"Fegs is't," said the other; "it's him as sure as that's you. Let me see," continued he, taking a paper out of his pocket, and carrying his eyes alternately from its contents to the object of his speculation; "let me see—sandy hair—ay—thin pale face—ay, exactly—small gray eyes—tuts, man! we need nae mair—it's the very chap, I'll be bailed for't."

"Ou, as sure's death it's him!" re-echoed his companion.

In a moment both of them, animated by the same impulse, jumped from their horses, and they pounced upon Donald like a couple of terriers on the seated hare to which I have already compared him, "You're our prisoner!" shouted they.

"Shentlemans, shentlemans!" exclaimed the unresisting Donald; "weel, weel! but fat is she pris'ners for? Och hone!"

"Ah ha, my billy, that cock'll no fight," said one of the men: "ye're nae mair a Hielanman nor I am: ye spak gude enough English at Perth fair, no muckle waur nor I'm speakin' mysel', I'm thinkin'."

"That is a gude ane," said the other; "as if ye didna ken as weel as I do what you're nabbed for. We'll see whan the Joodge comes round, whether ye can mak the witnesses forget that you are a robber an' a fief, as weel as you pretend to hae done yersel'."

"Fief!" cried Donald, much relieved by finding that instead of being made the subject of a robbery in his own proper person, he was only suspected of having robbed some one else. "Fief! och hone! sore troubles! sore troubles!" whined he, with an assumed air of deep and settled despondency.

"Ay," said one of the men, now quite at ease from the facility of his capture; "it's time to say sore troubles noo, indeed; but it wad ha' been a hantel better if ye had thought o' this sore trouble, or ere ye did that for which ye may get your neck raxt. But

come awa, auld carl; get oot o' the ditch, and come along wi' hus."

"An' which way wad she be takin' her?" demanded Donald, as he slowly obeyed the man's orders.

"To the Tobuith o' Perth, to be sure," replied the other.

"Och hone! sore pity! sore pity! bad luck!" cried Donald, again in the same whimpering tone, but inwardly rejoiced that the route which they proposed to take with him, was exactly that by which he required to go at any rate. "But, och hone!" continued he, "she be an auld man, an' she be sore tired; wad she no get a bit ride?"

"Ride," said one of his captors; "to be sure; d'ye think we ha'e time to let ye walk a' the way?"

"Ride," said the other; "to be sure ye shall ride; ride like a king ahint me, on this beast. Come, help him up here, Mr. Murdieson," continued he, as he settled himself on the saddle; "and noo, do ye keep a wee thoughty back, that ye may the better watch that he disna try to play me ony dog's trick, an' syne mak aff wi' himsel'."

"Ou! foo! she'll no do tat, shentlemans," said Donald; "she swarrants she no do tat—foo, foo!—foiye, foiye!—no, no!—she'll no do tat."

Donald's protestations were most sincere. Never did bride more willingly ride *en croupe* behind bridegroom than Donald did behind the horseman who took charge of him; and, as his weary limbs hung dangling free in air, at either side of the horse, he noted with a peculiar degree of inward satisfaction, how quickly the milestones were now flying to his rear in comparison with their motion in the former part of the day, when he was so tired with the rarity of their salutations to him, and the slowness of their retreat from him as he went limping past them. Meanwhile his two companions had their agreeable thoughts, too; and these they went on participating with one another in merry half-covered allusions to the ease with which they had secured their prize, the good luck they had had in so soon falling in with their prisoner, the wisdom they had both shown in taking that particular road, the shrewdness they had evinced in at once marking their man, and the triumph they should enjoy over some other parties who had taken different directions in search of the thief; but most of all, they hugged themselves on the delightful prospect which they now so certainly beheld before them, of the

immediate golden harvest of a very considerable reward which had been offered for the apprehension of the delinquent.

Whilst they were jogging on in this way, they met with a gentleman mounted on a handsome horse, and followed by a groom in livery. The two catchpoles at once knew him to be one of the wealthiest and most important gentlemen of Perthshire—an active magistrate; and one who, having been at Perth fair at the time of the robbery, had given his aid in devising and furthering such measures as were considered most likely to produce the capture of the culprit.

"Od, sir, we've gotten him!" shouted both the men at once, before he came within twenty yards of them.

"Ha! that's well," said the gentleman. "You are a couple of meritorious fellows. Well, I did not think that he would have come this way."

"Aweel, your honour, but I was cock sure o't; an' ye'll mind I tell ye sae," said Murdieson.

"Let me see the prisoner," continued the gentleman, riding close up to Donald, that he might the more narrowly examine him. "Bless me! he is an old man!—What a wretched sight it is to behold vice and crime and old age thus united!"

"Ou ay!" said Donald in his assumed whimpering tone, "sad sight! sad sight!"

"Wretched old man, how I pity you!" said the gentleman.

"Ugh ay!—pity,—sad pity!—bad luck! bad luck!"

"Bad luck!" exclaimed the gentleman, "alas! I fear there is no feeling in your hardened heart, but for the bad luck you think you have had in being taken. It may be well for you, old man, that you have been thus arrested in your career of crime, if you are yet brought to a sense of the enormity of your guilt before you die."

"Och hone! bad luck!" continued Donald.

"What a melancholy thing it is to see so much anxiety for life, and so great an indifference to futurity, in an old man, who, in the common course of nature, should be thinking of that journey which we must all, sooner or later, take, but which he may be said to have already entered on!"

"Ou ay," said Donald, thinking of the long way to Braemar,— "sore journeys, sore journeys!"

"Yes," said the gentleman; "but have you reflected, old man, as to where the journey may probably end with you?"

"Ou ay—troth she has done that!" replied Donald. "Ugh ay—sore journeyes."

"What a truly heartbreaking sight!" exclaimed the feeling magistrate, "to behold a man with one foot in the grave, as one may say, and with the load of a long life of crime upon his soul!—'Tis a pitiable sight indeed!—Let me advise you, old man, to think over your past life, and seriously to repent of those dark deeds which have so much blackened it. Trust me there is no hope for you on this side eternity; for the party who was robbed, declared, in my presence, that he can swear to your person, and there are others equally well prepared to identify it."

"Ugh, ugh, bad luck!—bad luck!" whimpered Donald again, though secretly congratulating himself that, since the true robber was so well known, his confinement could not be very long.

"Alas!" said the gentleman, again, "how the wretch would cling to life!—what a woful picture of human nature! But I need not tell you, officers, that he cannot be viewed as a guilty man until he is proved to be so before a jury of his country. At all events, he is old and feeble; therefore I desire that you will treat him as kindly as circumstances will permit, and let the poor wretch want for nothing."

"Ou, we'll see to that, your honour," said both the constables in a breath, as the gentleman left them, "we'll see and do that, as far as lies in our power."

They had not ridden much above a mile farther when they came to a public house—"Maister Matthew," said he who was called Murdieson, "I daursay the poor deevil's starvin' o' hunger."

"Ay troth, it's a question whether he's gotten ony thing to eat sin he took leg-bail yestreen frae Perth," said he who carried the prisoner behind him.

"Sore hongrie—sore hongrie—" whined Donald, as he emphatically rubbed his stomach with both his hands.

"I tel't ye sae," said the first officer; "an' troth I'm thinkin' I could eat a bit o' a cauld sheep's head, or a knuckle o' ham, or something that gate myself; for it's no that muckle I ha'e eaten this day."

"Fegs, to tell you the truth, I'm gaye an' yaup too," replied Matthew. "What an' we should stop a bit here, an' tak a morsel o' what the gudewife can gie us; it 'ill a' gang intil the count, ye ken."

"Ay," said the other, "and ye mind that his honour bade us treat the man."

"Ay," said Matthew, "his honour's very words were, an' ye ken I like to be parteeclear about words; for our clerk says, fouk should aye be parteeclear about words, for they dinna ken when they may be speered at anent them. His honour's very words, I say, were, *treat* him as kindly as circumstances will permit, an' let the puir vratch want for nothing."

"That's just what his honour said," replied Murdieson, dismounting as he spoke, "I can swear to his very words."

"Wou, but he's afeelin' hearted Christian!" said Matthew; "sae, as we hae plenty o' time to get to Perth lang or it's dark, I dinna see what can hinder us frae takin' as gude a dinner here as the circumstances o' lucky's hoose will alloo. Fouk maun eat, ye ken, as lang as they ha'e teeth i' their chaf'ts."

"'Od, that's true enough," said Murdieson, "sae jump ye doon, auld man, and let's into the hoose. Laddie! tak a haud o' thae naigs—put them into the stable for a gliff—but, d'ye hear, dinna tak aff the saddles."

"Come awa, lucky," cried Matthew, to the woman of the hoose, "ye used to be a bit fendy body; let's see what you can gi'e us till our dinner."

"Ye can hae broth, gentlemen, and beef, and twa brantered chuckies, and some ham and eggs," said the landlady.

"That 'ill do fine," said both the constables at once: "come awa' wi' them then, woman, as fast as ye can; for we maun be aff again afore ye can say Jack Robison."

You may easily imagine that Donald, though a perfectly passive party in their arrangements, was by no means the less delighted with them on that account: nor did he do less ample justice to this entertainment than either of his companions; for, while they talked, he went silently on, cramming himself, as if he had economically resolved to eat now gratis, what should last him till he should reach Braemar. A respectable, though not intoxicating, allowance of brandy-punch followed the feast. The bill was discharged by the constables; and the trio again mounted and rode on as formerly, for some miles, till they approached the turnpike-gate at the Brig of Earn.

"Wad ye no like a drink, auld carl?" said Matthew the constable, behind whom Donald was seated.

"Ugh, ugh, sore drouthy," replied he.

"'Od, I dinna wonder at that," replied Matthew, "after a' yon ham and eggs; for

my pairt, I'm chokin'; an' I'm sure ye sho'elled twice as muckle o't o'er your craig as I did; for I maun do ye the justice to say, that ye ate as if ye had had a Heriot's-wark laddie in your weym."

"Saunders! bring oot a bottle o' porter to this puir man."

Out came the turnpike-man with a creaming pot of brown stout. Donald took it from the constable, who handed it to him; and, turning away his head from the eye of the tollman, he drained off the liquor to the very bottom. "Faigs," said he, when afterwards telling this part of his story, "ta chield tat cam' after her was na' muckle ta better or ta waur o' her leavins."

"Weel, Saunders," said Matthew to the turnpike-man, "didna I tell ye that we'd catch him? it's no often that I misses my man."

"Catch wha?" said the tollman; "ye dinna mean to say that's the rubber!"

"Yes, but we do though," said the other constable; "whan Maister Matthew and me hunts in couples we never misses our gemm, though it should be an auld fox himsel'."

"'Od, I'm thinkin' ye're mistane this time though," said the tollman.

"Poof, nonsense man," replied the officer; "ha'e we no gotten the chield's pickter in our pouch?"

"Ay," said the other officer, "an' d'ye think we didna try him weel by his likeness?"

"I canna help that," said the tollman: "I'm positive that's no the man."

"Ha! ha! ha! that's a gude ane, Saunders," shouted Matthew. "Did ye no tell us nae langer than twa or three hours syne, as we gaed by the toll, that ye kent naething o' sic a chap as we describit the rubber to be; and hoo can ye set up your face noo, to be sae positive ae way or anither?"

"That's a' very true," said Saunders, edging round the horse to get a look of Donald, who still did all he could to keep his face away from his observation; "but I'm positive that's nae mair the rubber than I'm the rubber."

"Weel, ye're the maist positest guse I ever forgathered wi'," said Murdieson: "did we no show the chield to the Justice himsel'?"

"Ay," said Matthew, "and did he no tell me to treat him as kindly as circumstances wad permit, and to let the puir vratch want for naething? and wasna' that the very reason that I gied him the drap porter ye noo?"

"Ay," said Murdieson, "and did his

honour no gie the puir deevil the best end o' a half hour's sermon, that might ha'e edified even a publican and a sinner like you?"

"Will ye no be convinced noo, ye dour brute?" added Matthew.

"No," said the tollman, not a little nettled, "I'll no be convinced by you; an' yet I'm nae mair a guse or a brute than yersel', Maister Matthew."

"I'll tell ye what it is, Maister Murdieson," said Matthew, turning to his companion, "naething will ever stop the empty gabb o' this fool chield, but a gude bet; sae gin ye like to gae my hau'ves, we's wager him a siller crown, that we hae gotten the right soo by the lug."

"Done, gentlemen!" exclaimed the tollman, eagerly wetting his thumb in his mouth, and rubbing it against those of the two officers, which, after undergoing a similar preparation, were successively held out to meet it. "Ye may bid good e'en to your half-crowns a-piece; an' ye may comfort yersel's for the loss of them wi' the bit auld byeword, that fules and their money are soon pairted. I ken this auld man weel. Mony's the time he has stoppit at my door to get a drink, as he gaed by wi' droves o' wathers; for he's been drivin' sheep to Sir John Inglis o' Cramond for near forty years bygone. Mony's the crack I ha'e had wi' him; an' I'll be bailed there's no an honest body between the Earn there, and the Dee whaur he comes frae. It's but the ither day that he gaed by wi' his sheep, and I tak it that he's noo on his way north; so he couldna ha'e been in Perth for near this week bypast. Hoo's a wi' ye, Donald, my cock? what are ye hidin' your head that gate for?"

Seeing concealment to be no longer practicable, Donald lifted his head with a good humoured grin of recognition to the tollman. "Troth, she's no wonders nor she hauds doon her head, fan she be ca'ed a fiefs an' a rubbers," said he waggishly.

Mr. Matthew turned in his saddle; and Mr. Murdieson pushed his horse up to Donald to eye him more attentively. Dismay fell on the lofty countenances of both of them, and overshadowed them as the mist does the mountain tops.

"As I'm a sinner, he wants the muckle scour on his broo," exclaimed Matthew.

"'Od, what gard us no think o' that afore?" said Murdieson.

"Get doon aff the beast, ye auld deevil, or I'll ketch ye into the midden," said Matthew.

"Hoots, toots! no," said Donald, roguishly; "surely she'll be mindin' tat his honour bade her trate her as kindly as circumsasses wad pairment. Wad she no tak her on to Perth?"

"Get doon this moment, I tell ye, or I'll be the death o' ye," said Matthew, grinning so furiously with rage, that poor Donald lost no more time, but slid very nimbly over the tail of the horse, and took post behind the tollman.

"Aweel, aweel," said Donald, so soon as he felt secure of the protection of his old friend, who was chuckling heartily at the defeat and mortification of the constables,—
"Aweel, aweel, shentlemans, sin ye wunna gie her mair rides, she's mockle obliged for ta mony gude miles ye ha'e brocht her—ay, an' for ta gude kail, an' flesh, an' fowls, an' ham, an' eggs, an' brandies; ay, an' portars an' a'—sae she be wushin' yebaith a vera gude night; for, sin ye wunna carry her farder, she maun just e'en be trot ta wee bit gate to Perth on her nane ten taes."

"Na, na, Donald lad!" said the tollman, laughing as if he would have split himself, "we shanna pairt that gate. It's wearin' late; and ye's no gang farther this night, I promise ye; sae come in by. An' do ye hear, gentlemen, we'll ha'e your crown oot here in gude punch, an' sae we'll souther a' sairness."

"We're muckle obliged to ye, Saunders," said Matthew, tossing down his half-crown in a huff, an action which was quickly followed by a similar tribute, as sulkily paid by his companion; "but we ha'e mair important matters to mind, than to be sittin' teuchin' a' night in a tipplin' hoos;" and both of them, digging their heels into the sides of their garrons, they galloped off towards Perth in a whirlwind of dust, whilst the turnpikeman, with his sides shaking with laughter, led Donald into his house that he might have his share of their spoil.

Donald Lamont continued to take these annual journeys to Cramond, until his advanced age had rendered him so infirm, that he became altogether unfit to attempt them; when the charge of Sir John Inglis's wethers was assigned to some one else. But such was the affecting nature of Donald's recollections, that he never saw the drove leave the glen without crawling after them for some distance; and, when he parted with them, he kissed the creatures,—looked with a longing eye after them for some time; and, when they were out of sight, he burst into tears, and returned home crying like a child. The good Sir John Inglis never allowed the shepherd who drove them, to return to Braemar, without sending Donald some substantial token that he had not forgotten him.

MOTHERING SUNDAY; OR, OLD USAGES.

BY AN OLD INDIAN.

Hail, ancient manners! sure defence,
Where they survive, of wholesome laws;
Remnants of love—whose modest sense
Thus into narrow room withdraws.
Hail, USAGES of pristine mould,
And ye that guard them, mountains old!

THERE is to me an indescribable charm in *Old Usages*. They are the finest of all antiquities, for they have a life in the present, as well as a venerable memory in the past. The haze of Time has gathered round them; but it is tinted by the halo of Hope; they are ancient as the hills, yet fresh as the returning spring. How cheerfully they divided the social year of Old England, keeping the heart alive with gentle anticipa-

tion, or warm with kindly remembrance! There was first the hallowed starting-place—welcome Christmas!—with its religious solemnities, and carols, and revels, if less solemn, scarce less sanctified: the blazing Christmas log, and the garlands of ivy and mistletoe—most sacred of parasites—decorating the oaken hall, into which was solemnly ushered the boar's head with its appropriate carol:—

Caput Apri defero,

Reddens laudes Domino.

The boar's head in hand bring I,
With garlands gay and rosemary;
I pray you all sing merrily,
Qui estis in convivio!

Merry Shrovetide, with its rustic feast, and yeomanly feats, brought on the glad and Palmy Easter—the blessed morning of the Resurrection, when the cottage dame arrayed her children in their new home-spun garbs, and herself put devoutly on

— fresh raiment till that hour unworn,
In thoughtful reverence of the PRINCE OF PEACE.

I confess I was very much delighted to see, last *Pasch* Sunday, in the close vicinity of the metropolis of Presbyterianism, some hundreds of young children playing on the grassy slopes of the Royal Park, with hard-boiled coloured eggs, each with a new bonnet, or pair of new shoes, or were it that but a new pin, to ward old custom. I am not sure but I lingered with more heart-reaching satisfaction about this scene of childish sport, than I have felt in surveying all your late stupendous improvements, and felt that there was more of the genuine spirit of antiquity here than in the hall of the Antiquarian Society.

The observances of the May-day, Midsummer-eve, and Hallowmas, mingling as they did Druidical and classic superstitions with something which, if not Christianity, is far from being inimical to its spirit, were so intimately interwoven with the strong and simple virtues of the elder time, that one cannot help feeling as if their decay indicated a loosening of the bonds of social charity. Then how finely do they awaken the memory of the flowery allegories of the old poets, of Chaucer, and King James I., and Dunbar, and of the last days of romance and expiring chivalry, when the peers of Henry IV. thought it no disparagement of their valour to erect the Maypole in the court of the Louvre, or when Prince Charles leapt the palace garden-wall at sunrise, to surprise the Infanta of Spain gathering May-dew—the enchanting cosmetic of the ever-blooming damsels of romance; the only true “Circassian bloom” and “celestial Kalydor!” The ladies are hereby cautioned against using any other composition than this, distinguished from all counterfeits by the mark of the rosy fingers of Aurora, her signature witnessed by all the Graces. There is, I fear, no hope of seeing the Duke of Wellington and his Staff set up a May-pole at the Horse Guards, in imitation of the Peers of Henry; yet the pastime was at

least as innocent as the erection of the guillotine in the Place du Caroussel, or even of the triumphal arch of Napoleon, at the Champs Elysées. And though I fear we shall never see any modern prince imitate the lover's leap of the romantic and unfortunate Charles I., one likes better to think of his wild adventure, than of his successor indulging in the more modern pleasures of a midnight carouse at Chiffinch's, with Lady Castlemaine, or “Mistress Nelly.”

All those old customs and superstitions were pregnant with weighty meanings. The *wake* and the *ale* promoted courtesy and cordial good neighbourhood. There was in the May-pole a finer moral than was ever yet gathered in the gallery of a town theatre, where it is still to be seen in effigy. The fairies—yea, the dapper elves by whose example both men and maids were made more cheerful and more happy—were, I think, the first regular society on record for the promotion and encouragement of neatness, cleanliness, and good housewifery. If the gentlemen of the Highland Society think themselves first in date, they are mightily mistaken. The Fairies were, besides, the original improvers of dairy produce; they were bankers, too, and lent at even less than three per cent. But they are all gone! And we may sing, with jolly Dick Corbet,

Farewell, rewards and fairies!

Good housewives now may say,

For now foul sluts in dairies

Do fare as well as they:

And though they sweep their hearths no less

Than maids were wont to doe,

Yet who, of late, for cleanliness,

Finds sixpence in her shoe?

At morning and at evening both,

You merry were and glad;

So little care of sleepe and sloth

Those pretty ladies had.

When Tom came home from labour,

Or Ciss to milking rose,

Then merrily went their tabor,

And nimbly went their toes.

† Unless the Ettrick Shepherd's successors charm back those “pretty ladies” with the pastoral stop, they are gone for ever—“Tint, tint, tint!”

All those festivals and superstitions were the humble props of natural piety: their origin was religious. But how different a thing is the *wake* or merry-making of an English manufacturing village, from the primitive rural institution, the festal yet decent observance of the eve of the Saint to whom the parish church was dedicated! One would like to see the Christmas holly-bush, the palm-branch of Easter, and the gay

garlands and white blossoms of the May, flourish in perennial freshness, amaranthine wreaths; but to look on them dabbled in gin, blighted by the hot breath of riot and gross excess, would make us almost welcome Mr. Martin with a bill to restrain "the idle pulling of hawthorn," or "the wanton gathering of primroses," or the shade of Major Cartwright, followed by his *posse comitatus*. But no! let even the excrescences that have grown on our ancient customs be removed with a gentle hand; let them be renovated, not trodden down, and left to the profane vulgar till their memory has become a reproach—perished from among us!

Above all those old things, how fine were the ancient troth-plights and "tokenings" of lovers; the dedication of "special locks of vowed hair," and the thousand other amulets! So high a veneration have I for the pure silver token, (were it but a broken crooked sixpence,) that were I on the jury of a thief who had not spared this while he filched the other contents of a clown's purse, he should have no recommendation to mercy from me—that evidence should hang him. The sixpence broken for true love ceases to be the common coin "of this realm." It is stamped afresh by Nature's mintage; its obverse is a bleeding heart, its legend "constancy." But far above all other "tokenings," the exchange of Bibles is most beautiful and affecting. Into how powerful a talisman may a tiny red or blue volume be converted! How many changes of time, and mood, and worldly circumstance, will the memory of its acquisition survive, and still continue to be precious! I cannot at this moment recollect any scene of the highest wrought fiction more tenderly touching than that described of Burns—the inspired and still innocent boy Burns, and his early-lost sweet-heart, meeting in the Sabbath quiet of their suspended harvest toils, by the winding Ayr,

O'erhung with wild woods thickening green!

to spend "one day of parting-love," and exchange probably their whole independent personal property—their Bibles! How heart-touching the simple and holy betrothal which makes the history and the charter of man's salvation the pledge of his tenderness and fidelity to the beloved sharer of his earthly love and of his immortal hopes!

But I have wandered strangely from the object of my narrative, which was to record an *old usage* which still exists, and which to me was as novel as it was delightful. On my late homeward voyage, I fell in with a

shipmate, whose quiet and rather reserved, though finally kind and pleasing manners, and general intelligence, proved exceedingly agreeable, and fully repaid my trouble in courting his acquaintance. Richard Ashton's friendship, if slow in growth, was well worth waiting for. Towards the end of our voyage we were vexed in the Channel by baffling winds, and my calm friend became more impatient than was consistent with his philosophic temperament. He wished to reach home by a particular day. "One might think, Mr. Ashton, you had an appointment on that day with your mistress, after a three years' absence in India," was my smart remark, as we lolled over the ship's side in a dead calm. "I have with a half dozen of them, all about equally dear," was his reply. "I had set my heart on being home by Sunday; and I yet hope that I shall. It is an annual festival in our family, in all the families of our county; all my brothers and sisters will be at home;—it is *Mothering Sunday*."

I believe I half started. Mothering Sunday! how beautiful a name! I too had left at home a mother; I was touching on the land of my fathers! I entreated to be allowed to accompany my friend home, and the request was instantly granted. I inquired farther about this august festival, but learned nothing more than that on that particular day, all the children of one blood, however scattered by the waves of life, flocked back to the dwelling of their parents, to their own birth-spot. My friend had come from Bengal just in time; a married brother and sister, he said, were settled in London; another sister resided in Liverpool; but "I think," said he, with his grave smile, "we shall have them all, if no unlucky hooping-coughs, nor ill-timed confinements, as the ladies call them, come in the way."

On the evening of the following Saturday he said to me, pointing from our chaise to a low ridge of hills at a distance—"The hills beyond my father's dwelling;" and with his quiet humorous smile to those he liked, he added, "You think, Colonel, the gods have not made me poetical; but call me single-sonnet Ashton, if you please, for I once made some rhymes on this spot, which my sister Marianne christened a sonnet, and that was the first line, '*The hills beyond my father's dwelling!*' There must have followed a *swelling*, of course, but whether of heart, eyes, or memory, I cannot recollect. Marianne, before her marriage, had not only

made a fair copy of the lines for each of her sisters, but could repeat them. Poor Marianne! she was herself my sole reading public; she was indeed my every thing, my patient verb-and-noun hearer to the hundredth repetition; she loved Latin for my sake, all the better that she knew not one word of it. She was, besides, my apologizer-general, my sick-nurse, my stocking-mender, my button-stitcher, my all in all."

I had never heard Ashton say tenth part so much about himself. He relaxed into silence for a half hour; and as we turned an angle of the road which had latterly led down a broad open valley, again said, as if he had not paused, "And yonder is our parsonage, 'tis a little old place; but is it not pretty?"

I would have bit my own tongue rather than have denied that it was; but in truth I did not need to tax my sincerity. The cottage, or rather the cluster of cottages, inhabited by the curate of Nunsbrooke, had all the beauty which follows the wants, the industry, and the enjoyments of humble and useful life. We had now left the open valley, and struck off at right angles into the small circular vale which at every step grew closer and more crowded with the simple, common, and characteristic features of an English landscape. A hundred and a hundred such sweet, retired, rural scenes may be found in the bosom of England—but is the single wild flower which we cull the less sweet that tens of thousands of its kind are springing in the same meadow?

Twilight was deepening fast, and I could not minutely discern all the details of the scenery; besides, my attention was given to my friend, who became absolutely loquacious. From the moment he told me that the slip of rivulet that twined and glimmered in the twilight by our path was an admirable trout stream, and pointed out the copse where he had found his first bird's nest, I felt that I possessed the confidence of Richard Ashton. I am certain there is not a man in ten thousand in whom he would have reposed the same trust. "I see there is fire in my mother's room," said he; "she will be in for a long gossip with Marianne and Alice to-night, and will fear damp for her Cockney grandchildren, which she never dreaded for her own children. Fire in the parlour too, at this season! Here are extravagant doings, but it is Saturday evening; my father, even in his hardest working days, allowed himself a pipe and a newspaper on Saturday."

"And was such indulgence so rare?"

"My father reared and sent eight of us into the world well-educated men and women, on an income which for many years did not exceed thirty-five pounds. Even yet it falls short of fifty. He knows the value of money, as of every thing else; but he never would accept of any charge which might lead him from his people. Both my parents are of this parish."

I led my friend into his father's history. He felt a manly and honest pride in relating it; and well he might. I soon learned that the curate of Nunsbrooke was no ordinary man; and I afterwards found that I had not overrated him. He was a person of competent learning, and of strong intellect; who with much temperate kindness of heart, possessed inflexibility in principle and purpose that might have ennobled a Stoic philosopher. He indeed, as his son had said, held every thing in heaven and earth at its exact value. His aged partner was not quite his counterpart. She was inferior in mind; and education was not for her day; but they suited each other wonderfully well. She was most notable and exemplary in all household matters, the tenderest of mothers and the kindest of neighbours; one of those happily-endowed humble beings in whom "innocence is Nature's wisdom," who are better than they know. Her motherly kindness tempered the firmness of him whom next to her God she revered, which, but for this *anti-attrition*, might at times have verged to severity. Both were the children of small farmers in the parish; and the only difference of their lives was, that whereas he had been for a time a servitor at Oxford, she had never travelled ten miles beyond her own or her father's cottage. In my subsequent intercourse with the family, I saw that both parents were held in the tenderest veneration by all their children, with this difference, that a little story was sometimes told, or a little joke hazarded by her daughters, illustrative of their mother's *bonhomie*, if I may unsex the word for her sake; while the commanding intellect, and deep, and acute discernment of life and character, and of the complicated machinery which sets their springs in motion, possessed as it were intuitively by the elder Richard Ashton, raised him the more highly in the esteem of his sons, the more their own knowledge of the world extended and ripened.

I was both edified and amused by the evident astonishment and serious disapproba-

tion of the ancient and venerable matron, on witnessing how lightly, as it seemed to her, the yoke of matrimony sat on her eldest daughter, who, though with perfect gaiety and good-humour, not only avowed opinions different from her husband's, but appeared to have a decided will of her own. To old Mrs. Ashton, her husband had ever been almost in God's stead. This slackening of the bonds of conjugal discipline; this irreverence for the holiest earthly authority, appeared to shock her whole nature as much as so calm a nature could be unHINGED by any thing; and though both husbands and wives tried to reconcile her to what she conceived a breach of duty and decency, I have no doubt that she seriously lectured her daughters apart, and made this offence the subject of her secret prayers. "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands as unto the Lord," was a precept to which her whole spirit bowed; and the only thing I was told, that ever made Mrs. Ashton for a few hours now and then unpopular among the female parishioners, was the uncompromising strictness with which, in all cases of domestic dissension, she enforced the doctrine of implicit conjugal obedience.

But I have outstripped the regular course of my story. As I knew that the small parsonage would be swarming like a bee-hive from kitchen to attic with daughters and grandchildren, I established myself for the night at the Rose, the neat rural inn, in which my friend's introduction procured an attention to my few expressed wants and large supposed wishes, to which as a chance guest even my purse gave me no claim. Richard Ashton was not a man of apologies; but I was forced to check him as he began to mumble about my not finding things so suitable, &c. &c. Is it not hard, that because a man has had the misfortune to be baked and broiled half his life, he must be set down as a sensual, self-indulging, vainglorious voluptuary for the remainder of it? Yet I do plead guilty; and a man must have lived for thirty years in India, and been just off a five months' voyage, to understand the luxury which it was to loll in the crisp refreshing sheets, washed in the cool streams, and dried on the cuckoo-buds and lady-smocks of the meadows of England. I had hardly yet got rid of the rocking sensation of the ship; and this being but my second night on shore, I slept as a landsman does when he once more gains firm earth. On the former day, when walking, my very toes grasped the ground,

as if each were a feeler. I clung to earth with my feet, and planted them on land like the Seahorse climbing an iceberg.

I was literally awakened in the morning by the sweet chime of the Sabbath-bells; not the loud peal intended to startle the dull heart of great cities, nor yet the sonorous sound of the old consecrated bells, which my host told me were once known in this vale, and the ringing of which diverted the thunder-storm, and drove away the devil, but the "still small voice," whispering a gentle and holy summons to prayer and praise. I started hastily up, and, like all strangers, advanced to my window. The prospect was now fully revealed. The gray serene of the sky harmonized finely with the Sabbath-stillness that breathed over the valley. It was neither bold nor rich, but it was enchantingly soft, and what at the time was to me more precious, it was purely and delightfully English; not indeed a scene of wealthy, powerful, commercial England, though her mighty heart and the right arm of her strength were visible even here, but a confined home-view of rural England, Old England, Merry England! with her strong virtues, her primitive manners, and her *Old Usages*.

The church where my friend's father had so long officiated, stood on an elevated curvature by the side of the stream, and about the centre of the vale, which, as I have said, broke upwards from a wider and richer valley. It was a very humble edifice, and of dimensions much under those of the Gothic structures, whose open stone-work towers, or tapering spires, form so frequent and interesting a feature in the rich landscape of cultivated England. But this little chapel was not the less the pole-star of the vale of Nunsbrooke; and time and holy feelings, which had gathered around it and given it sanctity, left it not destitute of beauty. It had its garland of aged trees—elm, and ash, and monumental yews; and the tracery of wild creepers on the walls, and the streamers of ivy floating from the roof, assorted better with the humble structure, than elaborate architectural ornaments would have done. The parsonage and its adjoining offices stood about a bow-shot off on the same willowed rivulet, which, between the church and it widened into a translucent pool, so closely clipped in with alders and osiers, that as their tremulous shadows diffused themselves over its smooth surface, it glistened with a cool emerald tinge which sent freshness

into my very soul. A small foot-path—a *via sacra*—led from the curate's dwelling through his strip of glebe-land to the church. There were many other pathways of lazy curve, lying like brown net-work on the green meadows, and leading from the surrounding home-steads to this common centre. A rustic foot-bridge, which, however, I saw "privileged donkey or two occasionally crossing, spanned the stream, and united the sides of the vale.

Along each of these natural paths, as well as by the regular road, there were now advancing gaffers and gammers, comely matrons, and stout yeomen, whose limbs showed "the mettle of their pasture," "lasses and their shepherd grooms," with children of all sizes, and a few younglings indulged in church-going in reverence of *Mothering Sunday*. The concourse of people was greater than ordinary; for this was a day consecrated to the domestic affections, in every household of the parish. The son of my hostess had come from Birmingham, she told me; and every young girl of the parish made it a condition of her servitude, that she should be allowed to visit home on this day. It was the "Feast of Tabernacles" in Nunsbrooke.

I was distressed to find that the service had commenced ere I reached the church; for Richard Ashton in the house of God tarried no man's presence. I expected to see no commonplace priest: nor was I disappointed. The curate, though not tall, inclined to that stature. He looked not more than sixty, though I knew he was ten years older, with dark and high features, rather manly than mild. The expansive and wrinkled brow and bald polished head, were remarkably fine; the lower part of the face was rather massive than delicately cut. Yet what was the mere assemblage of features to that solemn and placid steadfastness; that unimpassioned fixity of look, which indicates the high-concentrated mental firmness and unity of purpose, which is the rarest and most excelling faculty of the human soul! All this power was at this moment bent to devotion. Mr. Ashton went through the church service with more energy than tutored elegance. There was even a relishing quaintness in his manner, but there were also the same fervent solemnity and earnestness as if he now performed this sacred office for the first time. To his devout energy what were the cold artificial graces of elocution! The voice of their pastor was neither soft

nor melodious, but its accustomed tones thrilled to the hearts and consciences of his flock, and that was enough.

By certain understood signs I had already guessed that the sacrament of the Supper of our Lord was on this day to be administered, under circumstances which, to my feelings, rendered this, the most solemn rite of the Christian worship, doubly affecting. It was very long since I had witnessed the celebration of any ordinance of Christianity, save the frigid routine of mumbling the Liturgy, which might occasionally be witnessed at my remote and almost Pagan Indian station. The priest took his place by the altar; there was a little stir among the people, but not more than the softest patter of the April shower on the first forest leaves; and the family of my friend, separating from the other worshippers, and forming into one group, advanced by themselves to the altar, where their common father stood ready to administer the sacred ordinance. Kneeling there was the mother, with her two married and two unmarried daughters, a very fair young girl, the daughter of the eldest son, three sons, and two sons-in-law. With a fine instinctive feeling of delicacy, no other communicant approached the altar at this time. The truly apostolic and venerable man stood there "in the midst of the children whom God had given him;" "he and his house vowed to serve the Lord." The sublime communion service of the church, its solemn warnings, and "comfortable words," had never to me appeared half so beautiful and emphatic, as now when recited by a good old man, invested with the most sacred of human characters—the father and the priest. During the passing of this holy mystery, I think there were more eyes glistening than mine.

At the conclusion of the service I was joined by my friend, and introduced in the church-porch to his mother, his favourite sister, Marianne, and a competent number of the scattered brood who had this day flown back to the shelter of the parent wing. I could not, I would not refuse their hearty invitation to join the family festival, though at first I felt like an intermeddler with their joys. Nothing could exceed the comfort of the feast, save the happiness of the guests; nor had the regular routine of the household, in its plain diet and plainer service, been much departed from. Some of the members of the family, I afterwards understood, with incomes twenty times larger than that of the

curate of Nunsbrooke, had naturally given in to modes of life very different from the frugal simplicity of their early home; but on this day no fashionable airs were displayed; no luxury of accommodation was missed; and if their ways of life were somewhat changed, I think their spirits were still temperate, their hearts sound; and, so far from feeling shame of their father's respected poverty, glowing with a healthful pride in his virtues. When our venerable host left us, which he did early, I joined the ladies, heard the married sisters comparing notes about the growth, likenesses, and abilities of their children, and more covertly showing or exchanging small articles of dress, receiving counsel from their mother on proper modes of treatment for the children, of which the theory was simplicity, the practice herbs. In short, there was a quiet but constant and copious interchange of mingled thought and chat, kindly, serious, or frivolous, as it might be; if the genuine, confiding overflow of affectionate hearts can ever be called frivolous. I felt that my absence would not be marked, and retired.

I afterwards, in a twilight saunter by the brook, met my friend with his favourite sister, and her husband, who good-humouredly proposed joining me. "I must give Marianne an opportunity to tell Richard all her secrets," said he, "and afterwards I shall learn all his from Marianne."

I set out from Nunsbrooke early next morning in company with this gentleman,

who left his wife to spend a few more days with her sisters and mother. We travelled to Liverpool together; and I was much pleased with the pride he seemed to have in his wife's family, and his affection for every member of it, especially for his friend Richard. They had when youths been for some years in the same counting-house. Nor did I think a whit the less of his understanding, for the close resemblance which he supposed between the fair young girl and her aunt, his own plain, but affectionate and sprightly Marianne.

I have not visited Nunsbrooke since, and probably I shall never see it again; but I know that it exists: nor have I met with any of the family, though in the medley of life I have often heard of their names. Some of them are now highly prosperous mercantile people; others have had adverse fortune; but their father's clear strong judgment, and pure principles, have descended to them all, their inalienable and best inheritance. When, in the gay world, I occasionally find my comfortable income too limited for my imaginary wants, or am suffering at the same time under an east wind, and a grand assault of blue devils, trying to carry my mind by a *coup-de-main*, I think of the valley of Nunsbrooke, and of all of good and gracious that is around its quiet stream.—How can I forget it!

"The immortal memory of one happy day
Lingers upon its marge."

ANDREW HOWIE, THE HAND-LOOM WEAVER.

BY MRS. JOHNSTONE.

It was a day of public rejoicing in Glasgow; and Mr. Mathewson, one of the most respectable, if not the largest of the manufacturers of the town, had taken charge of his own warehouse, that his son and two young clerks, with sundry inferior assistants, who usually officiated there, might have an opportunity of witnessing and sharing in the gaieties of the holiday. Already had Mr. Mathewson himself, by what was thought an extraordinary degree of condescension, viewed, examined, and paid for several pieces of cloth, brought in by hand-loom workers. He was going through the same process with an exhausted, broken-down workman, yet one

who in years seemed scarce in the prime of life, when an elderly, small, thin man, of poor but decent appearance, entered on the same errand, was saluted with more than ordinary attention, and desired to sit down on the bench. The old man nodded, and obeyed; wiped the perspiration from his thin temples and bald forehead, and then fixed a keen, hollow, gray eye on the speakers before him. He who stood in the place of workman was making a low, but earnest expostulation, to which the master answered at first calmly; and then, with a show of impatience, he whipped up a bundle of cotton yarn, saying aloud, "Do ye think we would wrong ye,

Robert? If ye are not pleased with what we can give, ye are welcome to take your change. This is a land of liberty;—we can find weavers, and ye are just as free to look out for another warehouse.” The poor man laid his emaciated, eager fingers upon the bundle: “Say no more about it, sir. Weel do ye ken I *must* take it.”

This poor man had brought in the fruits of his own and his neighbour’s fortnight’s labour from his cottage, five miles off in the country, that he might have a stolen sight of the grand procession. With thanks he had accepted wages reduced a full half below the prices of former years. These diminutions he had met by gradually retrenching and, in many instances, entirely surrendering the little comforts of his home, and at the same time eking out his hours of labour: but to hear of farther reduction, which lowered the price of his labour to three-eighths of what had been given for the same kind and quantity of work twenty years before, and to be told that in this sort of barter between *capital* and *labour*, the manufacturer and the workman meet on equal terms, wrung forth a hasty expression of impatience which he afterwards regretted.

“Ay ay, Mr. William,” said the old man, as the poor weaver sung dumb, “so he is, quite free to seek another warehouse; only where will the poor fellow find it, when every master has a third mair hands hanging on, than he can fully employ. So he is free to jump o’er the brig as he gangs hame; and maybe, in a sense, that would be the best thing he could do, only he would rin a chance o’ drownin’, and o’ leavin’ an orphan family to whole starve, instead o’ half starving; and also o’ committin’ a deadly sin. Had a war been going on, and the king needed soldiers, he might have left his family and ta’en the bounty. This is all the *real* choice he has between working for what ye think best; or starving, and seeing them suffer who can worse bear hardship. Ye ken, sir, better than I can tell ye, it’s little a weaver can turn his hand to. But I am far from blaming you, sir. When I see your full shelves, I ken weel ye are mair to be pitied than blamed.—But oh, there’s something sair wrang among us.”

After this lecture the weaver, having now carefully knotted up the yarn in his ragged *Monteith handkerchief*, left the warehouse.

“An’ how is a’ wi’ you, Andrew?” said Mr. Mathewson to the old man, when they were left alone. “A man o’ sense, like you,

is no doubt surprised to hear half their unreasonable nonsense. Ye may all know that in the present state of the market, our house, and too many others in this same town, are stuffing our warehouses with goods, for which there is neither demand nor likelihood of demand; and dipping rashly into our capitals, rather than throw our hands all at once idle. Prices, such as we once got, need never be looked for again; and how, then, can men be so unjust as to expect the same wages?”

“It may be sae, sir,” said the old man. “And it might be better for us all if there were less *labour*, and less *stuffing* up of the white goods: but oh, Mr. William, dinna go to aggravate and exasperate a poor worn-out, half-starved workman, by telling him he is as free to refuse work as ye are to refuse him employment. I canna thole to hear that even from you, sir.—So were ye, when a bairn boarded wi’ the gudewife—and a dour loonie ye were—to tarry* at your porridge; but ye ken weel that in an hour or twa afterwards ye were fain to draw to your bicker.”

Mr. Mathewson smiled: “And how, Andrew, is my kind old nurse? You should remember (for the sake of poor weavers) that if I *persevered* in not eating, she would at last give the porridge a tempting dash of cream, and coax me to eat.”

“It will be lang ere you masters pour cream on our cogs, or cox huz to eat, Mr. William,” said the old man, smiling grimly. “Where saw ye ever, for twenty years bygone, in town or country, in this land, masters in any calling that could not find hands,—ay, and double, and triple hands. In the Back Woods of America there may sometimes be lack of labourers, but seldom at our door-check,—and in our trade never; and never again will be, I jalouse. It will be fine times for the workman when he is able, for any length of time, to refuse an ill-paid job, Mr. William.”

Andrew’s business was now despatched, and the conversation became more general. Mr. Mathewson inquired about lodgings, which he wished to procure in his native air, and in Andrew’s neighbourhood. Something had disgusted him with his handsome villa on the Ayrshire coast, which he was trying to sell; and his health required change of air.

“Ye are looking, like myself, thin, auld-

* Take the pet at—refuse.—See *Jamieson*.

like, and yellow enough, sir," said Andrew, with compassionate interest.

"It's but a thin, yellow, hungry trade gown, this of ours, Andrew, compared with what we have both seen it," replied the manufacturer, smiling at Andrew's homely compliment to his complexion. "There is a change of times since I went to come out on the top of the yarn in my uncle's caravan on a Saturday afternoon, to get an afternoon's fishing with your laddies, and a capital *four-hours* of tea and bacon, or burn trouts, from my old nurse; while the overseer went about pressing webs on you. Those were happy days."

"Ye let us come to you now, sir. Ay, a weaver's wife could gie a bairn a piece, or a friend a *four-hours* then. Weel weel!"—The old man's sigh filled up the sentence. "But I am wae to hear ye need country quarters for health, sir; and there is aue at hame will be much concerned. What is like the matter?"

"No great matter, Andrew; something and nothing. The doctor says air, the pony, and ease of mind, will soon make all right; but the last is a commodity become right scarce among us."

"With a' those shelves, and bales, and muckle count-books, sir, and so many poor folk about ye, I can weel understand that," replied Andrew, glancing over the array of desks, and on through the long perspective of the deep and well-stored warehouse, room after room retiring from view. Mr. Mathewson's complaint was that of hundreds of commercial men in these times. He was nervous, he was dyspeptic, his sleep was broken, his appetite uncertain. Then he became almost quite well again, or much better, or nothing particular; and again there was a sense of languor, oppression, and exhaustion, or irritation; and the physician saw something was going wrong, but could neither tell exactly what, nor yet confess ignorance. His most distinct fear was for water on the chest; and "the pony, and ease of mind," were his universal prescription for all men in business. "If it's to be got ony where, it will be found about——side, by me, Andrew; so make the gudewife look for some bit room—no fine place—and I'll try to get out on Saturday; and now for your news."

"Yours it maun be, sir; The BILL is to do us a' a power of good, nae doubt? But what's come ower the Factory Bill?—the wives will a' be at me for news about that. Whatever comes of us auld, doited, weaver

bodies, it would be heartsome to see the bits o' bairns, poor, dowie, spiritless, dwinning, decrepit things, eased of their lang hours. I wonder what the manufacturing tribe will crine and dwindle into, sir, in a generation or twa."

"If the wives would take care of their bairns themselves, Andrew, that would be better than ten bills. There has been a deal of senseless clamour about this same story. The Government have more wit than interfere with the entire freedom of all contracts between capitalists and labourers. The Factory Bill will get the go-bye, ye'll see."

"Entire freedom!—how can ye ca' it sae, sir? It's a' delusion and mockery to tell even huz, that's grown men, that we have entire freedom of working at ony price. But freedom of contract for children! Na, na. Can they manage for themselves? Are they free? Alack, alack!"

"They have their parents, and friends, Andrew, to take charge of their engagements. May they not be safely left to them?"

"No, sir, they cannot—ye see they *cannot*. In a cot-house on a moor, with a kail-yard and potatoes enow, I would leave, cheerfully, a bairn to its ain mother; but in this weary town of yours, wi' a man thrown clean out of work, or brought down to the starving point in wages, hunger and cauld pinching, and a mill open for bairns, be the hours short, or those of black niggers, be the place healthy or murderous, we are come to that state, that fathers and mothers *maun* sell their bairns' labour. Necessity has no law; the poor thing of eight maun slave for the sister of two or three. Ye have read in our auld Josephus o' mothers so bested as to eat the very fruit of their bodies."

"And now we may hear of them *drinking* it, Andrew," said the manufacturer, sharply.

"I'm no denying *our* faults, sir; would we were in a way to mend them, or had encouragement thereto. But it's plain to be seen that we are far, far departed frae the healthy state, in whilk things might be left to themselves, and *ourselves* to *ourselves*. But think ye it is right to meddle or make only to scathe us? If you protect your corn, and your whisky, and your what not, by laws and statutes, and fines and felonies, why no protect ours and our bairns' wearied limbs and exhausted bodies, as well as at our cost the bread which should nourish us?"

"I have nothing to say for the Corn laws, Andrew; yet I cannot see that one bad law should be an apology for another useless one.

These are difficult complicated questions, and we have scarce leisure for them; but you will surely own, the world is much more prosperous than when you first saw it, sixty years back?"

"Indeed, and I'll no be rash there," cried Andrew, briskly; "but I freely own it's a *braver* ward; and plenty changes in it, too, whilk young folk say are lightsome. Changes especially in our *line*; and, as far as machinery goes, changes for the better, I'll not dispute,—sair as machines have borne on me in my ain peculiar.—But oh, we have surely made an ill use o' these marvellous inventions Providence has enabled us to make. They have no been blessed to us, sir, in the use. We are making man's master o' the dumb creations of iron and timber that should be man's servants."

"A little of the old leaven still, Andrew," said Mr. Mathewson, smiling, "But hark, the music of our lads, and the procession."

"Then I must be off to get a sight of their daft doings. It's aye some good THE BILL has done, when it gives them a play-day or two, and causes a brushing up among lads and lasses for a walk in the free air. But I would like to argue out the point with you, too, sir; for I'm almost sure I could convince ye."

The honest weaver showed such divided inclination between witnessing the Reform Procession and expounding his opinions, that his old foster-child, or boarder, compassionately suggested the adjournment of the question, to be resumed on — banks, or in Andrew's garden seat, under the bourtrees. The old man's eye brightened. As he took a glass of medicated port, kept in the warehouse, because prescribed for the manufacturer at his noon-day hour, he pledged to his better health, and shook his head with earnest gesticulation, saying, "'Od, but Mr. William, this o' ours should be a better ward if we kenned but right how to manage't. I'm not just sure if the birkies up-bye yonder,"—and he pointed over his shoulder towards London,—"*ken a' the rights and wrangs o't, or the real outs and ins; but howsomever, I hope they're honest men this new Whig set; and, wi' the aid of Divine wisdom*"—["And our good advising," interrupted the smiling manufacturer,]—"they may make some small beginning to set us in the right way. I could leave the world in peace, if I but saw it aince in the right way."

"In which for forty years ye have been showing it how to walk."—

"I'll no deny—it would be fause shame,—that since Mr. Muir's* day, I may have been etfling at that," replied the philosopher of Spindleton; "It's a man's duty, sir,—and though but a poor man and a weaver, I would be loath to forget 'A man's a man for a' that.'" But here the musical instruments attending an Irish detachment of the procession, now just at hand, poured forth "*St. Patrick's Day*," so loudly, that it was only by signs the friends took leave; and thus ended the first *idle*, leisurely talk that had taken place in that busy warehouse for months or probably years, at least when the master was present.

By Saturday evening Mr. Mathewson and his youngest daughter were settled in the small rural lodging near Spindleton, which Mrs. Howie had engaged for them in a gardener's house. His lady and elder daughters were reported to be prodigiously fine people, but in manners and simplicity of character, though his habits had become more luxurious, Mathewson himself was the same man as when an under clerk in the establishment to which he had succeeded, and which he had so much extended. Yet he had in many things gone with the stream which he now fancied it his duty to oppose, at least, in the instance of his own thoughtless family. He deferred his visit to his foster-mother till Monday; but saw, with satisfaction, the decent, quiet couple in their old back pew in the parish church, from which Andrew's gray eye ever and anon shot a challenge to renewal of their argument.

Andrew Howie, for a hand-loom weaver of 1832, might be considered a comfortable man. His good fortune, like that of most other men and weavers, was the fruit of his own good conduct. His cottage, the looms in one end, the dwelling in the other, with chambers above, was, together with the garden, his own property, on paying twenty-five shillings a-year of feu. His substantial long-used furniture was still in sufficient quantity, and well-kept. Fuel was cheap here. He had long since put "a little to the fore." It was, indeed, very little, but still something; and for the sake of a kind and dutiful daughter, Andrew would have suffered any hardship, save the humiliation of receiving parish aid, before he had touched it. This fund, of £23, 17s. was deposited in a Glasgow bank, for Andrew's prudent wife would

* Thomas Muir, Advocate, one of the Political Martyrs of 1793.

not trust this treasure even to her foster-child. "There were so many ups and downs," she said wisely, "among the great masters." Two benefit societies to which he sometimes grudged having paid for forty years, without being above three times sick, placed Andrew above the dread of destitution in illness, or of wanting decent and Christian burial, which always supposes expense; and the membership of a book-club which he had mainly established, and of a newspaper-club which originally took in "The Gazetteer!" supported his social importance in the neighbourhood. He kept his seat in the church, though that too was felt a heavy cess in bad times, and having surmounted the evil political fame of his youth, he was now on the new Minister's list for an elder. It was indeed suspected that Mr. Draught the clergyman, had done this as a stroke of policy, at a time when a rumour of building a Seceder Meeting-house arose in the village. Andrew had at one time kept a couple of apprentices; but this source of profit was stopt; he however let his loom stand, and was often not paid the rent. His own gains were little indeed; not above 4s. 6d. a-week on the average; but somehow he contrived to maintain his place as patriarch of the village. The only aid he received was from his daughter, who kept him clear of arrears with his societies; and who once, when in a desperate fit of necessary economy he gave up both his clubs, which cost a shilling a quarter each, entered him anew. Deprived of the distinction of having the newspaper directed, as for forty years, to "Mr. Andrew Howie, Manufacturer, Spindleton," the old man had become spiritless and insignificant in his own esteem. What is life deprived of life's enjoyments! Restored to his club, Andrew read, expounded, and rehearsed with greater zest than before; and was again the village oracle.

Andrew Howie, though not an idler, was on principle not keenly industrious. "Constant slavery at the loom," as he called the modern long hours, was against his creed and also his habits; and though the old man toiled only ten hours a-day, where his poor neighbours worked fourteen, and sixteen, he never ceased to maintain, that his own hours were much too long, and the necessity for such continued labour owing to a bad constitution of society. Man was intended, Andrew loftily affirmed, for something better than perpetual, monotonous drudgery.

Long before Mr. Owen, or Spence, or any of those apostles, or their new systems, were

heard of, Andrew's benevolent speculations had wandered into forms, to which some of his neighbours looked with interest, and others with amusement. His visionary Co-operative Societies, and manufacturing villages, were to be centres of domestic comfort, leisure, instruction, health, happiness for all,

For the young who labour, and the old who rest.

He, however, differed entirely from Mr. Owen in one essential particular. Every household in Andrew's town, was to have its own sacred fireside. If more extravagant in politics, Andrew Howie was more strictly religious than many of his younger neighbours. The spirit of Christianity entered fully into his weaving Utopia, and mingled with all his visions of the social Millennium of Spindleton.

When the old couple returned from afternoon service, on the Sunday after Mr. Mathewson's arrival, the conversation naturally turned on their former boarder, and as naturally reverted to their own changed condition. Sunday was now the only day of the week, in which they indulged in the extravagance of that thin *blue* dilution, which they, perhaps from habit, named tea; and which a weekly slice of wheaten bread, and a sprinkling of treacle, which Andrew thought good for his elocution, accompanied. Yet it ill becomes me to speak thus slightly of the beverage which the philosophic weaver sucked up like a leviathan, even to the sixth or seventh maceration of the bitter many-coloured leaves.

Though curtailed at his board, Andrew enjoyed many little comforts and great blessings unknown to his brethren in "yon weary Glasgow." He retained, after all his losses, the blessings—how great!—of fresh air, a roomy lodging, his garden, his good bed and useful furniture, the *leisure* which he took, preferring it, in a balance of comfort, to what others might have reckoned necessities; though he thus forfeited the trifle of more wages, at which men with families greedily grasped, at the expense of weary limbs, exhausted spirits, and finally of ruined health. He also enjoyed, to the full, his own importance in his ancient neighbourhood, and the superiority he ever maintained in argument and conversation. Though his wages were scarcely a third of what he had once earned, his kitchen in a cold night was almost as snug as ever, his bed as warm, his church seat as sacred. How few old hand-loom weavers could boast of as much!

"That's a dish of prime tea, gudewife," said Andrew, breathing hard, from gulping down the fifth filling, the last three without sugar; "Whate'er Mr. Cobbett may say, and he is a wonderful man, I wadna' care, in my auld days now, to take as much every night; he's a strong stamacket man o' his nature, I reckon, Mr. Cobbett, and doesna ken the wants o' sedentary callings."

"And sair do I wish, Andrew, joe, I could gie ye a dish ilka evening, after toiling at that weary loom for six lang hours frae dinner to supper, upon may-be potatoes and salt."

"And under a good dispensation o' civil government, I ken not, Tibby, what should forbid. I told you how kindly Mr. William bore in mind the hearty Saturday *four-hours* ye went to give him and the laddies langsyne."

"We durst na bid him to a dish o' tea now; and it's the less matter, as we have it not to offer. Then I had baith a bit sweet butter and loaf sugar for a stranger. But oh! he looks wan, and defaite, poor man; muckle worse than ye let on to me. That extravagant family is breaking his heart. They say, Andrew, his wife and tawpie daughters ne'er entered the kirk door six times in the same gown. They say Dr. Chalmers gledged off the book, and glowered braid at them ae day they rustled in, in their silks and satins."

"Hout lass, ye ken little about it; it's no a woman's gown or fifty o' them—gude kens they're ower cheap—could have played *phew!* on a trade like his. It's the trade itsel, Tibby, that's ruined. The losses in South America, and the crosses in North America, and Botany, and Van Diemen's. Shops fu' o' finished goods rotting in the faulds of the hydraulic press, or roupiit abroad for far below the first cost."

"Poor man! I wot nae, Andrew, but auld Geordie Mathewson's trade, though sma', was, when a' comes to a', a surer calling than this high-flying o' Mr. William's: wi' a' their new-fangled tackle, throwing greedy grips to the ends of the earth, and spreading out gauze duds to bring hame midges."

"Partly right, but far mair wrang, Tibby, as the women-folk generally are," said Tibby's apostle. "Mr. William and his neighbours have done good and ill baith to themselves and to huz weavers. But this jabbering about temporalities, is scarce Sabbath-eening discourse; so ye'll rinse up your

tea-tackle, as Mr. Cobbett ca's it, and let's get in the Books, my woman."

Mr. Mathewson on this Sabbath-night, was also at *his Books*, brought out on the previous day in his gig-box; and as a first draught of the prescribed ease of mind, in his rural abode, he dwelt upon them, comparing the fair and glittering array of figures in the ledger, showing what ought to be the profits of the year, with what he feared they might eventually turn out, till Andrew Howie was awakened after his tea-supper, out of his long refreshing first sleep, by the twittering of the swallows in the eaves of his cottage.

All next day Andrew hung over his loom, full-primed, and at half-cock, prepared for a vigorous discharge of argument and eloquence upon the manufacturer. It was evening before Mr. Mathewson paid his visit; and then he appeared fonder of a fireside chat with Tibby, than political discussion. But *ben* came Andrew, his Kil-marnock nightcap in one hand, a bunch of well-thumbed pamphlets in the other, consisting of a few select numbers of *Cobbett's Register*, a stray *Carpenter's Political Magazine*, some old *Examiners*, and the last *Trades' Advocate*. Without loss of time or ceremony he opened his broadside.

"Think ye still, sir," said Andrew, following the eye of his visiter round the apartment, which, as contrasted with the memory of former years, showed few tokens of increasing national prosperity; "Think ye still this a better world than that of the last generation? Have we mair meat, mair leisure to make ourselves wiser and better men, fitter for another world; mair peace of mind, mair comfort at the fireside, and in our families, than the auld folk ye remember here?"

"There's more, and merrier of you, any way," said the manufacturer smiling, as a squad of ragged children scoured yelling past the door.

"Granted, sir, and mair work too,—far mair production; and if we could warm ourselves with brass and metal trinkums, and eat crockery ware and our ain saft goods, it would be a brave world this coming up among us: the lady has her two silken gowns, and the lass her three printed ones, o' *Peel's rotten cottons*, as Mr. Cobbett ca's them, for one langsyne; but does that, sir, make up to you and me for our long, weary work hours, our anxious minds, and outlay of siller.—If four gowns, and a dozen

needles, or candlesticks, bring huz labourers no more bread than the half o' them did long ago, it will be ill to make me believe our world is the gainer by our reduced wage and lengthened hours. A' thing has thriven among us but the meat and the mense,* Mr. William."

"The mouths have thriven pretty well, too, Andrew. Do ye reckon for nothing the immense increase of the manufacturing population? enough of itself to account for the reduction of wages."

"Scarce enough, sir, when we have fifty times more production. But something I own:—the wives had a saying in my young day, 'God never sends the mouth, but He sends the meat with it.' But we must give up that, and adopt the new and unhappily over true doctrine, that with the numerous mouths come the famine and the pestilence."

"Well, well, Andrew, when the *bill* gets us down the meal and the bread, this will be half-mended—for I fear it will be but half even then. If we could only get these Chinese and Hindoo creatures, to make or grow some useful product, to send us in return for the goods we can furnish them, we could then pay ye, and content ye better."

"I own that, sir,—and Tibby there for one, would be glad to get a reasonable hold of a little more of their tea and sugar, among other good things.—— But ye are not altogether right about the number of mouths producing so great a glut of labour; for, compared with our young days, every single hand-loom hand is now equal to a man and a-fifth."

"A man and a-fifth, what do ye mean by that?"

"Our Andrew has sic droll similitudes," said the admiring Tibby; and Andrew, with a suppressed exulting chuckle, of which vanity he was ashamed in an affair so serious, replied, "The long hours—the long, exhausting, weary hours of toil, make every man's labour now-a-days equal to that of a man and a-fifth of former times. And if frail nature would sustain eighteen hours' work out of the twenty-four, we would soon see such hours; and if the cold form of religion subsisting among us, permitted Sabbath-work, we would have that too, and the poor folks in three months no a bawbee the better for it."

"Operatives are quite as free to restrict their hours of work, as to make their own wages."

"Now, sir, that's no like you," cried

* Mense,—manners, and something more: mensefu' includes discretion, and propriety of conduct.

Andrew hastily. "Dinna provoke a starving man, by telling him he may eat if he likes, and showing him bread and meat locked-up in an-iron cage far beyond his grip. But you masters, I grant, are not without your ain share in the miseries of these times. And for what is't a'? That the lady may have two shawls, and the laird two coats, where their father and mother had but one—that the mistress may have three sets of china tea-tackle, where one served her good mother: this three to be bought with a prodigiously increased quantity of our labour."

"Of my capital, or profits, Andrew?"

"We shall not dispute about words, sir; yours and ours together, and what ought to be your profits. You great folks, the Cotton Lords as Mr. Cobbett ca's ye, are far from free of troubles and anxieties. And what for incurred? Twa or three gold seals with coats o' arms dangling at the gold watch, give unco little comfort, aboon the auld clumsey clicking turnip, if the chief business is to remind the owner that the fatal hour is drawing nigh, and little to meet Johnnie Carrick's† peremptor demand." Mr. Mathewson gave a half-smile, which Andrew construed into assent, or perhaps approbation.

"I may be speaking ower long, sir; but looking on this nation as one great family and fellowship, and B, the cotton spinner or weaver, as equally the child of the commonwealth with C, ye observe, the landed man, or *great* farmer,—the question with our rulers, or stewards rather—for the people maun rule themselves,—stewards I say, who fear the Lord, and understand their duty, is this—if what C suffers or sacrifices shall not be met by more than an equivalent, in what B gains——"

But here, when Andrew had almost foundered at any rate, Tibby, with woman's tact perceiving symptoms of weariness in her visitor broke in with, "Sic a man!—bothering Mr. William wi' his B's and C's—when Andrew gets to the B's and C's, he is as wud as ever was Johnnie Waldie, reading the 10th of Nehemiah. Ye mind auld John Waldie, sir? He died only last Michaelmas."

Andrew turned eyes of stern reproof upon his helpmate, who, however, bore his rebuke with great *sang froid*. "It is not for the mere conveniences of life I speak," he said, "but something far mair lasting and precious, lost sight of, made shipwreck of alto-

† A celebrated Glasgow banker.

gether. By-and-by we must alter our Single Book, and make the answer to the question 'What's the chief end of man?'—at least of manufacturing man, to be—To work fourteen or fifteen hours out of the twenty-four, fabricating, half the time, trash worth no rational body's buying; and half-starving while he is about it."

"There is much truth and much error in what you say, Andrew," replied Mr. Mathewson. "But how do you system-mongers, and state-tinkers propose mending your condition—would ye advise a Strike?"

"Na, sir; I'm for nae Strike, unless it were better managed than ever I saw a strike yet. If the yearthen vesshel smite itself against the vesshel of iron, where will lie the potsherds? But if you would give up underselling each other, sir——"

"And I may retort, if ye would give up your under-working, Andrew—and over-working, and long hours, and diminish your numbers."

"I showed you how it could not be, sir,—situate as *we* are; entangled every limb and power o' us, in that weary loom."

"And how do you know that we are not equally entangled—Reckon ye for nought all our mills, machinery, goods, debts; binding us hand and foot as firmly as the necessity of daily supplying the daily meal does you to your loom—character, capital, and credit, are with us all at stake;—ye should be considerate in your judgments of us, Andrew."

"Ay that they should; and that's what I aye tell them," put in Tibby. "It would be wiser like, Andrew Howie, if you, that's a man of knowledge and experience, gave Mr. William a gude advice." Tibby had unlimited faith in the wisdom of her head.

"Then I would caution you masters, sir, how ye build mair mills, and machinery; though we had a spurt of better trade lately."

"And try ye, Andrew, and advise your neighbours to make at least three out of every five of their boys, some other trade than weavers, though brisk times should come."

"We must have down the peck too, sir—and that shortly; but how are we to keep it down if ye go on at this same rate. Ye may cover all the prairies in America with Paisley shawls, and the plains of India with ginghams and mull muslins, and hang yarns on ilka buss o' the wilderness; but what the better would we be? Cheap bread itself, the blessing we are all craving, will last but for

a short time, if we manage no a' the better. If by underselling, and over-producing, we learn the agriculturist, by small degrees, to get six ells for his bushel instead o' three, what the richer, better fed I mean, will us poor operatives be, in the long run? Till we can make the field yield its increase as rapidly as the machine does its products, or limit those products, it makes little odds whether the loaf is nominally a sixpence or a shilling. It will still be aboon our hand."

"Na, Andrew Howie, ye are surely gaen clean daft now!" cried Tibby. "My certes! a sixpence or a shilling for a loaf! There's an unco odds."

Andrew looked from his half-closed eyelids with a sort of pitying contempt of the weaker vessel, which was irresistible to Mr. Mathewson, low as his spirits were. Laughing heartily, he declared that Tibby had the best of it.

Her delight was complete, and Andrew himself was much gratified when, rising, the manufacturer requested his old fosterer to cook for him the well remembered supper of his simple childhood, the only dish he could now fancy for his early rural supper.

"Sowens! sowens!" cried Tibby, with glowing eyes, "eh, sir! and do ye think ye could sup sowens yet! atweel ye'se no want them." Mr. Mathewson believed he was thus undegenerate,—Master Manufacturer, and great Cotton Lord, as he had so long been.

Andrew, putting on his night-cap to ward off the night air, and still carrying his printed documents, convoyed the visiter to the end of the village, adding "line upon line." "That's Mathewson the great manufacturer," was whispered among the lounging groups in the village street. "He's had great losses lately they say, and is come out here to seek his health.—I'll wager Andrew Howie has been g'ien him a hecklin. I see it in Andrew's eyne."

Nor could Andrew, beset by friends on his return, deny the honourable impeachment.

"It will be twa days, lads, ere Mr. William say again, *man* and *master* meet on equal terms, at this time, in this country." But we leave Andrew to the glory of fighting his battle over again, till Tibby had three times summoned him to his water-gruel supper.

If any courteous reader shall imagine that in ANDREW HOWIE, he recognises an old acquaintance, we trust that he will like our hero none the worse for such recollection of another honest man.

THE VENTILATOR OF THE OLD HOUSE OF COMMONS;

OR, FEMALE POLITICIANS.

BY MRS. JOHNSTONE.

"THE most unfortunate season to bring out a girl, without any exception, since the year of that wretched business of Queen Caroline;—admitting that we have a most amiable Queen, and may expect drawing-rooms."—This was said by Lady Holroyd, with her most imposing face of feminine diplomacy, across a breakfast-table, at which she sat *tête-à-tête* with her husband.

"Then suppose, my dear, you *keep her in*," replied Sir Jermyn Holroyd, with quiet humour,—"suit your tactics to the time. But what makes you imagine, Anne, that, in coming up to town for a week or two, where her presence was required by me on her coming of age, my pretty ward thinks any thing about *out or in*?"

"Nonsense! Sir Jermyn; Miss Clifford has some reason to complain of my neglect already; but were it not that our friends are prepared to see her with us—that expectation is a tip-toe, and Margaret of age, I would still have counselled seclusion for this spring. The men—that is, all the men worth thinking about—*will* think of nothing but their vile politics. There will be no dinners—thin parties—the House and the Clubs everlasting."

"Pho! you take it far too seriously, Anne. The world will wag this session pretty much in the old way, at least so far as relates to marrying, and being given in marriage. So nice a little girl as Margaret, with the Priory acres to her petticoat, is only in danger of being too quickly snapped at: you must take care, in the first place, to make her over to some honest Whig; and, if possible, to one of our own county." Lady Holroyd bowed with dignity; her look saying, "You may safely confide all that to me."

While this conversation passed, the subject of it, a lovely and pleasing girl, with nothing in the least *striking* at a first glance, entered the apartment, prepared to go out, her shawl over her arm. She had arrived in London only on the preceding evening, and, in right of supposed fatigue, though Margaret's blooming face acknowledged none, breakfast had been sent up to her chamber.

"Going out, Miss Clifford! so early and alone?—the carriage, I believe, is not ordered yet," said Lady Holroyd, in stately surprise.

"Only to run across the way to Georgiana," returned the young lady. "She has got into one of those fine new houses, I believe; but I know 'her whereabouts,' and old Ralph will marshal me."

The young lady kissed her hand, like one quietly resolved not to be stayed, and was off, leaving her patroness to direct to Sir Jermyn the emphatic,—"Miss Clifford cannot be aware that Lady Robert Anson and I don't visit;—that circumstances render it impossible we should be on any terms save those of the coldest civility—if to that much her ladyship is longer entitled from me."

Five minutes afterwards, Miss Clifford was in the arms of her proscribed friend, who started from under the hands of her maid to receive her thrice-welcome visiter.

"My dear charming Margaret, how kind to *force* your way to me; I have *note-laid* you for three days, thinking I might smuggle you in here—contraband, for a few hours before you passed into legal custody;—and why not come to me at first, and for altogether?—But a week emancipates you, and then *you are mine!*"

"But, Georgiana, now that I have breath, what has come between you and my worthy guardian's excellent lady, an old *family friend*, who used to appear so particularly gracious to you?"

"So she has not told you, then?" said Lady Robert, colouring slightly. "Oh! 'tis nothing, or less—*politics*, I believe; only we don't visit—*tant pis*, and *tant mieux*, unless she were able to keep *you* from me; on all other points I defy her."

Lady Robert Anson was the favourite schoolfellow and early friend of Miss Clifford. Her ladyship had now been married for nearly five years, and was the mother of three children, though only four years the senior of the secluded Margaret; and this period had made her as much a woman of the world as was permitted by a heart naturally kind, though habitually selfish; and a head which, affecting deep knowledge of public affairs, and of those secret causes in high places on which they hinge, was as volatile and inconsequent as it had been at eighteen. It was vain for Lady Robert to pretend to diplomacy; but with her party she had her own uses.

In grace, and charm of manner, Lady Robert had improved during her sojourn in the higher regions and deeper recesses of the fashionable and the political world; and the early beauty of which young Margaret had been so generously proud, had gained as much in refinement and delicacy of expression as it had lost in ingenuous freshness and juvenile bloom. To none of Lady Robert's high-bred fascinations was Miss Clifford insensible, but the charm of kindness was far above them all: Georgiana loved her,—she at least loved Georgiana; not—and she chided herself for the feeling—as she once had done, but still far too truly and dearly not to have lately passed many an anxious hour on her account.

Miss Clifford had come to give a long morning solely to her friend; and Lady Robert had ordered herself to be denied to all the world. Several times Margaret attempted to lead the conversation to affairs of serious import to both the ladies; but Lady Robert either gave it a dexterous turn, or looked so vexed that Margaret could not press her.

"You know I must—*must*, Georgiana, tell Sir Jernyn *all*, one of these days. I never lie down or rise without self-accusation."

"You think far too seriously, too superstitiously, dearest Margaret, of these trifling matters. In a week you will be your own mistress—accountable to no one. You cannot doubt the honour of Lord Robert,—you cannot, Margaret, break my heart by exposures which would be so painful, so ruinous at present: say nothing more about it, love. Oh! there comes your maid with your clothes to dress. I took the liberty to send your apologies to Lady Holroyd. How could the exacting old woman expect you from me to-day?"

"I wish you had not, Georgiana," said Miss Clifford, gravely; "I would not for any thing offend a person so respectable, and so very kind to me as Lady Holroyd has always been." But the thing was already fixed; and Margaret soon forgot every cause of uneasiness in the charm of her friend's conversation, and the revival of old themes and girlish scenes. And in this way, and with the customary helps of tumbling over dresses, books, music, or jewellery, and narrating past, and planning future amusements, Lady Robert contrived to speed the morning hours.

Though the order, *Not at home*, had been most explicitly given, the servants inter-

preted it in some understood way; for in the course of the morning several gentlemen were admitted, who appeared to be of Lady Robert's most intimate and confidential *coterie*, and also two ladies, handsome, fashionable, dashing women, who were permitted to remain nameless, though some of the gentlemen were particularly introduced to Miss Clifford. Men and women appeared alike ardent politicians, plunged over head and ears in the affairs of the day, and the debate of the night. Lady Robert's work-table had been constituted into a council-board, where pamphlets and newspapers were tumbled over, notes received and despatched, and gold pencils kept busy in incessant calculation,—gay badinage mingling with serious discussion, and flippant remark with earnest deliberation, or what three of the ladies appeared to believe such.

"Ten to one against Talbot's motion!" cried one of the ladies, whom Lady Robert, somewhat *cockneyishly*, as Margaret thought, named "Mrs. A."

Lady Robert skimmed rapidly over the calculations which had led to this challenge, and raised her graceful head in triumph to the keen-eyed, subtle-looking, diplomatic person, announced as Mr. Snapdragon, who leaned upon her chair, while his regards were fixed on Margaret, who had retired as far as possible from the council-table, apparently occupied with a book. This gentleman had just entered along with a military man, whom Margaret heard sportively named in the circle, "Lady Robert's *Cortejo*," a term supposed peculiarly applicable to an old Peninsular campaigner playing the gallant. "Who is this fine girl you have got to-day, Lady Robert?" inquired the diplomatist in a queer kind of voice, the tones of which grated on Margaret's ear.

"One to whom your labours of to-night may earn you an introduction," she whispered; "a ward of old Holroyd's, the — shire heiress, a real God-send to me at present, among the best of my ways and means for the season, and a charming girl to boot—Miss Clifford, my old school-fellow and dearest friend." Mr. Snapdragon muttered some words of intended compliment "to the early friendship," which his tone and manner converted into a sneer. "Snappy being of the amiable nature," another gentleman whispered, "that the sweetest things sent up from his heart become acrid in their progress to his tongue."

Lord Robert Anson now first made his

appearance, and looked as if just out of bed, fevered and bloated. He complained of headach, and of the murderous hours of "the House." While he paid his compliments to Miss Clifford, the political deliberations were resumed in divan. They were now also joined by a pompous-like person, of great account with his party, for causes not exactly intrinsic, who was very formally introduced to Miss Clifford of the Priory, — shire, as Mr. Bellwether, member for — shire.

The plan of action for the night was submitted to Mr. Bellwether, who took credit for what Snapdragon called his acute suggestions of a former morning, as gravely as if they had ever glanced within a thousand degrees of his slow and obtuse mind.

Of what was passing, Margaret, though a silent, could not be an inattentive observer. She noticed that, as the heavy tread of Mr. Bellwether was heard, and long before he was announced, Snapdragon had whisked Mrs. A. off, through a side door, as a piece of smuggled goods not proper to be seen by every body in their society; and also marked the almost angry impatience with which the appearance of another important confederate was expected, who never came. Snapdragon looked to his watch a dozen times, though the French time-piece glittered before him, and at last cursed himself for having attempted "to move such a dish of skim-milk to any honourable enterprise."

One by one the party now dropped off, Lady Robert or Snapdragon sending after them those light jests and petty sarcasms which break neither bones nor squares, and which often give the bystanders a truer light into the character of the inventor of the wit than of the person at whom it is levelled. The party was reduced to seven, when the butler announced luncheon, to which Miss Clifford was conducted by the *Cortejo*, who, she now found, possessed the irresistible claim on a lady's sympathy of wanting an arm.

The nominal luncheon turned out a sumptuous, though small dinner, such as Lady Robert, too good a diplomatist to "neglect her table," was accustomed to give her party-friends, on field-days like this, that concoction and digestion might proceed together, without the loss of time. At lunch, or dinner, the conversation became more general, gay, animated, and witty, or approached that happier something verging on wit. Enemies were not forgotten, but friends were the favourite subjects of discus-

sion, where nobody was spared, from the most sacred interior of the Court to the mob leaders, as they were called. The minutes fled so pleasantly, that Lady Robert was compelled to remind the gentlemen of their public duties; and as she rose from table, touching her glass with her lip, she called gaily to Margaret to pledge her "country fashion" to the discomfiture of Mr. Talbot's motion.

Miss Clifford unconsciously pushed back her glass; first looked disconcerted by the request, but afterwards still more so at the grave way in which she had taken it. One of the gentlemen whispered something about "angels' prayers," and Lady Robert, with some affectation of manner, but in her most caressing tones, murmured, "Nay, love, that potent Whigges, Lady Holroyd, cannot have converted you already?—luckily, I caught you too quickly for that."

"Lady Holroyd never made an attempt that would so ill reward her trouble," said Margaret, coldly.

"Miss Clifford will let her husband be politician for both sides of the House," said Lord Robert.

"As Lady Robert has done," cried Snapdragon; and the lady so complimented reddened over brow and bosom, but affected to laugh. Margaret had learned—as in England who does not know more or less of every public affair, and the alleged causes of every public action—that Lady Robert Anson was greatly blamed for her husband having *shabbily* deserted his party—"his early friends," the Whigs.

"I mean, Miss Clifford will permit her husband to give the law in politics," stammered Lord Robert, amending his blunder, in the usual fashion, by making it worse.

"And he will be an honest Tory," cried Snapdragon, with that sharp, brassy, Irish voice, and presumptuous manner, which made him already Margaret's antipathy.

"At least he shall be an honest man!" said Margaret, with spirit and dignity that rather surprised her friend.

"Bravo! spirit i' faith— all that English girls want to be angels," said Snapdragon; and turning to Lady Robert, "Are we to know that to-night *our* guardian angel keeps watch for us; that bright eyes are upon us; that from yonder station they still—

'Rain influence, and judge the prize?'"

"My heart, you may be sure, is with you," replied Lady Robert; "but I can neither leave my fair guest, nor yet—"

"Take her with you?" interrupted Snapdragon, in a smothered voice. "Why not? Capital decoy-duck;—one can easily send abroad a rumour which will carry a legion of young Whiggings up to you. Talbot's majority is at most five. By Jove! you might turn it! *Tête-de-fer* would absolutely worship you for a stroke of female *strategy*, so akin to his own genius in war."

"Too absurd!" returned Lady Robert, evidently gratified. "Though I do unscrupulously enjoy an election *ruse*, the *locking-out* would be going too far."

"Not a bit of it, if successfully managed; which I cannot doubt, if committed to your fair hands. I would send you clever Mrs. A. and a few more of Venus's fly-traps," cried he earnestly, as the consequences of this stroke unfolded to his quick apprehension; and drawing up his shoulders, he protruded the fine-turned, but snake-like head, in which glittered the cold, clear, bright eyes; and spread abroad those eager, mobile, clutchy fingers, till they grew into the semblance of talons or fangs, before the fascinated gaze of Margaret.

There now passed many eager whispers, in which were mingled such words as the Prince, the Duke, the Ambassador.—"You *could*, you *might*, if you *would*, out-general them all. By Styx, you might!—or I bet my head for a tennis-ball to the Radicals—"

"Rated at its fair value, Snappy," murmured Sir R. Rawlinson, hardly aside.

"For what lesser purpose did Heaven illuminate such eyes with such a soul, such wit?" continued the persevering politician—in the present instance too persevering, or too indiscreetly urgent; for the aristocratic lady, with some hauteur, said aloud, "This would be going far to serve one's friends; besides, I have infinite contempt for such rivalry."

Thus ended the conversation. Some of the gentlemen swallowed fresh exhilarating bumpers, others coffee of triple strength, and all disappeared.

"A strange scene this to you, love," said Lady Robert, in her most caressing tones, and wreathing her beautiful arms round Margaret, who sat bolt upright beside her on the couch, in an attitude of grave determined thought.

Her sincere reply was, "At least an unusual one, Georgiana."

"You must often have heard of Mr. Snapdragon, though, till lately, he was not of our

set. He is the most talented, versatile creature in the world; full of taste and wit, independently of his great capacity as a statesman, a man of business, and a debater. The Walpoles, father and son in one;—and wields a plume, I promise you, like a scorpion's fang."

"An odd combination, indeed, Lady Robert. You remember our old little books at school told us, the wasp was armed with a sting, and the toad furnished with venom. The nobler animals are endowed with no such means of offence."

"When *our* party get in," continued Lady Robert, pursuing the train of her own thoughts, "there is no saying to what that man may rise. Save the Duke—and, like Bellwether, he is now rather in the past tense—there are no two men *we* could not better spare than Snappy.—But why not pledge me to the discomfiture of Talbot, Margaret? If you knew how that man has tortured us, or the cause I have *personally* to abhor him——"

"You astonish me, Lady Robert," cried Margaret, colouring; "I understood Mr. Talbot to have been a great favourite with you. When I was last in London, you did all you could to make every body in love with him." The young lady laughed, and again coloured slightly.

"So I did,—and so he then was a prodigious favourite; one on whom Lord Robert and I quite relied, which makes his conduct the more horrid in deserting us now."

"You shock as well as astonish me, Georgiana; a man so high-principled, of such honourable feelings as Mr. Talbot, distinguished in every way. It was quite a triumph when he lately carried our county; even Lady Holroyd, much as she dislikes Catholics, was delighted with Mr. Talbot getting into Parliament——"

"Where his first business was to attack and expose his friends. But for Talbot—ay, *Talbot*—Lord Robert need not have lost that northern embassy, which, trifling as the emoluments are, would have been something to us till brighter days come round;—something better than living in London in this *small* way;"—Lady Robert glanced with impatience and vexation round her splendid drawing-room,—"*small*, I mean, to what we were accustomed to while our friends were in office, or to what is expected from our rank." Lady Robert now looked extremely sensible and matronly. "I speak to you as a sincere friend, Margaret,—you who have done so much for us,—and as to one sensible

far beyond your years or opportunities. Our noble relatives have, they fancy, so much to do with themselves. I am sure, I wish there was a law authorizing British midwives to drown two-thirds, at least, of the female offspring of the nobility in china basins. They have, I said, all so much to do with themselves, that it became quite a *duty* to provide for us in some public way. Now, except that Lord Robert draws his full pay as colonel, of which they could not deprive him, and that we have a mere trifle from the colonial government, of which some Irish person, whom —— saddled on us, gets £300, a full fifth, for doing the duties, whatever they are,—and that the reversion of mamma's pension has been secured to me—and a terrible business it was—we have not one farthing of income. You know to your cost, Margaret, that we were not, at the first outset, the most prudent of people. But what could we do? Had our friends staid in, all would have been well in a little time; and I would have had such pleasure, love, in seeing you established among us. But the Duke is so terribly self-willed,—now this is in the strictest confidence,—his cast-iron temper has been our deadliest trial; and ——, the arch-traitor, knows so well how to irritate, tickle, and keep him in play. But we might still have had the embassy, even from the present set—they, blessings on them, have a sort of fellow-feeling, having little wants of their own—save for Talbot and the Radical crew, who, raising the cry of a job against us, frightened the poor dear Whigs into retrenchment, at least in our case.”

“Perhaps Mr. Talbot was not aware who was to hold the appointment,” said Margaret; “perhaps thought it a needless one, a burden on the country,” she added very gravely;—but Lady Robert caught only at the first part of the sentence.

“O! that would have signified nothing to Mr. Patriot Talbot,” she cried, laughing in angry disdain; “his virtue would have rejoiced the more in the sacrifice to his friends the *reformers*, had it been that of his own brother, if he had had one. You can form no notion, love, of the unprincipled, daring length to which Mr. Talbot and his revolutionary friends are pushing matters this session,—of the nature of the incendiary war they almost openly wage with rank, property, and the most sacred institutions in Church and State.”

“Good Heavens! Georgiana, it cannot be of the Mr. Talbot I know, you speak: for

his mother's sake, I trust he is none of those——”

“A leader, a chief; I assure you it is a fact, love. Don't you read the papers at all?—those of them worth reading I mean; there you may learn Talbot. Let me give you a specimen:—among his motions, his vile claptraps, of this year, was one about the revenues of the Irish bishops, a direct attack on church property. You have heard of my uncle, the Bishop, Margaret, and what a favourite I am with him,—he was a sort of forlorn hope to us when all else failed us. He has a very handsome revenue to be sure; but is it not his own?—and think of him of late years being condemned to live in exile away from the Court where he had been so much, and from all his friends, in that horrid country for months at a time, solely from a high sense of duty. He is a delightful person my uncle the Bishop, one who truly adorns the mitre. He lived in the handsomest style between Bath, London, and Windsor, and was constantly making us presents, and seizing such opportunities as fell in his way of doing us all manner of public kindnesses. He was a prodigious favourite with *our King*, [by this style Lady Robert and her female friends, at all times distinguished George IV. from his royal brother William IV.] and was often at Windsor Castle for weeks together in the latter years of the late reign.

“Heigho! how times have changed! My uncle had as much to say with a certain Marchioness as proved very useful to his friends; and I assure you, Margaret, whatever ill-natured people may insinuate, no one was more capable of true friendship than that lady,—where she took a fancy. My uncle possessed all those agreeable small talents for society, which at Court tell so well. He understood all the little amusing games and turns of address which the Dowager-court people enjoy so much, though to us they do seem tiresome. Forty years ago he was a first-rate Grecian, I am told; and you know the Bench of Bishops is not very rich in the best blood, which has its own value in certain places. He *was* all that I say; and you may guess the extent of my obligations to Mr. Talbot, when I tell you, that his infamous motion gave this admirable prelate, my poor uncle, a fit of gout, which flew to his brain, or something of that sort. Sir Henry Halford never understood the case properly, though no one doubted the cause; and now, though absolutely rolling

in gold, immensely rich, he has got a wild craze, that the Radicals will plunder him, the funds break, and that he will die a beggar in Trim work-house, — some horrid Irish place; nor would he now part with one guinea to save all our lives."

"Poor Ireland, how I enjoy thy revenge!" thought Margaret, who found some difficulty in preserving her gravity at this pitiful history. At last, she said, "The people of Ireland are so miserably poor, Lady Robert, — that must be Talbot's apology; and the bulk of them are Catholics too. One could say, in thinking of them, nearly with Chateaubriand, a royalist even up to your bent, — 'A time will come when it will not be believed, that, in a Christian land, one priest enjoyed a revenue of £20,000, while thousands of people wanted a meal.'"

"Merciful, Margaret, surely you cannot be an enemy of the Church!"

"Heaven forbid! Lady Robert; I hope there is nothing in what I say, that shows I am not a sincere friend of the Church, its humblest, most submissive daughter. I only think, in common with tens of thousands of Church of England Christians, that its revenues are sometimes cruelly gathered, always ill divided, and too often ill bestowed."

"I must set Bellwether upon you, Margaret; he lately represented — University," said Lady Robert, with forced gaiety; "or Goulburn or Herries. They will demonstrate by *figures*, love, what a miserable pittance, if divided among the people, all that our *rapacious* Order enjoys would in reality be. — And the necessity of preserving the Second Estate, Margaret, — of maintaining the *tone* in religion and morals, — how could that ever be so cheaply supported as at present?"

"When I saw you last you were quite a Liberal, Lady Robert, at least in Church matters."

"We were horridly betrayed, love; thrown, I fear, irretrievably into a false position. Lord Robert had been so entangled with the Canning *clique*, who were a doomed race — the sooner we cut and ran there the better. But then came *our* capital blunder — the Duke never should have conceded these Catholic claims. And now mark the base ingratitude of these Irish papists to *us*, their best friends. Why to a man they support the Grey set."

A short pause of thought took place. — "And Robert might have been with them,"

sighed Lady Robert. "There we see Palmerston, Melbourne, — all the old men in again; — but who can tell what is best? The path of public men is beset with quicksands. Sir Robert Peel has ruined his reputation by his honesty; and, thanks to Mr. Talbot, so, meanwhile, the base press says, has Lord Robert Anson, by his vacillation."

Miss Clifford had already heard, with pain and mortification, that Lord Robert Anson had, at his outset in life, acted a mean, shuffling, undecided part with the Whigs, afterwards a treacherous one with the Canning administration, and, latterly, a truckling one with the succeeding government. He was, however, in virtue of his family connexions and influence, floated on, till all had lately foundered together.

"But why thanks to Talbot, Georgiana?" asked Miss Clifford, in a tone of earnestness and vexation. "I know so little of your affairs. While you were a fine lady and a minister's wife, entertaining foreign princes and ambassadors, I could not expect you to answer my poor letters; and since you have grown a politician it has been much worse. I fear, Georgiana, you have never even read my country epistles. To which of your parties does Mr. Talbot really belong?"

"To none, love, — none. But, fie, Margaret, how could you imagine that I would not read *your* letters? — Mr. Patriot Talbot is a man of the people — an independent member — the modern Andrew Marvell, my dear — eats his mutton and turnip with his mother in some small house about Parliament Street, fagging in the Chancery Court all the morning like a tiger, and labouring in the House of Commons all night to build up a reputation with the Reformers, and destroy us. It is altogether too ridiculous!" continued the lady, with a choking laugh. — "When elected for your county, on the strength of his public virtues and wonderful talents, forsooth! by the sovereign chaw-bacons, to represent and guard their precious interests —"

"Nay, Lady Robert —"

"Pardon the offence against good taste, Margaret. Party-people, I own, are always vulgar; but you do not yet know what a *humbug* it all is, — to use another vulgar but expressive word of my friend Snapdragon's, proscribed, I believe, at our old school; — what an egregious humbug! but you will too soon learn."

"Never, I trust," cried Margaret, emphatically, "that independence and public

honesty, though rare, are non-existent in England."

"With the Phoenix and the Unicorn, Margaret, they exist."

"But the Unicorn does exist," said Margaret, laughing, "somewhere in the interior of Africa."

"And so may the Patriot, love, — in that same latitude; and every body who goes to seek him will die. But this interrupts my story. When Talbot got in on the people's shoulders, as they describe it in their elegant phraseology, I thought he might be of very great use to *us*. We all thought *him* worth gaining; even the highest of the very highest powers; and who so apt a negotiator as his old friend, Lady Robert Anson, who was accordingly intrusted with this delicate affair. I showed my credentials — opened my case; but no — Heaven knows what the man plays for; but his game, meanwhile, benefits only the base Whigs. I failed of course; tried the mother, who kept her door shut in the face of what the newspapers call my allurements, temptations, charms, and fascinations. She is a very gentlewomanly person, I believe; but she has surrounded herself, and her proud papist notions, with a triple Chinese wall of prejudices against *us*, the friends of the Papists, which neither —'s battering-rams, nor my small sapping and mining could dare on."

"Don't, I beseech you, tell me more of this, Lady Robert," cried Margaret, abruptly, and in a tone of vexation. "Mrs. Talbot is a person whom I must respect, nay, venerate."

"Just one small specimen, Margaret love, quite in your own way, to do you good, to sweeten your imagination. Talbot's election — though to be done *at* and *below* prime cost, so great a favourite is he — cost, nevertheless, some £3000. This sum the Whigs would have defrayed; and they owed him much more before he got into parliament at all, were it only for his various scribblements in their cause, we must not say in their *service*. Conceive the ridiculous pride of the old woman! all her jewels, — heir-looms that had glittered in the masques of the Plantagenets and Tudors, ornaments of the fair Talbots of other days, — she, to my knowledge, sold underhand, to save her son this mighty obligation, that no stain, forsooth! might rest on 'the one entire and perfect chrysolite,' which now forms Mrs. Talbot's whole wealth of jewellery."

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"Dearest Lady Robert, is it possible you do not sympathize in so fine an action!" cried Margaret, her eyes glowing and glistening; "if you do not, you are not the Georgiana you once were."

"Perhaps, love, I do sympathize — a little. I am at least heartily indignant at the way the pretty toys went. To think of the gems my chaste grandames had admired, the Talbot diamonds of our county, sparkling in the tiara of my new ally! — Well, no matter, — politics, like misery, bring folks acquainted with strange companions, — the calumnious Whigs would say 'bed-fellows.' 'Tis a sorry trade, and a thankless. If we had got this paltry embassy," continued the lady, deeply sighing, "it would have been so delightful to run away from London altogether; but don't speak of Talbot again to me, Margaret; with all the reasons I have to hate him, I am an angel to be able to think of that man with temper."

Lady Robert, notwithstanding all her gaiety, brilliance, and high spirits, and the marvellous secret influence in public affairs, on which she prided herself, now that the flimsy veil was removed, seemed so ill at ease, that, though many, if not of all her misfortunes, were clearly attributable to a line of conduct, deliberately chosen and obstinately followed, her friend could not do less than pity, while she gently blamed. Margaret would again have returned to confidential affairs; but Lady Robert declared herself so happy to-night, and begged so earnestly to waive all odious business for this one evening, that her friend could only sigh and yield.

It was now time to dress for that half hour of the Opera which Margaret reluctantly consented to share with her friend. And for this half hour of exhibition, the fair diplomatist made as elaborate a toilet as if she had been going into the presence of Majesty.

"Is it not miserable to find the habit, the necessity of dress, already beginning to outlive the enjoyment of the toilet?" she said, while anxiously directing, and patiently submitting to the finishing touches of a French waiting-maid, obtained as a treasure from the ambassadress, — one, it was whispered, better skilled in the English language and the dexterous use of master-keys than her lady would have approved.

Her own toilet complete, Lady Robert as anxiously superintended the proper equipment of her friend. "In beauty and elegance,

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we far eclipse the Whig women," she said, gaily, while surveying and complimenting Margaret. "That is confessed even by their own swains; and the crisis requires all our forces — artillery of all kinds."

It was a dull opera, and a thin, chilling circle; no woman worth bestowing a second look upon, nor man a second thought: so Lady Robert pronounced. And of the few gentlemen who lounged into the box and chatted with her, not one was considered worthy of being named to the heiress, whom she said she was determined not to cheapen by too general introductions. She soon seemed restless, uneasy, and out of place, and frankly confessed that her heart was not here. "Dare I tempt you, Margaret, within the verge of my spells? I am under a sort of engagement to sup with my friends at — House, where bright eyes make their own welcome. Shall I tempt you thither? But first, with what will you bribe me to place you within eye and earshot of Mr. Talbot's eloquence, and of the merciless thrashing that learned gentleman may make up his mind for to-night."

"One part of your offer would, I own, be a delightful gratification, if modestly practicable," replied the young lady; "but when, how, or where?"

"Never mind the when and where; follow you my white plume." And in a few minutes, cloaked and muffled, the ladies alighted near the House of Commons, and found Sir R. Rawlinson as if in waiting for them. Him Lady Robert gaily accosted with, "How wears the night," and heard that Talbot had not *opened* yet, that Bellwether had contrived to throw in the drag of a few petitions, and also, that unless the debate was protracted to a very late hour, the division might be defeated by delay for at least that night. With this, after some scrambling and winding through stairs and passages, not of the most inviting description, they found themselves at the *Ventilator* of the old *House of Commons*! That den called in the clubs, "The Petticoat Parliament House," where night after night, through the last two agitating sessions, high-born, stooping, kneeling, nay *silent* Beauty might be seen worshipping Eloquence. Never had brighter eyes, or fairer and more warmly throbbing bosoms, viewed or watched the fortunes of the lists at ancient tournament, than those that now viewed the turmoil and wordy war which nightly raged below, among gallant Knights of the Shire, and gentle Squires, representatives of rotten boroughs;

nor ever had the dames of chivalry raised to Heaven more fervent aspirations for the success of their favourite heroes.

"Fountain of stolen waters! dear, dirty, dingy, *exciting*, enchanting den!" cried Lady Robert, on entering the place which had been her late haunt, during the protracted "Reform Bill" discussions, and in which several persons, chiefly ladies,—young, beautiful, and elegant women,—were already assembled, and at their post of observation; "Dear, dirty hole-in-the-wall, what theatre, opera-house, royal drawing-room, or more delightful royal cabinet, is to be compared in torturing, maddening interest, to the rack I have lately found in thee."

Lady Robert met several persons of both sexes belonging to *her* party, and some of the members of her coterie; but the chiefs were all engaged below, and a few subalterns, loungers, and *attachés*, did gallant duty for the evening. Lady Robert's first care was to find an advantageous peeping-post for her young friend; and, that done, she joined one of the groups, and afterwards disappeared, though Margaret, in the full gratification of a lady's longing to penetrate those mysteries so provokingly and carefully veiled from female eyes, was too deeply engaged to mark the desertion.

Separated from the overpowering multitude of august and impressive associations which must crowd on every educated mind, in seeing, for the first time, the representatives of the British empire "in Parliament assembled," there is little intrinsically either dignified or splendid in the aspects of that show. To a New Zealander, a congregation of Methodists, or a Jewish synagogue, would infallibly prove more imposing,—a regiment of foot arranged in a chapel, a much more magnificent sight than that huge *Free-and-easy* motley club, of lounging, lolling, sitting, standing, leaning, stretching, yawning, slumbering, sleeping, winking, gaping, goggling, chewing, jotting, nodding, note-making multitude of "Faithful Commons." Yet with what feelings is it first beheld!—by Miss Clifford, at any rate it was, whose maiden glance was as awful an undertaking as ever was modest young member's maiden speech.

"'Tis the prettiest villain.

She fetches her breath like a new-ta'en sparrow,"

reported the Honourable Horace Wimbledon, a prating poet of Lady Robert's party, whom she had despatched to attend to the commands of Miss Clifford, mainly to get his perked ears out of the reach of the confidential

whispers of her *coterie*. This was now increased by the "Mrs. A——" of the morning, and the *Cortejo*, who came up stairs, leaving, as he said, "Snapdragon, lurking in the jungle, ready to spring on Talbot."

The demeanour of Miss Clifford was not ill depicted in Wimbledon's conceited quotation. In surveying that formidable array, composed of so many discordant elements, yet forming so majestic or *imposing* a whole, her cheek flushed, and her heart throbbed as if too large for her bosom. When the first swell of feeling subsided, curiosity came into play, and she looked round for some one to tell her who was who.

Mr. Horace Wimbledon, with whom she had no desire to cultivate a closer intimacy, although he styled himself, "Perpetual Speaker of the Ladies' House," had disappeared on his embassy; and fortune favoured Margaret in throwing her upon the politeness of her next neighbour, a stately, and rather aristocratic-looking matron, who appeared as much interested in the affairs of the night as herself, but yet took a benevolent pleasure in informing the eager novice.

And who were those "Faithful Commons," likely first to strike, and afterwards to rivet a lady's—a woman's eyes? "Is it Sir James Graham or Colonel Evans you mean?" whispered Margaret's informer, in reply to a question. Margaret meant both, and several others beside; but her eye was still restless; it had not found the object it sought: like some other patriots, it is to be feared Margaret tried to conceal certain personal feelings under the veil of public interest.

"But the heroes of this night, ma'am?" she whispered.

"O, the Bill Men!" returned the lady, smiling, "there is a host of heroes here."

"'Tis the member for ——shire, I mean, as the hero of this night."

"Oh, the *real* hero!" said the lady, smiling more freely; "Mr. Edward Talbot. There he is, whispering to Lord Palmerston, to that gentleman with the luxuriant whiskers. No, no, your eye is quite in the wrong direction; the something at which you look, resembling a human countenance, gleaming beneath that thicket of hair, does not belong to his lordship; that is Colonel S——, or, as the wits of the Clubs name him, Mephibosheth."

The actual appearance of Mr. Talbot, a rush of members into the house, and the dead momentary silence, resolved Margaret's

doubts. She had seen him but once, for some years, but had not forgotten him. His first words were to her inaudible. The subject of his motion was the education of the people; "Not a Ministerial measure," Miss Clifford's neighbour whispered, "but one which, to a certain extent, it was expected the ministry would support, and also some members of the Opposition." This whispered explanation had scarcely been given, when the orator, borne on in the full tide of his discourse, first revealed to the distant fair spectator that something till then unimagined by her, the magic power, the commanding force of the highest eloquence.

At the close of his speech, and while the walls still shook with the exciting cheers which wound up and dissolved the charm, and brought a gush of sympathetic tears into Miss Clifford's eyes, she involuntarily turned to her companion, who appeared almost as much moved as herself, drew a long relieving breath, a deep sigh, and passionately whispered, "And this is eloquence! I never before divined aright what that mightiest power might mean; but 'tis *truth* also—noble, generous, patriot feeling. Oh, how admirable, how enviable the man who, blessed with such glorious gifts, thus uses them in swaying these hundreds of minds for the happiness of millions!" And then abruptly checking herself, as if ashamed of unmaidenly enthusiasm, she muttered in a low hurried tone, "Mr. Talbot is member for my native county; and we in ——shire are naturally a little proud of him. I have heard of his wonderful parliamentary talents long; but never heard him *speak* before,—and he is so very eloquent!"

Margaret's varying emotion, her thrilling sympathy, and rapturous surrender of every thought and feeling to the passing scene, had not escaped the notice of her companion, nor yet this "lame and impotent conclusion."

"Mr. Talbot ought to be deeply sensible of the obliging partiality of his fair, young constituent," she replied, "and here, I believe, he comes to thank you." And the man sprung forward, on whose lips and eyes Margaret's soul had trembled for the last hour. She turned half away, tugging at her veil, and shrinking into herself, shivering with uncontrollable emotion. Fortunately she was not seen.

"You have paid for your fancy, mother," was said in the voice which had lately

vibrated to Margaret's heart, in tones how like and how unlike,—light, cordial, cheerful. "I am glad, that, till this moment, Mr. ——— did not tell me he had brought you to the House. You would have put me out to a certainty. You must be quite exhausted?"

"Not exhausted, Edward; not in the least, only too much gratified, too delighted."

"Home now, then," said the son, "I must be off like a bolt; but your squire, ——— is getting you some tea, I believe."

"Not off, Edward, till you have made your acknowledgments to one of your constituents, my fair unknown neighbour, for the patient, nay, I believe, unwearied attention with which she has listened to your long discourse."

"Indeed!" cried the member for ———shire, smiling, and bowing profoundly to the young lady, half screened behind his mother; then, half-starting, with a speaking look, he exclaimed, "Mother, and do you not guess who this is?" Margaret, now fairly turned upon, blushed, and smiled, and bowed, and smiled and blushed again, under the gaze of the son and mother.

"Ha, I see now! by her brow and smile, a Clifford! How could I have been so stupid? I ought to know the Clifford countenance. May I now claim the privilege of an old woman, and an old ———shire woman, to inquire which of our fair Cliffords I have the honour to address?"

"Margaret Clifford of the Priory," breathed Margaret.

"Then meet where we may, we ought to meet as friends," said the old lady, extending her hand; and Miss Clifford curtsied her deep delighted thanks, as one who sought and felt in this gracious reception something beyond the commencement of an ordinary acquaintanceship.

The gentleman, who came attended by a servant with tea, cried to Mr. Talbot "to be off; Snapdragon was on his legs." And Talbot hurried away, crying, "Mother, Miss Clifford, are you really not tired? May I hope to find you still *both* here in a half hour?"

"You will find us, Edward," cried Mrs. Talbot. "I can promise you neither of us will desert you till we enjoy your triumph."

"Or console me under my defeat, a more truly womanly office," cried the disappearing young member.

"And how, my dear, do we meet in this strange place?" said Mrs. Talbot, as both

ladies sipped the 'refreshing lymph;' "and, pardon me, you are alone?"

"I am with Lady Robert Anson," replied Margaret. "I am properly with Lady Holroyd; but I owe to Lady Robert the gratification of witnessing a debate. And whither can she have betaken herself?" continued the young lady, now first recollecting the desertion of her friend, and the awkwardness of her own situation.

"Since Lady Robert became a member of the ex-official corps diplomatique, she is oppressed with duties," said Mrs. Talbot. "Miss Clifford must suffer me to take place of her truant ladyship as matron protector; but her set will all crowd hither immediately, or as soon as they hear the tones of their party-idol, Mr. Snapdragon."

As Mrs. Talbot spoke, Lady Robert reappeared with her fair friend, and two or three gentlemen. "Alone, Margaret? where is Lord Robert; where Wimbledon, to whose innocent guardianship I consigned you? But Snapdragon is on his legs; you will be enchanted, Margaret. Defy his power if you can: to your post then."

Miss Clifford (who still stood near Mrs. Talbot, of whom Lady Robert appeared to have no knowledge) could not be called altogether an unprejudiced listener of the regular, trained campaigner, whose tactics were to turn into ridicule what he could not controvert.

The young life of Margaret had been more one of reflection than of action and bustle. Her temper was warm and candid; and the quick perception, and the love of truth, the spontaneous impulse of her naturally clear, and still unwarped mind. Miss Clifford owed many blessings to what her fashionable friends called "a neglected education." On this night, as one sarcasm followed another, and as the envenomed shafts of wit, which recoiled from the mark at which they were apparently aimed, yet tickled into cheers the thoughtless and malicious, her indignation became irrepressible. Her curling lip, her changing colour, and muttered reprobation, betrayed her feelings to her venerable neighbour. And when this fierce attack became more close, and distorted statements of facts, gross exaggerations, and insinuations at once barefacedly false and provokingly impudent, roused her indignation to the glowing pitch, rendered more intense by the knowledge that the mother of Talbot heard every word of this tirade, her feelings were unconsciously revealed in the impetuous whisper of, "Base,

base! false and base! but this cannot wound the feelings nor touch the fair fame of Mr. Talbot."

"No, my dear; no, no," replied the mother, returning the sympathetic pressure of the hand, which somehow hers had sought and met. "It cannot; and I am ashamed of feeling myself so vulnerable to the serpentine of those persons."

From other quarters of this whispering gallery, Margaret was assailed with the admiring exclamations, and low *Hear! hear!* of Lady Robert and her friends.

"Exquisite creature! can Talbot survive this *pounding?*" she cried, turning triumphantly to Margaret. "I perceive you are spell-bound, Margaret, and no wonder; Snapdragon, I am certain, is aware of *our* presence. If eyes could penetrate plaster, he is the basilisk possesses the orbs to do the feat. Does he not nightly dart their *scorching* fires through the ponderous and fleshly volume of ————. Ha! now you mark him looking up to the *Ventilator*. Did you note that about 'airs from heaven,' meaning *us*, dear; or, 'blasts from hell,' that is the Treasury Bench. How fortunate, love, to have heard Snapdragon to-night, when he positively outdoes himself! He will, he must, turn the fortune of the question. What does that man not deserve of us! How keen, how biting his sarcasm! and that unique, saucy, felicitous piquancy of style, which compels those to admire who are fit to tear his brilliant eyes out, those to doat who are ready to damn——"

"If to provoke and irritate be an orator's highest triumph, *yours* excels, Georgiana. He may lend you aid in ill offices, or in exposing foes; but, alas for the party who have no better instrument for gaining friends than one whose best weapons are petulance, arrogance, and the underbred flippancy which passes for wit."

"You are severe on Snapdragon, Margaret. You will learn to know him better. It was in that childish way I thought at first, in my sugar-plum nonage, when I made faces at olives, and thought mawkish downy peaches the only dessert. Such childish fancies disappear with time. What comparison between our brilliant, poignant, pungent champion, and that lump of sweetened curd, for example, Lord Althorp, there?"

"Can you indeed compare them, Georgiana?" cried Margaret. "A man of excellent sense, admirable temper, unimpeachable integrity, a true lover of his country,

one on whom one may pledge salvation and rest in peace, with a political adventurer, whom presumption has enabled to scramble high indeed, since he can number among the tools of his spite or his ambition the wife of Lord Robert Anson! Pardon my warmth, Georgiana; you know how I love you; but not what it is to be wroth with what one loves. I am never angered with those for whom I don't care."

Lady Robert was not prepared for any thing so *brusque* in her staid, mild Margaret, nor yet for a young *country* lady making such rapid progress in knowledge of public characters. She reddened and affected to be absorbed in listening.

Something so offensive and grossly personal was now said below, that the House resounded with indignant cries of "Order, order! Chair! chair!" Even Lady Robert, drawing back, and *up*, said, "This is too bad. In the vehemence of argument Snapdragon forgets that Mr. Talbot is a man of honour, and of *family*."

This burst of natural and of aristocratic feeling, in which Margaret rejoiced, was scarce uttered, when Mr. Talbot appeared, and Lady Robert's "better part of *woman*" was suddenly overcome by other interests. She had no leisure to analyze her thoughts, a process with which she was at no time familiar, when Talbot was seen addressing both the ladies who stood near her, her fair self unnoticed.

"Mother!" he cried, looking chidingly in the face of the old lady, whom, till then, Lady Robert had not deigned to regard.—"Mother! I see how it is; you have tempted me away in the heat of the debate, for I did fear you might be but too impressible by some points of Mr. Snapdragon's oratory."

"I have, at any rate, the grace to be ashamed of weakness so mean," replied the mother.—"If *we* durst reply, Miss Clifford," she continued, turning round and smiling in the face of Margaret, "how *we* would demolish him."

"I am unfortunate in Miss Clifford's first night of the Ventilator being one in which Mr. Snapdragon has chosen to give me such a tremendous thrashing," said Talbot laughing.

"Ha! Mr. Talbot," exclaimed Lady Robert, making a rally, and affecting only now to have noticed him; "driven to this corner?"

Her speech was marred by the cross fire of Mrs. Talbot, who exclaimed, "Miss Clif-

ford rates such ribald stuff at its true value—utter contempt. Go, Edward, do your duty; you need no advocate with the pure and the true.” There was an awkward, embarrassed silence, of which Mr. Talbot took advantage to bow himself off.

“How is all this, Margaret?” whispered Lady Robert.—“How came Talbot hither, and his mother—*elective* affinities—eh? Does the gentleman smell dissolution. But remember, love, you are pledged to us.”

Margaret smiled, and shook her head, with grave incredulity, and felt relieved when her friend was drawn away to the brilliant party which now entered, two foreign ladies of the highest distinction, attended by three gentlemen.

“And you refuse to be introduced, Margaret,” said Lady Robert, in an expostulatory tone, vexed and angry; “you prefer a hum-drum chat with an old woman, to the conversation of the brilliant strangers to whom you might have the advantage of being presented.”

“I do indeed, Georgiana; I am not ambitious.”—Lady Robert turned from her friend with marked vexation.

Mr. Bellwether was now “on his legs.” He had adroitly, and with what our lady spectators thought abundant assurance and self-sufficiency, taken precedence of Mr. Talbot’s friend, who had risen to say for Talbot, in reply to Snapdragon, things which, though less than truth, a modest man can hardly say for himself. Every one seemed to fancy this a privileged time for chat. The House emptied below like a church dismissing, and the ladies laughed above—all but Margaret Clifford and Mrs. Talbot.

“My son informed me how much of grace he owed at his late election to the ladies of the Priory, and I have always intended making my grateful acknowledgments to my old friend, your good Aunt Mrs. Elizabeth; but old people get so lazy.—I hope our fingers are not true emblems of our feelings; with me the latter are quick enough for sixty-five, at least where my son is concerned.”—Margaret bowed, and said her grand-aunt would have been so happy to hear of Mrs. Talbot; they rejoiced, indeed, when Mr. Talbot carried his election, but that was a general feeling in the county.

“Edward informed me that he had, after his election, the felicity of seeing the ladies of the Priory at an Archery Meeting, in the Priory Park:—when shall I forget its oaks and beeches!”

“Did he, indeed! did Mr. Talbot talk of our Archery Meeting?” cried Margaret, in a glow of gratified feeling.

“Ay, and of the Bow Meeting ball, and its fair partner,” said Mrs. Talbot.

“Aunt Elizabeth said that was the most truly *English* day of out-door and in-door gaiety she had witnessed for fifty years,—our Bow Meeting,” said Margaret, rather blinking the question. “She will be so proud to hear that Mr. Talbot remembers the rural holiday of our neighbourhood, in honour of his success, which our good neighbours believed portended better days to Merry Old England.”

“You mean the Priory tenants, Miss Clifford, who voted for my son.”

“Not at our instance,” returned Margaret, smiling; “my grand-aunt did not even tell our neighbours they were free to vote as their consciences dictated. She said, that was what English Yeomen should never once doubt about.”

“But Mrs. Elizabeth has such a horror of female politicians, that she would think I had committed her by the little I have said to-night.—I only wish Lady Robert showed a little of her feminine dislike of such subjects.” Margaret looked with anxiety to her friend, now engaged in vivacious whispers with the “illustrious strangers.”

“She, poor thing,” replied Mrs. Talbot, “knows as much about politics—if by politics you understand knowledge of public interests, and the struggles and balance of parties—as the sole of the tiny satin slipper she is now dancing. She has been inveigled by art, and involved by vanity and circumstance, in intrigues which she cannot fathom, and would, I trust; loathe if she could.”

“You don’t, then, approve of women interfering in public affairs?” said Margaret, vexed for her friend. “Even at an exciting period like this.”

“I, at least, regret to see the grace, beauty, and station of so charming a young woman, degraded into the instruments of political intrigue. Nor can I hold Lady Robert innocent; her share of the stakes played for, is that embassy on which she has set her heart. I cannot esteem such motives. I am a frank speaker.”

“Will you give me leave to present Georgiana to you?” cried Margaret, in a sudden flash of that enthusiasm which was latent in her disposition, and which, alternating with her exterior coldness, and quiet, sweet seriousness of manner, gave so rare a

charm to her character where she was known. "She had the most yielding and impressible nature—the gentlest heart."

"I know not how to resist Miss Clifford's wish," replied Mrs. Talbot, smiling graciously; "though I have no hope of converting her fashionable friend. — I, however, distinguish between Lady Robert and some of her fair allies, though I fear all the world is not so charitable. Nor do I blame her or any woman for knowing too much of public affairs, but only for having their knowledge uniformly on the *selfish* side. When the influence of women in society is considered, how important often becomes the counsel, the interference, the indirect control, which it is only graceful and proper for them to employ! Into how many dishonest acts and mean compliances have I known public men betrayed, that wives and daughters might retain their baubles, and hold degraded state, though at the expense of the poor man's integrity! Had Lady Robert Anson—pardon my freedom, I speak to one whom I consider worthy of frank dealing—had Lady Robert, in her married life, really possessed any proper knowledge of political affairs, of public duty, and of the true honour of her husband, as a public man, how different had been the part that she would have counselled, and that he might have sustained!"

"Then you do approve of women interfering in affairs?" asked Margaret, doubtfully.

"As we know very well they will interfere, I would rather they did so in an honest way," replied Mrs. Talbot. "Women are but too often the domestic traitors, whose prudent and gentle counsel, 'Stick by place in all events,' and tender fears of loss of fortune, and ruin of their children's prospects, betray men into the basest compromises, if not into the profligate desertion of duty. Instead of admiring the amiable, graceful passiveness and feminine delicacy we see so be-praised, I am often tempted to despise it as unprincipled cunning, in the gentle, timid, yielding, innocent creatures; who will know nothing of the wages of corruption, or the fruits of public plunder, save how to lavish them with taste and elegance on their own persons and selfish vanities. They know nothing of politics, indeed: they mind their family affairs and amusements, and do not concern themselves with how the wives and daughters of sinecurists, and idle placemen, are enabled to outdazzle those of non-placemen and patriots, of which last

kind of men they have generally a 'shocking opinion,' as persons unpardonably negligent of the interests of their families, and rather tainted with infidelity. — Yes, Miss Clifford, while I scorn the petty arts of female intrigue, I would, from the wife of the Constable, to her who shares the dignities of the Lord Chancellor, have every woman know as much of politics as to discriminate right from wrong,—her husband's public duty, from her own worldly interest; and to be able to say to him, on all proper occasions, 'Don't be the base thing who would draw emolument and distinction from the ruin of your country, and the degradation of your own character; put me and my children out of view: your integrity and honour are our dearest possession. With these untainted, we never can be poor, nor with these need we higher distinction.' I would have women support the faltering resolution, which they too often undermine; strengthen the infirm purpose which their prudent offices are directed still farther to shake; employ their tears, caresses, and solicitations, *occasionally*, on the side of public duty, though personal interest should pull the other way. In periods of trial, public men are too frequently found dishonest, but the women connected with them are almost always so, though often less from want of principle than from want of instruction, and of the capacity of looking in an enlarged way to the scope and consequences of actions."

While Mrs. Talbot thus whispered above, Mr. Bellwether held on prosing below; and Mr. Horace Wimbledon, again in waiting, informed the ladies that there would be no division for a good hour, as Bellwether, like an extemporary Methodist parson, when apparently winding up for a close, was often farther off than ever. And——and—— must speak,—they would not sleep otherwise; and the Blacking-man had still to wake his "brazen-trump obstreperous."

This was a favourable pause for another examination of "the House," of which Mr. Wimbledon had the bead-roll at his fingers' ends; but Miss Clifford seemed so insensible to his talents as a sketcher, that in a few minutes he flew off to another duty of the night—to report to the Club upon the heiress. In all the Clubs of all the parties, Mr. Horace, if not welcomed, was tolerated, for the sake of his gossip, his connexions, and qualities as a *quizee*. He encountered Sir Jermyn Holroyd, who had just paired

off, under the somniferous influence of Mr. Bellwether, and now dropt into Brookes' to gather the latest babble before he went home. The opening speech of Talbot and the bitter reply of Snapdragon, the fate of the night and the new face, were the topics of the idlers, some of whom had seen Miss Clifford at the Opera-house: the numbers on the division, and the months the heiress might remain unwed, and who might attempt, and who win her, were the subjects of the bets. Mr. Wimbleton was briskly interrogated — "Tall, Horace?" "No." — "Short?" "No." — "Dark?" "No." — "Fair?" "No." — "A truly negative young lady," said the questioner. "Then what the devil is she like?"

"The Church of St. Peter's at Rome," returned Mr. Wimbleton, throwing himself into an attitude.

"As how, pray!" cried the laughing bystanders.

"Why, because at first glance you see nothing remarkable about her, and, at the second and every succeeding one, wonder where your stupid eyes have been that did not at once discern the pure style, the perfect symmetry, the surpassing beauty of the whole edifice."

"Have done with your blarney, Horace — the girl is pretty, I suppose, spite of the small heiress-ship."

"No," again pronounced the arbiter; "she is not in the least what men call pretty, nor beautiful — something, perhaps, between what is named lovely, and felt delightful. She has, for one thing, a face of her own; no girl now in London has so original a countenance — perhaps she has two faces."

"Many young ladies have," said one of the amused bystanders.

"More correctly, two characters are expressed in one physiognomy," continued the critical demonstrator. "The brow is as expansive, smooth, and serious, for so young a brow and a female one, as that of Napoleon; while the turn of the lower part of the face, though the complexion inclines to fair, has much of the sprightly piquance peculiar to dark beauties. A pretty mouth, dimpling when it smiles; eyes well set, of delightful expression and no particular colour; nose — a *leete*, but most delicately, turned up, as if to mark that quick sense of the ludicrous which the lofty brow disclaims; the whole head set on the fair bust, with a grace and ease of outline which only Lady — can

rival, — and which she might envy; a 'clipsome waist,'

"Small by degrees, and beautifully less; — that just height and seemly carriage which make a woman as tall or as short as one desires, finishes this piece of fair perfection; and forms, taken altogether, as desirable an appendage to a very fine old place in — shire, worth two thousand a-year, as any self-denying patriot need look for."

"Two thousand — only two thousand!" "Such a trifle is nothing, gentlemen," said Mr. Wimbleton, bowing round the circle.

"A devilish good thing too; but not to puff an heiress off," said an Irish gentleman.

"And who puffed?" put in Sir Jermyn Holroyd, a quiet but not uninterested spectator.

"The Ansons, to be sure; *their* heiress; the great catch of *Anno Domini* 1831. Whom they have *dipped* pretty considerably," said Mr. Horace Wimbleton. Sir Jermyn knitted his bushy eyebrows.

"And the self-denying patriot?" inquired the Irishman.

"Oh! Talbot, who secured her with the county; for that matter his *Grey* — for she is not a *blue* — Mamma is at the Ventilator at this precious moment, clinching the compact."

"But the little girl will look for title, no doubt," said an Irish peer, whose honours were not yet rusty with antiquity.

"Can't tell," returned Mr. Horace. "The ancient gentry of — shire, whose verdant and sea-girt precincts are still wonderfully sacred from either manufacturing or moneyed pollution, are in their Elizabethan mansions as proud of their untitled rank as so many peacocks. Miss Clifford may have caught the trick of her neighbours, and fancy William the Conqueror's Esquires more noble, more rich in blood and in traditionary honour, than William the Minister's — yea, than Pitt's Peers."

"Shouldn't care to try her on that score, faith, unless my mind were made up to all other risks," lisped a Baron-expectant. "Lady Robert will have a good deal to say in the matrimonial *disposition* of Miss Clifford, — ten to one she belongs to the Tories at last. They are the fellows at a *coup de main*." This conversation proved very amusing to Sir Jermyn Holroyd, who smoked his cigar, warmed and rubbed his shins, sipped his brandy and water, and

said not a word, though the "considerably dipped," had attracted his attention, in conjunction with certain remembered mysterious clauses of his ward's late epistles.

The Club-room emptied for the division, or the news of it; for, before this time, the hour of fate had drawn on, and Margaret Clifford, in an agony of nervous apprehension, had three times whispered to her new friend, "He will surely gain, ma'am?"

"My son,—so I pray, and trust,—that *right* may, for once, overpower *might*; but parties are delicately balanced:—The House is about to clear for a division. Courage, Miss Clifford! If we don't obtain success, we know that we deserve it." Those who have experienced the exquisitely delightful torture of hanging on the final throw of the dice, which is to determine a fortune, or the last five minutes of the poll, which fixes a keenly-contested election, may form an idea of the intense anxiety of Margaret, when, on accidentally turning round, the group of gentlemen encircling Lady Robert and the "clever and handsome Mrs. A." brought to her recollection, like a lightning flash, the scheme of the morning. Lady Robert held the arm of one gentleman, her fair associate another. Other parliamentary beaux formed dumb-waiters for tea-cups; and three respectable personages, representing about half a million of population, formed pins and pegs for Cachemeres, smelling-bottles, and pocket-handkerchiefs. The manœuvre succeeded to admiration. The banded Tory ladies enjoying the stratagem, and already exulting in its consequences, lavished their sweet smiles, volleyed forth the brightest sallies of their wit, and breathed their yet more seducing confidential whispers into favoured Whig ears. Margaret felt that this was the instant of fate. In another minute the doors would be locked. It is a story as old as since the world began, that the most delicate and timid women become, in moments of excitement, and where their affections are engaged, the most daring and romantic of the sex. Margaret Clifford, bred in retirement, quiet, contemplative and sensitive, was, at once, driven from the natural bias of her character by the force of her feelings. She glanced below, where Mr. Talbot's tellers were straining their eyes, watching for the tardy return of truants; then to Lady Robert, the Circe by her side, and the fascinated circle around them; and, starting forward with clasped hands, earnest imploring eyes, and tones which Miss Fanny Kemble might emulate, she exclaimed,

"Gentlemen, if ye be indeed friends of Mr. Talbot, remember the doors will be locked." A more prosaic sentence from a lady's lips could not easily be imagined. The Duke of Wellington's own—"Up, Guards, and at them," was not more homely in its sublimity, nor yet more effective. Five of the gentlemen, huddling down their trophies and burdens at the feet of their fair captors, ran off, muttering curses against themselves, and craving pardons from the ladies. The fair bevy, thus abruptly deserted, first looked blank, and next surveyed the intruder with disdainful glances. She turned away, followed by Lady Robert.

"You have done a strange, bold thing, Miss Clifford!" said Lady Robert, angered out of her policy, and half ashamed of the part in which she had been detected.

"I have done a *right, true* thing, Georgiana, though I wish it had not been mine to do it." There was a dead pause of anxious breathless suspense; and then the vote was announced, but not yet distinctly understood by the ladies above. Margaret, in the strong revulsion of her feelings, felt as if she would die. She leaned heavily in the arm of Mrs. Talbot, sunk more and more helplessly on another and stronger arm, which now clasped and sustained her, and sobbed in passionate, nervous emotion.

"Miss Clifford, Margaret, dearest Margaret!" was breathed in her dying ear by the voice to whose remembered tones Margaret's heart had secretly vibrated for long months back.—"Margaret! my own Margaret!" cried Lady Robert Anson, and her fair, jewelled arms were intertwined with those of her political enemy, and fondly wound round her early friend, forgetful of all but their youthful affection.

"One touch of Nature makes the whole world kin."

It was given when Margaret, feeling now that she was assuredly dying, languid, and happy, and in the arms of her friends, pressed their united arms to her bosom, and became totally insensible. "The air of this horrid place has killed her," cried Lady Robert; and a hubbub arose below and around, that a lady had fainted in the Ventilator, Sir Jernyn Holroyd's ward—there she was—Mr. Talbot carrying her to a private room, and Lady Robert Anson and a crowd of women about her.

When Margaret again opened her eyes, the same persons were around her, and Lady Robert and Mrs. Talbot supporting her. Deep shame was her first distinct feeling;

she almost wished that she had indeed died ; — then came another thought.

“ Yes, love, *we* have triumphed,” said Mrs. Talbot ; “ I know what your eyes are asking — and only by a majority of three — Talbot owes you this great victory ; and to-morrow he shall know how.”

“ I have been very, very foolish, I fear,” said the young lady. “ The stifling air of that place, heat, and altogether ; — and as I never fainted in my life before, I fancied I was dying.”

Mr. Talbot now went in search of any body’s carriage, and every body’s was offered ; but before this was arranged, Sir Jermyn Holroyd burst in upon them. The scene at the House of Commons, the manœuvre to defeat Talbot’s majority, the fainting and carrying out, &c. &c. were already the news of the Clubs, though twenty minutes had not elapsed. He had also picked up some intelligence of the supper at — House, of “ the illustrious strangers,” of “ clever, handsome Mrs. A.,” and of the life Lord and Lady Robert were leading ; and, on the whole, he resolved, though at the expense of a little incivility, to carry his ward home with him without more delay. The flustered looks of Lord Robert, who waited to attend his wife and the heiress on their farther midnight progress, confirmed his resolution. Lady Robert made some feeble opposition to this arrangement, and offered to give up her party and attend her friend ; but to this Margaret would not consent. Mrs. Talbot seemed pleased with the determination ; and, seeing her into Sir Jermyn’s carriage, she took the kindest leave, promising to visit her early on the morrow. Lady Robert, uneasy and vexed, got into the carriage beside Margaret, whom she embraced affectionately, weeping real tears, however mingled and disturbed their source might be. “ How little of your confidence you have given me, Margaret ! Is it like true friendship that I should be the last to know of Mr. Talbot’s feelings for you ?”

“ For me, Georgiana !” and Margaret was thankful that the veil of night hid her mantling blushes. “ No, no, that is impossible ;” and in the deep humility of true passion, Margaret felt how vain the thought that Talbot, the eloquent, the powerful, the admired, could, or *ought* to think of her ; her reason giving decision against the interests of her heart. “ I will not upbraid you, Georgiana ; — I could not tell what I have no right — what I dare not believe ;

but of the election, and our happy Archery Meeting, I did write you more than once — very foolishly perhaps, — but certainly confidently.” Lady Robert could not answer — she muttered something of their own election, of Brighton, and of Margaret Georgiana having had the measles. She then dried her eyes, took a hurried leave, was handed into her own carriage, where her female associates were impatiently waiting, and drove off for — House ; while Sir Jermyn taking his place beside his ward, gave the order, *Home*, in a voice intended to silence the whispers of impertinent bystanders.

The first minute spent alone with her son, was employed by Mrs. Talbot in informing him of what he already knew, that he probably owed his small majority to the spirit and presence of mind of Miss Clifford. “ When you told me of your Bow Meeting at the Priory, you forgot to mention how really charming a girl, sweet, serious, and spirited, the young heiress was. It could not be from insensibility to the fact ?”

“ No, mother, from any thing save that.”

“ You are proud, Talbot, and perhaps retain your boyish hatred of heiresses ; — you think Miss Clifford too rich ?”

“ Not guilty, mother ! — Before I ever saw Miss Clifford, I was aware that her fortune was embarrassed, that she is any thing but rich. The good-nature of her guardian, her own girlish generosity, and the prodigality of the Ansons, have stripped her poor enough. This is no secret, I believe, save to those most concerned. I hope she may still be rich enough for her own happiness.”

“ Unprincipled plunderers !” exclaimed Mrs. Talbot ; “ and the disgrace of such proceedings is, to a young woman, even worse than the pecuniary loss. Conceive the degradation of taking advantage of the unsuspecting kindness of a girl, to involve her youth and inexperience in toils which are painful and shameful even to manhood. But you cannot be sordid, Talbot ?”

“ Nay, mother, it is for you, my oldest and most intimate friend, to judge of my character in this respect,” replied the gentleman with grave humour.

“ Then why — why, Edward ?” cried the mother. “ Surely, — yet there *can* be no other cause — you cannot imagine me so wretched a bigot — strongly as I feel that *one* objection.”

“ You have divined aright, mother ; though I did hope to overcome that one obstacle ; if once but *half* assured that there might not

exist another, far more insurmountable, with the lady herself. I feared Lady Robert's influence; and, save in this one case, don't much admire Lady Robert's friends."

"I certainly wish Miss Clifford of the religion of her ancestors," resumed the mother; "but if excellent Mrs. Elizabeth could see with pleasure an independent Catholic gentleman representing ——shire, shall I not open my arms to this charming girl, who has already, unconsciously, undesignedly, found her way to my heart, through its most accessible, and yet most guarded avenue."

This conversation brought the humble hackney-coach, which conveyed home the mother and son, to the door of the snug, comfortable house in Parliament Street, so contemptuously described by Lady Robert Anson. It was now past three in the morning. Mrs. Talbot declared truly, that she had not been such a rake for ten good years, but was yet resolved to learn early how Margaret fared after her agitating night.

While this passed in one homeward carriage, Sir Jermyn Holroyd in another was listening to the first half-extorted, and then impetuous confession of his ward.

"Don't let people call me an heiress, Sir Jermyn! I seem to myself, where that is imagined, to be the meanest of deceivers. In a few days I shall leave London, and be forgotten; till then, and till the Priory is sold, don't let Mr. Talbot, nor any body, fancy me other than I am,—a very credulous, facile girl, whom a few tears and fair professions will betray into the most imprudent actions."

"Pack of swindlers! I'll expose them—I will, Margaret—£15,000 in three years lavished on their vile extravagance; and plundered off a child. How infamous! Why, the clear Priory rents, for seven years, do not amount to more. And how much of that has gone to Jews and money-lenders?—how much to foreign milliners and fiddlers?—besides the £2000 the Clubs had the story about, laid out in jewels,—poor Mrs. Talbot's, I believe, faith,—which Lord Robert presented to one of the female harpies, who pretended she was to obtain him that precious embassy! They shall refund, by Jove!"

"Do not! do not, dear Sir Jermyn, say more of this. I can suffer any thing,—so can Mrs. Elizabeth, rather than expose Lord Robert, or grieve Georgiana, whose worst faults are of circumstance. How happy and relieved I feel that the worst is

now told, and that I shall not longer be thought an heiress."

"Don't talk nonsense, Margaret. You have played the fool, and my friend, Mrs. Elizabeth, the old fool, which, in money matters, is more surprising. I may have been a little remiss myself, too, in looking after you,—all girls need to be looked after; but Talbot's Chancery practice is, they tell me, this year worth something handsome, and on the increase every day. We may keep the Priory among us yet."

Margaret felt it her duty, as a young lady, to affect to believe that this referred to Mr. Talbot, who admired the Priory, intending to purchase the place; but she was too much a truth-speaker to be able to perpetrate the harmless fiction which female genius had instinctively invented.

Next morning, before Sir Jermyn Holroyd went out to attend a committee of the House, on a turnpike bill,—a bit of harmless legislation which frequently fell to his share,—he looked in at Brookes', as usual, but with a face of more than usual weight of meaning.

"Oh! there comes Sir Jermyn—we shall now know the truth.—When does Talbot, if it be a fair question, marry your beautiful ward, the heroine of the *Ventilator*. Wimbledon is to make something out of it—either a comedy in five acts, or a three-volumed fashionable novel, as Mr. Colburn and he can agree on. But when does it happen? Talbot was seen at your door by eleven this morning, throwing politics and law to the dogs; then came Lady Robert, with her veil close drawn down—eyes beautiful in tears! next Mrs. Talbot, who remains with the *bride* and Lady Holroyd now—a committee on silks, probably. When does Talbot clench his ——shire interest with 'the white wonder' of Miss Clifford's hand?"

"The very first holiday Saturday Lord Althorp can spare for so laudable a purpose, I guess," replied Wimbledon, "Miss Clifford being too good a reformer to take her learned lover a day from the Bill." And, in a few Saturdays afterwards, Sir Jermyn gave away the bride—saw the new-married pair set off from the church door, for the Priory, and Lord and Lady Robert Anson, at the same moment, for a continental retreat. Seated, in returning home, between his wife and Mrs. Elizabeth Clifford, who had come up to town to witness the marriage of her grand-niece, Sir Jermyn demanded of Lady Holroyd, what was become of the dull season, the shocking

season, the bore of a season. "No defrauding Dan Cupid of his rights, Anne, any more now than forty years ago. Drive him from Heaven, Earth, Air, and Water, and every private dwelling in Westminster,—why, you shall find him lurking in that

most unlikely of all places, the roof of St. Stephen's Chapel; whence, should any friend, Mr. Hume, exorcise him as an idle, anti-utilitarian vagabond, he will contrive to nestle in some other quarter equally odd and unsuspected."

PRESENTIMENT; OR, THE INFANTA AT PRESBURG.

BY MRS. GORE.

CHAPTER I.

THE narrow streets of Vienna were thronged with a joyous multitude, and a clear, sharp, autumnal sunshine insinuated its way between the lofty houses by which they are overshadowed, falling alternately upon the tapestries or crimson banners suspended from the windows, the verdant garlands and mimic crowns of roses with which they were intermingled, and finally upon the radiant sea of heads occupying the area below. The peasants from the Wienerwald displayed, in countless multitudes, their towering caps of gold brocade, and the Linzerinnen their glittering winged *cornettes*; but even these could not match with the various splendour of the military uniforms scattered among the people. Towards the *Burg Platz*, or palace-square, indeed, the streets were lined with the gorgeous Hungarian and Imperial guards; and several companies of artillery, as well as a regiment of Bohemian hussars, were on duty in the square of St. Michael. From an early hour, pieces of ordnance had been discharged, at measured intervals, upon the bastions; the bells of the numerous churches now increased the animation caused by the murmuring voice of thousands; and at length the single solemn toll of St. Stephen's silver bell, which strikes like an organ-peal upon the ear, announced that the solemnities of the day were about to commence. Joseph, the future Emperor, the first-born of the mighty Maria Theresa, was about to receive, at the altar, the hand of the Infanta of Parma!

Already the civil ceremonies had been concluded; already the magnificent array of gilded chariots, and horses sinking under the weight of their embroidered trappings, had passed the arched gate of the palace, on its flower-strewn road, towards the Augustiner, or Aulic church. Two heralds of the empire

opened the gay procession; each several carriage was preceded by running footmen, with plumed caps and brocaded sashes, and followed by a detachment of Heiducks or Hussars, in rich uniforms; while, at intervals, a gorgeous company of trumpeters, mounted on milk-white horses, rent the air with their brazen music, pausing only to give way to the bursting acclamations of the populace, aided by loyal cheers from the surrounding windows, which were crowded with all the beauty, youth, and rank of the empire.

The popularity of the reigning family, the liberal distributions that had been made in honour of so auspicious an alliance, the numerous fountains of Vienna glittering with *Bisamberger* wine, and more than all, the propitious brilliancy of the weather, conspired to gladden the scene, and to dispose every spectator to mirth and festivity. It seemed as if sorrow could hold no influence upon any heart in the city at a moment of such general exultation.

Yet there was one among that brilliant assemblage, whose very soul shuddered at the tumultuous joy displayed around; whose ear was deaf to the inspiring music which filled the air; whose eye recoiled from the glittering confusion of gems and chivalrous orders by which it was dazzled on every side: this was the shrinking bride,—the young and lovely Isabella.

The altar before which she stood was almost concealed by the draperies of snowy muslin and garlands of orange blossoms with which it was decorated; and blooming trees from the Schönbrunn orangery, filled the intervening niches. The mightiest of the empire were ranged around;—the houses of Esterhazy, Lichtenstein, Palffy, Lobkowitz, Auersperg, Schwarzenberg, had put forth their pride to grace the solemnity; but distinguished above them all, by his graceful address and ancient Spanish costume, radiant

with the diamonds of the crown, appeared the youthful bridegroom himself. The Archduke, who had scarcely completed his twenty-first year, was even then remarkable for that animated intelligence of countenance, and graceful dignity of gesture, which in after years exerted a successful influence upon those most hostile to his arbitrary political views. But neither the beauty of his person, nor the flattering smiles which elated his clear blue eyes, could dispel the painful retrospections of the Infanta, as she knelt by his side at the high altar.

Conscious of the observation fixed upon her very slightest movement, and still more deeply sensible of the importance of the duties to which she was about to lend her vows, the Princess, through a strong effort of fortitude, attempted to dismiss the terrors by which she was overcome, and to occupy her mind exclusively by the holy rites; and, notwithstanding the perturbation which had oppressed her mind as she traversed the crimson-velvet footcloth that lined her passage to the altar, she was soon enabled to listen, with eager and devout attention, to the exhortations of the officiating Cardinal. Her responses were as articulately pronounced, as her vows of conjugal faith were piously and sincerely undertaken. At length the marriage anthem resounded from the choir, re-echoed by the fretted arches of the lofty roof, as Joseph, turning towards his tearful and trembling bride, bound round her graceful head the nuptial garland, and imprinted upon her forehead the kiss of usage: and, even to his keen observation, the dejection of her countenance appeared but the natural and becoming expression of her regrets on leaving her family and native country, and on finding herself a stranger in a land of strangers. Her air of constraint seemed indeed to enhance the charm of her highly expressive countenance. Her eyes, full-orbed and dark as those of an antelope, her raven hair and crimson lips accorded well with the clear Spanish complexion which, but for the redeeming beauty of her features, would have borne an unfavourable comparison with the snowy brows of the Archduchesses, her new sisters, who at that period presented a group of youthful loveliness, rarely equalled even in the inferior classes of life.

Several of these princesses officiated as bridesmaids to the Infanta; and at her right hand stood the Emperor and Empress, — the former an interested, the latter an

observant spectator. To the mind of Maria Theresa, indeed, accustomed as she was from childhood to the sway of empire, and estimating perhaps too highly the prerogative to which her very existence seemed united, the disinclination evinced by the Princess of Parma to share the prospect of an Imperial diadem, afforded grounds for suspicion and distrust. It was well known to every member of the court of Vienna, excepting the Archduke himself, that on the first application of the Austrian ambassadors to Don Philip of Parma, for the hand of his daughter, the Infanta had openly declared her abhorrence of the match; and that on their presentation to the young Princess herself, towards the conclusion of their negotiations, she had received them with tears and remonstrances. But Don Philip was too conscious of the political value of so splendid an alliance, to permit the repugnance of his daughter to thwart his projects; and although the unfortunate Isabella earnestly implored permission to take the veil, in preference to an eternal separation from her native country, her objections had been disregarded or overruled.

Upon the arrival of the Infanta on the Austrian frontier, where she was warmly and dutifully welcomed by an illustrious deputation of the nobles of Vienna, and by the German ladies who were hereafter to form her establishment, she parted from her Italian attendants with a struggle of mind, which her ingenuous temper sought not to conceal from her new associates; and in reply to some tedious courtly speech of compliment, by which they purposed to dissipate her grief, and to unfold to her comprehension the glories of the mighty empire she was destined to rule, and over which her posterity might reign, even unto remote ages, the Princess was moved to exclaim, "Why talk to me of a throne?—it is a grave only I shall find in Germany! Trust to my prediction, that I shall never live to become the mother of a race of kings!"

These facts had been carefully reported to the Empress, who, while she acknowledged, in the tale, sufficient grounds for uneasiness and a future scrutiny, was at the same time reassured by the indiscreet and childish candour with which the Infanta had exposed her feelings to observation. As the marriage had been solemnized immediately upon her Serene Highness's arrival at Vienna, Maria Theresa was still undetermined whether this excess of candour, — a quality so rare in the

purlieus of the courts of kings, and, for many years past, so unfamiliar to her own bosom, — had not its origin in mental weakness; and it was only after a prolongation of familiar intercourse, that the Empress permitted herself to recognise the strength of mind and singleness of heart, of which the rare union so embellished and endeared the character of the young Archduchess.

Many circumstances tended, however, to retard this change of sentiment. The Archduke himself, her youthful bridegroom, possessed, at the period of his marriage, a very secondary interest in the hearts of his parents; whose partial fondness was engrossed, as that of their reigning successor was afterwards said to be, by their younger son. The Archduke Charles was indeed a youth of the highest promise and endowments; but it is probable that his daring impetuosity of character would have proved a source of family discord, if not of national calamity, had not a premature death removed him from the pernicious tenderness of the Empress, shortly after the marriage of his brother. "Lament not so bitterly my approaching end," said he to the weeping Maria Theresa, in his latter moments. "Had I lived, madam, my irascible temper would have surely afforded you greater cause for sorrow." *

Until this melancholy period, the talents and disposition of the Archduke Joseph had been illiberally appreciated by the Imperial family. His reserved and gentle demeanour was mistaken by the Empress, who piqued herself upon a bold and masculine cast of understanding, for want of energy or ability; and vainly did his more discerning governor, Marshal Batthiany — who detected in his character the germ of that acute and independent spirit, which, in after life, qualified him as a companion for philosophers, as well as a regenerator for a degraded nation — repeat his favourable prognostications concerning the heir-apparent.

It was principally to the marriage, of which the inauspicious commencement has been detailed, that Joseph was indebted for the change that soon occurred in the feelings entertained towards him by his family, as well as by the nation at large, — which already regarded him in the anxious light of its future sovereign. The ceremonies and festivities consequent upon his august nuptials necessarily forced him from the retirement in which he had been hitherto secluded;

* Historical.

and the ardent affection with which he was soon inspired by his young and lovely wife, imparted an air of joyousness and interest to his countenance, which wholly overcame the vacuity of his former phlegmatic reserve. For the first time, he mixed freely, not only in the society of the court, but in the public diversions of the capital. At the theatres, in the gallery of the splendid *manège*, and the noble *Redouten-Saal*, Joseph was frequently observed in attendance upon the Archduchess, whose mantle he carried *en bourgeois* upon his arm, omitting no opportunity of testifying towards her his respect and love. Sometimes the Princess, anxious to familiarize the eyes of the people with the frank and captivating address of their future monarch, would draw him into the public walks of Vienna, or share his sledge upon the Prater; and upon all occasions sought to remove, by her own ingratiating manners and beneficent actions, the unjust prejudice that had been excited against her husband.

Some among the courtiers already began to prophesy that the extreme popularity of the Archduchess Joseph would, in time, become offensive to Maria Theresa, whose sway over the affections of the people had been so long undivided, that she had learned to consider it indivisible, and that a mere want of tact on the part of the Italian Princess, led her to court these *open* demonstrations of regard. Others accused her of paying a mean court to the Empress, by her acknowledged preference of the Archduchess Christina, her eldest and favourite daughter. Whether the superior mind of Maria Theresa elevated her above that common weakness of princes, — a mean jealousy of her successor, — or whether in truth she saw and appreciated the purity and artlessness of the Infanta's mind, it is certain that she soon conceived towards her sentiments of warm maternal affection, and fondly courted her unrestrained intercourse with the Imperial family.

"*Il n'y a rien de si adroit qu'une conduite irréprochable,*" says a modern sage; and in this instance, a total ignorance or disdain of courtly arts became the means of conciliating that general good will, which the wariness of a finished tactician might have vainly sought to secure.

Among the warmest of Isabella's adherents, were the young Archduchesses, her sisters-in-law. The readiness with which she forwarded their amusements, or lent them aid in those pursuits of literature and art, in which an

Italian education had perfected her own superior talents, and still more the total absence of rivalry in her feelings towards them, confirmed their first predilection in her favour. Yet thus beloved, thus deservedly cherished,—the idol of her husband, the darling of the nation,—anxiously sharing the amusements of her family, and executing the private and public duties of her station, endowed with “golden opinions from all sorts of men,” Isabella, in her hours of retirement, was uniformly dejected and sorrowful.

Various were the surmises that arose among the numerous members of the court, concerning the secret causes of this untimely and unaccountable melancholy. The Archduchesses perceived, that although she listened cheerfully, and conversed freely on general topics, she avoided all recurrence to her early life; and was never tempted into details of the habits of her native country. Sometimes, indeed, her younger sisters, moved by the eager curiosity of childhood, would question her of the observances and customs of Italy. “How!” she would answer with a smile, “am I not then a German, like yourselves? I have renounced and forgotten Parma; and I pray you, do not remind me that I am only your *adopted* countrywoman.”

Even to the Archduchess Christina, her favourite friend and companion, she was no less measured in her confidence; and one day, when her Italian letters seemed to have aggravated the despondency of her heart, Christina, dreading lest her depth of affliction should prove injurious to her unborn child, made eager inquiries into the nature of a communication that had proved so distressing. Isabella replied by entreating her perusal of the letters she still held in her hand; which, to the surprise of the Archduchess, contained only the most uninteresting details, and were indeed little calculated to excite the feelings she had witnessed. From that period, the Infanta regularly offered to her inspection, all her correspondence with her own family; and entirely dissipated a suspicion that they still held an undue influence over her mind.

But of all those who witnessed and grieved over the mysterious sadness of the Archduchess, her husband himself was the most lenient in his judgment concerning her state of mind, and the most sincerely anxious to brighten her destiny. The extreme youth of Joseph had fortunately secured him from forming any of those fatal attachments

which frequently imbitter the wedded life of royalty. He loved Isabella with the warmth of a first affection; passionately, tenderly! He would have given kingdoms,—and they were almost at his disposal,—to have believed this affection returned. He felt that to be beloved by a being so gentle, so gifted, so humbly devout, so purely lovely, would be a destiny indeed worthy of an emperor. But he could not deceive *himself*, however he might succeed in blinding the rest of the world, as to the indifference of her feelings towards him. He saw that her gentle complacency was solely motived by submission, and a sense of duty; that she had never sought in his looks an approving smile of tenderness, never sprung into his embrace after long absence. Her eyes strayed not after him when he mingled with the gorgeous crowd by which she was surrounded; nor brightened into joy when it dispersed to leave him again by her side. Over these facts, and many other trifles which form eras in a life of love, the Archduke brooded in silent sorrow; and every day his own anxious attentions to the Infanta, attentions which he could not but believe importunate, declined in their ardour; he assumed in his turn that semblance of estrangement which he believed to be most grateful to her feelings.

At other times, after long and solitary rumination upon his painful and mortifying position, he would suddenly accuse himself of want of energy, in failing to establish his claims upon her heart.

“I will tear aside the veil!” he exclaimed one morning, as he traversed, under the excitation of such feelings, one of the stately corridors of the palace of Schönbrunn. “I will myself penetrate the clouds that darken her mysterious mind; I will demand her confidence in right of the vows which make her mine. Nay, by heavens! she *must*, she *shall* love me; for I can no longer endure this cold reserve!”

But the formalities of announcement, and the ceremonial exacted by her ladies in waiting, tended to subdue his irritation on his entrance to the Archduchess’s *suite* of apartments. In reply to his inquiries, he learned that Isabella was occupied with letters in her *boudoir*, and had commanded that no intrusion might interrupt her employment. “Would his Imperial Highness deign to return in the afternoon?”

“No! now, or never more!” replied Joseph, in a hurried agitated voice; and desiring that the ladies of honour would

suffer him to enter unannounced, he took his way through several resplendent but now deserted chambers of state, and reached the door of the *boudoir*, where he paused to gather breath and presence of mind for his purpose. The golden latch yielded in silence to his careful touch.

It was a fairy cell, that *boudoir*! Who has not distinguished it among the wilderness of gilded galleries, and tapestried saloons at Schönbrunn? Its simple walls delicately covered with embossed straw, its furniture of snow-white, glossy maple wood, its draperies of the palest sea-green silk. A lute lay upon the marble window-seat; a few rare flowers were scattered by the side of a half-finished miniature upon the desk; but no living creature was there! Joseph trembled as he approached the painting. Might not Isabella's secret be unfolded upon that tiny ivory? Stimulated by an agony of apprehension, he cast one hasty but decisive glance upon—a portrait of *himself*!

Agitated by this discovery, though still haunted by a painful perplexity of mind, he gazed round the room for some token that might explain her absence. A slight current of air seemed to agitate one of its silken draperies. True! he remembered now; the door of an adjoining oratory was concealed beneath, and gently unclosing the entrance, the object of his search was before him; but in how sad, how afflicting a position! Prostrate upon the marble floor; her dark hair dishevelled and veiling her face, breathing quick sobs of sorrow or of penitence, Isabella lay at his feet!

Very tenderly, and very silently he raised the sufferer in his arms, and imprinted a kiss upon the pale cheek, bathed with tears, that now drooped upon his shoulder; nor did she seek to extricate herself from his embrace. "Isabella! dearest Isabella!" said he, clasping her to his bosom, "why are you here at this hour, and wherefore thus? You condemn me to long days of absence from your side; you withdraw yourself from a society which lives but in your presence; is it only to indulge in wayward melancholy?"

The Archduchess threw a tearful glance round the little chamber. It was destitute of all ornament, save an unframed picture, a glorious representation of the Holy Mother of God, by the hand of Guido, and a tall and unadorned crucifix standing on a flight of marble steps; the cushion before the *Mutter Gottes* was worn with kneeling.

"There is surely nothing here," said she, "which can displease you as the companion of my solitude."

"It is yourself, your precious self whose companionship alarms me!" replied Joseph. "Why cultivate this gloomy devotion, this austere penitence, at the cost of your health, and of my happiness? But if these are alike indifferent to your heart, I beseech you remember that a mighty empire awaits your promised heir. Isabella! forget not your unborn child."

"Forget it!" exclaimed the shuddering Princess, "would, would that it were possible! Its claims form the bane of my existence!"

"How! would you then deny it the inheritance of a mother's affection? the inheritance of the meanest cradle guarded by the blessings of my poorest subject? Does your faith, Isabella, forbid the indulgence of so sweet an instinct? Then little is it influenced by the Creator's will."

"Hush!" whispered Isabella, pressing her hand tenderly upon his lips. "I have heard your chiding, bear in turn with my reproof; and promise me, dear Joseph, to repress that evil impulse which sometimes leads you into light mention of religious ordinances."

"Thanks, thanks!" said the Archduke. "Reprove me, teach me, direct my faith; for every instance of your regard is precious in my sight. But you must love me, too; only love me! I seek no other concession."

The Archduchess started.

"And surely my unqualified devotion may win some favour in your sight? Our marriage, it is true, was planned in a state council; our young hearts were not consulted; and mine, I confess it, revolted against this arbitrary disposal of its affections. But you came, and they were yours at once: wholly, wholly yours! From the moment my eyes had rested upon Isabella, every other earthly object became a blank. Yes! the Empress gave me life; but she has effaced that gift by a far more precious endowment, by your hand,—I must not say your heart."

"If it were possible—" the Archduchess began.

"No! no!" interrupted Joseph, "that measured voice bodes me no good. I will hear but one word from your lips; my Isabella—only tell me that you love me!"

The Princess seemed roused by his vehemence to some new train of ideas. "Love you!" faltered she, withdrawing herself from his arms. "Love you! oh! no, no!

such tenderness would be my ruin. Indifference alone can palliate my wretchedness. Love you! Heaven in its mercy forbid!"

"Isabella!" exclaimed the Archduke passionately, again attempting to fold her to his heart. "These words are madness; I cannot give them faith, I will not. In the sight of all Europe you are mine,—in the sight of God,—my own, my wife! If it is your will to rend these ties asunder, speak! if they must still exist, they shall not be thus evaded!"

"Oh! merciful Heaven!" said the Princess fervently, as she hastily ascended the marble steps, and clasped her arms around the crucifix, "spare me this trial. Suffer not my bleeding heart to be divided from thee; let me not have implored thee in vain! Go!" she continued, turning towards her husband, yet still retaining her hold upon the cross, "Go, leave me, in peace with God, in charity with thee."

Joseph, fearful of increasing her unreasonable agitation, departed in silence from the presence of the Infanta; and escaping through a private gate into the solitary groves of the park, he strove to subdue by reflection and reasoning, the tremor of his own frame. How ill had his attempt prospered! how little availed to dispel his anxieties, or to resolve his doubts! Sometimes he attributed to delirium, to temporary frenzy, the strange expressions of his wife: but then, her settled melancholy? He had found her, however, occupied in retracing his features in her unobserved retirement: this was the sole consolation he had derived from his intrusion; and it was one which renewed his eager hope that time and the birth of her child would dispose her in his favour. Meanwhile they met again upon the following day,—oh! marvellous restraint of etiquette that can school both voice and feature!—as if no unusual interest had been excited between them.

CHAPTER II.

THE affectionate interest with which the Archduchess Joseph was regarded by the Empress, induced her to devise a thousand schemes for her diversion, and imagine a thousand flattering attentions to win her from her sadness.

One morning early in the summer, when the copper roofs of the palace were beginning to glare offensively on the eye, Maria Theresa persuaded her daughter-in-law to accompany

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her in an airing through the *Vörstadt*. These suburbs form the most important part of the city of Vienna; for having been burned, as untenable, during the last Turkish siege, they are principally constructed of handsome modern mansions; and contain several splendid summer-palaces of the nobility, situated in the midst of enchanting gardens.

As the carriages of the Princesses approached the Leopoldstadt,—the island suburb formed by the Danube, or rather by the paltry canals which diverge from that noble stream in order to afford the advantages of its navigation to Vienna,—the Hungarian guard which had preceded the carriage, suddenly halted and drew up in a line opposite to a stone gateway; and Isabella, on entering a garden of the most enchanting description, a perfect "bower of bliss," perceived that every flowery parterre was formed into her cipher, and that the fountains, in throwing their jets of silvery wire upon the *carillons* whose tinkling sound mingled with the plash of their waters, were directed so as to enlace her initials with those of the Archduke.

The Princess, betrayed into her natural self for a moment, warmly expressed the most artless admiration of the fairy delusions by which she was surrounded; and when the Empress pressed the whole upon her acceptance with a maternal kiss, she received this token of affectionate regard with the gratitude and exultation of a child. Maria Theresa drew her arm within her own, in order to conduct her to a temple of Parian marble, commanding a view of the Moravian mountains, and of the nearer heights of the purple Leopoldsberg. Rising majestically above the silver waters of the Danube, these glorious hills form a noble object from the Augarten, the public garden planted by Joseph after his accession to the throne, and resigned to the pleasures of his subjects; while for his solitary wanderings he retained only the small adjoining pleasure-ground consecrated by the memory of his wife.

A bust of the Archduke ornamented the temple. "This, dearest Isabella," said the Empress, "is at present but the temple of Hope; I trust you will one day make it that of Happiness, *you* alone possess that power; you alone influence and control the affections of my son."

Isabella clasped her hands mournfully in reply. Her tears were already falling.

On another occasion, as her chariot rolled beneath the magnificent avenues of the

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Prater, she was invited to visit the lodges of the deer; and entering a wooded glade, a sylvan concert rose on every side, like the voices of the wood-nymphs, to welcome her to the grove. The invocation was breathed in the very measures of Metastasio, and harmonized by the skill of Mozart; and the poet and the artist personally superintending the execution, it was worthy of the semi-divinities by whom it was performed, the young Archduchesses habited as hamadryads. A rustic bower constructed of trunks of trees, and roofed with branches of fir, and garlands of exotics, now courted the queen of the *fête* to partake of a repast, seemingly uniting every imaginable delicacy, but formed entirely of iced confectionary. Again the music floated in mysterious echoes around her, but it was all in vain! The Princess smiled upon their efforts, tasted their viands, listened to their delicate flatteries; but the smile reached no further than her lips. Like the cates of their own deceptive board, all was coldness and delusion beneath.

It was to gratify a caprice expressed in one of her more cheerful moments, that the feathered prisoners of the Imperial aviary were let loose into the lofty tropical conservatory at Schönbrunn, then unique in Europe. To gratify her playful fancy, the loxia was admitted to disport amid its native bowers, and suspend its elegant plumage from the palmated leaves of the draconia; parroquets chattered amid the clustering pods of the creeping vanilla plant; the bleeding dove of Java murmured once more among the scarlet clusters of the ixora; and gaudy lories displayed their radiant wings among the bread-fruit trees.

At another time, Joseph* invited the nobles of the court circle to appear at one of his private balls, each in the costume of that country of the Austrian dominions in which he held his estates:—Hungary, Bohemia, Croatia, Sclavonia, Transylvania, Moravia, Styria, Carinthia, Carniola, Lombardy, Flanders, Lorraine, Tuscany, and Austria, sent forth representatives to the festival, in the persons of their proudest and loveliest. On the birthday of the Emperor, the chief cities of his realms were magnificently embodied in a similar manner; and on St. Theresa's *fête*, all the personages of Metastasio's operas were represented by the flower of the young

nobility, under the counsels of the reverend Abbate in person.

Sometimes Ariosto's knights appeared to joust in the Imperial *manège*,—from whose columned galleries, as in the lists of chivalry,

Ladies' eyes
Rain'd influence, and adjudged the prize.

Sometimes the Archdukes and their noble company of cavaliers affected an encounter with the Saracens; who were represented, as now in the *carrousel*, by wooden posts with Turkish heads, whose painted frowns of mimic grimness form their sole defence. But what are all such empty pageants but the toys of full-grown children? a *passetemps* to the *désœuvré*, but an importunate torment to the unhappy! Often would Joseph in the height of his exertions, or at the moment of the ballroom's gayest grouping, anxiously seek among the approving eyes of the spectators those which formed the light of his solitude; but still and ever did he find them listless, unimpassioned, or, worse still, wrought by an effort of duty into the constrained expression of interest!

Of all those who, surrounding the Archduchess Joseph, necessarily shared in these diversions, the Princess Lichtenstein, her favourite lady of the bedchamber, alone presumed to court her observations on the passing scene, or to comment upon her singular indifference to the splendid gaieties of the court. The Princess was arrived at that period of life when, without presuming beyond those boundaries of etiquette so rigorously observed among the attendants of Maria Theresa, she could express something of a maternal solicitude for her Imperial mistress. Her brilliant position in the world placed her above the suspicion of seeking to exert undue influence with selfish views; for her open, upright, and dignified character became the name she wore. To this amiable woman, whose attractions consisted less in the brilliancy of her conversational talents or the acuteness of her mind, than in warmth of heart, frankness of thought and speech, and an intuitive sense of all that is womanly and virtuous and honourable, confirmed by unostentatious piety, the Archduchess more fully conceded her confidence than to any member of the Imperial family.

As the period of her confinement approached, Princess Lichtenstein, herself a fond and exemplary mother, would frequently enlarge upon the happiness and interest of maternal occupations, and indulge in a thousand chimeras respecting the heir which

* A similar *fête* was given by the present Emperor, to the Allied Sovereigns, during the Congress of Vienna.

she confidently predicted would be born to the German empire. But to all such observations Isabella would reply, "And what avails it to increase our ties unto a world we are about to forsake? What is it to me that I shall be permitted for a time to indulge in the sacred joys and duties of a mother, since all must end so soon! I tell you, Princess, before the time shall arrive which you so often predict, before you are permitted to hail my husband as King of the Romans, I shall be lying cold, and silent, and lonely *there!*"* And she pointed to the church of the Capuchins, the burial-place of the Imperial family, which adjoins the palace.

"*Au reste, chere maman,*" continued the Princess more cheerfully, and leaning affectionately on her arm, "you need not embarrass yourself with these fruitless preparations; for believe me, you will never live to hold a son of mine upon your knee. If indeed I should survive to be blest with a living child, you must content yourselves with a tiny Archduchess."

This part of her Highness's prediction was soon and happily accomplished by the birth of a daughter, who was named Theresa, after the Empress; and the intense affection manifested by the young mother towards this blossom of a desert heart, induced all who were interested in her welfare to anticipate the happiest results. But notwithstanding the increasing pleasure which the Archduchess appeared to derive from her newly-awakened maternal tenderness; notwithstanding the activity with which her lively mind busied itself in the acquirement of new accomplishments, and in their adaptation to the amusement of her husband, whom she alone possessed the power of interesting in conversation, or attracting towards new pursuits, Isabella still retained that settled character of gloomy mournfulness which no endeavours on the part of those by whom she was surrounded could ever entirely overcome. Enlarged experience of the world taught her to render it as little irksome to her husband, and as little oppressive to her domestic circle as possible; but the feeling of depression did not the less exist within the secret recesses of her heart. She would frequently dismiss her attendants, and remain for hours absorbed in solitary meditation; or, seated within the favourite temple of her garden, she would seem to watch the flowing waves of the Danube, as though the minutes of her existence were only worthy, like

them, to pass onwards, undistinguishing and undistinguished, towards the mighty ocean of oblivion.

Even the political measures taken by the Austrian court to secure her husband's succession as King of the Romans, appeared to interest her mind only in as far as they were important to himself; and it was in vain that the Archduchesses, her sisters, attempted to awaken her sex's foibles of vanity and ambition in her heart, by detailing the preparations in progress for Joseph's approaching coronation at Frankfort.

"Have I not already assured you," she would reply, "that instead of ermine and purple, I shall be girded in a shroud? My sisters! assure yourselves that I shall not live to be Queen of the Romans!"

Even in the presence of the Empress, whom she regarded with the most respectful and filial deference, Isabella was far from concealing the tenor of her feelings and presentiments; and it is remarkable that by her Imperial Majesty alone, the opinions of the Archduchess were never combated by ridicule, or treated with levity. In fact, the mind of Maria Theresa herself was already broken by age, and premature exertion; and the eminent intellectual endowments which in her early life had commanded the admiration of Europe, were now enfeebled by the thralldom of narrow prejudices, and a bigotry that partook somewhat largely of the national weakness of her people. During her long reign, the Austrians were more attached to superstitious observances than any nation in Europe; and through a weakness, incredible in a civilized age, the doctrine of familiar spirits was not only prevalent in Vienna, but many of the most distinguished men of the day had devoted their valuable time and fortunes to the pursuit of the philosopher's stone, and the elixir of life.

The Emperor himself had expended enormous sums in such speculations. For some time he was engaged in an attempt to dissolve small diamonds, in order, by an alchemical process, to re-crystallize them into one large mass; and the Imperial government held out warm encouragement to individuals, to devote themselves to the transmutation of metals, by affording funds to facilitate these chimerical researches. Nor is it wonderful that the adept and the necromancer should have been tolerated in a city where the memory of Paracelsus was still venerated as that of the first of philosophers.

* The words used by the Archduchess.

Among the most credulous of the dupes to whom the outbreaking light of philosophy assumed in the obscurity of a dark age the semblance of a miracle, was the great Maria Theresa herself. The supernatural had an engrossing charm in her eyes; which were blinded alike by ignorance, and by the arts of the monkish crew that surrounded her retirement from the cares of state. It was evident that her Imperial Majesty entertained no doubt of the full accomplishment of the Archduchess's prediction; for she was secretly persuaded that her daughter-in-law had received some supernatural revelation on the subject of her future destinies; and she revered her the more, as one distinguished by a heavenly interposition, and by intercommunication with the unseen world.

There were, however, two members of the Imperial family not only enlightened beyond the contamination of these absurdities, but grieved to behold the minds they loved and revered, a prey to such corroding superstitious subjection;—these were the Archduke Joseph, and his sister Maria Christina, already the wife of that Albert of Saxe Teschen, who has since invoked the genius of Canova to immortalize their affection.* Christina loved her Italian sister with a most enthusiastic fondness. She had been the first to suggest the diversions and courtly pleasures by which she had ardently trusted to dissipate her melancholy; and she was not, even now, contented like the rest to abandon her to the despondency of a misgoverned mind.

"Why," she would say to the Archduke, "why do you encourage our dear Isabella to pass her life away in the mere formal observances of our faith? Why permit her to accompany the Empress in her frequent and prolonged visits to the vaults of the Capuchin convent? My brother will scarcely deny that our duties towards our living kindred are paramount to any respect we owe to the mouldering bones of our ancestors; and how, I beseech you, do my mother and sisters advantage themselves or their family, or further their eternal welfare, by the days they waste away in that chilly cavern of death?"

"Isabella has so few enjoyments, so few

* The exquisite monument of the Archduchess Christina, now one of the chief ornaments of Vienna, is known to have been originally designed by Canova for the Venetian States, as a tribute to the memory of Titian. The simple, but striking inscription, is wholly its own.—"*Uxor optima Albertus.*"

caprices," replied Joseph, "that I know not how to deny her an innocent indulgence. My mother is pleased by her sympathy—a sympathy that you or I find it impossible to bestow; and the peculiar frame of the Infanta's mind derives consolation from this strange familiarity with the aspect of death. Do not let us be niggard of pleasures which we cannot share."

"Nay—but surely we might attempt to moderate a taste so little accordant with reason, or indeed with the happiness of its possessor."

"No!" replied the Archduke after a moment's deliberation, "I have made it the principle of my wedded life to oppose no wish, no thought, no action of my Isabella's; for all are innocent in themselves, and few,—very few,—distasteful to my feelings. It would have been the glory of my existence to have obtained at her hands a reciprocation of that fond, that passionate, that exclusive attachment, with which, from the first day of our marriage until now, I have still regarded her; but this I have long recognised as impossible; owing to natural coldness, or to some strong pre-occupation of feeling on her part. Believe not, Christina, that I allude, as many have suspected, to some previous attachment, to some Italian lover; if such were the case, she had not still retained that empire over my heart and mind which she holds with undivided power. No! my respect for her and for myself are equally untarnished by my warm, warm tenderness for Isabella."

He paused for a moment, oppressed by his own emotion.

"My dear brother," interrupted Christina, "I little intended to distress you by this discussion."

"Nay!" replied Joseph, "you have sought my confidence on a delicate subject; and you must receive it perfect and entire. You have been surprised—for I am not so blind as I appear, to all that is passing around me—that loving so distractedly as I do my lovely but perverse wife, I have never either penetrated her mysterious sorrow, nor compelled her to adopt habits more consonant with my taste; or, perhaps, an hypocrisy of happiness, which might deceive the court and the world as to our relative feelings. Would you know the secret of this, Christina? Would you know why your brother, whose arbitrary spirit you have so often upbraided, appears in the present instance so tame, so enduring? Would

you know by what strange enchantment his mind appears thus bereft of its energies? By *love*, my dearest sister, by a strong, a fervent, and disinterested attachment! Love hath taught my restless spirit patience,—my despotic mind deference to the will of another; and Isabella of Parma, young, and timid, and gentle, and unobtrusive as she is, sways me with a far more resolute hand than I shall ever wield withal the rod of empire."

Christina smiled.

"You deride my weakness;—yet even against the mighty weapon of ridicule I am clad in an armour of proof. I have taken my resolution, sister; I have determined, in this instance, to resign all selfish feelings, and to act only as may assure the happiness of my wife and children."

At this frank and generous declaration, the smiles of the Archduchess ceased. She was touched by the manly yet feeling tone of her brother.

"But you, my dear sister," resumed the Archduke, "whose intercourse with Isabella is restrained by no such delicacy, by no such embarrassments,—*you* surely might seek her confidence, might beguile her from the austerity of her devotion, from the cheerless reserve of her heart. Between woman and woman confidence is more prompt, more natural, more unqualified by selfish views; an existing sympathy of motives and actions, of frailties and inclinations, renders confession less alarming and less painful. I do not ask you to love Isabella; I am persuaded that she is truly and justly dear to your bosom. Still less do I ask you to betray her; or to ingratiate yourself into her secrets in order to deposit them with her husband. But I *do* ask you,—I do beseech you as *her* friend, to ascertain the origin of her depression of mind, and to leave no labour undone, no exertion spared to restore her to herself and to happiness. Nay! my dear sister,—come to me, having so mastered her secret, tell me but by what sacrifice I can restore her peace of mind,—tell me that I must resign her,—renounce for ever the hope of her affection,—and I will implicitly follow your counsels. Tell me, Christina, that your friend would be cheerful and happy and pleased with life if secure of my absence, and by the Heaven that hears me! I will never look upon her face again."

The Archduchess was too deeply aware of the intensity of her brother's attachment for his wife, not to appreciate, to the fullest

extent, the value of his generosity. "Calm yourself," she replied, "Restrain this impetuosity of feeling. Be assured,—as I am,—that whatever may cause the gloomy reserve of the Infanta, you, and you alone are master of her transient impulses of happiness. I am persuaded that you are the sole and dearest object of all her thoughts; and although I possess not the shadow of a clue to her secret, I would peril my existence that it is blameless."

The countenance of Joseph was flushed with pleasure at the sound of declarations so cheering, from a sister whose head and heart and sex, equally qualified her to judge with discrimination the character and conduct of his beloved Isabella. Christina hastened to offer renewed assurances of sympathy and aid. "I will do all and more than you have required of me," she said. "We are about to leave Vienna; Isabella has half promised to visit me at Presburg; and during our solitary summer leisure, I trust I shall find occasion to execute your project. Before winter, the Archduchess will be again a mother; before winter I trust that our united efforts will have removed every shadow of sadness from her brow."

Cheered by these prognostications, the Archduke prepared himself with eager hope for the summer residence of the court at the Imperial palace of Laxenburg; where the Emperor and Empress, surrounded by their lovely daughters, were accustomed to forget for a season the monotonous routine of their existence at Vienna. Although etiquette was laid aside, they lost nothing of their true dignity,—that of nobleness of heart, and mind, and action. They seemed indeed to forget the crown and arbitrary sceptre of Austria; but it was only to become the happiest, and most united, and most virtuous of its domestic families. The Archduchess Joseph and her infant were the leading objects of interest to the cheerful group; and Isabella herself appeared for a time rescued from her mournful presentiments, by the animated round of enjoyments devised for her welcome. Christina and her brother already exulted in her happier frame of mind; but Princess Lichtenstein, whose employment in her household admitted her with unchecked familiarity to the solitary hours of the young Princess, still regarded her with the deepest anxiety, and spoke of her condition with the fondest regret. Already she anticipated the most dreadful results from the despondency of her lovely charge.

CHAPTER III.

THE summer of the year 1763 was one of those rare holidays accorded in the course of a century by the caprice of Nature, in order to renew the tarnished credit of pastoral poets, and to invite the *frondeurs* of her reign into unconstrained familiarity with her loveliness; a season when the sky becomes our roof, and the turf our floor, and we seek refuge in the woodlands from the oppression of a dwelling made with hands.

The climate of Austria is one of strong transitions. The winter of Vienna is rude and inclement, and during three months of the year, sledges supersede the use of wheel carriages; but its summer is almost Italian. There are seasons when the *Helenathal* of Baden might vie in exuberance of foliage and cloudlessness of sky, with the more celebrated valleys of the "sweet south,"—with Tempe or Vall'ombrosa; there are seasons when the Danube heaves his mighty burden of waters through banks of woven oak, and amid plains of flowery verdure, more gracious and more smiling than those of Arno or the Durance.

Isabella had sometimes playfully complained of the chillness of the Austrian sunshine; but when June scattered her roses over the gardens of Laxenburg, she was compelled to acknowledge that those of her own villa at Colorno were out rivalled; and that not the orange blossoms of Italy could hang more richly upon the fragrant air, than those of the Imperial *bosquets*. The Princesses evinced their intense enjoyment of the weather and of the exquisite scenery to which it imparted an air of enchantment, by living almost entirely under the canopy of the skies. They were at that period anxiously occupied by the progress of the *Ritter-schloss*, the mimic Castle of Chivalry which decorates the park of Laxenburg; forming a monument of bad taste that seldom fails to excite the sneers of the tourist. But although its design may be regarded as scenic and puerile, its rival wonder, the Temple of Night at Schönau, has been admiringly described by Madame de Stäel, and is generally regarded as a *chef-d'œuvre* of the decorative art; and if the much reviled *Ritter-schloss* fail in its competition with its castles of feudal pride, the cares of its construction and arrangement afforded at least a blameless excitement to the happy family of Maria Theresa during their summer solitude.

It appears resolved by the general consent of modern times, that monarchs alone shall

be denied the indulgence of realizing similar fancies; and that even their private revenues shall be expended according to the strictest interpretation of the arbitrary canons of criticism. Yet wherefore withhold such slight and harmless recreations as may in some measure compensate the loss of the sweeter sympathies of existence,—of the unrestrained joyousness of private life?—and who would endure the loneliness of a throne, if the toys and baubles which beguile its dulness, are to be snatched away? "*Heureux le peuple,*" says the adage, "*dont l'histoire est ennuyeuse!*" "*Heureux le peuple,*" might be also said, "*dont le souverain occupe ses loisirs de pareils hochets!*"

Let those who gaze with the scornful coldness of a callous heart upon the Castle of Chivalry, imagine the animated interest with which the young and lovely Archduchesses—who had designed its groined roofs and bannered galleries, its "storied windows richly dight," its gloomy armouries and warden tower, and dwarf with his enchanted horn,—inspected its slow completion; the ardour with which they explored the hoards of the Imperial treasury for the toys of the olden time,—for jewelled chalice and fretted carcanet,—for the brodered hawking-glove which Hungary was accustomed to fill with ducats, for her ancient queens,—for missals which Cranach and Durer had illuminated for their use,—for the combs sparkling with opals that had graced their tiring chamber,—and all those thousand nameless trinkets of coral and filigree, tourmaline and agate, which equally form the glory of the ancient *châtelaine*, and of the modern antiquary.

Maria Christina, who was an artist of no mean excellence, and Isabella, who was gifted with the elegance and refinement of her native country, were indefatigable in tracing and designing the carved fretwork of the Gothic masonry, and the antique furniture which was to grace the gloomy chambers of the tower; and when the brilliancy of the summer sunshine imprisoned them within the shelter of *jalousies* and marble walls, they would sit together sketching, and comparing, and correcting their plans for the *Château des Caprices*, while the Archduke, with a new volume of Marmontel in his hand, reproached their volubility; or the Princess Lichtenstein intruded the playful infancy of the little Theresa upon their busy occupation.

If Isabella derived less pleasure from the task than the Empress and her court circle,

if she proved less ardently that love of excitation which prompted them

—to create, and in creating live
A being more intense,

she had her own season of enjoyment, and her own allotted Eden at Laxenburg. There was a terrace overlooking its "pleasance," which might alone suffice to vindicate the fallen favour of the grand and stately in the art of landscape gardening. The spectacle afforded by many of the royal residences of Germany,—which a depraved taste for what are perversely called English gardens, and "the natural," has surrounded with serpentine walks, mean shrubberies, hermitages, artificial rocks, rustic bridges, and meandering canals bordered by weeping willows,—might indeed convince the most hardened sceptic of the absurdity of adapting the diminutive graces and *conceits* of a citizen's villa, to palaces recalling the splendours of Versailles. But the Imperial gardens afford a happy union of either style; and the noble terrace to which Christina and Isabella were wont to repair in the stillness of the summer twilight, in order to enjoy the tranquillity of the skies, and a happy and undisturbed confidence of thought and feeling, was indeed worthy to adorn a palace of the modern Cæsars.

The profusion of statues and vases ranged along its marble parapet, tended to deceive the eye as to its glorious extent; yet still the perspective was singularly striking. Clustering pomegranate blossoms, of dazzling brilliancy, overhung the pale marble; many a trim orange tree, white with its bridal flowers, seemed to murmur in the basking sunshine, from the numberless bees that were secretly enriching themselves with its spoil; and here and there, at considerable intervals, some colossal vase, on which the sculptured nymphs twined their voluptuous dance with wreathing arms and uplifted cymbals, extended its gigantic bowl, uncrowned with flowers like the rest, as if to collect the sparkling dew as a propitiatory offering to the sylvan deity of the spot. The lofty marble stairs, whose descent terminated the terrace at either end, were secured from intrusion during the nightly promenade of the Archduchesses. The air was loaded with perfumes from the adjacent gardens; the smooth glossy gravel shone like a tessellated Mosaic; and the eye wandered between those choicest forms of ancient idolatry that graced the balustrade, towards the tangled wilderness of blossoming shrubs in the dis-

tance beneath. All was gracious, and courtly, and noble; seeking no paltry competition with unrivalled nature, but displaying a splendid example of the achievements of human art.

"This was the favourite haunt of our childhood," said Christina, one evening, when the Infanta appeared unusually dejected. "My mother and the Emperor were always summoned hither by the governess of the Imperial children, to witness our first locomotive attempts; and soon that happy interest will be renewed by a younger generation. Caroline's imps are already exerting their little limbs at Caserta; and though I am myself denied the joy of a surviving child, yet next summer, dear Isabella, I shall delight to see you guiding the footsteps of your little Theresa over this level ground."

"And that, believe me, you will never see. I repeat to you, Christina, that these happy evenings, these lonely walks, are my last. The summer sun seems brilliant to you,—to the Empress,—to the whole court; but judge how fair its beams must appear in my eyes, which are so soon to close upon its brightness. Look upon this enchanted scene, Christina,—mark how it unites the highest trophies of mortal and immortal creation,—breathe its sweet air, my dear sister, inhale its perfumes into the very depths of your heart,—feast your eyes upon the variety and softened union of its countless hues,—and then contrast them, as I do, with the darkness and the loathsomeness of the grave which awaits me."

"Hush! Isabella, hush!" said the Princess of Saxe-Teschen, shocked by her allusion. "To reject the abundant gifts of Heaven is ungrateful,—to court such wayward despondency, is selfish and perverse."

"Perverse, if you will,—but not selfish," replied Isabella. "Oh! did I study my own enjoyment, my own inclinations, think you I would not tear this rooted curse from my bosom, abandon my troubled heart to the sweet affections which court its adoption, and live, and love, and smile as you do, Christina? For myself, I tell you that the gloomy clouds of November will hover over my pall; and as to my child——"

"Nay!" interrupted the Archduchess, affecting to ridicule her predictions, "if you must needs die yourself, do not carry the mortality through the family."

"*Vous voulez que je vous laisse mon jeune? Ah! ma foi,—non! vous ne la garderez tout au plus que six ou sept ans.*"

"I trust, then, dearest sister, that you will accede to my mother's desire, and permit my pencil to record the existence of a being whom you announce as so evanescent. When will you allow Theresa to sit to me for the promised portrait, — when will you commit your precious self into my hands? November is approaching!" added Christina, with a significant smile.

The Archduchess Joseph withdrew her hands, and clasped them vehemently upon her bosom, as a deep shudder pervaded her whole frame. "You say true; — my time is indeed short!" She walked on a few paces alone, then suddenly returning, "Sister!" said she, "you are right. These portraits, if indeed you wish to record among you the brief existence of beings who have been lent you for your sorrow, must be speedily completed. You are about to depart for Presburg: you have sought my company, — accept it now; I will be the companion of your journey. It will prove a diversion to the Archduke, who is oppressed by the constant sight of my sorrow."

"I doubt, however, my brother's inclination to visit Hungary. Let us content ourselves with our own society; we will leave him to add his chamber and his whim to the *Château des Caprices*; or, during your absence, he may visit Baden, — the waters and the varying society of the baths will be a surer antidote to *ennui* than my poor castle of Presburg."

Christina was not mistaken in her conjectures. The Archduke, while he warmly applauded the project of Isabella, was eager to escape himself from a sojourn in Hungary. He secretly detested the character of the people; and might probably already meditate those plans of reform which still render him the *bête d'aversion* of the Magyari. He had profited by his election as King of the Romans, to resign the government of Hungary into the hands of Prince Albert of Saxe Teschen, the husband of Maria Christina; and although the nation had testified its loyal attachment to the children of its queen, by the erection of a noble palace at Buda, as a residence for the Palatine, yet the Archduke was at little pains to conceal his contempt for their barbarian ignorance and vain-glorious pride. He considered the enslaved condition of the peasantry with the deepest commiseration; and regarded with jealousy the unyielding supremacy of the Magnats, without reflecting how far their rights might antedate the rule of his ancestors. He for-

got, or wished not to remember, that Maria Theresa herself had, in her early days of adversity, not only confirmed their ancient constitution by accepting the coronation oath of Andreas II., but in gratitude for their faithful adherence to her blighted fortunes, had extended their dangerous privileges, and created a new nobility to strengthen their might. He resolved that his first exercise of the Imperial power should be to level the rank growth of aristocratic enactments, which subdued the energies of the land, and impoverished its resources. Europe had not then learned, by a terrible example, the difficulty of separating from the sound members those decayed branches and supernumerary trunks, which a prudent foresight would devote to the axe of the woodman.

Joseph was indeed the arbitrary apostle of liberty, the despot of reform, the tyrant of the liberals. He decreed that a nation should be set free, which fondly hugged its chains. Without pausing to inquire, like our own Elizabeth touching the petitioning Evangelists, — "whether those prisoners *wished* to be released," he determined to impose freedom on his subjects at the point of the bayonet. He sent a mighty army to perish in the marshes of Croatia; and restrained, with a fearless hand, the privileges of the discontented nobility. The condition of Hungary, at that eventful period, has been compared with that of England during the struggles between John and his barons; but the British king was not the champion of an oppressed peasantry; and the besotted people of Hungary, ungrateful for the exertions of the Emperor in their behalf, resembled nothing but Sganarelle's wife, who insists upon being beaten, and resents the protecting interposition of a stranger.

Had Joseph the Second survived to direct and support the measures he had planned, all might have gone well. But when death terminated his active operations, Hungary was upon the eve of insurrection; and Leopold was compelled, by an exhausted treasury and a rebellious people, to revoke all the unpopular edicts of his predecessor. Ere his brother was cold in the grave, at one fell swoop the labours of his life were demolished.

The political designs of the Archduke are said to have dated from his earliest years of manhood; and from the period of his marriage he avoided all communication with the Hungarians, save those who were neutralized by residence at the Austrian court. In vain the Infanta besought him to accompany her

in this her first visit to Presburg. "Do not," he replied,—"do not, I implore you, require me to visit Hungary. The sight of her lovely face, deformed and degraded as its features are by the mastery of evil passions, is revolting to my feelings. No! I cannot visit the castle of Presburg!"

Was the repugnance of the Archduke urged by the remembrance that his own helpless infancy had been harboured from his mother's faithless subjects in that very castle, by those very Magnats who now moved his disgust? Did he apprehend that the stones of that celebrated hall,* in which the young and lovely Theresa had committed her destitute babe to the "ancient fidelity of the famous Hungarian States," would prate of his ingratitude? Did he fear that the echoing clash of those loyal sabres, which had leaped from their scabbards to attest the unanimous cry, "Our lives and our blood for your Majesty!" would enervate his firm resolve to unsheath against them the weapon of an enemy, and to suborn the land by an inundation of "*pellegrine spade*?"

The purposed visit of the Archduchess was deferred by several unforeseen occurrences: by the indisposition of the young Theresa, and by a series of *fêtes* given by the Emperor for the diversion of his favourite, the Princess Auersperg. Early, however, in the month of October, Isabella, travelling as the Gräfinn Leutsnau, and attended only by the Princess Lichtenstein and the household of the young Archduchess, arrived at Presburg, where she was welcomed with friendly affection by Maria Christina and Prince Albert, the Governess and Palatine of Hungary.

CHAPTER IV.

And must I weep my youth away
In these forebodings? must I feel
Death's icy footsteps day by day
Upon my shuddering bosom steal?—VANE.

THE banks and fringed uplands which surround Presburg were already bright with a thousand golden hues, and the vineyards, whence the fruit had been recently stript for the winepress, were tinged with the earliest hectic of autumnal decay. The rivers began to roll with a more impetuous current, the clear sparkling air sharpened the outlines of

the distant hills, and the mighty plain of the Danube, between Vienna and Presburg, was alternately scorched by a sultry noontide, and chilled by the early frosts of a darker season.

The castle, which now presents a mass of ruins whose stately outline alone recalls its pristine glory, was then a splendid palace, well ordered, and gracefully decorated. Its local advantages are perhaps unrivalled; our own Richmond offers but a feeble miniature of the union of woods and waters among which the citadel of Presburg uplifts its crest. The Danube with its island groves, the vast plains interspersed with princely *châteaux*, "bosomed high 'mid tufted trees," the vineyards that clothe with their rich promise the adjoining slopes, the city with its towers seeming to rise gradually from the waters below, and to offer homage at every step, the intermingled gardens and rocks of the foreground, and the maize fields, and misty hills melting in the vast horizon, form a noble and varying landscape. The reflexion of the illuminated atmosphere of Vienna, which, at a distance of forty miles, is discernible at night from the summit of the hill, bears witness to its proud elevation; but it was during the sunny noon that Isabella leaned against an upper window of the tower, to contemplate the rich beauties of the surrounding scenery; and it was with difficulty that Maria Christina tempted her from her post, and persuaded her to sacrifice a passing hour to the completion of that portrait which still survives to perpetuate their friendship.

The Archduchess found her sister listless and languid; and, anxious for her own credit as an artist, she attempted to animate her pensive countenance by many interesting details touching the castle and its former inmates. At length she spoke of the Archduke's unhappy infancy, of his refuge within its walls, and of the loyalty of the hearts by which they were guarded; and, more than all, she described with powerful interest the celebrated appeal of the young queen, to which I have recently alluded. The lapse of three-and-twenty years had not sufficed to tarnish the romantic brilliancy of the event. History, that gravest and most authoritative of liars, had not laid a benumbing touch upon its *vivâ voce* animation; nor had party perverted its character or aspersed its motives.

"She came hither," said the Archduchess, "harassed by faction, driven from her hereditary dominions, deserted by her allies; a young mother, about to give birth to a second

* This hall is now in ruins. It forms part of the Seminarium, which was accidentally burnt during Napoleon's siege of Presburg. Several modern travellers have enthusiastically apostrophized the present chamber of the Diet, believing it to be the scene of Maria Theresa's celebrated harangue.

heir to her misfortunes, yet without a hope of retaining one city of her empire to shelter its helplessness. She was unsupported and timid; but it was the timidity of youth and not of mind; for although the Empress was then but of your own age, dear Isabella, and lovely and gentle as you are, yet was she strong in mental energy, and in dauntless reliance upon Heaven: even in her extremity of adversity she retained her self-command, and through that her command over the minds of others. Nay! so prevailing was the interest created by her youth, and beauty, and moral courage, that a land of heretics, even distant England, was moved to lavish its treasures in support of her cause.*

"But what avails our compassion?" exclaimed Isabella, hastily dispersing the tears that were gathering in her eyes. "Look upon the after-position of her destinies; look upon the fame Maria Theresa has acquired among the nations of Europe; look upon the name she will leave to after ages!"

"On that it were premature to decide, since we are taught to judge of man's fortunes by his *end*. And 'tis an appalling thing, even to the best of sovereigns, that said judgment of posterity; 'tis an impartial tribunal, which levels monarchs with the rest of mankind; a consideration, Isabella, that more than reconciles me to the obscurity of my own lot in life. *Comparative* obscurity, perhaps I ought to say; yet surely a daughter of Austria may, without vanity, hail it as a lucky chance that her head is doomed to wear no royal crown."

"Your destiny has been one of rare felicity for one of our degree," replied the Archduchess Joseph, mournfully. "You have been permitted to give your hand to the lover of your choice, without abandoning your native home."

"And *you*, Isabella?" demanded Christina, smiling at the inference.

"And *I* am married with one whom I could wish to have been the object of my preference; but believe me when I declare to you, in perfect honesty, that my heart has never beat with a quickened throbb through the influence of mortal man."

"Nevertheless," observed Christina with some hesitation, "the world has not failed to attribute your depression of spirit to the disappointment of an early attachment."

* The English ladies, instigated by the Duchess of Marlborough, subscribed £100,000, for the aid of the Queen of Hungary. The gift was, however, gratefully declined.

"Indeed!" exclaimed Isabella, starting from her seat; "it had not occurred to me that my conduct or character could bear such an interpretation. I had thought to live in those records of history which you seem to hold in such holy horror, but as a sullen princess, feeble in mind and health, and unworthy of the greatness that had been thrust upon her."

"Undeceive yourself, then, my dear sister. You are, and will be, represented as the victim of an unhappy passion, unless you retain me, or some other of the handmaidens of Rumour, as your advocate."

"So much has been said and sung of the power of love," observed Isabella, musingly, "that we have at length brought ourselves to believe it the master passion of human nature. It is assuredly the most graceful and picturesque, the most acceptable to the arts; but neither the most powerful nor universal. Hatred and revenge, hope and fear, ambition and avarice, had they been equally hymned, or equally analyzed, would afford us, perhaps, as many examples of the mightiness of their influence."

"No, no! I will not have you in the right, dear Isabella. Jove and his thunderbolts are approved to have quailed beneath the simple shafts of love; and I, for one, hold the true faith that hearts may be broken by his influence, and brows borne about amid the better joys of life, as desponding, as wretched as your own."

"Your judgment is so thoroughly a woman's that I am half tempted to forgive its treason."

"But will you not, my 'sullen princess of history,' enable me to judge you with more exactness? I have never intruded upon your confidence; but if earnest affection, and a sincere interest in your welfare, entitle me to claim a concession which you appear to have accorded to none beside, then, Isabella, am I indeed worthy to become better acquainted with the true nature of your feelings?"

"My kindest sister!" said the Archduchess, turning towards her with deep tenderness, "it has been my misfortune that my mind has been suffered to brood unmo- lested over its mysterious treasury of sorrow. I have sometimes even thought that its mood of misery, like the troubled dream of the sleeper, might have been dispelled had I attempted to speak,—had I presumed to give vent to its secret wretchedness."

Maria Christina affected to ply her pencil

with busy activity, that she might not intimidate by observation the unfolding confidence of her companion.

"You will not be curious?" resumed Isabella; "you will not affect a further interest in my destiny, my fatal destiny?"

"Dearest sister! I only fear to surprise your confidence; to tempt you to avowals which you may repent at some calmer moment."

"Nay! look not so alarmed; I have nothing startling to unfold; nothing personal at least; no guilt, no error. I can only tell you that I am unhappy, and *that* you have known from our first hour of friendship."

"Rest yourself, then, on yonder couch, where the morning air plays so refreshingly. Rest yourself, dear Isabella; I will retouch some other painting. Tell me only that which it will be a relief to yourself to disclose; every detail of your life must interest my heart; but remember that I am your sister, not your confessor, and wish to extract nothing that will give you pain."

Isabella extended her weary frame beneath the open casement of the lofty tower. She bent her eyes alternately upon her affectionate auditors and upon the wide expanse of landscape unfolded beneath, and thus commenced her narration:—

"I have little occasion to begin my story, after the ordinary fashion of tale-tellers, by an enumeration of the *gestes et faits* of my ancestors. You know them for Bourbons, my dear Christina, both on my father's and my mother's side; and that name may supersede a host of details. But although springing from a common source, the blood that flowed in their veins had acquired a strange diversity of character in its separation from the parent spring: that of my father, during a single generation of Spanish royalty, had engendered gloom and superstition, coldness, and a taste for monastic seclusion; while my mother, as an *enfant de France*, born and nurtured at Versailles, had retained a character of liveliness and elegance, and addiction to pleasure. To this union of contrasts I am perhaps indebted for the mingled levity and melancholy of my unsettled disposition; to its breach of the canons of the church (since the consanguinity of my parents required a papal dispensation) I perhaps owe the

evil destiny which has hovered over my devoted head.

"My grandfather, Louis XV., in bestowing his eldest and best loved daughter upon Don Philip, appeared even more depressed by the anticipation of her future life of seclusion, and the dreary monotony which awaited her at Parma, than by the loss of her affectionate devotion and animated society. He even conditioned with his uncle, the King of Spain, who had negotiated the alliance, that Elizabeth should be permitted to retain about her person, two of the ladies who were appointed to accompany her from the court of France; in order that she might not be at once denied the indulgence of the language and habits of her native country. The Comtesse de Loménie, accordingly, her *dame du palais*, and Mademoiselle de Vauquémont, the companion of her childhood, became the consolations of her loneliness in a foreign land; and, by affording her the resource of constant companionship, relieved her from the necessity of conciliating the various members of her husband's court, or seeking the regard of her new subjects. Careless of Italy, indifferent to the claims of Parma, she continued to feel, and act, and speak as a Frenchwoman. My poor mother,—I can only recollect her as a fond caressing mother, for I was too young to need a friend or an instructress,—passed her whole time in labouring to introduce the customs and amusements of Versailles into the noble circles of Parma, who cared but little for their adoption. Pleasures, like plants, have their appointed soil and climate; nor will they flourish in an alien country. Her life was therefore a lost one, as far as regarded its influence on her subjects or the world; nor was it, I fear, contented or happy in itself.

"She was destined to an early death; and her parting prayers obtained the assurances of Madame de Loménie that she would never abandon her children. 'You have been my unfaithful friend,' whispered my dying mother, 'my last link to a beloved, an forgotten country. If you desert my Isabella, *who* will form her to be worthy of the name of Bourbon? If you break the chain which connects my sweet babes with my own home and kindred, how can I look for their happiness and well-being at the hands of Italians? Stay with them, Hermance! for my memory's sake renounce not this gloomy Parma!'

"Madame de Loménie found no courage

to reject the entreaties of her dying mistress; and as my mother's indiscreet appeal was carefully reported by the treacherous Vauquémont, now by marriage with a nobleman of Parma, Contessa Mignardi, it served to dry the tears of her husband's courtiers for her loss, and to indispose them in her daughter's favour; and thus you see my life began under an inauspicious influence. But however my popularity in the court or city might be affected by the Duchess's betrayal of national partiality, it secured my warm acceptance with Madame de Loménie. She truly loved my mother, and looked upon myself in the light of a sacred deposit; her tenderness indeed knew no bounds, and if indulgence and flattery be so truly pernicious as the wiser half of the world has decreed, I was soon possessed of a full right and title to become a prodigy of wickedness.

"The only countercheck to all this lavish favour, was of a character perhaps even more mischievous to the formation of my disposition, and to the ordering of my future prospects. Countess Mignardi, who shared with the indulgent Hermance the superintendence of my education, was a person in whom an instinctive malevolence of thought and speech effaced the charm of many valuable qualities, and talents of no mean character. She was pleasing in her address, and *piquante* in her general discourse; and but for the undisguised malice which tinged her lips with bitterness, many would have sought and loved her. But she had been thwarted and disappointed in her hopes of forming a higher alliance in Italy; and although fairly matched with one of her own degree, yet the overthrow of her lofty ambition had changed the current of her blood to gall. Envious and wittily malicious, she seemed to reverse the instinct of the bee, and to gather only poison from the fairest flowers; but she had its venomous sting pointed indiscriminately at enemy or friend. Her compliments were a covert insult; her endearments masked a blow; like the concealed asp of Cleopatra, her forked venom darted from among tempting fruit; and if she stabbed with a smiling face and jewelled bodkin, the wound festered not the less! Her own husband, her own kindred, escaped not her insidious observations; my poor mother, the companion and friend of her childhood, she could not persuade herself to spare; my father, whom she had vainly attempted, if the court whispers were worthy of credit, to inveigle into a *liaison*, was now

the object of her ironical deference; Madame de Loménie, who was good and simple, and incapable of self-defence, she boldly and insolently satirized; and even myself, my childish and motherless self, she never approached without a bitter compliment or flattering sarcasm.

"In noting the uncertain progress of my education, the Contessa Mignardi failed not to bewail in my hearing, with an affected *navetété* of frankness, that its brilliant results should be wasted upon a court so obscure as that of Parma; and in betraying her discoveries of my ignorance, and petulance, and feebleness of mind to my father's court, she ceased not to lament that a princess so poorly gifted, and so miserably advised, should be destined to preside over its future destinies. Thus instigated, those of the Grand-duke's courtiers who approached the nearest to his confidence, presumed to insinuate into the royal ear the incompetency of Madame de Loménie to preside over my education. But Don Philip, although reserved, possessed a secret fund of deep sensibility; he had been wounded, indeed, by my mother's alienation from his country and its usages, but he revered her memory with the affection due to an unblemished wife; and in reply to the complaints whose accusation bore against my kind governess, 'Elizabeth loved her,' he would reply, as though he considered all argument and all refutation included in the spell of those few words. If it were a weakness on his part, it was a respectable and touching weakness; and even to this day, I never think upon my father, or feel inclined to resent his arbitrary disposal of my fate, but that the tone in which he used to pronounce '*My Elizabeth loved her!*' comes back to my heart, and pleads for a renewal of my tenderness and duty.

"Countess Mignardi's malice served therefore only to isolate my existence, to aggravate the disinclination of the ladies of the court for seeking my society, and joining the circle of Madame de Loménie; while she in her turn, wounded and irritated by their neglect, taught herself to detest and despise Italy. From my childhood I was instructed to adopt the language and customs of Versailles, which have ever been more familiar to me than those of my native land; my indignant preceptress breathed into my young ears no maxim so peremptory, no principle so assured, as that France was the first of European countries; a French princess the happiest and most distinguished

of mortals; and a French queen the unapproachable superlative of her sex.

“Don Philip was either too devoted to the memory of my mother, or too acutely sensible of the hollow nature of state alliances, to be tempted into a second marriage. In my dear brother he beheld the promise of a noble successor to his throne; in myself, had he been so minded, the assurance of tendance and tenderness in his declining years. He divided his time between the cares of his duchy and the pleasures of the chase; tormented one half the day by the importunities of his ministers, and rendering himself in his turn importunate to his courtiers during the remaining half. Can one in truth imagine a greater vexation to a studious or indolent man, than to be obliged season after season, day after day, to gallop off to the forest; harassed, and fatigued, and impoverished, and disgusted by a sport in which he is necessitated to affect an exclusive interest? But every prince is blessed with some strong taste or tendency, in order to exercise the loyal patience of his court! Thus engrossed by his passion for the chase, my father, although affectionately interested in the welfare of his children, had little opportunity to win upon their confidence. I have sometimes fancied that he found in the hurry of the hunting-field his sole retreat from the irksome punctilio of Spanish etiquette, maintained at his court; even in his interviews with myself, its utmost rigour remained unrelaxed. He seemed to consider, and how universal is the error? that the affections of kin and consanguinity are purely instinctive, and require no cultivation; while to interest the hearts of strangers and retain our ordinary friendships, we must spare nor labour nor effort!

“It was not however with me alone that Don Philip was cold and reserved; he lent himself as sparingly to the pleasures of his court, as to the indulgence of his domestic affections. He was a disappointed, solitary-hearted man; but he tried to forget his cares in occupation,—he never strove to efface them by new diversions or new affections. It was to Madame de Loménie, therefore, that I wholly dedicated the confidence and the warmth of my young heart, and urged by misjudging nationality, she sought to divide it solely with her own and my mother’s native land. I had attained my seventeenth year, and still I was a mere child. The ill-acceptance of my *Dama soprantendente* at the court of Parma induced her to cling to

the solitude of our narrow circle, and to exert her influence with my father to detain me yet awhile from the pleasures of the world. My health was feeble, and she represented my disposition as inclining me to strict seclusion. The habits of the Escorial hung about Don Philip; he hailed my love of retirement as the first of feminine virtues: and I was permitted to perfect my education, undisturbed by any diversion more attractive than an annual gala, or *baisemains* of state, when a crowd of withered half-centuries, in an armour of brocade and whalebone,—*point d’Espagne* and *velours épinglé*, made their silent obeisance,—and retired! The earnest hope of my heart was to escape from a closer intimacy with their appalling formality by retiring to a cloister!”

“Dearest Isabella!” interrupted the Archduchess, “could such an alternative present itself as a *hope*! Can you, so gifted in mind, so deeply impressed with the importance of moral duties, can you regard a monastic life as aught save an unnatural sacrifice? unavailing to man, unpleasing to God!”

“I was a child, dear sister! a sad and a secluded child; and as I had been instructed that nature was a desert save on the banks of the Seine, and society a blank, save in the *salons* of Versailles, I assured myself that some peaceful abbey—of which the simple sisterhood would be at once my friends and my submissive children—would be a heavenly refuge against the illiterate inanity of the *coteries* of Parma. I loved only my flowers, my birds, my books, my prayers, my God! and I felt that those might be equally cherished, and these far better served in a retreat excluding the importunities of the vain and the interested. A considerable change was however soon effected in my views; but it was preceded by a metamorphosis still more remarkable in the person of the Contessa Mignardi.

“The Conte her husband’s estate was known to be one of less than moderate extent; and it had always been surmised that her bitterness of heart and sarcastic levity of tongue arose, in a great measure, from the mortification of straitened means. But on a sudden the Contessa launched into habits of easy opulence, affected a cheerful, gracious, and gentle bearing; and we knew not whether most to admire her elegant splendours, or the amiable grace that tempered her smiles. Instead of avoiding, as formerly, the cares of her appointment, or

shrinking from the society of my good Hermance, she became assiduous in her court to myself, and cordially friendly in her demeanour towards Madame de Loménie; who, in her simple singleness of heart, fell readily into the snare. She began already to accuse herself of having noted impatiently the defects of the Contessina; already repented her injustice; and received all her *agaeries*, and became the dupe of all her *manigances*, with the easy credulity anticipated by her crafty rival. For myself, although totally ignorant of the end and aim of her manœuvres, I was convinced that so much address was not superfluously exerted; nor could I put my trust in her sudden sympathy with the *maladie de pays* of my good Madame de Loménie, since she had chosen, by a voluntary marriage, to settle herself in Italy.

“One of the most unaccountable traits of Countess Mignardi’s conversion was a detestation which, about this time, she began to exhibit towards every thing and every person connected with Germany. What was Austria to her, that she should unprovokedly indulge in the bitterest sarcasms upon its laws, its climate, customs, inhabitants? I have told you that she was original and piquant in her turn of conversation; and never did she exert her mischievous talent more divertingly than in sketching, — forgive me, Christina, but you have required the whole truth, — in sketching the foibles of the Empress, the astucious policy of her cabinet, her weak superstition of mind, her overweening attachment to a husband more than indifferent to her affections, and a thousand other flippant impertinences. The Emperor himself she represented as an illiterate, half-witted, indigent Prince of Lorraine, who had disposed of a showy person to the highest bidder; ‘and what,’ she would add, ‘can we expect of the heir of such an union? Even that which we find! a flaxen-headed German boor, whose excesses include *bier*, *bratwurst*, and *sauerkraut*; and whose exploits —’ but why should I relate her coarse irony? It availed only to move my girlish laughter, and to prompt Hermance to inquire the motive of her virulence against the Austrian court. But she silenced us both, and diverted our attention to other objects by introducing some topic of interest connected with Paris; thus confirming my former prejudice, and introducing a dangerous antipathy into my mind.

“Judge, therefore, dearest Christina, with

what horror, with what dismay I listened to a rumour, communicated to me by the weeping Hermance, that my hand was about to be sought in marriage for the Archduke Joseph! Oh! Christina, dare I but relate to you one half the revolting accusations of degrading vices, and ignorant superstitions I had heard levelled at the Austrian character, you would not wonder at the agony of my feelings on the bare supposition of such a sacrifice! Hermance mingled her tears with mine; but Countess Mignardi stimulated me to bold exertions in my own defence. I rushed to my father’s feet, implored his mercy, besought him to let me live and die with him at Parma; I assured him of my obedience on all other subjects, but declared my rooted opinion that a cloister or a grave were preferable to a German throne.

“Don Philip listened to me with patience, with indulgence. He was not eloquent in discourse, but he had a plain distinctness of speech that touched immediately upon his purpose. ‘My daughter!’ he replied, to my vehement expostulations, ‘a long experience of the world has supplied my natural deficiencies of mind. It has taught me, Isabella, that princes least of all mankind are born for their own rule and governance. They are put in authority over a certain portion of human creatures, but that they may be peremptorily swayed by another. They belong to the world, to their ancestry, their posterity, to any one but themselves; and the trinkets of royalty, sceptres and crowns, are lent them but to withdraw their attention from their gilded slavery. Let the son of a kingly line display a martial spirit, should his father’s ministers decree that he will serve them more effectually in a cardinal’s hat than in a helmet, he must submit! Another is deeply imbued with the peaceful resignation of Christian piety; he is sent to control navies, or to subjugate unoffending nations with fire and sword! Myself, who loved Spain, nay! who adored my native country, have been affiliated in Parma, and devoted to the service of a nation that neither claims nor rewards my interest. But I was born of the blood-royal, and submission is consequently my first duty.’

“I started at the sound of a doctrine so new to my apprehension. ‘And shall you, my Isabella,’ continued my father, ‘be alone exempted from the common lot, which proves that even monarchs are included in the mighty plan of justice and compensation?’

Shall you alone reject the rights of the world to your obedience? Alas! my petty sceptre will not suffice to maintain the independence of the child I love! Even the Archduke, whom you absurdly reprobate, — heir to the first of European empires, — cannot dispose of his destinies. He is a youth of studious and retiring habits, and so little inclined to endure domestic constraint, that his ardent and sole desire is to visit foreign countries, and to acquaint himself with the remoter districts of his own. Yet the wings of the young eaglet are clipped; and to rescue the empire of his mother from the dangers of another disputed succession, he is required to marry in his boyhood, his tastes unconsulted and uncared for, in order to extend the mighty line of Hapsburg.’

“I wept again, and with increased bitterness. ‘You tremble, Isabella?’ said Don Philip. ‘Dry your tears, child; you have not been honoured by the selection of the great Maria Theresa; but I forewarn you that should so desirable an event occur, your consent and my own must hail it with grateful acceptance.’

“This was a terrible announcement! but Don Philip deigned to address me with so much moderation, and with such persuasive earnestness, that I attempted to conceal my tears, and resolved to fix my hopes upon my numerous chances of escape from so honourable an election. One measure alone marked, on the part of my father, his disapprobation of the sentiments that had been instilled into my mind. He dismissed Countess Mignardi from my service, and exiled her from his court. Don Philip was probably acquainted with all that appeared to pass unobserved in our little circle; for his wrath expended itself in this single and singly-earned expulsion. Even had Hermance incurred his displeasure, I doubt not that the memory of his Elizabeth would have availed to secure her from its expression.

“Soon after our first confidential interview, I was hastily removed to the summer palace at Colorno. The small-pox broke out in the city, and rendered it an insecure residence; my father had already past the ordeal, and as my retinue, for better security from contagion, was considerably reduced, Madame de Loménie and myself anticipated a delicious *tête-à-tête* of many months’ duration. It was spring; and even at a less inviting season, I loved Colorno. I rejoiced in the deep seclusion of its scenery, in the

deserted air of its untenanted galleries; I could read there, and sketch, and sing, and weave my garlands in unmolested industry, and these were my favourite diversions; I could uplift my lonely thoughts in prayer, or indulge with childish caresses my tenderness for my second mother, and this was my only happiness! In the graver hours of our communing, I acknowledged to Madame de Loménie how earnestly my devout intercessions implored some mental foreshowing of my future destiny; how earnestly I prayed that my suspense might be terminated by some sign of Divine protection. Hermance warmly reproved my presumption; alas! how little did she imagine that before I quitted Colorno my prayers would be terribly and fatally fulfilled; that I should be permitted to peruse the book of fate only that my eyes might be blighted, and my heart withered by its awful characters!”

Isabella paused for a moment; nor was she permitted to resume her narration. Princess Lichtenstein, who had passed the morning in an excursion to Kittsee, the castle of her kinsman Prince Esterhazy, now entered the chamber, to announce the return of Prince Albert from the chase. The *causerie* of the friends was thus interrupted, and in the evening the resident nobility were admitted to the circle of the Archduchess, that they might offer their homage to their future queen. There was at present no possibility of gratifying the anxious interest of Maria Christina.

CHAPTER V.

THE impression made upon the Archduchess Joseph by the reception chamber of the castle of Presburg, caused a material change in the judgment she had formed at Vienna of the Hungarian *noblesse*. At the court of Austria she had distinguished them from the nobles of the empire, only as exhibiting richer evidences of pride and profusion; but in the capital of their native country, they boldly displayed their national characteristics.

There beats not in Europe so haughty a heart as that of an Hungarian! He is proud both of his nation and himself, and let him condescend as he will, he cannot disguise the supremacy which they maintain in his estimation; but if *hauteur* could sit becomingly on any human brow, it would be on that of a majestic, half-civilized, half-

martial Magyar. This vain-gloriousness of character, which betrays itself in richness of costume and a pertinacious retention of ancient customs, imparts to the address of the Magnats an air of defiance, — to their ladies, a sort of selfish dignity; but while in both it serves to repress the cordiality of strangers, it also tends to pique their curiosity, and excite their interest. They perceive that the Magnats differ wholly from the inhabitants of England, France, and Germany; where the higher classes may be considered as united into one common *caste*.

But during the reign of Maria Theresa, the Hungarian nobility exhibited a far more distinct and peculiar class than in the present day. They had not resigned their hopes of forming once more an independent monarchy; they cherished a strong sense of their claims upon the gratitude of their queen, and they studiously reserved themselves from all connexion with the less loyal houses of Germany. The noblest and most powerful among them were assiduous in their court to Maria Christina, as being the favourite daughter of their favourite sovereign; but their homage was vouchsafed as a concession; they bent the knee with an air of affability, and appeared to disdain even their own condescension.

The ladies of the court scrupulously retained the gala-dress of the reign of Matthias Corvinus; and their jewels, which, although heavy and ill-set, were singularly splendid, were in a great measure drawn from their national resources. They were secretly reproached, it is true, by their rivals of the Archduchess's *suite*, with want of ease and *enjouement*, and an admixture of French graces and refinements; but, in the eyes of Isabella, their originality and Gothic magnificence was far more attractive than any imitation of a happier model.

"Are they not an exact restoration of the obsolete *belles* of the middle ages?" she whispered to Princess Lichtenstein. "I could fancy myself at the court of the Medici, or Can Grande! They are more regal than royalty itself; *fieramente grandiose*, — *nobles absolument à l'outrance*; and despise us from the very summit of their self-sufficiency."

"Believe me," observed Christina, "they have many virtues; very many sterling qualities. They consecrate their time wholly to the discharge of their domestic duties; and if our fashions and accomplishments have not yet crossed their frontier, our follies and vices are equally excluded. Forgetful of, or superior to, their splendours of to-night,

to-morrow they will be found sitting, like the wives of the patriarchs, among their handmaidens, knitting, and spinning, and sewing. They speak of the Hungarian nobles who spend their revenues in Vienna with the most lofty contempt; but they are not sociable among themselves, though profusely hospitable; and thus the *tracasseries* of female gossiping are unknown in Presburg. They are intimately acquainted with the standard of their own dignities, and that of their neighbours; and being as scrupulous in yielding as in claiming place and precedence, I have no *frondeuses*, no jostling in my little court."

"Yonder group of *précieuses* in velvet robes, stiff with embroidery, looks as if you had robbed the cathedral of some of its monumental effigies."

"If they are indeed *tant soit peu précieuses*, they have some little right to the exercise of so deadly a sin. Most of the Hungarian ladies are tolerable classical scholars, and all are capable of conversing in Latin, as well as in several modern languages. They avoid but one, and that, alas! is German, — detested among them as a badge of subjection."

"I wish they loved us better," observed Isabella, turning away; "or I am much mistaken, those fierce glances and warlike mustachios will be heard of at Vienna within these twenty years."

The exquisite military band entertained by the Prince of Saxe Teschen, now struck up; and the whole assemblage joining in a *polonoise*, the only dance truly becoming the dignity of a court, Isabella escaped from the heated crowd; and finding her way unobserved to the chamber of her little daughter, she dismissed her attendants, and stationed herself by the couch of the young Archduchess. Drawing aside the silken curtains, and bending over that holiest of nests, her infant's pillow, she marked by the moonlight the calm soft cheek of the slumbering babe, and contrasted it with the flushed brows and glare and tumult she had quitted.

"And shall I presume to grieve," murmured Isabella, "that the will of Heaven should fix thee thus, — thus in thine innocence, — thus for ever! 'Tis said that the loved of God die young; and thou, mine own Theresa, will be among the early dead! Thou art destined to be a blighted bud, my lovely child! No sin shall wither thy blameless heart! Pure as the Almighty lent thee to our love, he will claim thee again with a mighty hand, — a mighty, but a *merciful*

hand, which wills not that thy spirit should expand on earth, unguarded by thy mother's tenderness. And why, oh! why should I dread the grave in which thou wilt so soon slumber by my side? Even as I now lay down my weary head upon thy pillow, even so sweetly, so composedly, shall our last rest unite us in the tomb!"

A gentle step interrupted Isabella's gloomy endearments,—the Archduchess Christina lightly approached the couch. "They have departed," said she, in a subdued voice. "My guests have left the castle; and I have sought and found you, Isabella, with a clue by which all mothers *should* be found when sought."

"How fair she is," whispered the Archduchess Joseph, pointing to her nestling. "She is more than half an Austrian, Christina; and I shall expect her countrywomen to cherish her very tenderly for me when I am gone to rest."

"Isabella!" exclaimed her sister, half reproachfully, but encircling her with a caressing arm, "I will not allow you to grieve me with these forebodings. It is sinful to forestal the judgments of God."

"Had I been permitted to terminate my recital this morning, you would have spared your reproof. But it is yet early, dearest sister! we shall not be interrupted here; and if you permit me to conclude my melancholy relation, my heart will be in some measure relieved from its oppression."

Christina, warmly desirous that the effort should be past, followed the Archduchess Joseph into an open cabinet adjoining the alcove of the little Theresa, where, reclining in the glimmering moonlight, Isabella resumed her explanation.

"Methinks I had already taken you with me unto Colorno,—sister, Colorno is a lovely spot!—but I have often described it in your hearing,—its ornate architecture,—its stately gardens,—its glassy river. Yes, it is a lovely spot!"

"But fair as it is and was, and deeply as Madame de Loménie had always appeared to prize its beauties, my *gouvernante* now, for the first time in my life, indulged in prolonged absences from my side. Her health, she said, required more exercise than the delicacy of mine would permit me to share; and every day she departed, leaving me happy in the calmness of my solitude, alone—consoling thought!—with Heaven. My Hernance failed not, however, to recommend me

to the redoubled vigilance of my ladies in waiting; and when she returned to my side, the joy of our re-union was so great, that I always forgot to chide her delay. Some expression, some incautious word that fell from her lips, induced me to imagine that she had been engaged in an interview with the disgraced Mignardi. She had now always some intelligence from Paris to communicate. The French court appeared more and more warmly than ever to interest her attention; and upon one occasion she congratulated me that I had no further chance of being buried alive in Vienna, for a marriage, she assured me, was already on the *tapis* between the Archduke and one of my aunts, Madame Adelaide de France. Another time she hinted a hope, that a prince of the Bourbon blood would make his proposals for my hand acceptable to my father; but when I betrayed my anxiety by many an eager question, she saw cause to repent her frankness, and treated the whole as a chimera.

"I have told you that I loved solitude; but I did not like to be debarred the happiness of Madame de Loménie's society; neither would it have formed an obstacle to my solitude, for I loved her as myself. I had no thought hidden from Hernance, and I candidly acknowledged my discontent at her repeated absence. I implored her to permit me to share her rides; but again she peremptorily refused my request. Fortunately a visit from my dear father enabled me to obtain his consent to my desire. The following day, four milk-white mules, with crimson-velvet trappings, arrived for our use,—a gift from Don Philip. Full of the excitement of my childish triumph, I insisted upon accompanying Madame de Loménie that very day. She attempted, indeed, to excuse herself; but I was peremptory, under the sanction of my father's will.

"I shall never forget that first summer ramble through the forest! So seldom had I been thwarted in my inclinations, that to triumph over an obstacle was a rare and intoxicating pleasure. My mule, too, the gentle and beautiful animal prepared by my father for my use, seemed by its animation to share my pleasure, when my happy laugh overpowered the tinkling bells that ornamented its bridle rein. Hernance led the way through a part of the forest I had never visited, and which was, in fact, untraversed by roads. She was still, in memory of her recent discomfiture, grave and *boudeuse*; but as I exultingly joined her, holding on my

wrist the favourite merlin I had taken from my equerry's hand, she gazed upon my joyous radiant face, until its smiles became reflected in her own. Our way led us through an entangled grove of bright-leaved chestnuts, that shut out the sun-light, or admitted it only in quivering patches that here and there trembled on the moss, or threw a golden reflection upon the ancient trunks among which we wound our path.

"Sometimes we crossed a little brawling rivulet, that flew murmuring along, flinging aside the pebbles, as if discontented with the lonely obscurity of its allotted course; sometimes a gravelly ravine, which manifested that, in a stormy season, torrents of greater importance were destined to the same mischance. Here and there, impervious masses of dark ilex confronted our way, and obliged us to diverge into the green allies cut for the use of the royal chase among the woods. At length, in the very depths of the forest, we approached a spot cleared of its larger trees, and only tufted with underwood; at the extremity of which, I discerned an embattled stone wall, surrounded by a moat. I insisted upon a nearer inspection, but Madame de Loménie assured me it would be labour lost. "'Tis but an ancient half-ruined manor, a dismantled *castello*," said she, carelessly.

"'A ruin,' I exclaimed,—'a thing I have never seen save upon canvass! Let us forward, and discover if aught may be discerned through yonder grating.'

"Madame de Loménie assured me that the moat was filled with reptiles and stagnant water, and that the exhalations might be dangerous: but I was not easily terrified,—I had already surmounted one difficulty that day, and I resolved upon a second attempt.

"'Do not persist, my Isabella, you give me pain,' suddenly exclaimed Hermance; and I immediately turned the head of my mule towards home. A word of kindness disarmed my obstinacy: had she called me princess or highness, I should have persevered.

"But judge of my amazement when, as I wandered listlessly, on our return, amid the thickets of bay and arbutus, I distinctly beheld Madame de Loménie, who was loitering at some little distance, take a billet from her bosom and deliver it to one of our equerries. The colour rose to my temples when I perceived him gallop off in the direction of the moated wall. 'Am I trifled with?' whispered my proud heart. 'Yonder is no ruined castle, and, when time and

tide permit, I will yet gratify my curiosity. *Le bon tems viendra!*'

"I soon, however, forgot my passing fancy, and my displeasure against Hermance. The spring-tide breezes, and the sweet odours and sweet sounds incorporated with their freshness, played fitfully around me, and shook the loosened tresses upon my cheek, as I pricked forward to outstrip the sober pace of my *governante*; nor were they lighter or more changeful than my heart. I was gay in the sunshine, pensive in the shade; and the deer (which we surprised at their evening feed, and which at our approach fled wildly over the fern, trampling the tufted beds of our Parma violets, now alive with flowers and fragrance) were scarcely so sportive or so timid as myself.

"The next day, and the next, we renewed our rides; but Hermance took care that they should be directed along the banks of the river, or upon the Casalmaggiore route; and it was the very effort she made to appear forgetful of the forest, which continually recalled it to my mind. I affected, however, an indifference equal to her own; and one day, as we issued from the columned gateway of Colorno, I turned, as if unpremeditatedly, into the forbidden track. 'It is a sultry morning,' said I, carelessly; 'the turf and the chestnut shades will be delicious.' Hermance had no reasonable excuse to suggest; and we accordingly re-entered the tangled woodlands, and once more startled the ring-doves from their secluded nests.

"At length, with leisurely negligence, we approached the memorable spot, when suddenly putting my mule to speed, I paused not until I reached the gateway of the moated house. But although my project succeeded to the utmost, I found in its accomplishment no reward for my wilfulness. The objects around me were little calculated to gratify my curiosity. I gazed, and saw the long dilapidated façade of an extensive mansion, to which the closed windows imparted the same melancholy character we trace upon the countenances of the blind. Tall grass, and taller hemlock, waved throughout the spacious courtyard; but there was a narrow path trodden towards the portal, showing that the desolate abode was not wholly tenanted.

"'M'amie!' I exclaimed to Madame de Loménie, who had now reached my side, while her mule, pawing the ground, and attempting to dislodge the forest flies which penetrated his silken net, seemed as vexed

and indignant as herself; '*M'amie! mon cœur!* you are but too well acquainted with the inhabitants of this wretched dwelling; tell me who was the hero of the billet?' Hermance remained angrily silent. '*Cara, carissima! rispondi o mori!*' said I again, holding up my broided rein with playful menaces. 'Look! there is a *mozzo di stalla* issuing from the orchard gate, who will betray the secret at my merest questioning; speak! or, as I am a Christian princess, I will summon him hither, however disappointed I may feel that neither dwarf nor magic horn guards in his room the enchanted gate.'

"The billet which so moved your Highness's interest," replied Madame de Loménie, haughtily, 'was addressed to a French family resident here, friends of my early youth. I had trusted that an Infanta of Parma was superior to mere trifling girlish curiosity.'

"I was conscious and piqued. 'A French family!' I exclaimed. '*J'ai aujourd'hui trop de bonheur!* I will ask their hospitality in my mother's name.'

"Your Serene Highness cannot surely be serious!"

"Serious as an Ursuline; and see! your friends have discovered your arrival, Hermance, *ma chérissime*, and are come to bid us welcome.'

"The consternation of Madame de Loménie was now *au comble*. We had been indeed discovered from the house; and a gentleman, middle-aged, and of a peculiarly distinguished air, now advanced to the gateway, which was hastily opened by several domestics who followed his approach. I know not whether the movement which caused my entrance into the courtyard proceeded from myself or my *monture*; but I soon found myself pausing at the portal, with the stranger, on his bended knee, offering me the courtliest homage in the courtliest French, with the courtliest adulation I had ever heard or witnessed. Partly to aggravate the confusion and trepidation of my *gouvernante*, and partly to trace the mystery to its source, I graciously consented to alight; expressing a desire to visit the gardens, and repose myself in the shade. Hermance saw me dismount, and, finding remonstrance in vain, was forced to follow my example: obliged to modify her displeasure, she stalked majestically by my side, as the stranger conducted us towards the disordered and untrimmed paths of the gardens.

"Has it ever occurred, Christina, to your painter's eye, that flowers spring nowhere so

richly or so brightly as in some deserted and uncultivated garden? Free commoners of nature, they resist amid our trim parterres, the tyrannous hand which curtails them of their fair proportions; they will not blush at our bidding,—they will not follow at our guidance,—and repay our cares with the murmuring submission of slaves. But when we abandon them to their lawless loveliness, they burst into a perverse luxuriance of bloom, and scatter their prodigal clusters as if in mockery of our art. Yes! Colorno with its formal alleys, and garnished terraces, which but that morning I had esteemed as peerless, grew pale, and poor, and artificial, when compared with the abandoned garden of Castel-Avreline! Its walls of mossy stone seemed to enclose and monopolize the sunshine for its use; but neither the maidenhair pendant from their crevices, nor the glossy houndstongue, whose bright verdure contrasted with their hoary gray, appeared less molested by the hand of culture than the entangled roses of every dye, which, like the beauties of a festal crowd, disputed for pre-eminence among its labyrinths.

"The marble base of the sun-dial had gradually mouldered away, to the destruction of its perpendicular, and the discredit of its records. But what mattered its errors? since the prying scarlet honeysuckle, creeping up its sculptured column, alone approached to investigate its fidelity. The beds of basil and marjoram around, proclaimed that no wandering footstep had invaded their green carpet for years!

"Such was the wilderness of sweets through which I bent my way; enchanted with a scene such as I had neither witnessed nor imagined, but whose careless beauties far outpassed the orderly array still destined to precede the paths of princes. Desirous of giving occasion to Madame de Loménie to explain to her mysterious countryman, as best she might, the origin of my indiscreet intrusion, I flew onwards to a distant terrace, leaving them behind me, panting in the sunshine. It is the remembrance of that very terrace, Christina, which, by the association of contrast, has always so endeared to my heart the stately pride of Laxenburg.

"That of my desolate Italian castle was tessellated with black marble and *rosso antico*; but its balustrade had been of the purest Carrara, ere mellowed by the weather-stains of time. The sculptured gods of Lachsenburg are proud and unyielding, as if

incense were still offered upon their altars ; but of those of Castel-Avrelino, some were hurled from their pedestals,—others were contemptuously mutilated,—and many were obscured by the exuberant growth of the shrubs, still blossoming beside them in their moss-grown vases. The orange-trees of your prosperous palace are shapely and exotic ;—those of my terrace were guarded by long rude thorns of wildness, and had intruded the bloom of their unrestrained branches among the shafts of Diana's quiver, or the chords of Apollo's lyre. But more, far more than all recording the desolateness of the lonely place, was the tall withered stalk of an aloe-flower, that had sprung up amid its rigid palmy leaves, and bloomed and perished undiscovered. After the darkness of a century, its unavailing light had dawned upon the weary wastes of a solitude !

“As my unwonted step approached a bower of rose-acacias, matted with pendent blossoms, which terminated the terrace, a twittering flight of goldfinches started from its boughs, and the rapid lizards glided like shadows into the crevices of the marble pavement ; and as I crept stealthily along to invade their territories unobserved, I heard the murmur of voices from an alley sheltered beneath the terrace. ‘I beseech you, madam, to compose yourself,’ said the stranger to Hermance, ‘the circumstance you thus deplore, is capable of being directed to the most flattering results. The Infanta flies into our arms,—what more do you require?’

“That my precious Isabella's incautious candour may not endanger our ultimate success. One word to Don Philip touching our secret negotiations,—and farewell France !’—

“*Chère Comtesse, ma toute aimable amie ! calmez vous !*’ replied her friend. ‘*Votre bonheur,—celui de votre auguste élève—réclame tous mes soins. Jugez si je songe à abandonner des projets conçus depuis si longtemps ;—jugez si je me sens disposé à renoncer au doux espoir de vous rendre à cette patrie si chère à toutes-deux. Non ! Madame ; désormais ne craignez rien ;—abandonnez vous à une destinée jusqu'ici propice à nos vœux !*’

“If my curiosity had been previously excited by the mere wall of the castle, judge whether this unintelligible harangue tended to decrease my interest and my astonishment. I heard no more in explanation, for Madame de Loménie at that moment reaching the

terrace, respectfully presented her countryman to my notice as the Comte du Fayel,—an officer in the service of my illustrious grandfather ; and the courtly stranger, resuming all his ingratiating suavity of address, began to express his regret that the dwelling I deigned to honour with my presence, should be so unworthy the distinction. ‘I have not presumed,’ said he, ‘to seek a fairer abode during my stay in Parma ; since I am come hither but in affection for a beloved kinswoman, who has been so unfortunate as to provoke the displeasure of Don Philip. I will neither venture to name my relation in your Highness's presence, nor to lament her disgrace ; since it has not debarred me of the long-coveted happiness of offering my homage to her august charge.—I shall leave Italy contentedly, since I am enabled to assure the noble Princes of Bourbon, that their lilies flourish in its soil, as brightly as in their native earth.’

“In looking back upon the powerful impression made on my mind by my first interview with Monsieur du Fayel, I find it difficult to explain the nature of my delusion. Was it his adroit flattery,—his *usage du grand monde*, or his perfection of diction in a language known to me, in its purest elegance, only from the lips of my mother?—Madame de Loménie had long since involuntarily Italianized her phrase ;—but my mysterious acquaintance still wore on his lips the latest polish of Versailles.

“Do you agree with me, dearest sister, in estimating Parisian French, as the language *par excellence* of courtly adulation ? My father's Spanish intonation always breathed to my heart the spirit of prayer ; my native tongue is probably the most copious in expressing the intensity of the passion ‘*che nell' anima si sente* ;’ your own, Christina, which so roughly grapples with its subject, is assuredly that of philosophical discussion ; but French is your only idiom for polite dissimulation ;—it is the very voice of courtesy,—the measured cadence of falsehood, the breath of diplomatic deception, the language of promise and policy, insinuation and intrigue ! The Comte du Fayel was a mighty master of its elegant pliancies ; and when I quitted Castel-Avrelino, not only had he fully succeeded in reconciling me to myself and to Madame de Loménie, but had imparted a character to my caprice which at once affixed a confidential seal upon my visit.

“Once settled at Colorno, however, and uninfluenced by his ready tact of speech, I began to regard the subject with bitter uneasiness. I had discovered myself to be the object of a plot,—to be a tool in the hands of some unknown agent. I had reason to imagine that he meant me well; but when I remembered his connexion with the artful Mignardi, my mistrust overcame the charm of his address. A cloud too had insinuated itself between Hermance and my confidence. She had acted towards me with duplicity, and thus diminished my affection. My mind was in a confusion of surprise, and regret, and trepidation; I trusted to time to develop the mystery.

“Meantime, Madame de Loménie appeared as much distressed and embarrassed as myself. She could scarcely compose herself to join in our accustomed studies; music moved her to tears, and her trembling hand could no longer guide the pencil;—the vessel had lost its compass, and was wandering pilotless amid perilous breakers. At times she would gaze upon my face, while the tears stole down her own; at others she would pace along the apartment, regardless of her ordinary punctilio of etiquette; and at all hours, and all seasons, she was overwhelmed with the arrival or despatch of letters, which only served to aggravate her visible agitation. One morning, after the receipt and anxious perusal of one of these inexplicable billets, Hermance appeared more than usually oppressed. It was the mid summer; and a sultry season, which had already parched the olive grounds and vineyards with drought. The day had dawned heavily, and the air seemed darkened with coming storms; when Madame de Loménie, either unobservant or careless of its aspect, suddenly proposed an excursion into the forest. It was the first time she had alluded to the subject since our visit to Castel-Avrelino, nor had she even named Monsieur du Fayel; but breaking through her reserve, she informed me that he was on the eve of his return to Versailles, and awaited only her commissions and adieu. She proposed indeed to make the attempt alone; but she spoke so encouragingly of the state of the weather, and so pointedly predicted that no rain would fall till after the meridian, that I offered to accompany her, and found the proposal gratefully accepted.

“Experience proved my *governante* to be an indifferent augur. Long before we reached the *castello*, single drops of heavy

rain began to plash upon the chestnut leaves; and the air was still and breathless, save when a distant deepening murmur foretold the approach of the storm. The intervals grew shorter, the peals more distinct; and the pricking ears of the mules proclaimed their instinct of the coming danger; we hastened and hastened,—but the speed of the tempest outstripped our own; and now each livid flash that glared through the boughs was followed by an immediate crash,—a prolonged roar—as though some mighty monster had been wounded by the forked arrow of the heavens. Just as we reached the gateway of Castel-Avrelino, one vivid sheet of fire seemed to fall upon a lofty pine that overhangs the wall. It is still there! scathed and leafless; but I marked not *then* its destiny,—I was borne in the arms of the Comte du Fayel, senseless and motionless, into his desolate, his fatal mansion!”

CHAPTER VI.

I see a hand thou canst not see
Which beckons me away,—
I hear a voice thou canst not hear
Which says I must not stay.

GAY.

“I cannot but believe, Christina, although I know not that the idea presented itself at that period to my mind, that I had been expected at Castel-Avrelino,—that the alternative of finding refuge from the storm in the dwelling of the Comte du Fayel had suggested Madame de Loménie’s ill-timed excursion. She might wish to enable her friend, who, circumstanced as he was, presumed not to seek a presentation at Colorno, to convey to my mother’s family a more particular account of my character and demeanour;—for what other motive could urge so bold a measure?

“By this supposition only can I account for the profuse magnificence of the chamber, and the elegance of the repast which courted my attention as soon as the pauses of the storm restored me in some measure to my self-possession. The brilliant refinement that attended the most minute details of both, was of an order unknown in Italy; and served to impress me with a still deeper admiration of Parisian taste. In vain I claimed the notice of Hermance for the assemblage of costly novelties which so attracted my childish fancy; still overcome by terror and emotion, she could not banish from her recollection the perils of our awful ride; nor could the courtly host who

presided over this strange admixture of splendour and ruin, of desolation and magnificence, restore her to composure by his respectful exhortations. Yet the Comte du Fayel, of all men whom I have ever seen, possessed most powerfully that domestic eloquence, that ingratiating and persuasive bearing which fascinates our better judgment. My dear father is generally esteemed one of the most dignified and graceful of our Italian Princes; but the Count, who nearly approached his age, far excelled Don Philip in his mode of address; and in the present instance he played the part of the humble and devoted host, surprised in his destitute retreat, with a cordiality of deferential hospitality emulating that of Federigo and his Falcon.

"Having conducted me to an apartment of which the draperies of fawn-coloured velvet, and the cornices of matted gold, appeared as little in accordance with the mouldering tapestries that garnished the walls, as with the condition of the inhabitants of the castle, Madame de Loménie informed me that at so advanced an hour of the evening, and in the uncertain state of the weather, she could not venture to return to the villa; and that having despatched messengers to Colorno, for our attendants and *deshabillé*, she had accepted hospitality for the night at Castel-Avrelino. Enchanted with the measure, for my life had been one of such deep seclusion that any variation was welcome, I threw myself down on a silken divan, protesting myself quite unequal to the fatigue of a second expedition; and the fitful gusts of wind howling among the battlements served to confirm our mutual resolution.

"Monsieur du Fayel was too intimately versed in courtly ceremonial to propose a further intrusion upon our retirement; but the zeal with which his household furthered our wishes bore witness to his superintendence. The supper equipage withdrawn, a couch was prepared for Madame de Loménie beside my own splendid canopy; and our arrangements having been completed by the ladies of the wardrobe who had arrived with the requisite toilet, I besought Hermance to permit them to retire to rest in the anteroom, that we might pass one happy evening together unmolested by etiquette or observation. Delighted with her acquiescence, I profited by this first freedom from restraint to commence a careful examination of our apartment. It was lofty, and evidently propor-

tioned as a gallery; but at either end a *cabinet de toilette* had been subtracted by a temporary partition, from its length. Opening by panelled arches into our sleeping-room, their massive outer doors appeared secured from without by brazen bolts. The stormy wind still roared along the corridors; sometimes sharpening to a scream, sometimes rocking the dilapidated mansion with its fitful violence; and as the waving tapestry bore witness to its intrusive currents, Hermance had required a brasier to be placed on the capacious hearth. Half terrified by the inclemency of the night, I drew aside one of the brocaded draperies, and looked out upon the state of earth and sky with anxious scrutiny.

"The moon was nearly at its full; yet so frequently was it concealed by the heavy clouds hurrying over the heavens,—like stragglers hastening to rejoin the mighty tempest which had outstripped their speed,—that its uncertain light served but to perplex the eye. One moment the marble statues below, blanched into deadly whiteness by its beams, threw their long, black, cypress-like shadows athwart the terrace; the next, they appeared to vanish amid the general obscurity of the garden; while the huge branches of the forest creaked under the furious control of the night winds that impelled those wandering clouds, and their fleeting shades. Disheartened and oppressed, I drew towards the side of Hermance, who was seated in contemplation of the decaying embers; and seizing a book from a table covered with the latest Parisian engravings and publications, I attempted to divert my attention from the ominous violence of the weather. Unfortunately I had selected a new romance full of tedious discussions upon the arts, and metaphysical examinations into every passing thought and feeling of its personages. The coarseness of its allusions too disgusted me; and throwing aside '*La Nouvelle Héloïse*' as unworthy of a woman's interest, I appealed to Hermance for better amusement.

"'*Chère Maman!*' said I, 'this desolate abode oppresses my heart. Talk to me,—tell me what you think of Monsieur du Fayel's inconsistent retreat.'

"'*That* were improvident, while we are still in the wolf's den,' replied Hermance, with a mournful smile. 'How know we what ears may loiter behind the arras?'

"'And is it thus you try to re-assure me,' I replied. 'Look round upon this chamber,—divest it of its modern and incongruous

decorations,—and tell me whether it does not recall to your mind some manor of a darker age,—which the domestic tragedies of the Sforza and Medici have rendered so terrible to our apprehensions?’

“‘We are under the protection of a nobleman of France, distinguished by the favour of its sovereign,’ answered Madame de Loménie, without attempting to realize the impression I had foretold. ‘Let me implore your Highness to retire to rest, instead of prolonging a day of anxiety and fatigue. You have constituted me for the night your lady of the robes; suffer me to offer my assistance.’”

“My attention was now absorbed by the awkwardness of the *Dama soprantendente* in the duties of her new charge; but as I indulged in unconstrained laughter at her numerous *bévue*s, the hollow echo of the vast solitary chamber seemed to reprove my levity.”

“Dearest Christina!” resumed the Archduchess Joseph, after a pause of some minutes’ duration, “hitherto my relation has touched but upon the uneventful details of a life of seclusion—a life of Spanish royalty; and I thank you for the friendly interest you have bestowed upon my egotism. But I have now something more than interest to seek, dear sister, at your hands;—you must grant me your indulgence,—your faith; you must enlarge your trust into a solemn assurance that what I am about to relate is neither a deception, nor a self-deception. Although inheriting with my Spanish blood, and perfecting by an Italian education, a degree of piety ‘in all things too superstitious,’ still believe me I have never indulged in mysticism; and if I rashly presumed to crave from the Almighty a manifestation of his divine protection, it was wholly without a hope that my prayers would be recorded. No! Christina; the event of that terrible night was no vision of a heated fancy,—no chimera of an excited mind;—it was *too* real;—too truly,—too horribly real.

“Ere we retired to rest, Madame de Loménie removed to the further extremity of the chamber, the solitary *veilleuse* by which it was to be enlightened for the night. She could not sleep, she said, if its glare visited her pillow, which was unshaded save by a mosquito gauze; and the caution was effectual, for very shortly after she had breathed her usual prayer and tender ‘*buona notte*,’ I called to her and found that she was already sleeping. I attempted to close my

eyes in my turn, but the effort was unsuccessful; my mind was stimulated by the novelty of my position, my frame was fevered by the indisposition of the morning; and instead of falling into my usual sweet forgetfulness, I kept starting up to trace the figures on the tapestry,—grim representations of the dying Seneca with his Paulina—wounded and ensanguined,—which the wind and the flickering lamp-light seemed to endow with life and motion. There was not the murmur of the river, as at Colorno, to lull me to repose; nor its familiar sights and sounds to render wakefulness endurable; but in their stead I was startled by the flapping of a distant shutter, loosened by the wind, or by the wind itself varying its melancholy voice unto unnumbered cadences.

“I would have given the world for the interposition of some living thing to disturb the weary silence of that vast lonely chamber;—a dog,—nay! a cricket on the hearth would have seemed my friend. I buried my head in my pillow to shut out the sensation; but the beating of my heart was still audible to my apprehensions. I lay in this position many minutes—I thought them hours—agonized with a sense of solitude hitherto unknown; yet I was ashamed to waken Madame de Loménie solely to banish my puerile terrors.

“At length a sound did indeed break the spell of that horrible stillness,—but it was only to consummate the agony of my spirit!—a sound how silver-sweet,—how solemn in its bell-like modulation! how far outpassing the result of any earthly effort that has since greeted my ears!”

“Any *earthly* effort?” reiterated Maria Christina.

“Yes! my sister,” continued the Archduchess Joseph, drawing closer to her side, and gently pressing her hand, while her voice subsided to a tremulous whisper! “yes! it was the heavenly announcement of that supernatural visitation for which my vain spirit had presumed to importune the throne of grace!—The night-lamp was suddenly extinguished, but the chamber remained not long in darkness!—From the lofty arch of one of its cabinets there issued a gradual emanation of pale blue light;—clearer than the moonshine, more subdued than the day;—like the symphonies by which its dawning was announced, it was faint at first,—swelling insensibly until it filled the chamber.—Awe-struck, but fascinated and excited beyond description, I half rose from my

couch, and fixed my intense gaze upon the spot whence it appeared to issue; when a film suddenly overspread its brilliancy, and clouds of fragrant vapour obscured the arch.—They dispersed at length; and a bright and beautiful landscape offered itself to my view!—

“It was France! I could not mistake its features,—its trim vineyards, unlike the wandering vines of Italy,—its corn-fields, its gay, joyous peasantry! The strain of a simple *chalmieu* was heard;—and a mellow voice accompanied the measure in praise of the pleasures which abound ‘*sous la coudrette*.’ A group of village maidens seemed to traverse the vineyards, strewing the path with lilies, and breathing the tenderest welcome, as a veiled figure lightly approached;—they called her Isabella,—and as she raised her veil, my own exact self was revealed in her features; smiling and joyous—but terrible in my sight as the confirming evidence of the truth of the vision.—I shrieked with horror! and in an instant the pageant vanished amid a prolonged murmur of those gracious songs of welcome.

“I called upon the name of Hermance,—she did not reply; then collecting my failing breath, I was about to spring from my couch and seek her side, when once again music appeared to hover upon the surrounding air. But the measures were different now; they were languid, and solemn, and like the sadness of a requiem, penetrated my very heart.—Again the fleecy vapours floated around,—again they melted away, and a new scene—a scene, how horribly impressive—offered itself to my recoiling observation! It was a Gothic cathedral, Christina; majestic as our own St. Stephen’s,—gloomy, and vast, and dark with the breath of ages!—A solemn procession slowly paced its mighty aisle,—a solemn chant accompanied its approach; *it was a funeral!*—

“The sable banners and escutcheons that graced its pomp were emblazoned with the united heraldries of Austria and Parma,—Isabella’s name was mingled with the funeral anthem,—Isabella’s style was proclaimed beside that stately pall!—A fair child, a girl—even such a one, my sister, as sleeps in yonder bed,—was weeping among the mourners; she demanded her mother,—she required to be comforted!—And lo! importuned by her sorrow, they seized her little frame, and girding it in the vestments of the grave, they laid her low at Isabella’s feet, within the vault of her ancestors.—Christina!

as I live and breathe, and address you,—my words are words of truth; I saw all this plainly, as I now relate it; nay more! the mourner who headed the procession turning gravely towards me,—displayed your brother’s countenance! As my words are recorded in heaven, I have never looked more distinctly upon my husband’s face, than I did that night when the anthem ‘Mourn for Isabella! mourn for the bride,—the mother,—for Austria’s Isabella!’ was faintly murmured in my failing ears.—Oh! my sister! forgive my emotion,” continued the Archduchess, laying her head upon Christina’s shoulder. “I cannot recall that fatal night without a renewal of my spirit’s agony.”

Of all the feelings conflicting within the bosom of Maria Christina, to one alone did she venture to give utterance.—Compassion, unfeigned and most affectionate pity for her afflicted sister’s state of mind, commanded her earnest condolences and fond expostulations; for the reality of Isabella’s terrors was manifested by her death-pale brow,—by her death-cold hand,—by the silent tears that stole unobserved over her marble face,—by the breath which came and went as if the struggle of her soul were too mighty for endurance.

“My dear, dear Isabella! console yourself,” said she, fondly supporting and caressing her. “Friends are around you now,—no treachery will endanger or afflict you more. Calm yourself, sister! you are secure, happy, beloved,—the idol of a thousand hearts,—and better far than all,—the beloved of one exclusive and affianced bosom! Repress this pernicious agitation, and tell me, since the subject even now so deeply moves you,—tell me how you were enabled to endure the actual presence of the vision?”

“I know not!—all that followed was vague and void. I know not how the night concluded, I only know that the daylight was shining upon my face, when I became once more conscious of existence. I raised my throbbing head, and found myself in a litter, with Madame de Loménie weeping by my side; and when we arrived at Colorno, I was removed to my own chamber, where for many, many weeks, a delirious fever confined me to my bed.”

“And Don Philip,—Hermance,—the Count?”

“My father tenderly and repeatedly visited me during my prolonged indisposition; and in one of my intervals of consciousness, I heard Madame de Loménie reply to his

inquiries by an assurance that my illness proceeded from indiscreet exposure to the inclemency of the weather,—from a storm which had surprised me in the forest. Of our sojourn at Castel-Avelino, as you may imagine, she said nothing to Don Philip; and as my attendants were all of her own selection, nothing transpired concerning our visit to the Comte du Fayel.”

“But yourself,—Isabella? Surely you revealed to the knowledge of your second mother the unexampled event of that mysterious night?”

“I did indeed,—and oh! with what emotions of grief and terror! But Hermance, after listening attentively to my description, treated the whole as a vision,—as the first symptom of my approaching delirium. Even unto myself she insisted upon the storm as the origin of my disorder; and at length forbade me to renew a discussion so inconsistent with reason. But she saw that the impression was too deeply engraven in my heart to be easily effaced.”

“But Madame de Loménie surely attempted by argument, by religious counsels, to obliterate its influence upon your feelings?”

“No! she foresaw that her mightiest efforts would have been vainly exerted. I was too well assured of my own perfect self-possession at the memorable moment which had revealed the measure of my destinies; and that persuasion not only retarded my recovery, but rendered life and health indifferent in my eyes. As soon as an imperfect restoration admitted of my removal, we returned to Parma, whence all symptoms of contagion had disappeared. The court was assembled for the winter season; and when we arrived at the Palazzo Ducale, my father conducted me in person to my apartments, mingling in his affectionate caresses an air of triumph and gratulation. I was deeply penetrated by the emotions which, for the first time in my presence, disturbed the serenity of his lofty brow as he addressed me.

“My Isabella!” said Don Philip, “Heaven has furthered my hopes. The preliminaries of your union with the heir of the first empire in the world are already adjusted. Let me be the first,” he continued, kissing my resisting hand, “to hail my beloved daughter as the future Empress of Germany.”

“I felt my father’s proud heart beat as he fondly held me to his bosom. ‘Pity me, sir,’ I whispered. ‘Pity me! this dreadful marriage is my sentence of death!’

“Dearest child!” he replied, “do not

tarnish the brightness of this happy day, by fruitless repining! My royal word, Isabella, is pledged for your acquiescence,—the alliance is now *inevitable!*” He imprinted a second kiss upon my forehead, nor perceived that it was already cold and senseless;—when he relinquished his embrace, I fell upon the marble floor, devoid of motion or consciousness.

“It was natural that my father and my household should attribute this revulsion to the abrupt intelligence of my approaching separation from him and home; and Hermance was prompt in bestowing a character of sensibility upon my undisguised suffering. But when sense and speech were again assigned me, I disdained this false interpretation of my conduct,—this temporizing compliance,—and ceased not to declare my abhorrence of the projected union, and my preference of a cloister in my native country.

“Madame de Loménie affected to moderate my vehemence; yet the regrets she constantly expressed that the Duc d’Orléans had been unable to make his overtures for my hand acceptable to Don Philip, served but to confirm my detestation of Austria, and of Austria’s slandered Prince. She told me, and it was with tears, that her cares for my education being now happily ended, she felt herself required to admit the claims of her own family and her own country upon the remnant of her days; and respectfully but firmly announced her determination of returning to Paris in the event of my marriage. ‘But a few months past,’ she added, ‘I trusted that the matrimonial alliance projected between the Archduke Joseph and a daughter of France, would have permanently sealed the peace of Europe; and then my Isabella might have been herself restored to the beloved home of her mother; and as a princess of the Bourbon blood reunited by marriage to its royal line, would have graced, as she ought, the happy circles of Versailles.—We have now only to submit to the arbitrary disposal of our destinies.’

“But, alas! while I listened to her lamentations over the menaced tranquillity of Europe, it was—I confess it to my dishonour—my *own* peace,—my *own* safety,—which occupied the cares of my trembling conscious heart,—which preyed upon my distempered mind. I breathed, however, no further complaining; I knew how ill murmurs or prayers would serve my cause with Don Philip;—I had ascertained that his word was truly pledged unto the Austrian

cabinet, and knowing it to be immutable, I sealed my lips in silence.

"Christina! from that first moment of submission until this, my bosom has never known the blessing of tranquillity. I endured the adulation,—the compliments of my father's court,—of your own delegated ministers, who evidently hailed me the most favoured of mortals. I left Parma, my sister,—I shed my last tears upon my father's cheek, and I knew that they *were* the last,—that I should never look upon his face again. I quitted my fertile Italy,—its clinging vines,—its caressing accents,—and I knew that I should return to it no more. I bore my withered heart into the land which I knew was soon to close over my grave,—into the embraces of a husband whom I regarded as an enemy,—and I bore it all patiently and uncomplainingly; I felt that my life was henceforward a vain thing! God had spoken unto my mental ear; and human words could find no entrance now.

"And oh! Christina,—you who regard love, mere mortal love, as so mighty a subject of the heart,—imagine, if you can, the omnipotent control of *fear*,—the fear of death,—the fear of judgment!—Death, which approacheth so secretly, so silently, to every soul that liveth,—to me, and me only, hath foreshown his terrors. The feet of other mortals are betrayed into his pitfalls;—but against *my* weak, defenceless bosom, his arm is visibly uplifted;—nor can I turn aside my gaze from the menacing aspect of his awful brow—from the fearful tribunal whither he would hurry my shrinking, trembling soul!

"Nor are these spiritual terrors my only or worst affliction. 'The *fear* of the Lord,' saith the inscribed word, 'is the beginning of wisdom;' and I should not repine if my submission to his will were thus secured. But it is not my spirit only which hath withered beneath the glance of the supernatural world; it is my heart—my heart—my heart of flesh—which, crushed and wounded by its might, renews from day to day my bitter torments.

"How can I indulge in those sweet impulses of affection which I know would bind my struggling spirit unto earth, in its coming hour of departure? How can I presume to interpose the frailties of human tenderness between my heart and that bright eternity whose inheritance I would labour to win?—Christina! our God is a jealous God!—and will not vouchsafe to share our

love with our fellows of the dust,—with the vile creatures of his hand!—

"I could have loved you all;—you who so tenderly welcomed your froward sullen sister unto her new country; from yourself, my chosen friend, unto the little Antoinette who springs so fondly into my arms, I could have cherished you all with the kindly tenderness of kindred. My indulgent husband too, who has dealt so forbearingly, so nobly with my estranged heart,—how warmly could I have returned his generous affection, had I dared to confide myself to the suggestions of my own feelings!

"And my child, Christina!—when the gentle murmurs of its living voice first reached my ear,—when its soft cheek was first proffered to my lips—then, then I felt how lovely life could be!—and I spake harshly, and sent it from my presence, lest it should win back my softened heart to the joys of existence!—Sometimes even now, I watch its little dawning impulses of intelligence, and strain it closely, closely within my arms, forgetting how soon my sweet task must end,—forgetting that such passionate affection is sin in the sight of Heaven!—It must not be, sister! it must not be;—I dare not love the precious objects which embellish life;—or yonder dark repulsive vault would form a home too dreadful to my apprehensions.

"Oh! Christina—Christina!—reprove me not,—relax not your endearing caresses;—shun me not as selfish in my sorrow;—but fix your thoughts upon the responsibility of a mortal soul,—upon the struggle of a spirit about to abandon its weeds of clay,—upon the clinging of the reluctant mind unto the dust it hath learned to cherish! *I am to die!*—I know it! I am to fix my closing eyes upon that dear face which, from the first moment it smiled upon my wretchedness, hath looked on my faults with the indulgence of a tender forbearing love;—upon that fair babe which so delights to nestle in my bosom, but which will soon lie by my cold side, uncaressing and uncaressed, within the grave! The worm will soon be my companion—the winding-sheet my garment!—*can you,—do you* marvel that my tears are so ready,—my soul so inaccessible to the common pleasures of the world?"

Christina indeed wondered not;—but she soothed the unhappy sufferer with the most devoted gentleness; and having persuaded her to retire to rest, she sat by her pillow till sleep visited her swollen eyelids. Mean-

time her own thoughts were not inactive. "I will yet," she whispered, "restore her to happiness, to my brother's ardent affection. All may yet be well,—if Heaven prosper my undertaking!"

CHAPTER VII.

THE Archduchess Maria Christina's secret solution of the mystery unfolded to her by the Infanta, was prompt and undoubting. Treachery—French treachery—instigated by the faction which had left no means untried to impose a daughter of the direct Bourbon line upon the young heir to the Austrian throne, had not hesitated to use measures, both lawful and unlawful, in order to thwart the projected alliance with Isabella of Parma. She was well aware that the recent treaty between Maria Theresa and Louis XV. had been effected by means scarcely less blamable; and chiefly through the medium of Madame de Pompadour.

But what a scene of baseness and ingratitude was thus unfolded to her view!—how cruel a betrayal on the part of the Comtesse de Loménie! who had profited by her intimate acquaintance with the lively imagination and enthusiastic devotion of her charge,—a charge committed by a dying mother into her hands,—in order to assure the wretchedness of her future life.—And Isabella,—the good, the gentle, the lovely Isabella!—what years of misery had been already apportioned to her heart by this wicked deception,—what evils might it not still entail upon her devoted head!—Indignant and irritated against the perpetrators of so gross an outrage, Christina for a single moment resolved to provoke the vengeance of the Empress against their crime. She knew that Hermance, now Comtesse du Fayel, held an appointment in the household of the Duchesse de Bourbon; and that the Conte Mignardi and his cold-blooded intriguing wife sustained with high honour the embassy of Parma at the French court. But although it had been easy to expose and punish their former unsuccessful villany, Christina scarcely dared conjecture how far the discovery might implicate the inhabitants of Versailles; and dreading to endanger the league of amity which had been so dearly purchased by the Austrian cabinet, she determined to direct her labours solely towards the task of undeceiving and re-assuring the mind of the Archduchess Joseph.

By a fortunate coincidence it chanced

that a series of optical delusions, aided by the magical effect of the musical glasses,—then a recent invention,—had been exhibited for her amusement the preceding winter at Prague. The artist, a young Saxon, who was said to be on his return from Italy, where he had perfected himself under the instructions of the celebrated Cagliostro, had been particularly recommended to the protection of the Prince of Saxe-Teschén, himself a skilful experimentalist in those arts which direct the mightiest laws of nature towards pleasing and startling results. Christina had more than once been the spectator of scenes, which an adept such as Cagliostro or Schröpfer would have imposed as the triumph of the necromantic art. She remembered that young Melzer had been placed, under Prince Albert's patronage, as master of the laboratory to Count Harrach at Vienna; and without the loss of a single hour she despatched a courier requiring his immediate attendance at Presburg; revealing the nature of the services sought at his hands in an exact repetition of the delusions executed at Castel-Avrelino; in order that he might provide himself with the machinery necessary for his purpose.

Before noon on the following day, Melzer had received his audience of final instruction from the Archduchess. He had brought with him a confidential attendant, and readily undertook the task assigned him.

"I need scarcely apprise your Imperial Highness," said he, "that an optical delusion such as you describe is among the legitimate objects of my art; and were I not apprehensive of trespassing too far on your indulgence, I could unfold a singular coincidence—but forgive me, madam!—I am presuming beyond the bounds of your Imperial Highness's condescension."

"By no means," replied Maria Christina. "All you can relate on this topic is interesting to my curiosity."

"I allude, madam, to a service imposed upon me during my boyish attendance upon the self-styled Count Cagliostro. We were sojourning in Piacenza, when a nobleman of the country,—Mignardi, unless my memory fails me, was his name,—obtained a similar exhibition of the skill of my preceptor; and I had a material hand in the performance."

"At Castel-Avrelino—at Parma—in the royal forest?" exclaimed the Archduchess.

"At a half-ruined castle in some forest, madam," replied the astonished Melzer. "The delusion was projected for the diver-

sion of a lady of the royal suite ; but I heard not her name, and imperfectly understood the language. The whole design was, however, so singularly accordant with that imagined by your Imperial Highness, that —”

“Melzer !” exclaimed Maria Christina ; “renew that scene, — repeat with scrupulous exactitude that very representation, — and claim two hundred ducats, and my gratitude for life, as your reward ! — No thanks, sir ! — but say, *when* can you effect the exhibition ?”

“By to-morrow night, madam, unfaillingly.”

“To-morrow be it, then,” replied the Archduchess, as she cheerfully left the chamber. “The gallery connecting with the eastern turret is already placed at your disposal ; and such of my household as can further our projects, wait your orders.”

The whole of that day, the whole of the next, Christina betrayed a joyous flutter of spirit inconceivable to the Infanta, who had anticipated a kinder sympathy from her friend. But when the second evening came, the spirits of the Archduchess became suddenly depressed. She complained of *migraine* ; and laughingly attributing her indisposition to loss of temper, she escaped from Isabella’s side to visit the gallery in which Melzer’s half-achieved preparations tantalized her eager wishes. The assistant, whose services were indispensable to the performance, had been suddenly seized with severe illness ; Melzer exhibited, however, in order to appease the Archduchess, a sufficient specimen of the perfection of his phantasmagoria, to aggravate her impatience a thousand fold.

“Melzer !” said she, “I have heard that gold is a universal panacea. Let your invalid lend you at all risks his aid to-morrow evening, and he shall receive half the sum I have proffered to yourself.”

And the evening came ; and Maria Christina in an irrepressible agitation of mind, began her preparations by insinuating their intention to Isabella. “Be calm, dearest sister,” she whispered, “compose your feelings and attention while I reproduce with human aid before your eyes, a repetition of that which you falsely estimate as an interposition of Heaven. Seat yourself by my side, Isabella ; suffer me to hold your hand within my own ; and while Princess Lichtenstein thus soothes and supports you, summon your fortitude to endure a spec-

tacle of which the mere physical sources shall afterwards be offered to your inspection.”

Isabella, startled and perplexed, obeyed the request. As the first bell-like chiming of the harmonica struck upon her ear, a vivid blush of astonishment overspread her face ; and when the odorous vapours gave place to the smiling landscape — to its songs, — its tripping joyous peasantry — its representation of herself, — her amazement and agitation overpowered her ; when the filmy clouds again interposing, the pageant vanished as it came.

As soon as the emotion of the Infanta had in some degree subsided, “My dear sister,” said Christina, “it would be as easy to my agents to place before your eyes the second part of the deception which formerly produced so strong an impression upon your mind, as this first attempt ; our preparations to that effect wait but your orders. I am myself, however, unwilling to sanction so solemn a representation in mere levity. The rites for the dead can scarcely be thus portrayed without sacrilege ; and if you will permit me, I would rather direct your attention towards the apparatus by which these seemingly supernatural effects have been produced.”

Isabella, leaning upon Princess Lichtenstein, was now introduced to the interior of Melzer’s little theatre ; she saw and assisted in the spectral representation of herself, by means of the portrait finished after Christina’s sketch, and a certain disposition of convex glasses. With her own hand she produced those mystical tones which she had so long believed of heavenly origin ; with her own hand she kindled those brasiers whose blue glimmering light and intoxicating perfume she had attributed to enchantment. Melzer and his coadjutor were indefatigable in pointing out the facilities which similar toys of science afford to the artful and interested for subjecting the minds of the uninitiated. The Infanta, transported beyond herself by these consolatory discoveries, again and again embraced her beloved sister, her best of friends, — her preserver ; but when Maria Christina called upon Melzer to declare the part he had taken in the scene of Castel-Avelino, and when he confirmed the authenticity of his recital by a thousand local details which could not have been suggested to him by his patroness, the Infanta bursting into tears, gave vent to the bitterest sorrow.

"Hermance, — whom I so loved and revered, — to practise thus upon my weakness!" she exclaimed, "what cruelty, — what humiliation in the thought!" Then warmly expressing her thanks to young Melzer, and her gratitude to Heaven for the chance which had placed his skill at her disposal, she took two valuable rings from her finger, and presented them as tokens of her goodwill to the artists.

Accompanied by her sister and her friend Krescentie Lichtenstein, the Infanta was now about to leave the gallery of which the doors had been guarded by the ushers of the court, when they were suddenly thrown open, and the Archduke was announced. He had accompanied the Duke of Saxe-Teschen in a tour through Moravia; and now on his return to Lachsenburg, was come to claim his wife and re-conduct her to Vienna.

"There are tears on this cheek, my Isabella," whispered Joseph as he clasped her in his arms. "Yet you promised me, Christina, that no sorrow should come near her while I left her in your charge!"

"Nor has she deceived you! These tears are tears of joy — of repentance! — repentance, love, that I have hitherto so ill-repaid the tenderness you have lavished upon your froward wife; — joy, that time may yet be accorded me to repair my error. Is my love, my grateful affection still precious in your sight? — receive it, — accept it, — not as a gift, but as the humble offering of my gratitude."

"What miracle is this!" exclaimed the Archduke, with quivering lips and sparkling eyes. "Isabella! do not deceive me, even in kindness; — you are rendering existence too precious in my eyes!"

"I do not deceive you," whispered Isabella, again. "I deceived you only when I affected indifference to your attachment, — coldness to your generous devotion. I have not, I believe, to *learn* to love, — I have only to learn that the tenderness of a wife may be cherished and acknowledged without shame."

The rapture with which these confessions were hailed by the Archduke may be easily conjectured. Accompanied by Maria Christina and her astonished husband, Isabella now conducted Joseph to the chamber of their sleeping child; and over its pillow renewed with solemn and deep emotion, her expressions of contrition for her former selfish estrangement, and assurances of the most unqualified devotion to their affections for the future. Again her tears of joy and

gratitude interrupted her declarations; — and this time she wept not alone! —

The following day, when the departure of the Archduke and Archduchess Joseph gave leisure for the indulgence of Maria Christina's calmer reflections, she could scarcely realize to herself the unanticipated success that had crowned her efforts. She was well aware that in restoring to her beloved brother the cheerfulness and tenderness of his wife, she had gifted him with a treasure richer than richest Ind could supply; and she was equally persuaded that in re-awakening in the bosom of the Infanta a security of life, she had only placed within her power of enjoyment the blameless and most hallowed pleasures of existence. Herself on the eve of a journey to Vienna, and confident in the perfect happiness of those who were so dear to her, she neither sought nor received tidings of Isabella for many days; but contented herself with revealing to her husband the singular discoveries originating the scene that greeted his return to Presburg, and with applying herself to the completion of the portrait, which she was anxious to present to the Empress on her ensuing visit, as a memorial of both her daughters.

On the sixth morning after the departure of the Infanta, the Archduchess was occupied with Countess Czernin in the repetition of a duet from Gluck's *Rinaldo*, when her husband suddenly entering the music room, gravely requested her to desist from her employment. "You will agree with my feelings, I am persuaded," said he, "that the sound of music is just now unbecoming in the castle. The viaticum is on the point of being administered to one of its inmates."

"How!" exclaimed Christina, "and I knew not that there was even sickness within our gates."

"The sufferer has not been the less cared for on my part; but I was apprehensive of alarming you with the intelligence that the smallpox appeared upon Melzer's young pupil, the very day following his interview with the Archduchess."

"Great Heaven!" shrieked Christina, "and our precious Isabella has never had the disorder. She spoke to him, — received several objects from his hands, — probably inhaled his very breath. — Her doom is sealed! I have murdered my sister by my rashness, — for I knew of his indisposition."

"Be calm, dearest Christina —"

"Tell me," interrupted the Archduchess, "tell me truly, — have you received any

tidings from Vienna,—are you already aware that the Infanta has shown symptoms of the contagion?"

"On my honour, no! I have received no single word of intelligence on the subject; but that very silence is ominous. Our best measure, both for Isabella's safety and our own release from suspense, will be to depart instantly for Lachsenburg."

"Rather for Vienna,—the court was to remove, three days since, for the winter." Then turning towards Countess Czernin, the Archduchess implored her to expedite their departure by achieving every necessary preparation, and by arranging that the carriages should follow her to the gates of the cathedral. "Come with me," she continued, seizing her husband's arm. "Come with me, Albert,—on foot,—unobserved;—let our prayers for her safety ascend together from the foot of the altar."

Albert of Saxe-Teschen, scarcely less afflicted than his wife, silently conducted her down the heights of the Zuckmantel to the Dome Church of the city. Unnoticed, for in their private walks at Presburg, etiquette exacted that they should pass unrecognised, they bent their agitated steps towards that high altar so appropriately graced by the equestrian bronze statue of St. Martin—as the patron of a race of warriors. And oh! how fervently were breathed their prayers for his intercession,—with what vows—what offerings, did Christina appeal to Heaven for mercy upon her suffering sister!

At length, comforted but still weeping, she threw herself into the carriage, recommending speed to her attendants; and notwithstanding that, in obedience to her commands, the horses scarcely appeared to touch the ground, the cloudy mists of a November evening already veiled the lofty spire of St. Stephen's, as they traversed the Rennweg, and approached the palace.

The carriage passed the archway of the *Burg Platz*; where, pausing at the eastern entrance leading to the Archduke's apartments, the Duke of Saxe-Teschen alighted to obtain some preliminary information. A few minutes brought him back to the agonized Christina; but unable to endure the suspense, she was already ascending the great stairs leaning on her astonished chamberlain.

"You must prepare yourself for the worst," said he, tenderly drawing her arm within his own. "Our apprehensions are fatally verified. Three evenings ago, Isabella, on approaching the city from Lachsenburg, was seized with

a shivering fit; and Van Swieten, who was summoned on her arrival at the palace, has not since left her side. My dearest Christina, our poor sister has given birth to a dead infant, and the smallpox has already declared itself."

"And my mother!" exclaimed Christina. "The Empress must surely be endangered by this horrible event;—she is not like myself secured by having passed through this dreadful disorder."

"Maria Theresa will not be suffered to approach Isabella's apartments; but the Archduke, night or day, has not quitted his beloved sufferer."

"Thank Heaven, my arrival will in some degree divide his cares, and alleviate his distress!"

"Nay! dearest Christina," said Albert, resisting her entry into the chamber, "you are at present unequal to the agitation of encountering such a scene."

"How, Albert!—I who have destroyed her—would you have *me* shrink from the spectacle of her affliction?—No—no! let my faithful and untiring services atone for my error."

The ushers now threw open the doors of the ante-room, as the clashing salute of the sentinels without, announced the arrival of one of the Imperial family; and Christina, having despatched a chamberlain to demand an interview with Princess Lichtenstein, hastily traversed the almost deserted chambers. "Oh! Krescentie!" she exclaimed, throwing herself upon the bosom of the Princess, who advanced weeping to meet her—"say! may I yet presume to hope?"

"The disorder of her Imperial Highness is, alas! pronounced to be of a most malignant kind,—her own enfeebled position is against her; and Van Swieten and Jaquin have, from the first moment, appeared desponding."

Let it be remembered that at the period in question the smallpox, unmitigated even by the art in use among their barbarous Turkish neighbours, was held by the Austrians as secondary only to the plague. The grandfather of the reigning Empress had expired, wrapped by order of the faculty of his capital, in twenty yards of scarlet broadcloth; and the same mode of treatment terminated the existence of eleven members of the Imperial family under the disorder, within fifty years. If not pronounced incurable, it was commonly proved to be so.

Princess Lichtenstein, with many a maternal word of preparation to the young

Archduchess, now conducted her into the chamber adjoining that of Isabella ; and pointing to the coffin of the little infant, whose birth had disastrously confirmed their calamity, she bade her mark how, amid the general confusion, it had still been surrounded with the paraphernalia that decorates a royal bier. "Let me not look upon its face," said the weeping Christina. "It hath proved the herald of misfortune."

She hushed her light footsteps as she entered the chamber of her sister, which was heated to a temperature mortal to the invalid ; and as she stole to the couch, a laugh, a hoarse horrid laugh greeted her ears. "It is herself," whispered Krescentie, replying to Christina's look of terror. "For many hours she has been delirious."

The first object that presented itself, was the kneeling figure of the Archduke, fixed and motionless beside the bed. There was not a tear,—not a struggle upon his youthful face. He neither spoke nor murmured ; despair seemed to have turned him into marble. Not so the sufferer ! Her long raven hair was floating loosely round her shoulders,—her whole frame was agitated by the intense fever of her suppressed distemper ; she had raised herself from her pillow, and was flinging her arms wildly above her head, laughing and shrieking by turns.

"Go—go !—Du Fayel," she vehemently exclaimed. "Go, cruel Hermance ! you are no longer my mother,—I disclaim you—I am the child of Austria,—the daughter of the Empress ! No grave now for Isabella,—no requiem,—no emblazoned pall ! I shall live—live—live—to be happy,—to be beloved.—I have a child, a husband ;—their prayers will preserve me.—No grave now for Isabella."

Maria Christina stood riveted to the spot, contemplating this dreadful spectacle.

"Is there no hope?" she murmured to the venerable Van Swieten, whose moistened eyes were fixed upon the terrible aspect of the young Prince, so precious to the vows of Germany.

"Alas ! madam, how can I answer you?" said the old man mournfully. "God is good !—let us trust that he will enable us to do our best."

From that period, through the day, and through the night, Maria Christina relaxed not from her attendance, nor quitted for a single hour the chamber of sickness,—*the chamber of death!* The disease now broke out with disfiguring virulence upon the person of Isabella ; and as the fever subsided,

her consciousness was restored ; but the approach of the last agony already oppressed her respiration.

"My husband!" she faltered, fixing her languid gaze upon Joseph. "Is it indeed you who have watched so tenderly by my pillow? My best beloved!—how shall I thank your kindness; my breath is spent—my sight failing.—I cannot ask you to kiss these festering lips,—to press this loathsome hand!—But my heart springs forth to yours to bid you farewell.—I am young to be torn from life,—from you whose affection was about to render life so dear ;—but my dying heart is filled with resignation to God, with charity and gratitude for those I leave behind.

"My father,—Joseph!—commend me to my dear father, and tell him he judged wisely for my happiness in the disposal of my destiny; bid my brother cherish our Amelia for my sake,—and implore the Empress,—my tender friend and mother,—to recommend me in her prayers to Heaven.

"Christina!—Krescentie!—you will watch over my little daughter ;—and when the day shall come that my husband will try to recall my parting words, tell him I bade him live,—I bade him be happy,—but without banishing from his heart the remembrance of the wife of his youth."

A time-piece that decorated the chamber,—a splendid gift from Louis, to his grandchild, which had never been wound up since its arrival in Vienna,—now, through some disorder of its mechanism, repeatedly struck the hour.

"It is my summons!" murmured the dying Isabella. "So,—raise me ;—yet more and more. I see you not, my husband,—but I feel that you are near me still.—Receive me, heavenly Father! receive me to thy mercy!"

She turned her glassy eye upon the Archduke, and her gentle spirit was released from its polluted human mould.

Joseph, stung to madness, threw himself upon the disfigured corpse ; and as neither prayers nor remonstrances could prevail upon him to abandon his perilous post, his chosen friends, Count Cobenzel and the hero Lacy, were admitted by the desire of Maria Theresa into the chamber of death, and forcibly withdrew him from the body.

Thus, at the age of twenty-two, perished the Infanta of Parma ;—thus did a vague prophecy become accidentally its own fulfilment. Ere the gloomy days of November expired, a solemn procession traversed the

aisle of the Augustiner church ; which scarcely three years before, had been gladdened by the marriage vows of the Archduchess. And the requiem resounded through the arched roofs, saying, "Mourn for Isabella, — the bride, — the mother ! Mourn for Austria's Isabella?"

It is now several years since I completed a tale founded upon Wraxall's sketch of the death of the Archduchess Joseph. On visiting Vienna since that period, I was anxious to procure some further anecdotes of my heroine, — but in vain. Her very name appeared forgotten ; and the sole records of her existence which came to my knowledge, were her sarcophagus, placed between the little silver coffins of her two children, in the Imperial vault beneath the convent of the Capuchins, — and a very singular panel in one of the saloons of Schönbrunn, which represents the nuptial ceremonies of the Emperor Joseph. The portrait of the In-

fanta painted by Maria Christina is in the possession of the Archduke Charles, who has inherited the immense wealth of Albert of Saxe-Teschen. It is remarkable that although Joseph continued to his last hour to cherish the memory of Isabella, and to wear her picture concealed within his watch, he exhibited from the moment of her death a rooted antipathy to Christina, who had been her bosom friend. Upon this hint, I have assigned a cause, purely imaginary, for the melancholy of the Infanta ; but I have in other respects followed the memoirs of the times, particularly those of Wraxall ; who relates several touching expressions used by Isabella, — her predictions concerning her own death and their accomplishment, — the irregular striking of the clock and her gloomy inference. He mentions her indeed by her baptismal name of Elizabeth ; which, in a Spanish court, naturally became *Isabella*. I have antedated by a year or two the marriage of the Archduchess Christina.

THE LEGEND OF "THE BIG FLUKE,"

AND

THE TALE OF "THE ROSS BEH WRECKER."

BY MAURICE O'CONNELL, ESQ., M.P.

"THERE'S nothing more for me to see about Killarney," was my reflection, as I sat alone in one of the drawing-rooms at Finn's Hotel, on the third evening of my fourth sojourn in that town. "Glengariff is as familiar to my eyes as Bond Street—'Gougone Bana' I have visited nearly a dozen times ; and how *am* I to occupy the remainder of my time?" As I spoke, my eye fell upon a Dublin newspaper of a week old, which had in vain, morning and evening, wooed my attention since my arrival at Killarney.

In a moment my plans were laid : I had, in idea, made a decided hit. But the time is not yet come to unfold my whole scheme ; to forward which I instantly summoned the head waiter of Finn's, to consult him on the means of reaching the route I pro-

posed. A public conveyance would, I was told, take me to Colinsween, within fourteen miles of my destination ; but I had a horse, and the "Valentia Steam" took no four-footed passenger above the size of a pointer. Here we were at what Dennis Donovan called "an amplash ;" but, after considering a few minutes, he solved the difficulty by saying— "Suré, there's Jack Begley come in just now on a return car from Tralee, and is going home to Cahir in the morning ; and, if your honour will be up early enough, Jack's just the best guide you could have : but you must be up early, for he's going express, and your honour's luggage can go by the Jingle." To this arrangement there could be no objection ; and, accordingly, six o'clock the next morning found me clear of the town of

Killarney, on the road "to the West," with the aforesaid "Jack Begley" shambling along by my side, at a pace which kept my pony in a smartish trot. Begley was evidently well-known along the road; scarcely a peasant passed without changing a word with him, and two or three gentlemen, whom we met on their way into Killarney, drew bridle and detained him for a few minutes in conversation, doubtless as to the name and quality of the "stranger"—a point on which Begley could afford them no information. Jack himself was such a character as one could not hope to meet, except in Ireland, and particularly in that part thereof through which I was now journeying. He had been described to me by his patron the waiter as—"Not a fool—but a kind of an ape—a sort of half natural like, plaze your honour." And his whole appearance stamped him as belonging to the "Davie Gellatley" school; without the poetry, but with more of utility than that hero of his kind. Jack's head was, as is usual among the class to which he belongs, of more than usual magnitude, and covered with a tangled mass of hair, which had evidently never known any comb save the fingers of the owner, by which its recesses were ever and anon disturbed, as a prelude to his answers to my numerous questions. His eyes seemed as if they had been selected at random from amongst the refuse of Nature's workshop; but, though not quite as bright as diamonds, still one of them could boast of being decorated with a pearl. His person was short and thickset, and his bare legs bore token of the frequency of his journeys, no less by the marks of scars and scratches, than by the strong development of the various muscles. He was comfortably dressed in a sailor's jacket, waistcoat and trousers of pilot cloth, the latter rolled up nearly to his knees, and had jauntily stuck on one side of his mop of hair, a low-crowned tarpaulin hat, much the worse for wear, and bearing the words "New Grove" in white letters on its front. Of course he wore no shoes—he never had, he told me, but when he went to the *dancing school*, and then they *burnt* his feet so that he sold them for a "quarter of tobaccy."

My carpet bag was strapped upon his shoulders; and, when I considered that, in addition thereunto, he carried in his hands two parcels, one containing "six pounds of powder for the young gentlemine," and the other, "some stuff for the doctor," the speed with which he got along was to me matter

of some surprise. As despatch was not a paramount object with me, I walked a considerable portion of the way by his side, and endeavoured to draw him out; but into any thing like connected conversation I could not lead him. He paused after each remark of mine—glanced at me out of the corner of his eye—and then, after a pause of some seconds, the reply would be bolted forth, as if ejected by some projectile machinery within the man.

He was no sailor, he said, but wore sailors' clothes, because "all the gentlemine did—and when the Liberator, God bless him, ordered the clothes for him *this year*, he wouldn't be out of the fashion." He got a suit of clothes every year for running messages, and his honour gave him some check shirts, and the gentlemine were all very good to him. His hat was a present from one of the sailors of "the Gat," as he pronounced the word Yacht; and then he paused—and asking my honour's leave to light the dudheen, he proceeded to unroll the trouser below his right knee, and produced from among its folds a short pipe jappaned by constant use, and a piece of tobacco wrapt up in a dirty paper, which, taking out the tobacco, he threw from him as he turned into a cabin to fill and light its companion the pipe. I have almost a Mahometan propensity for picking up pieces of waste paper; and, on examining this, I found that it was an acknowledgment from one of the employés of the provincial bank at Tralee, of the lodgement of two hundred pounds, per J. B. "to the credit of Messrs Parry and Grant of Colinsween," and bearing date only the preceding morning. I had just finished my inspection, when my guide issued from the cabin with his steamer at full work, and, glancing at the paper, clapped his hand hurriedly to the place whence he had extracted it, and then broke out with—

"Sure your honour will give me that back, and not ruin a poor boy entirely."

"Why, Jack," said I, "how came you by this?"

"Sure I got it at Tralee, sir," was the answer, "when I lodged the money."

"And who," I asked, "was fool enough to trust you with such a sum?"

"Faith, thin, you're the only gentlemine I ever see would call thim fools, when they bates the country for 'cuteness; and sure it's me they always sinds with their money, and nivir lost a penny before—but now, that I dropt the resate—and hasn't lost that yet,

for I know you'll give it back, sir; for I'll be kilt if I come without it, and I hope your honour won't say I told you; for the never a more I'd be sint wid de money if you did."

His speech being rewarded by the restoration of the paper, Jack trudged along as before, solacing himself with the pipe, and answering my further questions as concisely as possible, as if fatigued by his oratorical exertion. We passed the gate of Grenagh; then the bridge and demesne of Beaufort; next the seat of M'Gillicuddy of the Reeks; and thence made our way without halting through Killorglein.

For some short distance, after leaving the last named village, a small stream runs by the side of the road, into the channel of which my companion stepped, and paddled deliberately along its course as long as it continued parallel with the road, looking all the time intently at the stream, as if seeking something beneath its waters. At first I concluded that he did so for the purpose of cooling his feet; but when, as he left the channel, he exclaimed, "Well, I've done that many a time, and never seen one of 'em yet," I was tempted to ask him what he sought for, and was answered with—"Why, a fluke, (Anglice, flounder,) to be sure, sir." "And why should you seek one there?" said I; "it seems a most unlikely place to find them in." "O, sir, did ye never hear what the fluke did there to St. Patrick?" "No—but I should like to hear it now."

Jack Begley began:—"Why, sure, sir, when St. Patrick was going on by here to Iveragh, he stopped at the sthrame here, to wash his face; and, at that time, they say the sthrame was full of fish, and plenty of flukes above all, and the only place in Ireland that they were to be found. And that time the flukes had their mouths straight, like another fish, and not all as one as now. Well, sir, when St. Patrick was done washing his-silf, he knilt down to take a dhrink: and who should be in the water, just under him, but a big villain of a fluke—as big as a turbot. And when he see St. Patrick kneeling down, and seen his long beard, that was all full of dust from the road, he begins to laugh; and, says he, 'That's the queerest ould man ever I see;' and he calls a parcel of the foolish young flukes about him. 'See how I'll frighten this ould chap,' says he; and, when St. Patrick was just touching the wather—and he mighty thrusty—the blackguard of a fluke hit him a slap in

the lips with his tail that made his mouth bleed, an' splashed him all over wid de watur; and wid that, all the young flukes began to laugh, and put up their heads, and make crooked mouths at the Saint. 'Which of ye'se done this?' says he. "'Twas I,' says the big fluke, putting up his head, and winking his eye, and putting out his tongue, and twisting his mouth twice worse than the rest—and they all screeched laughing, so that you'd hear thim from this to Finn's. 'Well,' says the Saint to the big fluke, 'for that same thing,' says he, 'I'll change you into a stone; and you shan't be in the wathur for evermore. Come, step out here, my lad,' says he; and with that, sir, the big fluke steps ashore, and walks up to the top of the hill here; and there they say he is—God save us all!"—pointing to a large flat slab of stone which lay on the road side. "Well, sir, when the little flukes seen what happened, they began to cry, and roar, and ax the Saint's pardon; and 'Ye poor fools,' says he, 'I'll pardon yese; but the never a fish but a fluke shall be seen in this river for evermore; and ye, and all yir childer, shall have crooked mouths,' says he; and, sure enough, sir, the divil another kind of fish was ever seen here, and all the flukes in Ireland have crooked mouths; and I was looking for one in the river to show your honour; but, though I look every time I come by, the never a fluke did I see there yet, and I suppose I looked there a hundred times if I did onct; and that's the whole story about it—about the fluke and St. Patrick; and the sorrow a word of a lie in it, but tould it just as I hurd it. And there's Lough Cona, plase yir honour."

I looked, and saw, at the distance of perhaps a quarter of a mile, nearly encircled by hills, (except to the westward, whence rushed a rapid stream, that, winding beneath the rising ground on which we stood, sought its termination in the adjacent bay,) a lake of considerable size, unruffled by a breeze, and shining like a mirror beneath the now nearly meridian sun. As I gazed, a small boat broke the placid surface, the rowers suddenly rested on their oars, and the notes of a bugle were heard, pealing forth the fine old martial air of "O'Sullivan's March," while wood, and rock, and mountain, were filled with the thronging echoes. The bugle ceased, the echoes faded gradually into silence, the oars again glimmered in the water; and, as the boat shot behind one of the steep headlands which project into the

lake, Begley exclaimed, "Well, we'll get a salmon at Wales's, any way; for the men have been fishing, and Jack Gansey wouldn't be playing the bugle, only they're done. So, if you come on, sir, we'll be at the place as soon as them."

Charming as was the prospect before me, I yet felt that a slice of the fresh Cona salmon was not to be despised, particularly as it was probable that I should be entertained not merely with music, but with the traditions of the neighbourhood, by my old acquaintance, Gansey; and, accordingly, pushing on, we crossed the river by a singularly inconvenient bridge, some short distance from which we came in view of a snug, slated tenement, which my guide told me was "Wales's." A short time brought me to the door, over which a gilt lettered board informed me, that "Wm. Wales was licensed to sell wine, spirits, beer, and tobacco." Around stood several loiterers—the boatmen of whom Begley had spoken—listening to the music of Gansey's pipes, and awaiting "their allowance" from the landlord. Begley was met with five or six hundred thousand welcomes from each of the party. Young Gansey, recognising me on my approach, civilly touched his hat, and took charge of my horse. His father replied to my inquiries after his health, by saying he was "Well, and glad to see me so." *Nota bene*—He is stone blind. And, while the woman of the house proceeded to make preparations for my entertainment, I had time to look about me, and examine this caravansera of the desert, in the keeper of which I found a jolly native of Lincolnshire—thrown like a waif upon the sandy shores, and amusing with his English accent, and edifying by his English habits of order, cleanliness, and regularity, the wild natives of Glen Begh.

"Rather a wild-looking country, this Glen Beh seems to be," said I, as, returning from a short excursion, I seated myself by Mrs. Wales's well-furnished table.

"Yes, sir," replied Gansey, to whom I addressed myself, and whom I found seated in the corner of the little parlour, in a posture of peculiar attention, his head erect, the face turned towards me, and his sightless eyes fixed in the direction from which my voice proceeded, as if he literally listened through them. "Yes, sir, the country is wild-looking: and the people are wild enough too, in

spite of all Lord Healdy has done to try and civilize them: a power of money he has laid out here; but he can't cure them entirely. But they are not as bad as they were in the times I have heard tell of, when it was scarce safe to travel through the Glen; for you were either forced into a quarrel, or maybe beaten for sport, and robbed to pay them for their trouble. The worst they do now is to plunder a wreck; for they say that the sea gives them that, and that they have a right to it: and a good property it was to them before the light-houses were built on the Skelligs; for then there used to be as many as three ships ashore at once after a gale, with, maybe, all hands drowned; but I never knew any of 'em long the better for money made that way, for it went as it came."

"And badly got it was," said I, (wishing, if possible, to lure Gansey into a story, of which I knew his stock was large;) "for, I suppose, they used to hoist false lights to draw the vessels into the breakers, and murder such of the crews as escaped to shore, that they might not give information."

"No, sir," replied Gansey; "they never murdered any one, nor did they show false lights but once; and that time, the man that did it suffered for it; so that none of them ever tried it again."

"How did that happen, Gansey? I should like to hear it," said I.

"If you prefer it to a tune on the pipes, sir, sure it's aisy for me to tell it; and faith, I'm bothered with playing the pipes all the morning. And so—(thank you, sir—your health, sir: that's a good tumbler of punch, and will put the life in me for the story;)—and so, sir, here's all I know about the

"ROSS BEH WRECKER.

"Your honour," continued Gansey, (whose phraseology I shall follow as nearly as my memory and the few notes I made at the moment will allow me,) "must observe, that the bay, along which the Iveragh road will take you presently, is Dingle Bay—until it comes just below us here, where there's sand-banks running out on each side, and only a nasty narrow channel for vessels—that it's only possible to get up at particular times of the tide, and up this you get into 'Castlemaine harbour.' There are three rivers running into this harbour—the Maine, the Soune, and the Carra; and it's those rivers, I'm told, that cause the sand-banks and things that makes the upper part

of the bay dangerous to vessels. The promontory on this side is called Ross Beh, and it's upon it that most of the vessels that are wrecked run; for, generally, masters of ships know nothing of this part of the coast; and often, when they could get easily enough through the channel into Castlemaine harbour, they'll be lost for want of knowing where safety is to be found. Well, sir, long ago, when this country was a deal wilder than it is now, and had but two or three families living in it, there was one Cournane that held a lot of ground down by Ross Beh; and all this place here was waste and barren, and he had in a manner the whole of the lower parts hereabout; for there was no one to use it but he, the other tenants living up the Glen; and, indeed, there were not many of them, and few resorting to these parts, but people that would be on their keeping, and cattle stealers, smugglers, and such like; so that Cournane, as I was saying, had this whole place to himself, he and his family, and lived down near the sea, where he had a long low house, and as many flat stones obliged to be laid on the thatch, to keep it from blowing away, as would have slated it twice over. He had two sons living with him, and the wife and children of his eldest son, that was off out of the country, (on account of something that happened at the fair of Killoilyn a year or two before the time I'm talking of,) and his two daughters, and their husbands and children; so that the house was pretty full; but they were snug people, and had plenty of every thing—besides what they got now and then from a wreck; though, indeed, Cournane wasn't craving in that way, but would let any of the people that might be saved take what they wished or wanted, and would share with the other tenants; so that he had the good word and good wish of all who knew him. Well, sir, it was winter time, and had been blowing hard from the westward of north for some days, until, at last, it blew up into a regular gale of wind, and was blowing all night; and, just about the going away of night, Cournane and his family were awakened with hearing three or four guns fired from the sea, and seeming to come nearer every report. 'God help all poor souls in distress at say to-night!' says Tim—(that was his name, sir)—'Get up, boys,' says he, 'and we'll go and see if we can help the cratures.' And they got up and put on them, and down they went.

And, when they came down, there was the strand all covered over with pieces of wreck; and they begun gathering them together, and they found the bodies of nine or ten men, all dead; and, a little distance higher up the beach than the rest, there was a big dog, lying by what seemed to be the body of a man; but, when they came to him, they found the life was in him yet; and he was brought up to the house. And they went on searching about till they got all they could, for the neighbours came down soon; and they brought their gatherings up to the house with them, and found the man that was saved there quite well, only his arm that was broken—which they got a knowledgeable man in the neighbourhood to set; and then they learned all about the ship and crew. The man that was saved was the captain of her, and was coming home from the West Indies with rum and sugar, and a good deal of dollars and other things, when they were driven into Dingle Bay by stress of weather. And they could not get into Dingle or any where, but went ashore under Ross Beh; and had only time to get out the boats when she went to pieces—being old, and crazy, and heavy laden—and the boats were swamped before they got far from the wreck, and only the captain saved, that was brought ashore by the big dog when the rest were drowned. He was owner as well as captain, and was nearly ruined, he said, by the loss, but still thankful for his life being saved; and a very nice man all that saw him said he was. Well, of course, he could not go away very soon, on account of his broken arm, but stopped a good while at Cournane's, and was treated with the best they had, until he was cured; and then one night when they were sitting round the fire talking, he told Cournane that he would be for going away the next morning, or as soon as he could get a horse and guide; and he began to thank him for his kindness and all like this. 'Well, Captain,' says Cournane, (Captain Killick, they said his name was,) 'if you go away this way, you'll go away a poor man,' says he; 'and woudn't it be better for you to stop here with us, and take share of what we have—and we'll always give you the best of it—than to be going away seeking your fortune again; maybe to lose it all again, when you had it just made—and perhaps not to save the life either, so well as you did now?' With that the captain turned, and looked at him for a little; and—'It's few would make the offer,

Tim,' says he; 'and I thank you for it as much as if I took it; but I have a wife and children that don't know where I am, and to work for them is my duty. I have a little left still, and, with that and my own work, we'll do well enough, please God.' 'Then, sir,' says Tim, 'if it's go you will, God forbid I should keep what's your wife's, and your children's, from them. Here,' says he, opening the chest, and showing a big bag, 'here is what dollars and money was saved from the wreck; they're all yours, we know, from what we heard you say; and, if we could give you back the goods, we would too; but this you must take with you, when you go—and God send you luck with it, wherever you go!' And, 'Amen,' says all the family, but one. Well, the captain was twice as thankful as he was before—and promised he'd never forget it; and forgave them the rum, and sugar, and the goods. And, says he—'That's more than my own countrymen would do for me, if I was wrecked on their coast; but it's trying to get the vessel wrecked, they'd be.' And so they asked what he meant; and he told them how, when he was mate of a vessel, they were in a gale of wind, off the coast of Cornwall, and saw another ship's light, as they thought, before them, and steered after it; and the ship went ashore; and he and some of the hands got into a small boat, and were drifted ashore, a long way off; and how, next morning, when they tried to get opposite where the vessel was wrecked, they found that all of their comrades that got ashore alive were murdered, and all the wreck plundered; and they'd have been murdered, too, but that there was a magistrate with some soldiers down on the beach that saved them; and they found that the light was no ship's light, but only an old horse that the people got, and tied a lantern to his tail, and spancelled him, and drove him along shore; and it was a way they had in that country. And many other stories he told them. And the next day, he went away; and, for a long time, they used to hear from him, now and then, and get presents from him, and hear he was getting on well; but, at last, they did not hear of him for a long time, and thought he was lost. About that very time, there came a couple of bad seasons together; and Cour-nane's crops were scant, and a blast came over his cattle, and many of them died, and more were drowned or clifted, and things

were getting bad with him; and just that minute the landlord took to raise his rent; and, every way, he was going down in the world. There was a daughter's husband of his, that lived with him, a black-minded kind of man, that was the only one that didn't say "Amen," when he wished Captain Killick luck with the money, and was never rightly satisfied with any thing, but he would be always complaining and grumbling, until the neighbours called him 'Shawn Grownuith,' which means 'grumbling Jack;' and he grumbled twice as much at that—and, of course, the more he grumbled, the more they took delight in calling it to him. This fellow would never let Cour-nane alone, since he gave the dollars back to the captain; and used be saying; he'd want them some time or other, and be sorry for parting with them. And now when the trouble came, you may be sure he didn't spare him, but worried the life fairly out of the poor man. It was the month of March, just coming on Ladyday; and if Cour-nane hadn't the rent ready to the minute, he was to be served with notice, and, of course, would be turned out without any mercy. And, as he was sitting one day, thinking on what he would do, this Grumbling Jack begins to bullyrag him again about the money he gave the captain back, and telling him how comfortable he would be now, if he had kept it; and, at last, the poor man says, 'Well, leave me alone, Jack,' says he; 'the money's gone, and I wish I had it back in any way, if 'twas only to stop your mouth; but I fear there's not much chance of that. I wish that captain would send us as much as would pay the rent any way, and we'd forgive him the rest,' says he. 'I'm afraid you'll wait long enough till he sends you the money,' says Grumbling Jack; 'but sure he taught you how you'd have a chance of getting some, if you've only courage to try.' 'What do you mean, man?' says Cour-nane. 'What I mean is plain enough,' says Jack, 'and it's long enough ago you'd do it, if you weren't a fool. There's two large vessels come into the bay this morning; and now the equinoctials are blowing, and they'll be obliged to run up the bay; and, if we tie a lanthorn to your ould horse and spancel him, and turn him out, the way the captain said, each of them will think it's the light aboard the other that he sees; and we'll have them both in the thrap before morning, or one of them at least; and then

we'll have a chance of getting more than you gave to that captain, like a big fool.' 'God forgive you, Jack!' says the old man. 'Is it a murderer you want to make me?' says he. 'Sure, isn't it better than to be a beggar?' says Jack; 'and what murder is it to tie a lanthorn to an ould horse's tail, that would be spancellor and turned to graze?—but 'twould be ten thousand murders to lose the farm, and the stock, and be turned out to beg the world wide.' And he went on till the old man was fairly bothered:—and—'Let me alone,' says he, 'and hould that tongue of yours that never had a pleasant word on it yet; and I charge you never to presume to talk of the likes to me again.' And so he went away; and says Jack to himself, 'He didn't tell me not to do it—only I don't know what to do for a lanthorn'—and away he went, poking about, mighty serious; but, as it was always the way with him, it was nothing good that he was thinking about, but quite the contrary.

"Well, sir, that very evening it came on to blow pretty fresh, and before dark it was a regular hurricane; and the family were sitting down eating the potatoes, when all of a sudden Courname missed Grumbling Jack, and he asked where he was; (for he was always sure to be first in at meals, and to eat more than any two of the others, though all the time he'd be talking and abusing the very potatoes he'd be putting into his mouth—and signs by, they never throve with him, for he was always a yallow, hungry-looking wretch;) but no one knew any thing about him, till one of the childer said they saw him riding the ould horse off to the priest's that day, but wouldn't tell what he wanted, only said maybe he wouldn't be home until late, and not to be waiting for him; and so they thought no more about it, but ate their supper and went to bed; for the night was so bad they thought, of course, that Jack would stop out at the street* near the chapel—all but ould Tim, that was uneasy in his mind when he remembered what they had been talking about in the morning, and couldn't sleep. And so he sat up by the fire smoking by himself, and all the rest of them snoring about him, until it was getting into the morning, and the gale was just at its height, when there came some one to the door and tried the latch; and when whoever it was found that it was fastened within—for they

* Any assemblage of cabins is thus called, particularly if there be a whisky-house among them.

put a spade again' it when they went to bed—they put their shoulders to it and broke the ould door off the hinges; and in they came, two men dressed like sailors, and all wet and tired; and, when the first of them saw ould Tim, he calls out 'Father!' and catches him round the neck, and begins screeching and roaring till he woke the whole family; and he fell to kissing the old man as if it were a purty girl he had, instead of an ould fellow, with a goat's-skin beig on him, and the dudthreen† jammed fast in his mouth—for he didn't get time to take it out, but was half choked with the smoke before he could get loose; and when he did, 'Is that my son, Pat?—and what brings you here now, and dressed that way?' says he. —'I'm your son, Pat, and I'm dressed this way, because I'm second mate 'board a ship, with one Captain Killick, if you know him; and that's what brought me here; and all hands must come down to the shore with me, for fear any thing would happen; for she's in the bay to-night.' With that, all got up; and, while they were putting on them, Pat said a few words to his wife and children, and then away they set down to the shore together. It was blowing harder every minute, and they could scarcely get along; but, by dint of creeping, they made a little way, and, just as they got out of the shelter of the garden ditch, 'Sail, ho!' says the other sailor that came with Pat; 'I see her light off here, just on a line with the gap, and she seems to be standing to the northward,' says he. So, when he pointed it out, —'God forgive us, that light's on the top of the Cliff,' says ould Tim; and then his mind misgave him about Grumbling Jack, and 'For the love of God, boys, run that way, a couple of ye, and see what it is,' says he. Just then it moderated a little between two squalls, and a couple of the younger men made for the light, and the second sailor with them; and the rest went straight down towards the shore; and, as they went along, they saw the light begin to move very fast all of a sudden, and then it went out all at once; and then, as if in a minute, the storm ceased, and the clouds dispersed, and it became quite lightsome like, with the gray of the morning. 'I'm thinking that light was there for no good,' says Pat; 'it must have been something more than common, or the gale wouldn't stop so soon after it went out; but here, we're on the beach.' And, sure enough, when they got down, they saw the

† Short pipe.

ship a short distance from them, just standing off the land; and, as the weather was moderating every minute, she made a good tack off into the bay, and the day came on quite calm and beautiful; and there she lay, and they watching her for some time, until the young men that went after the light came down to them, looking mightily grave, entirely. 'What ails ye, boys?' says ould Tim; 'and what's come of the light?' 'Oh' then, that was the bad light for some people,' says one of the lads. 'What do you mean?' says they, all at once. 'Come this way, and you'll see,' says he—and they did, and sure enough when they come round a corner of the rock, there, at the bottom of one of the highest cliffs, was the ould horse lying dead, with the lanthorn the priest used to have to take out at night with him, when he was going to a sick call, tied to his tail, and Grumbling Jack lying near him, all smashed to pieces, and the life just in him enough for him to be able to speak. And his story was soon told:—He went to the priest's to borrow the lanthorn, pretending he wanted to fetch the doctor man to some of the family, and tied it round the ould horse's tail, and was driving him along the cliff, spancellor, for a false light to the vessels; and when he heard the boys that were sent to see what it was, speaking, he got frightened, and took off the spancel, and got on the horse to gallop away; but the ould horse was blind, and took him over the cliff; and he died in about half an hour, screeching for the priest; and they say his ghost is seen every stormy night driving a headless horse along that very cliff. And he was the only one that ever set up a false light at Ross Beh—and that's how he suffered for it. And wasn't it curious, sir, how Pat came in just at that minute—for he'd been put ashore in the morning with

the other man, that was from Killoilin, to go see his family; and they loitered on their way from Coonunna to Ross Beh, and so they came in so late?"

"But the rest of the family, and Captain Killick—what became of them?" said I.

"Oh, sir, all I heard more, was just the end of the children's story—that 'they lived as happy as the day was long;' and if they didn't, that you and I may!—It's dry work this story-telling—will I play you a tune now, sir?"

"Take this first, Gansey?" said I, handing him a second tumbler of punch; having consumed which, he was commencing to tune his pipes;—when interrupted by the driving up of the "Valentia steam," as the outside ear conveying goods and passengers between Killarney and Cahirsiveen is denominated. Finding that Gansey and his son were proceeding to the latter place in this vehicle, in order to assist at some merry-making, I determined also to travel by it; and, mounting Begley on my pony, took my place accordingly, much to the delight of Jack Scannell, the driver, who having, hitherto, had no cargo more profitable to him than my heavier luggage, with which he could hold no converse, and from which he could expect no payment of 'driver's fees,' had hitherto entered this as a blank day, so far as his private purse was concerned. We proceeded from Wales's for about a mile, towards the foot of a conical hill covered with thriving plantations, belonging to, and planted by the present Lord Headly; then turned to the left along the banks of the river "Beh," from which the glen and promontory derive their names; crossing which, a couple of miles higher up, by a newly erected bridge, I found myself, for the first time, fairly within the precincts of Iveragh.

BLANCHE DELAMERE.

BY MRS. JOHNSTONE.

CHAPTER I.

BLANCHE, COUNTESS OF DELAMERE, was "the accident of an accident;" and one exceedingly mortifying and provoking to the noble lady whose pure Norman stock she seemed sent into the world as if on purpose to taint with the admixture of her plebeian blood.

The father of Blanche Georgiana Yates Delamere, had been the only surviving representative, almost the only living relative, and the sole heir to the long accumulating honours of a very ancient and still wealthy family, now represented by Marguerite Blanche Rade-gunde Hilda, Countess of Delamere, a Peeress in her own right.

In very early youth, when just entered at Oxford, a high-spirited and ingenuous, though a proud and wayward boy, the Honourable George Delamere had become passionately enamoured of a very lovely, ingratiating, and well-educated girl, who, by the ill favour of her stars, had been promoted to the perilous office of reader and amanuensis to the Countess, his grandmother; and who, until "the low and degrading attachment" was surmised, had, from her meekness of submission and sweetness of manners, been rather a favourite with her haughty patroness. The origin of the beautiful Margaret Yates was no loftier than being the fondly cherished and only child of the widowed pastor of Stoke Delamere, himself the descendant of an old stanch race of respectable north-country yeomen, some of whom were now becoming opulent, from having early engaged in the cotton manufacture.

When the guilt of the youthful culprits had been fully detected, and it was ascertained that the heraldic readings, for which the Honourable George all at once took so violent a fancy, had been followed by stolen interviews in the gardens, and way-layings in the glades and dingles of the park, through which Margaret passed on her weekly visit to her father, the Countess summoned the youth to her presence. She received him in the library in baronial state, and with the grandeur, dignity, and severity of the times when aristocratic parents were the stately tyrants of their children, the children hating or dissembling slaves. The guilt and audacity of him! a boy, a child! meditating insult or injury to a young person under the protection of her roof, one of her household! immediately about her person! was duly expatiated upon by the Countess.

"Insult, injury to Margaret!" exclaimed the arraigned youth, indignantly.

"Presumptuous boy! this tone to me!" returned the Countess, the blood of the Delameres rushing to her knitting and throbbing brows: "Is the seduction and shame of a virtuous girl, however low be her rank, no insult to me, no degradation to you?"

The eyes of the youth flashed wildfire.

"What wretch has abused your ear, madam? The love of her guardian angel is not more pure towards Margaret Yates than is mine. That I love her is most true; that I hope to deserve — to win — her love, most true; but that——"

"The boy is mad!" cried the Countess, sternly. "Do you, young sir, remember who

you are, and in whose presence you stand? If you forget, I cannot.—*Her* love! win *her* love! away, sir; your tutors have been negligent. This boyish folly must be whipped out of you." [This taunt to the proud heir of the Delameres, a man of eighteen, a lover of three months!] "It shall be my task to command the girl her duty."

The lofty dame rung the large silver bell which stood on the table before her easy chair, or rather her throne of judgment, and Margaret was ordered up in thoughtless, passionate haste. The Countess was not a woman of conciliation or management. She could not be made to understand how a Delamere, a peeress in her own right, one of a race ennobled as long as the De Rooscs and the De Cliffords, should not carry all points with a high hand, or by her sovereign pleasure.

The pale and trembling girl, conscience-struck, and inexpressibly alarmed, glided slowly into the room, like a doomed thing. Tears were her only answer to the abrupt and contumelious questionings of the Countess; and the sobbing, reiterated words, "Forgive me, my lady; forgive me; suffer me to return to my poor father!" was all she could utter.

"Margaret, why forgiveness?" said the rebel lover, walking up to the girl's side: "Is it, then, a crime to love me? But you do not love me; you contemn me, shun me, perhaps hate me; while I"——The sentence was interrupted by Margaret's imploring glance, as, for one moment, she raised hersweet eyes to her impetuous lover, full of tender reproach, and of inextinguishable love. That look's electricity was instantly felt by one who, if she had ever known, must have long outlived the softening remembrances of the passion whose excess it spoke.

"Are we to have a love-scene rehearsed in my very presence?" cried the Countess, starting from her chair. "Begone, audacious boy! on your duty I command you!——The bold companion of your folly shall be fitly cared for. Gracious heavens! for what sin of mine or of my fathers' is this stroke sent upon my house in my old age!"

CHAPTER II.

"Blood of the Mirabels!" said the jocular, witty, and impudent new-come London footman to the three giggling housemaids and the young under-laundress, as they sat over their double ale in the servants' hall, about

two hours after the scene described above,—“what a kippage my lady was in! and what a runpus up stairs! Mr. George off like the whirlwind, as if the deuce were after him, while it is only the chaplain to fetch him back; and Miss Yates, poor thing, crying and packing her handbox. Can't say why the lad should put out his eyes to a pretty girl, or sing dumb when he has a parable to put forth to her, because the old 'un is as proud as Lucifer's bride.”

“It's very 'dacious, though, of a poor Methodist's daughter to go for to think of being a 'my lady,'” remarked the elder housemaid.

“But they say she won't or would not have him; and I'm sure she always runs out of his way as if the red bull were after her, when she sees him in the Chestnut Avenue, for I see'd that mysel',” added the younger girl.

“Poh! all make believe of you skittish ladies, Miss Molly,” replied the footman, archly: “run that you may be pursued and caught behind the bush.”

“Well, if I were a young gentleman, or a young lord,” said the youngest and prettiest of the housemaids, “I would follow my own fancy, and marry ever a pretty girl I liked, whatever my grandmother said, though with never a shift”—she corrected herself hastily—“*chemise* to her back.”

“Oh fie, Miss Betty,” interrupted the footman, smiling wickedly and archly; and the young and really pure-minded girl blushed at a supposed breach of delicacy; while Miss Molly, affectedly pushing the town-bred valet, cried, “Go, you naughty fellow!”

“I mean I would rather marry for love than money, any day,” added the young girl.

“Bravo!” cried Harry, in honour of this generous sentiment from a very pretty girl. “And make pretty Miss Yates 'my lady,' rather than ever a one of that skinny, dun, Lady Honoria, my lady wishes to tie my Lord George to; and she is an old puss too.” There was here a side-glance at Miss Molly, head *broom* of the chambers in Val Crucis Abbey; and Harry laughed and Betty giggled.

“Had she but a few drops of good blood in her veins, *our George* might do worse,” continued the free and easy gentleman's gentleman.

“Blood here, blood there,” said the provincial under-cook, “the blood without the suet won't make the dumplin'. And Mr.

Jervis Yates, her uncle, is as rich as Cruises; and a-coining o' more, by them factories of his'n.”

“And neither chick nor child but herself among the Yateses; and were she once a 'my lady,' never a poor soul of his kin would handle a stiver of the fortune the nigger is grinding out o' the faces o' the poor,” said the laundress, who had great local knowledge of the district in which Mr. Yates was flourishing.

“Ay, ay,” added the north-country under-cook, “ilka one lards the fat pig's tail. But I reckon if Lord George got Jervis Yates' fortin, they might keep a decenter table for poor servants, and no ha' the house-keeper's longnose for ever a-poking in the dripping can; so I says—Amen to the match!”

“Suppose, ladies, we drink to the good luck of the match,” cried the gallant Harry.

“But, gracious, not in more of that nasty, heavy, fat ale,” said Betty.

“A pitcher of stingo is drink for a squire,” cried the under-cook and brewer of the Abbey.

“Faugh!” rejoined the refined Harry, producing a bottle of old and choice claret; and the happy marriage of “*our George* and Miss Yates,” was toasted by “the ladies” in the best vintage of the Countess's cellar.

Before this revel was concluded below stairs, the Countess had conferred above with her chaplain. Afterwards she consulted with her woman, and finally her pillow; and the result was, that Margaret should, as a measure of prudence and safety, remain at the Abbey, while her lover was to be sent to London till his college term.

The Countess repented the hasty explanation into which her temper (she said her feelings) had hurried her. But George was still a boy, whom the first glimpse of the world, of good society, and of well-born women, and even elegant women of pleasure, would show his folly and bad taste; and the “audacious hussy” must be taught her duty. “What is Mr. George but a child?” said the lady's maid. “Heaven bless him! a mere child. A *woman* of seventeen is more than a match for a *boy* of nineteen, at any time, let alone one having the arts of our sly Miss Margaret.”

The hopes of the Countess—if it were possible to believe that she calculated upon the pleasures and seductions of the capital leading her grandson to forget his plebeian

but virtue-strengthening attachment — were fully accomplished. George Delamere, liberally supplied with money, and surrounded by temptations, plunged into the vicious excesses of young men of his rank; and, among her other sufferings and mortifications, Margaret had soon the misery of hearing the chaplain and his patroness discuss the gay follies of the high-spirited youth, who vindicated the blood of the Delameres on the turf, at the gaming-table, and in every fashionable haunt. His letters to Margaret, which it had cost her such agony of apprehension to receive, became shorter and more rare; and alarm for the detection of the correspondence was lost in a feeling tenfold more bitter, when few letters came. Those few were, indeed, ever kind—or she tried to think so—ever delicate; and Margaret felt that all hope was not lost, that his heart could not be wholly changed, while he spared her those details of the fashionable scenes in which he was engaged, which he dutifully related to his grandmother, especially when he wanted a fresh remittance.

The agony of the Indian tied to the stake could not be more exquisite than the torture of the poor girl, compelled to control her feelings, and read and re-read these epistles to her conscious tormentor.

If, as we have said, the object of the Countess of Delamere had been to wean her heir from his ignoble attachment, by plunging him into scenes of dissipation, it was amply fulfilled. Before he was of age, the Honourable George had been three times “ruined,” and twice had his debts paid. If his incensed noble grandame ventured to remonstrate against his profligacy and extravagance, the ready and careless apology was, that, in refusing to consent to his union with Margaret Yates, she had sacrificed the happiness of his life to her heartless pride, and he cared not what came next. Such observations rendered the Countess doubly indignant; and for some months she had broken off all intercourse with her heir.

Poor Margaret was now to experience another stage of misery, when six weeks passed, and no tidings of any sort came from her lover; and when his former “cruel letters” would have been comparative bliss to the torturing anxiety, the yearning suspense of her present condition. No one in the Abbey now knew much of the prodigal heir of Delamere, save, perhaps, the steward and the lower servants. He had been on the Continent; he was said to have gone to

the Greek Isles. The newspapers, gently ministering to the tuft-hunting propensities of John Bull, who takes such a devouring interest in the movements of the Fashionable World, represented the Honourable George Delamere as now in London, now at Melton Mowbray, now here, now there; and Harry, the oracle of the servants’-hall, avouched “that the chap had some spunk in him after all—showed blood.”

The second table discussed the affair more respectfully and gravely; and the Countess Marguerite and the chaplain held daily synods and councils on the gloomy prospects of the House of Delamere.

“A dashing affair,” announced to the housemaids by Master Harry, about this time, deeply incensed the Countess, and also created an immense sensation in the Fashionable World. The Honourable George had, one night, by mistake, carried off a brilliant foreign singer in the first blaze of her fame, who was claimed as wife by some other foreigner, who, at least, appropriated her salary in the character of husband. In the first heat of sorrow and anger, the old Countess paused upon the propriety of yielding to the wishes of the headstrong youth, before he had utterly ruined the health and principles of the representative of the Delameres, painful and deplorable as the contemplated sacrifice was. What was her unfeigned astonishment, her glowing indignation, to hear the humble pastor, summoned to her august presence, emphatically declare, that, although he never would force his daughter’s inclinations, yet so far as legitimate paternal influence might go, it should be the duty of his life to warn Margaret against the misery and degradation of an alliance with George Delamere, until he was a changed man. He added, “that he trusted to his daughter’s good principles and strength of mind enabling her soon to eradicate every trace of her misplaced and unhappy attachment.” The silent though bitter tears of Margaret gave but faint confirmation of these hopes of her father. This night he carried her with him to his humble home—the mortified and angry Countess felt, as if in triumph.

“That insolent, beggarly, puritanical parson,” said she to her chaplain, “has pride enough for a cardinal. Will not even my coronet content his ambition for his offspring?” And the name of father and daughter were forbidden ever to be again mentioned within the walls of the Abbey. Whatever might have been the effect of this

dreadful visitation on the health of the pastor, it is certain that he did not long survive it. He died of a fever, caught in visiting a poor parishioner; and his orphan daughter was transferred to the care of her wealthy uncle, Mr. Jervis Yates.

Meanwhile, the rebellious heir was once more forgiven and taken into favour; and all his debts, whether of honour or dishonour, were once again discharged. As his opposition to every matrimonial overture continued as resolute as ever, and his name, at this time, was too much up to make him, without going through some intermediate state of penance and purification, an acceptable match in the great but poor aristocratic family, to one of whose five marriageable daughters his grandmother wished him to throw the handkerchief, it was settled that he should, for a time, sojourn in the East, as an *attaché* to an old family friend, lately appointed ambassador to the Porte.

Chance led George Delamere, immediately before his departure, to attend the county races, where again chance introduced him to his old acquaintance, Mr. Jervis Yates—a coarse and unpolished link in the electric chain of his fondest and purest associations. "Could she love me still, all unworthy as I am?" was his painful yet tender thought; and he felt that Margaret could! The accidental invitation of Mr. Jervis Yates was gladly accepted; and where much love was, there came full forgiveness. How willing was Margaret to listen to those half apologies, and half, and indeed very slight explanations; and to believe that seductive example, and the snares of the wicked and deceitful world, had, for a transitory moment, only for a moment, led him astray, who protested, and truly protested, that, in his wildest aberrations, he had never ceased to love her!—and how blest the gradation of her softening feelings, from the proud, silent indignation with which the neglected girl met him, through the silent, weeping regrets that such things had been—into full reconciliation and renewal of love and confidence—into a dream almost as ecstatic as that of the few untroubled moments of their early passion!

* There was now no high-principled and wise father to oppose the warnings of wisdom and duty to the wishes of the lovers. In the East, Mr. Delamere felt that he should be spared the sound of the fashionable world's dread and withering laugh, still so appalling to him; and Margaret gladly saw how she might for years escape the more dread pre-

sence of that awful lady who had been as the Nightmare of her young existence.

The only individual wholly delighted with the hurried marriage, was, perhaps, Mr. Jervis Yates, whose ambition was gratified at his niece becoming a Countess in prospect, upon any terms. It was in his carriage that the fugitives repaired to Scotland; it was he who doubled the allowance to the now Honourable Mrs. George Delamere, of the paltry £1500 a-year, withdrawn from her grandson by the Countess, in the first impulse of impotent fury; and it was also Mr. Jervis Yates against whom the fond and meekly-enduring young wife could feel, rather than perceive, that the stomach of her aristocratic partner rose, even while he accepted the low-born man's benefits.

CHAPTER III.

THE disobedient exiles had been for nearly two years in Syria—for Delamere had speedily disengaged himself from his diplomatic appointment—when Mr. Yates wrote, that the serious illness of the Countess opened a near prospect to the brilliant succession. The tidings came too late. Delamere, an altered and a sadder man, was, ere they reached him, daily watching either by an infant's cradle, or by a solitary grave under the Cedars of Lebanon—a grave, whither devoted affection for himself had hurried the gentle and endearing creature, who, in teaching him to love, had first taught him all the charm, and now all the misery and nothingness of life. Mrs. Delamere, in attending on her husband under an attack of the plague, when friends, attendants, and even physicians had abandoned them, subsequently sank under the frightful malady, from which her husband recovered; having, as he felt, paid her life for his. Their infant had been received into the family of the nearest European Consul, and Delamere abandoned himself to solitude and sorrow. Yet was not this time misspent.

It was during this melancholy period, that, in perusing the journals of his wife—so full, from earliest girlhood, of himself—and the familiar letters and private papers of her father, that the high-born Delamere obtained the first perception of a virtue which transcended all his previous ideas. The high-minded integrity, and simple, self-sustaining dignity of the humble pastor; the gentle forbearance, the unflinching tenderness—pure emanations of the unbounded love of her he had not learned fully to appreciate until she was

for ever gone—came to him now like heavenly revelations. How unworthy had he been of so noble, so ill-appreciated a creature!—yet how wretched to have lost her! How low seemed now the standard of the false world's morality, its honours, and its ambitions, compared with that placed before him in the writings of his humble, Christian father-in-law! He soon began to suspect that his dislike or antipathy to Mr. Jervis Yates might be the effect of aristocratic prejudice; for was not he the brother of this meek-minded and high-hearted man?—and, in the sudden recoil of his feelings, he appointed Mr. Yates of Bellevue Park, and his own friend the Consul, the guardians of the rights and person of his infant heiress.

The birth of the infant Blanche had been duly and dutifully intimated to the Countess, her august great-grandmother, who deigned no reply. Her only congratulation had been an angry remark to her chaplain upon the "impudence and presumption of bestowing one of the favourite female names of the Delameres upon Miss Yates' base-born brat," while she threw him the letter. That prudent and excellent person knew better than that the child was base-born; but he had no desire to cause his patroness another of those ambiguous fainting-fits, which might have proved fatal to his hopes of the good living, for which, through a dozen years, he had sorely laboured.

It was from the newspapers, soon afterwards, that the Countess first learned that "the bane of her life and of her house," as she termed poor Margaret, was no more:—"Dead or alive, I should never have acknowledged that intriguing and ungrateful minion as his wife; nor the offspring of a clandestine Scottish marriage as the heiress of Delamere," was her funereal lament.

Her hopes of the re-appearing glory of "her house" revived with the death of Margaret. Delamere was not yet twenty-three—and widowers of twenty-three, in all ranks, and however afflicted, are generally found consolable. Yet strange reports came home about his habits; nor were those who knew him best, surprised to hear that the wayward and eccentric heir of the Delameres—a man of violent passions and enthusiastic feelings—had, upon the death of his wife, and his own narrow escape from death, become devout, if not a gloomy ascetic, buried for life in one of the monasteries of Sinai. It was in vain that his grandmother repeatedly wrote, urging his return; in vain employed

the influence of the ambassador, and, finally, of the Sublime Porte, to drive the rebel to England, and to "his duty to his religion and his house."

Mr. Jervis Yates indirectly co-operated in urging the same measure; for, though the old lady, surrounded by chaplain, surgeon, steward, "own maid," housekeeper, and cook, all alike deeply interested in her preservation, seemed to bear a charmed life, it was medically if not morally certain, that she must pass off suddenly at last, and perhaps shortly; and therefore wise in her heir to be near the spot. Bellevue Park was quite at the command of Mr. Delamere.

The Countess despatched one letter, which she did not show even to her chaplain. It excited the deepest indignation in her grandson, though it contained the magnificent offer, the rich bribe, of instantly surrendering all the honours and emoluments of her station to her heir, upon terms specified. "Heartless woman—Cold-blooded aristocrat!" was the exclamation of the gloomy Delamere, to his friend, the wife of the Consul. "And she would actually strip herself of all those baubles and distinctions she prizes so highly, to gain her unworthy end! Her hatred and prejudice have depraved her natural feelings, as well as perverted her moral sense. Would she have me dishonour the memory of my wife, and bastardize my child; nay bribe me, by free license in vice, to the line of conduct which her idiotic pride exacts?"

He replied to the offer of the Countess rashly and resentfully, though sorrowfully; and, in answer to one insinuation, stated, "that all the honours of English nobility could not wean him from a lonely grave in Syria; nor all the Powers of Hell keep him from England, if the honour of his wife's memory, and the rights of birth of her child, made his appearance needful there." The rage of the Countess, on the receipt of this letter, was unbounded. The measure of her hatred of her contumacious heir at last fairly exceeded that which she had entertained towards his submissive wife.

Failing the infant Blanche, the honours of the lofty and far-descended Delameres reverted to a little boy still at school in a remote town in Ireland, whither his mother, the poor widow of "a Captain Delamere," had retired from motives of economy. The degree of kindred was so distant, that only a herald or genealogical lawyer could have clearly reckoned it, but with the mother of the boy a communication was instantly opened,

The grave in Syria was not long solitary ; and indurated as the feelings of the Countess seemed, in the first revulsion and anguish of her heart for the loss of the last of her family—of him who had been once the idol of her hopes—sentiments resembling tenderness sprang up, and the claims of the infant Blanche might have been favourably considered, save for the impertinent interference of the child's guardian and low-born relative, Jervis Yates, Esq., of Bellevue Park.

“Do I not remember this paltry weaver, when a lout of a boy, deeming it an honour to run through the muddy lanes to open the gates for the lowest of my menials,” said the haughty dame ; “while the boor, his sire, held the plough on his own fields, in better ordered times than these : times when every churl knew at least his proper place.”

The question of legitimacy or illegitimacy—heiress or not heiress—now assumed a very grave aspect ; and soon Lancashire, the West Riding, and County Palatine, were fairly divided into two bitter factions—of legitimists and illegitimists, aristocrats and democrats, *Blancheites* and *Marguerites*. Strange it was, that some of the plebeians declared loudly against the side of Mr. Jervis Yates ; while a few of the patricians pronounced the always eccentric Countess now fairly mad. But these persons were of the new order whom she contemptuously denominated “*Pitt's Peers*,” or “*Peg Nicolson's Knights*,” and only one degree better in birth and station than “*Jerry Yates*” himself.

Several years had been spent in the contest, and immense sums of money lost on both sides ; but the suit still proceeded briskly and hopefully. The litigants were admirably pitted—the pride of purse, and much real respectability of character and good sense, however alloyed by pitiful ambition on the one hand, and extreme obstinacy, ignorance, and aristocratic hauteur on the other.

The innocent object of this legal battle meanwhile still lived in happy ignorance in Syria, in the charge of the lady of the Consul, to whom her dying father had committed her, and who had cherished her orphan childhood with maternal tenderness. It was not until the seventh year of the great suit, that, by the judgment of the Chancellor, the little girl in Syria was declared the legitimate child of the Hon. George Delamere, and consequently presumptive heiress to the Countess, his grandmother.

The Countess appealed to her peers—she

wrote to Queen Charlotte with her own hand. She tried to stir and warm the blood of the Howards, the Cavendishes, and Stanleys, and of whatever, as she said, was still worthy of the name of *noble* in England, to sympathize with her wrongs—and in vain.

“Little cared I for the decision of that petifogging, pitiful fellow, sprung from the dregs of the people, who now carries the Great Seal of England,” cried the frantic lady ;—“but I *did* hope there was still enough of manhood and chivalry left among the Peers of England, to have protected a helpless and insulted woman, one of themselves :—but no ! there is neither faith nor honour among them. I shake them off. The person of Marguerite Delamere shall never more darken the doors of St. James's Palace. From a Hanoverian Court, *I* or *mine* had little to expect. But to this insult to a lonely, childless woman, the last of a brave and noble race, the few real, though degenerate Peers of England have consented ! What had I to look for from the descendants of Castlemaine and Nelly Gywnn ?” In her blind anger, the Countess vowed never again to stir beyond her park walls. England she excommunicated, together with its degenerate Peerage. A happy diversion of feelings which tended to madness, was contrived by the chaplain, who suggested that, since the law had declared Blanche her heiress, she was entitled to claim the care and education of the child—even as her nearest relative ; and she soon became as much excited in thwarting Mr. Jervis Yates in this affair, as in vituperating the degenerate Peerage.

Scarcely had the mansion and numerous mill-buildings of that gentleman ceased to blaze in honour of his legal victory, when he was compelled to surrender the Countess Blanche, as his domestics had been instructed to call her, to the care of her grandmother, as the Court of Chancery directed. Blanche had, therefore, not been many months in England, when, in a carriage on which the arms of the Delameres and Yateses were learnedly quartered, and, with a *cortège* that might have sufficed for a princess of the blood, the rich manufacturer, attended by his law-agent and counsel, conducted the bewildered child to her ancestral home in Val Crucis Abbey. The party was received in form by the Countess, in the grand saloon or hall. She was attended by her whole household, from the chaplain downwards—all the men-servants, being duly marshalled, with a few

mutes and supernumeraries from the stables and gardens to swell the pageant. The ceremony of surrender and reception was gone through with great pomp and solemnity, to the especial wonderment of Hassan, the Arab attendant of the fair child.

It was to the hand of this wild, swarthy, picturesque-looking person, her father's attendant in the Desert, and her own guide across the seas, that the little Blanche clung but the more closely when desired to approach the lady named her grandmamma. It was round the neck of the kneeling Arab that she wrapped her arms in uncontrollable sorrow, imploring him "to take her home—back to her *own* home."

Though no one, save Mr. Jervis Yates, knew one word of that plaintive, wailing speech, the spectators were affected by the deep grief of the child. Mr. Yates, whose sense of propriety, and of the lofty presence in which he stood, began to be scandalized at this scene of violent sorrow between persons so dissimilar in condition as a future Countess of Delamere and an Arab servant, at length interfered, somewhat abruptly, to end that prolonged weeping farewell, at which the old lady stared, haughty and vacant; while the child, unaccustomed to contradiction or control, looked angrily and defyingly towards her plebeian uncle, and resolutely maintained her place by Hassan's side.

Dr. Hayley, the soft-voiced chaplain, whispered to his lady. Her features relaxed; she looked more graciously to the indignant little girl, fancying she perceived a small rearing of the swan-like neck, an indescribable proud turn of the aristocratic head, as Blanche looked poutingly and scornfully towards Mr. Jervis Yates.

"The blood of the Delameres" was assuredly mounting in this small and degenerate specimen of the race, and her ladyship hailed the sign. The chaplain and the lady whispered again; and then the reverend personage, stepped forward, and in a very bland voice and courteous manner, informed the child that her kind grandmamma, the Countess of Delamere, would receive Hassan into the household until she should become more familiarized with her new home. It was in the speaking eye of the Arab, that Blanche read the meaning of this speech, even before he interpreted it to her in French, and as rapidly and eagerly uttered his own thanks. The delighted child, instantly comprehending what she had gained, and from whom, sprung as of impulse towards her noble relative,

gracefully kissed her hands, and pressed them to her forehead and kissed them again. The stately lady was taken by surprise. She was almost affected.

"What a lovely, graceful creature, and how very like!" was the whisper of the housekeeper.

The Countess, recollecting herself, drew up, saying coldly, "Enough, child;" and she bowed Mr. Yates and his counsel off, and gave orders that "Lady Blanche Delamere" should be conducted to the nursery apartments prepared for her. The words, the title, (albeit one of mere courtesy,) spoken in the hearing of his lawyers, half appeased the resentment of Mr. Jervis Yates, who shook hands with his grandniece, and, bowing profoundly, backed out of the Presence, and for years saw no more of his intended heiress.

The little Blanche, on the insinuation of the chaplain, who, as usual, dined tête-à-tête with the Countess, was sent for after the dessert had been placed on the table. Her costume was singular, and her ways even more "odd" than her eastern dress. Her imperfect English, and wild glances of shyness, of proud defiance, or of keen scrutiny, were pronounced boldness or sullenness. His Reverence judged better and more kindly; and good-naturedly ventured to impute the child's shyness to her strange position; and advised that she should be let alone; while his noble patroness maunderingly bewailed her own hard fate in being plagued with such a charge, and the desolate condition of the house of Delamere.

A plate of dates served in the dessert, attracted the regard of Blanche. She fixed her eyes passionately upon them, burst into tears, and threw herself upon the carpet in an agony of sorrow. The chaplain hastened to present her with some of the fruit, and she pressed fondly to her lips and bosom the memorials of her home in the Desert. She was, by his caresses and signs, induced to eat; and she soon smiled to him, and forgot her grief. The Countess stared at the child in an amusing state of perplexity. There was the creature she had wrested from the hands of Mr. Jervis Yates, — her grandson's child, decked out like a stage-player, and unable to sit upon a chair, like a Christian child, or to speak a word of English, — yet, alas! the heiress of her house!

There was a singular mixture of refined awkwardness and free, natural grace, in the looks, and motions, and attitudes of the child

of the Desert; yet, it must be owned, Blanche was indeed, at this time, much more like a young gipsy than a well-born English girl. The chaplain found amusement in watching her proceedings; while she, in turn, seemed to drink in, with her searching, lustrous eyes, the conversation which was maintained about herself and her parents.

Before lights had been ordered, the windows of the small dining-room used by the Countess when alone, were thrown open, at her desire, to admit the perfume of the tuberoses, and other plants, arranged in the terrace which ran along this front of the Abbey, the Delameres being, as she always observed when repeating the same order, "epicures in flower-scents."

"And this little lady displays the hereditary taste," the chaplain ventured to remark, as Blanche, recognising the flowers of her Syrian home, darted out upon the terrace, kissed their petals, addressed them, fondly flitted about among them, like a butterfly, enjoying their beauty and odour, and finally sung to them a wild and low, but beautiful strain, in some tongue, the Doctor said, "unknown at Cambridge." The stately lady was somewhat mollified. She had baffled Mr. Yates. Good digestion had waited on appetite; and a few glasses of old Madeira, medically ordered, and strictly administered by the chaplain, had attended on both. He again, in the regular course of his duty, as physician in ordinary, as body-curer and soul-preserver, filled her glass.

"I am almost sure I have had my proper quantity already, Doctor." The chaplain protested, and solicited her attention to Blanche:—

"Well, really, it is not an ungraceful, though foreign-looking, little creature—but all English children have now got a sad foreign air, and wear trousers:—and if those Yateses can be kept aloof—which must be——"

"Shall be!" reiterated the emphatic chaplain.

"If she is properly trained, and never hear nor surmise one word of what is low in her descent—for which I shall issue immediate orders—who knows, my excellent friend, but that the Providence who has ever graciously watched over my illustrious race, may even from this insignificant girl rear up anew the desolate house of Delamere! The throne of Great Britain will, in all human probability, one day be filled by a girl, goodly as was the family of noble sons

which my queen and my friend, Charlotte of Strelitz, bore to England. Shall I then repine, when the royal house is thus left desolate, while mine may again be raised from the dust? But, alas, that it should be by such means! The child shall, however, never know any thing of her origin, not even of the unhappy person who gave her birth; yet what, my dear friend, can cure that fatal taint?—You guess, my excellent friend, that a double-Delamere, like myself, must have faith in blood."

"And that the pure and noble will overcome the mean," replied the chaplain, who really suffered daily martyrdom from the twaddle of his patroness; though, with a steady eye to the expected rectory, he bore all with exemplary philosophy. "Your ladyship's usual acuteness perceived how the little lady bore herself, when that person, Mr. Jervis Yates, interfered with her: one spark shows the flint as well as a thousand. But what is the child about?" The doctor hastened to the window. The crescent moon had risen in her brightness, and was shedding silvery radiance on the ancestral towers and woods of the little heiress. This fair orb was yet another dear friend met in a strange land; and, turning from the flowers, Blanche was gracefully kissing her hand, and bending in adoration to the Queen of Heaven.

"It is worship," said the chaplain, smilingly.

"My Heavens! is the child an idolater also?" cried the lady, falling back, quite shocked, in her pile of cushions. The clergyman was not half so much alarmed for the orthodoxy of Blanche; and when the girl clapped her hands, and the Arab sprang to her side from the gardens, and both together talked, gesticulated, and pointed with rapture to the moon; and when the child drew the chaplain to the window, and, in broken English and with joyous looks, showed him the blessed planet, and attempted to say, "She shines in Syria too," he could not help thinking her very like her beautiful mother—that poor Margaret whose sufferings from their joint patroness he had so often pitied, and whom he could almost have married himself, provided he had first got the rectory.

He signed to Hassan to be gone, shut the window, led the child to her grandmother, and, with a little pious fraud, or perhaps two frauds, pretended to interpret to the old lady the flattering and kind things which Blanche had said in Arabic, (a language of which he

knew not a word,) of her "dear, grand, princess grandmammina," and of her own love and gratitude. The humour of the Countess became so gracious, that he even ventured to sound her upon keeping up some sort of prudent connexion between her heiress and the enormously-rich manufacturer. But on this topic he soon sang dumb, marvelling withal, well as he understood her, at the incredible folly of the woman, who said, vehemently and bitterly, "His money perish with him,—sordid dog! The very air of the north of England is polluted with these filthy factories. Some one," she continued, glancing rather suspiciously and scornfully at her chaplain, "has had the impertinence to inform my woman, Martin, that this very fellow derives more profit from his dirty cotton concerns than the whole revenues of the Delamere estates. It is a lie!—a base lie! But, if it were true, who shall presume to weigh filthy lucre against the honour of an ancient race—against the rich blood of princes?"

The child was staring, with her searching, soul-beaming eyes, upon the excited lady. "Send her away—out of my sight!" she exclaimed; "she is like her mother!" And the chaplain himself hurried Blanche away. Another affray arose. The child would not sleep with only her newly-appointed nurse in her chamber; she demanded Hassan. She wept, and stormed, and stamped, like a little fury; and the Arab, who had scarcely been parted from her for one day of her short life, seemed equally resolute to maintain his post in her apartment. There was a compromise, and he slept as usually at her chamber door.

These early difficulties were gradually surmounted. Both Hassan and his charge became favourites with the household, and were tolerated by the Countess. The peace-making chaplain was the steady friend of both; and there were suspicions that he was even the secret correspondent of Mr. Jervis Yates, who had, if not livings in his gift, then money in his purse. Blanche, in a few months, made considerable progress in the English language, though very little in the Church Catechism; and when she either kissed hands to the Moon, crossed herself, or called on Allah, her spiritual instructor was charitable, and had no more doubts of the ultimate Christianity of an English Countess, than of her aristocratic feelings springing up in due time. Her grandmother, on perceiving her readiness to cultivate the friendship of all sorts of people, and especially of the

children admitted to weed in the gardens of the Abbey, hinted to the chaplain that the little wretch had, she feared, naturally the same democratic taint with which old Yates had, at one time, nearly vitiated the mind of her unhappy grandson, by unaccountable and most abominable interpretations of Scripture, to which the Church gave, she was sure, no sanction:—such as, that to honour the king meant to honour the law, and such like seditious and Radical trash.

The chaplain—always, however, "through the grace of God and the noble example of his patroness,"—hoped the best for the child, whom he probably loved, and to whom he was uniformly indulgent and attentive. It was a trial to Blanche, as well as to the Countess, when, after a very severe winter, the old incumbent died, the long-expected living became vacant, and he departed. At first, he spoke of remaining and appointing a curate; but then came his strong sense of spiritual duty in these awful times. He was, in truth, heartily tired of the weary work of attending upon and studying the caprices of a weak and violent woman; but, though he wished to recover his freedom, he also wanted to retain his influence.

The piety of the Countess, it is to be feared, languished after her chaplain's departure, and the education of Blanche stood wholly still. He was always looking out for a chaplain and tutor, but none proper to the high and double office could be found; so he still paid his patroness frequent and long visits, for the advantage of her soul, and of the mind of her heiress. The arrival of Dr. Hayley, or "Madam Grandmamma's Religion," as Blanche named him, was ever welcome to the Countess, as an event in the dreary monotony of her elevated and dull existence; for she was now becoming as indolent in body as enfeebled in mind; and there was ever something to be discussed relating to the dignity of the Delameres, which no one could understand or appreciate so well as "the good Doctor."

Blanche alone, of that grand, cheerless, monotonous, and heartless, aristocratic household, was happier than she knew. Many loved or seemed to love her, and all flattered her and bent to her will. The imperative orders of "Madam my grandmamma," (as the child termed the Countess,) under pain of dire displeasure, and the penalty of instant dismissal, had prohibited the slightest mention of the story of her mother's ignoble birth; yet, by some means, Blanche divined much

of the truth; and nature had already constituted her the warm champion of her plebeian mother. The interdict of the Countess could not extend to the Arab, who freely indulged the little girl's tender curiosity about her parents, and kept alive in her mind that beloved Syrian home, to which she skimmed back, flying through the air, in those rapturous dreams which she recounted to Hassan, and sometimes to the chaplain; her beaming eyes and lively gestures telling more than half the story. So excited did she become in relating her dreams, that the nurse-maid sometimes half fancied the little idolater and her wild attendant held intercourse, by means of broomsticks, with the pagan lands they so glowingly described.

Want of the society of children was the most severe of the present privations of Blanche. The little, shoeless, merry urchins, in their smock-frocks, who weeded in the garden, or scared away the birds, had been formally *tabooed* to the heiress, for reasons she could not be made to understand. The meaning of such English words as *low*, *vulgar*, *plebeian*, were to her as incomprehensible as "Madam Grandma's" lectures on gules and argent, griffins and wiverns; nor could she be made to understand why she must not go beyond the park walls, and run about the village green at play with the other children, on whom she looked so wistfully as often as a distant glimpse of them or their sports could be obtained.

"Take me to the village—tell me of my own mamma," were the only wishes that could not be complied with; though the personal attendants of the Lady Blanche, if not judiciously kind, were attentive and indulgent; and all were studious to gratify the wishes of the only young creature that for twenty years had gladdened the dreary residence with the music of childhood's speech and joyous laughter, and with the sweetness of childhood's smiles—of her, moreover, who was the future lady of all, and whose young and warm heart it was their interest thus early to impress and attach.

Through the glades and wood-paths of the wide domain, Blanche might gallop her pony at will, Hassan running by her side; but then came those impassable gates, guarded within by cross old lodge-keepers, and assailed without by terrific giants and ogres, under the appalling names of *Swing* and the *Weavers*. On the other point, Blanche was more successful. If the Emperor of Austria could not prevent his grandson, the young

Napoleon, from hearing the wondrous and interdicted tale of *his* father, it was not to be expected that the Countess of Delamere could prevent her heiress from learning something of her beautiful and gentle but low-born mother.

Notwithstanding the edict which cut off the child from all congenial society, and her still imperfect knowledge of the language, it was indeed wonderful how much *eye* knowledge she had acquired and stored for future rumination during her first year in England. A scanty acquaintance with the language—more apparent, however, than real—sometimes betrayed her into ludicrous blunders and mistakes. She seemed to attach to particular words the meaning given to them by deaf and dumb persons, who very often apply the *true* instead of the proper or the *conventional* word. Where another child would, even at her age, have softened the word *ugly* into *plain*—or a *lie* into a falsehood, or a *fib*—Blanche unconsciously spoke the true word. Many of her ideas were as odd and *savage*, or anti-civilized as her words. Instead of prizing the society of the little gentlefolks who were occasionally permitted to come from some of the neighbouring seats to visit and play with her, she still sought the *tabooed* hoers and weeders. They were more *living*, she would say, and more *funny*, and ran and jumped better, and she loved them more. This native, innate vulgarity was studiously concealed from the Countess, who, in the frequent passionate caprices and headstrong fits of the mismanaged child, was pleased to see the blood of the Delameres "assert itself."

CHAPTER IV.

THE Countess Delamere, who had never wholly recovered the insulting decision of the Peers, was now often confined to her winter suite of apartments; while the Lady Blanche, almost nine years old, reigned, with Hassan as her vizier, supreme from the stables to the attics of the Abbey—from the laundry to the conservatory. Her ignorance of language fortunately rendered the *patois* of nearly all the under domestics to her an unknown tongue.

One day, when Blanche had been above a year in the Abbey, she flew to the apartment of the Countess, exclaiming,—“Madam Grandma, your Religion is coming; I saw his carriage in the avenue. I am so happy! I shall dine with you to-day; and pray do

order the *poacher* for dinner. Your Religion likes game—I have often heard him say so—and I wish to eat a bit of a poacher myself; in Syria we never had any.”

“My Religion, child,” interrupted the old lady, “coming up the avenue in a carriage! What do you mean? And to order a poacher for dinner!—you mean a *pheasant*, I presume. But you never will learn your mother tongue—I mean pure English,” caught up the lady, who fancied she had made a slip in using the word *mother*. “I fancy you mean that Dr. Hayley is coming—my former chaplain—who, though a worthy minister of religion, is not *my* Religion.”

Blanche was not convinced. “What, then, is it?—this?” She touched the large gilt prayer-book, which now formed a part of the customary garniture of the dressing-room.

The Countess slightly frowned.

“Or this?” And Blanche touched reverently the sacred, crimson-velvet hassock.

“My Heavens! such deplorable ignorance!” exclaimed the petrified Countess; “something must be done with this heathen child.”

“Oh, then, these are only what you *do* religion with—not your religion its ownself—I understand. I knew a lady at *home*, in Syria, who had so beautiful a Religion! a string of beads as long as so, and a little Jesus of gold. But do, good madam, my grandma, order the *poacher* for dinner—the poacher the keepers shot last night.”

“My Heavens, child! the fellow is surely not shot dead! Good God! to what the guilt and audacity of the lower orders are driving persons of condition, in defending their property! But where is Martin—where your maid, young lady?—and why, with so little ceremony, do you intrude on my privacy uncalled?”

The nurse-maid tapped, entered, curtsied, and looked very demure.

“You are come just in time for a very naughty child, Mrs. Martin,” continued the old lady, as the nurse-maid stood curtsying on, and frightened as to the consequences of her pursuit of her fugitive charge. “Pray, is that wretched man—one of the Watertons of Millhurst, is he not?—is he seriously hurt?”

“Smartly winged, my lady, and richly deserving it, the desperate villain! to go to clamber into the preserves, in spite of your ladyship’s strict orders about the game, every feather of it; though your ladyship’s

housekeeper, in distributing the flannels last Christmas, gave his mother as nice a petticoat—three full widths—as any of your ladyship’s servants need wish for their own wear. Well, he won’t clamber over my lady’s park pales in haste again, ungrateful vagabond; so please come away now, Lady Blanche; but tell her ladyship first how you ran off in spite of me.”

“I did,” said Blanche, gravely, and without once looking at her nurse, who stood dangling the young runaway’s bonnet.

“Then, madam, a poacher is a man. I shall remember to tell Hassan that—not a bird—not a beast,” said Blanche.

“Surely, child; a worthless, lawless wretch, who breaks into *my* preserves to kill and destroy the game—*my* hares and *my* pheasants!”

“And you hire the keepers to shoot poachers when they shoot birds?”

“Surely, child,” said the instructive grandmother; “but not quite that. I, and persons of my rank and condition, have gamekeepers to protect our game, and not merely to shoot *poachers*.” It was a distinction too nice for Blanche.

“And *weavers*, too, grandma? do the keepers shoot weavers? Did I ever see one, Martin? Is it a bird or a wild beast?”

“The child is an absolute fool,” exclaimed the vexed lady, fearful that even the rich blood of the Delameres had not quickened the plebeian puddle of the Yateses. “A weaver is a sort of a man, certainly—a low kind of man—one of the lower orders, and wild enough probably.”

Blanche was wrapt in musing. There were other “chimeras dire,” of which she had heard in the nursery, besides *poachers* and *weavers*,—and of which there were no pictures in her little books of natural history.

“And *Swing*?” she said at length. “But I fancy he is a fiery-dragon, or perhaps a giant.”

“To fly away with naughty little ladies,” said the simpering nurse, who had probably used the dreaded name to subdue her charge to the wholesome terrors of the nursery.

“My Heavens! what shocking ignorance and perverted knowledge!” cried the alarmed noble grandmother. “Where can the child have heard of all those disagreeable and horrid things? This must be looked into. She is almost nine years, and can read, and has been carefully taught her prayers and catechism.”

“Oh, yes!” exclaimed the little girl,

eagerly; "and I have a soul: have the lower orders souls, grandma? Your Religion takes care of your ladyship's soul, Martin says. Does any one take care of the poachers' souls?"

"Truly, child, you get too deep for me, and not a little impertinent," said the Countess, haughtily, while her secret thought was, "Here is the blood of the puritan with a vengeance."

The command was given — "Take the Lady Blanche to her nursery, Mrs. Martin."

"If madam my grandma don't tell me, I don't care," cried the angry and excited child. "Plenty of people will tell me what *Swing* is. "Am not I a girl of quality and fortune, Martin?"

"To be sure you are, Lady Blanche," replied the nurse, in a caressing tone; yet as if afraid that stair-walls might have ears. "Though a very young lady, you will be mistress of all, and a generous one too: but my lady, though a dead old lady, may hold out a long while yet. But here comes the Doctor: now, do behave handsome, Lady Blanche, and credit your nurse."

Blanche, always glad to meet her grandmother's smiling, bland, and comely Religion, and doubly so now to learn that his pocket contained something to be exhibited at dessert, forgot *Swing* and weavers, and all sorts of fearful and nondescript English animals; and, with unusual patience, suffered herself to be equipped for her daily walk in the park, attended by Martin and followed by her own footman, Master Harry.

The gates, the impassable gates, were at all times the point of attraction for the walkers; and this autumn evening, "my Lady" being secured at table for at least two hours, the gate next the village was the favourite rendezvous, for there news might be obtained of the desperate skirmish of the former night, between the poachers and the gamekeepers. Several men were believed to be wounded in the affray, and severe wounds had been inflicted on the keepers; but only one delinquent had been left in the hands of the captors, the unfortunate Waterton.

The pale face of this man's wife, who sat on a curb-stone without the gate, a child in her arms and two at her knees, was the first object that met Blanche and her attendants who slowly approached. The woman sprang up and forward—a gleam of sad pleasure shooting, for an instant, across her meagre features.

"Oh, Mrs. Martin, how happy am I to have met with you! The cruel gate-keeper will not admit me, though I hoped, that if I could see you, you would speak to the housekeeper, to plead with my lady for poor Tom."

"Soh! indeed, admit you, Mrs. Waterton! It is more than his place is worth, or mine either, to admit any such, or yet to speak of so ungrateful a law-breaker, to the best and kindest of ladies, who does so much for the poor every Christmas. Hares and pheasants, forsooth! Why, it is not often we have any thing better than rabbits, or barn-door fowls, at the second table. Good bread and cheese, or bacon and suet dumpling, were likelier food for your family, good woman." And the ignorant and "pampered menial," though not an ill-natured woman, tossed her head in scorn.

"Had I that same, or far worse for them!" returned the mournful woman.— "Alas, alas! it is little the likes of you know of us, or what we have, or what we want. Yet, would that he who is lying in Stoke-Delamere jail, a maimed and bleeding object, had left us to beg or starve, rather than have brought this ruin and misery on himself and us!" The poor mother struggled with her tears, but the children wept aloud.

"To offend my lady, who is so kind, and so particular about the game!" continued the nurse, less severely.

"And break down the walls," said the footman.

"And destroy the park pales," growled the gate-keeper.

"Alack, alack! what know I of your laws, but that they press hard on poor folks?" sighed the woman; "but if you, dear Mrs. Martin, who have so much to say with my lady and the housekeeper, would but speak a good word for that poor fellow. 'Tis his very first offence, and indeed we were starving; and he is come of the good old stock of the Watertons, who have for two hundred years, they tell me, been under her ladyship; and, were he only to get out, we would go to the far-off Potteries or Factories, or any where, and never more trouble my lady's game, or any living thing it was her pleasure to favour, were it but a stoat or a weasel."

"Mine dadda, mine dadda!" sobbed a baby, like a chorus, to his mother's petition.

"Don't weep, little boy," cried the Lady Blanche, thrusting her caressing hands

through the bars of the gate—"I had a father once, too, but he died. When I am a big lady, I will not allow the keepers to shoot at your father; for I know now a poacher is not like a partridge or a pheasant. A poacher is a *man*, and has a soul. Don't cry, ma'am, pray. Tell me what to say to Madam, the great Countess. I am the little Countess myself, and yonder is Hassan, my Arab friend."

She clapped her hands, and her familiar was by her side. She addressed him in their native speech, with lively emotion, frequently with eager gestures pointing to the woman and the children. His eyes flashed fire, and his gestures, as he threw his clasped hands over his head, were passionate and violent.

"I have told Hassan, my friend, that poachers are men," said the animated little lady, turning to the poacher's wife, "whom the Christian keepers shoot in England if they take a bird to the tent for the children's supper. He says Allah will be very angry with them; for they are wicked men, and Madam, my grandmamma, a bad old woman, for making her people shoot your baby's father for taking a few flying birds."

"Fie, fie, my lady!—how you do talk!" said the nurse-maid, dragging away the child.

"I *will* talk," replied Blanche, resisting firmly. "Tell me what to pray and ask for you, ma'am, and Hassan will do it too; and I shall make grandmamma's Religion do it for the children."

"Her Religion! dear child! dear, kind-hearted, lovely child!" returned the poor woman; "for, lady-born though ye be, you have your dear mother's heart in your bosom.—Say to my lady, that a whole poor family—five miserable creatures, though still her fellow-creatures—cry to her for mercy to him who has offended only from too tender love for us.—Oh, Mrs. Martin, you can better tell my sad story to this dear, good child."

"A pretty story indeed!—Aren't you ashamed of yourself, to keep up such a confab, with low villagers, Lady Blanche, and saying such things of my lady, your own grandmamma, and dragging Mister Harry, and myself after you to the gates, which is more than our places are worth?"

"Woman, that's a lie!" returned the impatient little Countess, whose sincerity and frank-dealing were much more unimpeachable than her choice of words. "You led me to

the gate; but I won't tell—I am cunning—Hassan says I must be cunning among you Christian dogs." The footman and house-maid exchanged meaning looks.

"Is not money good for something to all you Christians?" continued Blanche, addressing her maid.

"Surely, my lady," returned the nurse-maid, forcing a smile; "good for every thing in the whole world."

"And I have a great deal of money, ma'am," rejoined Blanche, addressing the poacher's wife,— "a great *mint* of money, which my plebeian cousin, Mr. Jerry Yates, will give me when I marry. I heard so yesterday from Betty Thompson, in the laundry; and I will be sure to give you and the children plenty of it then. But, if you know where my vulgar cousin lives, you may go to him, and say it will be best to give you some now. Please tell him the Lady Blanche, the Little Countess, orders him to give you some of the mint of money he has to give her when she marries."

The whole group smiled at the mimic dignity with which the Little Countess issued her commands, interpreting them, at the same time, to Hassan. The Arab better knew the Christian world; and the scene closed by the nurse being ordered to surrender to the poacher's wife the one bright sovereign which she kept for the Lady Blanche, to give to the church collection on some approaching holiday. Her attempt to kiss the baby, at parting, through the bars of the gate, fairly upset the nurse, following as it did, so soon on the compulsory levy.

"Marry, come up! kiss and fondle such like chits! I should not wonder if they gave her the itch! Fellow-creatures, indeed! to the Countess of Delamere, a peeress in her own right! In good sooth, there is something in gentle blood, and in churl's blood, too, Mister Harry, as my lady says; and it tells in an instance that shall be nameless—" and her eyes dropped on Blanche.

"You mean me," cried the quick child, her eyes flashing. "You mean *my* mother's blood. I have heard the Great Countess talk of that ere now to her Religion, when she fancied I did not understand her; but I did. I am cunning since I was a Christian. I said not a word to her; but from you I won't bear it. Hassan says, my *own* mother was never a great Countess, and my *own* friends in Syria say that she is an angel in heaven; though, when I went to Madam

my grandmamma's, I must not speak of her. I think of her, though, and say my prayers to her. I am not a fool, and I hate you all, cruel Christians! I love only Hassan, my father's friend."

"Goodness gracious! Lady Blanche! my lady!" screamed the alarmed nurse. "Did I mean? could I mean?—Mister Harry, *could* I mean any thing so disrespectful as my Lady Blanche fancies, of her mamma?"

"Do not lie to me more," said the indignant little girl, taking the hand of her Arab friend, and walking on.

"Here is a kettle of fish! Was ever such a little vixen? But I don't know whether to tell the housekeeper of all this or not.—Yes, I daresay it will be wisest to sing dumb—'a close mouth catches no flies.'"

Mister Harry's judgment sanctioned the prudent resolution:—"Better keep all from the ears of 'the old uns.'"

It was with lively joy that the Lady Blanche embraced "grandmamma's Religion," when admitted to the dessert. He had heard of her diverting mistake about the poacher, and began to joke with her about it; but Blanche became very grave, and spoke low and earnestly—"Hassan says, 'tis wicked to shoot men so—Allah will be angry with Madam my grandmamma, when the poor woman weeps, and the little babes cry to Him, because their father was put in the prison for seeking their food, when they were hungry."

"Hush, my dear!" whispered the peace-making Doctor; and he diverted the discourse; and Blanche had a hundred questions to ask him, all treasured up against the time he should arrive,—doubts of her own and Hassan's, and mostly turning on "the lower orders," to which class her mother had belonged, and on people of *mean* blood, and the poor. Blanche owned that, after due rumination, she was persuaded they had souls; for, only yesterday, she had heard the groom, who was breaking the colt, say to the old deaf man, who brought sand to the maids in his donkey-cart, "Damn your old soul! get out of the way!" and gave him a sharp cut with his whip. Dr. Hayley smiled at the soundness of her logic.

"Is that groom a Christian?" inquired Blanche.

"That act and speech did not show him to be such, at all events," was the reply.

"Is the Bible *all* true?" was the next grave query. Luckily the old Countess was nodding in her easy chair.

"All true and all good," was the solemn reply.

"Then, I fancy, the Christians do not believe it, nor care for it; and are all like the Great Countess, my grandmamma, and my vulgar cousin, Mr. Jerry Yates."

"Hush, hush! Well, but how do you think so?"

"Oh, I have been reading the Bible so much since you were here last, and making the Quaker laundress read it for me; and I don't think it will ever make me a Christian like grandmamma. It is so much the other way."

"The other way," was a peculiar and significant phrase with Lady Blanche, with her still limited English vocabulary; but Dr. Hayley had an understanding of what she meant; and, as the Countess showed symptoms of waking, he produced the pretty little volumes of coloured plates of animals, which he had brought for her. The Lady Blanche did not now weep over dates, or kiss the flowers which resembled those of Syria; yet it was with lively joy she recognised the gazelle and the dromedary. At the camel, she paused some seconds, and then addressed the learned Doctor.

"Madam my grandmamma is rich—is she not, sir?"

"Certainly, my dear—who properly can be called rich, as well as illustrious and honourable, if not my noble patroness the Countess of Delamere?"

"Grandmamma, you have no camels in your park—there are plenty of them at *home* in Syria:—and they are so large—so huge—bigger than two bullocks."

"I have seen camels, child," said the Countess, peevishly.

"Then, madam, do you know how hard it will be for you to get to heaven?"

"Doctor, is this child merely impertinent, or a fool?" The question was difficult to answer.

"The Bible says—I can show it you myself—It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven." But Hassan don't think the Christians believe one word about that heaven of theirs, they love this earth" so well. But, were I you, and so old a lady, I should give away all my money, grandmamma, that I might get to that happy place, where my *own* mother is an angel, for she was *poor* and good."

"Good God! How that strange child talks!" exclaimed the excited lady. "One

might fancy the puritan, her grandfather, spoke through her lips; my nerves—my harassed spirits—cannot stand such shocks—take her away instantly.”

A worse shock awaited the noble lady. The alarm bell of the Abbey suddenly broke on the stern silence which ever brooded over the domain. The report of fire-arms was heard in quick succession.

“’Tis the Radicals, my lady!” exclaimed “my lady’s woman,” entering, and becoming hysterical.

“’Tis the poachers!” cried the housekeeper, who followed in haste.

“’Tis Swing himself!” announced the butler. “What, Doctor, shall be done? The left wing is on fire—we must save the papers, the paintings, and plate: I have sent for a party of dragoons.”

The housekeeper fainted—the waiting-maid screamed—and the Arab rushed in, and snatched away the Lady Blanche.

CHAPTER V.

Swing and his Satellites.

THE inmates of the Abbey of the Holy Cross were now in confusion worse confounded. In the conflagration of a great house, as at the end of a battle, the general maxim is, *Sauve qui peut*; and when the little Lady Blanche, having struggled out of the arms of her Arab rescuer, flew back to her grandmother, she found that noble dame abandoned by all her servants, and in something like cataleptic rigour, from which it was difficult to rouse her faculties.

“Haste, haste, my lady grandma!” cried the little girl, clasping her arms fondly about the rigid, motionless lady; “I will carry you; Hassan will carry you. Oh! come, my own father’s mother—come with us—with Hassan!” A myriad of broken, confused, and distracted thoughts flashed, as in a nightmare dream, across the brain of the perturbed lady. She was in the psychological state of the little tipsy old woman in the ballad who doubted of her own identity. Was she indeed Marguerite Blanche Rade-gunde Hilda, Countess of Delamere, sole representative of an illustrious line—left alone, deserted by “her people,” and her mansion in flames over her head, from the torch of villanous and ungrateful incendiaries? And was this England?

The Arab gave no time for ruminati- on or parley; and a more unceremonious hand- ing down the great staircase than his could not

well be imagined. In the open air, the dis- cordant voices of the people and the glare of the torches acted upon the senses of the Countess, and partially restored them. She was hurried—dragged across the lawn, and flung upon a bench under a solitary and mag- nificent beech tree, whence she might undis- turbed contemplate the progress of the con- flagration.

“It might better have become the last Delamere to have perished in the ashes of the old nest,” said the reviving lady; “but God’s will be done!”

“Oh, don’t be sorry, dear grandmamma,” replied her only companion, venturing to caress her aged relative with more freedom than at any previous time of their inter- course. “Fred. will soon put out the fire, and you will get back to your own warm room again—never fear that. Let me put my shawl round your feet.” And, as the little girl knelt to perform this act of atten- tion, the aged Countess, under the influence of one of those electric touches which sooner or later come to all, suddenly kissed the affectionate and intelligent creature minis- tering to her comfort; and Blanche, though she had often *endured* her grandmother’s formal salute, felt that this was the first *motherly* kiss that had ever been given to her. She repeatedly kissed her grand- mother’s hand; and, looking up with her mother’s sweet eyes, which glowed through tears, she exclaimed—“Grandmamma, you love Blanche? Do you? Not so well as Mrs. Simpson at the laundry loves little Lucy. Oh, she is so happy that poor child! But some little you love me. Ah, when I feared you should be burned alive, poor old grandma! how I loved you then—when we came back for you! But now!—”

“Did you indeed return for me? Do you indeed love grandmamma, Blanche? You are a strange, a very strange child. . . . Who else cares for me?” added the lady, sorrowfully but haughtily, recalling in full force her lonely situation, as the deserter, Dr. Hayley, approached in haste. “My people, base poltroons, fled—leaving their too generous, too easy mistress to the protec- tion of a foreign menial, and the kindness of a child. My friends—those who had called themselves such—”

“Madam, you wrong your servants,” in- terrupted the Doctor, “and the most devoted and faithful, though the humblest of your friends. I had flown for aid to convey you to a place of safety.” The good Doctor

said nothing of sundry small matters of cash and papers in his own apartment, and now hastily secured about his person; yet his statement was substantially true.

"I find," he continued, "I have been anticipated. The flames are happily completely subdued. To the main building there never was any danger,—thanks to the courage of a young hero, or rather to the knowledge and self-possession of a young philosopher, who has to-night earned the gratitude of every friend of your ladyship and the family."

"It is Fred.," cried Blanche, exultingly.

"He is the gardener's and Mrs. Simpson's nephew, Lucy's cousin, and a scholar—not a gentleman. Oh, he is so clever and so good, and they are all so proud of him! He is the friend of Hassan, and knows our language very well. I love him very much myself. . . . Oh, here he comes!"—and Blanche sprang towards the youth, who was eagerly advancing, bareheaded, and blackened in the face.

"You are safe, Lady Blanche?" said the lad, eagerly.

"Yes, yes; come, Fred., to grandmamma."

And she dragged the youth forward, who, on recognising the august and awful Countess, was modestly shrinking back.

"Ah, this is your ladyship's young champion against the Fire-king," said Dr. Hayley, affecting gaiety. "Though he does bear sable tokens of the combat, permit me to present Mr. Frederick Leighton to your ladyship." The Countess saw a handsome, slight boy, with a pale and interesting, though now a shockingly begrimed face. An expression of mildness and benignity, and a smile of singular sweetness—at least as his eyes fell upon the triumphant little lady who held his hand—were more remarkable than the features themselves. The Countess was moved, and most gracious.

"The family of Delamere, this young lady and myself, are, I understand, greatly indebted to you, sir; and a Delamere never forgets a service,—nor yet an injury." She extended her hand. The abashed youth muttered some words of acknowledgment, and bowed most deferentially upon the gracious hand of the lady, for he literally fell fainting at her feet.

"Poor boy! his feelings have overcome him; he is unused to a Presence like ours."

Dr. Hayley had more serious fears. "The poor fellow has, I fear, sustained some severe personal injury while on the roof of

the steward's wing. Where, Lady Blanche, is Hassan?—he is a skilful leech."

Lady Blanche ran screaming across the lawn towards her "Arab friend;" and, as the Countess was now surrounded by "her people," steward, butler, housekeeper, own maid, and own footman, all alike respectfully eloquent, in protestations of attachment, and explanations of the accident; and as the bench and the sward around her became literally cushioned, clothed, and carpeted for her comfort, as if by enchantment, no one longer regarded the Arab, the heiress, or the fainting boy.

"Take him to my own nursery; we will watch him ourselves, Hassan—his arm, you say, is broken?—only broken—boys don't die of broken arms—Fred. shall not die!"—And the Lady Blanche heroically cut away the sleeve of the boy's shirt, and his blood-clotted hair; and, under the directions of the Arab, who was indeed no contemptible surgeon, performed the besprinkling duties necessary in such cases.

She then flew back to poor "Madam Grandma," who, now leaning on the arm of Dr. Hayley, was contemplating the ravages of the fire, so happily arrested by the intelligence, courage, and activity of Frederick Leighton.

"He is a noble boy," said the Countess, unusually excited; "and I have long marked him. It is the privilege of English nobility to patronize and to reward talent in the lower orders. I shall write to the commander-in-chief; or, should he prefer the Church, I have livings in my gift. And Blanche is a good child, too," added she, as the girl burst to her through the phalanx of servants.

"And he is living, grandmother! Fred. is. I put water on his face, and he would not live; I held smelling salts to him, and Hassan gave him a good shake, and he would not live. And then I wept, and kissed him, and kissed him, and he lived!—He opened his eyes so wide, so—and said, 'How good, Lady Blanche!'"

Dr. Hayley smiled, but made his usual significant gesture of silence.

The features of the Countess were assuming that peevish, perplexed look, called forth by the odd ways of her grandchild, when Blanche, who had a savage's acuteness in all her senses, called out—"Hark! I hear the tramp of horses." This was disputed for some minutes, until the more distinct beat of the horses' feet, and the flash of torches in

the woods, proved that the troops sent for were approaching.

"Thank Heaven!" ejaculated the Countess. "Browne, Mr. Grimshaw," (she addressed her head-butler and her steward,) "is the ruffian named *Swing*, the villainous incendiary, secured? I should wish the military to find that my household is not altogether inadequate to the defence of my property." Mr. Browne was half afraid to tell that there was no trace of any strange incendiary; and yet that both he and Dr. Hayley, and indeed every one whom the care of their own goods and chattels had given leisure for observation, had noticed some very suspicious circumstances attending the fire. It had broken out in the steward's business-room; and, what was remarkable, while the furniture and building timber were nearly unharmed, a mass of valuable and important papers had been consumed, and even thick account-books destroyed, though kept in stone and iron repositories. What of them the flames had spared, water had wasted; and all was one heap of inextricable confusion.

The steward wrung his hands in despair. He was ruined! for ever ruined! The scene was overacted; and Dr. Hayley, remembering the hint he had received from Frederick Leighton, coolly had the worthy man be composed, for the butler should maintain vigilant watch over the half-burned premises, until the affair could be probed to the bottom by the proper functionaries, who might, perhaps, find it necessary to call in the assistance of some of the keen-sighted gentlemen of Bow Street. It was long afterwards universally alleged by the servants, that Mr. Grimshaw had started and changed colour at this hint.

"Bow Street officers, thief-takers! ransacking the dwelling of my noble and honoured mistress, under the direction of a common county magistrate.—of probably Jervis Yates—taking the deposition of the Countess of Delamere! May the old eyes of the faithful follower of her house be spared by death from that sight!"

"Ay, indeed, Doctor, how should you talk of Bow Street officers and Jervis Yates ransacking *my* family repositories—taking *my* deposition—about the base, low wretches, who presumptuously have fired the mansion of the Delameres!—But the military gentlemen approach. I charge you, Browne, that all fitting attention and hospitality be shown to our brave defenders, his Majesty's troops.

The commanding officer will, no doubt, wait upon me for his further orders—I mean for the necessary explanations."

"And leave to me, my lady, to the most devoted and now the oldest servant of your house, to look after *Swing*, while Mr. Browne attends to his duties in-doors," said the steward. "If your ladyship should catch cold in the night air, or suffer from this excitement:—but, no! True Delamere! ever the more calm and self-possessed as danger rises higher!—I think I may venture to show your ladyship this diabolical scrawl of the monster *Swing*, written in characters of blood—sealed with the death's-head and cross-bones of the Irish Papist, O'Connell—threatening my destruction for my fidelity to 'that brimstone harridan,' as they wickedly and blasphemously term a certain noble lady!"

"Good Heavens! Grimshaw—my poor, faithful Grimshaw—to be thus menaced!"

"Alas, madam! I was fool enough to fancy, that my own poor place and my few ricks at the Grange only were threatened, while destruction hovered round the honoured dwelling of my noble mistress."

"Let that epistle be preserved for the inspection of the magistrates," said Dr. Hayley, authoritatively.

"Perish the thought, sir!" cried the steward, instantly tearing the precious document into a hundred pieces, in his virtuous fury.

"Not, save at the price of my blood, shall any eye rest upon the contumelious epithets applied to my thrice-honoured and honourable lady, by these bloodthirsty monsters; and, least of all, to the eyes of Mr. Jervis Yates. For myself, I welcome the ruin and personal distress that may spare Lady Delamere a moment's pain."

"Ay, indeed, doctor!—such language going through all the Jacobinal journals, as applied to me!—Let the vile scrawl never be seen again!"

"Incorrigible fool!" thought the vexed and angry ex-chaplain, as he impatiently waited the arrival of the dragoons.—"Fawning rascal, if not black, designing villain!"

"Don't you be so sorry, pray, for Mr. Grimshaw," said Lady Blanche, addressing herself to the consolation of her grandmother. "He won't be ruined. I have heard Mr. Browne and the housekeeper say, many's the time, he had feathered his nest well, and had made very pretty pickings."

In spite of "the august presence," there

was a suppressed titter among the uninterested bystanders; while the steward gave one blighting side-glance at the little girl, whom her grandmother commanded to silence, as malapert.

What could stay the military lately heard, and expected now for several minutes? Had some one, in league with the incendiaries, led them from the two miles long and now neglected avenue, which led from the Stoke Delamere gate? Were they, man and horse, over the crags into the river? No such thing. But, after having really been within the Park, they had been told the fire was got under, and recalled to suppress a riot in the borough, where a lawless mob had set fire to the jail, and rescued the wounded poacher, Waterton. That duty performed, they now came gallantly on, at a brisk trot; and, as they emerged from the avenue, and were loyally received by the cheer of the spectators, which was returned till the echoes of the old Abbey rang again; and, as the numerous torches held by the servants flashed on plumed helmet, and glittering sabre and harness, the bosom of the ancient lady swelled with proud and long-forgotten emotions. Here was a shadowing of the gallantry, the gorgeousness, and the inspiring dangers of the olden time. Just so might the Abbey of the Holy Cross have looked on that ever-memorable night when it enjoyed the never-to-be-forgotten glory and felicity of sheltering the fugitive royal Charles and a band of gallant cavaliers. Such as now looked the young and handsome lieutenant of hussars, who, gracefully dismounting, stood unhelmeted, bending lowly before the lady of the mansion, at the grand entrance to the saloon, might the royal Charles have looked.

The gorgeous dream had an abrupt awakening; there were here men and things, intrusive, vulgar realities, which had no prototypes in the glorious days with which the Countess pampered her fancy.

"The Colonel," said the officer, "with his most respectful compliments, charged me, madam, to express his deep regret that important affairs in another part of the county, at this disturbed time, have prevented him from taking this duty in person. I may be inexperienced in such delicate affairs; but I walk by this gentleman's wisdom,"—and he turned round.—"Mr. Jervis Yates, madam, one of your intelligent and well-affected county magistrates, who volunteered this duty. I am happy, however, to find

that your ladyship requires none of my services—that the affair is over."

"Nor those of Mr. Yates's either, sir," returned the Countess, drawing haughtily up, as the bustling and somewhat consequential magistrate, who had thrown his bride to his old acquaintance Hassan, hastily advanced. "My own household are perfectly adequate to the defence of my life and property; if not, my attendants must be augmented."

"Don't you consider it rather curious, my lady," said Yates, "that the fire should have done so much damage in the steward's business-room, without spreading farther?—Ha! my noble little cousin, Lady Blanche! how d'ye do, my dear?"

"Madam grandma, may I shake hands with my *plebeian* cousin?" asked Blanche; but the Countess moved off. "Pray, sir, did the poor poacher's wife come to you from me, to get some of that money to buy food, which you are to give me when I make a great match with a grandee, and make you uncle to an Earl?"

Mr. Jervis Yates smiled, the undigested *plebeian* notwithstanding. "This frank young lady, Lieutenant Wynne," said he, "is my little cousin, Lady Blanche Delamere, a young lady not yet perfect in her English, though otherwise, it seems, abundantly precocious.—Thinking of marriage, the great act in the woman's drama, already, Blanche, my dear? Ah, ha! a touch of old Mother Eve in all bloods, Doctor."

"I intend to marry Fred. myself, if he will have me," continued the frank-spoken little maiden; "and every body, except grandma and the Doctor, tells me I am a young lady of title, and a great heiress, and may do just as I please: and I will, too."

The young officer smiled, and bowed approbation.

"Very pretty, my little lady," returned the merry magistrate. "Any thing, you mean, becoming your duty, and your exalted rank and station." And he winked—yes! Mr. Jervis Yates made some sort of slight motion of intelligence with his left eye, *at* or *towards* Marguerite, twentieth Countess of Delamere, whom the naïveté or pertness of her grandchild, and this fresh audacity, appeared to have frozen to stone.

"But to business!" cried the active magistrate. "Here are no ordinary matters for investigation." And, in defiance of the remonstrances of the steward, Mr. Yates went on, till midnight, plunged forty fathom deep in examinations and depositions; and, with all his acuteness, was so effectually

baffled, that he took nothing for his pains save a very severe cold.

The distinguished small party in the dining-room, meanwhile, partook of refreshments; and the ten troopers and their sergeant, in the servants' hall, joyously regaled themselves; while Blanche and Hassan remained with their patient.

The Countess sulkily, though silently, resented the smallness of the military party sent to her assistance, though this was but one of the many mortifications to which she was this night doomed; for the jovial troopers did not consider themselves half qualified to pronounce upon the quality of the far-famed double ale of the Abbey of the Holy Cross, when a mounted messenger brought a summons to their commander, from a neighbouring magistrate, to come promptly to the defence of another place threatened by the Stoke Delamere rioters; nor could the indignation of the Countess be disguised, when the commanding officer—himself a scion of Norman nobility—hastened their departure from her almost untasted hospitalities, to the protection of some trumpery cotton-factories, a few miles down the valley, respectfully stating, that he was bound instantly to obey the orders of the civil magistrate, of Mr. Jervis Yates.

It was long past her usual hour on that memorable night before the Countess was undressed, put to bed, and had received her Madeira-whey from her faithful Martin.

"Is Lady Blanche in bed? You tell me the poor boy's arm is properly set, and that magistrate person gone with his followers."

"Yes, my lady; and I trust in a gracious Providence, my lady, that the prayers of your faithful servants, my lady, may prevent the gout——"

"There must be family-prayers, thanksgiving, in the hall to-morrow, at twelve precisely," interrupted the Countess, "for my signal deliverance from this most guilty and horrible attempt. Let the servants be warned, and see that the state apartments are in order. Doubtless there will be distinguished visitors at the Abbey to-morrow. Many will sympathize with me in this calamity. O Martin, what will society—what will ruined, unhappy England come to, between poachers and weavers? Well might the immortal Pitt exclaim in his dying hour, 'O my country! my country!'"

The afflicted Countess swallowed the final gulp of her wine-whey, and was tucked up for the night, to digest her grief and chagrin

in swan-down blankets and satin coverlets, under a coroneted canopy,

CHAPTER VI.

Cases of Conscience.

The consequences of that fire were many and various, which, to her dying day, Lady Delamere persisted in attributing to that omnipresent, and, it would seem to some imaginations, that omniscient miscreant Swing. In the first place, it brought an influx of the provincial nobility and gentry—from the Lord Lieutenant, the Right Honourable the Earl of Fanfaronade, and his Countess, downwards—with congratulations, condolences, friendly offers of service, and of leagues for mutual protection; and with the expression of warm sympathy in this undoubted conspiracy against the aristocracy, and extravagant praises of the high spirit displayed by the noble sufferer. Its future consequences were, inextricably-ravelled accounts, numerous petty prosecutions of tenantry, an expensive chancery suit, long afterwards instituted by the heirs of Mr. Grimshaw against Blanche Countess of Delamere, and the loss of large unascertained balances of rents.

Awkward or impertinent as Blanche had latterly been on the previous night, the marks of her instinctive attachment to her deserted grandmother were not forgotten by that lady; and on the day of general gratulation, Lady Blanche behaved so well, and was so much commended by the noble visitors, for improved growth and appearance, prepossessing manners, and a decided resemblance to the Delamere family, that she had never before been so high in favour. A proper governess was forthwith to be engaged for her, on the recommendation of the noble governess of an "illustrious personage;" the Arab was to be sent home to his own country; Blanche was to have her hair turned up, wear longer petticoats, and be *confirmed*, along with some junior branches of the neighbouring noble families.

The Countess, in the plenitude of her exultation, also declared that she had resolved to provide for Frederick Leighton, either in the army or the church, whichever was found most suited to his genius. With this last piece of intelligence, which she had picked up with her usual quickness, the Lady Blanche flew back to the bedside of the patient, whom the Countess had herself

condescended to visit that morning, though Blanche had been prohibited the indulgence.

"Be a soldier, Fred., if you cannot be a great man. Do not, Hassan says, be a priest—to do religion, and flatter, and imbibe, and play cards all day with old women like grandmamma," was the earnest exhortation of Lady Blanche.

"I would rather be a scholar," said the mild youth. "But do, Lady Blanche, leave me; the Countess will be so displeased with you for being here against her orders."

"Then you don't like me near you, Fred.; you like Lucy better; you do not love me to be with you, to watch you, and give you drink." The boy sighed, and turned away his head.

"I wish you loved me as I love you, Fred.; but you won't look at me—then I don't care for you either." The Lady Blanche walked off, in disdain, and in sorrowful anger. She sought Hassan, to tell him of her causes of grief; but found she could not now tell him that Fred. did not love her; so she proposed that they should have a gallop to the Stoke Delamere gate, to hear of the rescued poacher. It was long past her ordinary hour of exercise, but she resolved to go; and the Arab never balked her in any wild wish, though in violation of all established rules. Blanche stole back to her nursery for her riding-whip, which happened to be there, and also to be friends with Fred., if he asked her; for a quarrel of above five minutes with any one she loved, and, above all, with him, lay like a dead-weight on the heart of our heroine.

Aunt Simpson, from the laundry, was with him, and little Lucy—the pretty, fair, and fairy Lucy,—was prattling to him, and holding his hand. The heiress stole back unperceived, silently mounted her pony, and soon far out-rode even the fleet pace of Hassan.

When he overtook her, he found her stretched, as if dead, in the path, beside what he believed a poacher's great-coat and a dark lantern, which had probably startled the pony. The world, at this sight, seemed a blank to the Arab. She had, however, recovered long before he got her home, and merely said she was sleepy—she should like to sleep. The greatest alarm and distress pervaded the establishment. The real consequence of the little heiress had never been felt till now. It might now have been thought that the Countess had no object in existence save her grandchild, for whose preservation heaven and earth were stirred. The family surgeons, three in number—the

Fanfaronade family surgeon—the "very able" medical friend of Mr. Jervis Yates, were all in turn eagerly welcomed. Their learned fears, diverted from the brain, finally rested on "injury to the spine."

Perfect inaction, a constantly recumbent posture, was the cruel sentence, after long consultations, pronounced upon the lively, restless, and quick-spirited girl; and rigidly was it enforced by the entire household. In the accession of the Lady Blanche, every one placed hopes, and no one knew what might befall to place and perquisite under the regime of the unknown Irish boy and his mother.

The Countess, horrified by the idea of the death of her heiress, or of her possible deformity—deformity which might prove an obstacle to her marriage—to the greatest of earthly interests, the lineal transmission of the family honours—yielded to, or anticipated her every wish. Her early kind friend, Mrs. Simpson, was, at her desire, permanently placed in her apartments, as her principal attendant. The pretty, gentle, little Lucy was engaged as her playmate; and Frederick Leighton, until he was sent to the University, was her daily reader and master of design; Dr. Hayley taking long spells of the same duty.

Hassan alone, the wild Arab, fancied it cruelty, perhaps designing cruelty of the Franks, to fasten his companion, his wild gazelle, his graceful antelope, all day long, like a dried mummy, to a board. He became more and more moody and dissatisfied—he was not fitted for an in-door attendant; and, though the Lady Blanche affectionately received his daily visits, their intercourse began to be less happy. Her intellect was rapidly expanding—new thoughts and images were with her rapidly accumulating, while the mind of the Arab was as completely stereotyped as that of the English Countess. As his influence with the hope of the house appeared to decline, Mrs. Martin became saucy to him, and Mr. Browne surly; and, on several occasions, the fiery Hassan had half drawn his dagger, and upon one he used it. Blanche clung to him still; and it was, perhaps, fortunate that the desire to part came on his own side. During a tedious and severe winter, which nearly precluded out-door pursuits, now his only pleasure in England, Hassan was seized with the homesickness—with that indescribable, languishing desire, that unappeasable yearning for home and kindred, to which medicine has

given a name, though nature alone affords the remedy. He was finally sent home with liberal presents, and an annuity which, in his own country, made Hassan a sort of chief.

It was not until the eve of his departure, that the Arab secretly committed to his young mistress a sacred trust, which he had cherished with Mahommedan fidelity, — namely, every scrap of the writings which had been in her father's possession at his death; among which, were her mother's diary and daily correspondence while a girl, the reader of the Countess; and that good grandfather's letters, of whom Mrs. Simpson delighted to tell her, that virtuous pastor of Stoke Delamere. Her grandfather's daily familiar notes of counsel and direction for his daughter's studies and conduct, and the open, affectionate, and cordial, and often playful interchange of mind and heart between father and daughter, were now all in her possession. What precious treasures, as Blanche came to consider them! One sealed packet was addressed, "To my daughter, Blanche Georgiana, to be read when she shall be seventeen." Blanche pressed it to her lips.

Though occupied by these parting gifts, the Lady Blanche wept a long day for the loss of the giver, her "Arab friend," who, in exchange for a lock of her hair, had bestowed upon her the precious amulet brought from Mecca by his grandsire. From mingled sentiment and superstition, Blanche secretly wore this charm in an armlet, till old enough to smile at the fond folly, and, alas! to sigh at the discovery that it was one.

The Lady Blanche was soon left yet more to her own resources. Frederick Leighton was away at his college, and Lucy with an aunt in Chester, who wished to adopt her; Dr. Hayley was at his living, and the Countess gouty, rheumatic, feeble, peevish, and repining. The fiat of the physicians still held Blanche recumbent, allowing her only a couple of hours a-day for carriage exercise. It was a trying discipline for one with health so good, and animal spirits so high, and whose former existence had been nearly that "of a dweller out of doors." Reclining, she could now work, sing, draw, play with and arrange the flowers heaped upon and around her bed, or her couch, or the floor, on which she was condemned to lie extended for hours. But soon her business, her pursuit, her engrossing pleasure or passion, was reading, followed in a very irregular and desultory

manner, but with enthusiastic ardour, incomprehensible to all around her, except Frederick Leighton. "Save for books," was her speech to him in aftertimes, "I should, under medical torture, have become a maniac or an idiot: blessings be with them, my preservers! my comforters!"

Of "Mr. Frederick" so flattering were the accounts of his tutors to Dr. Hayley, that the Countess resolved to have him yet Archbishop of Canterbury; but he was first to be constituted, when qualified for the important office, her domestic chaplain and private secretary. In the meanwhile, he was employed, at every recess, in directing or rather sharing the studies of the alleged invalid, Lady Blanche, and as her language-master. In general literature she had, he said, far outstripped him, which was probably true; for she had read lovingly in the light of her mother's often gay and girlish, but heart-inspired criticism, and of her grandfather's profound and eloquent commentaries on those favoured works which were at first, on this account, the volumes most fondly cherished by his young descendant. In this weary, sad, but most important interval, when the habits of her mind were strongly and rapidly forming, Blanche owed much to her humble friend Mrs. Simpson. This matron was a Quakeress, well and solidly, though plainly educated, who had been thrust beyond the pale by the Friends for a love-match, which, however, she had not yet, when past middle age, repented. On being left a young and destitute widow, her exquisite skill as a laundress and sempstress had recommended her, spite of dissent, to the housekeeper at the Abbey; and for many years she had reigned matron paramount of lawn and linen, and independent mistress of the romantic and comfortable residence within the Park, a cottage *ornée* called "the Laundry." She had moreover been, strange as was the fact in a great house, universally beloved and esteemed. There were some things remarkable in her history—she had saved money, and refused several offers of marriage from persons of consideration in the Countess's establishment; and while duly performing her appointed business, she had cultivated her mind. It was, however, her motherly kindness of manner, and perhaps her pretty tales and ballads, that first won the heart of Blanche; and certainly neither her acquired knowledge, nor yet her high moral principles or singular religious opinions. These, indeed, she kept

to herself, and let her life and conversation declare them.

In this humble matron Blanche found a friend to whom she could communicate her doubts and intrust her distresses, and with whom she could even converse about her books and her projects for the future. No one could manage the Lady Blanche, the petted, wayward, capricious heiress, save the Quakeress; and, with her, Blanche, affectionate and docile, required very little management.

"I obey my grandmother because it is my duty, and I will not grieve her, and my good Dr. *Hush-ley* never exacts obedience," said she one day to her young tutor, now become Mr. Frederick Leighton; "but I obey *ma bonne*"—her caressing name for her humble friend—"because I defer to her clear judgment and strong intellect, and know that she loves me for myself, and to do right for its own sake; and because it gives me such pleasure—oh! such heartfelt pleasure—to comply with the wishes of those I love—of those whom my compliance can render happy. . . . They are not many."

This was spoken in a melancholy tone—melancholy for one so young and so much the darling of fortune; one naturally so gay, so affectionate—to whose feet, to do homage to whose charms and high endowments, all that was noble, or great, or illustrious in the world of England, would yet be gathered. So dreamed the silent listener during a long pause, lasting till Rollin, the study of the day, was resumed on the suggestion of the pupil. Lady Blanche was now almost fifteen, but she looked at least three years older. In her long *recumbency* she had grown rapidly; and her always animated features had taken a higher and more refined and thoughtful expression. "Deep, humid eyes, surmounted by a brow of lofty thought," had been a descriptive flight of Mr. Fred.'s, the truth of which Dr. Hayley was unable to challenge, though he scarce approved its warm tone.

A maiden lady, a visitor to the Abbey, commissioned for the purpose of scrutiny, had written a more minute account of the personalities of the great heiress-hermitess, to Lady Blande, the married daughter of Lord Fanfaronade; a distinguished leader of fashion, and a very clever, brilliant woman, only *half* of the world, but who was still quite willing to use a little sisterly diplomacy for the advantage of her second and favourite brother in the way of matrimony.

With this brother she sat in her dressing-room in May-Fair, ready to go out, letter and watch in hand.

"Just entered sweet sixteen—but looks nineteen—a decidedly fine figure; partly lost by a careless slouching gait." Well, that is still quite remediable under good treatment, and, I dare say, caused by those abominable spine-doctors and their strappings. My belief is, that Blanche, who, three years since, was as firm and elastic as a young fawn, has no more spine than I have, or, at any rate, than she should have, being an inch taller, and that encourages this nonsense to gratify an indolent habit of sauntering, and reading poetry and romances, under cover of study with this Abelard, whom her foolish grandmother has chosen to give her—with the usual consequences, no doubt of it—if my good-nature and your good fortune, your *very* good fortune, Horatio, shall not prevent them."

The lady read on. "A certain curious awkward elegance, or rustic gracefulness of manners, is conspicuous; yet she is quite *unformed*. No discretion—less *retenu* than a child of seven years old. She will laugh at nothing perceptible to other people, like a mad creature; and they tell me she is as easily moved to tears, though we, fortunately, are not favoured with any displays of sensibility. Save for her long protracted valedudinarian state, the young lady might have been masculine or hoydenish; now she inclines to the lackadaisical. They speak here of her candour; I can witness for her *brusquerie*. She can be positively, downright ill-bred. Her admirers say she has very generous and warm feelings. We see nothing of them. If she has a heart, she keeps it to herself. She has been remarked from childhood for obstinacy, and liability to bursts of passion, especially with those she loves; and she has imbibed some most extraordinary religious opinions, which is no wonder, considering her origin among Mahomedans, Jews, and Catholics, and that her spiritual director, or sole director in her grandmother's family, is not really Dr. Hayley, but an old Quakeress or Moravian, her *Mother-confessor*."

"I have been," continued this useful correspondent, "at your request, sounding the Countess about allowing Lady Blanche to visit you in London; but the old lady will not let her go into the world in any shape until she is confirmed; and to this ceremony the strange, obstinate, and impious girl will not submit."

"Well, what think you of all this, Horatio? I have shown you the very worst of it," said Lady Blande, folding up the letter; "a very, very fine fortune, and more in expectancy—a fine person—no *trail* of younger brothers and sisters; and, in heart and mind, good material and plenty of it, out of which a sensible man may fashion an admirable wife."

"Have her up for judgment by all means," said the laughing brother; and he took the letter to read for himself.

Lady Blande soon afterwards in person claimed the fulfilment of an old promise, that the Lady Blanche should be allowed to visit her for three or four months, in order to have a sly peep of the world from her nursery windows. She would be taken such care of as never was taken of young lady before. "They were so quiet in good old Grosvenor Square:—indeed the very highest circle in London was ever the most quiet—no fashion, no vulgar dash."

Blanche was passive, yet pleased with the graceful pressing kindness and fascinating manners of a pleader who would not be refused; and Dr. Hayley was urgent for her departure. Blanche, from rapid growth—he was unwilling to believe it might be any cause more serious—had, ever since her accident, now several years back, become more and more delicate in habit, and thoughtful in mind. Languor, fluctuating spirits, and fits of unaccountable waywardness and depression, were among the gloomy train of symptoms which he observed and lamented. The provincial physicians had varied their treatment of her case, and exhausted every means of their art. In London, she would be under the daily care of that famed and fashionable physician, already two or three times brought down, but whom even the fees of a Lady Delamere could not lure for many days from his lucrative practice. The Countess consented. Martin and Mrs. Simpson were to attend the young lady; and, lest any inconvenience might arise, she was, with Lady Blande's permission, to have her own carriage.

"After this long retirement, we may afford to dash off our heiress a little,—though not brought out," said the Countess less confidently to the Doctor. "That duty I take upon myself. If God spare me, it is her grandmother shall present the Lady Blanche, future Countess of Delamere, to her sovereign, and his illustrious consort. Only, I insist that, before moving, she shall be con-

firmed. She shall not leave her ancestral home a tall heathen, to shame us all."

"The Lady Blanche," said the good Doctor, hesitatingly, "still doubts her fitness for what, to a young person, seems, and in one sense is the most solemn rite of the Church. I own I respect her scruples so much—your grand-daughter's is no common mind, my lady—that I should be reluctant to see your ladyship use your undoubted authority at this time.—A *lecite* time, a *lecite* discussion.—There are eminent theologians in the Church of England, who do not consider confirmation quite an essential—an absolute essential, I mean."

"Not be confirmed!—not obey me!—set up her independent judgment, not alone against me, her only parent, but against her spiritual directors and her Church!—I will not, Doctor Hayley, longer tolerate such perversity and rebellion. My grand-daughter, before she stirs beyond these walls, shall be confirmed in Delamere Chapel, as I was. These are not times when well-born persons may, with impunity, set an example of laxity in the fulfilment of their religious duties."

Blanche was summoned. There was a point up to which Blanche, young as she was, and headstrong as she was reputed to be, now readily yielded her own will to the wishes of the Countess, sometimes in lofty forbearing compassion with her age and her narrow understanding, but as often from the generous desire of contributing to the happiness of one ever more favoured by fortune than affection. The Countess urged her purpose. The Bishop had kindly offered to come himself to the Abbey. The family chapel, so long unused, had been repaired, and decorated for the ceremony.

"Why make a hypocrite of me?" said the girl, driven to the last resort. "My Bible tells me nothing of it. Indeed, indeed, grandmother, I cannot. Leave me alone—I am not yet good enough—I am not religious in the Articles. I am a very ignorant, simple Christian."

"The Articles, child! how indeed should you pretend to understand such things? The Bible! what know you of it, save as you are taught to believe?"

"Madam, am not I, like yourself, a Protestant! You have had me taught to read—ineestimable blessing!—and my Creator has given me reason and understanding. Shall I extinguish the divine light in my own mind—strive against inborn conviction?"

"Grant me patience! Is she a Quaker, Doctor? They rave something, don't they?—about inward light I believe. Has that artful woman, who has such sway with her—and whom I only retain because she understands her constitution—has she corrupted her religious principles with which we have taken such pains? I shall never forgive Martin for having introduced a Dissenter into my family. What are all the nice clear-starching and small-plaiting in the world, compared with bringing heresy into a great household like mine?"

Blanche half smiled; while the slightest possible shade of contempt mingled with the feeling of the ludicrous, quivering on her lip.

"Do you presume, young lady, to have more reason and understanding than your grandmother—more than the whole of your ancestors?—*you*, a child—a baby but yesterday!"

"And therefore not fit for this solemn rite—one you conceive so solemn. No, no, I will not, I never will be a wicked hypocrite, and make a mock of belief, when I do not, cannot believe other than my Saviour has bidden me in those plain doctrines and pure and holy precepts to which my inmost heart responds."

"Child, child," cried the excited Countess, "does not all the world declare against you? Every young lady—nay, I am happy to say that, in these improved times, every young gentleman also, publicly performs his religious duties. You are surely distracted. There never was an Englishwoman of title a Dissenter, save Lady Huntingdon, to the grief and shame of her family, and with no advantage, I can tell you, to her own character. A Methodist, a Quaker,—a what is she, Doctor?" The Countess held up her spread hands in horror.

"I am neither, madam.—Give me time. I hold to the Scriptures as my rule of faith and life; I don't understand beyond that. Many of my ancestors were Roman Catholics, and must then have held the doctrines of the Church of England damnable heresy. My maternal ancestors have, I learn, been Puritans and Nonconformists, and thought a hierarchy erroneous and anti-scriptural. In the country where I was born, there are a great diversity of faiths. My friend Hassan worshipped the Prophet whom you call Antichrist; I once kissed hands to the Moon; and my early protectors were zealous Roman Catholics. I have since had the great benefit

of Dr. Hayley's instructions, and those of my *bonne*. I have, in these long, weary years read my Bible in the light shed upon it by the pure and holy life of my grandfather, and with the advantage of his instructions to his daughter, my own poor mother. I am of no peculiar sect; I am of the faith of Jesus Christ and of his gospel, as, in all humility, my reason apprehends it. It is the faith my soul needs, the faith my heart cleaves to; and I am not of the Church of England—I am a more simple Christian." This was said in a low deep tone, but with an earnest vehemence which overpowered the hearers.

"Simple enough, God wot, and mad too," said the vexed and angry lady. "And, pray, what call you a Christian? Am not I—is not Dr. Hayley a Christian?"

"I trust you are. The more pure and holy in heart and mind, the more warmly and actively good in thought and deed, then the more religious, the more Christian, I am bound to consider every one, whether poor or rich. I know of no other standard than—'If ye *know* these things, happy are ye if ye *do* them.' Scripture speaks nothing to me of a religion apart from goodness. One of your own High-Church philosophers says, 'The more I am a good man, the more I am religious—the more a Christian.' I suppose Mr. Coleridge did not confine this opinion to rank or sect."

"And does the Church of England make distinctions of rank? No, ignorant child: persons of all conditions, boors, nay, parish paupers, may receive the comfortable rites of the Church; and, if they repent their sins and believe, are not cut off from salvation."

"Providence, doubtless, for wise and merciful ends," put in Dr. Hayley, "has decreed a vast variety of conditions in this transitory life, many of them, no doubt, trying and painful; but with God there is no respect of persons. And what are the ills and poverty of this brief existence, to the everlasting life set before the pious poor, and the suffering, when God's own hand shall adjust the balance, and the last be first, and the first last?"

"And what, also," said Blanche, "the goods and luxurious enjoyments of so very brief a life? Why so tenacious for the privileges and distinctions of the threescore years and ten, if we really believe that the grave levels all distinctions, save those created by superior goodness?—Oh! it is a strange subject, and might well perplex a stronger

head than mine. Hassan, the Mahometan, has said to me he could not think the wealthy, grandee Christians believe their own religion, else they would exclude the poor and vulgar from their heaven, and keep it all, or at least the best places in it, for themselves, exactly as they do here on earth."

"What shocking, nay blasphemous notions have been infused into this child's mind!" cried the Countess, piquing herself upon dignified forbearance with the ignorance and perversity of her grand-daughter. "Why, child, that person—a respectable enough individual, I believe, in his own way—your relative, by the maternal side, Mr. Jervis Yates, has, as I am informed by my Lord Fanfaronade, at this appalling crisis, when the welfare of the State and the security of property are so indissolubly connected with the maintenance of the Church, publicly renounced dissent, and returned to its bosom.—Go, child, I have long borne with your ignorance and petulance—and shall I say presumption—from reflecting upon your disadvantages in childhood, and that you were full ten years old before you were taught your catechism. I leave the Doctor to converse with you. But confirmed you shall be. It is your duty; it becomes your condition as my apparent heiress; and it cannot be longer delayed." The Countess swept off in her grandest manner.

Good Dr. Hayley was any thing but an overbearing and pertinacious, and much less a persecuting priest; for, though he every day more and more abhorred dissent, he loved his ease; and was more likely, in ordinary times, to have erred upon the side of indifference and laxness than of strictness and severity in "mere matters of opinion"—of "mere ceremony," as he now described the stumbling-block placed in the way of Blanche. "What was it but a ceremony?—and, though most becoming in the observance, particularly in young ladies of condition, not materially different from a lad, on entering the University, subscribing the Articles of the Church. It leads to nothing," he continued; "and merely shows the colours likely to be afterwards worn by the individual. It is certainly not worth vexing the aged Countess about, who has set her heart on the performance."

"Why should my grandmother be vexed about a mere ceremony, if to me it is suff of the conscience?" said the unconvinced Blanche, quickly; "or yet about what I privately think?" And Blanche argued the

matter in her own earnest and simple way, drawing her sharpest arrows from the quiver of Milton, whose prose writings, lauded and quoted in her grandfather's letters, given to her by Frederick Leighton, when he had last gone to college, had, for some months back, with some pieces of Robert Hall and of Foster, been the private study of her recumbent solitude.

Jejune as the remarks of his catechumen might be, many of them were perplexing to the good, *downy* Doctor, who, failing to move the understanding of his disciple, wisely rested his case on an appeal to her heart, in behalf of her "aged and pious grandmother," whose peace of mind and happiness depended so much on her compliance with "the ceremony."

He carried his point; only "the ceremony" was to be delayed for a few months, until his instructions had brought the young lady to a more suitable frame of mind, and take place immediately after Easter, and before she went to London.

Both ladies looked forward with some anxiety to that period. Blanche was so untaught in elegant female accomplishments, so deficient in every thing, that her grandmother became uneasy for her, and, for relief, took up the good Doctor's idea, that the education and acquirements of her heiress, though different, were more valuable and *solid* than those of most other young ladies; and she really knew a very great deal—perhaps, in one sense, a great deal too much. These matters formed frequent topics of conversation between the Doctor and his patroness.

The Countess had one peculiar source of sympathy with her grandchild. Enjoying many of the privileges of the other sex, her pride had often suffered under the legal prescription of women—or at least of women of rank;—and if she could not reason, she could be at times very indignant, that, while the Earl of Fanfaronade was Lord-lieutenant of the county, she could not be a deputy—not even a magistrate like Mr. Jervis Yates; or do judgment at Quarter Sessions on poachers and paupers, like her own steward, Grimshaw. And Lady Blanche also, though destined to be that exalted being, a Peccess in her own right, was the proscribed entity, a *woman*. Dr. Hayley had little sympathy with these feelings, which he fancied very ridiculous; but he had a very bad opinion of Mr. Grimshaw, the steward, or chamberlain as he was styled—who, he was sure,

systematically imposed upon the Countess ; and he was therefore aware of the importance of the Lady Blanche, with her prospects, obtaining a competent knowledge of accounts, and, perhaps, of the outline of the laws and interests of the country in which she had so vast a stake. Besides her large estates in different parts of the kingdom, Blanche would, in all probability, succeed to the great moneyed fortune of Mr. Yates, and an interest in manufacturing and mining concerns. Some knowledge of the economical resources of the country and of the British constitution was requisite ; and Lord Fanfaronade was consulted, and approved of the idea. His lordship had caught the opinion, probably as people catch a prevalent epidemic, without knowing how or when, that in the one case Adam Smith was the standard, and in the other Blackstone infallible ; and no doubt Mr. Frederick Leighton, the young favourite, with whose fortunes Lady Delamere charged herself, and of whose intelligence, learning, and good principles, his college tutors spoke so highly, was the very domestic oracle to expound these legitimate authorities. A regular course of study, to be undergone in three months, was accordingly drawn up by his lordship, cut-and-dry, ready to be administered. "Butler's Analogy" was to alternate with "Chesterfield's Letters," and Hannah More and Warburton balance Horace Walpole and Lady Mary Wortley. Memory was only to be refreshed in English history ; for the Lady Blanche had already been initiated into "History, Geography, and the Use of the Globes."

"I will have Lady Blanche intimately versant with the history of her own country, and of France, the land of her Norman ancestors," said the Countess, at a solemn family conclave held in the library. "But she must know nothing of politics—politics, Mr. Frederick, I expressly debar. Nothing is so odious, improper, and unlady-like as a female politician, save, indeed, a female sectary. Understand, Mr. Frederick, that I confine the Lady Blanche's studies to History alone."

"To the *politics* of every year but the present," whispered Blanche ; and she added, aloud, "Pray, Doctor, what do politics become after they are fifty years old?"

"Politics," interposed the Countess, "are always vulgar and unfeminine, and particularly unbecoming in young ladies of condition."

"Shall I tell you, Doctor," continued
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Blanche, in by-play with her old friend, while the Countess lectured and documented the young tutor intrusted with so precious a confidence as the farther initiating the heiress of Delamere into History as it should be taught to young ladies. "Shall I tell you? I found it out quite of myself, I assure you, from a conversation I had with *ma bonne* and Frederick, the other evening, about the times of the Civil Wars. Why the turbulent, saucy, scolding, quarrelsome minx Politics becomes, in forty or fewer years, that grave, staid, and dignified matron, History, whose deeds it is the province of women to study, until they have at their finger ends, how Elizabeth was the lion-hearted Protestant princess ; how Charles I. suffered martyrdom on the 30th of January, 1649 ; and how his gracious son was blessedly restored upon the 29th of May, 1660 ; and such like important events, never once all the while venturing to inquire into or reason about the causes which sent the one to the block and the other upon his travels."

The Doctor shook his head in smiling menace, as if he said, "You are incorrigible ;" and the Countess, who had caught all that was good for her, went on,—"Certainly, child ; these are the exact dates, I believe. My Lord Fanfaronade is quite of my own opinion, that a *solid* and *liberal* education, in the station in which it has pleased God to place you, is necessary ;—that, notwithstanding your sex, it is your duty to understand the laws and leading interests of your country, and particularly those of our Order, which is the first in the state. I make no doubt Mr. Adam Smith has placed all that in the proper light.

"Though I have the utmost confidence in the zeal of one so devoted to my family as you must be, Mr. Frederick, I shall deem it a duty to look, from time to time, into Lady Blanche's progress ; and you will not, I am certain, neglect Lord Fanfaronade's excellent hint about the analysis or theme from Smith, to be submitted to me. Mrs. Simpson here, of course, pursues her needlework while Lady Blanche studies. I need not commend the child to your best care, nor yet say, that, as her parent, I depute to you all needful authority. Your arm, Doctor."

And the Countess sailed away before the disclaiming or complimentary speech of the young tutor—blushing as much from the arch side glances of the pupil as at the lecture of the lady.

"Well, sir, are you to whip me, or only
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lock up the naughty girl in the dark closet, if she is idle or disobedient?" said Blanche, as he shut the door of the pretty apartment formerly named the schoolroom, but now refurnished, and filled with all her literary and other treasures, and dignified with the appellation of "Lady Blanche's study." No answer was returned.

"Dear lady," said the Quakeress mildly, "my friend Fred., feels this to be misplaced, perhaps cruel, jesting."

"Let us resume our task," said the still embarrassed tutor.

"Oh, surely, sir; but, on penalty of whipping—which, I dare say, I may deserve—I shall take my own way with my *Smithian* exercises."

"You will deeply offend the Countess," said the young gentleman, with the utmost gravity; "but I beg pardon—you know best; I have only to submit to your will, Lady Blanche."

"Every one, of course, submits to Lady Blanche's will," replied Blanche, in a tone of pique, yet with deep feeling, though an affected playfulness of manner. "Will any one in the world ever care for her enough to control her will—to make her reason submit to a more enlightened or wiser will than her own?" She hastily looked up—the eyes of her tutor were riveted upon Adam Smith, and a silence followed, embarrassing from its mere protraction, before the gentleman faltered out—"Is she capable of this?"

"Who is there to try her? who ever, save you, *ma bonne*—you who are only too indulgent to my faults—and my Arab—who never saw a fault in me—has ever, in a kindly spirit, bestowed one precious pearl of truth on poor Blanche?—But to our studies," she hastily added, with the consciousness of having gone too far. "I shall, as I have told you, find such things in this pleasant, light reading selected for me, as shall make my grandmother and Lord Fanfaronade believe I have been studying Tom Paine or Cobbett under your care."

"When the Countess will be deeply offended—perhaps put an end to our readings."

Lady Blanche appeared sunk in reflection. This was a result she by no means desired. "You must not be implicated, however. But I cannot refuse myself the pleasure of seeing how Lord Fanfaronade will stare and grand-mamma look. Remember how for three years I have been a prisoner in bonds, and do not grudge me a little pleasant revenge."

CHAPTER VII.

Studies of an Heiress.

UPON the next visit of the Earl, the Lady Blanche was summoned to give an account of her studies to that paternal and urbane nobleman; and she went, her prepared theme in hand. "Nay, then, dear lady," said the Quakeress, in gentle expostulation, and laying her hand on the paper.

"Nay, then, dear friend," returned the Lady Blanche, laughingly, "why baulk my sport? I assure you, Frederick—Mr. Frederick Leighton—shall not suffer from my temerity." She gently extricated the paper, crying, as she went off,

"Is it not rare sport

To see the engineer hoist with his own petard?"

Arrived in the presence, and the preliminary ceremonies over, the theme was produced, and the fair student assured her noble auditors that it was wholly her own—Mr. Frederick Leighton had not even read it. This drew forth the compliments of the Earl; and the young lady being accommodated with a reclining chair, commenced reading a cento of sentences from Adam Smith:—"I. Of productive and unproductive labourers, or ploughmen and footmen."—"Labour was the first price, the original purchase-money that was paid for all things."—"Does that, my lord, include the price my ancestors paid for their fief?—Is feudal service labour, productive labour?"

"Certainly, Lady Blanche, my dear—most certainly, Countess. What labour so productive as that of *our* minds in the council, and *our* swords in the field?"

Blanche proceeded—"The labour of a manufacturer generally adds to the value of the materials upon which he works, that of his own maintenance and his master's profit. The labour of the menial servant, on the contrary, adds to the value of nothing." I beg Mr. Smith's pardon there, though," interrupted the reader. "I do think the cook adds very considerably to the value of the chicken she roasts for me; and the chambermaid every day to the value of the bed she makes, and the rooms she cleans for me. But my author perhaps means lackeys, when he says—"The maintenance of a menial servant never is restored. A man grows rich by employing a multitude of manufacturers; he grows poor by maintaining a multitude of menial servants. The labour of some of the highest orders of society, is, like that of menial servants, unproductive

of any value. The Sovereign, for example, with all the officers both of justice and war under him, the whole army and navy, are *unproductive labourers.*”

“Child, what jargon is this?” interrupted the Countess. “They are gentlemen—they are not labourers at all.”

“True, madam. Your definition is the exact and scientific one,” said the Earl.

Blanche did not perceive any definition, and she was signalled to proceed.

“Though the profusion of the Government must, undoubtedly, have retarded the national progress of England towards wealth and improvement, it has not been [able to stop it. . . . In the midst of all the exaction of the Government, capital has been silently and gradually accumulating, by the private frugality and good conduct of individuals.”

“When did the man write this stuff, Blanche, my dear?” said the Countess.

“About sixty or seventy years since, madam.”

“Most extraordinary! I do fear, my lord, you have been imposed upon in this Scottish writer.—Sixty years ago was long before the Jacobins!”

The noble Earl seemed uneasy; he took snuff, and Blanche, though tickled, with the charity of true politeness, read on.

“II. Taxation, Corn-Laws.—‘Taxes upon the necessaries of life have nearly the same effect upon the circumstances of the people as a poor soil and a bad climate. Provisions are thereby rendered dearer, in the same manner as if it required extraordinary labour and expense to raise them. . . . To lay a new tax upon them because they are already overburdened with taxes, and, because they already pay too dear for the necessaries of life, to make them likewise pay too dear for the greater part of other commodities, is certainly an absurd way of making amends. Such taxes, when they have grown up to a certain height, *are a curse, equal to the barrenness of the earth and the inclemency of the heavens*, and it is in the richest and most productive countries they have been generally imposed. . . . A tax may take out of the pockets of the people a great deal more than it brings into the public treasury, in four ways:—*First*—”

“Have done with that trash, child,” said the excited Countess. “Surely a writer quoted in Parliament, and so extolled, must have something better than that nonsense, and I trust you have profited by him in something.”

“I have learned all about the effect of bounties and prohibitions, madam.”

“That is well enough for merchants and traders, and so forth, but of little consequence to persons of family and estate.”

“Primogeniture and entails, then?”

“Ay, indeed,” said the Earl. “Primogeniture, the Palladium of our Order, my lady; along with the Church, the very bulwark of the Constitution; and Entails, the fundamental principle, the basis of primogeniture.”

“Read on, child,” said the Countess; and Blanche very demurely read—

“Entails are founded on the most absurd of all suppositions—the supposition that every successive generation of men has not an equal right to the earth, and all that it possesses, but that the property of the present generation should be restrained and regulated by the fancy of those who died perhaps five hundred years ago.”

“Hear you that, my lord?” cried the Countess. “There must be some great mistake—some very serious blunder here: that, child, cannot be Smith.”

“Yes, madam, it is—quite right, I assure you. He says farther—‘Entails are still retained, through the greater part of Europe, in those countries especially where noble birth is a necessary qualification for the enjoyment of either civil or military honours.’”

“Certainly,—save now, in unhappy, degenerate, revolutionized France,” said the Earl.

“‘Entails,’” read Lady Blanche, “‘are thought necessary for the maintenance of this exclusive privilege of the nobility to the great offices and honours of the State.’”

“Certainly,” repeated the Earl, emphatically; and he pompously went on,—“The career open to talents—a novel, innovating principle—may be the maxim of a Republican Usurper, but can never find place in a legitimate monarchy.”

“Was Napoleon a Republican, my lord?” inquired Blanche, gravely.

“He was, Lady Blanche, the very child of Jacobinism and Revolution.”

“And a tyrant, too,” said Blanche. “But to Adam Smith—‘The Order of nobility.’—‘That order having usurped one unjust advantage over the rest of their fellow-citizens, lest their poverty should render them ridiculous, it is thought reasonable they should have another.’”

“Grant me patience! Is this, my Lord

Fanfaronade, the book you have put into the hands of my granddaughter? You must have been dreadfully deceived; the man is a rank democrat and leveller."

The discomfited Earl again took snuff.

"He is a philosopher, grandmamma."

"Ay, ay, a *Scotch* philosopher—perhaps an infidel; but pardon me, my lord. It shall not be said I have condemned unheard. Read on, and—"

"*All for themselves, and nothing for the rest of the world*, seems in every age to have been the vile maxim of the Masters of mankind. As soon, therefore, as they [the feudal nobility] could find a method to consume their rents upon themselves, they had no disposition to share them with any other person.' ["He has just been describing, madam," said the reader, "how in rude times the feudal nobles kept a great many retainers, until the gradual increase of luxury afforded them another and more selfish way of consuming their revenues."] 'They sold their birthright, not, like Esau, for a mess of pottage, in time of hunger and necessity, but in the wantonness of plenty, for trinkets and baubles, fitter for playthings for children, than the serious pursuits of men. . . .

. . . In countries where a rich man can spend his revenue in no other way than by maintaining as many people as it can maintain, he is not apt to run out; and his benevolence is seldom so violent as to attempt to maintain more than he can afford. But where he can spend the greatest revenue upon his *own person*, he frequently has no bounds to his vanity, or to his affection for his own person.'"

"I am astonished—confounded!" cried the Earl, unable longer to restrain himself; "there must be a fatal mistake; this cannot be the work I mean—Smith's 'Wealth of Nations,' Lady Blanche?"

"Indeed it is though. He goes on to tell, madam, how the estates were *cleared*, in the manner Mr. Grimshaw went over to Donegal to help the Irish agent to clear your property of Papists and paupers; and how farms were enlarged and rack-rented, and yet"—and the tone of the speaker became earnest—"how the wrath of man worketh the righteousness of God, and society was bettered even by this cruel means."

"Don't cant, child," interrupted the Countess, angrily; "I detest cant. But how, my lord, shall I ever forgive you for allowing this incendiary work to come into my library?"

She attempted to soften the severity of the rebuke by a smile.

"I shall never forgive myself, Lady Delamere. I have been strangely deceived. But what shall we say, when sedition and sectarianism may be found lurking in every thing we read? I have heard this man quoted by those who ought to have known better. What edition is it that your ladyship possesses?" The edition was ascertained. "I knew it! This has been interpolated, I make no doubt, by some seditious Scotch editor."

Even with this explanation, Smith was ignominiously expelled from the library of the Lady Blanche, and her *theme* committed to the flames; and thus ended three weeks' study of "Political Economy" by a great heiress.

The study of the British Constitution was deferred. The Earl, having made one fatal error, could not be certain even of Blackstone himself. Besides, Blackstone had written before the French Revolution, and many things, though nominally the same, were now, in reality, very different. It was therefore resolved, that the Lady Blanche should, except history, suspend all her more serious studies, and betake herself to the "well of English undefiled," as the Earl proudly phrased it—to Shakspeare and Milton, Dryden and Addison. The Earl remained to dinner, and Mr. Frederick Leighton had the honour of being admitted to table, and properly lectured by the Peer.

"You comprehend the wishes of the Countess, for Lady Blanche. The poets—down to Pope, and no later—the dramatists as I shall select them; *our* best essayists; with county histories, memoirs, and anti-quoties. This is *my* idea, my lady; and, as a little indulgence," continued the graciously smiling peer, "suppose we throw in a romance or two—Richardson's or Scott's. He is safe."

"Quite my own idea," responded the Countess.

"And make good use of your time, my dear young lady. My daughter Blande will be down at Easter, and will not leave the country without you; so, by the middle of April—it is now hard on February—you will require, Doctor, to have your interesting pupil in proper training. It is with you, sir, I believe, Lady Blanche reads Italian?" and he turned to Leighton.

"Lady Blanche has read a little Italian with me," replied Mr. Frederick Leighton; "but that beautiful language was one of her

native, her childhood's tongues. She has not learned—she has merely recalled.”

“I have a smack of all the tongues of Babel,” said Blanche, laughing, “save Irish, which grandmamma has promised to let me over to her fine old, deserted place in Donegal, to catch, some day; and I have too a touch of all national characters, which, I suppose, is the cause of my prejudices being kept in equilibrium.”

Leaving Dr. Hayley to do the honours, the aged Countess, considerably exhausted, sought her comfortable *fauteuil* for her afternoon sleep, and the Lady Blanche flew to her *Bonne*. Her colour was high; for the palest rose tint now seemed as the deep rose hue in the usually marble cheeks of Blanche. Her eyes glowed, her spirits were elated. She communicated all her good fortune. Her joke had told; perhaps one or the other of her noble auditors might ponder some one of Adam Smith's apophthegms, and Lord Fanfaronade try to make independent provision for his younger sons and daughters. The benevolent Quakeress shook her sagacious head.

“Oh, that hope-damping, Burghley shake, *ma bonne!*” cried Blanche, laughing. “Think that I have still three months of delicious Spring before me, and nothing to do all day but drive my pony-chaise, gather flowers with you, and read, read, read—poetry and romances; or, better still, hear Fred. read, read, read, and you talk to us about it! Will it not be delightful? Nay, I won't suffer that second shake. Thus I prevent it.” And Blanche playfully placed her hands on each side of the neat lawn crimped coif of her maternal friend, until they almost touched it.

CHAPTER VIII.

Love Trials of the Teens in High and Low Life.

FORTUNE, omnipotent over mortal woman, will sometimes disconcert the best-laid and most prudent schemes, and as readily those of the Duchess as of the dairy-maid. The three spring months which the Lady Blanche Delamere had promised herself were to pass like a vision of enchantment, in the fairy-land of Shakspeare and Spencer, and the brighter regions of her own young Romance, began in disappointment, and ended in endurance, if not in sorrow. Three days fled on wings of rapture; but, on the morning of the fourth, the young tutor—so honoured, so

trusted by the Countess, so affectionately and frankly treated by her granddaughter—had left the Abbey of the Holy Cross without leave asked or given! The immediate or alleged cause of his disappearance, as explained in a letter to the Countess, was the illness of his mother, who had expressed a wish to see him; and with many grateful acknowledgments for her ladyship's munificent designs in his favour, he respectfully declined her future patronage. The Church was not suitable to his views, and he disliked the Army. He intended to prosecute the study of medicine, of which he had always been fond; and hoped to turn his acquirements into the means of supporting himself until he was qualified to exercise the profession he had deliberately chosen.

The surprise and displeasure of the Countess were extreme. Here was respect!—here was gratitude! Dislike the Church!—dislike the Army!—not suitable to his tastes and views!

“How, indeed, should they!—both are the professions of gentlemen. So, Blanche, my dear—how very late you are, child, this morning!—this Mister Frederick Leighton chooses insolently to decline my patronage, and the line of life I had selected for him. He is quite right; he is unfit for the profession of a well-born man. He chooses to be an *independent* apothecary—a compounder of drugs—instead of my chaplain and secretary, and probably a future dignitary of the Church of England.”

Blanche had her own deep and peculiar causes of grievance this morning with her runaway tutor, to which her troubled brow and clouded eyes bore testimony, though one which, fortunately, her grandmother could not read; but she was too high-minded to be unjust, and she held a proud silence, not only then, but all through that day, brooding and moody, and at times retiring to weep alone. Not one word had she deigned to address to her *Bonne*, who had sat with her, dejected and silent, after several attempts at establishing their ordinary happy and confidential intercourse.

“'Tis thy hour for bed,” said the mild Quakeress, who had meekly and compassionately borne the young lady's waywardness, in sympathy with her sorrow. “Thou art feverish and heated, dear lady. Shall I send Martin to undress thee?—or wilt thou permit thy grieved friend the pleasure of serving thee?”

“I'll have no Martin—I can serve myself,

thank ye!" cried the young lady, proudly, though scarcely able to restrain her tears; and she broke forth—"You, at least—you whom I have loved as a mother—revered as my better angel—you who, I believed, loved me—But 'tis no matter! Good-night!—good-night!" The Lady Blanche rose, and waved her hand.

"Nay, I will not leave thee thus. Thou knowest I could not sleep; and thou wouldst be sorry to-morrow."

Blanche was melted.

"Have I been very petulant?—sullen? I fear I have;—and I detest sullenness. And proud too?—but my pride is humbled to-day. How very condescending—yes, it was—how gracious and compassionate it was, in your nephew, Mr. Frederick Leighton, to leave the message you delivered this morning to the vain, giddy, perhaps—yes, *perhaps*—the forward unmaidenly person he must consider myself! Most generous to flee ere the forlorn or lovelorn damsel had farther exposed herself. Oh, how I hate—how gladly I could kill myself—could I imagine that my heedless indiscretion had given this insolent, this most unparalleled, presumption but a shadow of cause!"

And scalding tears forced their way in torrents down the burning cheeks of the heiress. Her friend suffered this paroxysm of irritated pride and wounded affection to expend itself.

"And you—you won't speak to me—you whom I have regarded as my wisest and best friend!—struck dumb with pity, are you, for the love-sick girl, whose silly, childish heart was given unsought, and flung back unprized?—How little all of you know her! No, truly—Mr. Frederick Leighton need not have taken such deadly alarm. Oh! I could sink into the earth for very shame that he may have gone hence with so false, so humiliating an idea of my real sentiments. Surely, *ma bonne*, you who read my inmost heart, know that I am incapable of the most unwomanly weakness of giving, were it to a prince, my love unsought."

"I know it well, believe firmly—thou couldst not do aught unmaidenly; thy faults are all on the side of the pride which would die and make no sign. Wert thou thy grandmother's milkmaid, instead of her proud heiress, thou must be wooed to be won. But thou art under strange misconception, dearest lady. Deeply dost thou in thy displeasure wrong poor Frederick;

deeper still thine own noble nature, which will yet do him justice. He has followed the clear line of duty and honour, probably with no little sacrifice of vague hopes, idly and too fondly cherished; and, in thy esteem, he will yet obtain no mean portion of his merited reward."

The tears of Blanche rained fast and faster; but their source lay deeper in her heart than the scalding drops which pride and indignation had wrung forth. Was it conscience barbed the arrow which, since the delivery of Frederick's complimentary and simple message, had rankled in her proud, and maidenly, and now desolate heart?

Gentle as was the hand of the maternal Quakeress, she kindly and wisely forbore to probe that young bosom, quivering in its first-felt woman's agony; and when the more gracious and healing shower was spent, Blanche had recovered herself. She dried her eyes, and half-smiled. "This is all very foolish; but, thank Heaven, no one can guess save you. . . . If Mr. Frederick Leighton must needs go home—if his duties here were become so unpleasant to him—though, once, he seemed to like to be with us—might he not frankly have said so? Did he fear that, because I was childish enough to show my satisfaction at the arrangement for my studies made by the Countess, his inclinations were to be forced?—or was it that he must kindly steal away lest the silly girl should not have fortitude to see him part?"

"Deeply thou wrongest him in thy proud speech, lady, to whom thy secret thoughts do more justice. Thou knowest the natural diffidence—the utter want of self-confidence and presumption—of him on whose spirit, nevertheless, the yoke of dependence would have pressed hard, though imposed by a lighter, more delicate hand than that of the Countess. In this matter, pardon me—thou art thine own accuser—thine own tormentor. Frederick's healthy, right mind pointed out the necessity of his going. If in the manner there was fault, that was mine:—I approved the measure, and I urged speed. He has dallied too long—been but too sensible to the pleasures and fascinations of a life to him enervating and perilous, and for thee, noble maiden!—pardon that frank sincerity without which my friendship for thee were of no worth—for thee most unwise—for me, thy humble friend, unworthy. That is done which time, which society must shortly have accomplished, but only when

estrangement might have been more painful, when hopes, unwisely placed but fondly cherished, might have made that death to thy presumptuous playmate which to thee had been sport."

"Sport to me the pain of Frederick Leighton! Nay, then, I have a right to blame you—you ill understand me. No hopes that he could have formed in relation to me—to my own self, *me*—the poor orphan Blanche—could I ever dare to view as presumptuous; impossible as I am aware their fulfilment might be, while the customs of society conspire against the happiness of all womankind, and most against those in the highest station—against mine, whose seeming independence is but a mockery. But enough of Frederick; do not mistake me so far as to imagine that, notwithstanding the accident of my birth—and Heaven knows that hitherto it has been no blessing—I ever dared to compare myself with man or woman but by the one standard of superior intellect or greater goodness. I require to reflect that I am placed thus high; for, do believe me, I but very rarely feel it—and never when I am either very amiable or yet very happy. Why do I esteem thee, in thy pinched coif, petulant and wayward as I have been to-day, far beyond the noblest matron in the land that I have ever yet seen, or am, I fear, likely to see?"

"I will not call thee flatterer," replied the gratified governante, with her softest maternal smile, "but I will call thee dear, fond enthusiast, and pray that thy generous, expanding mind may guard, while it sustains, thy pure and ardent heart:—and now good-night indeed. Thou hast forgiven Frederick Leighton? Many years may roll away, and change come to all of us, before we see him again. But thou I know wilt do him justice; for thine is a nature to sympathize with the noblest struggles of the inward warfare—and those I fear have been his."

"Had he but suffered me to show how *firmly* I could have seen him depart—how frankly have cheered his honourable purpose;—but it matters not;—and so farewell, Fred. whom I have liked too long, too young, and perhaps too well, ever to have been in love with; that was impossible, you know, *ma bonne*, in an intercourse so kindly and familiar, and, until these last days, so frank and brotherly as ours."

The *bonne* half smiled. "Spite of thy rank and conventional relations, how true to thy sex's instincts art thou—to its

haughtiest caprices, as to its deepest tenderness!" were her secret thoughts.

Whatever poets and dramatists may have recorded, the dawning love of sixteen is we opine rarely found dangerous to the lasting peace of its victim. The Lady Blanche, bravely as she had borne herself before the most trusted friend she had on earth, wept sadly enough for one half-hour when darkness and the bed-curtains had fairly veiled her weakness. She felt as if she must be miserable while life endured; and so she rose and re-perused in the moonlight the scene in "Cymbeline," which had formed her reading on the former evening, when her heart had thrilled so rapturously while her young tutor enthusiastically dilated upon the exquisitely feminine character of the heroine—and then she remembered, half-resentfully, how her *bonne* had abruptly put an end to the twilight reverie which followed the reading. Blanche knew that it was idle to return to bed, as repose to her was impossible, however bravely she should bear herself during the day, so that not even *she* should guess how deeply her affections had been entangled. It was therefore with some vexation that the Lady Blanche awoke next morning, at the usual hour, after a long and profound slumber. No, no—the dawning, innocent love of the *teens* never yet cost enamoured swain or maiden a whole night's sleep; and, upon the whole, in wise and kind hands, like those in which Blanche was placed, is very easily manageable.

By active and varied in-door employments, and out-door exercise, and frank and frequent conversations about the absent hero, those dreamy reveries which are the food of passion were prevented; and discussions on the duties and real difficulties of the manly part which Frederick had chosen, and by which he must abide in working his way to independence and distinction, dispelled illusion and cast down wild imaginations. He was to be a physician; and, if possible, an eminent one—or his should not be the fault.

Although the irritation produced by the reproaches of the Countess, by moving the generous ardour of Blanche's nature to the defence of her absent friend, kept him constantly in her mind, Mr. Frederick might have been mortified to learn from his aunt's letters how soon any painful sense of his disappearance faded in that noble household. Other occurrences intervened, and other interests arose. The masterly organist from a distant town, who had long been Lady

Blanche's instructor, was ordered to come more frequently; and the rite of confirmation, to which she consented with great inward reluctance, and with many tears, flatteringly ascribed to the tenderness and warmth of her devotional feelings, was followed by several solemn festivals at the Abbey, and by a few visits, strictly *en famille*, as the young lady had not been presented at Court. The open profession of adherence to the Church of England, exacted from her, had endeared her to the Countess, whose original unreasonable dislike for her heiress seemed changing into doting, superannuated fondness.

"What would Frederick say to my step of this day?" said Blanche to her friend, on escaping from the entertainment given to the Bishop, the Earl and Countess of Fanfaronade, and a small "distinguished" party at the Abbey, in honour of this important event in family annals—"to that step which we have so often debated—and which, save for my scruples, he seemed to regard as little important."

"What says thine own conscience—whose silent response is more to thee than the approving or condemning judgment of all mankind?"

"That I have taken my first downward step, and that with my eyes wide open, venial as the wrong may seem, and pure as is the motive—to content my poor grandmother. On the rights of conscience—in my private *protestant* judgment—girl as I am, my mind has never wavered."

The subject was not stirred again; and weeks flew by serenely and happily, because busily and profitably to health and mind. Gradual relaxation had taken place in both medical and educational discipline. Lady Blanche, in her studies, required rather the rein than the spur, good Dr. Hayley said; and the Countess generally adopted his commonplaces, and used them until she fancied them the original inspiration of her own wisdom. The heiress, in her long mornings, was therefore left much to her own devices; and to her, sage and womanly as she had grown, few were more pleasant than getting beyond the Park walls, and passingly renewing her acquaintance with the friends of other years. Among these was Phœbe Waterton, the eldest daughter of the poacher. Of this dispersed and ruined family, few knew any thing, and no one said good. The father was skulking from justice, helplessly lamed; the eldest boy had been transported

for a petty theft; the mother had died in the work-house of a broken heart. Phœbe alone—the fair, pretty, merry Phœbe, the joyous playmate of the Lady Blanche in her early escapades to the strawberry-pickers and weeders in the Abbey gardens—was doing well, and still living under the protection of her grandmother, who was one of Blanche's out-pensioners, through the ministration of her Quaker *bonne*. One day, a visit was to be made by her to Dame Waterton, and Blanche also volunteered—"It is months since I have seen little Phœbe. I daresay she cannot leave her old grandmother, save when she is at work—field work. I hope it will not make her ugly, she is so pretty now; I am sure I should like it myself, however—hoeing and hay-making—far better than scrubbing and dish-washing; but Phœbe fancies house-service genteeler, and I promised her a good turn with the housekeeper. If she could smuggle her into the laundry, or the dairy, grandmanma's conscience would not be disturbed with the sinful example of giving bread to a poacher's child.—That poor family! I cannot think of them without sorrow;—corrupted, dispersed, ruined. I know not whether aristocratic game-preservers, with their insulting, irritating, tyrannical laws, or the desperate invaders of those laws, are worst; but I know with which I the most warmly sympathize."

The pony phaeton, which Lady Blanche usually drove, was left within the Stoke Delamere gate, and with her friend she took her way to the solitary cottage of Dame Waterton, which was a little way beyond the village, and on the outskirts of one of the farms of him who, without the Park walls, was generally named "Squire Grimshaw." It was about the hour when Phœbe might be expected to rest from her field labours; and there she was, sunk in a corner of the settle, weeping, and the old dame stamping on the clay floor, in great apparent wrath and excitement. As the light, elastic figure of Blanche appeared on the spot where her presence had always made sunshine, Phœbe started up, half-screamed, and, drawing her shawl suddenly and closely around her, again sunk down, and wept afresh.

"What is wrong, Phœbe? Dame, I fear the lady's visit is ill-timed?" said the Quakeress.

"Grannie cross, Phœbe?" whispered Blanche, laughingly. "Oh, never mind. Mrs. Martin is to hire Phœbe, dame—very

soon, too. One of the laundrymaids is going to be married—oh, to your old admirer, Stephen Duck, Phœbe; but don't despair for that, lass."

"O my young Lady Countess, you who was always so good to the good-for-nothing quean! O Missus Simpson, marm, has she not shamed us all—there, where she sits, the vile, light hussey! I'll brain her! yes, I'll brain her!—to bring me to shame in my old days. Never will she get creditable place, never honest husband; the 'rection-house is the fit place for her—and too good, too."

The wretched girl, taking her hands from her face, cast one wild, despairing look on her grandmother, and rushed from the house. Her slight and very girlish figure, and pretty baby face, contrasting with her enlarged size, too plainly told her sad story, without the angry commentary of the furious grandmother.

Blanche, inexpressibly shocked, became suddenly faint, and leaned against the little mantle-shelf, which it had once been the pride of Phœbe to deck with flowers and shells, and which yet showed some of her own old toys.

"The vile, wicked slut!—her wickedness will kill my lady too——"

"Peace, peace, dame—fetch a cup of water if you can—and not another word," said the Quakeress.

The dame, "sadly flustered" as she said, had not performed the required duty, when a village matron entered, screaming—"Dame Waterton! your grandchild has drowned herself in Squire Grimshaw's pond! See what comes of your worretting the poor wench, as if she were the first girl in the parish had ever gone wrong, or would be the last either!—Lor' bless me, my Lady Countess here too!"

The woman's dreadful information acted as an instant restorative to Blanche, who sprang out of the cottage, and flew to the spot indicated. It was a little pond, bordered by willows and alders, and divided from the path to the cottage by a narrow strip of meadow. The despairing and maddened girl had darted across the meadow, and at once plunged into the water, from which she had been rescued, in less than a minute, by a labourer, who was trimming the trees. She now lay on the grass, with her eyes shut, and completely drenched, but, by the time Blanche reached her, perfectly sensible.

"Thank your God with me, Phœbe, who has mercifully preserved you from a rash

and fearful act." And, stooping, Lady Blanche took the girl's hand.

"Oh, my lady, do not speak so kind to me! It kills me worse, ten times, than grandam's scolding," sobbed Phœbe.

"She will not be so harsh to you again, poor Phœbe. I will beg her not. Here she is coming hobbling to you, poor old body, to comfort you. She was so proud of you, Phœbe."

"Oh, she will kill me—she will kill me—she vowed she would—if *he* would not marry me—and, oh, cruel! he won't.—Why did they drag me out of the water, and not let me die at once, and never see the light again? Oh, if it were but night, dark, dark to hide me!" And, wrenching her hand from the grasp of Blanche, she writhed in despairing anguish.

The party from the cottage had now come up; and the crone, relieved from immediate fear for her granddaughter's life, again began to pour abuse upon her, as if the strength of her righteous indignation were to atone to the bystanders for the girl's sins,—while the Lady Blanche stood the image of shame, horror, and grief. The Quakeress directed that Phœbe should be removed; and remonstrated, though in a very gentle tone, with the clamorous grandam.

"Be merciful wi' the wench, dame," said the labourer who had dragged Phœbe from the pond, "or thou'lt drive her far enough. . . . If the chap do not the handsome thing by thee, Phœbe, my poor lass, the whole neighbourhood will cry shame on him."

"He wo'not, he wo'not," shrieked the dame. "Did not the wretch but an hour since go down on her knees, and crawl like a yearth-worm before him, at the parson's honour's, who axed him and coaxed him to make the wench an honest woman?—and first he denied, the villain! that the child was his, and then swore that he wo'not marry an inch of thee, disgrace of me!—Get thee gone to the workhouse with thy brat—or to bridewell—for my roof shall fall on thee ere it cover thee! Why, neighbour Robert, did ye take her out o' the pond, when she was well in it? The vagabond is looking after the smith's daughter, in my lady's laundry, who has a portion will buy him a team!—I ax a ten thousand pardons, my lady; but that wench has put me mad—I was so proud of her—and she'll never now hold up the head of an honest woman."

"This is a terrible scene for thee, dear lady," whispered the Quakeress; "couldst

thou not return alone to the gate, and so home, or else depart and wait me there?"

"Dreadful indeed — but unavoidable — a dark chapter in woman's life; but I must now see to the end of it. I cannot feel it in my heart to leave the wretched creature with this outrageous woman, in the present temper of both — nor can I desert her. Say, could we not place her somewhere? The laundry — dear old sanctuary! No servant from high to low dare whisper against me."

The matron could not approve of this scheme, nor could she abandon Phœbe; and, trusting all to her intelligence and humanity, Blanche, on her request, returned alone — and within the Park gate sat long under a tree, ruminating deeply on those tales of woe and guilt, which, even in this quiet neighbourhood, had reached her guarded seclusion, and upon the exposed condition of young girls in the rank of poor Phœbe Waterton. Her early regard for her old playmate, and recollection of the painful circumstances which had deprived Phœbe of a mother's guardian care, at the critical period of maiden life when that guardianship becomes most necessary and valuable, deepened the interest which her fate inspired.

When Mrs. Simpson returned, she was able to tell that she had provided a respectable temporary refuge for the girl, and seen her seducer in presence of the clergyman and Mr. Grimshaw. She described him in a few words, as a very young and good-looking rustic; — ignorant, selfish, and, perhaps, brutal. The power of marrying or not marrying — of deciding a fellow-creature's fate — seemed to have mightily augmented his self-consequence, especially since the squire and "the young Countess" had become parties in the affair. But the price of a *team* was his dogged *ultimatum*.

"So the unmanly boor, who has won her simple and affectionate heart, would graciously accept poor Phœbe on these terms?" said Blanche, indignantly. "I would give her the price of ten teams, if I had it, had she the sense and spirit to respect, in herself, fallen as she is, a far nobler creature, and to despise this fellow. — Can any good come of such a marriage? — I will talk to her myself."

Even the benevolent Quakeress was startled by the idea of Phœbe, were the offer in her power, refusing, by marriage, to solder up her broken reputation; although, in such a union, she owned that she saw no hope of happiness, and no foundation, warranted by

ordinary prudence, for these two young, ignorant, and improvident creatures uniting their fate. She accompanied the Lady Blanche next morning on her visit to the forester's cottage, where Phœbe had obtained shelter. They found her engaged in some needle-work, which, blushing the deepest scarlet, she hastily concealed, as she rose tremblingly to make her little curtsy. Her work had been some sort of baby-clothes, which poor Phœbe was sadly fabricating from her own maiden finery.

Blanche looked upon her sad, pale, childish countenance, with deep compassion.

"Ah, poor Phœbe, you have been foolish, but you have suffered too," said the Quakeress. "You have gone through a fiery ordeal; nor is the worst past." And Phœbe, fancying this something very wicked, yet pitying herself withal, wept abundantly while murmuring —

"I know I am very, very wicked; but, oh, I am very wretched too." And her tears flowed faster.

"We are not come to upbraid you, Phœbe, my poor girl," said Lady Blanche, whose heart was smitten. She knew her playmate to be untutored, vain, and credulous; but she was also sweet-tempered, affectionate, docile, and, in spite of her frailty, richly endowed with that native delicacy which seems the inheritance of the great majority of uncorrupted women, in whatever condition they may be placed. She made no complaint of her betrayer, cast no blame on him; though, far beyond all that she had suffered from remorse, shame, and the harshness of her grandmother, was her agonizing sense of the brutality with which he had cast imputations upon her modesty, and charged her, in rude vindication of himself, with misconduct, which the clergyman was moved to repel and indignantly rebuke. On this point only Phœbe's feelings betrayed her into the expression of any thing like resentment or indignation.

"He might have refused to marry me — perhaps I deserve to be no man's wife; but to say, and before all the gentlemen, I was a light, bad girl — oh, that was wrong, that was cruel!"

The sense of injustice and unmanly dealing had cut her to the soul, wounded her trusting heart to the core, and beyond healing.

"Surely, then, poor Phœbe, you could not think of marrying the man capable of such base, unmanly villany?"

"Alack! he won't have me," murmured

Phœbe. "I have no portion. The parson begged him, the overseer threatened, I went down on my knees, as grandam said, and he was either angry, or laughed at me, and said light, jeering things. — Oh, if poor girls would but take warning!" moralized Phœbe. "But, perhaps, if my Lady or Squire Grimshaw ordered Stephen, he might, though I am over-bold to speak of it."

"If we bribed him, forced the unmanly fellow to do you the poor justice in his power!" cried Blanche. "Oh, no, Phœbe. He does not love you; he never loved you; he is unworthy of you."

Phœbe looked up in transient surprise.

"Him you must learn to forget, to despise — respect and love him as a husband, you surely never can?"

Blanche turned to her friend.

"Those enforced parish marriages, how I loathe them! To me they seem unutterably detestable; and, to women, how miserable, how utterly degrading! — Forget this man, Phœbe — avoid him — earn your own honest bread. Rear your infant in peace, if God shall give it life. Respect yourself, and you will be respected: and, as a well-conducted single woman, you shall, after all that has passed, never want a friend in me."

Phœbe wept profusely, ere she murmured, artlessly — "But, my Lady Countess, I should never then be an *honest woman*."

In spite of her habitual gravity and decorum, the Quakeress smiled at what she knew her pupil would regard as "the honest-woman fallacy;" but Blanche, who was too much interested and excited to sympathize in these mirthful feelings, replied, earnestly — "What shall prevent! Other than an unfortunate girl you cannot now be; but an honest and reputable single woman you may yet be. Look, then, Phœbe, for your redemption to yourself, not to the pitiful atonement which may be wrested from this young man, at the price of true womanly dignity and of future peace."

"Neither a maiden to have a suitor, nor yet a wife," was Phœbe's melancholy thought, while the Lady Blanche energetically addressed her:

"Phœbe Waterton, give me the satisfaction of rescuing you from the farther consequences of your folly, ensured by a degrading and most unpromising marriage. Have the fortitude to encounter a brief shame, which cannot be worse than it is now, rather than a life-long, gnawing sorrow. — I leave you now to your own reflections."

The result was, that Phœbe reluctantly resigned her hope of marriage; while her rude lover, suddenly changing his mind, pressed his suit; and, though the clergyman was at fault, the parish overseer surprised, maids and matrons in consternation, the Lady Blanche resolutely maintained that Phœbe was in a better moral and social position nursing her unfathered babe in her grandmother's hut, than as the "honest woman" into which, at the expense of a few pounds, or promises and threats, she might have raised her former playmate.

"I have but one regret," said Blanche, when her friend returned from her first visit to the young mother; "It is, indeed, hard that the innocent babe must bear a deeper stain of shame than the parents. There is nothing, it seems to me, in Christian society more anomalous and cruel than the condition of illegitimate children."

"Art thou prepared to say it may not be for the best — may not ward off greater evil?"

"That the heaviest and the longest punishment should fall not on the erring but on the innocent? Oh, no, that cannot be right; yet it may be better that poor Phœbe's babe remain a stigmatized child, rather than the first of the offspring of an ill-assorted marriage, entered on with loathing, dragged on in strife, and probably hate — the first child of a family trained in misery unto all vices of temper, if not of life."

"Thou wilt not, then, approve of our patched-up parish marriages on the Delamere estates?"

"Quite the reverse. If I ever have power, I shall discountenance such alliances to the point of tyranny. How much happier, and, to my feeling, how much more respectable, may simple Phœbe become, an unfettered single woman, earning her own bread, than the partner, on sufferance, of that coarse-minded, ignorant fellow, and the mother of a wretched brood, whose first lessons might be their father's ruffianly upbraidings of their mother's shame?"

"But where the transgressors really loved, and wished to be united?" said the Quakeress.

Blanche reddened, as she gravely replied — "Such cases are beyond my jurisdiction: love, real love, must be a law unto itself; the parish or the lord of the manor are no more entitled to disjoin united hearts, than to bind together hating or uncongenial minds."

Squire Grimshaw had "come good to the

parish" for the consequences of Phœbe's indiscretion, and, farther to conciliate the young Countess, had dismissed Phœbe's lover from his employment in a manner which precluded any one from hiring him. Phœbe was to be sent to the neighbourhood of Chester, to nurse her child, under the care of a sister of the Quakeress, who kindly promised to look after her; and a load was removed from the heart of Lady Blanche.

But the tale of Phœbe's undoing had, meanwhile, reached the ears of the Countess, through the ordinary medium of village gossip, her maid, Mrs. Martin; and so outraged were her ideas of morality and parish discipline, that Mr. Grimshaw was commanded to have the fellow fetched back from Lincolnshire, whither he had gone, and married to the worthless hussy at the point of the beadle's staff, although his own should be exercised on his bride's shoulders ten minutes after the ceremony. The Lady Blanche was sick with vexation. She took courage to speak to her grandmother—to reason with her. The Countess, though not made aware of one half the extent of her grandchild's knowledge or interference in this delicate affair, was petrified at the young lady knowing, or, at least, at her appearing to know any thing whatever of so shocking and shameful a business; and the delicacy and womanly feelings of Blanche were deeply wounded by the tone of her censure and reproaches. She retired abashed and in tears to her own apartment; and a long while elapsed before she could unbosom herself to her governante, which, at last, she did abruptly:

"Were ignorance *innocence*, I might deserve grandmamma's reproaches," she said; "but, alas, it is not! I am very young to be sure—at least I am not old; but I have been born into a world of suffering and sorrow, as well as of grandeur and gaiety, and I can neither obliterate my understanding, nor put my senses of hearing and seeing, and power of involuntary thought, to sleep, because I happen to be a young woman—a young lady. I cannot help reasoning on what I am compelled to feel. I hoped my strong, natural sense of justice and of female honour, and my true sympathy with poor Phœbe, might have supplied my want of experience, and yet not have exposed me to the suspicion of indelicacy. I am not satisfied that I have done wrong; but I begin to feel that the world will be too strong for me: one by one I shall be forced to surrender whatever prin-

ciples I consider good and right, that are opposed to its opinions, be they right or wrong, and become the slave of custom,—like all womankind."

"Thou wilt not," said her friend. "The degree and activity of thy opposition may become a question of prudence; but thou wilt not allow thy understanding, thy conscience, the divine instinct of truth, glowing in thy young and pure bosom, to be either perverted or extinguished."

The Lady Blanche shook her head mournfully, yet half-playfully, replying—"These sons of Zeruiah be too strong for me! yet shall I manfully give battle."

This battle of wild opinion and extravagant speculation, as he deemed it, was frequently maintained with Dr. Hayley, but partly in fun and drollery. The Earl of Fanfaronade had been tried in these skirmishes of wit; but he was found too dull even for a butt. Her strange wild flights of thought and imagination threw even the worthy Doctor into consternation, or left him, like Time with Shakspeare, toiling after the Lady Blanche in vain, while her bold doubts, and bolder questionings, sometimes half-frightened him, not so much for her orthodoxy as her sanity. Her genuine, unaffected indifference to the advantages of her birth, and, as it often seemed, to life itself, shocked him yet more than her wild notions. It was unnatural, and, in one so young, almost revolting.

"Of what use is life to me, since it is of none to any one else?" would she say, despondingly. "A pain—often a burden. I have no power of independent action—my existence is without value, not alone to society, but nearly to any one human being."

"You are then, I presume, a *utilitarian* philosopher," said the Doctor, smiling.

"Yes; but one who holds dispensing knowledge, happiness, even innocent pleasure, the highest mode of utility; and feels herself of small account indeed."

"It is wrong, nay, almost impious to say so, Lady Blanche. Had Providence, who has been pleased to plant you in the highest station, no gracious purpose to advance in so doing?"

Blanche shook her head. "If so, I am unequal to it. But I doubt. My grandmother—has she fulfilled her high destiny? Or my great-great-grand sire, him called the *wicked* Earl; yet he was far more powerful, and far more rich? But if Providence allot our social position, it also allots that of the

millions on millions around us, who live in misery, and perish in ignorance.—Ah, no, no! Providence has blessed us every one with reason—and given us revelation; and we pervert the one, and act as if we believed not the other—which, in truth, we do not believe. Who believes with the understanding? Few, if any. Who obeys? Oh, not one! and least of all, *I*.” This was said with deep emphasis, and in a tone of despondency.

“None are faultless,” said the good soothing-syrup Doctor; “few without blame, though surely, Lady Blanche, you judge yourself harshly.”

“Pardon the interruption, Doctor. I guess what you would say. I have been a safely, if not well-brought-up girl: I break no positive commandment—I do not kill—I do not steal—I do not swear; but do I not violate every day the purity of conscience, and live far, far below my own sense of right; immersed in the evils of insincerity and selfishness, and enslaved by the tyranny of custom and false shame? Loving my Creator with my whole heart, where shall I find strength of mind—moral courage,—to act as if I indeed loved my neighbour as myself, even while that love is burning in my human bosom?—where, with some power of knowledge, and probably one day to have much of fortune, shall I find fortitude to enter upon a life of resolute good?”

Doctor Hayley, even when arguments were at hand, often fancied it wisest to permit these morbid feelings and distempered fancies to exhaust themselves in combating each other. He was not afraid that the Lady Blanche would go abroad to the lanes and highways, nor yet enter drawing-rooms, to preach a purer religion or higher morality; nor yet that, in due time, the world, though it might not gain her judgment, would compel her obedience.

She was about to be put to the test; for Lady Blande claimed her promised guest, and Blanche finally left her grandmother and Holy Cross Abbey with deeper concern than she could well account for; and with more ornaments, directions, and injunctions than ever young lady carried to London before or since. The town physician was to correspond with the village Esculapius, and daily bulletins of health and adventures were to be despatched to the Countess and her now inseparable Doctor.

“Dr. W——’s duty is likely to be a

sinecure,” replied Lady Blande to the “more last words” of the Countess, touching her granddaugther’s health, and symmetrical perfection of figure.

“I have never seen Lady Blanche, always charming, look half so handsome as now. Even the tardy roses are budding through the snows at last.” And she gently tapped the delicate cheek, now wearing the softest tint of maiden blush. “Budding into richest beauty,” whispered the graceful lady in her most dulcet tones—“gather them who may.”

“My grandchild has improved wonderfully of late,” said the Countess, “both in health and person. She looks, indeed, almost too formed for her years—too womanly. Her Quaker governante has some merit in her training system:—and, by the way, Doctor Hayley, as well as myself, is of opinion that it should be persisted in, even in town, alternating with equestrian exercise—of which Blanche, as a Delamere, is extravagantly fond.—Riding, and the love of horses and hounds, is, indeed, a hereditary passion in our family.”

Lady Blande was ready to promise for every thing. Had swimming or ballooning been declared necessary, or a family propensity, she would have undertaken for Blanche enjoying those modes of exercise.

Until the eve of her departure, Blanche had never once spoken of Phoebe Waterton, now some weeks a wife, by her own glad consent at last, and to the great delight of her grandmother.

“She ought to be the best judge of her own happiness,” said Blanche; “and, if apprehensive for her, and somewhat grieved, I am not offended.—But to the point. My grandmother has quite enriched me to-night—and Phoebe shall not want the *team*, which would have made her acceptable once, and may be useful still.” Blanche gave her new and well-replenished note-case to her confidante.

“Thy marriage gift may not be wanted now—yet needed in time—there is no present haste,” said the prudent Quakeress.

“Yes, there is; she shall lose no chance of comfort in her new state that this small help can give her.—You will do all that is proper for me; and, pray, don’t be niggardly:—of your own property you never are; remember I shall be rich some time or other, and, if I may not have even the small pleasure of doing a little good to an old playmate, of what value will wealth

be?" She added, in a low and earnest voice—"My older, dearer, more unhappy playmate—have you made those inquiries which may give us a clew, yonder where we are going, upon the trace of her—of Rosa?—Rosamond Weston?"

"I have—but, alas! with no success; and, although I had obtained some trace, I fear that poor lost one is fallen beyond your help."

"Do not say it. Is it not singular, most pitiable, that, of the very few young girls whom I have ever known and cared about, two (and those each in her own station the most gentle and amiable) should be thus the victims of their own folly; say rather of their exposed position, and of that horrible licentiousness of which women dare not think, but which fills the world with misery surpassing my comprehension; which makes me shudder and recoil when I should act. But we will seek out Rosa. You, dear *bonne*, have knowledge, goodness, and experience; I have a brave will, as you know; and I shall have power. I would have snatched poor Phœbe from a life of, I fear, wretchedness and degradation, and most certainly of poverty; and, far more anxiously, I will, through your agency, rescue Rosamond Weston from the sin and slavery of a life of involuntary vice, if it be possible!"

The young woman of whom Blanche spoke, was the daughter of an humble medical practitioner in Stoke Delamere, and had, as matter of grace and of necessity, been admitted to the Abbey, with one or two more young persons of respectable family, when the heiress, on her first appearance in England, had been taught dancing. Rosamond Weston was some years older than the Lady Blanche, and a fair, delicate, and elegant girl, whose gracefulness, beauty of person, and sweetness of manners, the little Countess had admired with the passionate fondness which female children often conceive for young women who are kind to them. The sudden death of her father had left Rosa a penniless orphan; and to this hour the Countess continued to lament the handsome sum she had thrown away when a subscription was raised in the neighbourhood to place the girl at school, in order to qualify her for a governess. "Fifty guineas thrown away on so worthless and ungrateful a wretch; one of those vile creatures who employ their beauty and accomplishments, forsooth! to entangle and seduce thoughtless young men of family and fortune.

Do you know, Doctor, I have been told that the Honourable Mr. Horatio Devereux, the second son of my esteemed friend Lord Fanfaronade, the heir to his mother's pretty estate, and one of the members for the county—But why explain to you, who know Horatio so well—so rising and promising, and indeed so exemplary a young man—so much the pride of his family and his tutors—who made that fine speech, you know, on the Malt-Tax, and wrote that immensely clever pamphlet about something, which Hatchard sent down to me, with so eloquent a letter from the author? But, indeed, he was always one of my pets. Well," (whispering,) "there's a mistress in the Wood, in that quarter, too. It is truly shocking; but so I am informed."

The Countess did not give up her authority—her all-knowing Martin, namely; and the Doctor, who however heard nothing that was new to him, was duly affected.

"This wretched creature has successfully woven her toils around even this well-principled, very clever, and highly moral young man. But it is all over now, I believe; nor have I, my friend, in any respect committed myself with Lord Fanfaronade. The character and connexion are, certainly, in every way unexceptionable. And, thank Heaven! in matrimonial alliances the Delameres need care little for either title or fortune."

One might have fancied the lady was herself meditating matrimony. The subject was not new to the Doctor, though her ladyship had never before spoken so explicitly. He was well aware that her family vanity would be unwilling to sink the title of Delamere even in a ducal coronet, and that she would be much better pleased to bestow dignity than receive it. Besides, nothing could be easier than the united interest of the families obtaining that title for the Hon. Horatio Devereux, which, in the event of his marrying the Lady Blanche, must, at all events, descend to their son. With his other advantages, the husband-elect of the Countess's fancy was not a mere penniless younger son. He was heir to his mother's snug estate of £7000 per annum, of which he already enjoyed above half the income. Had the Doctor spoken his inmost thoughts, he would have said that it would be all in good time to settle the matrimonial interests of the young lady some seven years hence. Indeed, he saw no great use or advantage in her marrying at all, which event would effectually disturb his own little pleasant ar-

rangements, and probably not contribute much to her own happiness; but, if it must be so, then Horatio was just as eligible as any other young man of rank. He contented himself with merely hinting, that it would be as well not to disturb the young lady's education, and the confirmation of her recovery, by the introduction of a topic so agitating.

"Nay, nay; for that you might trust to my prudence, my good friend," replied the gratified Countess. "My granddaughter is, in one sense, a mere child. But special circumstances create special cases, my good Doctor; and the extinction of an illustrious house is matter of no ordinary consideration. My project is, if it be the Almighty's will,"—the Countess, when she had made up her own mind, was always very resigned to the will of Heaven,—"to present my granddaughter at the last drawing-room of the season, and to marry her immediately thereafter, if her health be quite firm, for which I have now small fears. The young people may spend the honeymoon at Lady Fanfaronade's pretty little place in Staffordshire,—a toy thing in the way of a mansion, but which, at her ladyship's death, will be Horatio's; and I then intend that, until Blanche is of age, we shall form one family here—though I shall not object to a town establishment."

Though the Doctor was far from satisfied, he had not a word to object; and he had a strong reserve of hope in the suspected contumacy of the young lady. That the Hon. Horatio should be insensible to his good fortune was not probable; and the long friendly relations with the Holy Cross of the whole Fanfaronade family, together with the excessive *empressement* of Lady Blande, left him no doubt as to them.

CHAPTER IX.

Our Heroine in a New Scene.

It was certainly not the fault of her lively, agreeable, and thorough-bred hostess, if the visit of the Lady Blanche to London was not delightful to her. She was the distinguished and caressed inmate of a well-appointed and admirably-regulated establishment; where the most refined luxury seemed but to minister to taste and ease. Lord Blande was found an agreeable and high-bred man, less lively in parts than his lady, but never in the way of social pleasure; though, be-

yond his graceful bow and smile, the joke of gentle dulness, and a faultless toilet, he might not contribute much to the general stock of entertainment and enjoyment. There were two very pretty children in the family, unspoiled and engaging; and Mr. Horatio Devereux was, as Blanche speedily informed her *bonne*, one of the most gentlemanlike and agreeable persons she had ever seen—quite a new style of man—with an ease and simplicity of manner which gave her a new idea of the boasted politeness of the fashionable world—a perfect contrast to the stiff dignity and elaborate courtesy of his father, and so much more simple, quiet, and self-poised than his sister.

"I may say of his manners," remarked Blanche, "as is said of the accent of the purest speakers, that he has no particular manners of any kind."

Mr. Devereux had been the only dinner guest on the evening that the fair travellers reached London; and the ladies had not been five minutes in the drawing-room when Blanche remarked—"I am surprised, Lady Blande, that you did not mention your brother to me, among your other attractions; I have a sort of pre-adamite recollection, or rather knowledge of him, from hearing grand-mamma and Dr. Hayley celebrate his great talents and orthodox Tory principles. Once, indeed, at an election, I had a peep of him from the nursery-window, when he came to pay his devoirs to the Countess; but I am afraid I fixed my regards principally upon his beautiful horse—"

"Oh! Horatio!" replied Lady Blande, in a tone of easy indifference—"he is so much one of ourselves, or a second *myself*, that I never should have thought of marshalling him the way to your good graces. He is, indeed, an uncommon, a very superior man—a brother to be proud of; though I should not have fancied him at all likely to captivate Lady Delamere; but there is no answering for the caprices of old, or, for that matter, of young ladies."

"He does not seem in too good health, I fear," said Blanche.

"No, that detestable House of Commons half killed him last year, and he was again attacked with a low nervous fever at the beginning of this season. He is still a sort of invalid, though now much better; only prudently keeping out of society a good deal, and, I suspect, glad of an excuse. Indeed, he never liked the May-fair mobs;—he was always fond of literature—and latterly

politics have quite absorbed him, though I doubt if he be quite the sound old Tory her ladyship gives him credit for. Horatio is, I fear, likely to break bounds some time or other; but he is a very good *old young* gentleman for all that. Do you know, he is eight-and-twenty—quite a papa, a Methuselah, in your idea;—and so fond of my children, that I am sometimes jealous—if a mother could be jealous—that he haunts me as much for them as for myself.”

The gentleman spoken of now appeared with Lord Blande, who, in compliment to his guest, did not go abroad; and an evening passed away, the most exhilarating, if not the most happy, that ever the Lady Blanche had spent in her life. The conversation—gay, lively, and, if not absolutely witty, something better,—glancing swiftly and gracefully on all subjects in that touch-and-go style which charms and yet leaves no distinct impression—was of a kind which half bewildered while it pleased the young stranger. It was like nothing she ever had heard or joined in before. It was, she said, to her “the lightest *allegro* movement of conversation—champagne-talk;” and she apologized earnestly for having kept her *bonne* so late out of bed—perfectly astonished to find it was one o’clock in the morning before she had fancied it ten at night.

Upon farther reflection, Blanche was at a loss to guess whether Mr. Devereux was serious or in jest in maintaining her side of an argument, which had greatly amused Lord Blande;—namely, that it was the duty and happiness of every member of society to labour with head or hands, and to employ his talents for the common advantage; but he had seemed very earnest and sincere; and they had already discovered one common sympathy, in admiration of Handel’s music, and for a style of music with which Lady Blande seemed entirely unacquainted, with which the spirit of Blanche had been imbued while a child, living with her Roman Catholic friends in Syria.

“Fancy me singing with any one save Fred., or good old Palmer the organist, or, at most, Dr. Hayley!” said she. “Mr. Devereux has, indeed, very little voice, but I am sure he has musical sensibility; the musical part of his nature, wherever that may lodge, has received the Promethean touch, wanting to ninety-nine in the hundred of what are called accomplished musicians, so far as I know any thing of them: besides,

his love of my dear, old, magnificent, soul-swelling chants, might cover the multitude of musical defects.—But it is time I were asleep now, and more than time you were. Besides I wish to be in good looks to-morrow, that the new doctor may not inflict more than enough of professional penance upon me.”

The “new doctor” was the most courtly and indulgent of London lady-curers. It was necessary to prescribe, as prescriptions are the seeds from which the fruit—fees—springs; but the Lady Blanche was left entirely in the hands of her hostess, save as to late “London hours.” Dr. W—— approved of every thing that his provincial brethren had done, and also of every thing in which they had been circumvented or tacitly opposed by Mrs. Simpson. The patient was assured that she had nothing to do but keep good hours, repose till she was inclined to stir, take exercise till she was inclined to rest, and enjoy herself, in order to be quite well; and the Doctor went on his rounds, to tell his fair and fashionable patients what a magnificent, unbroken Arabian filly the future Countess of Delamere was, and to stimulate their curiosity to besiege the doors of Lady Blande to obtain a sight of a greater natural curiosity than any the Zoological Gardens afforded.

“Is it true, Doctor, that she preaches how we should all work, and that she can churn butter and get up fine linen herself?” asked one noble lady, a few days afterwards. The Doctor smiled sceptically.

“Lord Blande says so,” continued the fair questioner. “I wonder what his insipid lordship would be fit for under the new order of things?—could he tie a cravat, or dress a lobster, or a salad perhaps, if that be work? For Mr. Devereux, he can write books, or at least pamphlets: his fortune is made.”

“It is really cruel, however, in Lady Blande,” said another lady, “to shut us all out from the benefit of the young lady’s philosophical lectures on our duties and privileges, in being raised to the dignity of usefulness, in the way of baking loaves and milking cows.”

The exclusion was rigid. Lady Blande heeded little the sneers and drolling of her acquaintances, and pleaded the delicate health of her young charge, and her own implicit promise to the Countess. In her house Blanche remained, therefore, in as effectual seclusion, in the heart of London,

as if at the Abbey of the Holy Cross. Yet the most assiduous, kind, and considerate attention was paid to the comfort and amusement of so cherished and honoured a guest, and every morning produced a fresh scheme for the pleasures of the day. She had been *privately* at the Theatres, and at the Opera-house more than once, and had been disappointed; and she had also seen Exhibitions and Picture Galleries, and the shops, at hours too early for the encounter of the fashionable world; and, what was much pleasanter, she had spent some delightful May mornings in rural excursions; and one long day was passed at Richmond, and part of two at Windsor, with only Lady Blande, her brother, and the children.

Mr. Devereux had occasionally been her squire, when she had no chaperon save her *bonne*, to whatever lion-shrine awakened curiosity in a rural bosom, and also to places of which the fashionable denizens of London had either never heard or thought of before—to a Quaker meeting—a synagogue—the Borough Road School—a Bible Society meeting—and an Infant School.

The amusement of Lord Blande at such sights and visits was so much beyond his ordinary tone of good-breeding, though rarely indulged in the presence of Blanche, that his lady was obliged to chide his mirth; while her brother drily said—

“I begin to think that Mrs. Simpson’s taste in sight-seeing, or that of her lady—for it is between them—may be quite as refined, as it is undoubtedly more intellectual, than our own exclusive tastes.”

“Are you bit, too, Horatio?—I fancy I may expect to see you all go off in a hackney coach to the Tabernacle some morning soon; or shall it be Greenwich Fair?—I could fancy it pleasant enough pastime squiring the younger lady there; but what do you make of that tiresome Quakeress?”

“I do confess she is *de trop* sometimes,” replied Mr. Devereux. “Eleanor, could you not persuade this worthy matron that it is sinful to idle and gad about in this way?”

“I am afraid it will become as needful to persuade her to forget that Mr. Horatio Devereux engrosses a great deal more of the society of her pupil and nursling than is quite proper. That tiresome, imperturbable old woman does vex me. A hint is totally lost upon her. I must, however, congratulate you upon your increasing influence, Horatio, in spite of her. I will not say Blanche is

attached; but she begins to fall into the habit of expecting you—of missing you—of reckoning on you in all our little plans.”

“And I am falling into the habit of admiring her beyond all womankind; the freshness and strength of her character are a continual feast:—even the eccentric and visionary nonsense which fills her exalted little head, and makes her sufficiently absurd at times, speaks nobility of nature.”

“She is, indeed, a charming creature, and I prophesy will make a greater sensation in society than many a regularly-trained demoiselle of quality,” said Lady Blande.

“Then, now is your time, Horatio,” rejoined Lord Blande. “If she do not *lecture*, nor insist on setting us all to very hard and perhaps filthy *work*, I could not desire a more charming sister-in-law. But the sooner the nail is struck on the head the better,” added the sagacious Peer. “I have a notion the young lady, like her father before her, has a will of her own, if it is once fairly roused.”

“No will at present opposed to Horatio’s hopes, I am confident,” replied his lady. “But I must not make you too vain. And let me add, that, if I did not believe you truly appreciate her qualities, and will make the best husband of any man in London to my young friend, you should not have my good wishes; for she is truly a noble creature: with more frank, generous heart than would furnish the bosoms of half-a-dozen marrying-misses.”

“And more genius than would irradiate a galaxy of *blues*,” said Mr. Devereux.

The last compliment was repeated to Blanche in a few minutes afterwards, as she attended Lady Blande’s toilette. Her ladyship was dressing for the greatest ball of the season, whither she went with affected, or, perhaps, real reluctance.

“But I must show myself at D—House; no one would believe else that I had an invitation; and, Heaven knows, they are as plenty as blackberries. Blande won’t come, lazy fellow, till late—long after you are asleep; and Horatio has cut the gay world altogether. Between them and the children you will, I hope, be well amused—and how I shall envy you! The demands of society are the saddest penalty attached to a certain rank in life. Among your many reforms, pray do, dear Blanche, reform the system of London routs in the first place.”

“I will, at least, place myself above its inflictions.”

They returned to the drawing-room, where

all admired the splendid costume and brilliant beauty of the lady; and, in a sudden fit of gallantry, Lord Blande resolved to attend his wife himself. The Lady Blanche was thus left solely to the versatile powers of amusement of Mr. Devereux, and the company, for a little time, of the children.

Other evenings of the same kind occurred, in which talk about the excursions of the morning, or those planned for a future day, a little reading, a little music, a little chat, and a world of desultory but agreeable discussion, whiled away the time; and, at length, led a man, experienced in the female heart, to conclude, that—

“A little love, when urged with care,
May lead a heart, and lead it far.”

Blanche fell into musing fits. Her grandmother's anxiety for her early marriage was no secret to her, and had often excited the latent spirit of opposition.

“I must be married, not that I may be beloved and happy, but that the world may have a chance against being visited with the overwhelming calamity of lineal heirs being wanted to the honours of Delamere!” she was wont to say to her nurse. “My uncle Yates, too, it seems, is most anxious for my marriage.”

After her intimacy with Mr. Devereux, the idea of marriage—if not entertained with the usual feelings of a young lady in love—became much less repugnant. To her bosom confidante she frankly owned that she thought Mr. Devereux very pleasing, very well-informed, and possessed of many of the qualities she should prize in a husband. Above all, were his domestic tastes, and the love of quiet and intellectual pleasures, and of music and literature. She had been exceedingly happy in his society and that of his sister, even in London; and liked them far better, in ordinary intercourse, than any persons of their rank she had ever seen.

“Thy heart is touched at last, proud maiden,” said the Quakeress, half sorrowfully.

“Hearts! what have grand princesses like myself to do with hearts, who must be married for the glory of our families and the advantage of our heirs! Were I even independent, is free choice permitted me? Below a certain rank, were any man, though a Plato or a Washington, to address me, the kind world—they call it ‘the understanding of mankind’—would impute to my lover motives of mean ambition, or others more sordid still. Nay, I might suspect their

existence myself: and how could love, and reverence, and trust unbounded, harbour in the same breast with doubt of the beloved? While, on the other hand, how would the false world judge and brand the traitress to her rank, to the delicacy of her sex, her duty to her family and to society, who ‘disgraced herself’ by contracting what it is pleased to call an unequal, or *low* marriage, though with the man she loves and honours! Oh, no! the world is in every thing too strong for me; and I must in the strife ever succumb at last.”

“And if Mr. Devereux has obtained the approbation of the Countess, must thy consent follow?”

“Why, so I presume; that is, if the mighty princess must needs be married, which, however, she would rather decline. I see no one I like more than Mr. Devereux. I could have fancied something far—so far different;” and Blanche sighed inaudibly; “but it was a girl's dream, a fond illusion of imagination; perhaps some broken dream of my pre-existing, some shadow of my future state of being.—I am now in the world, and it claims its own. I will endeavour to bend my will to what it dictates as my duty so far as I am able; exalted happiness is, alas! for few, and certainly not for noble heiresses.”

“She will be this man's wife,” thought the Quakeress, sadly. “A blighted portion for so fair a nature—so lofty and yet so tender—so loving, and faithful, and womanly; yet will the world pronounce it blest and enviable; and she will strive to acquiesce in the hollow belief, and live, if not unhappily, yet how far below herself!”

“Does Mr. Devereux's fancy accompany all the wild flights of thine?” asked the Quakeress, one evening, when Blanche was recounting a conversation on De Grammont's picture of the Court of Charles, in which they had differed in opinion; “does he comprehend all thy poetical and half-metaphysical nonsense?”

“Alas, no! how should he, when I but half understand myself?” said Blanche, laughing. “I must pardon him there, since his wings were not impeded in the East, nor yet full-plumed during a course of romance-reading under the beeches of Holy Cross, with, for a companion, a young poet, now a philosopher grave and erudite; but there are other points on which I have ventured to ring Devereux, and he has sounded hollow, or given no response. Our conversation, but

lately, on that odious book of De Grammont's, which embodies the very quintessence of whatever is most false, heartless, and profligate in the mutual relations and obligations of the sexes, makes me fear that we entertain opinions, wide as the poles asunder, on points which men and women in society seem tacitly to have agreed to banish or bury, but which I cannot banish from my thoughts while I remember poor Phoebe Waterton, and, far more compassionately, dear Rosa Weston.—Is there no trace of her?"

"None; she was not one likely to blazon her shame; she has hid herself somewhere—but I have not yet given up inquiry or hope."

While this conversation was passing above stairs, Lady Blande was amicably rating her brother for, as she said, "rousing the Quixotry of Blanche about that trumpery, witty book De Grammont. You men, with all your conceit, don't understand women half so well as we do each other. Blanche is new to life, and will, no doubt, yet learn to curb her thoughts, or, at least, to hold her tongue like other people. But just now her head, and I dare say her heart too, is filled with many wild vagaries and soaring notions about the purity, and honour, and rights of women—which, as mere abstract opinions, no one would condemn; but then I have a notion she is just the damsel to act upon them."

"Act upon them—certainly; can any lady entertain ideas too high of the honour of her sex?" said Devereux.

"Certainly not," returned the lady, coldly; "but Blanche is of a temper which would make her break off an engagement, even at the altar, with a man by whom she conceived another woman had been betrayed or wronged; on these matters she has very peculiar notions. One thing candour compels me to say—you have evidently made a favourable impression upon her; she is, probably, as much attached to you as she is capable of being to any man, until the spirit of Plato is unsphered, or something in that grand way; but a breath might destroy your hopes."

"I conceive your meaning, Eleanor," replied the gentleman, seemingly shocked. "But satisfy yourself; that unfortunate, that infatuated business is completely at an end; Blande will tell you that it is now in the hands of my solicitors. The children—"

"Well, well, never mind," interrupted Lady Blande eagerly, and unwilling to hear more. "There," kissing him, "we are friends again; and now you have my cordial

good wishes. Indeed, Horatio, it went to my conscience to have you under my own roof, dangling after my friend, and so fine a creature, too, and so very eligible a match—and that unfortunate *liaison* hanging over your head. Now, to-morrow, pen a proper epistle to grandmamma, with a postscript to the Doctor; but be sure to secure Blanche's consent before the favourable answer comes."

Mr. Horatio Devereux bowed acquiescence, and immediately took his departure; though soul-stricken and melancholy, yet resolved to pen the letter—to obtain the consent.

"Poor fellow, I pity him!" said Lord Blande. "Rosa was so devotedly attached to him; and it is so old an affair now: and really the children are very pretty creatures. Do you know the girl is very like you, Eleanor?"

"Don't mention it, I entreat. It is a dreadful annoyance, and from any other quarter would be insulting. Thank God, it is over now, and my brother saved! It has gone near to destroy him. Conceive Horatio's pining for the death of that youngest infant, as if its life had been desirable? I have no patience with such preposterous nonsense! As much concerned as if it had been his lawful child!"

"Probably more, Eleanor; as Horatio may conceive that he has something to reproach himself with. And a man's child is still his child, whether it be his wife's or not," added the sapient and not unfeeling Peer, while his lady blushed angry, though virtuous, *ruby* red. "Besides, Horatio was really much attached to Rosa and her children. She, indeed, poor thing, bore her faculties meekly."

"Surely, Blande, you forget yourself," replied the lady, sharply. "At all events, I don't suppose you would wish this fallen angel for a sister-in-law, and her babes for your children's cousins? Let Horatio make all the atonement in his power. My brother is a man of honour—and only too humane and susceptible where female frailty is concerned. He has properly left the affair to his solicitors, who are men of sense. And, I trust in heaven, Blanche will never hear of it; for I affirm again, she is just one of the high-flown, romantic damsels who would be off at once.—How shocking thus to discuss my brother's misfortunes with my husband!" The lady withdrew in haste.

About four or five years previously to this period, Rosamond Weston—the money subscribed to finish her education having been

more than expended—waited upon Lady Blande, in consequence of an advertisement for a preparatory governess, whom her ladyship wished to engage for a friend in the country. Miss Weston called more than once, by desire, and both sister and brother were much struck with the beauty and elegance of the poor girl, whose soul seemed to hang on the response of the lady, and to sink into despair when a doubtful answer was returned to her modest application. Mr. Horatio Devereux was a man of fine sensibility—all the world said so—and it is certain that his feelings were deeply interested for the beautiful petitioner. To do him justice, he, in the first place, repeatedly urged his sister to do something for the girl. She was very young, very lovely, tolerably accomplished, and an orphan—strong pleas. Lady Blande promised; and, had she been a fairy, with the power of making fairy gifts and conferring happiness as easy as speaking the word, or by the touch of her wand, Rosamond Weston would have been relieved and protected. But she was, on the contrary, a fashionable English lady, whose time, thoughts, and, above all, money, were fully engaged. She, however, kindly gave the girl hopes of better success; and her brother assumed the character of her ambassador to Rosa, certainly with no premeditated scheme of villany; for he pitied, while he admired. Mr. Horatio Devereux was not a rake—not a libertine. He was, as Lady Blande said, a man of elegant taste and quiet manners—fond of literature, of music, and of refined female society; and indeed very delicate in all his feelings about the sex.

As time went on, the imprudent and friendless girl, unable to receive the visitor whose kindness and gentle courtesy had sunk so deeply into her desolate heart, agreed to receive messages from Lady Blande, sometimes real, sometimes pretended, at places of meeting agreed upon; which she could easily do while engaged in the search for situations upon which she was daily despatched through London by her school-governess. No dishonourable advantage was taken of these assignations—probably none was meditated; and, mutually enamoured, and forgetting, or never once recognising any rule of propriety or prudence, this desultory, unacknowledged courtship proceeded until, at the commencement of winter, Rosa, on a particular morning, came to the accustomed rendezvous all in tears, and informed him—she durst not give him any familiar name even in her

secret thoughts—that an engagement as a singer in a minor theatre had been offered to her, and that the mistress of her school insisted that she should accept of it at once, or, at all events, leave her house. Her whole soul appeared to recoil from the idea of such a life—from the nightly exhibition of her person, her talents, and graces, and *allurements*, before a promiscuous or rude throng; and Mr. Devereux warmly and indignantly partook of her feelings, and vowed that she should never go upon a stage.

Her plan was to return to the north, where, perhaps, she might obtain a little work, perhaps some pupils for music; but she had no friends—none!—and when Mr. Devereux urged that she should try one more chance, advertise once again, remain one more month in London, and wait yet another letter from his sister, she was easily persuaded; for where her treasure was, there was her heart also! To remain at his cost was, she feared, very wrong—and it was very repugnant to her delicacy—but to go was death; and she procured a little lodging at Camberwell, and remained for the time specified, and for ever. It was an after consolation to Mr. Devereux that he never had indulged any deliberate scheme of seduction. His stars were in fault, or Rosa's guardian angel had fallen asleep; but "it was all over now;" and no one in her unhappy circumstances was ever more delicately treated, or honoured with more respectful observance.

"It was very foolish and shocking," Lady Blande said; "but the girl must either have been a perfect idiot, or have thrown herself in his way; but it was all over now!"

And the *liaison*—to use one of those foreign terms by which English virtue reconciles itself to vice and cruel injustice—was even winked at by the elderly ladies of the family, and such of Horatio's sisters as had come to the years of understanding the world, as the means of preventing greater inevitable evils and more dangerous ties—namely, connexions with rapacious and extravagant actresses or ballet-dancers—until the protracted celibacy, and obstinate fidelity of Devereux to his mistress, begat fears of another kind,—either that he might never marry at all,—though his elder brother had no family,—or marry that artful creature."

Though Mr. Devereux had fashionable London lodgings,—“convenient,” as the Irish say, to his duties as a legislator—and also an apartment in his father's town

house, when he chose to occupy it — far the greater part of his time, for the last four years, had been spent at what even his high-bred sisters jestingly termed his “country seat,” a cottage near Streatham, in which he had embowered “his Rosa” and their two children. Thither he was in the custom of riding out every Friday after the House rose, and in all weathers; and there he remained until *duty* and *patriotism* brought him back to town on Tuesdays.

At “the country seat,” in the enjoyment of life’s best and sweetest blessings, no more embittered to him either by forethought or reflection than served to give zest and piquancy to sweetness which otherwise might have cloyed, *he* lived in happiness, whatever might have been the occasional remorseful feelings of that delicate companion whose mind he had cultivated, whose sensibilities he had cherished, and who, loving him with passion far more profound than in the hours of her girlish devotion, was now to be told that she was to see him no more. Here, where he made a home, and planted its dearest joys and treasures, Mr. Devereux was never again to appear. He was going to amend his life — he was going to be married! Devereux had not, indeed, told her so himself. Accident spared him that pain.

Save a ramble on the Continent in the first months of their connexion, and a stealthy trip to the Isle of Wight, Miss Weston had hardly, even for a day, gone beyond the precincts of her sweet and sequestered, but most precarious and degrading asylum, save when, at hours not liable to remark, “her protector” had sometimes taken her an airing, or to see some celebrated spot in their neighbourhood. Neither the refined Devereux nor his gentle mate was of the intrepid order of sinners, who brave or defy the world’s opinion; and, though the *respectability* of the neighbourhood at first hotly resented their settlement, they had conducted themselves so *discreetly* — that is to say, they had paid their bills so punctually, and been so unobtrusive in their manners — that the connexion was now as leniently regarded as any thing of the kind could be by “respectable” people. The beautiful and well-dressed children of the Cottage were universally pitied, and sometimes caressed, by ladies, when met walking with their nursemaid in the lanes; while, by the less scrupulous villagers, “the darlings” were admired and praised. The death of the youngest child, a mere infant,

had been followed by the long and severe illness of the mother, from which she was not yet fully recovered; and the loss had deeply affected the spirits of her “protector,” to use another elegant and delicate English periphrasis.

We have said that Mr. Devereux’s “fine feelings” — his family and friends could never enough celebrate their trembling delicacy — were spared the pain of telling his unfortunate companion her destiny.

On his final visit, gently sad and subdued in manner as he ever found her, until the joy of his arrival and the charm of his society had attuned her spirit to whatever might be the prevailing tone of his, there was this day melancholy change which could not be mistaken. After an ineffectual struggle to command her feelings, broken murmurs and irrepressible tears were the only reply to his constrained and chill, but courteous greeting.

His visits alone had ever brought sunshine and gladness to that lonely home; and the happy, unconscious children rushed to “papa,” as at other times, and clung around him.

“Be well now, mamma!” said Horatio, the boy, a quick and affectionate child, whom his young “papa” had graciously honoured to bear his own honourable name, because it was the dearest name on earth to “poor Rosa.”

“Go, sir! you trouble your mother,” said Mr. Devereux, peevishly, pushing back the child.

“Go, dearest Ho.; go, poor boy,” whispered the sinking mother, in a choking voice.

“Yes, mamma, since *you* bid me.” And the boy sulkily led away his little sister.

“You are spoiling those children, Rosa,” said Devereux, sharply, and after a painful embarrassing pause — and the mother’s over-stretched heartstrings snapped! —

“*Those* children! — *your* children — *our* children! Oh, tell us our fate, Devereux!”

Mr. Devereux durst not trust himself to look towards the unhappy young woman, who, with clasped hands, breathed these simple words in the low, thrilling voice of exquisite mental agony; yet was he pleased that probably the gossip of the servants had anticipated his “painful but most necessary duty.” He had no friend to whom he could depute so delicate a task — and write he could not. A letter, he feared, might drive Rosamond mad, and lead to the most

painful scenes, perhaps to fatal exposure; and he knew his own power with "poor Rosa," and had resolved not to leave her until she had "come to reason, and was resigned and composed."

With some effort, he now worked himself up to sternness and displeasure at what he called her "impatience, and unreasonable nonsense." What, he at last demanded, though very mildly in tone, had she looked for? This refined and honourable Mr. Devereux inquired, "What could she have expected else?" and for a moment the wretched girl glared upon her former lover with an expression which made him quail to the inmost recess of his dastardly spirit. But this was not the natural mood of Rosamond Weston. She had felt as if a shot had passed through her brain—her flesh quivered and burned for an instant as with the thirst of blood—and then the strange feeling was gone—and, lowering her eyes, she replied, almost inaudibly,—"Nothing—oh, nothing! For myself, I have never expected—never presumed. Hence my weakness—my incredible folly—my deep guilt—my misery, my most intolerable misery! I have long foreseen this day—known it—felt it. It has been ever present with me—and yet I lived on."

The children were now heard returning with noisy mirth; they brought in fresh-gathered flowers and fresh water-cresses for papa—not gifts to propitiate love—of which they had neither doubt nor fear, though this time papa had forgotten to bring them any of the promised pretty things from London. He hastily rung the bell, and dismissed them.—Not such had been their usual reception. It was a new agony for their mother; yet she said—"Thank you for sparing me their sight. No, Devereux—for myself I expect nothing, deserve nothing. But these children!—how shall I henceforth think of them?—how look upon them, and endure to live?"

The feelings of Mr. Devereux were any thing but comfortable. Compassion, remorse, nay, affection, battled with ambition, or with what he wished, rather than succeeded, in thinking his paramount duty to his family—his father's, not his own—and, above all, to "*himself*." Lord Blande was right in believing him even tenderly attached to "poor Rosa and her children;" only he loved himself—nay, his rank, his place in the estimation of that small section of mankind which he called society or the

world, and the means of increasing his fortune and influence—a great deal better; and gradually, as the point was debated in his own mind, better and better, until the appearance of the titled heiress banished every doubt, and left, as the only difficulty, how she was to be gained, and Rosamond to be most prudently, and kindly, and *generously* dismissed. Yes! Mr. Devereux determined to be both delicate and most generous! Rosa's gentleness and devoted attachment merited good treatment at his hands. *Her* children—they were now *hers* only—should be sent to France to be educated, and their mother should have an annuity sufficient for her few wants. She would no doubt retire to some quiet, remote neighbourhood, where nobody could know her, and, perhaps, might marry.—But, no! he was almost sure Rosa never would marry. Delicacy, love for himself—for deeply, fondly, devotedly had poor Rosa loved, and must ever love him—would prevent a step which, by a seeming incongruity, but through a really natural sentiment, he thought of with jealous, angry pride at the very same moment that he was meditating eternal separation. No, not eternal; perhaps, at some future time, in some change of circumstances—Mr. Devereux could not premeditate injury to his future wife, or the violation of his own conjugal duties; but, while his ambition and his pride demanded the hand of Blanche Delamere, whom he certainly admired almost as much as he pretended, other, and softer, and habitually cherished feelings made him reluctant to surrender for ever the heart of "his meek and endearing Rosa!"

Mr. Devereux was, in short, bewildered in a maze of sentiment and sensibility. He would have been both deeply mortified and hotly offended, had Rosa been able to hear of their separation—of her dismissal—without sorrow and despairing agony; and he was equally alive to the necessity of that event preceding his addresses to Lady Blanche. As he rode out that morning to Streatham, his consolatory thought was—"I know poor Rosa loves me so much as to submit patiently to any arrangement I may show her to be for my advantage and happiness. Whatever her weaknesses may be, no creature can be more patient and disinterested than poor Rosa."

This very favourable opinion made Mr. Devereux the more angry with her "unreasonableness," even while thankful that she

had divined the cruel purpose lurking in his breast, and spared him the shame of revealing it.

But we have left Mr. Devereux in the midst of the explanation which cost him such an effort.

"Speak not of me," continued his companion. "Tell me of these children. Once you seemed to love them—and I!—how shall I now dare look upon them, when already I shrink from the deep eyes of that poor boy!"

"And surely I do love them, and you too, Rosa, were you only yourself, and *reasonable*." And he attempted to draw caressingly towards him the shuddering and recoiling girl, between whom and himself a wall of separation had in a moment been raised, which neither bribes nor blandishments would ever again overthrow.

"Please then to sit down, madam, till we discuss the matter of your children," said the now incensed Mr. Devereux; and he began to recount his wise and generous designs. "I am aware that it could be no more pleasant than right that you should educate the children. They will be carefully attended to, and you may occasionally hear of them. Of the boy there is no fear. If he conduct himself properly, he shall not want my countenance nor that of my family; and for the little girl——"

The explanation proceeded no farther; with a shuddering groan, the unhappy mother of the children fell into a swoon, and Mr. Devereux, though shocked, deemed it wisest, on the whole, to take advantage of her insensibility to withdraw.

The old gardener, who attended the cow, and trimmed the shrubs, and mowed the grass-plats, and defended the premises from rats and robbers when the master was absent, led out "master's horse," as in happier times.

"So Madam is to be sent off, your honour, we hear," said old Robert, whom the fear of being thrown out of a good place had strangely emboldened. "Well-a-well; I should ha' got a warning though, too; and so should Molly, my wench:—But I knowed it must come to this some time, when your honour, like other grand gentlemen, turned off your miss and married a lady. Well-a-well!—I reckons we'se get wages and board, Molly and me, to Michaelmas, any way—that's but justice. I'm cruel sorry for Madam, too; for, an' she were a ——, she was one of the best kind of 'em."

Every fibre, every drop of aristocratic blood, in the body of the Honourable Mr.

Horatio Devereux boiled and quivered to the sound of the contumelious appellation bestowed upon "his poor Rosa"—and old and new wrath, and a host of maddening and conflicting feelings were expended, in laying his horse-whip about the shoulders of the gardener, who, quite ignorant of the delicacies of gentlemanly feeling, had supposed he might use plain speech, especially after "Madam had been cast off."

"Dr'at the chap!" soliloquized Robert, after Mr. Devereux had sprung to his horse and galloped off, as if justice were after him—"Dr'at the chap! but I ha' a mind to take the law on him, for striking me only for calling the poor wench what he made her his ownself!"

The Honourable Mr. Devereux did not again trust himself at Streatham, nor yet change in one jot his fixed purpose regarding the inmates of his "country-seat." Again, "upon his honour," he assured his sister "that the unhappy business was for ever over." The children were to be sent to France as soon as the necessary arrangements could be made: and "their mother?"—to her Mr. Devereux had penned a long letter of *admonition* and *advice* for her future conduct. "She was still very young and very attractive, and might be exposed to the arts and temptations of man—if she *fell*, it should not be through the temptation of want."

While these gracious things were passing, Mr. Devereux was indeed often as "low, and nervous, and nonsensical," as it provoked his sister to see and call him. But it was, thank Heaven! all over now; and that day he had spent a long morning in Westminster Abbey, the sole attendant of the Lady Blanche. Her *bonne* had gone to spend the day with some "Friends" in the country; and Lady Blande set down her fair guest at the Abbey, (whispering her brother, "Just the spot to woo a heroine,") under "excellent care," and took her up when Mr. Devereux—and he was not more rash nor more presumptuous than other gentlemen of his standing—flattered himself that he had only to speak and be accepted.

He had done all but speak, and more than words could perform; and Blanche had not frowned, nor withdrawn her arm, nor reared her neck into her swan-like, unconscious, and involuntary haughty attitude of superiority. At one time, indeed, when he gently upbraided her impatience for the return of Lady Blande, and imputed weariness of his

society, she had said — “I am not tired of your society, Mr. Devereux. So far from it, I find few so entertaining, pleasant, and friendly.” At his murmured, rapturous thanks, and sudden, passionate pressure of the very tips of her gloved fingers, she looked confused, and, as their eyes met, blushed, and walked away, and then stopped to question him of Nelson’s tomb. Mr. Devereux was skilled in the *pathology* of the female heart. That evening Lady Blande could not doubt that her brother and Blanche were heart-, or — to her it came to the same thing — hand-plighted. They sat apart, talked together, sang together, and appeared completely absorbed in each other — Devereux in gay and exulting spirits, Blanche more softly, sweetly, and gently feminine than she had ever before appeared. Lord Blande went off to one of his clubs, tired, he said, of playing nobody in his own house; and, at a late hour, his lady, who had held out alone over a dull, fashionable novel as long as patience and eyes could hold out, playfully pointed to the *pendule*, and told her brother he must be off.

“How very late!” cried Blanche, rising, and blushing, as much at her own thoughtlessness as at the gallant, complimentary reproaches of her admirer, who, as he for the first time kissed her hand, after he had embraced his sister, craved leave to wait upon her next morning.

“Silence is maidenly consent,” said Lady Blande, gaily, when Blanche hesitated to reply. “Come to us as early as you will, Ho.; but go now.” And she pushed him away. “Poor Mrs. Simpson, who will not take slumber to her eyelids till she has seen her lady cared for, must be half dead by this time, with her early travels and her late vigils, and may besides, perhaps, have a word of exhortation to give,” she added, archly.

Lady Blanche hastened to the comfortable apartment where her friend, as usual, awaited her.—“Pray, don’t scold me. I am enough punished by remorse; it was so heedless, so thoughtless, so selfish — as heedlessness ever is — to keep you waiting. And why wait? Yet I should have been so disappointed had you been gone to bed! I have so much to unbosom.—For how many years, now, has this unrobing hour been the happiest of my day? What would become of me, deprived of our confidential intercourse? I can never forego it.”

Blanche Delamere, more from the impulse of an almost morbid delicacy, than any pride

of personal independence, chose to be in many things her own lady’s maid. She hated, she said, to have Martin, or any one she did not both like and love, fiddling about her person, and annoying her with those offices of undressing and hair-brushing usually performed by servants. At this unrobing hour, her *bonne* ostensibly read to her, though more of the time was generally consumed in talking of the adventures and incidents of the day.

“I have a world to tell you of to-night,” said Blanche to her very grave friend, whom she feared her tardiness had seriously displeased: “so very much, and wonderful, too, that I am sure, after you hear all I have gone through, done, and suffered to-day, you will pardon me.”

“I would have thee first listen to me, lady. I have to tell what, I fear, may grieve thee. Yet it must be told.”

“What!” cried Blanche, while the idea of Frederick Leighton struck on the conscious heart, which now first felt that it had that day been unfaithful, where fealty, though never claimed, was involuntarily given. And she was glad that the thick, dark tresses hanging over her arm, to be brushed, veiled her deepened colour.

“A sad tale—yet one that it deeply concerneth thee to hear, while it is yet time. The man to whom thou hast all but pledged thy hand, to whom thou art unconsciously losing thy heart, is bound to another—bound by ties which the proud and the false may condemn, which man’s laws may defy, but which the God who seeth in secret and judgeth all his creatures in mercy and in equity, solemnly regardeth.”

The Lady Blanche was effectually roused, and yet inexpressibly relieved. It was not, then, of Frederick — what but good could be heard of him!

“I have found Rosamond Weston! Her betrayer, the author of the life-long disgrace and misery which brings neither suffering nor shame to him—though her own passions, her own folly, should have been partly the cause of her betrayal — is the man who now offers thee *honourable* addresses:—Thee, pure-hearted, high-minded maiden!”

The outline of the tale we have related, was rapidly traced; and Blanche listened earnestly, but with the entire composure which gave her anxious friend assurance that, however her delicacy or her pride might be hurt, there was no deep tenderness to wound, no bitter jealousy to awaken.

"What shall I do first?" was her eager response—for Blanche never paused upon the necessity of doing something.

"That I leave to thy heart and thy judgment, lady; to thy wise and just regard for thine own honour and happiness; and—may I not say it?—for the *rights*, if not longer the happiness of thy fallen sister-woman."

"I will drive to Streatham to-morrow before breakfast. On an errand of mercy, you will accompany me:—mercy to myself. I have promised Mr. Devereux an interview, which can never now take place. I will not consult Lady Blande; I will act by my own counsel in what so nearly concerns myself. I will see Rosamond; culpable she may have been—but how treated? Paley's 'Moral Philosophy' appears to you English people, if not altogether canonical, yet a kind of supplementary Bible. What says the Rabbi of Craven in the passage you made me insert in my book of Canons, soon after poor Phœbe's misfortune? If I remember aright, it runs this way:—'*If we pursue the effects of seduction through the complicated misery which it occasions, and if it be right to estimate crimes by the mischief they produce, it will appear something more than mere invective to assert, that not one half of the crimes for which men suffer death by the laws of England, are so flagitious as this.*'"

CHAPTER X.

Rosamond's Bower!

THE bright-eyed morning of the still vernal summer wore its fresh dew and innocent beauty, when the carriage of the Lady Blanche Delamere drew up at a small green portal, which broke the high wall over which sweet-scented hawthorn sprays and blooms, and the gorgeous flowers of the horse-chestnut, were shedding a luxuriance of floral loveliness.

It had cost the servants some trouble to discover the sequestered residence by any address that Blanche or her governess could imagine as appropriate to "the lady living under the protection of Mr. Devereux." She could neither be known as "Mrs. Devereux"—nor, the mother of a family of children, as "Miss Weston." In fact, the inmate of the pretty detached cottage, in former days playfully named, by Mr. Devereux, "Rosamond's Bower," and known in his family as "Horatio's country seat," went by the most common and convenient of all names—that of "Mrs. Smith."

From the narrow precincts of her domain,

of an acre and a half, or thereabouts, laid out in flower-beds, orchard, and lawn, the prying eyes of the curious and *vulgar* were as jealously excluded as if the cottage had been an aristocratic mansion, embosomed amidst "the pomp of groves and garniture of fields," in the lordly park of the Fanfaronades, over whose high walls even the prying eyes of the bagman, on the top of the fast coach, could hardly catch a passing glimpse, though straining his neck like a crane, that he might have the pleasure of telling ever after, at The 'Travellers' dinner, how he had seen "Lord F.'s charming place." 'Tis the worshippers make the idol.

The sudden opening of the green door in the bowery lane revealed a fairy scene, as the fairydom of gentility is imagined in England—that is, a cottage, of the order *picturesque*, ornamented with French lattices and a verandah, and embosomed, or rather matted and *mosaicked*, by roses and honeysuckles, passion-flowers, fuschias, myrtles, and clematis—the latter disporting their vagrant fancies in a luxuriant entanglement of blossom and foliage. The bright, fresh turf of the trim, span-breadth lawn, was embroidered with violets, primroses, and the wild blue hyacinth; and the folding glass door of the hall, thrown open, showed beyond, in tasteful confusion, skin mats, rustic seats, and baskets, and stands with plants in flower; with a few stuffed birds and animals, and fishing-rods and fowling-pieces, slung up with garden rakes fit for a lady's hand. But the principal ornament of this saloon, was a very large and handsome Newfoundland dog, stretched across the threshold, and basking sleepily in the morning sun, while a lovely little girl strewed his glossy, ebon coat with flowers from the stores in her lap. Her brother had been attracted from her side by the appearance of the ladies, whom the maid-servant now admitted with the fuss and bustle consequent on that wonderful phenomenon, the appearance of female visitors in a place where nothing that could, by any stretch of politeness, be called a *lady*, ever had appeared—save the poor sempstress, who had lost some of her best or most virtuous customers by wickedly making frocks and bonnets for Mrs. Smith's children.

"How sweet a spot!" whispered Blanche to her friend—"how pure, peaceful, and home-like!" She stooped to pat the child and the dog—the one giving her welcome by bright smiles—the other by a benevolent growl, and wag of his tail.

"Were this indeed poor Rosamond's home—these *her* children—which yet *are* her children—how delightful our visit to her—how pleasant to renew early friendship—how gracious a continued intercourse with one so amiable and affectionate—the mother—the *wife*—surrounded by all the sweets of home and family—and oh! more than all, enjoying the security, the self-approval, wanting which all else is without value, if it be not the source of remorse and unappeasable anguish!—How dreadful for an affectionate-hearted woman to have placed herself in a condition in which she must be compelled to wish her children unborn or buried!"

The ladies were meanwhile ushered into a light and airy morning room, in which breakfast was set out. The sunbeams were dancing through the clustering foliage of the lattice upon the gay chintz furniture, the brilliant paper hangings, and airy draperies, and the few choice cabinet pictures, and well-stored Lilliputian book-cases. The whole scene, and every comfortable or elegant accessory, seemed so thoroughly domestic, yet so cheerful and bright, that Blanche, addressing the little girl who toddled after her, for a moment forgot her errand, and where she stood. Her recollection was instantly recalled by a portrait in crayons, which, as the most cherished ornament of the *home*, hung over the mantel-piece.

"That's papa," said the boy, following the eye of Blanche. It bore, indeed, a striking resemblance to the alleged head of the household, if head it might be said to have. He whom it portrayed was, however, the absolute master of the inmates; their sole hope and dependence—by whom and for whom they existed; the lord of their destiny. Other households have claims and rights; legal protection; friends, neighbours,—sustaining social sympathy—that strongest bulwark of the security of families, bound up with the general weal of society: this little household was thrust beyond its pale. It had been drawn together for the licentious, or at least selfish, pleasure of *one* man—it had existed at his mercy—it was now to be annihilated by his fiat.

With such thoughts passing through their minds, the unexpected visitors silently waited the appearance of Molly's "Missis," who, the handmaiden took upon her to assure them, would appear "in a jiffy."

As she disappeared, the boy informed the ladies that "mamma was not very well this morning."

"If you are from town, ma'am, perhaps you will see papa. He has not been down for some time. If I could write, I would send him a letter, bidding him come, for mamma is not able to write him now, she says—her headache is so very bad; and she cried so, when I would not let Mary put papa's flute away from mamma's pianoforte."

Twice had the quick ear of Blanche caught a faint rustle, as if a child touched the door-handle, and had then desisted as if afraid to venture in. At a third palpable attempt, the boy suddenly threw open the door, and the sad, pale, drooping, and trembling young woman staggered, rather than walked forward, and failed in an incoherent attempt at speech.

It was not the innocent, happy, and buoyant Rosamond Weston of past times, though there were many traces of her in the tall emaciated woman, who, still in mourning for her infant, wore a dress somewhat resembling that of the Sisters of Charity. Lady Blanche advanced with a grave expression of sympathy and friendliness; and the Quakeress also advanced, with that air of mild and benign kindness and courtesy, which won all unsophisticated hearts. There was instant though silent mutual recognition.

"I may seem an unpardonable intruder," said Blanche; "but the motive of my visit must plead my apology." The words of the young woman, in reply, were unconnected and unintelligible; her eyes were downcast and brimming with tears; her voice tremulous. The boy pressed to his mother's side, in sympathy with those signs of distress, and took her hand—and then the tears overflowed their bed.

"You are the Lady Blanche Delamere," she whispered at last; "and I can guess your errand—yet, for a few moments, spare me." She gasped as if for breath, and her colour went and came. Blanche turned away in compassionate sympathy, and busied herself in opening the lattice to admit freer air.

"You are very ill, dear mamma," said the boy, anxiously pressing his mother's damp hand.

"I will be better soon—go now, Horatio—go, dear boy. Take Eleanor into the garden, Mary, till I call you. I have business with the ladies."

The boy had been trained in the obedience of love; and, though very unwilling to leave "poor mamma" and the strangers, about whom he was curious, he never thought of disputing her will. She hastily shut, and

even bolted the door, and, rushing towards the Quakeress, threw herself on her knees before her, and burying her face gave way to the passion of sorrow and shame which she had struggled to subdue in presence of her children.

No words passed for some time; and Blanche, bending over the weeping Magdalene, kindly and respectfully pressed the thin hand, on whose white attenuated fingers yet glittered the rings, forgotten by the wearer as by the bestower, though tokens of fond remembrance, if not troth-plights.

And now Blanche almost embraced, in gently raising the feeble despairing creature, over whom she leaned, while she whispered—"I am, as you guess, your former playmate, Blanche Delamere—but not here, Rosamond, to give you pain or sorrow—oh, no!" And she led her old companion to an ottoman, and sat down by her. "Since you remember me, and have heard of me, you may also have learned where I am living—whose attentions, and almost courtship, I have, in ignorance, been receiving. I have been in imminent danger of becoming the affianced bride, while another is, or ought to be, the wife of Mr. Devereux."

"Softly, dear child!" interposed the Quakeress, alarmed at the impetuosity of her pupil, whose impulses, if always benevolent, were not always, she feared, under the restraint of cool judgment; but Blanche heard her not.

"Your claims, Rosamond, are of older date and of a more sacred character than mine."

"Ah, no, no—alas, no!" answered the young woman; "I have no rights—no claims—none which law sanctions—none which society allows;—to him alone I looked—to his love for us."

"What! are not your children—is not this the *home* which he has given you, and shared with you for so many years?"

"Alas, yes!—my poor innocent children!—I have gathered the apples of Sodom, but for them remain the ashes. Oh, could I alone be the sufferer, I should ask no more!"

It was at last to the benign Quakeress that the unhappy girl was beguiled into confiding her whole story. From her—young, rich, beautiful, and—as her still devoted, and, therefore, jealous heart whispered—triumphant rival, she shrank with mingled shame and apprehension. Her feelings far more refined, and her heart as purely feminine as that of simple Phoebe Waterton, she also

attempted no self-justification—permitted no reproach, no complaint, to escape her against the author of her misfortune. There was in her manner and her words, a degree of meek forbearance, of deep humility, which almost chafed the quick and high spirit of Blanche.

She spoke in French to her governante, who perfectly understood, without ever allowing her lips to be polluted by pronouncing one word of, that polished language of gallantry and sentiment, compliment and double-entendre.

"One might fancy this poor woman agreed in opinion with the generous world—that her seducer is the injured party, and she the only culprit, because he is about to be slightly whipped by the natural consequences of his pleasant vices—or rather from having to deal with a person so eccentric, for one in her rank, as my humble self, so Quixotic in her opinions of morality, religious obligation, and social rights—who, knowing it is her highest duty to love her neighbour as herself, cannot think it fit to marry her neighbour's husband."

The flushed cheek of the unhappy girl showed that she understood the scope of this speech.

"You understand what I have taken the liberty to say," added Blanche, hastily. "Tell me, then, frankly, do you think you have no claims on Mr. Devereux? Are your youth, your affection, your womanhood, your honour and happiness, of no value, save the wretched, pecuniary recompense it is at his pleasure either to set upon them or to withhold?"

"Yes, alas!—sometimes, when despair has, for a moment, given way to indignation, and to that natural pity for myself which I may not deserve from the virtuous, I have dared, for a few moments, to think so!—but, oh! no! no! *Me* he could not now marry, without the disgrace I could never bring upon him, were he even willing to incur it for me. Is it for me—weak, infatuated as I have been, and now justly punished—to come between him and the brilliant fate which may yet be his?"

Blanche was not satisfied.

"Right, indeed, it must be," she said, in a tone of asperity, "that men decree that what in them is a jest—an amiable weakness, a venial trespass of youth—should on their frail partners, be visited with social proscription, ruin, misery, irreparable degradation and infamy, since women themselves can vindicate the opinions and rules which

their masters establish for their own benefit, or to secure indemnity for their most cruel injustice."

"It is not for me, who have for ever forfeited the world's good opinion, to brave it now," sighed the afflicted woman. "The poor children, of whom he seemed so fond—save for them, I am resigned to every thing. Mine, in my happiest moments, when Devereux loved me well, has ever been a troubled joy."

"Loved you!" exclaimed Blanche, scornfully. "Durst this man so profane the attribute by which God himself chooses to be revealed to his creatures! How false, how shameless a mockery!—Loved you! while his every act degraded you in the eyes of your fellow-creatures and in your own. Thus the wolf loves the lamb, which he tears to glut himself with its tender flesh; thus the vermin loves the fruit in whose bosom it riots till it become wasted and loathsome."

Blanche felt that she had spoken too strongly; and, considering the delicate situation and sensitive feelings of the unhappy object of her indignant pity, perhaps harshly; and she endeavoured to soften the expression of her opinion, by adding—

"I do perhaps feel too strongly on those points; but it is because the world—even the virtuous part of it—seems so hardened as not to feel at all."

The delicate, but ingenious questioning of the Quakeress, could not draw from the unhappy Rosamond that she had ever received any direct promise of marriage from her lover.

"I never demanded one," she said, with tones of pathos which thrilled to the heart of Blanche. "At first, while happy in his love, how could I doubt?—at last, how could I speak?"

It was too true. Mr. Devereux spared himself and her on the past, and she never found courage to speak of the future, until the dawning intelligence of her eldest child alternately presented it in uncertainty, or darkness and terror. After the birth of that child, with infinite pain and sorrow she had made up her mind to separate from the man in whom her soul, with all its affections and hopes, was centred; but Mr. Devereux, who had at this time no other *serious* attachment, and who was not yet tired of his gentle and elegant companion, took alarm at the idea of his Rosa's desertion; and her wise and virtuous resolution was overruled by his remonstrances. The Quakeress considered

this unwise submission a very great aggravation of the original error of the unhappy girl, whom she, nevertheless, sincerely pitied; but this severe opinion she suppressed; and, to afford a temporary diversion of feeling to her involuntary hostess, she begged for a cup of coffee, aware that poor Rosamond might feel it presumption, or impertinence, even to offer her guests refreshments after their early drive.

Breakfast was accordingly served, and slightly partaken—the children again appearing, and prattling to the kind strangers—to the *handsome* and the *good* lady—with all the captivating simplicity of their age, while the mother's eyes gushed over, and Blanche gazed pitifully on the lovely *Paria* family, sprung of English aristocracy. The little girl, Eleanor, what—as she grew up in beauty, and with the refined and sensitive feelings of her sex—were to be her sufferings and mortifications!

"Eleanor is papa's pet," said the little boy, raising to Blanche the candid brow which already said—

Here, shame is ashamed to sit!

What were to be his feelings when time revealed to him the ignominy of his birth, and the humiliation and wrongs of her who was now the angel of his life?

When the slight repast was concluded, the party went into the garden for freer air; and, while the children tumbled on the grass plats, or gamboled in the walks, the former conversation was resumed, in that bowery summer-house which, in fine weather, was the usual afternoon haunt of Rosa and her "protector."

Blanche whispered to her *bonne* that it would refresh her spirit could poor Rosamond only be roused to one burst of hearty, honest indignation against him; but all she obtained was one fugitive glance of joy, one bright gleam of rapture, when she energetically declared that, between herself and Mr. Devereux, every tie was severed—that, whatever the world, or even the law might pronounce, she considered him an *unmarriageable* man, if an unmarried one; bound by the deepest obligations to his children, and with much to atone for to them, and very much to be forgiven. Tears streamed down the cheeks of Rosamond—a soul-relieving flood. All that she dared wish for was not to be separated from her children just yet, while they were still so very young; while, on the other hand, her judgment whispered, that the

sooner the dreaded sacrifice was made, the better perhaps for them.

"The law, I believe, Rosamond, cannot deprive you of your children; in that respect you are more happy, as a mother, than women whose rights it protects, as wives.—Oh, no! Our masters, the law-makers, seek no power over those unhappy children whose existence only embarrasses them. It leaves children in the sole power of those women who are presumed to be vicious and corrupted, and who certainly are degraded and ruined in the world's esteem, while it strips the virtuous married mother of all power over her own offspring! You smile, *ma bonne*, at my not *unusual* warmth; but there is something rotten in this our state of Denmark, and why should not I denounce it?"

"Whatever be my wishes or my claims," said Rosamond, "how can I oppose the decision of Mr. Devereux, in disposing of my poor children? On his will they must depend for the very bread they eat, while my watchful care, my yearning love, can only bring blight and shame upon the dearest objects of my soul."

"Gracious heavens!" exclaimed Blanche, when again seated in the carriage, "that man's selfish vice and woman's weakness should thus convert the finest and sweetest feelings of a nature, even in its frailty so exquisitely feminine, into scorpions to sting her! What is to be the fate of her little ones? How often have I heard you descant on the many chances against the healthful growth and development of the affections and moral principles of illegitimate children!"

The mother had not ventured to follow the guests, whose respectful sympathy and parting injunctions that she would take no step and consent to no arrangements until she heard from them, had fallen like healing balm on her crushed and desolate heart; but the joyous children followed to the green door, the boy requesting that papa might be sent down, and the little girl holding up her rosy mouth to be kissed, as, all glee and smiles, she lisped her pretty farewell.

On the homeward drive, the conversation naturally turned on the scene they had witnessed, and the condition of deserted women, with illegitimate offspring. But before they reached home, the *bonne* quietly inquired of her impetuous pupil what she meant to do?

"Need you inquire? My kiss on the lips of that innocent child, is the seal of my covenant that through me no injury or

injustice shall ever come to her or her unhappy mother." She was in the drawing-room ere the words were well uttered.

A note, left for Lady Blande, had merely stated that Lady Blanche was to drive into the country a little way with Mrs. Simpson, to visit an old friend, but would be back early; and though there was a little wonder at the very independent manner in which the young lady often acted, and some doubtful augury at this capricious and ill-bred breach of a formal appointment, with a lover all but vowed, it was quietly set down to Lady Blanche's way; and her friend, embracing her, sportively exclaimed,—“Ah, runaway! give an account of yourself directly. Here has Horatio been twice—and will soon be a third time—most lorn and lover-like, that you should choose to absent yourself on this particular morning. I set it down in my own mind to the true cause—dear caprice—vagrant virgin fancies; but would not so far impeach my late order as to own so much to him.—But seriously, Blanche, why do you look so very grave? Where have you been?"

"I have been where I presume you never were, Eleanor—though there is much to be seen there to interest your feelings—I have been to Streatham, and, farther, to visit the family of your brother, Mr. Devereux."

Lady Blande coloured violently, and, with all her tact and use, became confused and at a loss what to reply to so blunt and home a thrust; but the thought was quick—this must be some wild flight of romantic generosity, indulged by a young lady who entertained very extravagant notions on many subjects, and especially on what she was pleased to consider her "duties," and who, no doubt, having unfortunately heard of their existence, must have been seized with the crotchet of some imaginary "duty," obliging her to adopt and educate the children of the man whom she was about to make the master of her fate.

"I do not affect, with your keen perception, to misunderstand you, my love; yet you astonish me. There was, I have understood—for you know little birds will sometimes whisper naughty tales, which ladies should not hear—there was, ages ago, some vain and silly girl, and some boyish entanglement, which Horatio, who is the very fool of women's tears, found it difficult to get handsomely rid of, until his solicitors cut the Gordian knot, in the ordinary manner, with a golden scythe. I understood there was a

child or children, which made the matter much more unpleasant to my brother; but, on my honour, it is all over ages ago. You cannot imagine that I would sanction the attentions of my brother, dear to me as he is, to my guest and dearest friend, with the knowledge that any entanglement of this sort actually still existed."

Blanche made no reply.

"I understand from Blande—for, of course, I cannot discuss such points with Devereux—that the young woman, who was quiet in her ways, and rather respectably conducted, is most grateful for his generosity to the children. But I am surprised, Blanche, you are not more shocked; though much worse things are quite the order of the day among our lords and masters, and, I suppose, always will be. But come, tell me your adventures, dearest—make me your confidante—your only one—for I own that I am struck dumb. I know that you possess that noble and magnanimous way of thinking which Devereux so fervently adores; yet, I confess, to visit these little wretches, would, in similar circumstances, have been too much for me. I might have half hated the precursors of my own children; but, as Devereux swears, 'Magnanimity is the bright peculiar virtue of Blanche Delamere.'

"I must, however, as an elder sister, assume the privilege of experience and knowledge of the world, to caution you against either committing or encumbering yourself with the brats. The Countess will, assuredly, not take such liberal views as her generous grandchild. Even mamma, though she adores Horatio, may take to the high ropes on the question of the *decorous*, if not of the right; nor need Horatio himself know the length your warm and generous feelings have carried you. All men, my dear Blanche, are more or less conceited. I must candidly warn the inexperience of my friend against my own brother. They are all apt to misconstrue our motives, and to resent interference with what they consider their especial or exclusive concerns; and, besides, no one has more refined—I may say more fastidiously absurd—notions about female proprieties than Devereux.—But hush!—is not that his voice? The woman and the children are entirely in the hands of the men of business; Horatio, I imagine, concludes they have long since left the country; and that is all as it should be."

During this long and hurried harangue, Blanche had kept her eye steadily and

gravely fixed upon the fluttered speaker. At its conclusion, she silently turned away her eyes with a calm and stern expression, which, to those who could read her character, said,—“Why expostulate with this woman? I never could make her understand me. Her worldly opinions and their hollow foundations I can comprehend: she cannot fathom *mine*.”

Lady Blande, as the expected gentleman did not immediately appear, again resumed:—“Did Mrs. Simpson learn why the poor creatures are not gone abroad, or to Wales, or Scotland, or somewhere—for I am certain Devereux not only wishes but believes it?”

“One reason of delay may be the very delicate ‘health of the mother,’” replied Blanche. “She has had fever, and seems to me still hovering between life and death. Your ladyship cannot surely be aware that Rosamond Weston was the loved and admired playmate of my childhood.”

Lady Blande started, without any affectation.

“Such as I can remember her, lovely and spotless, kindly and amiable, must not I, with my whole heart, abhor the selfish being, calling himself man, who could steal the treasure of her young affections, and use his power over her devoted heart, only to rob her of her innocence, to humble her maiden pride, and finally, to cast her forth to endless shame and sorrow.”

“You talk with strange inconsiderateness, my dearest Blanche,” whispered the lady. “Pardon me for saying so; and, for Heaven’s sake! for my sake! be silent, until we have more leisure to confer. This girl your friend!—and you are much excited. Had you not better retire, love. It is not from your lips, surely, with your lofty ideas of maidenly purity and womanly dignity, that we are to hear an apology for an ill-conducted woman?”

Lady Blanche coloured with indignation, but made no motion to retire; and Mr. Devereux and his brother-in-law entered the drawing-room—the latter playfully questioning Blanche about her stolen march, though unable by his jocularly to dispel her ominous gravity.

“I betted that you had gone to Hanwell, to study *mad* people in a philosophical way,” said the jocular peer.

“Needed I have gone so far?” replied Blanche, coldly.

“Or else to the Friends’ Meeting, in the

expectation of some outpouring; or, perhaps, to the Penitentiary."

"You were nearer the mark there," said Blanche.

"But why not carry Devereux along with you? The poor fellow has been fluttering about all the morning like a hen whose ducklings have taken the water."

The jest, such as it was, told on no one. Blanche rose, with an air of grave dignity; and, fixing her eyes steadily upon Devereux, said—"I promised you an interview this morning, Mr. Devereux, on a subject of the highest importance to both of us; but a higher duty called me to Streatham.—Nay, hear me! I have breakfasted, along with my friend Mrs. Simpson, at your late residence there, with your lovely and amiable children, and their most unhappy mother—once my own innocent and beloved Rosa Weston—that erring and culpable, but deeply injured, friendless, and helpless creature, whose greatest weakness has been forgetfulness of her own honour and happiness, from blind, unmeasured confidence in your honour and tenderness, and excess of infatuated attachment to the *man*—not to his rank nor to his fortune. Her years exceed my own but by some few; and, with a woman's warmest feelings, she is invested with the sacred character of a mother. But it is not my province, nor yet my inclination, to lecture or dictate to you, Mr. Devereux. In many of our late conversations, your opinions on such topics seemed to be more just than those too generally acted upon by men—even when they are not proclaimed in words. But let that pass. I have only to consult my own honour and happiness, and to follow the clear dictates of my principles, as a Christian woman—softened, it may be, in this instance, by my feelings, as a partaker of the same frail nature with that poor girl whose condition fills me with grief the more profound, that her case, as the world views it, is beyond all help of womanly sympathy. I cannot restore Rosamond to innocence, and to the ever-grateful esteem of her fellow-creatures; but, while I protect myself, I *can* and *will* mark my indignant sense of the selfish and cruel system of which she is the victim. I need scarce, therefore, tell you, that, in Mr. Devereux, I can henceforth only know either the *husband*, or the *seducer* of Rosamond Weston."

Before the petrified gentleman addressed could gain breath to attempt reply, the young lady had walked out of the room in

"unblenched majesty." Devereux turned his eyes on his sister, who looked the image of vexation, and of irritation with difficulty suppressed. Lord Blande first found his voice—"What means all this, Eleanor?—What prying, officious devil has put this heroical damsel on the scent of your little Rose, Devereux? It is a deuced unlucky *contre-temps*, to be sure! I fancied Mrs. Smith and her babes in the Isle of Man, or some such asylum for love-families, long ago. Are you dumb-founded, good folks?"

"Nothing was ever so provoking," exclaimed Lady Blande. "It must have been that busy, intriguing Quakeress: a very Maintenon she is, in her love of power and cool cunning." Mr. Devereux was walking across the room with hasty steps.

"A cool thing enough in the young lady!" continued Lord Blande. "Conceive her effrontery. A jealous, furious wife could not have done more than stormed poor Rose's retreat, and have put her to the question in the grand moral and philosophical style. It absolutely beats fiction. Have you lost your voice, Devereux?"

"You surely have your usual fine tact, Blande," cried his vexed and angry lady.—"What is to be done, Horatio? Blanche is so strange, so singular a creature, that common rules, as I have often told you, do not apply to her. That odious Quaker woman, with her precise, puritanic notions, ferreting out that worthless girl, has done it all. No one else would, could, or durst have presumed to carry to Blanche such unwelcome tales of the man to whom, I may say, she was all but married; but I must follow her, and make the best of it."

"A thousand thanks, Eleanor!" exclaimed the brother. "From your admirable tact—your true sisterly kindness—I reckon on every thing.—Yet what accursed, meddling fiend can have done all this? Durst Rosamond complain?" And he knitted his brows in pale anger.

"Use your own wits, also, Horatio. I assure you, you will have need of them all in this emergency. Generosity—magnanimity—romance—these are your cue."

When Lady Blande, having tapped, found admission into the dressing-room of her guest, she found Blanche already unshawled and unbonneted, and busy writing; while near her, Mrs. Simpson, at whom her ladyship looked scorpions and basilisks, was quietly pursuing her perpetual fine needle-work. She offered apologies for intrusion,

and looked as if she wished the matronly friend away; who, understanding her meaning, and rather desirous to leave her pupil to entire self-reliance and self-guidance in this delicate crisis, quietly disappeared.

The clew which Lady Blande possessed to the feelings of Blanche at this time, was necessarily as imperfect as her knowledge of the rare character of her guest. She concluded that the proud and lofty-minded heiress might be even more than the ordinary run of young ladies, shocked, jealous, offended, affronted; and she was ready to make every concession to feelings so natural, and, as she said, so proper. She accordingly condemned, in good set general terms, the usages of the wicked world, and the weakness and wickedness of women, to which Mr. Devereux had fallen a prey; but she also, in his behalf, pleaded, remonstrated, appealed to, and touched every passion, and every shade of feeling in the female gamut, so far as she could sound it, from the bottom to the top of the scale—from the maddening despair of the lover, to the dread laugh of May Fair.

It was in vain.

“Would you, Lady Blande, in plain terms,” Blanche demanded steadily, “have me marry either the husband or the seducer of Rosamond Weston? That is the true and narrow question on which you have, pardon me, wasted much needless eloquence.”

“Nay, pardon me, dearest Blanche,” replied Lady Blande, exercising that strong control over her feelings which proved that the passions of quick-tempered ladies are often more in their own power than they are sometimes willing to acknowledge. “You wrong your excellent understanding when you talk in this strain. You cannot mean to affront me, by alluding to the possibility of this unfortunate person—admitting that she has been faithful and well-behaved—becoming my brother’s wife. I allow fully for your feelings—for your just indignation—though, believe me, you will outlive it. I blame only those who have secretly aimed a blow at your happiness, by reviving this piece of antiquated scandal, only to mar my brother’s felicity, and disappoint all our hopes.”

“And, pardon me again, Eleanor; but those who imagine that I could, in the same circumstances, talk in any other strain, entirely misunderstand me. No question of right and wrong, which ever interested me, or was left to my own decision, has been more simple—it has no sides.”

“Why, the Countess herself,” returned

the lady, evading direct reply, “would, I am convinced—notwithstanding her little prejudices, from mere knowledge of the world and of society—see this silly affair (magnified by malice into undue importance) in the true light; especially when matters have proceeded so very far between you and Devereux. You cannot imagine, my dear Blanche, that, flattering and delightful as this alliance is to all my family, but particularly to one who, like myself, so highly and warmly appreciates your admirable qualities, who so anxiously desires to obtain you for the sister of her heart, the second mother of her children—you cannot imagine that I have used any improper influence, direct or indirect, to forward the wishes of my brother; yet, the flattering encouragement with which his attentions have been received by you, can be construed only in one way. I would not offend your modesty—I would propitiate your very prudery, dearest Blanche; but you have given Horatio hopes, which, to disappoint now, is, I know, impossible with your feelings of probity and honour—laying the judgment of society out of account.”

Blanche was covered with blushes at this implied accusation. Though her judgment and memory of the past did not quite acquit Lady Blande of all participation in the hopes or schemes of her brother, she was unable to fix the blame of any specific act upon her. Lady Blande had done nothing unhandsome, or not more than was sisterly; and Blanche candidly confessed her precipitance.

“I may have too heedlessly, too lightly, both for his sake and my own,” she said, “accepted the attentions of Mr. Devereux. I am new to fashionable society, and know not well where vapid gallantry ends and serious courtship begins; and I will confess that the manners and sentiments of Mr. Devereux—his opinions—must I now call them abstract, speculative—not such as influence, much less strictly regulate, men’s conduct to women?—made a strong impression on me: yes, I was imperceptibly beginning to love him—to listen to him with deference—to expect and rely upon his sympathy in my peculiar opinions—to do, in short, what every woman, who places her love happily, must do—look up to him with fond homage. Now I look down upon him! He is a man of great talents and knowledge, and I am but a girl, a weak woman—yet am I that man’s superior!”

Lady Blande was again thrown out. The

proud energy with which the last words were pronounced, was more intelligible to her than their import; and she still fancied Blanche only very angry and perhaps jealous; and, accordingly, said, in her softest and most cajoling tones,—“Well, dearest, we shall sleep and wake on it. I am quite sure that, to-morrow, you will see the affair in the true light. I am content with any penance, however severe, that you may choose to inflict on Horatio, so that it be not extended beyond the season—that July realizes his hopes, and makes us all united and happy.”

“There is but one light in which such affairs can be seen—nor, till my nature is changed, can I ever view them in another; and I wish I could make you see with my eyes, Eleanor; for the world and its false glare have not yet dazzled me. A mutual error (to view the conduct of your brother to this friendless young woman in the most lenient way) is, to *her* and *her* children, followed by ruin and infamy—by even what you, Eleanor, must confess to be deep and lasting injury to one party, and that one the weak and helpless—the trusting, the betrayed; while the other—But, no, I cannot speak of it. Yet some—even you, my friend—fancy that these transactions, and their consequences, should be no bar to your brother’s prosperity and happiness,—to his immediate alliance with a noble heiress—ay, pardon my candid pride, with Blanche Delamere.”

“You cannot rate the pride and happiness of such an alliance more highly than I do, dearest Blanche. Yet, for Heaven’s sake, keep those very singular notions you have formed to yourself,” said the lady, pettishly. “I do not pretend to vindicate many parts of the conduct which society, and women themselves, tolerate in young men of fashion—in all men; but that my brother has brought any stain on his honour—done any thing unbecoming the character of an English gentleman—no one will dare to affirm. His liberality to that indiscreet young woman, on whom the laws of society justly visit the consequences of her own folly and guilt, has even been cause of censure to more prudent persons—of praise, I grant, to those who, like you, think more charitably.”

“This is no subject for debate between us, Lady Blande,” returned Blanche, coldly; “you forget that I have seen this unfortunate person, and her tenderly-nurtured children, only this morning—that I knew and loved

her in happier times, though that does not far influence my judgment now. You will not permit me to allude to Mr. Devereux, as the possible husband of Rosamond Weston, nor do I wish to force so repugnant an idea upon you; but the *seducer* of Rosamond Weston—I say it again, and for the last time—her *seducer* cannot be named or thought of as the husband of Blanche Delamere without the deepest offence.”

This was said in a tone so decided, that Lady Blande was silenced for a minute; and Blanche resumed her writing, concluded and folded the letter, and ordered her own footman to take it to the post-office.

“Cannot your epistle go in the ordinary way?”

“No—I am unwilling to lose a post. I am announcing my instant return to Holy Cross to my grandmother. I wish to spare her the pain and fatigue of a needless journey to London, on my account. It is now scarce worth while to say, that, in answer to Mr. Devereux’s application, my grandmother sanctions his addresses, since she informs me she has written himself to that import.”

“Good heavens! and that letter, so welcome, will probably be waiting Horatio at his lodgings. For God’s sake, recall your letter—” and she ran to recall the man herself, but he was gone. “Give, were it but one day, to reflection—let me entreat you, dearest Blanche—by your regard for me, give yourself time to think. Conceive the grief of the Countess, the ridicule of society; spare me, spare *yourself*, the disgraceful eclat of such an affair; let it, at all events, go off gently; and be assured that, though I had set my whole heart upon calling you sister, I shall never again renew the subject; nor is Horatio—adoring, worshipping you as he does, placing the sole happiness of his future life, as he has told you, on the dear hope you have allowed him to entertain, of calling you his—a man likely to urge any lady beyond the point to which her own feelings for him freely lead her.—But spare me the open breach. You do not, dear Blanche, with all your acquirements, know wicked London society quite so well as I do. The breaking off of a match, in high life especially, merely because the gentleman has a discarded mistress, would positively render you the jest of all the clubs, the ridicule of all the coteries, for a month;—the men would absolutely combine against you—so atrocious a case of prudery would be condemned as utter indelicacy by the women—they would never

pardon you, for knowing so much of what it does not at all concern us women to know."

"Not concern us! The purity of the morals of our lovers—the fidelity of our husbands? You astonish me, Lady Blande!—what, then, does concern us? The title—the diamonds—the settlements—the provision for matrimonial discord, hatred, and separation: all these mightily concern us, and are cared for accordingly."

"I spoke not for myself, but others; yet ridicule, sneers, impertinent remarks, are not less certain in this case."

Despising herself for a conscious weak susceptibility to the threatened species of contemptible annoyance, yet unable to brave the idea of the laugh of "society" with indifference, Blanche reddened with vexation, even while she calmly replied, "I must, I find, if I mix much in what is called society, teach myself to bear, for the sake of my conscience and principles, persecution hotter than the passing flash of a fool-born jest."

Before the interview concluded, Lady Blande having learned that the letter to Holy Cross was a simple announcement of an abrupt return in consequence of unforeseen circumstances, extracted a reluctant promise that Blanche would take no farther measure for two days, with the understanding that she should not, in the interval, be intruded on by Mr. Devereux, nor past occurrences referred to in any shape. If she then still persisted in returning home, and would not fulfil the promised term of her visit, her noble hostess declared herself bound in honour to restore her, in person, to her grandmother, though in the middle of the season. This was a ceremony with which Blanche would gladly have dispensed.

This had been a day in which the high-spirited, but womanly-hearted heiress of Delamere had fulfilled a duty which demanded no ordinary exertion of moral courage and fortitude. At its close, she was far from happy, and not even satisfied with herself. How false and hollow, and teeming with sin and misery, seemed the world on which she was entering! and how powerless her efforts to amend, even in one solitary instance, the ills over which she grieved! Her spirits had never been more low and desponding; and a secret, creeping, insidious, world-begotten sense of impropriety, if not of indelicacy, of conduct, although her conscience and her pride scouted the idea, had yet power to annoy her. This feeling was

betrayed, rather than owned, to her friend at their customary hour of confidential talk.

"Grandmamma will, no doubt, be extremely angry when she learns that I have visited Rosamond; and with you, my friend, as much as with myself. It was heedless to implicate you; yet I should repeat my visit to-morrow and to-morrow, if I saw that it would be either useful or consolatory. I disdain the spurious female modesty which can smile on the seducer while it treats his victim with horror or scorn; yet this is the modesty of all the women around me—of the really modest, the truly amiable and charitable, as well as of the pretenders."

"There can be no imaginable impropriety in my visits to this unhappy one," replied the Quakeress; "and I will alone fulfil to her a duty to which my heart urges me. To reason about your continued visits is unnecessary—they might be fancied improper; and, what you will more readily feel, they might be painful to their object. Really penitent sorrow seeks few witnesses."

"I fear, indeed, poor Rose may not like to see me; perhaps I was *ungentle* with her? How unlike to you I am, even when not wrong in the main! What is worse, my warmth in her cause may have irritated her sultan, and done her injury where good was earnestly meant. I fear a *moral* reformer like myself," she continued, half laughingly, "cannot always enact the mild and *gentle* maiden, which, to say truth, is rather foreign to my—my haughty Delamere blood, shall I call it? I don't see why blood should not be chargeable with a few of the faults of us aristocrats, as well as be the fountain of all our virtues and honours. Do you think it possible that, if more dexterously and delicately managed, Mr. Devereux might not have been induced to marry Rosamond?"

"Ask rather if I should, in the present state of opinion in England, think such a union desirable for either party;—but, waiving this, I do not imagine such an atonement in the least probable: he will never marry her. An English aristocrat is sometimes seen to marry the mistress of another man, or the wife of a man of his own caste, but rarely his own mistress. I do not understand the distinction:—I merely note the fact.

"By the laws of Scotland, our educated, highly moral sister, and next-door neighbour, Rosamond would be held his wife, and their children legitimate. Well, never shake

your quilled coif at me; but the marriage laws of that unpolished country are—I will not say more merciful to women and children, to the weak and defenceless, for I want not mercy, I stand for justice,—and *they are* far more *just* than our own.”

“Liable to sad abuse, though.”

“Which abuse, however, never, or very rarely, occurs. You are a terrible Conservative at heart, *ma bonne*; the old objection to every law, new and good,—‘it is liable to sad abuse.’ But what can we do for Rosamond?—that is the urgent question.” And it was soon decided.

Long after midnight, on this eventful day, and long after as many of the inmates of the cottage near Streatham as could sleep were wrapped in repose, the fevered ear of Rosamond, or her heart’s quick sense, listened once more to what had so often been the glad signal to welcome and joy—the clatter of horse-hoofs in the lane, which, in her frequent lonely watchings, she had learned to distinguish, long before the gate bell was touched. The agitating events of the morning, and the low nervous fever which had for months been consuming her, aggravated by the silent but ever-gnawing sorrow at her heart, had produced an exacerbation of disease; and now the approaching footsteps—the very breathing, painfully distinguished, brought a deadly pang of alarm, which seemed the messenger of dissolution. “He is come again—he brings my death-warrant!” was her agonizing thought. “He has learned the visit of Lady Blanche—he has borne the proud scorn of her he adores—he comes hither to wreak his anger and disappointment. Would that this hour were past!”

How it did pass, can never now be fully known on earth. At an inquest held two days afterwards upon the body of Rosamond Weston, *alias* Smith, spinster, &c. &c. held in spite of the influence, and almost direct interference of Lord Blande and other friends of Mr. Devereux, the nurse-maid gave evidence that she had been awakened by her mistress, and directed to admit Mr. Devereux, which she did. That her mistress had long been in delicate health, and all that day particularly indisposed. She had dressed herself with some difficulty, and been assisted into the drawing-room, where Mr. Devereux waited impatiently, calling more than once to learn if her mistress were not ready. That she herself again retired to the nursery, and, being fatigued with her

business during the day, fell fast asleep in her clothes, and knew no more till, awakened again by the furious ringing of Mr. Devereux, she hastened back to the drawing-room, where she found her mistress a corpse, leaning in the easy chair, and Mr. Devereux affectionately supporting her in his arms. There was nothing remarkable in her appearance. She looked then as placid as the corpse before the court; there was no perceptible difference, save that a few drops of blood were then still oozing, or bubbling, from the lips.

The witness stated, farther, that Mr. Devereux appeared exceedingly distressed and agitated; and it came out, on the examination of the old gardener, the father of the preceding witness, that Mr. Devereux had despatched him, on his own horse, to summon a medical gentleman from Epsom, much in his confidence, and who had sometimes attended Mrs. Smith and her children; but with directions to send also the first surgeon he could find.

Mr. Devereux was alleged to be too ill to attend the Coroner’s Court; and *delicacy, consideration* for his feelings, was secretly pleaded against the delay, suggested by some sturdy John Bull sitting on the Inquest, till the person so deeply implicated should be in a condition to be examined.

The evidence of two medical gentlemen, one of whom had examined the body of the unfortunate young woman not more than an hour after life was extinct, was consistent, clear, and satisfactory. The immediate cause of dissolution was the rupture of a blood-vessel in the heart. Agitation might have proved an exciting cause, but could not be the primary one of the disease; and the verdict, given after what was reported in the newspapers as “a long and patient investigation,” was,—“*Died by the visitation of God.*”

The gentlemanly Coroner informed Lord Blande, who was present, that his honourable relative, the Member for—shire, remained without a speck on his character.

“Died, or was hurried and tortured to death, by the injustice of man!” exclaimed Blanche Delamere, throwing from her the newspaper in which, spite of the efforts of the Family Compact, a detailed account of the inquest appeared. “We want a term for destroyers of life of this worst description. I must not call Mr. Devereux a murderer, an assassin. I do not believe that he has used violent means to remove the object in

the path of his ambition, or of his desires. I can even imagine him grieved and compunctious.—What matters it? Were Rosamond alive again, in all her beauty—nay, in her first innocence—would he act differently from what he has done?”

Notwithstanding the shock, the scandal, the very unpleasant *eclat* of such an affair, Lady Blande secretly felt pleased, and scarcely concealed her opinion that Devereux's mistress in dying had done, though rather inopportune, the very best thing possible in the circumstances.

“If she possessed the sense of virtue, and the refined feelings you attribute to her, my dear Blanche, surely, for herself, this is the most desirable consummation. Good Mrs. Simpson appears resigned to a dispensation, shocking, but scarcely to be lamented. Now I can, with perfect propriety, look after my brother's children.”

“To the care of my friend Mrs. Simpson, Rosamond Weston has bequeathed her children. She has, at least, done what I feel equivalent to myself—besought my protection and kindness for their friendless, *parentless* infancy, and given us all the rights she possessed. We will not deceive her confidence. Mrs. Simpson has gone, even now, to remove the children from the care of the respectable and compassionate neighbour, who could not hold any intercourse with Mr. Devereux's mistress, but who took home his worse than orphans. She is to place them meanwhile with a friend at Stoke-Newington. Yes, Lady Blande, the love of life is still fresh and strong in me; yet I, too, though mournfully, acquiesce in the catastrophe which takes from me an early, and a once much-loved, and still loved friend. For poor Rosamond the best refuge was an early grave. She is gone to just judgment:—we wait our turn.”

Lady Blande was silenced. The event of Rosamond's death had procured her a delay in the departure of Blanche, whom she was still resolved to accompany, if she could not divert away the resolution. Her brother was indisposed, and meant to go to Paris for a few weeks; and matters looked black enough; still she was inclined to hope that the worst was past, and that Rosamond, the one great obstacle fairly removed, the proud heiress might yet be won. She should be indulged in the absurdity of protecting the children. Fondness for them might prove a tie with the father; and, to work on the

feelings of Blanche, her ladyship permitted herself to exaggerate, while she affected to rail at the excess of concern which Devereux exhibited at this “untoward business.”

In the meanwhile, the fashionable physician who still occasionally took fees for Lady Blanche, became for a few mornings, of double importance with his fashionable patients, though he protested he could tell nothing.

“Oh, but you know the whole, though, of course, professional honour seals your lips,” said the young matron mouthpiece of one fair bevy that baited the May-Fair Galen. “Mr. Devereux had a most beautiful mistress—a Rosamond—a Rosa Munda!—of whom he was passionately fond. I know it. Lord Albert Seacote and Tom Jerningham often drove round by her cottage when at Epsom, to have a peep of her over the hedge. Well, this imperious heiress thought fit to fall in love with Devereux—too good a match for him, no doubt, to be slighted—and there was a violent flirtation—carried even to indecent lengths; for the young incognita was to be seen with him every where, without any thing in the shape of a chaperon. But this was all very well—Lady Blande knows what she is about—until the little Tartar heard of the beautiful mistress; when, down she goes by herself, storms the cottage, assails the poor woman like a jealous tigress; and, next morning, Devereux's beautiful mistress was found dead in the summer-house, with a vial beside her, labelled *Hydrocyanic Acid!* Since you will not tell us your edition of the story, Doctor, you are welcome to ours—that which is circulating all over the town.”

The Doctor smiled his ambiguous smile of acquiescing incredulity, while he blandly whispered—

“The report of the Coroner's inquest in yesterday's *Morning Post*—”

“True; but what does it signify? ‘Died, by the visitation of God’—certainly—and not one word of the visitation of ‘Queen Eleanor.’ Nay, more, Lady Blande has this morning set off for the north, to convey the terrible creature to her grandmother's custody. I do not see, now, how Mr. Devereux, or any man, could venture to marry her, with all her splendid advantages:—if not deranged, she must be worse.”

This much of the tale was true: Blanche, attended by Lady Blande, had certainly returned to Holy Cross.

With confusion, and a strong desire to

disclaim the excess of filial tenderness ascribed to her, she heard Lady Blande dexterously, yet evasively, impute the real motive of the impromptu return, to fond fears and anxieties for "dearest grand-mamma;" while, on the first absence of Blanche after their arrival, it was more than insinuated that the dignified delicacy of the heiress of Delamere required that, under the guardian and maternal eye of the Countess, and in her proper *home*, she was to be wooed and to be won! The self-complacency of Lady Delamere was moved; her pride was gratified; her tenderness for her grandchild excited.

"After what had transpired, Mr. Horatio Devereux must be aware that his visits will be most welcome to the Lady of Holy Cross,—and probably not disagreeable to its future mistress," the Dowager added, with gracious smiles. She continued,—

"My dear Lady Blande, I am more than satisfied—I am proud of my grandchild's choice, which naturally waited on, and has followed my approval. The heiress of Delamere, in affairs of great moment to other young ladies, though of the highest rank, can afford to waive certain considerations, and look alone to character, connexion, and inclination. Were Mr. Devereux the first Duke in England, I could not more heartily approve the alliance."

Lady Blande was equally delighted. Dr. Hayley, and every other kind, considerate friend, had kept from the knowledge of the aged Countess whatever might be supposed unpleasing to her granddaughter or disagreeable to herself. The sister of Mr. Devereux appeared, at this critical time, on the most intimate and friendly footing with Lady Blanche; and, whatever might intervene, there was little doubt of him being her accepted suitor and eventual husband. A word in his disparagement, though an honest one, would have been dreaded as high treason. Yet was Dr. Hayley rather gratified to learn how the affair really stood, and that the misunderstanding—as Blanche, without much explanation, asserted—was interminable; for it rested on *principle*—on total dissimilarity of views and feelings, which time could not remove. She owned, in the saunter in the shrubberies to which she invited the ever-soothing, ever-indulgent *ci-devant* chaplain, that the art of Lady Blanche in—without direct falsehood—lulling her grandmother in the belief that all was harmony between

herself and Mr. Devereux, did provoke her.

"But," she added, "I dislike annoying poor grandmamma. I was truly shocked to find her, though in great spirits, looking so changed on my return yesterday; and, for the time, was as much affected as Lady Blande alleged. Tell me all that has happened in our absence, to interest me? Is Phæbe's husband kinder than we durst hope?—But you may guess how I long for home news. How do Squire Grimshaw's doings please you? How many poacher prosecutions had you at the Sessions? Above all, what think you of grandmamma's health—her mental health?—I trust she has had no more faintings? Her appearance altogether, and her high, flighty spirits, are not satisfactory to me."

Dr. Hayley made light of those fears. The Countess was aged, no doubt of it. Time shows slight respect to peresses, even though such in their own right. He did not indeed say this; he hardly permitted himself to imagine any thing so levelling and audacious on the part of the old, iron-toothed Inflexible. Lady Delamere, at all times excitable, had been of late, he said, worried by applications, amounting to mysterious menaces, from the next heirs to the estates and title of the Delameres; the family whose pretensions she had maintained against her grandchild, and afterwards deserted in caprice, which now amounted to positive dislike.

"'Tis the worrying she has had from those troublesome and importunate Irish people which has made the Countess so very anxious for your speedy marriage," said the Doctor.

"Importunate!—Is it not hard though, my good friend, that this poor lad, between whom and these large estates and coveted titles there only interposes my silly self, should be half-starved, waiting for their possession? I am sure I cannot comprehend how the rights of this unknown twenty-first cousin are not about as good as mine."

"As yours!—Let me beseech you to take heed what you say, my child. There may be persons quite of your opinion, if it seriously be yours. The Countess has been so exasperated as to withdraw the allowance of £300 per annum, generously made to this ungrateful youth and his mother, for his education; and since then he has been going among the Irish tenantry, fomenting all kinds of mischief. There is a very bad spirit among those people. You alone inter-

pose, as you say, between him and them, and their most flagitious hopes."

"You don't imagine he will have them *maschacré* me?" said Blanche, laughing.

"God forbid!—though they are fit for any wickedness. All this last spring there have been nocturnal disturbances—carding and turning up ground in the barony; and one horrible murder has been committed. They are incorrigible wretches, whom indulgence only renders worse."

"Another murder!" said Blanche, shuddering. "This might have been foreseen—those cruel ejections—no wonder grandmamma is distressed."

"When the petitions of their priest were very properly referred back to the local agent, some of the wretched creatures had the wicked hardihood to send the Countess threatening letters, one of which, of shocking import, was thrown into the carriage as she was driving to church, and was unfortunately read to her ladyship by Mrs. Martin. We had—Grimshaw and myself—studiously kept back all such incendiary writings from her, with the knowledge and full approbation of Lord Fanfaronade,—aware of their alarming effects on her nerves."

"Or on her conscience," thought Blanche, sadly. Compassion for the notorious Donegal rebel tenantry had made her much better acquainted with their wrongs and their condition than was the good Doctor.

"I trust the last days of grandmamma's life may be blessed and gladdened by some effort on her part to improve the condition of her Irish tenantry; by making some atonement for the neglect of generations, and the oppression of later times."

"I tell you, Lady Blanche, it will be at the peril of her life, if the subject is again brought before the Countess," said the Doctor, with unusual energy. "That abominable letter nearly upset her mind; besides, it is too late now; most of the peasantry—a pestilent, lazy, filthy, rebellious, priest-ridden crew they are—have gone to America—"

"Or to their graves."

"Oh, Heaven knows where! But a few desperate characters continue to loiter about the outskirts of the estate, boiling with designs of pillage and murder. You surely would not encourage such demoralized, unnatural wretches? It was a frantic beldame, the grandmother of a notorious band of them, named O'Hanlon—no good of characters with big O's before their names, Lady Blanche—who lurked about the Park here, till, when

refused an audience of the Countess, she threw that incendiary letter into the coach."

"The handsome O'Hanlons! Sure you have heard grandmamma speak of that family hundreds of times. How different the Donegal estates must have been fifty years since, when she went to go over among the people, and when the loyal and enthusiastic race worshipped the very footsteps of their young *Ban Tierna*! When grandmamma, in the exuberance of her loyalty to the Bourbons, or hatred of the Jacobins, raised that famous Delamere Brigade, on her Irish estates, Widow O'Hanlon's three gallant sons were the first that flocked to her banner. It has been whispered that the young O'Hanlons would rather have fought on the Republican side than either under the French Princes or in the British army, but that the *volunteer* condition with the poor farmers, was either to send out their sons or lose their little farms. Alas! both evils have been incurred—the young men were first sacrificed, the parents then driven forth."

"Pardon me, Lady Blanche; you know well, or might know—for you have often been told—the rude, lazy, kind of husbandry practised by those turbulent, half-savage, Papist people. The property was every year deteriorating, and substantial Protestant tenants were offering. The Countess at last determined to adopt a better system; of which the first step was getting clear of those wretches. And how generously the Countess provided, or would have provided for them, in mountain farms or fishing villages! What sums, at all events, were lavished in attempting to settle them! But that wretched country, not alone to my patroness, but to Great Britain, is—*Magormisibib*—evil and a curse to herself, and to all around her!"

The usually calm, *downy* Doctor was actually excited; and Blanche, though unconvinced, gave way so far as to keep silence. She could not, however, think, that the way to restore her grandmother to healthful quiet and equanimity of mind, was to conceal facts which might lead to some healing measure—to some degree of atonement to her Irish tenantry, and she ruminated upon how she might introduce a subject always hateful to the Countess, unless she herself led to it, in discoursing complacently of her bright young days—the days of her patriotism and glory, when she had unfurled the banner of Delamere, and seen her peasantry rally around it with those proud feelings which

exalted vassalage, and gave to serfdom a colour of sentiment.

The ruminations of Blanche were ended by her grandmother inviting her to drive her *tête-à-tête* next day in the garden chaise, to inspect a lodge, or gamekeeper's cottage, which she was erecting in a part of the Chase lately taken into the Park. Lady Blande was to spend that day with her mother, and pass the next again at Holy Cross, previous to her return to town.

It was now near the end of June, and a day of resplendent, outgushing, and steady sunshine; and Blanche and her grandmother, conversing affectionately, drove on through the sweeping glades, and adown the stately and solemn avenues, until they gained the opener and more lightly timbered parts of the Park, and rapidly crossed those spreading lawns and pastures, where the fallow-deer were seen in groups, standing a moment at gaze, and then scudding off to the frequent copses and thickets, and hillocks of gorse and fern. No sight in that world of beauty was so delightful to the Countess, as the numerous young broods of pheasants, which, tame as domestic fowl, were seen at feed in the fallows, and among the newly turned up soil. The heart of the aged lady swelled with the proud feeling of *property*, not unmingled with nobler sentiments, as her grandchild's rapturous broken exclamations—the almost incoherent expression of her exquisite sense of the beautiful with which earth and sky were bursting around her—fell on the ear of the yet sole proprietress. She began proudly to expatiate upon what *she* had done to embellish the demesne—on the thriving growth of the woods of her planting, and the flourishing state of the gardens, conservatories, and aviaries she had created or extended. Even the fine breeds of domestic animals on her estates—the horses, the cattle, the very poultry—had been improved by her vigilant intelligence and her public spirit.

“When I first remember Holy Cross, now more than sixty years since,” said she, “there were in this part of the country much fewer pheasants than there are—thanks to the factories!—now poachers?”

“That is no improvement,” said Blanche. “But the yeomen, the labourers, grand-mamma—have they improved like the breeds of cattle?”

“Improved!—degenerated they have; but, thank Heaven, I have bought them nearly all out on my own borders; or those

smoky, seditious towns have absorbed them; and the country, save for the poachers, is really much more orderly than I can remember. My tenantry are a very different kind of people from my father's; but then I have not one for twenty boors who, with their families, then ate up the estate. Could my dear father now see our improved husbandry—the farm-buildings—the enclosures—the excellent breeds of cattle—the modern implements——”

“And the rent-roll,” said Blanche, somewhat archly.

“Ay, child,” returned the Countess, laughing graciously; “the rent-roll, indeed—quadrupled since my own time; while the value of the property has been so much increased, in timber, buildings, roads, and a variety of substantial and permanent improvements. I have been no unprofitable steward of the family inheritance, child, as you will find.”

“But the Irish tenantry, grandmamma?” whispered Blanche, in tones scarce audible.

“The Irish tenantry!—the plague and curse of my existence for thirty years! Yet even on these estates, which I have sometimes wished sunk in the Atlantic, good plans, with resolution and firmness in executing them, have made their own way. I have no hesitation in saying, that the Irish estates are in a much better condition than I found them:—we have got rid of three hundred and seventy of the wretches this season, and the property is in rapid course of improvement. But what smoke is that near Dinglebrook? 'Tis late in the season for burning waste, and the new lodge smokes should not be in that direction.”

Blanche was engaged with the reins. The *steady*, old, favourite, north-country pony, *Beardie*, which the Countess often drove about the grounds herself, had pricked up his ears, and showed symptoms of uneasiness, as they wound down the steep and narrow picturesque path which led to the little bridge over Dinglebrook. This brook, diminished by the summer heats to a mere rivulet, winded among steep and very high banks, which, immediately on crossing the bridge, presented a natural pass, through which the road had been made by blasting the solid rock. The pass was bridged overhead, where there were walks, on a higher level, leading to other parts of the demesne; and in the centre of the arch was an iron gate, very rarely shut, but which, if locked, might have blocked up the pass. Having gained the

bottom of the dingle, and crossed the bridge, they were about to drive under this arch, while Blanche pointed out to her grandmother the luxuriant growth of ivy and saxifrage, and the many creepers and flowers which love the shade, that mantled the rocks and the arches overhead, and descended in long streamers and garlands, which she playfully caught with her whip.

"How deliciously cool and fresh! and how lovely!"

"I have long resolved to have another ice-house here," said the Countess. "It is rather distant from the house, to be sure; but, though I choose to-day to drive out with you, like a market-woman going to Chester to sell butter and eggs, I have horses and menials which mock at distance; I will have an improved ice-house here immediately."

"To cool your tongue, is it!" was yelled in her ear; and the gate under the arch swung close with a crash which awakened all the echoes of the glade, as a tall female, concealed in the dark cloak and hood of the Irish peasant women, jerked the reins from the hand of Blanche, with a violence which made the pony start.

"Is it *ice* ye want, my lady?—ye'll need it," continued the stranger; while her hood fell back, discovering the sharp, haggard features, and wild scintillating eyes of partial insanity.

"It is *she*—the woman O'Hanlon—that terrible woman come again!" said the Countess, in a voice, and with a look, which doubly alarmed Blanche. But, rallying her spirits, she said, firmly, "Let go the rein: who are you that dare thus interrupt us, and alarm the Countess of Delamere?" And she attempted to snatch the rein, which the other held the more firmly.

"Ye would like to hear, young madam, would ye, who I am?—ay, ye shall, too, whether ye like it or no. . . . Let her who sits by you tell you who I am, and who I was when her cruel eyes first fell on me, in my little cabin;—Pat O'Hanlon's happy wife—the mother of three handsome and blessed boys. Where are they now? Murdered and crippled in the bloody wars, to please the pride of her who drove the heart-broken father and the orphan childer on the black world, to beg their bread through it; and sould the truss of straw from beneath them, and burned the roof over the gray heads, and slaked

the ashes on the hearth—*her*, I tell ye! The widow's and orphan's curse upon her!"

"Let us pass, for mercy's sake!" cried Blanche, struggling to regain the reins with one hand, and with the other to support her sinking grandmother, who, violent as opposition usually made her, was now overpowered—acutely sensible to all that was said, but too feeble to offer resistance.

"Let us pass now," Blanche continued, soothingly and persuasively; "and, on my honour, your story shall be listened to—your wrongs shall be righted, so far as atonement is now possible. You cannot be inhuman! See how pale and ill the lady is."

"Is *she* pale and ill—the proud Lady-Countess of Delamere?—who came among us with the banner, and robbed us first of our children, and then of our little farms. Perhaps it is *could* her ladyship is?—or hungry?—or naked?—and the widow O'Hanlon did it on her—the desolate widow—whom they drove mad!"

The frantic laugh of the woman rang through the arches overhead in frightful reverberation—heightening, if that were possible, the nervous terror of the Countess, and the alarm of Blanche, who knew not whether to think the Irishwoman more mad or malicious. Their eyes met steadily for a moment, "You cannot mean mischief to my aged grandmother," she said firmly. "If you have had sorrows, she, alas! has not been passed by untouched. Do, pray, good, kind woman, let us go our way."

"Yes, go—go, Lady-Countess—to where your brother Dives waits to welcome ye. In this life, ye know, he had his good things, and our brother Lazarus his evil. But where, my haughty Lady-Countess—where, ye cruel and sinful woman, did he lift up his eyes? Will it be my Patrick will bring ye the cup of cold water, think ye?—or my Dermott, who died by your banner, when they feel how ye misused and oppressed the decent ould couple they called father and mother?"

"The Countess is innocent of much of this," said Blanche. "The agents—the exigencies of the time—"

"Tell not me of the agents' doings, lest I throttle her outright!" shrieked the woman, in a wilder paroxysm than ever, while the Countess clung closer to her grandchild.

"Have you, who thus resent wrong, yourself no mercy?" replied Blanche, her spirit rising. "Have you no fears of the consequences of this violence?"

"Fear!" exclaimed the mad woman,

laughing wildly, and throwing up her bare, bony arms. "What have I to fear? Can she and her agents do more than crush this miserable carcass?" And she tore open her handkerchief. "This was the bosom that suckled them—dry and withered now. Give me back my boys!—give me my children, woman, and keep your lands; and, oh! that every stone and clod on them laid another pound to the load will sink ye to burning punishment!"

"This is too horrible!" exclaimed Blanche, relinquishing her grandmother, and springing to the ground. "Wretched woman! unless you would see Lady Delamere expire before your eyes, begone!"

The dark eyes of the maniac—for such she seemed, strange as was the method of her madness—scintillated and sparkled with gratified revenge; and then, after a moment, turning calmly to Lady Delamere, she slowly and emphatically repeated—

"Fear not him who can kill the body; but fear Him who can cast both soul and body into hell!" Proud and hard-hearted woman, I summon you to meet me and mine at His judgment-seat—ay, or ever that midsummer moon be at the full!"

And, raising her eyes to the faint crescent high in the sky, she threw down the reins, and disappeared behind the gate.

"She will not return—shall I go to seek help? Dearest grandmamma, have you courage to be left alone for a moment, till I can call a woodman, or one of the keepers?"

"Oh, no! I shall die, I shall perish, if you leave me here!" Blanche was able to bring a little water from the rivulet; and she tried to comfort and soothe the frightened lady, while she bathed her temples and her hands. "I am better—yes, dear child, better. Hasten home!"

She spoke no more; and it was a full half-hour before Blanche was so fortunate as to see a forester crossing a distant path, whom she called, and despatched, by the nearest way, for a carriage. "The Countess," she merely said, "had been taken suddenly ill;" and the man, who ran at full speed, told the butler, "My lady was lying two-fold in the little chay, quite dead-like." Dr. Hayley, the carriage, and all appliances, were in instant readiness; yet it seemed an age to Blanche—now driving on a few paces—now halting to look at, and fondly address, her speechless grandmother, before they came up.

All the medical aid in the county was

in speedy requisition. Her own physician suspected a return, in a worse form, of those apoplectic attacks, politely named fainting fits, to which the Countess was liable; but the medical friend of the Lady Blanche's watchful and zealous Cousin Yates, spoke decidedly of serious concussion of the brain.

Days passed, and the real state of the Countess was known and revealed. There was no longer any violent sorrow displayed in the household; no keen anxiety, no deep regret. Even Mrs. Simpson and Dr. Hayley took all calmly and tranquilly; and Blanche hid her own grief in her heart. Strange it seemed, even to herself, that she should thus feel for the Countess; but she sought no sympathy in her suffering, and struggled to suppress every outward symptom of sorrow, which to others, and even to those who loved her best, might seem far greater than the event justified. "Is it that mysterious force of kindred blood?" was her secret thought.

The night of the full moon found her a silent watcher by her grandmother's death-bed. The Countess had never freely spoken—never, save when violently roused by the medical men, given any token of consciousness since the adventure at Dinglebrook; but all this day, her high and painful breathing had been gradually becoming lower and more feeble, and, by midnight, it had ceased! The Quakeress, her regards fixed on Blanche, whose eyes were riveted on the dying Countess, perceived her colour change, and hurried her out to the same balcony where she had, in old times, paid graceful adoration to the beautiful luminary of night.

"The moon is at the full to-night," said her friend, following her upward eyes.

"I could be superstitious," thought Blanche, half shuddering as she gazed and remembered the solemn citation of the terrific maniac.

"A poor wretch, a half-mad creature, who has wandered hither from Donegal, to petition the Countess, has been found dead by Dinglebrook bridge to-day," said the Quakeress. And Blanche started violently. "The body was snuffed out by one of the keeper's terriers. It is thought she had clambered within the Park, at that lonely spot, in despite of orders; and, too feeble to get out again, has perished without help."

They passed into the chamber, and silently contemplated the face of the dying.

"'Tis all over," whispered the physician, who still tried the pulse; and, shortly afterwards, Lord Fanfaronade, as of right, entered the chamber to condole with, and lead forth "Blanche, Countess of Delamere!"

Next morning a letter lay on her table, of mingled condolence and congratulation, from *Sir* Jervis Yates, with offers of every possible or impossible service to the "Countess of Delamere."

"So my plebeian cousin has got his nickname too," said Blanche, bitterly.

"Dear child, what means this? Dost fancy thy own proud title a nickname?"

"I know not well what I mean. But you—you are a very, *very* calm person—do you fancy me insane—of unsound mind—unfit to manage my own affairs?"

"Dearest Blanche—Countess, what is wrong?—speak to me, to thy friend."

"If I be not yet mad, the Irish family, and the Grimshaws, are in a scheme to make me a lunatic."

The Quakeress looked aghast. "Who has dared to say—who has imagined this wickedness? They abuse thy credulity."

"I have known it now for three days. Frederick Leighton has told me—warned me. Read his letter for yourself. Methinks they might have let me be nearer of age ere they had taken the trouble to make me out mad. But I go to give orders for the poor Irishwoman's funeral; will you be so kind as to attend it? *She* need not tarry the plumes and scutcheons of a Countess:—will she sleep the less soundly?"

CHAPTER XI.

Coming of Age.

THE prayers of many grateful hearts were granted—the hopes of many young and joyful bosoms fulfilled—when the sun rose in unwonted splendour upon that June morning which beheld the young Countess of Delamere complete her twenty-first year, and obtain, with the uncontrolled possession of her princely fortune, the mastery of her own actions. Before the sun had risen, the village girls were in their cottage-gardens, gathering the earliest roses and the latest valley lilies—sweet as their own innocent breath—for the welcome holiday. The music of the rustic band was already heard afar off, in the avenues leading from the Stoke-Delamere gate to the stately mansion of the Holy Cross. The gleesome children and their mothers had assembled in troops,

equipped in their neatest dresses, each carrying flowers and floral decorations, in the long procession which, at a very early hour, picturesquely defiled upon the lawn, and under the magnificent beech and walnut trees, where it was joined by the young Countess, and her female friends and attendants.

Before partaking of the breakfast, arranged on long, flower-decorated tables, spread in the Berceau Walk, the Countess Blanche and her rustic neighbours—matrons, maidens, and children—were to join in a social meeting, rather than in solemn worship, in the ancient chapel of Delamere. It was Blanche who presided at the organ, and led the cheerfully-pious and simple hymn, in which the Universal Father was thanked and adored by His assembled children for His bounty and goodness; and in which earnest supplication was made for light and energy to fulfil His will, and to accomplish those high ends for which the beings here assembled had been called into existence. When, at the close of this simple celebration, the young Countess had shaken hands with the women, and caressed the children—each bashful or brisk urchin who, confident of her kindness, pressed forward to seek her notice—she whispered her Quaker governante, now her maternal companion, to leave her in the chapel for a few minutes to solitude and her own thoughts. And, although hers was not a ritual religion—a ceremonial faith—it was with a soothing sense of peace and consolation stealing over her spirit, that Blanche rose, with tearful eyes, from the altar-steps, where, kneeling in mute devotion, she had silently thanked the gracious Providence which had sustained and guided her friendless youth through the many trials, perils, and snares by which she had been beset; and implored the same gracious guidance and protection from this new era in her life, when, with privileges which the world esteems so high, came duties which she had long contemplated as imperative, yet difficult and solemn.

"For many years have I been looking forward to this day," was her observation to the friend waiting for her at the door of the chapel; "yet it still finds me, if neither weak nor wavering, grievously unprepared."

"Thou wouldst lay too much on thyself at once, dear child: give thyself time to accomplish the good thou designest."

"No time—no time! Let me work whilst it is called to-day! For what have I desired

this unsatisfying riches, assumed, yea, battled for, suffered martyrdom, to attain these barren honours — sought this great, this awful responsibility — save to work out those benevolent schemes of wiser, and more thoughtful heads, which my own heart and conscience sanction? Thinkest thou, dear companion, that I might not have been happier — ay, happier far — as the wife of Frederick Leighton, the village surgeon, than the solitary, loveless, joyless possessor of all this unvalued wealth and grandeur? Had the base attempts of others to defraud me, not alone of my rights, but of my intellect, of my personal independence, my freedom, not roused my spirit to the combat, I sometimes feel that I should have been most thankful to abdicate my sovereignty to the next heir, and get me, — not to a nunnery, but to a happy, humble home."

"In vindicating your rights, you took the course which God and man approve. Need your friend say how much, were it but for the sake of humanity, she exults in your escape and triumph."

"Yet I shudder as I look back, and wonder whence I derived the strength of spirit which has borne me through that terrible ordeal which exposed me to the real wreck of those poor wits which I was accused of wanting. Stanch kinsman as Sir Jervis Yates is, and ever will be to a countess-cousin — zealous as the house of Fanfaronade has been for a noble heiress, who may yet be converted into a nearer relative — and, though to both I feel all due gratitude — what, save for your sympathy and affection, and the noble, the generous devotion of Frederick — what, save for his consummate knowledge and ability, must have been my fate in those dreadful investigations? Now I could almost bless my past trials. Have they not revealed to me the true nobility, the unimagined beauty of one human heart, and that one devoted to me with all its untold treasures of love and goodness. You press my arm — I know well the meaning of that gentle check," continued the young Countess, smiling; "yet you shall not, on this morning of jubilee, grudge me the proud happiness of knowing that I am beloved — loved for myself alone; and that the only heart I ever sought is my own! Can I ever forget what sustained me throughout those torturing, degrading, maddening trials! Had my enemies triumphed — had I been proved a lunatic, an idiot, unfit to enjoy the commonest rights of the species — his love, I know it, would not even then have

failed me. We should have fled together beyond the reach of cruel and tyrannical, because blind laws; and, though pronounced unfit to enjoy the honours of the heiress of Delamere, mine might have been a more blessed lot."

The maternal friend wished to lead the mind of the young Countess from a course of thought to which it was of late morbidly prone, and to fix it upon present duty. — We must look back for an instant. The complicated transactions of Mr. Grimshaw, the steward of the late Countess, and her confidential man in all her affairs, had left him, as all the world believed, greatly her debtor. And, though the destruction of account-books and vouchers of all kinds in the mysterious burning of the left wing of the Abbey of the Holy Cross had involved his affairs in inextricable confusion, Mr. Grimshaw looked forward with apprehension to the period when the young Countess should act under the counsels of her clear-headed cousin, Sir Jervis Yates, whose talents for business and accounts were famed throughout the country, and who had been heard to say, that the long widowhood of Countess Marguerite, and the prolonged minority of Lady Blanche, must have made the Delameres the greatest *moneyed* aristocratic family in the north.

Before the death of the old Countess, Mr. Grimshaw having made, as was alleged, a safe preliminary bargain with the next heir — that young Irishman of whom the reader has formerly heard — began to hint doubts about the soundness of mind of the eccentric or half-mad heiress, born to destroy the estates, and disgrace the house of Delamere. Mr. Grimshaw, the young Pretender, and those of his friends who acted by the steward's instigation, and under his guidance, would have been better contented had the young Countess, on coming of age, quietly agreed to leave them the sole management of her fortune, promising not to marry, and to have spared themselves the scandal and difficulty, and her the pain of the investigation into her soundness of mind: but Mr. Grimshaw too well knew her high spirit to entertain any hope of so desirable an arrangement; and a case, most carefully drawn up, was accidentally shown to Dr. Frederick Leighton, by an eminent physician in London, which revealed the deep-laid scheme of villany. It was shown to Leighton as a professional curiosity upon a discussion accidentally arising about insanity, and its strange and varying symptoms.

The young female, A. B. had been born, it was stated, in an eastern country, was aged eighteen, handsome in figure, and with regular Grecian features; but of a raised and distracted look and wandering eye; complexion dark, temperament melancholic; liable, from childhood, to sudden and wild bursts of passion, sometimes amounting to actual frenzy; apt to be amorous, and, at one time, when very young, had almost formed a matrimonial connexion with a young man living in the family in a half-matrimonial capacity. The hypothetical case tallied in so many minute particulars with what Leighton knew of the history and opinions of Blanche Delamere, that he could not doubt as to the identity of A. B. Nor could he help admiring the ingenuity with which trivial facts and circumstances had been perverted and distorted, to make out the case of a young lady, always remarkable for eccentricity of conduct and opinion, falling into partial insanity, which certainly made her unfit to manage her own important affairs, or to contract marriage; and compelled the next of kin to come forward.

Indelicacy of manners, superstition alternating with infidelity, contempt and outrage of public opinion in matters which, by women of honour, are held sacred, were among her alleged vices of disposition, but, above all, rebellion against the authority of the most indulgent grandmothers. A number of illustrative anecdotes, which, it was said, could be established by evidence, closed this remarkable case, among which were an exaggerated version of the story of Phæbe Waterton, and of Rosamond Weston. Much stress was laid upon the influence held over the mind of this unfortunate lady by an artful attendant, who, it was believed, intended, as soon as she was of age, to marry her to one of her own connexions, a person, in birth and fortune, every way beneath the rank of the patient. The brow of the young physician burned as, by this odd coincidence, he read of the designs imputed to himself and his aunt upon the fortune and person of the imbecile or lunatic heiress. He had, however, sufficient presence of mind to suppress his indignation at the complicated villany laid open.

"Little doubt about the frail wits of this poor damsel," remarked his friend. "Here is absolutely one of those cases in which law steps in with advantage, to protect the weak, and baffle villany; for there are, I fear,

men to be found base enough, for filthy lucre's sake, to marry a creature in this pitiable condition; and she may give heirs to a rich and noble house."

Dr. Leighton answered, that the case was indeed singular—very singular. They had, however, seen but one side of it. They were not in a condition to judge of the motives of the relatives of this young lady for depriving her of personal liberty, and the control of her own affairs; and he craved leave to copy over the singular case, which was at once conceded.

Painful, most painful, had it been to Frederick Leighton to communicate to the Lady Blanche the discovery he had made; and for a long night had he ruminated upon withholding it, at least until the matter took shape. But this idea was abandoned. He felt the urgency of the occasion. He relied upon the fortitude and strength of mind early displayed by Blanche, and felt the importance of instant warning, while those around her might be hourly on the watch to misconstrue her every word, and misrepresent her every action.

This was but the first of a long series of services as effectively as delicately rendered, during the torturing investigation, to which the Countess Blanche had been privately subjected, and under which her pride, her firmness, nay her intellect, she believed, must have given way, save for his unflinching sympathy, and heroic devotion. For her sake, he had, for the time, abandoned his professional views, and every immediate hope of advancement in life; for her sake, to secure her from further indignity and persecution, had he forborne to accept the rich and passionately coveted gift almost proffered him—the hand of her, whose heart had been ever and only his, and whose love no longer brooked, nor sought concealment.

"Had they made me out mad," continued the Lady Blanche, as she walked with her friend from the door of the chapel towards the happy festive groups, waiting her presence under the trees, "then still had I been blest. Oh, so blest!—Frederick would have fled with me—you would have accompanied us to Syria—to my own dear childhood's land. There might no longer have existed a Countess Delamere in the peerage; but how blest a Blanche Leighton, in some safe and humble home—blest and making blest!"

"And hast thou not now power to bless?"

Unthankful lady!—to whom hundreds look up for the happiness which, largely imparting to others, cannot long fail thyself. There is but too much reason to fear that the first whisper of alliance with one whom the world deems so far below thee, would be the signal for the renewal of those base schemes, which, degrading to thee, might for ever deprive those hundreds of thy dependant fellow-creatures of thy generous and considerate care. Thou hast already a large family—ties enough to occupy and fill even thy expansive affections. Look, lady, to the small part of thy expecting assembled English family which yonder await thee. Thou hast high duties—doubt not in their fulfilment to find happiness. Is not our Heavenly Father the Just One?"

The young Countess sighed, and strove to be contented.

"I endeavour to think in this manner—to look only to the bright side. I have triumphed over villany, and possess what seems a boundless power of doing good. Would that society were so constituted, that no one, however generous and well-inclined, possessed power so ample and so dangerous.—But I will make the best of it; and, some day, perhaps—some far distant day—the sense of the benefits I may have been able to confer on others, shall soothe this weak, fond heart, and quiet this human yearning, which now cannot be appeased. There is but one man in this whole world whom I can marry; and I know that our union is at present all but impossible. But I will not desert the post in which Providence has placed me. I will not—I dare not—risk throwing those poor people, who have no hope save in me, upon the tender mercies of those who have no mercy. But why dally? Have I not work enough for a long life before me?"

In cordially doing the honours of her rustic fête, in reciprocating kindnesses, and breathing, as it were, an atmosphere of love and gladness, among the objects of her love and bounty, the spirit of the young Countess recovered its elasticity. Before the festival of the women and children had closed, a procession of men and boys, with banners and music, arrived—a spontaneous demonstration of regard and respect for their young lady, "who was so good to their *Missuses* and little ones." There was also to be a dinner of farmers and country neighbours at the George and Dragon; and already was the antique Market-Cross over against that

hospitable hostelry decorated with evergreens and banners. A more delicate compliment was paid to the Countess by some unknown person, who had privately adorned with flowers the windows of her grandfather's humble parsonage.

The indignant refusal of the farmers to have their festival dinner presided over by Mr. Grimshaw, who volunteered for the purpose, marked the general feeling towards that gentleman. He had not, indeed, come ostensibly forward in the late delicate investigations respecting the sanity of his mistress; but not only was the disgraceful affair well known throughout the country, but his share in it. Some talked of a sound pelting with stones, if the steward presumed to show his face abroad that day; and it was remarked that the *Guy Faux* which suffered incrimination at the Market-Cross, amidst loud rejoicing, wore the exact costume of the steward, and looked his twin-brother, both in the redness of his nose, and the sinister cast of his eyes.

From dispensing and receiving simple gifts and memorials of the day, offered by her morning guests, the young Countess was summoned to important business. Mr. Grimshaw was there—the lawyers were already met in array—the guardians assembled—Lord Fanfaronade was come—and, as a friend and relative, Sir Jervis Yates took post by his kinswoman. The business formalities were happily despatched, as far as was possible; for something yet remained to be done, both by the Lord Chancellor and the steward. But the Countess was *free*, uncontrollable, in word or action, and with grace and dignity she received the congratulations of her company; with touching softness, she whispered congratulations of her old friend, Dr. Hayley, whom, to the confusion of Lord Fanfaronade, and the displeasure of Sir Jervis, she requested to take the place of honour at the dinner-table where she first publicly presided as mistress. As Blanche arose from the table, where she was the only lady present, she addressed Lord Fanfaronade.

"Your business is happily accomplished, my lord—mine is but beginning. May I, even at this unusual hour, request your presence, with that of my cousin, Sir Jervis—and as many of the gentlemen assembled as will do me the honour—as witnesses to the completion of a part of mine. My own agent and people of business are already in the library."

His lordship and the other gentlemen

bowed, as she glided away, each conjecturing what this business might be.

"I should not be surprised if she were about to betroth herself to that Frederick Leighton, who has been galloping over to Ireland and the West Indies on her affairs—all the settlements ready cut and dry," whispered Sir Jervis to the Peer, who drew up in offended majesty.

"I shall remonstrate strongly—I never will consent to my cousin throwing herself and her fine fortune and connexion away in this manner;—she who might make the first match in England."

Lord Fanfaronade bowed his reply—he was unable to speak.

"I have backed her but and out against the heir-at-law, instigated, it is said, by Grimshaw—and would again; but I cannot stand this. Your son, Mr. Devereux, who, I understand, did the Countess the honour to pay his addresses to her, when she was a mere child, has not, I hope, changed his mind? *There* is a connexion to ensure the protection she so much wants; and the Countess cannot be insensible to the importance of such an alliance in her present delicate circumstances, nor to the kind interest your lordship and your family have always taken in her and her affairs."

"You are extremely obliging, Sir Jervis. My family—my wife and daughters—who have known the Countess from her childhood, and who are much attached to her, did, at one time, certainly, desire the alliance. That my son Horatio was attached to Lady Blanche, I am also aware. His present sentiments I do not pretend to know. But when a young man of fashion—who might form the most brilliant matrimonial connexion—remains for years unmarried, in his peculiar circumstances—the fair inference is, that he has his reasons. Some cloud did intervene between the young people, years ago; but I have no doubt that my son Devereux remains attached to your charming relative. Can you have any good reason to believe that she meditates a connexion so unsuitable, so extremely derogatory, I must say, to her family and her Order, as that which you suspect?"

"In faith, I fear it, my lord!" returned Sir Jervis, becoming familiar upon the strength of a reciprocal confidence, and a common object. "Leighton, who is a most intelligent fellow, has made himself extremely busy, and not a little useful to my fair cousin; and I know, from good authority,

that there have been far more paper-drawing work and documenting, going privately on, than a young lady should be concerned in, without the advice or knowledge of her friends: but these people have, from childhood, got so round her! She has always had too much of her own way, that's the truth of it.—But she is a fine creature!—a noble creature! were she once properly settled down."

Lord Fanfaronade bowed and hemmed. He would not repulse Sir Jervis; he would not commit himself. He had gone far enough, and abided the issue; but hope or pride wrong forth this remark as they passed to the library.

"The Countess would scarcely have invited so old a friend of the Delamere family as myself, to witness an act which I must be pardoned for regarding as degradation to herself and her noble Order, were her purpose what you suppose."

"We shall see—we shall see!" rejoined Sir Jervis. "And if it be my countenance she seeks to such a connexion, I promise you, my lord, she shall see the blackest side of it."

"The champagne has affected that person," was Lord Fanfaronade's thought. "Vulgar, no doubt, but a shrewd man—perhaps ambitious in his own way."

When the gentlemen entered the library, they saw a table covered with written papers and parchments; the modest Quakeress in her best gray silk gown, and her gentleman-like nephew, Dr. Leighton, in his professional black. He had just arrived from Ireland, with the agent on the Countess's Donegal estates, and two gentlemen of the law, with whom he seemed on very intimate terms, and who had met him, by appointment, at Stoke-Delamere.

"Hey-day! here is an array for a birthday drawing-room," cried Sir Jervis, briskly; "what, my fair Countess, is about to be played off for the amusement of your guests, and in honour of the day?"

Blanche suppressed her rising disgust, while she replied,— "I owe, Sir Jervis, as some of my guests must be aware, my life—or all that gives life value, my health—to this dear friend, who has, for twelve years, watched over me with a mother's care. How much more I owe to her than mere life—for that which far transcends its dearest interests—which exists above, which endures beyond life, it is not for me here to tell. But I cannot suffer even one day of my hard-bought

independence to elapse, without rendering her all the compensation within my poor means."

"Certainly, certainly!" said Sir Jervis Yates, relieved, and concluding that "compensation" to the aunt must mean an annuity, or a good sum in hand, and not marrying the nephew.

"A service of tea-plate, perhaps," thought Lord Fanfaronade—"a small touch of the innate plebeian ostentation, in taking so many witnesses to the mighty reward—were it no more." But he hemmed, and said sententiously, that "Faithful and useful service acquired all the rights of humble friendship, and could neither be over-valued nor over-rewarded."

"I am glad your lordship thinks in this manner—I seek not to enrich my friend—she requires neither my gifts nor my money—she is rich enough already for her wise and modest wants. But I seek to increase her happiness. It was she who early inspired my childish mind with the deepest horror of slavery—of man holding property in the blood, the sinews, and the free-will with which the Creator has gifted the meanest of His creatures. Nor could I, upon this the first day of my power, lay my head on my pillow in peace the owner were it but of one slave. I have taken measures to ensure the safety and comfort of the emancipated negroes on the West India estates of my family, in the enjoyment of their new-born freedom; and also, for the protection and improvement of my property. I now hasten to sign their manumission, and thus to discharge, so far as it may be discharged, my weight of obligation to my maternal friend."

Before Sir Jervis could recover his astonishment, or Lord Fanfaronade dispose of his pinch of snuff, Blanche had started to the table, and rapidly signed several sheets of paper, the leaves of which Dr. Leighton turned over for her.

"Softly, my dear madam," cried Sir Jervis, at last; "are you aware of what you are about? or the number of your slaves? above three or four hundred!"

"So many more hundreds of reasons against the delay of justice. Will you, Sir Jervis, do me the kindness to sign as a witness. Dr. Leighton, give me your name. Nay, my lord, I do not despair of your lordship also humouring me and honouring me."

Lord Fanfaronade was taken by surprise; and the dignified FANFARONADE figured before simple Frederick Leighton, in the act of

emancipation, which drew moisture to the eyes of the Quakeress, as she silently pressed the hand of her late charge, and retired.

"I have nothing to say to so extraordinary a document," said Sir Jervis Yates. "It is not alone the amount of property rashly thrown away, but the example. I don't understand it. Was this the reward which your nurse requested? The idea might be quite natural to a Quaker, yet not the most proper for a young, unmarried lady of title and fortune—eh! my lord?—who might, at least, have been expected to consult her friends in so important a step."

"My young friend, the Countess, if I may have the honour of calling her so, has graced the day of her majority by a gracious deed," said Lord Fanfaronade, who was already compromised by his signature. "Let us not damp the pleasure which the glow of benevolence sheds over her bosom; and let us hope that the poor wretches whom she has released, may neither abuse their freedom, nor disgrace her goodness."

"I fear it not, my lord. I have, with warm love to all my kind, great faith in the human race—in all God's creation, in all my fellow-creatures, whether black or white."

Lord Fanfaronade had quickly recourse to his unfailing snuff-box, and the contemplation of the diamond-encircled stately Maria Theresa pictured on its lid. He doubted, after all, if this singular young woman—against whom insanity had lately been so plausibly alleged, that even his own mind was shaken—could be a fit wife for Devereux, great as were her extrinsic advantages. Her "kind," her "fellow-creatures," "God's creatures." Why, what was all this but a sort of Radicalism in disguise; and the worse because disguised under the cloak of Christianity—Christianity, which some blasphemous, dissenting or German preacher had lately styled "the highest and purest form of democracy?" He had heard the young Countess herself quote those shocking expressions so repugnant to social order, decency, and religion.

"I could not sleep in peace the owner of a slave," continued Blanche; "but neither can I remain the mistress of a race of miserable serfs, whose degraded existence must be a constant pain and reproach to me, and a curse to themselves. My second act of independent sovereignty, my lord, shall be to raise the Irish peasantry on the family estates to the dignity of industrious, independent labourers and farmers."

"This will require mature consideration," said Lord Fanfaronade, with more quickness than his ordinary manner,—“I mean, totally changing the management of those valuable estates.”

“I have not been rash. Your lordship is aware that I was indulged in making a long visit to Ireland last summer. I was not idle; and then, if I felt with my girl’s heart, I also saw with my own eyes, and judged by my own and by more enlightened understandings, of the condition of the people on these estates and on those of neighbouring properties. Dr. Leighton has since devoted some months to the same examination. He has just returned from Ireland. All that I desire, and am bound to attempt, cannot be accomplished in one day, nor in one year—no, nor perhaps in one lifetime. Yet, knowing my duty—having taken anxious and humble pains to learn it—I will not suffer an hour to elapse without commencing the work of amelioration—of *atonement*.”

“Your ladyship, having kept yourself as poor as a rat, during your minority, in throwing away your personal allowance on those Irish incorrigibles, would now throw your landed property after it,” said Sir Jervis Yates, in a tone which somewhat ruffled the temper of the young Countess, though she checked the retort which rose to her lips. “Come, my lord—come, Mr. Grimshaw—we must form a council-board on these Irish affairs of my noble cousin’s,” continued Sir Jervis. “We must not allow the generosity of the Countess to be altogether imposed upon, and advantage taken of her inexperience to deprive her of all power over her Irish property before she has for four-and-twenty hours enjoyed it.”

“Who seeks such advantage, Sir Jervis?” inquired Dr. Leighton, firmly, on seeing the eyes of the baronet fixed upon himself.

“No one, I hope, my good Doctor; but, at all events, if they should, English good sense is able to resist Irish or any other encroachment.—Eh, my lord?”

“With all deference,” observed Mr. Grimshaw; “so complete a revolution as my lady meditates in the management of the Irish estates would not only require deliberation, but I have doubts if, by the family settlements, any proprietor is entitled to perform acts which go to the virtual alienation of the estates from the family; for what less are perpetual leases?”

“Alienation!” ejaculated Lord Fanfaronade.

“Alienation!” repeated Sir Jervis Yates. “And in whose behalf, pray?” and his eyes again involuntarily sought Dr. Leighton.

“In behalf—if alienation it be—of those who, I believe in my conscience, have the best right to these wild lands,—of the people reared upon the cultivated portion of these rack-rented absentee estates, of those whose industry has given them whatever value they possess,” replied the Countess; “and,” she proceeded, “I have not been, even in idea, a rash innovator. My power over that property is unquestionable. It is that by which alike the King holds his crown and the cottager his copyhold—*LAW*. And, while I retain that power, I am resolved to exercise it independently, and to the best of my judgment, and with, I trust, a profound and ever-present sense of my responsibility. The lands already under some kind of cultivation, however imperfect, amount to nearly two-thirds of the whole estates. Of these we—my counsellors and myself,—and she smiled and bowed to her new Irish agent,—“propose to give long leases, preferring the present tenants, unless some insuperable objection exists—and at greatly reduced rents. I shall deem it wise for both parties, landlord and tenant, to encourage the spirit of improvement and industry by every proper means; and by making advances for improvements on a much more liberal scale than has been usual, where the principle is to draw and screw all away, and to return nothing. Nor will I be an absentee, though I hope my Irish tenants will soon be very well able to do without me. The world does not offer more delicious summer retreats to the true lover of nature than are to be found in the bays opening on the Atlantic, on the shores of the Delamere, and of many other Irish estates, which the owners never see. ’Tis to such places my friend, Dr. Leighton, says he would send English invalids, in preference to the more fashionable haunts of the Continent. And there shall be my summer station. The mountain lands—those lying in a state of nature since the Deluge, but quite susceptible, I am informed, of cultivation, and at present of little or no use to any one—we propose to allot in small farms, held by perpetual leases, and at first at merely a nominal rent. We shall build good cottages and offices, and provide for the comfortable settlement and maintenance of the mountain farmers for the first years of their hard but hopeful struggle:—and from the first hour it will

be hopeful; for they shall not feel that they are wearing out their strength, and encountering distress and privation, merely to pay a rack-rent to an absentee, but to improve their own little possessions, and increase the comfort and wealth of their families. It is my wish that every remaining poor family, that has been ejected from the estates of my ancestors, shall find a refuge in these mountain-farms. This is a justice which I owe to them, and to the memory of their former landlords. Can their spirits rest in peace, while these poor people, driven out in their misery, are wandering as beggars on the face of the country which their toil has enriched!"

"And therefore your ladyship's *wise counsellors* would have you generously open pauper-warrens to receive them all in your wild lands?" inquired Sir Jervis, sharply, and looking hard at the mute new Irish agent.

"Pauper-warrens! pardon me, cousin; but what has my grandmother's Irish estate been, for fifty years back, save one large and increasing pauper-warren, if you will name it so. My projected mountain-farms—and would that law gave me the right of disposing of them, out and out, to all whom industry might stimulate to labour to redeem them!—my mountain-farms shall, in the first place, not be too small, and one main condition of the tenure provides against subdivision. The rent—at first, nothing—like that of all the other farms, can only increase with the productiveness of the farm, and the consequent ability of the tenant; and it will be limited by being paid in kind—or as a grain-rent. We intend that a considerable portion of it, in the new lands, shall at all times go to maintain parish roads, mills, and such new improvements as the progress of society may introduce into agriculture; and also to maintain the school-houses, the chapel, the parish library, the infirmary, and other useful institutions."

"The *Papist* Chapel, madam?" inquired Lord Fanfaronade, solemnly.

"Whatever kind of place for Christian worship the householders of the new township choose to have, my lord; and any sort of school they approve. Where can the patronage and care of such institutions be so well placed as in the hands of those seeking religious instruction and consolation for themselves, and useful learning for their children?"

"In the hands of ignorant or bigoted Roman Catholic peasants, madam?"

"They are men, my lord, endowed with like faculties as other men. Give them freedom, and motive to exercise those faculties under the stimulus of their dearest interests—whether as intelligent, responsible beings, or as fathers and neighbours—and my life upon the quick access of knowledge and liberal feeling among my Irish farmers. Your lordship does not like the Roman Catholic religion; neither, abstractly, do I admire it; yet I please myself in thinking that my new mountain-farms—*my* emigration colony, (one going only the short distance from the plains to the hills,) may form a sort of atonement for the cruel hardships inflicted on the poor people of those estates, through the harshness, or the culpable negligence, of my predecessors. *My* mountain-farms shall be a perpetual Mass for the repose of their spirits; and, I trust, not an unacceptable one."

Lord Fanfaronade knew not what to reply to this wild talk; or what final opinion to form of the character and sentiments of so singular, so decided, or so over-bold a young lady. Meanwhile he wished to get away. He required the counsels of his lady, and particularly of his daughter, Lady Blande,—of whose talents for penetrating character, and managing high-flown, and, indeed, all kinds of people, he had a great opinion.

On taking leave, he expressed a hope that Holy Cross and Fanfaronade Park should ever maintain their ancient amicable relations; and he mentioned the intention of his lady and her daughters to drive over to congratulate the young Countess to-morrow, as they knew that business engagements, and entertaining the tenantry, must occupy all her hours on this important day.

Some county business remained to be discussed between his lordship and Sir Jervis; and, as their roads lay in the same direction for a few miles, the latter, with evident pleasure, from the condescending invitation, accepted a seat in the peer's carriage, though, amidst the multifarious business of the day, one little affair of his own was still left unsettled. For this, he invited himself back at an early day. Sir Jervis Yates had recently withdrawn his now illustrious name from the vast concerns of the mills, but he was so far from having surrendered his pecuniary advantages to the ostensible partner, that the majority of the Countess had been impatiently waited for to obtain a

lease, resolutely and angrily refused by her grandmother, of a piece of ground commanding a fine water power, where he proposed erecting new and very extensive cotton-mills.

"You know the terms," said the young Countess, smiling, when, at parting, he drew her aside to remind her of the request.

"I am ready—our house is—to pay not merely a good, but an enormous rent for that small reach of the river," replied Sir Jervis.

"I do not want—I would not receive an enormous rent—and I have none of my grandmother's repugnance to the neighbourhood of manufactories. I see their value, especially to the people of Stoke-Delamere; perhaps I may yet find an asylum for some of my Irish families, or their off-shoots, in your new mills down the river. But you know the only conditions on which I can grant you a lease, not merely of these falls, but of the adjoining farms, for your establishment."

"Oh, flower-plots before the white-walled cottages, I believe. Was not that it, my lady?" And he laughed.

"Yes, flower-plots—but much more—neat, roomy, substantial, and *fairly rented* cottages—each with its *large* garden or *pad-dock* as well as the flower-plot; common greens and public walks; school-house and library; washing and cooking establishments; baths, brewery, store, and surgery. And these are but the husk—the beggarly elements of social happiness in my well-ordered, imaginary factory of *Beau Ideal*. You kindly warn me against forming a pauper-warren in the Donegal mountains; but, with every wish to forward your project, Sir Jervis, neither shall I be in any way accessory to establishing a worse sort of warren almost under my own eye. There are forms of misery still, more squalid than those of the Irish peasant—a civilized lot still more dehumanizing—more soul-stunting than the peasant's in his worst cabin of the bog. But I am not merely willing, but *anxious* to facilitate this scheme of you and your partners; if, in so doing, I can be assured that I shall help to lay were it but one little stone to the sure foundations of a firmer and happier social system than that which is growing up around us, in these manufacturing districts."

"We have no doubt about satisfying your ladyship's men of business, and also meeting your benevolent views," replied Sir Jer-

vis, "about the dame's schools and the flower-plots."

There was a little good-natured sneer conveyed in the tone of the last words; but Blanche was not offended with her millionaire relative, who she understood to be at least as considerate about the human instruments which produced his wealth as are the most of his brethren in England. It was agreeable to him to see them clean, and looking tidy, if not healthy; and his interest that they should be industrious and temperate. He, therefore, encouraged Temperance Societies and Savings' Banks among his partner's work-people—for he rarely saw them himself—and had no objection to a game at ball or cricket on a Christmas afternoon, if the amusement never interfered with the regular hours of working the machinery, which they, however, somehow always did.

It was with a sense of relief that the young Countess saw her guests depart; and the longest day of the year, and of her life, come to an end in the despatch of business, which with her ideas assumed the nature of important duty. She had signed her will, which was ready prepared, and also a deed, which secured for her natural life £1000 a-year to the next heir to the estates, beyond her own power of revocation.

"This is, indeed, to heap coals of fire upon the head of the ingrate," said her friend, as the deed, hitherto kept secret, from motives of delicacy, was witnessed by Dr. Leighton and the Irish agent.

"It is an act of mere justice, and, perhaps, scanty justice. Can I approve the law which leaves this young man to languish in absolute poverty, while it enriches, to prodigal extent, a girl who has chanced to step between him and the large possessions which our common ancestors have gathered together—it will not now do too curiously to inquire how. I have provided for every domestic and dependant who might have been disappointed by the sudden demise of my grandmother, not, I fancy, what will be called nobly or munificently, but fairly. My few maternal relatives—those who have lately, in the most remote and unsuspected localities and degrees of consanguinity, made me aware of their existence and of our relationship—I shall endeavour to treat with becoming kindness and tenderness; but fortune is not given me to enrich only them. I have an impression that it is temporarily intrusted to my stewardship for

more expansive objects. With those abuses of public charities with which we are all conversant, I almost fear to complete the endowment of my *pet* plan—my schools in Stoke-Delamere, and asylum, and annuities for poor lonely widows and destitute spinsters; but we have been so very wary—our lawyers so skilful—that surely, for some generations, our scheme will not be vitiated. So let us to work on this—and then my birth-day star may set when it will!”

“I fear you have exhausted yourself already,” said Leighton, looking anxiously on her eyes of preternatural brightness, and her flushed cheek. “The excitement of benevolent enthusiasm may prove as wearying as that of fashionable dissipation—and, for these many months of preparation, you have been suffering under ‘the philanthropy-fever;’—shall we not, therefore, for this night, sweep away agents and lawyers, parchments and doctors, and leave you to repose?”

“Not till my task be accomplished; I should not else taste repose.—Could a Howard, a Wesley, a host of glorious men, devote their whole lives and energies to the most fatiguing labours in the service of their suffering fellow-creatures, and shall I drop in one day!—Don’t think so meanly either of my mental or physical powers. I am ever strongest in trial. Let us finish our business.”

There was more signing and sealing. The schools were founded and endowed—the asylum for destitute age and respectable poverty, established—with all legal formalities; and the funds for their support provided partly from the rents of those lands which were intended to surround the manufacturing village; which lands, it was believed, must rapidly increase in value.

“And now,” said the Countess, laying down her pen, “I do confess fatigue, for which the remedy shall be a soothing drive in the twilight to witness the rejoicings in my honour in Stoke-Delamere. I am bound to return the visits paid me this morning. Where are our children?” And the little daughter of Mr. Devereux and the lost Rosamond, for whom Blanche felt as a tender mother, and kept constantly with her, and the boy, now at home from school, attended her to enjoy the spectacle of the night, as they had done that of the morning.

The first rocket of the fireworks, which were to render the natal day of Blanche, Countess of Delamere, brilliant and illus-

trious over all the surrounding country, announced the arrival of her landau in the little antique town; and loud were the huzzas and hearty and heart-felt the cheers. It was with some difficulty that Dr. Leighton was able to prevent the young men and lads from unharnessing the horses and taking their places themselves; and only his positive assurance that the Countess would be frightened, angered, and disgusted by such an attempt, prevented the degrading proceeding.

Among the most active of the volunteer beasts of draught was the husband of Phoebe Waterton, who, now that his wife’s patroness had come to her kingdom, was convinced that his fortune was made, and huzzaed accordingly. The son of old Jacob Goodridge, keeper of the Buckshound gate, would be turned out at once, to make way for him. It went to the heart of the heiress, on this day of power and rejoicing, to deny the humble petition of her old friend and playmate; yet, even under the menace that Phoebe would be harshly treated or *beaten* by her disappointed and angry lord, she resisted importunity to perform a deed of injustice, which would have made fifty discontented, and one ungrateful; and thus she allayed the murmurs of the maidens and gammers of the Goodridge faction, who had whispered that “a fair face, though faded, and an oily tongue, went farther with great folks than good will and faithful service.”

“I shall never be popular,” said Blanche to her friends, as they drove from the town, immediately after she had dismissed, with something like severity, the second petition urged upon her by the tearful Phoebe. “When I consider the many preposterous, unreasonable, and impossible petitions and requests that have been made to me from my earliest childhood, and which pour in upon me now, I could pity a harassed statesman in office. I must be content to be imagined hard and cold, though it wounds me, that I may deal impartial justice to all, and be understood and loved by few—how few! One by one, all will forsake me; and I shall be alone—alone!”

Her tremulous, desponding tone, and low-breathed sigh, revealed the depth of the sentiment which these few words embodied. The Quaker matron looked at her lady, as if tenderly deprecating and pitying, while she chided this desponding spirit; and the strong emotion of the young physician, over-

coming his habitual self-command, was betrayed by an involuntary expanding of his arms, while the mute eloquence of passion, in his kindling eye and animated gesture, seemed to say,—“Come to this heart and be cherished—come, if its life-long devotion may suffice thee.”

The full import of the slight involuntary movement on both sides, as Blanche, for an instant, seemed to bend towards her lover, as if about to throw herself into his opening arms, and to shed her grateful and rapturous tears on his bosom, was mutually understood; and to her heart, this self-betrayal of one usually so provokingly guarded and sage, so inflexible in purpose, was a triumph and a solace. A thrill of delight shot through her whole frame, to the exalting thought—“Although he so often imagines I may never be his, although thus ever-guarded, he loves me—yes! he loves me! and I am happy!”

The twilight of the lovely evening had reached that point when, about midsummer-tide in England, twilight seems to kindle and brighten after the setting of the sun, and to shine with a splendour that seems all its own, unborrowed of the departed luminary.

“How balmy and refreshing is the air to-night. What a luxury only to live and breathe this sweet air,” said Blanche, after a long pause. “I do confess something like collapse of spirits after the varied excitements of this day, and can fancy no restorative equal to a stroll home through the woods, and coffee under the beech trees—with the dearest friends of my childhood about me.”

“Command your slaves,” said old Dr. Hayley, gallantly. “Coffee shall appear at the touch of my fairy wand; and my friend Frederick will give you his arm through the shrubberies. That is a felicity and honour which a small twinge of my old enemy prevents me from disputing with him to-night.”

The Countess had alighted, and the last gleam of her white dress, as she disappeared among the trees, leaning on the arm of Leighton, enabled the Doctor to remark to Mrs. Simpson, with impunity,—“Our Countess is at last her own mistress, and how deserving of every happiness. I do not, ma’am, affect ignorance of the state of her affections—but Grimshaw and the heir-at-law—would they commence their schemes again? What do you think, ma’am? I wish I could make

Dr. Leighton a prince to-night for her sake!”

“Would she value or like him more?” remarked his companion, quietly.

“The poor, dear child, I could lay down my life to give her happiness; but another conspiracy, and no one to support her this time?” He shook his head. “But, come; let us make her as happy as we can, ma’am; let us get supper arranged under the trees. Dr. Leighton leaves us to-morrow morning, I believe. Come to-day, gone to-morrow—he is unkind to his friends.”

The good Doctor really liked Leighton, and was not very insincere, though he at this time certainly wished the young man well away and on the high seas; but no shadow of insincerity found favour with the single mind of the Quakeress, however innocent or speciously veiled it might be by kind motives, or so-called politeness. She drily answered—

“Frederick goes to-morrow, or haply this night. He will embark for the West Indies on Friday. He is pledged to see the emancipation experiment, which he heartily approved, fairly made. He will remain for the approaching cane-harvest, and probably the next.”

“I hope it may answer,” returned the Doctor, in a doubtful tone, “for the sake of our Countess, whose kind heart was set upon the thing.”

“For the sake of humanity, of justice, I pray it may—and for her sake also.”

They drove on in silence, much less embarrassing than that which was as solemnly kept on the wood-paths threaded by the lovers.

“I fear you have suffered much from the great exertions of this day,” was the whisper which at last fell on the ear of Blanche, as she silently seated herself on a rustic bench, to rest for a few moments, after ascending a winding steep.

“I shall have abundant leisure to recover from fatigue,”—and she proceeded in a more impassioned tone,—“Oh, Frederick! when you know that these are the last hours, the very last, we may ever spend together—the last moments that we may freely talk to each other—that I have to endure the anguish of seeing you depart to the perils of the sea, of climate, of all that may intervene, ere our far-distant meeting, if indeed we shall ever meet again—can you talk to me of personal fatigue?”

“Should I try to keep alive that anguish, dearest Blanche? Yet I confess I should be

wretched to see you perfectly easy under this long and most painful separation. — Am I selfish ?”

“Not more than I would have you,” she replied, now faintly smiling. “But sit down by me. I could forgive a little more of this kind of selfishness, Fred. A little less philosophy, and even more suffering at our separation than you are likely to display, whatever you may feel. — Oh, I am myself very selfish in this sort. I can conceive no true and strong affection without it. I remember when I was wont to be delighted to see you a little miserable under my caprices. That is past — yet, to say truth, I do not desire to be very reasonable to-night. I wish you to suffer. . . . And I shall find time enough to be rested, and to be rational, in four long years. — Four years ! how shall I endure them !”

“Are they nothing to me ?” was said in a tone of tender reproach.

“Forgive me, Frederick, if I indulge to-night in the luxury of complaining. While you are by my side, what is repining but another form of happiness ? But, oh, the cold, dark, heavy days to which I look forward — the unappeasable anguish of the aching and yearning heart — to be endured in silence ere we meet again — if we shall ever meet : — and unchanged ? How my heart sickens and misgives me at times. So large a portion of life given away a sacrifice to the world, to pride — a sacrifice which never will propitiate the spirit that tyrannizes over us, and imposes bonds which our Heavenly Father never laid upon the creatures whom he has made to love and to be blessed.” She was now weeping without an effort at control.

“Tempt me not too far,” replied the soothing lover, “lest I too, in turn, become the tempter. Can I thrust from me the nearest prospect of bliss ? Shall we risk all — brave all ? We have been prepared for worse. Say, dearest, shall we give up our plans, and part no more ? How easy it were to-night, inflexible as you upbraid me with being, to overset my firmest resolutions. . . . And should our dearest hopes ever be realized — however distant the time — you must still be prepared for *many* saying that I have been aspiring, sordid, and worldly-minded. I make up my mind to this sort of censure — content with having done all that honour and manhood require of me to vindicate your choice.”

“Oh, more ! far more Frederick ! — unkind

as you have sometimes seemed to me ; yet, for that very repelling unkindness, I only loved and honoured you the more. It was the true fruit of your generous and delicate feelings for one whose best claim to your regard was, comprehending your noble character, and loving you for yourself. And surely mankind are not all ungenerous ; your motives will come out, clear as your truth and your love.”

“While you believe so, dearest — having done all that we can to propitiate the just opinion of society — I shall be indifferent in my own regard. Nor, philosopher as you call me, am I able to wish you less noble, less beautiful, less *rich*. The accidents of wealth and title — while the world continues to see them dispensed in such unequal measure — well befit my own Lady Blanche, who boasts yet higher nobility — well befit my promised wife ;” and he clasped her towards him. “My soul’s comfort and stay in every stage of our blended existence — for Time and for Eternity !”

“I am better able to part with you now, Frederick,” sighed Blanche, as she withdrew from the embrace in which she had gently sobbed away her rapturous emotions.

“Thank you, for speaking so to me. We have lived in love — such as few can understand — but how seldom have we spoken its language ; and yet, now, I think I am less able to let you go. Oh, I am as fickle as the wind to-night — yet, in spirit so much lightened. Oh, heavens ! the exulting and abounding joy that this one interview, these few words exchanged between us to-night, would have given me but one short year since — and I dare still repine ?”

“Our love has indeed stood fierce storms of adversity — will it, Lady Blanche, endure a severer test ? I care not for the world — but, you — will *you* never repent — never regret — never look back ? —”

“Nay, Frederick,” she interrupted quickly, “I have a right to be offended now. I do not, with all my faults, deserve this. The qualities are intrinsic, not accidental, which can ever change my feelings to any living thing, were it but to a dumb brute, that I had once loved. . . . How long have we known each other, now ?”

“Is your memory so frail, or so indifferent ? It is now exactly ten years since I, a bashful boy, saw the little Lady Blanche, sitting, *à la Turque*, in the window of that small parlour in the old laundry, reading the ‘Pilgrim’s Progress.’ I should have dreamed

of you ever after as a Peri—the creature of an Oriental fairy-tale, save for that dear, old, quaint book.”

“I remember it all now, though less distinctly than many other times;—as that burning and your broken arm. I was not in love with you till that night—not quite,” and she smiled. “Then my tenderest feelings were excited by your accident. We are kind creatures, we poor women, Fred. We will never make great mathematicians, I suppose; nor, they say, write tragedies or epic poems, like you men—but a much easier process might raise us into ministering angels than would be required with many of you of the nobler sex. . . . I should be sure you loved me to-night, Frederick, if I had before doubted.”

“By what new token, dear Blanche? I fancied I had exhausted them all.”

“That your thoughts carry forth my image—the idea of our blessed and blended existence, into Eternity,” she said, in a very low and solemn voice. “Oh, this is true, this is exalted love.”

“It is thus I have ever felt, then—even in childhood—for my turtle doves, which I would have been unhappy not to take to heaven with me—how much more for you, that sacred, that indestructible love,

—‘which ever burneth,

Which came from heaven, to heaven returneth.’

Courage, dear lady! It will exalt and sustain our souls to endure this long probation. Like the youthful patriarch, my years of bondage shall seem but as a day. Were they spent beneath your eyes—cheered by your smiles, soothed, charmed by your sympathy—as a rapturous day. . . . I must not let my thoughts dwell on this, but on the blessings I can only win by deserving them—And you, my own Blanche?—”

“I shall strive to follow your example. I am not insensible to the many, *many* great privileges of my lot; to the far greater blessings I possess and hope for. What woman’s loving pride—what woman’s unbounded faith in man, can be equal to that which I feel, and am justified in feeling? Forgive my querulousness and seeming want of fortitude; and do not grudge the relief of weeping with you, to one who must so often weep alone. I do not shrink from our resolution—yet suffer me to repine a little, were it but for the dear delight of finding your strength taxed to sustain my weakness. I have told you that I am not always quite rational in my deeper feelings; and, to say

truth, I do not desire to be so. It is enough that the burden shall be unshrinkingly borne—we may surely adjust the load so as to fit the back.”

Such desultory talk, with many a pause, many a broken whisper, fond interrogatory, and soothing promise, brought the lovers within sight of the noble beech trees on the lawn in front of the Abbey; under which, by the prompt orders of their friends, the servants had already set out a table with refreshments—fruit and wine.

“How like a glow-worm, seen through the foliage, is the lamp on which the coffee is simmering,” said Blanche.

“And how grandly and proudly the noble old house looks out from the ancestral woods in the twilight, as if it carried its head the higher to-day, because the Lady Blanche is every inch its mistress.”

“There remains a prouder day for it and for her—that on which she can tell it to hold its head higher still, for a noble master; or—bid it farewell for ever, and follow him to as happy although a much humbler home.”

A long and silent embrace was the seal of this parting covenant, and unbroken silence brought them to their waiting friends. If suffering from their approaching separation, the young pair were yet too happy in their own feelings, not to feel with kindness and complacency for all things around them, animate and inanimate.

CHAPTER XII.

The Denouement.

AFTER having solemnly, if silently, given her troth-plight, Blanche and her lover joined their waiting friends, under the magnificent guardian beeches, in front of Holy Cross.

It was Blanche who first courageously spoke, “Dr. Leighton leaves us to-morrow, Dr. Hayley. Having advised or approved my *strong* measure about the poor negroes, he goes to ensure its success by his personal superintendence.”

“So soon?” replied the good Doctor.

“Ay, make much of me to-night, ladies,” said Leighton with gaiety somewhat forced; “you may not see me for three years again. I have long wished to visit the United States; from thence I can easily procure a vessel for the Mediterranean, and realize a boy’s classic dreams, by visiting Greece. I may even, perhaps, be tempted to carry your united loves to our old friend Hassan, under his tent.”

"We gentlemen, who live at home at ease, may be tempted to envy you the power of doing good and acquiring liberal knowledge," replied the Doctor. "The system of a gentleman's education is greatly expanded since I was a young man, and placed my highest pride in being appended to a noble lady's girdle."

"The ladies do not seem to covet so awkward an appendage as myself, or I also might be but too proud. The Countess, however my vanity may be mortified by the preference, has, I fear, the good taste to choose you."

"Indeed you must never leave us again," said Blanche, addressing her old friend; "and I shall never be quite sure of you, till you fairly give up your living. You flatteringly tell me how happy I make you, and now that I am emancipated, your protection is more necessary to me than ever, were it but to put the proper face of decorum upon my maiden court."

"You are but too good to me—too kind, dearest lady," replied the old man, melted to tears. "Need I say that my home of forty years has become dearer to me than ever."

"Then we never part!" said Blanche, extending her hand to ratify the covenant. The old man raised the fair hand to his lips with affectionate and graceful courtesy. His former petulant pupil also seemed deeply touched.

"And that I may deserve your countenance," she said, when she had recovered composure, "I promise to be the most decorous, dignified, and pretty-behaved peeress of my years, in this well-ordered realm—that is, in my public capacity. At home, among ourselves, with the children, and such worthy and intelligent people as will be social with us, I may be privileged to be as foolish as I list;—and we shall be so happy, and, I am sure, so attached, though the world should call us a humdrum family. Nor shall we be so very humdrum. Many of life's best pleasures lie around us for the gathering, and we will taste them with relish and cheerful thankfulness. The world may not quite understand us, but it shall be compelled to respect, and, perhaps, in time, to love us. By the time I have reached the mature age of twenty-five, it will perhaps admit that so sober-minded and well-conducted a personage has a right to judge for herself in what mainly concerns her own happiness; it may not, in short, be longer able to withhold its consent"—and she hesitated—"to my marriage with Frederick.

Give us yours now, Doctor, with your blessing!"

The good Doctor was taken by surprise, and fairly overcome. The consent he had no right to give or to withhold, and the fervent blessing, were the spontaneous impulse of his warmest feelings, as he clasped the united hands presented to him.

"And now," said Blanche, smiling and drying her eyes, "all is as it should be—there are no secrets, no mysteries in our little household, and we shall be all the happier for that ourselves,—strangers have no business with our affairs or projects." The ladies withdrew to the house, and Leighton soon followed them, leaving the Doctor to recover himself.

A thousand last words were still to be spoken—and a thousand reminders of arrangements for constant correspondence—and ten thousand fond entreaties and counsels to be given to a medical man about the care of his own health: and that scheme was to be absolutely negatived which precluded an intermediate visit to England before Leighton went to Greece. Even his sage aunt remarked that he was bound first to return and give an account of his stewardship.

"Return only to be banished again? I am not equal to continually renewed torture."

"Nay, remember," said Blanche, gravely, "that this lies in your own choice. If I have sometimes almost spit in the world's face, to express my scorn of some of its base ways, I am surely equal to setting myself above its tyrannical opinion, in so solemn a matter as this. It would punish me for being a woman! Were I a young, independent nobleman, falling in love and marrying a physician's pretty daughter, I would in time be forgiven by the ladies, and the gentlemen would at once applaud me—if she were *very* pretty. . . . How idly I talk! Good-night, then, *Good-night!*"

"Nay, aunt—nay, my own Blanche—stay but a moment!—You shall not take her from me yet," and, while the old lady, smiling gently, retired, he led back the Lady Blanche, softly repeating—

"Good night! Ah, no, the night is ill
That severs those it should unite;
Let us but be together still,
Then will it be—GOOD NIGHT!"

For how many solitary days and nights, in my exile, will those words, which your 'Good-night' has recalled, ring in my ears? But now it must be Good-night, indeed."

"Our God be ever with you to bless you,

dear Leighton! Oh, remember all that you are to me—that I have of this world's ties, of supreme good, but you alone!"

Though Leighton, it had been agreed, was to go off without further leave-taking, the young Countess felt deep chagrin, and something like momentary displeasure, to find next morning that he had been able to obey her own command.

"He might have let us see him for one moment," she said; "I could be superstitious about it. Do you remember Clara's feeling about St. Preux's dream of Julia and the veil? and you can smile, my friend. Well, fortunately, I must go down to those business people—and then receive those visitors. Well, well, the longest day comes to an end."

On this long day Sir Jervis Yates had the honour of attending the ladies of Fanfaronade Park, on their congratulatory visit to Holy Cross, to arrange about the ball he meditated in honour of its mistress coming of age. She was found looking remarkably well, in high spirits, and dressed with more splendour and care than was her wont; and also exceedingly obliging and gracious. She accepted a verbal invitation to a quiet dinner, in the next week, for herself and Dr. Hayley. The invitation had, from policy, been extended to "the *ci-devant* laundress," her "*Maintenon*," as her friend was sarcastically called by the Fanfaronade family, but declined by that judicious person, who quietly put an end to a mutual embarrassment, by simply stating that she never visited save among her own friends.

"And may we not hope to be included in that favoured number?" said Lady Blande, in her most insinuating voice, though with the gentlest possible sneer.

The rebuke of the Quakeress was, quietly going on with her muslin-hemming, as if nothing had been said. It was a sensible arrangement of the old woman, they agreed, since the Countess was so very absurd as to place her so nearly on a level with her own society, though, indeed, she was rarely or ever met in the reception rooms.

Nor was this all the good luck of the morning. Dr. Leighton, it was understood, had departed, and was immediately to sail for the West Indies.

"It must, therefore, have been all nonsense, that has been whispered on that score," Sir Jervis said; or else Blanche had come to her senses, and retreated in time, and it was of little consequence which; while Lady Blande whispered a request to see "her little

niece," and "that mamma, also, might see Devereux's child."

"Pardon me," returned her hostess, reddening; "I cannot expose little Eleanor to such a trial. She remembers her mother; she is a child of great natural sensibility—another time she may be prepared to see you:" and no more was said. The party joined Dr. Hayley at luncheon, and heard him enlightening Sir Jervis upon the young Countess's plans.

"Her ladyship sets off for Ireland in a month, and tempts me to accompany her; she will, if we find the residence as agreeable and quiet as she anticipates, remain there till late in October. We are to be great schoolmasters and agriculturists. After spending Christmas at Holy Cross, the Countess proposes to take her first season in London."

"I am delighted!" cried three or four female voices in chorus.

"I admire your good taste, my dear Countess, in re-furnishing Delamere House, antique as it is, in the good old square," said Lady Blande, "And that charming villa—the ambassador's lease of it is expired, I believe."

"It is my own now," said Blanche, "and I must, I fancy, be so extravagant as to keep it. It will be, if not impossible—since toiling thousands do it continually—yet dire punishment to my friends and myself to live in London, in the sweet spring, and sweeter early summer; but I hope we shall contrive somehow not altogether to misuse our privileges and indulgences."

It was not until after Easter, that the young Countess and her venerable establishment went to London. The widow of a late Governor-General of India—a distant cousin of the Delameres, a woman of high connexions, and universally respected, though far from being rich—condescended to patronize the heiress, and to live with her in town. Dr. Hayley also formed part of the town establishment, while the Quakeress lived wholly at the villa, where the Doctor also had an apartment. The Fanfaronades disliked the new arrangement, and endeavoured to impress the heiress with the apprehension, that, in her aristocratic chaperone, she would take a bore and a selfish tyrant into her family; but Blanche, always a decided person, had not become less so since she had reflected upon her changed position and felt her own consequence. She therefore took her own way; mingled moderately in

fashionable society; went twice to Court, and sometimes to Church, and sometimes to Meeting;—rejected, or, more properly, delicately distanced admirers and proposals; and made the duty of her chaperone almost a sinecure, by plainly stating to her that she would not marry until she was twenty-five, and that her affections were already engaged. Save that she acted upon all occasions with the independence and decision of a married woman, or of one far beyond her in years, little fault could be found with her conduct; and if not popular in her first season, neither was she condemned; while it was found impossible to fasten a ridicule, whether in dress, *style*, or behaviour upon a person whose natural dignity and courtesy, and perfect simplicity of manner, baffled the most dexterous of the fashionable wits, gossips, and quizzers.

Even the nice, cheerful-looking, silver-haired matron often seen in the carriage with her, was now dressed with simple elegance, in rich, though mild-coloured silken garments, not of the very stiffest Quaker cut. She was, to be sure, rather a Hannah-Moreish looking person, but not objectionable as an old governess. And the aristocratic dowager, who, if poor in purse, was a woman of high spirit, if she began the connexion—to which her poverty and not her will consented—with an inward feeling of mortification, prolonged her residence under the roof of the orphan heiress from genuine attachment.

The mystery of season after season passing away and the Countess remaining single was none to her. The secret had been frankly intrusted to her honour. She did not approve, but she would not betray; and, as their intimacy ripened into sincere friendship, Blanche would playfully say—

“You must see Frederick ere you condemn me for falling in love at ten years of age, and deliberately confirming my choice at twenty.”

The dowager had learned the history of their connexion, and sometimes she heard read part of the contents of those letters which formed so much of the happiness of her young friend; on which, indeed, her soul seemed to hang, and to sink when they failed to appear.

The maiden condition of Blanche was accounted for in various ways. There was, according to some excellent authorities, disappointment in consequence of the romantic attachment in girlhood, of a very romantic girl, to one in inferior station. Others whispered of a compromise with the next

heir, who had agreed, on obtaining an immense annuity, not to disturb the actual holder of the honours and estates about the flaws in her titles, provided she remained unmarried. The Fanfaronade family did not discourage such reports. True, she continued inexorable towards Mr. Devereux, but she was indifferent to any other admirer; and thus hope was not entirely shut out.

“We must wait till she get alarmed at being an old maid,” said the politic Lady Blande.

That the young Countess lived in comparative retirement, and in a style below her imagined circumstances, was imputed to various causes. She was known to have devoted a considerable share of her income to the improvement of her Irish colony, and to objects of public utility and benevolence; and when tempted to what seemed very trifling and not wholly unnecessary expenses, she would thus laughingly parry the attack.

“Can’t afford another white bonnet, though of the most exquisite Parisian shape, this summer; this one is quite clean. Think what a pretty chest of drawers the cabinet-maker in my village of Ballyperi could give me for this sum, (so trifling to Madame,) for one of my tidy Judys. It would purchase such a quantity of prize-books for my school! Why, four charming cuckoo clocks—heir-looms among my tenants—could be got for this. No, I can’t afford the bonnet. Thank you, dear friend, for having so early instructed my tastes and feelings in the true value of money to myself and others. How much of the science of happiness may lie in the knowledge which teaches the proper application of the first rules of arithmetic. To that homely science, together with the perception of the truly beautiful, as distinguished from the expensive and conventionally beautiful, how much of the daily enjoyment of my life has been owing, with nearly the whole power which I possess, even with my ample fortune, of doing some little good to my fellow-creatures!”

Blanche sat with her matronly friend and her noble chaperone, Lady Vesey, and one or two ladies, over their small but elegant dessert, when the new bonnet had been started, *apropos* to a public breakfast which was about to be given by a noble bachelor, who had been very long young, where the unmarried ladies were to appear in a kind of uniform, which had led to the conversation on toilet economics.

"Is it not the duty of persons of fortune and condition to encourage elegant manufactures and ingenious industry, especially ladies, in deserving persons of their own sex? Is it not a sort of charity to purchase and use fine lace and embroidery?" said Lady Vesey.

"Perhaps—a *sort* it may; many amiable women, at least, consider it so; and it is *charity*, even to palliate the distress of the poor lace-makers and embroideresses, until their distress is done away by society learning to do *justice* to all its members. These are deep, difficult subjects. But I am so far from thinking myself *charitable* for purchasing lace and embroidery, that I have trembled to think of the price in health, and in useful leisure, pleasure, seasons of mental improvement to some young sister woman or her babes, that my veil, or the trimming of my pocket handkerchief, may have cost; luxuries which, idle that I am! those pale emaciated creatures fabricate—labouring fifteen hours a-day, and stealing time from necessary sleep to perform their domestic duties—while I shall be pronounced *charitable* for bringing them to me with a wish."

"I strive to put such thoughts far from me; and, fortunately, in the meanwhile, there are enow of persons in the great—I mean in the *rich* world—to encourage the pretty arts of millinery and jewellery, though my taste in luxury takes another direction. To say truth, so far as concerns mere personal tastes, I have little to give up. I feel very little difference between my ornaments and those of the simple maiden, who has the better taste to decorate herself, and shed an atmosphere of perfume around her, with fresh flowers. The whole to me seems resolvable into what pamphleteers call '*The Bullion Question*'—hoarded wealth—*fixed* capital—which men exhibit on the persons of their wives and daughters, or their principal slaves, as it may be. The custom of loading the person with ornaments seems to me so essentially barbarous, that I wonder, Lady Vesey, what my jewels would bring? The money could be turned to so much better account. Yes, yes! depend on it, our trinkets will speedily follow the gold-lace and bag-wigs of our lords. I speculate upon all the jewels of civilized Europe (that are left unstolen) being speedily absorbed by the Americans and Russians, to be made over in time to the Esquimaux, provided that nation be ingenious enough to find any trifling exchangeable commodity, with which to buy the baubles. There is some real value in

trinkets;—like the desire for guns and pistols, they may stimulate the industry of savages, and so help to civilize them."

The Lady Blanche spoke rapidly, as if embarrassed, and, meanwhile, fixed a steady gaze on her chaperone.

"I have been denying stoutly every where that you mean to sell your jewels, Countess."

"Thank you; but it won't longer deny. I have told it myself, hoping to raise my market. I require all the money which the ornaments will bring from the very best bidders."

Lady Vesey looked disturbed. She hemmed and said—

"So many commercial people, and even Jewesses, now wear diamonds, that, no doubt, their value to persons of condition is greatly depreciated; yet valuable *family* jewels have always been one distinction of persons of rank," she added emphatically. "Their age and history, no doubt, greatly enhance their value to their hereditary possessors. I have a clumsy, little, antique seal-ring, which belonged to our common ancestor, Hubert, seventh Baron of Delamere, which I certainly value at twenty times its intrinsic worth."

"Oh, no! depend upon it, your value is no more to you than its intrinsic worth. Though, somehow, I disregard the mere ornament, don't imagine I undervalue the *token*, the *symbol*, the *heirloom*, if you will. Yet I sadly fear this religion of sentiment is very apt, in our own sex, at any rate, to degenerate into superstition; that the mere symbol becomes the worshipped idol. I love the sentiment, the memorial, the *token*, but yet dread and despise the vanity and avarice generated by the passion for these pretty toys."

"Remember the turquoise ring and the silver shrine," said the Quakeress, looking up from paring her pippin, with the quiet archness of manner which often gave point and drollery to her simplest laconisms.

"I do; and am charitable!" returned Blanche, blushing and smiling, while her eyes glowed with pleasurable recollections. "The turquoise—I believe it is a bit of blue glass, after all—but Frederick Leighton, when a boy, brought it to me at the laundry from Stoke-Delamere Fair; the 'silver shrine'—it is the covering I procured with my first pocket-money, for that old oak-bound Bible, derived to me through my Puritan grandsires. It has, as I find by my grandfather's papers, such a history, that

poor homely tome! To me it is hallowed by so many tender, so many lofty and solemn associations—deep as the first heavings of the Protestant Reformation—elevating as every the poorest emblem must be, of the unconquerable martyr-spirit, the unquenchable love of truth and freedom, which burned in the magnanimous breast of its first possessor—that humble Cheshire yeoman, of whom I feel more proud than if he had been descended of the flower of Norman chivalry."

Blanche felt that she had said far too much, and spoken out of season; and she suffered a chill and recoil of spirit. Excellent, or rather *respectable* person as Lady Vesey was, it was not from her she could expect sympathy in such enthusiastic feelings. She rose from table, saying, in a lighter if not a gay tone—

"I find how difficult it is in this affair of gems and shrines, to retain the pure Protestantism of the spirit—should I say the Quakerism? How one's best feelings imperceptibly blend with one's most pitiable weaknesses! I had no sooner gotten an idol than I must have a shrine for it, as my friend says; but now, lest the pure sentiment which the heart attaches to family memorials and tokens of affection, should degenerate with me into woman's paltry love of personal ornaments, and also for other good reasons, I am determined to get rid of my jewels. Besides, I need the money."

"To maintain your orphan family, your modern St. Cyr, as your satirical friend, Lady Blande, terms the establishment at the villa."

"I am obliged to Lady Blande for giving my little household so fine a name. Do not you, Lady Vesey, think, that if I am able to provide the means of educating those twelve orphan girls aright, my trinkets—the loss of which is really no personal sacrifice—which, on the contrary, are a plague and anxiety to me and to every body—will not be worth considering? My friend, at an age which requires indulgence, gives up her time, devotes her whole energies to our pupils."

"I trust the results may be as satisfactory as the motives for the undertaking are pure," returned the lady, evasively, and rather drily. "But *family* jewels—there are questions of transmission involved. Should your ladyship marry, and have a son, for which, as a true Delamere, I am bound to pray Heaven, the jewels—at your pleasure no

doubt—might naturally be regarded as part of the fitting paraphernalia of his bride; or be divided, in part, among your daughters."

"'Tis a far cry to Lochawe,' as our cousins, the Campbells, say, Lady Vesey," returned Blanche, laughingly; "and I hope my sons and daughters may have some of their mamma's tastes in matters of mere luxury and decoration. But, though not convinced that I have not a perfect right to use my own discretion, I shall certainly not purloin the property of my heirs and successors. Much good may it do them, to peruse the inventory of their necklaces, rings, bracelets, spoons, buckles, and dishes 'with a cover.' Save the spoons which I and my friends eat with, I am sure I have had no other good from those heaps of *useless* things, accumulated at our different supernumerary mansions. I have, indeed, experienced a swell of pride in looking on my woods and streams, but I am immovable towards my plate chests."

"Gold plate is not to be laughed at," said Lady Vesey. "*Old family* plate," more emphatically.

"Certainly not—nor for that matter silver-gilt; and I am so much of the silver-fork school myself, that I wish every body in the world had silver in place of iron and horn to eat their food with—'tis so much cleaner and nicer."

"You love luxury after all, Countess?"

"Warmly—I love it, where it ministers to the cleanliness, the refinement, nay, to the real grace and ornament of life—so warmly, that I wish all mankind to share in what I love. But my homely Quaker arithmetic taught me to prize, first, things necessary; and my Bible bids me love my neighbour as myself, and do to others as I would have them do unto me. Now, were I in the place of one of the pretty young wives of my poor Irish tenants, I am certain I could never think it right, that an idle young woman, like myself, should be squandering those fruits of Judy's husband's labour which her husband pays in rack-rent, upon useless and cumbrous ornaments, while the cabin was without beds, chairs, pewter spoons, and platters. But, as I have told you, I follow and gratify my own tastes; I grant by what is fancied an unusual mode of expenditure, although I did not consider it, in my peculiar circumstances, a duty.—No, Lady Vesey, the regalia of Great Britain, did it adorn my person, would but humble

me the more, were those whom a vicious social state have made my impoverished dependants, left in squalid poverty, while I lavish what is theirs—the fruits of their industry. I prescribe to no one; but, with my Bible lights, I am bound to a certain distribution of my income, and to a certain present and prospective management of my property. My St. Cyr, as it seems my friends call it, shall not be allowed to interfere with these first duties; but it will absorb all my personal savings. I deny myself no pleasure, meanwhile, that I really feel to be such; and I only fear that our *family* at the villa is becoming too attractive to fashionable people, though I am not afraid of many imitating our plan.”

The beautiful villa on the banks of the Thames, which the eccentric young lady had given up—some said for a Nunnery, others for a Magdalen Penitentiary—did become an object of curiosity to a set of persons easily excited by any novelty that promises amusement; and many applications were made to the foundress, both for the admission of pupils and examination of the premises. The greater part, and far the happiest, of her own hours were now actively spent there, in forwarding the objects of an establishment, from which it required some firmness in the superintendent Quakeress, to keep off the inroads of the idle and impertinent.

“We shall burst upon you, Countess, when you hold your Fancy Fair to dispose of the pretty things made by your ingenious *protegées*,” said one of the ladies Fanfaronade. “Devereux means to be an immense purchaser.”

“My young friends make no *pretty* things for sale; they are busy in educating and being educated, and in being happy.”

“Oh, then it is a drama they are to perform on your birth-day—something *Genlis-like*. We are, however, quite resolved to be invited. Mamma says she will take no refusal; she takes immense interest in such exhibitions.”

“I have seen the girls on the lawn of an evening, perform *Thread my Grandmother’s Needle*,” replied Blanche, laughing, “the most brilliant, hitherto, of their histrionic or pantomimic efforts, I fancy.”

“Are you not, then, training them for vocalists? so enthusiastic and accomplished a vocalist as you are yourself, or actresses?”

“To act their part as useful, independent members of society; to be amiable women, energetic moral beings; no more than that of acting, Lady Fanny.”

“And they wear the Quaker garb, and take vows of celibacy, poor things!” sighed the young lady.

Blanche laughed. “Only strong resolutions against foolish, loveless, or *mercenary* marriages, Lady Fanny, which their education sets them above, if they follow it up.”

“Your Friend is qualifying the young women for superior domestics, I understand,” said Lady Fanfaronade; “and of these there is indeed a grievous want in high life.”

“Not exactly for domestics; though every mistress of a family, as I hope some or many of my young friends will become, must first know how to *serve*. There is really nothing wonderful in the system on which we are endeavouring to train these friendless young women. Their range of study is much more limited than that which one sees in the conglomerated *ologies* of the advertising cards of ordinary boarding-schools. We wish them to learn nothing that is not worth acquiring and retaining; and we strive not to force natural genius. I shall be disappointed if, in after life, these young girls may not be heard to say, that the days in which they were qualifying themselves for the serious duties of life, and to earn independent bread, if need be, were as happy as any they have known.”

“But what do they learn, pray? Do they embroider, or do millinery, or make artificial flowers? or——”

Blanche shook her head, as if dissenting. “We prefer, for their acquirement, skilled labour in things likely to remain useful, and, consequently, in demand, to mere manual dexterity in any small art, however temporarily profitable. Of a thousand girls, four hundred and fifty will make dresses and bonnets about as well as the larger half. We wish our pupils to turn their attention (where Nature has not denied the power) to pursuits requiring long study and diligent application. No *trade* can, to man or woman, be the certain means of comfortable subsistence in our society which is too easily acquired; and I hope these young persons will, by their own labour, be rendered *comfortable* as well as independent in their circumstances.”

“Trade! I fancied they were respectable young women, the daughters of professional men and of decayed gentlemen.”

“And so they are—all of them, the unprovided daughters of educated if reduced families. But call their future *vocations*, *professions*, if you please, for the term will

be rightly applied. We have three young ladies who will, by and by, be well qualified to supply the place of mothers—to be instructresses—governesses if you will; but that is the one narrow resource of all well-born young women in reduced circumstances—and a profession that is both over-done and underdone.

“We have already in our family two very promising wood-engravers, and one exquisite miniature-painter, particularly of children: that girl will make a fortune if she choose. We have a map-engraver, and a painter of decorations and armorial bearings for us nobility. I have no doubt that some among the girls might be very clever at jewellery and watch-making. But these are not considered very high arts. One mathematical genius among my Friend’s pupils, her master has formed the ambition of having apprenticed to his brother, who is an eminent optical instrument-maker. I hope the plan may succeed. Women, without renouncing the gentle virtues of their sex, might be helpful to themselves in a thousand ways, and society all the happier for it, had they only fair play.”

“Oh, true; see the women in Paris in all the shops—*Madame* directing, managing every thing, so keen and active and alert in business—and really harder to deal with than Monsieur,” said Lady Fanfaronade.

“I confess,” returned Blanche, “that I participate in the English prejudice against female traffickers, shopkeepers, and clerks. How very sharp, and sharp-witted, selfish, hard, worldly, and, in one word, *unwomanized*, clever girls do become, in *chaffering* situations as book-keepers, bar-maids, and whatever else exposes them to the public gaze and the contact of strange multitudes, with gain, or the hope of it, for their object, or personal vanity their continual stimulus.—Morally, these female dealers are in a worse condition than the poor actresses and figurantés. They only *stimulate*, and often, what is the most soft, refined, and feminine in the sex; while ‘the women of business,’ where the most gentle in their nature, at best only learn to conceal their grasping dispositions under flattery and cajolery.”

“Just like a fashionable physician striving, by mean arts, to obtain practice: the *modiste* palms off her wares, like the doctor his nostrums upon silly women,” said the Quakeress, “and often by the same arts of cozening and white-lying. I would not, therefore, have thee rest blame exclusively

upon the poor professional women, dear lady.”

“Nor do I—they are very like their brethren; and perhaps the brazen impudence or hardness of the lower class of trading women—those whom one sees at the counters of gin-palaces and in pawnbrokers’ shops—is not a whit baser than the polished or lackered metal worn as the visors of their superiors. But if our young friends cannot acquire and exercise some branch of skilled industry without becoming public traders, plunged into the keen competition of selfish interests, and jostling and elbowing their way in the market, I shall at once abandon my plan. Let us English, whatever the French may do, keep at least one sex sacred from the selfishness and contamination of traffic, as far as is possible. I suppose that few merchants, and indeed few professional men, physicians, lawyers, and still less statesmen, would wish their high-principled and pure and single-minded wives and daughters to know about the compromises, and trimmings, and subterfuges, and “tricks in trade,” that sometimes enter into their affairs. Such confidences would inevitably diminish esteem on both sides. When a man is blamed for not acquainting his wife with his affairs, one must believe that the true reason often is, that he respects her probity, her purity of principle, too much to take her into his confidence about his commercial enterprises, speculations, watchings of the turn of the market, and all those fine things into which, for the sake of both men and women, I should be very sorry to see women initiated, although they should be condemned ‘to chronicle small beer’ for a century longer.—My young sisterhood shall be taught no art nor science which they may not exercise in woman’s true place, the bosom and sanctuary of *home*; and either as single women, wives, or widows, as circumstances may dictate; though it is for the independence, and consequently the happiness, of *single* women that I am principally concerned.”

“And you would neither have them milliners, dressmakers, nor in business at all?” said Lady Vesey.

“There will always, I fear, be too many milliners and dressmakers; and I have said that I do not, at present, like *trafficking* for women. In the name of all that is holy and happy in domestic life, let us shield at least one-half of the species from, I fear, the too frequently corrupting processes by which

bread must be striven for in our imperfect and uneasy society."

"Not bread," said the Quakeress, quietly; "that is generally honestly and hardly earned by the sweat of the brow; but certainly bread, if with *butter* to it, by those who seriously profess to believe all the while that, for the threescore and ten years, food and raiment will suffice; and to depend, from day to day, for that same on God's Providence."

"Oh, just so. It is the plum cake, the *was-sail* bread, which 'so many among us are striving for, and rarely obtain, without sustaining some moral injury—some stain to the virgin purity of conscience in the worldly strife. The softer and more flexible nature of women, at least, could hardly escape contamination."

"Persons in business are, I am aware, often very low-minded, if not sordid creatures," said Lady Vesey, looking annoyed by the discussion, "and such cheats!"

"Pardon me, Lady Vesey, my homely illustration comprehended many more than tradespeople—all the professions—all those who wish for more money or money's worth than they can honestly and honourably acquire; and that, I am afraid, includes nearly the whole aristocratic world—we landlords especially."

"You are a Whig, Countess, and always were," returned the lady, bowing and smiling. "Now, as I am a Tory, and, besides, know nothing whatever about politics beyond an election perhaps, ladies having, I am sure, no business with them, I may as well yield to you."

"If by politics you understand, as indeed every body seems to do, party rivalry, struggles for place, factious opposition, intrigue, and even gross falsehood, neither do I desire to understand politics farther than to renounce and repudiate them. But the knowledge of what I have been taught to consider politics—and I heartily wish we had another name for the science instead of the abused one—is among the noblest of human attainments. Poetry, we are told by one who was a great prose-poet, as well as the greatest of philosophers, 'has something divine in it, because it accommodates the shows of things to the desires of the mind;' but politics—what I understand by politics—is of a nature still more divine, for it accommodates the *realities* of things to the dictates of the judgment and conscience—to truth, love, humanity; to all those glorious ends for

which Our Father, who is in heaven, created this beautiful world, and gave it to his children to enjoy, while undergoing that discipline of love which best prepares them for the fulness of joy, in the future and perfected exercise of all the faculties of their nature. Politics, in a word, is, or ought to be, the science which teaches men to live together in society, according to God's will. But as for what is generally understood by politics and politicians—My soul, come not thou into their secret! unto their assembly, mine honour, be not thou united!"

Lady Vesey heard this flight with pre-occupied attention. Her mind was fixed upon one point—the unnatural aversion which the young Countess seemed to entertain to the dearest end of all womankind—marriage.

"You don't, then, wish the girls to marry, Countess?"

"Not quite that," replied the Quakeress, in answer to an observation which escaped the rapt Blanche, who was plunged into a momentary bright reverie of human progression and happiness. "But we think we exalt the one sex, and contribute to the happiness of both, when we strive to place young women above the temptation of marrying merely for a maintenance."

"Can any one doubt about the degrading and miserable consequences of such necessity?" said Blanche, recalled to the conversation. "Can any one who feels the full value, the inexpressible tenderness and sanctity of the union of true hearts, tolerate the counterfeit, with all its attendant, teeming evils, incurred that a young woman may, on certain conditions, obtain food and clothes; be *provided for*, as my Irish friends honestly, if bluntly, phrase it? The world is bursting with misery, to which ill-assorted marriages contribute not a little. And there will still be too many unhappy alliances, when the prudence of parents is satisfied that their daughters need no longer marry merely to be '*provided for*.'"

"Apropos," said the courtly lady, whom it was impossible to startle from her propriety, "apropos to your subscription for the Bishop's Charity School—I must take leave to remind you."

"I am sure you are very kind, and very considerate, Lady Vesey, to take such pains to make me stand well with the religious-fashionable world; my five guineas, or whatever you think right, shall, from respect to you, not be wanting. There—mulct the

heretic," and she laughingly handed over her purse. "Nay, take more—shall I write a cheque for you? The children in the Bishop's school will, no doubt, be duly taught to read and repeat the Lord's Prayer. Would that the world, or any considerable portion of it, could only understand and act upon its spirit, as embodied in one-half dozen words! How can I consistently aid in teaching the children of the poor to repeat that prayer, while I tacitly consent, in a hundred ways, to retard the divine will from being 'done on earth as it is in heaven?'—What mockery in us, the English nobility, to contribute our pittance to teach the poor to pray, 'Give us this day our daily bread!' while we profit by selfish and cruel laws of our own making, to tax their bread; to rob their basket and their store only to enrich ourselves.—Oh! it is often all darkness and distraction to me: I am lost in a chaos of tumultuous thoughts: but the conviction ever remains, that I participate in the guilt of this centuries-old scheme of spoiling, oppressing, and brutalizing our fellow-creatures; and that dearly may we yet rue it."

The Countess was more excited than her watchful maternal friend approved. She looked anxiously towards her; and Blanche, by a sudden strong control, checked and subdued the outward signs of her emotion. But the vehement current of her thoughts, if staid, was not changed, and she sank into a troubled reverie.

"Give thy thoughts vent, if conscience say that thou oughtest not to suppress them," whispered her Friend.

"Do you not fancy it a very awful parable, that of the Saviour, about Dives and Lazarus?" replied Blanche, in a low voice, with an abstracted air, and a slight shudder. "Lady Vesey, after the sudden and painful death of my poor grandmother, and the shock which my nerves, nay, my whole sentient and spiritual being, sustained, I do imagine that though I was not sensible of it at the time, there might be some colour for the derangement or excitement imputed to me. How gladly would I have sought consolation, then, in the superstitions, as we deem them, of the Romish religion, had not reason and conscience revolted! Yes! never once wavering in my own faith—never disturbed by one doubt that might be called *religious*—I was yet accused of a religious craze—while the overwhelming evil against which my unshaken faith, and the wisdom and sympathy of the warmest friends with

which a woman of my condition was ever blessed, were taxed to the utmost to sustain me against what it were far nearer the truth to describe as a *moral* mania, a social or political madness, into which my agonized mind fell, under the distempered feeling that I was the last of a race of oppressors,—of doomed Diveses, upon whom the vials of the Almighty's wrath were to be poured forth. The wrongs, done upon the face of the earth, and especially the cruelty of the rich, and their instruments, to the poor, of which I had witnessed so much, even in my own narrow experience; bold, shameless, triumphant villany; the wrongs inflicted by man on woman; and the misery in which, in those dark days, the whole earth seemed steeped; though they could not shake my faith in the power and goodness of the Almighty, presented the fearful temptation that I and mine were of those, most miserable! whose portion is only of this world; that we were of the number of the illustrious reprobrates, who 'have here our good things, while Lazarus has his evil.'—It was in vain, for a season, that my Friend told me, in accents of love and compassionate sympathy, that I was not more powerless to change the destiny of my progenitors, than unblamable for the station and position in life which I filled;—that I had but one concern—duty, *present* duty—one unailing trust—the goodness of Providence. Frederick Leighton came, and reason borrowed the language of love in persuading me; and though I was in time consoled and cheered, yet I can deeply pity any one who may suffer as I suffered then: I can still pity, and not very much condemn, in myself, the spiritual conflict into which I was thrown. . . . Sometimes a *grueing* of that dark period creeps over my spirit still. I am still tempted to feel that this is—

'A wild and miserable world,
Thorny and full of care,
Where every fiend can make his prey at will;

and, with tears and cries, to demand, as in those days,

'Is there no hope in store?
Will not the universal spirit e'er
Revivify this wither'd limb of Heaven?'

"I am quoting much at random those deep, agitating words which haunted me then."

The Quakeress, evidently uneasy at the agitating nature of the conversation, endeavoured to relieve or divert it. She accord-

ingly took up the quotation, and smiling serenely, recited—

“O rest Thee tranquil; chase those fearful doubts,
That ne'er should rack an everlasting soul.
Joy to the spirit came!
Through the wide rent in Time's eternal veil
Hope was seen beaming through the mists of fear;
Earth was no longer hell;
Love, freedom, health had given
Their ripeness to the manhood of its prime,
And all its pulses beat
Symphonious to the planetary spheres:
The dulcet music swell'd
Concordant with the life-strings of the soul;
It throbb'd in sweet and languid beatings there,
Catching new life from transitory death,
Like the vague sighing of a wind at even,
That wakes the wavelets of the slumbering sea,
And dies on the creation of its breath,
And sinks and rises, fails and swells by fits.”

“O thank you! thank you, best friend,
for remembering so much of my ‘bane and
antidote,’ as once you called that above-earth
composition.”

“I do, without approving all, remember
very much of that wonderful poem. How
could any one, at all able to sound its depths,
ever shake off its high and solemn import?
How could I forget such passages as that in
which thou foundest the *antidote*:—

‘Yet, Human Spirit! bravely hold thy course.
Let virtue teach thee firmly to pursue
The gradual paths of an aspiring change;
For birth, and life, and death, and that strange state
Before the naked soul has found its home,
All tend to perfect happiness, and urge
The restless wheels of being on their way,
Whose flashing spokes, instinct with infinite life,
Bicker and burn to gain their destined goal.
Life is its state of action—
Death is a gate of dreariness and gloom,
That leads to azure isles and beaming skies—
The happy regions of eternal hope.
Therefore, O Spirit! fearlessly bear on!
Are there not hopes within thee, which this cene
Of link'd and gradual being has confirm'd?
Whose stings bade thy heart look further still,
When to the moonlight walk, by friendship led,
Sweetly and sadly thou didst talk of death?’

Bravely bearing on, thy will
Is destined an eternal war to wage
With tyranny and falsehood, and uproar
The germs of misery from the human heart.
Thine is the hand whose piety would soothe
The thorny pillow of unhappy crime,
Whose impotence an easy pardon gains,
Watching its wanderings as a friend's disease.
Thine is the brow whose mildness would defy
Its fiercest rage, and brave its sternest will,
When fenced by power and master of the world.
Thou art *sincere* and *good*; of resolute mind;
Free from heart-withering custom's cold control;
Of passion lofty, pure, and unshaded.
Earth's pride and meanness could not vanquish thee;
And therefore art thou worthy of the boon
Which thou hast full received. Virtue shall keep
Thy footsteps in the path that thou hast trod;
And many days of beaming hope shall bless

Thy spotless life of sweet and sacred love.
Go, happy one! and give that bosom joy
Whose sleepless spirit waits to catch
Life, light, and rapture from thy smile.”

“I seem as if I were vain enough to appropriate something of this beautiful encouragement and exhortation to myself,” said Blanche, as she turned her suffused eyes from her friend, and as, with the childish, pretty motion which had become with her a natural trick, she rapidly winked her eyes, as if shaking away the gems from their long delicate lashes; “yes, I am thus vain—I own it honestly. You quote to elucidate the beauties of the denounced poet, whose fervid natural religion I have heard you so warmly and candidly extol; and I apply the text to my own circumstances.”

“And so do I,” said the Quakeress. “But, to come back to sublunary, or anti-millennial matters, shall I order coffee, Lady Vesey? I volunteered young Shaw's duty, that he might be present at his sister's wedding, and am getting very like other official deputies.”

The Quakeress went away.

“How curiously your friend *chants*, rather than recites poetry,” said Lady Vesey; “and such a memory!—Admirable Wordsworth! But he is equal to every thing!”

Blanche either did not hear, or did not think it necessary to correct the lady's mistake.

“Shall we go to the drawing-room? Any thing save dreams of Elysium, or the music which begets them, is intolerable, after this high colloquy.”

She led the way, seated herself at the pianoforte, and, without another word, poured forth the vivid feelings of the moment in the extempore, impassioned music with which she preluded and accompanied what Lady Vesey remarked to be a song quite out of the common way certainly, neither Moore's nor Haynes Bayley's; perhaps from something like Comus, or one of the old Masques.

“He came like a dream in the morn of life,
He fled like a shadow before its noon;
He is gone, and my peace is turned to strife,
And I wander and wane, like the weary moon.
O, sweet Echo wake!
And, for my sake,
Make answer the while my heart shall break!”

“But my heart has a music which Echo's lips,
Though tender and true, yet can answer not;
And the shadow that moves in the soul's eclipse
Can return not the kiss by his now forgot:
Sweet lips!—he who hath
On my desolate path
Cast the darkness of absence, worse than death!”

"What an eccentric, flighty creature she is, after all," was Lady Vesey's thought, as she busily suited shades of Berlin wool. "Yet how resolute and even obstinate she can be on some points. I have no doubt but that she will sell her jewels—how strange and disreputable!"

"How I wish Frederick were returned, that the misery of suspense to so excitable a being were terminated," was the rumination of the Quakeress, who cast a furtive, anxious look, from her perpetual hemming, at the enthusiastic musician, fervently wishing her some more sedative amusement, and almost resolved to remonstrate against the intemperate indulgence of the bewitching art. Blanche caught her eye's meaning—rose, locked the instrument, and brought her the key as Lady Vesey left the room.

"There—place it in thy work-bag, and keep it for me till the right time. I am very fidgetty to-day. That packet announced as at Falmouth in the morning papers, and still no delivery—perhaps no letters to be delivered."

"I can sympathize with thy impatience, without forgetting that thine is, alas! an idle if a natural anxiety. . . . There is one question I must put to thy conscience, dearest one, in the spirit of tenderness and fidelity which has ever marked our intercourse, since thy heart first developed thy understanding, and led thee to place confidence in one so unequal to thyself in fortune and station." Blanche—her clasped hands rested on her knee, her concentrated spirit seated in the eyes rivetted on the face of her friend—bowed in the pause, as if she wished the discourse to proceed. "Art thou not, dearest lady, seeking false strength in pride, while it is in affectionate tenderness and obedience to the dictates of reason, instead of cowardly submission to the factitious tyranny of opinion, that thou canst alone find strength and happiness in one?"

"Cowardly submission!—am I then the world's slave—the slave of its false opinions?"

"For a limited period; a bondage of four years covenanted for, to propitiate its favour; but they are well-nigh past, and save for this restless impatience—the sinking of hope deferred—that agony of suspense under which I so often see thee suffer, alternating with the flush of feverish expectation—I should be content to see thy self-imposed sacrifice to pride—thy penance—consummated; but as it is"

"Pride again!" returned Blanche, almost

in the accents of pride, and with a flushing cheek. "I may have been over-proud of my choice; over-proud of the heart and intellect which I have gained and possess; weak and over-fond, in the hope that I should compel the world to do my motives and feelings justice, and to acknowledge that, in the unusual path I pursue, I am a reasonable being, living up to the full character, and for the blessed purposes for which God has given me existence; not a silly, vain, fond, and self-willed girl, bent upon the indulgence of her own inclinations at all hazards."

"Spare thyself," interrupted her friend, calmly; "in every daring experiment, even the most prudent and cautious applaud success after it comes. This much I can promise on the world's part, in thy meditated unequal alliance——"

"Unequal alliance! How can I listen to such words from your lips—that union in which I place all my pride—my true pride, as well as every hope, dear to a loving woman's heart;—and you have told me there is fervour and depth in mine." This was said in a tone of tender reproach.

"I used the world's language, dearest lady. Had our Frederick not been the manly counterpart of thine own generous and fervid spirit, he must have been warmed and moulded to it ere now. I speak from ardently desiring your mutual happiness, and thine especially, now sacrificed—pardon the plain phrase—to mistaken pride. And Frederick? but he does not complain. Like the youthful patriarch—the seven years of bondage may to him seem but as a day."

"I certainly have no right to trifle with his happiness, nor perhaps to throw from us both, so much of the dear blessing of a united life. And to this feverish restlessness I do plead guilty. I suppose every day becomes as long as a month in certain states of feeling. Nay, I am often almost ill, and, if not unfit for duty, yet feeling nothing like the old cheerfulness and elasticity of spirits in the discharge of its proper business. Yet how can I bid Dr. Leighton return immediately, that we be married forthwith, as nothing goes well without him," she continued, with a touch of her natural gay humour, "how tell '*That I gang like a ghaist, and carena to spin?*' Thank God, however—oh, how fervently for that!—that it is no sin, but my best happiness, my pride, my crowning joy, to think of him, and to cherish his image, and to dream of our perfected bliss. Am not I the happiest of women?"

"In thy very caprices the most charming of women, might thy lover say," returned her friend, smiling. "But the sober certainty of waking bliss — that pure and serene atmosphere in which the soul finds vigour and enjoys repose, thy native element—is wanting to thee still; and thou art self-exiled from it by mistaken notions, while another innocently suffers with thee. While Frederick had a duty to humanity to perform, I was patient for thee."

"Wert thou but a powerful magician, as thou surely art the benevolent little Fairy-Lady who presided at my birth, I know what you would do for me to-night," said Blanche, trying to smile.

"Summon Frederick home? or merely send to the Colonial Office, to learn if there be no packet, ostensibly at least, for his poor old aunt?"

"Perhaps both."

"Nay, then thou art exacting: but the first I cannot do. Shall the intriguing old governante hasten matters, lest the Countess of Delamere rue her folly ere it be too late?"

"Who indulges false pride — who is the world's slave — opinion's slave, now?" cried Blanche, with vivacity, "if even you, dear friend, dare not act with simplicity and godly sincerity, for very fear that your pure and benevolent motives should be misconstrued?"

"I confess it, but without purpose of amendment. Were I so unhappy as to perceive any want of mutual faith between you — the shadow of misunderstanding — I might see it a duty to interfere, so far as to place matters in a right light; but, at present, the humble Quakeress may cherish her pride and her delicate scruples, as tenderly as if she were one of the world's ladies."

Blanche was smiling at this candour, when the loud simultaneous noises of the door-bell and knocker pierced the recesses of the distant chamber where she sat. She became very pale.

"O that postman—what power he has in accelerating poor women's pulses! how my spirits require the soothing cordial of letters to-night!"

The servant brought in letters — Irish letters; Blanche looked at them, at once with interest and disappointment. He also announced the arrival of Sir Jervis Yates, who requested the honour of immediately seeing the Countess.

"There is surely some wondrous cause for the unusual hour my cousin selects; but I fancy he has just arrived from the country

to enter upon his Parliamentary duties. . . . What an easy trade that of legislation seems to be. It is the only one which gentlemen take up at their own hand. Before I go, dear friend, there is one point of my false pride that you have spared, and on which I am about to be tried — my *Irish failure*." She hesitated, and played with the huge packet, addressed in her Irish agent's handwriting. "Read this before I return, and do not spare me; tell me the truth and the whole truth. We have already had discouraging news, but I anticipate worse."

"I regret your disappointment — the damping of the too sanguine hopes of a young generous spirit — but I see no *failure*, no probability of it."

"Thank you for that; your sympathy is all needed at present. Here is Sir Jervis come to exult (the very least) over the ill success of my rash experiments as a reforming Irish landowner."

"Were thy kinsman so ungenerous, he hath no cause of triumph. If with thy glowing love, thy large faith in humanity, thou hast not coolly, and all at once, reckoned upon the existing amount of ignorance and prejudice thou hadst to overcome, as well as the actual destitution thou hadst to alleviate, shalt thou for that be dismayed, or falter in thy generous work? I do not fear thy false pride here; and however thou mayest falter on points of false opinion, regarding the delicacy of conduct required of women, it is error on the safe side.—But thou wilt not shrink from the duties and responsibilities undertaken for thy poor Irish tenantry?"

"In the strength of Heaven, no!" replied Blanche. "But learn from these despatches the worst we have to expect, while I see Sir Jervis."

The attempts which that gentleman made to disguise the vivacity and exultation of his thoughts, under a long and serious face, did not deceive his fair relative.

"You have news for me, Sir Jervis; Irish intelligence — bad, perhaps — certainly painful. I have received unread letters myself. What has happened since the firing of the new chapel by the Orangemen? I have taken measures to pay the tithes, and other obnoxious public burdens, myself, to prevent the possibility of bad blood and fatal collision; but yet I fear."

"The more you do, the more you will get to do, madam, that is the nature of Paddy; especially with us English Protestants whom their priests incite them to hate."

"Not the priests whom I know, at any rate," returned Blanche; "they have been the most zealous auxiliaries of the magistrates in preserving order and suppressing the spirit of outrage, which, I regret to think, has spread even into my neighbourhood."

"Your neighbourhood, ma'am! are you aware that the Barony of Delamere Upper is alleged to be the focus of the entire mischief? In those mountain-farms every man is a sworn Whiteboy—sworn over the dead body of the murdered proctor, laid out in the parish priest's barn. Here is my authority; a private letter from a most active, respectable, and loyal Protestant magistrate, Squire Corbyn of Corbyn Grove—a small proprietor, and very large middleman."

"I know whom you mean," said Blanche; "and I hope this gentleman's information may be altogether incorrect—part of it must be so. Some of my generous, if mistaken friends, feeling themselves beginning to be comfortable in their holdings, only from their own industry, have, I fear, been tempted to try to help their neighbours also 'to right themselves,' as they call it."

"Right themselves by spoliation and murder, Countess!—And their ingratitude! They have warned your Scottish agent to take his departure before next rent-day, on penalty of cropped ears for the first offence; and Irish warnings are no jokes."

"You try to alarm me, now; but I shall never believe this until I ask the people themselves, and hear them own it?"

"Ask them, my lady, to confess their guilt! you cannot be serious."

"Never was more so. If they are capable, from any degree of ignorance, of acting so wickedly, with such entire disregard to their own interests and to consequences, it will go near to break my heart; yet how could I expect that my neighbourhood should all at once be a scene of virtue, prosperity, and peace, surrounded as it is? Excuse me now, Sir Jervis; will you take any refreshment? I am eager to peruse my head agent's letters."

"I have posted to town, Countess, to volunteer my poor services in suppressing these disgraceful outrages, and endeavouring to settle your Irish estates upon some scheme that will give you tranquillity on that score. I will procure a party of military from Enniskillen."

"Many thanks, Sir Jervis; but I had hoped so much from the basis on which I was endeavouring to settle them—on what

seemed to me the only fair and just one. I must see my way more clearly before I consent to trouble you or any one with these matters; which will come right, depend on it. The last season was a severe one; and, notwithstanding all I have been able to effect in the way of alleviating the general distress, it has been very great. This naturally generates those discontents of which there are spirits of evil ever ready to take advantage in poor Ireland. How much more strongly do I feel every day the extreme difficulty of doing any good there!"

"Let well alone, Countess; that is my maxim. The rents of the Donegal estates were trebled during the long life of the late Countess, turbulent as the tenantry always were. I believe the Steel-boys and Hearts-of-Oak were first heard of on your family estates."

"I am sorry and yet proud to hear it. If I live a few years I shall realize more advantage from that property than my grandmother ever actually did, racked and swollen out as her nominal rent-roll had become. But that at present is my least concern. I shall go over immediately and talk with them; and when I have once touched their kind and grateful hearts, I shall not despair of enlightening their understandings."

"Not to be thought of, madam—that hopeful mission! Trust yourself among assassins and incendiaries?—Fancy the ungrateful wretches offering to fire your Marine Cottage, and actually turning up the turf of the lawn, and destroying all the young trees and shrubs—those rhododendrons, and arbutuses of which you were so proud, from the size which they had attained in the open air in that soft climate."

"I will not believe that any one of my own people, my own friends, did so!" exclaimed Blanche, looking distressed. "It were sacrilege against human nature to fancy this possible. Those shrubs and flowers, the finest ornaments of my little home, were planted by the hands of their own girls and boys in their presence and mine; they were a covenant between us. I have the heart's *frank-pledge* for their safety. It would half break my heart to find it violated, but never lead me to desist, in my attempts to benefit them, and raise them to a better state of feeling. Surely those whose worst crimes are so closely allied to the warmest feelings of the human heart afford a fair field for Christian effort? I will not, Sir Jervis, send troops nor police among my poor friends.

If they are so misguided as you represent, I will, nevertheless, throw myself upon their generosity. I will meet them face to face, and hear their complaints, and what cannot be all at once redressed, will, I am confident, be cheerfully borne."

"You will, my lady!—consider your sex, your age?"

"Never mind my age; I am old enough to have held these estates in absolute possession for nearly four years; and if women may hold large landed possessions, they must, in common sense, be assumed capable of the duties connected with such important trusts."

"You will at least accept my escort."

"I had much rather go among them with my family, as I wont to do, with no protection save their kind feelings for me. This root of bitterness which has lately sprung up, I can trace it now."

This was, indeed, as very a trifle as most of the pretexts or proximate causes of Irish outrages always are, however deeply the true cause may lie and rankle. On the Delamere property, there stood, by a mountain lake, a ruined chapel, which the Catholic population of the neighbouring country sometimes visited in summer, on a kind of pleasure-pilgrimage; the aged animated by devotion not of the most ascetic character—the young for recreation or amusement. A promiscuous, and rather merry if not riotous group, had been taking their way to this spot one day in the last summer, when a party of Orangemen overarched a narrow part of the mountain-road or Pass with memorials and tributes to the glorious and Immortal Memory, in the form of Orange flags, lilies, &c., surrounding a grim effigy of King William, which each pilgrim was compelled to pass under; thus by implication either doing him homage, or being kept back from the shrine, or place of devotion. Nor would this have caused more than a skirmish, terminating in a few broken heads, save that the Orange guards of the Pass boasted that their flowers and banners had been the gift of the lady of the manor, the young *Ban Tierna*, through her agents and servants. A desperate conflict had ensued under those insulting trophies, which were trampled under foot, ere the pilgrims had forced their way. But not soon did the wound inflicted, as was now believed, by so unlooked-for a hand, cease to rankle. It was whispered at many a fireside that winter, that the Saxons were all alike, fair and false; and what had they or their children to look for at *her* hands more than from

those who "went before her." The sentiment was not yet general, but it was spreading in the district; and laying a foundation for all manner of misrepresentation and bad feeling.

"My own presence, and the language of truth, spoken in faith and love, will at once dissipate the shadow which has fallen between us," said Blanche. "I will set out to-morrow, if need be. Meanwhile, those jewels, cousin— But, pray, be sure that it is not to veil my poverty or disgrace from the world *you* make the purchase. With your offer I am quite satisfied; and they will be a handsome bridal gift to—may I whisper—Lady Sarah Devereux, whom I understand I am to have the honour of calling kinswoman?"

"That affair is entirely off, Countess; which, indeed, was never properly on. It is not so easy as you ladies fancy to move us cautious old bachelors," returned Sir Jervis, smartly. "At my age, new habits are ill to acquire, and sometimes sit with ill grace. I am more desirous to see *you*, my fair cousin, properly established, than occupied with any matrimonial projects on my own account."

"You are very kind, I am sure, Sir Jervis," replied Blanche, laughing.

"I begin to fancy you were all along right about that Devereux—a half superannuated dandy. You might do better. What is he but a younger son, though I own with fair prospects enough——"

"Of his brother dying, Sir Jervis?" said Blanche, archly.

"Why, your younger son, madam, your *second*, ay, your third son, might be a more important personage than the future Earl of Fanfaronade. What is a barren title though a baron's title? You were quite right about Devereux."

"I always fancied I was. I was certainly right in knowing that I never loved, never esteemed, and consequently never ought to have married him."

"Oh, of course; but the late proposal.— Ah, your blushes eloquently speak, Countess! as the poet says. Well, well—I do not press the delicate topic; only I don't care if all the world know that I shall choose for my heir the *third* son of a certain Marchioness that is to be. The elder, of course, inherits his grandfather's, the Duke's, title and fortune; and, for the second, the Delamere titles and estates ought to content any reasonable ambition; but the *third*, my boy, Countess—

Jervis Yates de Buble, if I may venture to christen him beforehand—”

Blanche was at a loss whether to frown or smile. She instinctively did something between. This absurdity was too pitiable and humiliating to be heartily laughed at.

She told her friend that she had lost the expected customer for her trinkets. A *hitch* seemed to have taken place between Sir Jervis and the Fanfaronade family after the matrimonial negotiation had been, by fashionable report, all but concluded.

“I think some member of the family must have let him see rather openly that they despised him; and worthy Sir Jervis does not want pride in any kind save the true kind. . . . But my Irish letters?”

“Gloomy enough. Insurrection, or what borders on it, all around; and these sympathetic people, strongly excited by kindred suffering, seem ever to blaze up together

‘Like fire to heather set.’

Your agent’s letters are, indeed, quite desponding.”

“I am going to Ireland:—will you? But I don’t ask it. Some of your pupils, my maidens, I will take with me; as many as volunteer; and Eleanor, poor child!—the excursion will benefit us all. They say my pretty marine cottage is destroyed, but we could pitch a tent in the very midst of them, as I did while it was building, and find in every man a brave and faithful defender. Would not that be a better way of conquering the insurgents, think you, than going among them with soldiers and constables?”

“I will not counsel this, but yet will I follow whithersoever thy strong faith leads thee. No one believes that the outrages on your new and modest dwelling, have been committed by persons near the place: in short, all is doubt and mystery, as is ever the case in every thing Irish. But read for yourself.”

“My reading shall not alter my resolution. I have but to provide for my young friends here till the period of their apprenticeships or *studies* shall be terminated, and for their fair start in life; after which, towards them, my duty closes—my affection never will terminate. Some of these girls are dear to me as younger sisters. Had Heaven decreed that I should remain a single woman, by sending no Frederick Leighton into the world, then I can conceive of no life so happy or respectable as to continue in the superintendence of my St. Cyr. But I have, with infinite satisfaction to myself, dropped a few

good seeds in favourable ground; others may yet prepare the successive harvests, and reap abundantly—and now to fresh fields.”

The Countess made her arrangements and preparations with her wonted promptitude or vehemence, where her heart was interested. Her jewels were disposed of next day, and the price placed at the disposal of her lawyer, and her friend, Dr. Hayley, for the use of her pupils; and now she had only to give them a long-promised farewell holiday, to be celebrated by a breakfast at the villa, a boating party on the Thames, and a collation on the grass; to be followed by a concert in the beautiful grounds which they proposed to visit—a concert so far only as the party themselves could supply musicians. It consisted of one friend invited by each of the pupils, together with their masters, and some artists, and dealers in works of art, interested in their studies, and desirous of promoting the views of their benevolent patroness.

Beneath a summer’s sun, in fine weather, any boatful of young English girls will look pretty and picturesque; and the barge, occupied by the Countess and her companions, attracted universal attention and admiration, as, after a happy day spent in rambling in the woods and meadows, its wild-flower laden nymphs sailed homewards, while glad choral strains, and bursts of young mirth rose from its bosom. The Countess alone looked sometimes, if not sad, yet abstracted. Her thoughts were wandering pensively away, even into the future of the young creatures now rejoicing in their own glad feelings and in her smile. Four of them were to accompany her to Ireland for a few months; two, who were *draughtswomen*, for improvement in their profession; one, because change and native air had been recommended for her; and the fourth—she was a little plain-looking girl—Magdalene Leighton, the half-cousin of Frederick; but there was in the thrilling pathetic tones of her rich deep voice, a spiritual power, which, in those late months, had often created a sudden flutter in the heart of Blanche, or sent a rush of tears to her eyes. While Magdalene, in the gloom of twilight, sung those simple and affecting north-country ballads, which Blanche had first listened to in childhood from his lips, it seemed as if his spirit communed with hers in music and poetry. This was become another of her unnerving indulgences, and it had not eluded the observation of her watchful friend, who would say, in gentle exhortation, “Thou art never merry when thou

hear'st sweet music.' Get thee gone, Magdalene, with thy woful ballads." And this was said once more, when Blanche was recalled from reverie by the darkening hour, and the duty of saying farewell to her young companions.

The farewell was affecting, almost solemn, which she took of her young sisters, as she affectionately named the girls she had befriended. "Her sweet and amiable sisters," she termed them, "whose society had been so sustaining, so delightful to her; whose future well-doing would be the cause of such joy and pride!" And as she kissed each weeping girl, she gave and exacted a solemn pledge, that if ever, in any of those calamities or trying turns of fortune which lie in every woman's path, any one of the number should be condemned to suffer what sympathy could soften, or be tempted to submit to what was unworthy of her, she should then frankly confide her trials and difficulties, or her errors, to her *sister*, and be assured, that there was pity and love for her in all circumstances, and probable help in many.

"Let us never forget the obligations of our Sisterhood," was her parting injunction; "they are only such as will beneficially exercise our virtues and affections — render our orphanage less desolate, and a single life, if such be our choice or our fate, less solitary, selfish, and dull; if they do not make it, as rightly understood they ought to do, useful, social, and cheerful."

The Lady Blanche had merited solace and reward by her manifold exertions to promote the happiness of others on this day; and they awaited her to fulness on returning to London, on the eve of her journey to her "insurrectionary provinces."

"Letters from Frederick! and he is coming!" she cried, running breathlessly into her friend's chamber; "in three months — perhaps less — by the packet after next! — Before I can be back from Ireland. But you shall have them — have his journal only, I mean — 'Cato's is not an ear for a love tale,'" and she smiled. "He has been in Cuba, and St. Domingo, and the United States, since we heard of him last. What journeying! Many letters must be either lost or delayed. He could not return to us, he says, tempted as he was, without again revisiting the plantations, to see how the poor blacks went on as their own masters and managers. They are doing admirably in their joint-stock concern; and it does rejoice me! Dr. Leighton told them that he must

leave them. I had given them freedom, and would give them work, and lend them money, or send stores, if they chose to continue on the plantations; otherwise the land must be sold, and the people dispersed. I would not consent to work my estates with slaves. Their continuing to work as free labourers might, he thought, be a mutual obligation and advantage; but they were free to act for themselves.

"Many grand *palavers* were held. Would we could have overheard them! Some were too rash in their grateful generosity, and would insist 'on working for Missy — who make 'em free — for love.' Others were as selfish; and a few longed to return to realize some fondly-cherished vision of a reed-cabin, and plantain trees and groves, and little brothers and sisters at play, on the fatal evening when the man-tigers had sprung forth to tear them away from their African land; but, finally, they agreed to be, in the meanwhile, my tenants at will, cultivating the plantations with my capital, but under the superintendence of managers and overseers chosen by popular election from their own numbers.

"Leighton was astonished, when he returned, at what he found had been the good sense and orderliness of their proceedings, and the judiciousness of their selection of leaders. But remember the motive. Good-will and energy, and direct personal interest, have accomplished far more than the brutalizing lash ever could compel. The lazy have been shamed and compelled to exert themselves, by the good rule, that those 'who will not work' —. I fancy there is still a touch of despotism in the power of the overseers, but then they may be displaced at the end of every crop, or oftener, upon an emergency. And in this last year, the culture has been better and more cheaply managed, and the crops larger, than in any former season. They will be able to pay me even too much rent. I can have no fair claim to the large surplus they offer me, but Fred. advises that I should take it, were it but to tempt my neighbours, even through their cupidity, to follow my example, and try something more human than their present practices.

"I do not despair of having yet wealthy black tenants, and of selling land or granting leases to negroes. Their worst present difficulties arise from the jealousy of the planters, and the diabolical tribe of attorneys, overseers, and drivers. This, I fear, will long

continue, and not allow the hopeful experiment any thing like fair play. . . . But I am out of breath, and you out of patience."

The Quakeress, who had gone early to bed, in prospect of her Irish journey, sat up, mingling adoration with thanksgiving, while grateful tears filled her eyes.

"I will not congratulate thee, dearest one," she said,—"thy present rapturous feelings are happiness enough; but I will pray God to strengthen thee more and more for future good works. They bring their own blessing."

It was in light and refreshed, if not gay spirits, that Blanche set out with her household for Ireland. They travelled leisurely; for she had tender consideration for its two aged members, and there was to herself ever-springing enjoyment in the pleasure which the young girls derived from the new scenes and objects they saw; nor is it easy to decide whether witnessing the rapid unfolding of an ingenuous and intelligent young mind, placed in exciting and novel circumstances, be not as delightful as watching the gradual development of the dawning faculties of childhood. No situation can be more favourable for observing temper and natural character; and, with a little placid indulgence for weakness, and some amusement at affectation, the Lady Blanche reaped both pleasure and improvement from the strict observation of her juvenile companions on the journey:—from one of them in particular, who, after an absence of four years, was returning with the Countess to all she had ever known of home, her foster-mother's cabin in the sheltering bay, where Blanche had reared her Marine Lodge. She was the orphan of the schoolmaster and his wife—"a genteel and *decent* young couple, though not of these parts—who had been cut off together in the fever." Their child was maintained by a subscription of about two shillings a-week from the farmers, until taken to London by Lady Blanche to be taught to earn her bread.

The Irish character was beautifully revealed in the tears and petulant bursts of passion, and vehemence of protestation with which Marcella Boyle vindicated the very worst of her countrymen from the bare possibility of having touched or harmed "were it but the poorest rush in the bog *she* (the Countess) ever set her foot upon." The letters met at Dublin did not bear out Marcella quite so far; but they conveyed no tidings to damp the courage of the Countess, though she was rather pleased when she

succeeded in persuading Dr. Hayley to remain in Dublin for a few weeks, about some antiquarian piece of learned research.

The morning of the tenth day brought the travellers within sight of that mountain range for which, though on the other side of the island, and she a geographer, Marcella had in vain watched, ever since they had come in sight of the Hill of Howth. She now begged to ride outside; and twenty times during the day she asked the Countess, or rather assured her, "That must surely be *Slieve Vanau* now, madam."

Blanche was more familiar with the landmarks; and, as the day was drawing to a close, and the journey to an end, she felt uneasy and depressed. At the inns, in the few places they passed through, the accounts of the state of the county were contradictory and doubtful; and for the few newspapers found at these hostleries, Blanche needed only to look to their titles to know the credence due to their varying and contradictory reports. She saw they were reaching a critical turn of the road, but she would not deprive Marcella of the rapture of surprise. It was remarked by her companions, that Marcella, who had long laboured hard and rather successfully to exterminate her native brogue, now exclaimed,—"*The say, the say! (anglice, the sea,) the lodge! the bawn! the boys!—Och, mi lady!*"

And she sobbed and wept, and hugged little Eleanor, who sat next her. The Lodge stood there, sure enough, its chimneys, "those windpipes of good hospitality," sending their light turf-smoke airily to heaven. If the sward of the lawn had ever been damaged, it was smooth, and trim, and green as an emerald, now; and the *boys*—their joyous hurrahs sunk into respectful silence as the carriages approached, and twenty young fellows bounded forward to hold wider the open gate—a silence which enabled the Quakeress to overhear the whispered—

"It's Mi Lady Countess herself, it is."

"No, faith it; it's little Margy Boyle. I knowed the black rogue eyes of her, big as she grew. And if my lady has made a first-rate gentlewoman of her, poor colleen!—bringing her home in her own coach, and munchipate the niggers, is she, think ye, going to be a tyrant, like the ould one, to the poor decent creatures born and bred on her lands?—Never a bone of myself will believe it, Terry."

"Hurrah, then," shouted the other; "she is past now, long life and glory to her, and

a good husband! — she is past, and so I may set go my manners — hurrah, boys!" and the cheering became general and loud.

"Faix, if she does not get from the heart the ten thousand welcomes, Slieve Vanau, there, is a big liar, for he is repating them too."

All the mountain echoes were indeed repeating the joyous welcome, as Blanche, unable to conceal her glad weeping, was respectfully handed into the house by her Scottish agent, and left alone with him.

"It seems to me to have been all calumny and nonsense about our poor friends, Mr. Wardlaw."

"Much of it, no doubt, my lady, but not quite all."

"I have met with a reception which shames my suspicions. How have you so speedily been able to restore a good and right understanding?"

"I had the powerful influence of an old friend, madam, in whom they have confidence."

There was a peculiar smile, or rather the faintest ghost of a smile, or of suppressed humour, fluttering about the left corner of the mouth of the Scotsman, had Blanche been able to perceive it.

"That Squire Corbyn, I suppose?" inquired the lady, in not the most grateful tone.

"Not he, madam—a friend of your ladyship's, who, on a former occasion, gained the confidence of the tenantry by doing them justice. But I promised to let Dr. Leighton know as soon as you arrived. He has ridden up to the priest's on business. Ah, here he is!"

Blanche did not shriek nor faint, but she caught at the back of the sofa by which she stood, as the agent withdrew and gently shut the door, whispering to the Quakeress still in the vestibule,—“The packet in which Dr. Leighton came had rough weather in the Channel. He got off in a pilot-boat,

and, learning our bad state, came to us at once. — He has been here for three days.”

“There is to be no bridesmaid save little Eleanor, after all,” said Marcella Boyle to her London companions in about a month after this; “so we need not be jealous about it now. We will all be at the wedding, though, and all the young girls and boys on the estates or in the county, if they choose. It is to be celebrated in Stoke-Delamere Church; and then they return to dear Ireland again—return to *winter* here; yes winter—‘brave the storms of the Atlantic,’ I heard Lady Vesey call it; as if our sea-breeze was not as good as London fog any day.”

“But won't the mourning for Sir Jervis Yates, who has left the Countess such a fortune, delay the wedding, Marcella?”

“Not a bit of it; sure, does she not rather need a husband the more to comfort her. And she won't touch a penny of the fortune. She considers herself his trustee in behalf of neglected relations and the people of his factory, who made it all—the factory of *Bonny Dale* on her own English estate.”

“Of *Beau Ideal* you mean, Marcella.”

“I'm sure the other name is as pretty,” said Marcella, pettishly.

“As pretty, but not *right*,” returned Magdalene, mildly.

“There is no harm in *pretty* things, I suppose, Miss Magdalene?”

“Oh, no; and *Beau Ideal*, or *Bonny Dale*, must be both right and pretty before the Countess is satisfied.”

And here, for the present, closes, as of right, with a marriage, our history of *BLANCHE, COUNTESS OF DELAMERE*. The privilege of relating the success of her benevolent experiments in the factory of *Beau Ideal*, or *Bonny Dale*, as the name was happily corrupted, and in her mountain colony in Donegal, we however retain until some future opportunity.

THE WIERD OF THE WINRAMS: A TALE OF THE PERSECUTING TIMES;

AS RELATED BY THE DOMINIE OF ST. RONAN'S.

THERE are many months in every year when the hostel of St. Ronan's, and the whole of that lonely village, are as mute and desolate as if it were one of those romantic watering-places embosomed in the Swiss

Alps, or buried in the heart of the Pyrenees, after the last flight of the summer-loving martlets from the cities had taken wing homeward. It was at this deserted season, and to a rustic and purely Scottish audience

of greedy listeners, that the Dominie of St. Ronan's narrated the following traditional story, which he thus precluded :—

“It might be in the latter year of the godless and gainless reign of Charles Stuart, the second of that unhappy name, or in the first year that his black-hearted, Papistical brother bore sway in this ancient realm, that a gathering of douce neighbours and orra wayfarers, much like this same, was drawn round the ingle-neuk, within these same stanch, auld, black walls—the whilk, sirs, were utterance gifted them, could tell many a stranger tale than mine is.

“It was Candlemas-tide, as I have heard, and snow lay thick on all the heights, and deep in all the hollows of the Gala, the Leader, and the other waters round; by reason of which, Robin Scott, the then carrier, or cadger, between that country-side and Edinburgh, was full three days behind his ordinary time; and, as this was a period of sore trial and tribulation to the persecuted Kirk and oppressed Estates of Scotland, the men-folk, ye may be sure, were hungering as sair for tidings as were the women for the nonsense trinkum-trankums Robin brought, in exchange for good fresh eggs and fat eerocks.

“Robin, slow as his pace was, in dandering from farmstead to farmstead, was the only post and mail of those days, unless when a laird or a lord, like Thirlstane or Torwoodlee, or him of the Black Barony, or the malignant persecutor, Sir Marmaduke Winram, might send off one of their house-varlets with a special budget on some of their godless errands of harriment and cruel oppression of the Lord's people. For this, sirs, was a time when heavy judgments were abroad in this land of Scotland,—when the sword of the smiter was unsheathed to slay utterly.

“There is a yirmin of discontent and a barning of restlessness abroad among this ancient people even now; but I trow, sirs, our lines have fallen in pleasant places, when our lot under the Protestant Princes of the House of Brunswick is compared with that of our godly and persecuted forebears, hunted like patricks owre the mountains and through the moss-hags, by Claverhouse and his godless gang; harried in their gear, and racked in their members with the bootikins and pilne-winks, and the other damnable devices of that Pandemonium, the committee of the Privy Council of Scotland; where the apostate Lauderdale, and Middleton, and Rothés, and their hellish instruments, Bloody Mackenzie, and the Muscovite tiger Dalzell, and

the excommunicate malignant, Sir Marmaduke Winram, of whom it more nearly concerns me to speak——” The Dominie gasped for breath.

“Weel a weel,” cried a young farmer, named Elliot, interrupting his old teacher somewhat irreverently, “if times are on the mend, thanks to the spirit of our forefathers; and, if they righted matters *then* at the price of their blood, let us try to hold them so, or shame befa' us, say I.”

The Dominie, who mightily prided himself on being “a Whig of the Revolution,” was looked on with suspicion by the younger Liberals of the parish, from having lately, in obedience to his ecclesiastical superior, the minister, refused them the use of the school-house to hold a meeting for Parliamentary Reform. This circumstance gave sting to young Elliot's speech, especially when he added—“It is just the auld story owre again then, Dominie, as now—‘Do as the laird and the minister bid ye, or else——.’ Then it was the King and the Curates:—it comes aye to the same thing. Now it is—hereawa at least—the Deuke and the Chamberlain.”

The Dominie waved his hand, sawing the air with Ciceronian dignity; and, giving the go-by to this home-thrust, held on—

“At a time when judgments were abroad, and the Malignants, in their blind and blood-thirsty rage, spared neither age, sex, nor station, tidings from the capital were, as I remarked, sorely waited for; and, in especial, the guidman of Elshieshiels—who likewise farmed the Mains of Redheugh, and had himself been out at Pentland with his auld maister, Rutherford of Redheugh—declared he would not stir from the chaumer in whilk we now sit, till Robin appeared, though it should be broad day-light; and so called for another bicker of ale, to help on the clatter, and also the graver discourse, which naturally ran in the subdued vein of a people quailing under oppression, yet stirred and excited in their minds by the many brave examples of steadfastness, even unto the death, with which that period abounded.

“Among the remorseless and cruel characters to which that disturbed age gave birth, none were regarded, by the country people, with greater horror and a sort of superstitious dread, than Sir Marmaduke Winram, whose patrimonial possessions in this neighbourhood had lately been increased by several forfeitures, and the gift of the fines he had levied in the course of his zealous service.

"He had been concerned in the arrest of Mr. Donald Cargill, and had also been solemnly excommunicated by one of the preachers among the Covenanters—a circumstance deemed so awful that some of his own servants abandoned him as one set aside and sealed to perdition and made over to the Enemy of Man.

"It is tauld, and I have good authority for believing it," interrupted the goodman of the Mains, "that the same night tidings came to his lordly dwelling of Randolph's Tower, that Mr. Donald Cargill had lifted up his testimony at the Gallowlee of Edinburgh, and laid down his precious life for the cause of Christ's Crown and Covenant—that the blasphemous wretch leuch loud out, and cried to his man, Sergeant Warrock, another wicked oppressor of God's people, and a spoiler and harrier of His heritage—"Fill me a cup of wine, Warrock, and we'll drink the Whigamore draidgie!" Whereupon the red wine in the cup turned in his hands into congealed blood! Yet he greedily drank it up!"

"A thrill of horror crept through the circle then surrounding this ingle like ourselves; and many other tales were related of the cold-blooded butchery committed by the persecutors; of their dissolute and abandoned lives; and of the visible retributory judgments already visited upon them for their savage cruelties to the Covenanters, and all those emphatically named 'the Lord's People.'

"He is off to Edinburgh last Monday morning, to crave from the Privy Council a deed of gift of Redheugh's lands," continued the farmer of the Mains—"your own great-grand sire he was, Mr. Elliot, and a savoury Christian in his generation; but there will be words about that; for there are as greedy gleds before him yonder as himself—off, after attending one of their Pandemonium Councils against us and ours, over at Thirlstane, where the hallowed rest of the blessed Sabbath was spent in cards and dice, drinking and damning, and blasphemies fit to have split the roof of the Castle, and sunk it fathoms deep in the earth."

"While the honest man held forth, the dogs began to yowff, and a glaikit lassie threw over her wheel in her haste, and ran out, expecting the longed-for cadger.

"It's no Robin," was her cry, on returning, "but just Sikker Simmie, the packman, wha, guid be aboot us! when I speered for tidings, tauld me, the Malignants have burnt the Nor' Loch of Edinboro, and that the

cadgers were selling the burnt fish for half naething!"

"The laugh at the pedlar's joke was not general; and that small gray man, who had been stabling his pony, shortly afterwards appeared in person.

"Simon Sloan, or *Sikker Simmie*, as the itinerant merchant was named, from the extreme caution of his dealings, had for many years plied at stated periods in this district—his beat being up and down the Gala, the Ale, and Leader Waters, and also other tributaries of the Tweed, before he annually traversed the valleys of Yarrow and Ettrick, making, by that way, his exit into Moffat-dale. It was also known that he stately travelled the east of Fife, whence he made his transit across the Frith, and ranged the Lammermoors, before descending upon the Tweed and its feeders.

"But this was not Simmie's usual period of appearance at St. Ronan's, which was never till after the bear-seed time; and surprise and questioning were added to that usual warm welcome to the Cleikum Inn, from the female part of the household, which the facetious pedlar always received.

"Wants of all kinds were now to be supplied to the females; but the cravings of the men for tidings were still more eager. Simmie heard all their questions, and often parried them with jokes, sometimes at the expense of the Covenanters; for, strange as it might be for one in his rank of life, Simmie was loyal and a Malignant; and in Fife, where his principles were better known, or more rigidly canvassed, he was even latterly suspected of using his calling to act as a spy for the curates and persecuting lairds. Some light remarks from Simmie, therefore, provoked the displeasure of the grave goodman of Elshieshiels, who, shaking his head, said—

"I trow they did not wrong you far, friend, that put honest men on their guard against ye."

"The pedlar looked disturbed, but laughed it over.

"Against the length of my ellwand is it, guidman? Weel, it measured aff ten ells of Flanders lace this day week, and double that of French lawn, for the bridal gear of bonny Lady Lochkeltie, owre yonder at Lindores, who is coming to be your lady here at Redheugh; and, if she shall say I wronged her, let me abide it."

"Here was news—and twenty throats were opened.

“And will Sir Marmaduke ever let that lady and her gear past himsel’ or his son?”

“Ay, that’s a point for divines like you, guidman; but see here, lasses, saw ye ever rarer ribbons? That’s ca’ed The Duke of York’s darling.” And he threw a wreath of red ribbon temptingly over his arm.

“Maiden of mine shall never wear snood o’ that bloody hue,” said the old farmer. “And I take blame to myself for clatterin’ wi’ a scoffing fool-bodie like ye, who, I have heard, partook, twenty and more years since, in the heathenish doings at Linlithgow, when Middleton and Dalyell, with other rotten-hearted Malignants, the magistrates of that town, burnt the Covenant, and put the Cause to open shame with their mocking devices, dancing around their big bonfire, while the Public Fountain spouted French and Spanish wine, in which the frantic wretches toasted the healths of the excommunicate apostate, Charles Stuart, and the enemies of the Kirk and of Scotland. No wonder ye blench, poor sinful wretch, and that the sweat breaks on your brow, come as ye are of pious Presbyterian parents, and allied to the blood of the Covenant. A present judgment was seen on him, my friends,” continued the speaker, as the appalled circle drew back, leaving the sacrilegious pedlar alone in his shame: “He wasted in flesh, sirs, and pined in spirit, like a thing bewitched, from that day; never again could settle to his honest trade of a shoemaker, and so took to the pack, and to what other less honest trades lies between him and his conscience.”

“Simmie must have been but a stripling callant, then,” said the landlord, sympathizing with his guest. “It will not do, Elshieshiels, in these times, to look owre strictly back to what ony o’ us were aboot a score o’ years syne. There has been a hantel changes o’ beliefs and unbeliefs in our day, and there is like to be mair yet—so least said is soonest mended; but let the guidman try, Simmie, what temper your razors are o’.”

“It was not a little remarkable, that, besides ballads and broadsides of all descriptions, for the lads and lasses who heard the curates, Simon never travelled without a secret assortment of such seditious and rebel tracts as ‘*Lex Rex*,’ which boldly maintained the doctrine of the lawfulness of armed resistance, or, ‘*The Causes of God’s Wrath*,’ and such proscribed documents as ‘*The Lanark and Sanquhar Declaration*,’ ‘*The Ruglen Testimony*,’ ‘*The Torwood Excommu-*

nication,’ and ‘*The Dying Testimonies of the Martyrs*,’ who were still suffering in numbers at Edinburgh, and in other parts of Scotland. ‘What can the like o’ me do,’ he would reason, ‘who am but a servant of the public, trying to earn a bit of honest bread at a season when the very giglet lasses, that wont to sing *Gilmorica* or *Kathrine Jamfrie*, affect mair these tragedies regarding the last hours of the virgin martyrs, Isabel Alison and Marion Harvie, than Vans Bentinck o’ the Krames’ best pinnars and pearlins.’

“As all was safe in the Cleikum at this time, in his estimation, so Simon undid the contraband printed papers, which were concealed in a web of duffle; and, at very moderate cost, but under strict injunctions of secrecy, dealt out a supply of those contraband wares, which were eagerly and instantly read.

“And this is what they mak’ by their villanous tests and edicts, an’ grievous burdens laid on tender consciences,” cried old Elshieshiels: “their ain creatures, such like as that weirdless body, Simon Sloan, being, by a gracious, overruling Providence, turned into sharp instruments to work their downfall and destruction. Honest Robin Scott durst not hawk about the precious inditings which, for the lucre of pelf, the Council-curates’ tools sell to us. No, no, sirs—all the soul-killing tests, and body-slaying murders, and all the finings, and hangings, and drownings, and racks, and thumbikins ever hell devised, and all the dragons and troopers in the three kingdoms, will never extinguish that fire of love kindled in the heart of Covenanted Scotland! For nearly twenty years they have tried to drown it in blood; but it will never be quenched. Fathers will be telling the bairns, when they are old men, that in their young years there were great days in Scotland; and that the faithful ministers—a Cameron and a King—a Wellwood, a Renwick, and a Kid—would not be silenced from preaching the truth, nor the Lord’s people kept back from hearing about their civil and religious rights; and how the scaffolds ran red wi’ blood, and how gory heads of martyred saints were stuck on all the ports of Edinboro; but all would not do.”

“Such was the talk of auld Elliot of Elshieshiels. Some of his friends thought that his long keeping to the hills under hiding, after the business at Airmoss, and a sore imprisonment, suffered in Tantallon

Castle, had given his brain a shake from the base of solidity; but it was remarked that his love waxed aye the warmer and more vehement as his worldly judgment failed; and he would find fault even with his own landlord, Redheugh, and other old companions in arms for the cause of the Covenant, because of what he scrupled not to call a lukewarmness and defection. This made Elshieshiels the more anxious about the fact, when he heard from Simon an inkling of the marriage of the Lady at Lindores, with his Laird.

“Comely house-dames and rich heritages have long been among the Enemy’s most effectual snares,” he remarked; and he strictly interrogated Simon as to Redheugh’s project of matrimony with the young widow of Lochkeltie.

“Though Redheugh was well stricken in years, the lady was yet a fair and buxom gentlewoman, on whom more than one or two suitors (even among the Cavaliers) cast eyes of regard, with maybe a *sklent* towards her fat dowery lands in the Howe of Fife, and some ulterior view of the custody and bestowal, in due season, of her only child Magdalen Leslie, to whom, though still in years but a babe, great wealth had fallen, both in lands and money-bonds held by her late goodsire, the Provost of Cupar, over the Laird of Winram’s estates. Lady Lochkeltie, in her state of bereavement, sojourned for personal safety near the West Bow Port of Edinburgh; and, though carrying herself with marvellous discretion for one of the weaker sex, she could not altogether withhold her succour and solace from the persecuted and outed ministers then under flight and hiding; for which fact her dwelling had been repeatedly searched, and herself brought up before the Privy Council, to bide the gibing and jeering of Lauderdale anent harbouring sturdy trams of the Kirk in her very secret chamber. Her woman’s wit, and maybe her comely countenance, helped her through; though it was alleged, by Elshieshiels and other highflyers, that her replies were not altogether so single-minded and ae-fold as became her pure profession. So she was dismissed skaitless, Lauderdale saying—

“Ye maun ware your widowhood upon a jolly Cavalier, madam, who will answer to us for your good conduct.”

“At one of these targings the lady chanced to be seen by this said Winram, who had just come from Galloway, where

the storm was raging, to give an account of his devil’s stewardship, in shooting, hanging, fining, and plundering.

“His prodigal and dissolute life at the Court of Charles Stuart, and the maintenance of his riotous troopers, had long since brought Sir Marmaduke to a piece of bread, in spite of all the plunder and fines which he pocketed; and he was now clamouring for prey with the best of those ravening wolves. It was remarked that, when the widow was removed, whose daughter, if there had been justice in the land, might in right of bonds be said to carry his estate in her bib, he got into a rage with the whole Council which had parried his demands; and, the Duke of York being in presence, he swore a blasphemous oath, By the Rood! that he must have siller, if he gaed to hell and pawned his soul for it! Upon which either Lauderdale, or Rothes, or some of that pack—for they were all alike, and, to use the vulgar idiom of the vernacular, ‘ae sow’s farrow’—cried out—

“A God’s name, man, take the Whig-a-more Leslie’s widow as the first instalment of thy unreasonable demands, and worry thy poor friends nae mair. The quean has a drop or two of gentle blood in her veins. If ye manage half, ye may, in due time, bestow her weel-tochered daughter on that hopeful youth, the Master of Winram, which will cancel all heritable bonds, and spare ye the lang journey ye may take soon enough. The wench ought in conscience to be made a ward of the crown, and bred up in honesty. But she will be safe in thy fatherly custody.”

“Sir Marmaduke, who had the pride of the Foul Fiend, winced at this frank project, but let himself be overruled; especially as it was expounded to him that there was no need whatever to part with his English concubine, Mistress Anne, who duly attended the curate’s mass, and reigned my Lady Paramount, at his dwelling of Randolph’s Tower, over the entire household, and the Master to boot; and never, it was said, did this woman forget or forgive this scheme, though it turned out of non-effect. But the matter got air, for, somehow or other, the friends of the cause of the Covenant had a sharp ear even in Privy Council committees; and, that same night, the hand of the widow of Lochkeltie was, by the offices of godly Mr. Blackadder, then under hiding in Edinboro, secretly bestowed in holy wedlock upon Rutherford of Redheugh; the little maiden, Magdalen Leslie, acting as her own mother’s bride’s-maiden, and James Rutherford, then

a stripling of ten or twelve years, as his father's best-man.

"I look upon us two," said Redheugh, 'but as the proxies of our children, if it shall please the Lord to incline their young hearts to each other.'

"There were divers reasons for this union in operation among good friends. By the preachers then in Edinboro, the sudden marriage was considered a matter of needful carnal polity, (as Lady Lochkeltie was bent on wedlock,) to keep so rich a prize, in a temporal sense, from the enemy; and as a clear dispensation of Providence, to strengthen the hands of friends.

"Instead of 'the young folk' (as every pair is called when they marry, however well stricken in years they may be) travelling to Redheugh, to keep the honeymoon, as Sikker Simmie had foretold, they took boat for Fife betimes next morning, and had crossed the Frith lang before Sir Marmaduke, who had been drinking and dicing all night with Lauderdale, heard of the march which the Covenanters had stolen on him. Flinging his furred cloak over his gold-laced habit, that had never gone off his back after the debauch, he burst into the Privy Council chamber like a man possessed by the Evil One; and, the Duke of York being again in presence, first swore a deadly revenge against the Laird of Redheugh — of whose lands he demanded the instant forfeiture — and a deeper and more burning hatred than that, set on fire of hell, which already raged in his veins — against the Lord's people. He even offered his dagger at his kinsman, Lauderdale, who could not keep from jeering at his disappointment with the widow; for such, sirs, is the friendship of the wicked.

"Though afflictions vexed and bruised the Kirk and Commonwealth of Scotland more sorely than ever after these happy espousals, and though the ungodly trode down the vineyard like swine, and rioted in the goodly fruits thereof, there were quiet days and peaceful nights for Redheugh in his own peculiar; so that it was alleged by Elshieshiels, and other suffering brethren, that he was forgetting the afflictions of Zion in the calm couthness of his wife's fireside at Lindores; where, if there was one member of the circle more dear to him than another, it was his step-bairn, the gentle and winsome Magdalen Leslie, who had at once gained for herself a beloved daughter's place in his heart. The children, James and Magdalen, had also mingled the buds and blossoms of the affec-

tions of youth, and could not so much be said to have fallen in love, according to any worldly or carnal sense of the phrase, as that the tenderest affection and endearment had been the law of their young life, as far back as the memory of Magdalen reached. The children together at Lindores shared the instructions of a godly outed preacher, until James had been sent to Holland to complete his education under the especial direction of Sir Patrick Home, an old friend and neighbour of his father.

"It was in his first absence that the golden-haired, mild Magdalen, with a skin of milk and an eye of softest blue, grew up into graceful maidenhood, unfolding her beauty beneath the fond eye of her step-father, like a living flower, until, it is said, the match of the maiden could not have been met with from Crail to Culross, in all the goodly kingdom of Fife. Magdalen had, in duty and love, cherished James Rutherford as a dear and only brother, and jaloused nae mair, until light broke in upon her maiden innocence, when she chanced to be scorned one day with the Master of Winram, and felt that she never could be the bride of any man, by her own free choice, save her dear and early companion. Ye may be sure that a matter so desirable to all concerned, both in a public and in a private capacity, was not ill to manage; so, on James Rutherford going back to Holland, after a visit to Lindores, he carried away her troth-plight; while, blushing in her secret chamber, with inborn modesty, and thrilling with innocent delight, the pious maiden blessed the Lord that those ties which had made so much of the happiness of her childhood, did not preclude that closer, more rapturously-endearing connexion for Time and for Eternity, to which she now tremblingly looked forward. For Magdalen Leslie almost grudged her own felicity, while Zion was in the furnace; and this had been a season of quiet for her parents, purchased, as I have said, by what was surmised a touch of lukewarmness, or some want of a fervent, fiery zeal, on the part of auld Redheugh. Yet was he a man of great weight among the friends of the cause, and highly respected; and something was yielded to his gray hairs, which demanded ease and peace, and something more to the prudent policy of Lady Lochkeltie, who, from the time she had been handled by the Privy Council, was ever in deadly terror of fines, forfeitures, and pilnewinks.

“However, a time was now drawing near, when a double-faced or worldly policy would not longer suffice, and when the choice was to be made between the Kirk and the Curates, between the Lord’s service and Baal’s; for now the soul-ensnaring edicts daily issued, were as a trap set upon Mizpeh, and as a net spread upon Tabor.

“To be brief, a crisis was drawing near within this ancient kingdom; for, as is said in the vernacular, when things are at the worst they mend. But the blackness of darkness was only lowering, the fiery deluge had not burst; and, such is the frailty of human nature in young and plighted hearts, that, maybe, Magdalen Leslie, as the appointed time drew nearer and nearer, thought but even owre muckle of her true-love in the lowlands of Holland, and partly forgot the public troubles of Scotland; though the maiden could not be called wilful nor remiss in duty, as her purpose of wedlock had been fortified and hallowed by the consent of their common parents, and warmly approved by those godly ministers and leading elders among the Covenanters, who, it was thought, liked over much to assume a temporal as well as spiritual authority over the adherents of the mighty cause.

“This marriage had long been the subject-matter of debate, and also of prayer, in the secret conferences of the Lord’s people; and it was hoped that, young as they were, James Rutherford and Magdalen Leslie might live to prove a nursing-father and a nursing-mother of the afflicted Kirk; for the youth was of a generous, high-spirited nature, and of a singularly ripe judgment for his brief years—his understanding of matters of civil polity having been wonderfully enlarged by his residence among the exiles in Holland.

“It was thought, moreover, that the son of Redheugh, who had suffered sorely in his worldly possessions by the oppression of his powerful and persecuting neighbour, Sir Marmaduke Winram, had a double title to the well-tochered heiress of Lochkeltie; and it was the merry saying of one of the preachers, maybe Samuel Rutherford, ‘Is not the house of Lochkeltie honoured in ministering of its substantial siller spoons to the toom aumrie of Redheugh, where Sergeant Warrock has left nothing better than horn cutties?’

“It is, indeed, a well-known historical fact, that whatever of vessels of silver, and vessels of gold, and ornaments, and gauds of gentle-

women, had been treasured in Presbyterian households, were freely cast into the public treasury. It was, indeed, a time of a singular awakening and opening of hearts and hands, so far as the free communication of gear and substance went; and that same is a severe test of what spirit a man is of, in his zeal for any cause.

“You are now, my friends,” proceeded the Dominic, “to suppose that ten years had elapsed from the marriage of Redheugh, during which time he had so ordered his walk, that, save refusing to hear the curates, for which his household suffered fine upon fine, it was next to impossible to fasten a quarrel upon him; and by altogether avoiding this country-side, he had not roused the enemy by crossing Winram’s path. As for the annual-rent on the late Provost of Cupar’s heavy bonds, it was thought best to keep quiet about that, the Cavaliers’ song being then, as now,

‘Instead of broad pieces we’ll pay with broad swords.’

“But how was the brave, hot spirit of young James Rutherford to brook this insolent injustice? The prudent lady hoped, that, by submitting patiently to every injustice, save in matters affecting conscience, the gray and honoured head of her husband might descend to the grave in tranquillity in the bosom of his family; and—though his spirit still travailed in secret for the wrongs inflicted on the land of Scotland, and his heart yearned over those sufferings of glorified martyrs and persecuted saints which had, twenty years before, kindled his soul into burning zeal, and unsheathed his father’s sword—it was alleged that he had set his heart, with an over desire, upon the completion of the marriage of his son with Magdalen, who was, indeed, the very apple of his eye—the light of his life.

“It was therefore settled that young Redheugh should return to Scotland at Whitsuntide, and the marriage take place without a delay, which, indeed, the broken state of the country forbade.

“Some of the ladies of those Cavaliers who were distantly connected by blood with Magdalen Leslie, had expressed a desire to take charge of the heiress in Edinburgh, and introduce her to society becoming her expectations and claims; and one or two matches had been proposed for her on the part of young and needy Malignants among the King’s and the Duke’s friends, and in especial by Sprinkel, and Douglas of Stenhouse, a papist, and one who vowed that he

would bring her back to the true church before she had been three months his wife. The worthy and godly family at Lindores were in great dismay at such pretensions backed by men in power, who were then given up to work all unrighteousness with greediness; and the Lady of Lochkeltie would have sent her daughter abroad to be out of danger, had she not known that their enemies only waited for a pretext to confiscate her lands and gear.

"Wicked Winram was now, in the wonderful ways of Providence, made their stay; for, when he heard of the heiress of Lindores and Lochkeltie being given to any Cavalier save himself or his son, he raged like a bull of Bashan, and the plan was suspended to keep peace in their camps and councils. Still the overly-prudent Lady of Lochkeltie, foreseeing nothing but danger and mischief to the whole family while Magdalen remained single, wrote with her own hand to speed the return of her stepson; to whom she remarked, 'that, godless monsters as the privy-council were, they durst not put asunder those united by the holiest of human ordinances, and that with the consent of parents and the next of kin.'

"Under cover of her lady-mother's missive, Magdalen also wrote to James as her brother, which she yet called him, and for the last time in her single state; but also as to her long-beloved and early betrothed; and that—for the letter was carefully preserved among the family papers—in a strain of tenderness, and with the outpouring of an affectionate spirit, which after circumstances render memorable. The Lady of Lochkeltie's letter contained, no doubt, much sound and evangelical doctrine, though it touched more on certain bridal purchases of Flanders lace, and Holland linen, and Indian china, and posset-dishes, than Redheugh might altogether have countenanced, while so many precious saints, hunted like wild beasts to the hills, had not a meal of meat to sustain nature. The epistle of the maiden contained also an account of a remarkable and solemn public renewal of her covenant, and a devout casting of her betrothed and herself upon Providence, in their new relation, for Time and for Eternity, which was wonderful in one so young.

"Rutherford, the younger of Redheugh, who, by all accounts, was of a manly, loving, frank nature, had sometimes chided his young connexion for an over degree of maidenly coyness in her late correspondence; but he

was now satisfied that his Magdalen's love far exceeded the giddy, flickering, light passion of ordinary women; and his heart, already rejoicing like a bridegroom's over his bride, he boune himself for Scotland, and was expected in the port of Dysart within fourteen days.

"As evil fortune would have it—for so to short-sighted eyes it might at first have seemed—certain papers necessary to the completion of the nuptial contract with which Gideon Drury, a God-fearing Clerk in Cupar, was then busy, were deposited in a secret hiding-place in the Peel-house of Redheugh, of which no one possessed the secret, save the old laird, and which he did not judge fit to intrust to any one save those nearest and dearest to him; so it was agreed that he should make the journey thither accompanied by Magdalen, and be back again before the Malignants in Edinburgh could wot of their absence. For this purpose they were to take shipping at Largo, and, crossing at once into East Lothian, altogether shun the perils and snares of a city now deeply polluted with the blood of the saints.

"A dull, gray, cold February morning it was when they took horse, and the heart of Magdalen failed her altogether as they rode off; so that, leaping from her pony, sorrow overcoming her, she ran back and fell into her mother's arms, sorely sobbing in a passion of grief, while she cried out, 'O mother! dear, dear mother! there is a load on my heart this morning it will never get aboon!' And the mother chided and comforted in the same breath, as mothers will do, saying,— 'What ails my Maidline, my winsome bairn?'

"Now the maiden had dreamed a dream; and, as they say in the vernacular idiom, 'Cadgers aye dream o' creels,' so young girls will dream of their sweethearts just as like as of any thing else." [Upon this there arose the only titter among the spinners, carders, and knitters of the Cleikum, which the Dominie's tale had excited.]

"All this long dreary night,' said Magdalen, 'was my broken sleep haunted by a pale spectre, taking the form of our beloved James; and then the wan thing would change like the mist-wreath, till it brightened into the countenance of an angel, and then the haughty countenance and scowling brows, and the eyne that scorch me, of the wicked Malignant Sir Marmaduke Winram would come between us; and hundreds on hundreds of demon visages would cluster about and

press on and suffocate me, like the fiendish faces that frightened me in my childhood, of Sergeant Warrock and the blood-thirsty murderers that paced past our window and down the West Bow on the day the innocent blood of young Isabel Alison was spilt like water.

“‘Whist, whist, my child,’ returned the lady, who was a careful dame, ‘ye are bound on the path of duty, to secure your dower of widowhood over the lands of Redheugh, if it please Providence to afflict you, like me, with the same sore bereavement of an early separation.’ There was a touch of worldly spirit in this, which found no response in the leal and loving heart of the maiden.

“‘Mother,’ she uplifted her voice, ‘speak not to me of widowhood, who never will be blest to be the bride of young Redheugh—Oh, never, never!’”

“‘Silly girl, these are foolish maiden fears,’ replied the lady, kissing and soothing her child. ‘And this is an unlucky back-coming,’ she added; for a touch of superstition in those days mingled strangely with a strong religious faith in the minds of all classes in Scotland.

“‘I fear to see again that stone on which the papist witch-wife of the Pathhead of Dysart stood the morning we fled from Edinburgh, denouncing wrath on our landing in our own country,’ said Magdalen. ‘How can I forget her eldritch scream, “Ye think ye have made a braw escape this morning, Lady Lochkeltie—you and your Whigamore bridegroom; but the *Wierd of the Winrams* hangs ower ye yet—ay, ower you and yours.”’

“‘I could chide thee, silly maiden,’ said the lady, forcing a smile; ‘but I must leave it to a blither companion to chase away these black vapours, bred of an idle brain and the public troubles; for I will not believe the Enemy has power over my Maidline. Blessings on my daughter!—far from her be Doubt and Temptation—near be Faith and Trust!’”

“‘Mother,’ said the maiden, ‘I know the ground of my hope, and I have not been nurtured like those who trinket with witch-women and put faith in soothsayers; but the finger of fate is in this, as ye shall learn. Early this morning, when I had shaken off these ensnaring dreams, after seeking counsel and direction of Him in whose hands are the issues of life, I opened my Bible at that fearful Scripture,—“Watchman, what of the

night?—watchman, what of the night? And they fled from the sword, from the drawn sword, and from the bent bow, and from the grievousness of war. For thus hath the Lord said unto me, within a year, according to the years of an hireling, and all the glory of Kedar shall fail.” Is not that a warning of speedy judgment? And, again and again, my Bible opened as if an unseen hand held back the brods at the same threatening text.’

“This was a species of appeal to fortune, a kind of heathenish *sortes Virgilianæ*, in which even sober Christians, especially of the weaker sex, then indulged. And well might the awful response thus solemnly, and not without sin, invoked, have made the maiden quail; nor did her lady-mother altogether elude the contagion of a superstitious dread, though she strove to believe that the threatening Scripture bore the rather upon the public estate of this covenanted and backsliding land than on her own fire-side. And so with blessings and prayers they parted, and four hours’ easy riding brought Redheugh and the damsel to Largo, whence they proposed to take shipping, by the dawn of next day, for Dunbar, and thence, traversing the Lammermuir, pass quietly down the Leader side, and on to the auld Peel-house, which Redheugh had not visited for several seasons bygone.

“It so chanced that Andro Baikie’s brig, a coglie bit craft, which the laird intended to hire for his occasions, had been bespoken by the prelatie travelling merchant, Simon Sloan, of whom ye formerly heard; but this was the less matter, as he was bound on the same voyage with his packs, passing on his annual journey from St. Andrews to the Merse, Tweeddale, and the other regions he frequented in his traffic. He was naturally but overly happy and vogie to have ability to grant a passage to Redheugh and the young lady; but he would suffer no one else to enter the vessel, save, as it chanced, that singular Christian Judon Elliot, the guidman of Elshieshiels, who, his brain being more and more infirm with what he had suffered, had taken a craze to make a pilgrimage to Magus Muir, for, as he said, the refreshment of his spirit, in viewing the scene where righteous judgment had been executed, once more before he yielded up his soul.

“There had also been some secret conference at St. Andrews of ministers and leaders, at which he had been present,

Magdalen had often heard of this person, who was regarded by many as a half-crazed fanatic, by others as a saint of the first magnitude; and there was certainly much in his physiognomy, and in the wild light which shot from his restless, gleding eye, to rivet attention.

"When, as the day broke, the group met together on the ruckle of sea-stones called Largo pier, ready to embark, and Elshieshiels joined them, his deep unearthly voice, as he poured forth the words, 'Watchman, what of the night?' made the damsel involuntarily start, recalling the oracular text.

"Redheugh, when on board, fell into close and private conference with his old companion in conventicles, prisons, hiding-places, and maybe battle-fields, and appeared deeply interested in the subject-matter of discourse; while the pedler trimmed his packs, and sat him down upon them, smoking a pipe, and humming what seemed the profane tune of 'Maggie Lauder;' and Magdalen, cherishing her own thoughts in a pensive heart, gazed into the hazy east, where the sun was wading in clouds, and dreamed of far-off Holland. She was again startled by the high tones of the Covenanter, who was thus addressing her step-father:—

"How are the mighty in Israel fallen!—alack for sinful defections! for the putting the hand to the plough, and then drawing back!—Let those that abide by their bein firesides, toasting their shins, and eating, and drinking, and making merry in their tents, and come not out to the help of the Lord, remember the curse of Meroz; for verily they shall not, when those things are inquired for, be guiltless of the blood of their brethren.'

"The colour mounted to auld Redheugh's brent brows. 'If this is levelled at me,' he said, in a calm, but severe and constrained voice, 'I must say it bespeaks less than courteous civility, and far less than Christian charity. My fellow-sufferer even unto bonds ought to remember, that the same command which enjoined Glory to God, proclaimed Good will to man.'

"I crave your pardon, Laird of Redheugh, and far am I from saying that the root of the matter is not in ye. But ye maun be tried, ye maun be sifted, ye maun be winnowed; the pure gold must be purged from the dirt and dross; ye have been ower lang at ease in Zion; ye have been practically saying, 'Soul, take thine ease—there are goods laid up in store for thee for many days.'

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Yet will ye be a brand plucked from the burning, for the noble testimony ye bore in times past, against the covenant-breaking and idolatry of this perjured land, with which the Lord has a controversy; and through the breadth and length of which He will go up in judgment, and give the fowls of the air, and the birds of prey, a feast of flesh and of blood. Yea, I see the sword is whetted for blood,' he exclaimed, in yet wilder tones, tossing up his arms, while his elf-locks streamed in the wind—'He will have a day of the blood of kings and of nobles. Blood has touched blood in this sinful land! Pentland Hills yonder, on which the mist is lowering, drank Mr. Guthrie's blood; and Bothwell shook hands with Pentland, and the drowned in the sea touched Bothwell; and Airmoss the drowned in the sea; and the Grassmarket and the Gallowee swim red—ye may wade therein in the blood of precious saints knee-deep!—And will He keep silence for aye?'

"The poor man is distraught with his long and cruel sufferings and solitary imprisonment in Tantallon Castle, with nothing but the German Sea sweltering below, and the mews and gulls screaming around him, my Magdalen,' whispered Redheugh to the trembling maiden, whose eyes were as if fascinated by the wild maniacal glare of the man's eyes; 'and, though I pity him, and sincerely respect what he has boldly done for the religious and civil liberties of Scotland, I wish we had had a quieter fellow-passenger.'

"Magdalen's gaze had attracted the Covenanter's wandering eye, and he shouted—'Rise up, ye women that are at ease! hear my voice, ye careless daughters! give ear unto my speech!—for the spoiler has gone up; and think ye he will spare the little ones or the delicate women; or that the fair and ruddy countenance which may allure the soldier of Christ from commanded duty, and prove the same snare to the son that the mother's wiles have done to the father, will not be changed into blackness and ashes, and—'

"Halt there,' cried Sikker Simmie, interposing, 'I gave you a cast in the brig, mainly to keep you from running into worse mischief, and that is the jogs o' the Laird of Anster, or the Crail Tolbooth; but ye are not to make a conventicle of this deck-head, which is but an ill return for my civility.'

"Your civility, apostate wretch!—But I scorn to bandy words with you; and, if I

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have infringed upon due courtesy in my ex-postulation with more honourable persons, I bear the signet and authority of Him who has honoured a poor worm with the mission I bear.' He flung himself upon the deck and unclasped his Bible, muttering what to the ears of Magdalen as much resembled imprecation as prayer, as he turned over the leaves.

"It would be a well-governed Kirk and State that had the like of your cock-brain at the head of it," said the pedler quietly, and aside; and Magdalen and her father were silent under the Malignant's jeer. Elshieshiels refused to partake of their refreshment at noontide, and spoke no more until, as it seemed, between sleeping and waking, he perceived the afternoon sun flashing upon the far-off Castle and the Kirk spires of Edinburgh, when he arose, and, taking off his broad blue bonnet, pronounced a passionate anathema against the 'proud city whose high places had, for twenty years, reeked with the blood of martyrs,' and again sank silent on the deck.

"To reflect on these things is enough to drive any man mad," said Redheugh, who had been very taciturn and thoughtful all day, as if oppressed by the weight of railing accusation to which an overly-tender conscience gave sting.

"Now, with your leave, Redheugh," put in the packman, "these things, instead of driving men of sense and gumption donnart, should make them doubly wise, doubly cautious, doubly sure that they see to the end before they risk, not merely their own lives and the peace of their families, but the lives of thousands, and even the safety of the cause they so foolishly contend for."

"This is a matter, friend, on which we are not like to agree," returned Redheugh, drily, and drawing forth his purse; "so ye will take the freight ye have paid for the boat, and we will be free and ready to part on landing. We push forward to my sister's house of Edgelaw before the sun goes down."

"The money was at once accepted, Sikker Simmie remarking, 'That it never became a poor man to refuse a gentleman's siller.'

"It was now late in the afternoon; but the destined port was close in view, the weather clear, and the horses fresh, and Redheugh was satisfied with his progress hitherto, when an alarming difficulty rose. Andro Baikie, the Largo skipper, as a Fife-man, and, consequently a Whig, was favourably inclined to the Covenanters; but still within

the limits of discretion, and safety to the Brig and its Navigator.

"As we are within two bows' length of running into the harbour, ye'll better bestir ye, friend," said Andrew, "and seek out your Pass; for we will be all strictly looked after, gentle and simple."

"The more especially as Andrew has an ill name, since a certain trafficking with a Dutch lugger off Eyemouth, whose cargo Hackstoun of Rathillet, and a wheen Whigmores, lying landward in your county of Fife, valued more than good brandy-wine or stout Geneva. I'm no saying, Andrew, it was either arms or ammunition." And Simmie chuckled.

"And if ye did, Mr. Sloan, it would be but one *lee* more to the deil's dozen was spread about that same auld nonsense, bringing honest folk into trouble. — But seek out your Pass, honest man."

"Elshieshiels raised himself, and sternly demanded, 'Am I then not also a free man of "no mean city?"'

"He'll be meaning Peebles or Jeddart, I'se warrant," said Simmie, apart.

"Am I not a free-born Scot, at liberty to travel upon my lawful occasions the length and breadth of my native country of Scotland, without speering the leave of any malignant, prelatie magistrate whatever?"

"Clean havers, man," replied Simmie. 'But I need not tell *you* of not sitting in Rome and striving with the Pope; for ye would pick a quarrel with a whin-stane, though ye surely could not be so misleared as bring Redheugh into trouble, who has had fash enough already from the Privy Council, by this day travelling in his company and his freighted boat, without a lawful pass and warrant. But, if so, ye ken the remedy, Andro.'

"Ay, that do I," replied the skipper; "ye shall be able to satisfy the town-clerk and the bailies, friend, or stow away, neck and crop, behind those salt barrels, and be landed again safe on the pier of Largo, or my name is no Andro Baikie."

"The fugitive at first expressed violent indignation; but, becoming more calm, at length proposed that they should lie to until darkening, and that then he would cast himself into the waters, swim on shore, and rid them of the Jonah in the bark. This was refused point blank. It was more than the Brig was worth, or its owner's neck, to make such an attempt to elude justice in these

severe times. Driven to extremity, the man called Redheugh aside, and communicated something which appeared to make a sudden and strong impression upon that gentleman.

"I cannot send back this honest man," he said, advancing, after a few seconds, spent, as it appeared, in rumination. "I will peril all ere that." Sikker Simmie remonstrated.

"He *must* go forward," replied Redheugh, with an air of vexation. "Magdalen, my dear," he whispered, "life and death are on his journey—my word is plighted to the protection of my old friend."

"Ye will sairly rue this interference, Redheugh," said the pedler, impressively. "But what do ye propose?"

"To lie to till darkening," said Redheugh, "go ashore in the boat, and take our chance."

"Well, well, Redheugh," said the skipper, doggedly, "I have seen your money before now, and may see it again, and I would be loath to disoblige you; but, if ill befall the Brig, which is the bairn's bread-winner, through that camstaerie Whig carle, ye ken—and ye are witness to it, Simon Sloan, and so is the young lady—to whom I shall look to make good the damage."

"Redheugh undertook all risks; and that the pedler might, as he said, run none, he also made the singular request, of being smuggled on shore with his pack, and along with the Covenanter.

"The pass which Redheugh had procured from the government authorities at Cupar, for himself and his daughter, was undergoing rigid scrutiny from the zealous town-clerk of Dunbar and a magistrate in the town-house, when a couple of constables, or what were named sheriff-maires, arrived with Elshieshiels in their custody. He had been apprehended a mile from the town, on his way southward; and upon the information of Simon Sloan the packman.

"Who has picked my pocket, the malignant villain, of a charge of private papers," whispered the prisoner, "forbye a small sum in silver coins."

"Redheugh went up to his friend, his countenance expressing deep vexation and alarm, which blackened into despair at a single word, whispered in his ear.

"What is this?—what is this?" cried the official, with dignity; "no private communing there. And where is the aforesaid Simon Sloan? Let him be called into court." But Sikker Simmie was nowhere to be found; he had put in leg-bail, and the

prisoner was committed for a future examination. The only crime charged against him, was clandestinely landing from a boat, and travelling homeward without a pass; but that was enough, in those days.

"Redheugh joined his daughter at the inn which was close by the Jail and the Council Chamber, and proposed that, as the moon was rising, they should set forth instantly, if she were able for the journey. So Peter Cairns, the laird's man, who, by this time, had got the beasts landed, saddled them forthwith.

"Something—some unhappy thing has chanced to trouble ye, my father," cried Magdalen, reading the laird's troubled countenance. He told her of the treachery of the packman, and of the arrest of his poor friend. She was lost in conjecture. "Robbed him of a charge of papers!—Yet, spite of appearances, I cannot help thinking Simon a just man, and a very tolerant Prelatist, and one who has a clearer judgment than falls to the generality of those of his rank."

"Not a word more passed between father and daughter until they had rode several miles; Magdalen fearing—she could not tell for what—that the gloom which hung upon her father's spirits partook of deeper concerns than the evil condition in which he had left the goodman of Elshieshiels. They gained a point where a bridle-track struck up into the hills, while the highway winded on nearer the coast. The moon was about the full; the sky starry, clear, and calm, with a light frost; and the prospect out upon the shimmering waters, and to the misty bays and capes, and up towards the hills, which might have seemed bare and tame in broad day, received that romantic charm from the magic of moonlight, which the flash of bright intelligence or the glow of enthusiasm is seen to communicate to the most ordinary features.

"It is a fair night, and a fair scene," said the damsel.

"I have a boon to ask of my Magdalen," said Redheugh, without direct reply, but drawing to her side. "Two more hours' good riding up hill will bring her to the dwelling of my sister at Edgelaw, where she will be kindly entreated for her own sake, even more than for mine. My man, Peter Cairns, knows every foot of the way through brake and heather; and much, much this night demands from me, frail, feckless old man as I am—much, much, depends on my pushing southward without stay—much that

concerns the weal of the kingdom, and the safety of the best and truest friends of poor, enslaved, persecuted Scotland.'

"'Father, do you think so meanly of me as that, in times which have made Scottish maidens martyrs and the fit companions of brave men and heroes, I should stand upon so small a thing as this?'

"'Bless thy tender and courageous heart, my own darling Magdalen! And it shall be blessed! Many of thy gentle kind have like generous impulses; but how few like thee the steadfast spirit that makes good the noble purpose! Bless thee, my Magdalen! Surely the Lord will prosper my journey but for thy sake, maiden. Let me but see thee the wife of our James, and freedom of conscience and peace within the borders of Scotland—and for what more does the auld man wait?—Bless thee again, twin-lamb of my little flock!'

"Magdalen felt that this was no ordinary leave-taking. The old man stooped as if to imprint a kiss upon her brow, when her spirited and restive pony sprung aside; and, though she kept her seat, carried her in an instant a considerable distance off.

"'Ill luck precedes and follows this journey,' said the maiden. 'I am not even permitted to receive my father's farewell kiss.'

"It was a saying of the younger Lady of Lochkeltie that she had aye found a good gallop the most exhilarating threshold-cup on parting with friends; and she now gave her palfrey, as such beasts are called in story-books, the rein, and also the switch,—which fell but as honey-dew from her light hand;—so that Peter Cairns was put to his mettle to keep her in sight. Magdalen had slackened her pace to permit this worthy guardian to overtake her; and had dipped into a small hollow, into which the path cut, where a little rivulet trilled away and glimmered in the moonlight, below the shadow of a thicket of alders, hazel and bourtree bushes, and briers. From under these, the voice of Sikker Simmie suddenly addressed her with—

"'A fair good even, Mistress Magdalen Leslie! Ye are boune, like myself, for the Edgelaw; for, to say the sooth, the air of a town-end, like yon of Dunbar, never agrees with me; while, in among the hills here I get a good supper and free quarters, instead of a lawin as lang as a Galston grace, for my breakfast, and never a plack gained in the way of trade to clear it with.' And, putting his interrogatory in a Scotsman's canny

way, Simon added, 'Redheugh will be behind ye, it's like? As I will be stepping on before gentry's hours in the morning, I might let the housekeeper and the herd at the Peel ken the Laird is on the road.'

"Before Magdalen could reply, the doughty Peter, still some yards off, took up speech:—

"'Ye audacious knave! if, after your tricks of this day, ye set your impudent snout that gait, or the way of the Edgelaw, we'll hound the dougs on ye!' And Peter struck out with his heavy riding-whip, while Simmie parried with his ell-wand, and proved more than a match for his man—the agile creature having acquired a great sleight of such wanton pastimes, at the tilts and tournaments, or riding at the ring, kept up, until a late day, in the Lothians, among the ancient fraternity of packmen.

"'I command you, peace!' cried the damsel, made the unwilling spectatress of this unseemly tulyie. 'Is it by hectoring with every varlet upon the road, that ye fulfil the orders of your absent master, touching my safe-conduct?' And the men were subdued and quieted to a pass that enabled the thick clatter of horse-hoofs on the frosty ground—implying a party of advancing riders, or what, in the old romances, was termed 'a plump of spears'—to be heard, bearing down upon the place of rencontre.

"'Tak' the muir, man!—tak' to the muir!' cried Sikker Simmie, kicking his pack into the bushes with the left foot, and with the right hand seizing the lady's bridle-rein—'Winram's sleuth-hounds are on us!'

"I fear me this Peter Cairns was, after all, though in high credit and trust with the Laird of Redheugh, but a self-seeking loon, and a bit of a gomeril to boot; but the man's instincts were quick for self-preservation, and he took to the muir, heeding little of the young lady, whom the packman, helping from her steed, with all of ceremony the time allowed, prayed to take shelter in the thicket till the storm passed over; and, tying her hood and riding-skirt to his ell-wand, he set this apparition of a lady on the side-saddle, and gave the beast a scud off in the direction of flying Peter;—and laigh laughed Simmie as to outward sound, though loudly and jeeringly in his sleeve, when the troopers, five in number, and led by Sergeant Warrock, fell into the snare, and off and away over the heather, in pursuit of the shellie-coatie lady and the knave.

"I need not dwell on the plight of Mistress Magdalen, whose heart flichtered like a snared bird, though her judgment remained clear and steadfast.

"'Honest man, I believe ye mean me well,' she said. 'Conduct me safely to the house of Edgelaw, and it is not this gold alone shall reward the service.' And she offered her few broad pieces to the pedler's acceptance, who said—

"'Keep the gowd—keep the gowd; ye may need it yet. It is not siller-service I am upon this night, but a work of atonement and the redemption of good name. This deed is but arles of my faithful service to the House of Redheugh, and the cause of Kirk and Covenant, if the trust put in me bè equal to the strength given me.'

"'This from you, Simon!' returned the young lady—'a Prelatist, a hanger-on of the curates, an apostate Presbyterian, if not something still baser—a spy of those malignant persecutors, Mackenzie and Middleton—besides this day's black business, by which a poor man is plundered and brought into trouble:—how can I help mistrusting you? I blame myself for thus parleying with one whose doings are so doubtful; though, when I remember your songs, and ballads, and merry tales, and drollery, and good-nature with my brother and myself in our childhood at Lindores, I cannot for my heart question but that ye mean me fair in this deliverance from that dreadful oppressor of our House and of the Lord's heritage, Sir Marmaduke Winram.'

"'Weels me on the gentle-hearted maiden, whose eye aye carried blitheness and blessing in it!' cried the pedler, 'Weels me on her bonny face!—craving pardon for the liberty—wha thought so kindly of the Linlithgow apostate, and on the tongue that said it; and, if e'er Simon Sloan did man or woman a good turn in his born days, he meant one this night when he spulyed yon fool-body of that charge of papers, and took—ye call it robbing—the bodle siller, to put a fair face on the deed. If I kened not, Mistress Magdalen, that ye are of a steadfast spirit, and come of the blood of Leslie, I would fear to afflict you with needful tidings and warnings of near danger.'

"'To my father!' cried Magdalen, gasping.

"'And to his son!' whispered Simon—and the damsel clutched at his sleeve—and ye may be sure Magdalen listened to his discourse with as much earnestness as if he had

been a gospel minister. 'My name has become a reproach among my people,' said Simon, 'a shame and a hissing—yet there are captains in our Israel that put trust in me yet. Know ye the hand and seal of Argyle, madam?' And he produced a certificate to good character and trust-worthiness from his spleuchan, which, again, for greater safety, had been hidden in a clue of blue worsted yarn; and Magdalen could, in the clear moonlight, recognise the signature and seal of that patriotic and God-fearing nobleman. Some Presbyterian gentlemen of the east, away about Fife and Angus-shires, had, it seemed, commissioned arms and ammunition from Holland, and by the very same ship in which Redheugh the younger was to return home; and the youth, as one well thought on for parts, and courage, and true principles, had been intrusted with divers papers by Baillie of Jerviswood, and Sir Patrick Home, and others, exiles for conscience and civil liberty, both touching their private affairs, the sufferings of the realm, and the dawn of a better day.

"'It was my unworthy self,' said Simon, 'was deputed to meet young Redheugh at Dysart, and free him of his written charge, which lay snug in the core of sundry prime Gouda cheeses sent to my care; when all at once an inkling got to the Privy Council of shot, powder, guns, and conspiracies; and blank warrants were issued, the ports watched, and thus we abode all last week; when some, as great warlocks as himself, misdoubting me, placed trust in the hands of the daft goodman of Elshieshiels. There is in these papers what would have hanged twenty gentlemen in one rope. But they are all mad together; and—partly from regard to their craigs, and maybe a wee thought that, if certain papers from the Hague, destined for the Earl's friends, fell into uncanny hands between Dunbar and the Tyne, the name of one Simon Sloan, a travelling merchant, might gain more bruit and blazonry than beseeemed his station and humility, and the crazed member, Elshieshiels himself, get a walk down the West Bow some fine morning—I determined to ease him of his burden, and intercept the bark, ere it fall into the gled's talons.'

"'And this is the cause of my dear father's sudden journey!' cried the damsel. 'Oh, why might I not have been with him in his affliction! And how, then, kind and honest man, and true friend of thy country, how is this dire wo to be averted?'

“That is just what I was ruminating. I maun back to Largo—round about as Brownie did—and try to get Andro Baikie aff, and doun the Frith, and out on the coast, to warn off the Dutch bark; and that I meant to have concerted with Redheugh, for which purpose I waylaid ye here; but the poor demented gentleman is aff eastward, believing me a rampant rogue, no doubt of it?”

“And what can I do? Alas, alas! how little can helpless woman perform for friends in trouble!—our lot is to pine and suffer, and be silent. But go; every hour will seem an age until I hear of the success of your merciful enterprise. And lavish shall be your reward. Oh, what is all the dross in Redheugh and Lochkeltie, and of this dwelling of Edgelaw, to the safety of James Rutherford and the friends of Scotland! Go, go, then!—lose not a moment. The lives of many—the hope of kingdoms—are in your errand—which may our God prosper!” And she fervently clasped her hands in the attitude of prayer.

“Amen!” said Simon, raising his bonnet; and, having seen the damsel near to the Mains of Edgelaw, he left her to make her own way into the dwelling.

“Ye may be sure her welcome was the blither for the narrow escape she had to recount. The Lady of Edgelaw—and guid-wives of the better class were aye called lady in these days—was a wealthy and childless widow, who, as a Rutherford of Redheugh, and proud of her father’s house, was thought to have rather demeaned herself by her matrimonial alliance with a thriving cattle-dealer. But that was all past, and the gold was to the fore; and, though a woman of spirit and discretion, Lady Edgelaw was a true Presbyterian, as became a daughter of the house of Redheugh; and, moreover, a woman of a fervent piety; so that her fireside and her purse were ever open to the preachers who were sufferers for conscience.

“Late on the evening of Saturday, which happened to be the third after Magdalen reached Edgelaw, and while she was anxiously looking out for her father, and pining and yearning after intelligence of that Dutch bark in which so many hopes and fears were freighted, a shepherd came down from the heights with tidings that Mr. Richard Kidd, an ejected preacher, who had crossed from the mountainous parts of the Upper Ward of Clydesdale, was to feed the

little flock scattered in the wilderness, at a lone place among the hills on the Edgelaw grounds; and that persons had been sent out to warn the waters of an occasion now become rare, and therefore doubly precious, as the laws against field-preaching were more severe than ever. You are to know that the scanty inhabitants of this pastoral land, then, as now, pitched their tents—that is, their huts and cot-houses—in the pleasant valleys, and by the sides of brooks or streams like the Whitadder, the Leader, the Gala, and the Heriot, and what not; with a’ their sprinkling of lone dwellings in the muirs. And, far and around, for scores of miles, would the soul-thirsty people of all ages and degrees flock to hill-side preachings for the refreshment of their languishing and parched souls—lying out all night on the heather, or at the lee-side of a rock, sustained from the scrip and the brook.

“Lady Edgelaw and her household—who refused to hear either the curates, or, what to them was worse, the indulged ministers, and had not been at public ordinances for months—gladly embraced the opportunity, and despised the cowardly counsels of Peter Cairns, who maundered aye on the fine of fifteen hundred merks on the rigs of Edgelaw for the last outbreak, which he thought as much money out of his master’s pocket, and so hinted that mercy was better than sacrifice, and that there were seasons when the dwellings of Jacob were seemlier for gentlewomen than the gates of Zion—and especially for Miss Maidline Leslie, now when Winram’s blood-hounds were scouring the hills, and her gray-haired father a marked man. But the maiden—though not yet called to a personal grappling with the enemy, and trial of faith in the furnace—was of that high enthusiastic strain of nature which warms at the sight of danger when planted in the path of duty, and who would have been steadfast unto the death—declared, that, whatever should betide, she had a clear call of Providence to accompany the pious family with whom she sojourned to the place of worship.

“Lady Edgelaw superintended her maidens baking, brewing, and preparing divers dainties for the refreshment of the little flock in the wilderness, until the clock struck twelve on Saturday night, and by seven was on horseback behind her oversman. The place of appointment was a wild derved cleugh in the very heart of the hills, five miles from any human dwelling, and so reinote and well fenced by

mosses and quagmires that it seemed next to impossible the troopers could traverse the marshy broken ground, if the fact had been bruited that a remnant had gathered here. Holding upwards, crossing a shoulder of the ridge, and traversing wide, gray, up-lying muirs, where no vegetation was seen but the ling and the heather, nor voice of bird heard, save of the plover and the curlew, Magdalen, ever ahead of her party, came sheer on the little dell where many small groups of families and neighbours, gathered from all the adjoining valleys, were in little knots clustered, or picturesquely scattered about, sitting, standing, and lolling—the old talking, in quiet tones, of the state of the times, or on religious subjects, while the young read their Bibles, awaiting the beginning of the service. No doubt a lad might gledge at a bonny lass, and a tricky bairn play its pranks even here; yet such solemn gatherings were wonderful times of refreshment, when the living waters were poured forth like a flood. Cold, hunger, and fatigue, were forgotten in the holy zeal of their spiritual exercises; and, if some had come up in perturbation of spirit, before the ending of the first psalm they would not have feared the face of thousands. There is, my friends, no courage like the courage of faith.

“The first service was ended, the people had partaken of their repast among the rocks and heather, and the preacher was engaged in the duties of catechising the young, preparatory to the evening diet, when a shepherd stationed on the heights as a sentinel gave a signal of danger. Winram’s bloodhounds, as the troopers were named, were out, scouring the hills; and the Preacher, after pronouncing a short but powerful benediction, broke up the assembly, and held a council with the elders and armed men. An hour or two later, and the cloud of darkness would wrap the people of God from the eyes of their enemies; and the herds, and those who knew the ground, could lead them through the bogs and swamps in safety; so the women and little ones, with Lady Edgelaw and Magdalen Leslie, were placed in whatever shelter the clefts of the rocks and bushes of the cleugh afforded, while the men took post at the gorge of the dell, ready to defend their citadel, if need were.

“But evening descended on the hills, and no foe appeared, and soon the gloom of night prevented further observation of the sentinels; and it was judged safe to disperse, breaking up and dropping off in threes and fours, as

quietly as possible, till few, save the preacher and the household and herds of Edgelaw, were left. They, too, parted on the edge of the hill, the man of God meaning to return to the shepherd’s sheelin, and the others wending downwards to the lower range of heathery heights. All danger was imagined past for the present, and Magdalen, ever a bold horsewoman, feeling chill in body and more chill and anxious in spirit, pushed onward at a brisk canter, not without hope that tidings of her father, or of one dearer still, might await her at the dwelling, which it was ordained that she was not then to reach.

“She had cleared a level rushy glen, from which a bridle track led up a narrow steep gully, opening upon the stretch of muir which sloped to the ridge named Edgelaw. The distance between the solitary farmhouse—for, though a bein Lammermoor Laird’s dwelling, Edgelaw house was little better—and the place where Magdalen put her pony to its speed, did not exceed a mile-and-a-half; so the more sober equestrians could not be many minutes behind her. When they approached the house, who should stand by the threshold to interchange greetings but Redheugh, who at once and earnestly demanded his daughter from his widowed sister, as he helped her from the pillion.

“‘Where is my Magdalen?’ cried the old man, his voice quivering. ‘She is not wont to be the laggard among blithe riders.’

“Lady Edgelaw’s heart misgave her.

“‘Within, surely, snooding up her hair,’ replied the lady, trying to put a calm face upon it. ‘Her spunkie Fife creature far outstrips our heavy Merse cattle, and puts us to our speed too. Here, ye hussies, take in my riding skirt, and summon Mistress Leslie to her father. And, O brother! but I am wae to see ye looking sae ill!’

“There was none to obey her summons; and a half hour, an hour, two hours elapsed, and the collies and men, with lighted lanterns, had been high and low, out and atower the the muirs, shouting and yelping, and routing on horns, to spread alarm, and communicate with each other how they sped in the darksome chase.

“And aye as one and another returned, old Redheugh’s cry was—‘My daughter—my Magdalen! What, sirs, have you done with my darling child—my last earthly comfort, now that the prop of my house is struck down? My son, my poor James—in imminent jeopardy himself—will be driven dis-

traught when he hears of her plight. And her poor heart-broken mother—

“It so chanced that Redheugh had met Simon the packman that same afternoon, travelling, as he pleaded, on matters of necessity and mercy. He had succeeded, by means of Andro Baikie, in warning the Dutch vessel off that part of the coast, and also in apprising young Rutherford of his danger. And the youth had got off in spite of the waylaying of his enemies, in the guise of a packman, which Simon had recommended, and was supposed to have taken the way to the Peel-house of Redheugh, to abide his father’s arrival with Magdalen, before taking further measures.

“It was my hope to have seen them united, and safe out of this distressed land, until the indignation be overpast,” said the bereaved old man, who had now taken Simon Sloan as far into his confidence as was needful. “But my hope is sunshine on water. Alas! I have been too lax in public duty, and my sin has been followed by speedy judgment. My bairns! my bairns!”

“Trust in the Lord, and in the power of his might, brother,” said Lady Edgelaw. “My nevoy can fend for himsel”; and the maiden has a spirit of courage and constancy far above her years and sex; strength will be given her in the hour of need. There is no’ a praying heart in all broad Scotland that, when this sad news flees abroad, will not be exercised in supplication for sweet Magdalen Leslie. A way of deliverance will be opened for her, never doubt it.”

“Then, too sure, ye believe her in the hands of that ruthless villain Winram, who neither fears God nor regards man. My Magdalen! my Magdalen! my meek, my innocent child!—Oh, to lie down beside her skaitless corpse in the blackest moss-flow of these hills, rather than think of her in that hardened man’s custody!”

“Make saddle my horse, sirs! If I can give her but little help, I may die in my duty. For what better use is this remnant of a miserable life? Make saddle my horse with speed! He shall taste Tweed water ere sunrise.”

“You are fitter for your bed, Redheugh,” said his sister; “there is fever in your blood and in your eyes. But many shall run and ride on this errand.” And she turned to her gaping servants.

“Dare ye parley with me, ye coward loons, and Magdalen Leslie torn from the very hearthstane of Edgelaw, and the prey

of Winram’s troopers? Mount and give chase! And do ye go also, Simmie, and try to warn my nephew of this. But, oh! bid him be wary—ye are a body for sense by the ordinary.”

“I need no biddin’, guidwife, in this errand,” was Simon’s answer; and he was already on his feet. “Few ken the country better; and I will have speech or tidings of the young lady or four-and-twenty hours go by.”

“Save my child,” cried the poor father, clinging to the slenderest thread of hope, “and I’ll make you the wealthiest packman in all Scotland, if I beg my own bread at Christian doors.”

“Withstanding all entreaties and persuasions, the Laird also mounted and set off, though it was with difficulty he kept the saddle; and that Peter Cairns got him to the desolate Peel-house of Redheugh, after fever and grief had half turned his brain.

“The Lady of Edgelaw only tarried the break of day to mount and send off her overseer and some of her neighbour farmers in different directions; and, as she ministered to them the stirrup-cup with her own hands, she cried briskly out,—“We have sought counsel and help from above; and now, if there be ruth or manhood, or the spirit of a true-blood Scot, left among us, ye will quit ye like men this day. Spare neither horse-flesh nor man’s strength; and, as ye ride, raise the Waters! Make saddle my own nag; I’ll ower to Thirlstane, to the Wolf’s den.”

“Ill news fly fast. Long ere mid-day, or before any of the regular messengers had returned, a lad, sent back by Simon Sloan to Edgelaw, brought certain intelligence that Sergeant Warrock and a party of horse had rode through Earlston at day-break, with one or two prisoners, and a young female strapped to her saddle, and her horse placed between two troopers. She had struggled and shrieked for help to the few villagers abroad on early labour; but what help could they give?”

“The pedler had no doubt but that this unfortunate person was Mistress Magdalen Leslie, and that she was by this time a prisoner in Randolph’s Tower; whence, if she came out with life, it must be as the bride of Randolph Winram. Sir Marmaduke was not a man to be baffled twice. But this Simon kept to himself; and, hiring a horse, he rode back to Edgelaw, in furtherance of his schemes; the Leddy, he said,

having routh of the sinews of war ; and gold, above a' things, was the first good wanted, whatever was to be done. He found this good dame's queans buckling on her blue camblet riding-skirt, and giving her silver-mounted riding-whip to her hands, while she soliloquized in her own fashion.

“The wealthy heiress of Lochkeltie, whose portion is to redeem the captivity of my father's house’—for the old lady, though religious, had much of the pride of family of the Scots of that day — ‘the troth-plighted bride of my nevoy, the last of the Rutherfurd of Redheugh, now in sore circumstances himself—an innocent and virtuous maiden, and of gentle blood—torn from the fire-side of Edgelaw !—— I’m for Thirlstane, Simon Sloan. His godless Grace is at hame ; and owes the house of Edgelaw a day in hairst, if the pledged word of a Duke is worth an onion peeling. — They shall all hear of this night's work ; and that on the deafest side of their heads, and in the inmost chambers of their councils. All Scotland shall hear of it, and answer too !—What care we for their headings and hangings, when driven to extremities like this ? So go tell the excommunicate apostate at Thirlstane that, Simon Sloan, as ye are one of his Malignant kind. What has an auld wife like me, with one foot in the grave and the other fast following, to fear from the power the Enemy may give the oppressors for a season to destroy the body ?——But I’ll speak him fair first though.’

“I wish I saw ye mounted !’ cried the pedler — ‘an auld wife, saving your pardon, may blurt out a rash and a bauld word, and one that may find a mark too, which a bearded man, however feckless, durst not venture. But be sure ye do not seek an audience with his Grace of Lauderdale till he has gotten his wame filled. Save and sain us ! but they tell he can eat a horse behind the saddle, after clearing two sheep-heads, a bouk of lamb, a half-dozen kaim capons, and a kebbuck of half a stone tron.’

“And, of a truth, it remains the burden of tradition,” continued the Dominie, “that this rampant and wicked apostate and persecutor was possessed by a familiar evil spirit, ravening within his swollen and bloated carcass, like the daughters of the horse-leech, night and day crying, *Give, give !* This may, however, have been but the inordinate and furious false appetite which physicians reckon among the many ills that afflict the

body ; though our forefathers believed it an open judgment, and a sore one, on this brutal though ducal specimen of fallen humanity.

“Leddy Edgelaw might have been deemed a bold matron, to beard the wolf in his den ; for this was a time of faint spirits and of great terror, when the nearest kindred feared to interpose in behalf of such of their friends as had offended the Government, by conscientious opposition to unlawful edicts and sinful compliances. She found the great man after one of his bestial banquets, and so in his best humour ; and he even ordered her a seat and a cup of wine, which for courtesy she put to her lips, but took care not to dip in his dish ; and then she began her tale ; at which he jeered and leuch ; the venom, churned by his lolling tongue, spurling in his devilish mirth from the blubber-lips for which he was noted.

“‘The lass was on her travels without a pass, guidwife,’ was his remark ; ‘but Winram will now be answerable for her safe-conduct. An’ if he let her slip through his lang fingers, as he did the widow her mither, fiend take me if I ever put fair wench or tocher-guid in his reverence again !’

“‘Never fear, never fear,’ cried the lady, frightened and angered out of all prudence. ‘The butcher will not let the lamb twice escape his gully, let the innocent bleat as it list. But, oh, that ever this foul kite swooped on the gentle dove on lands of mine ! Is there no remede, your Grace, for a wrong like this ? An innocent maiden—the daughter of an ancient Fife family—the troth-plighted bride of an honourable young gentleman, my nevoy, and representative of the house of Redheugh—brought into trouble by false and wicked accusers. The stones of the cause-way will rise in rebellion, let alone the godly folks of Scotland, for such shameless wrong to maidenhood and gentry.’

“Lauderdale waxed very wroth, and sputtered and churned venom for a full minute ; but Lady Edgelaw, and other folks of the Edgelaw, were his old country neighbours, in a sense, though miles apart both from Dunbar and Thirlstane ; and there was, besides, an ancient obligation anent hiding some of the race at the steading of Edgelaw, in the former troubles of the kingdom — and maybe, too, as it is sagaciously said in the vernacular strain, though somewhat savouring of profanity, ‘The De’il’s no aye so ill as he’s called ;’ for Lauderdale nichered a loud horse-laugh, as if at his own passion,

and, giving the guidwife of Edgelaw a push in his rough merriment, he says—

“‘Keep ye a calm sough, Luckie, and be off while it is fair weather between us. I have not forgotten certain services to my family, nor yet timeous refreshments for myself and my people from the thrifty aumrie of Edgelaw. But, hark ye! take care how ye go to the hill again, or listen these blatant beasts routing the gospel down the wind. Ye may not get so easily off from next conventicle, if Winram’s hot fingers come over ye, even though ye be his aunt elect!’

“‘Me! the audacious villain!’ interrupted Leddy Edgelaw—‘me! kith or kin to the blood-dyed, doomed race!’

“‘Be off, woman, ere worse come of it! and see how ye try my patience again. The auld wife’s mouldy pose, at Edgelaw, will bide another bang, in the way of fine or levy, if our friends are not mistaken; so, order your walk by your winning.’ And he civilly, as if in mirth, pushed her out of his closet—having granted her a far more gracious reception, though refusing her petition, than he was in the wont of giving to such as dared gainsay him in his apostate wickedness. And who should have waited her coming forth of the castle but Simon Sloan, to whom, in the fulness of her heart, she told all that had passed at the unsatisfactory communing; and it was pactioned between them, that, if gold could ransom the young lady, it should not be wanting.

“‘I ken nothing gold will not do if ye make the dose strong enough,’ said Simon. ‘I do not despair but that the sma’ key of the coffers of Edgelaw may be made pick the strongest locks in Randolph’s Tower, whither I shall be ere I am many hours older, and see what is there laid to my hand to do. If tidings are wanted of my speed, I may aye be heard of at St. Ronan’s; and I ken ye will lose no time in raising all your kin and allies in Fife and the Lothians.’

“Simon’s first stage was to Randolph’s Tower—for his pack and his sly tongue made him free every where; and thence he proceeded to the Peel. No tidings had come of Mr. James; and Simon feared that, notwithstanding his disguise and precaution, he had fallen into the snare of the enemy. So again, when the night had dropped into midnight, he returned to the Tower, where a glimmering light, high up, shining through an arrow-slit, pointed out the prison chamber of Magdalen Leslie. This Tower, long since

dilapidated, was but an ancient pertinent of the residence. Though of no considerable dimensions, it was of great strength, both from building and position, and seven stories in height—the upper ones divided into two or three cribs, the smallest of which projected beyond the walls as if hanging over the cataracts of the stream. The old Tower was connected with the more modern house by a long and arched stone passage, divided by two strong oaken doors, the keys of which were never out of Sir Marmaduke’s or his leman’s custody, save when of necessity intrusted to his right-hand man, Sergeant Warrock, as on the black Monday morning when he brought in his fair prisoner. The dreariest side of the Tower was turned to ordinary beholders, who saw only the massive gray walls, and a few arrow-slits.

“The river, from whose rocky banks it sprang, was here unseen and scarcely heard; and, in front, that building looked a tame, flat hold, which, viewed in the rear, resembled more the eyry of a bird of prey, than a chosen human habitation. Access was given to the different stages, by a narrow, spiral staircase, partially lighted by arrow-slits; and every separate flight of steps was jealously guarded by an iron-studded and strongly-bolted door; nor was it until the sixth floor was reached, that the light of heaven was admitted more freely into this den of darkness and evil deeds.

“Hither had sweet Magdalen Leslie been brought, more dead than alive, on the morning following her abduction. Instead of at once approaching by the principal entrance, Warrock halted his party in a copse under, and almost behind Winram’s Hall, whence he despatched one of his men for orders, and only waited on his master when these were fulfilled.

“He found Sir Marmaduke Winram, the man whose name was a terror and a hate throughout the land, seated at the morning repast, consisting, in the fashion of the day, of a venison pasty, game, fish, and fowl, with wine and ale in cups and flagons; for the jovial Cavaliers were noted belly-gods and riotous livers. Sir Marmaduke was knitting his brows, and casting looks of anger and contemptuous reproach upon his companion, his only son, the representative of his proud house, who, early as was the hour, had sunk into the sottish sleep of intemperance, upon his high-backed chair.

“‘The sot! the fool!’ he exclaimed; ‘he has not yet slept off his last night’s drench.

Even for a single morning he is unable to control his grovelling appetites. The hog! could not he be kept from the swill-tub, even when so fair an occasion offered of making a favourable impression on this distressed damsel, by playing the generous gallant, while his father was reckoned the desperate tyrant?"

"If Sir Marmaduke stood in the Master's shoes, the lady might be the easier wooed," said Sergeant Warrock, with the hardihood of his privilege of confidant, and the skill of the rude flatterer.

"It was not until Winram had far outrun his means in what he was pleased to call the King's service—though the Devil's would have been the apter phrase—that, notwithstanding his vices and crimes, he stooped to the sordid rapacity which was the law of the highest in rank among his Malignant associates. His old claim to the estate of Redheugh was now enforced by the thirst of revenge, as well as avarice; for, though he affected to congratulate himself on having escaped the ignominious alliance of the rich Puritan's widow, his pride had never forgiven the slight, even when it revolted the most at the connexion.

"A sneering smile met Warrock's bold observation; but it took effect, nevertheless; and, pacing the apartment, the knight appeared to be revolving important interests. Though past the prime of life, Sir Marmaduke still possessed eminent personal advantages. His lofty presence and dark and haughty countenance bespoke one as familiar with courts and councils as with camps; and, when he chose to control his violent passions, from respect to his company, the suavity and dignity of his deportment were as different from the coarse brutality of Lauderdale as his powerful countenance was from the serpent-comeliness of the cruel Claverhouse, whose smooth and almost effeminate features made the cold-blooded atrocity of his nature the more repulsive and abhorrent to human feelings.

"Sir Marmaduke assumed as his model the Great Montrose, and, above all things, prided himself upon his devoted loyalty to his Prince, and his nice sense of honour as a Cavalier—that is to say, he paid his gaming debts when he could, and was as prompt to provoke another to the duello as to accept an invitation to the field. I have never heard that this sort of honour, either in ancient Cavalier or modern gentleman, has proved any restraint whatever upon the most

insatiable rapacity and the most unmanly crimes; such as that which this profligate man now meditated against an innocent maiden, whose only crime was the temptation of her great wealth. He chose to lay the flattering unction to his soul, that, in this particular alliance, great honour would be conferred; and that the sufferings and oppression of Redheugh, and those of the gentry who embraced the cause of the Covenant, were either caused by their own stupid contumacy and fanaticism, or their canting hypocrisy. The rights of conscience and of freedom of worship claimed by the common sort, and for a quarter century, asserted at the price of their blood, he regarded as insolent impertinence, to be summarily put down by whipping, branding, and cropping of ears. Their blood he considered as so much red puddle, in which the hangman might freely smear his hands, though it rather disgraced the blades of his own troopers.

"So, Warrock, you have brought in the lady and the preacher, and some more vermin? Is it not so? Fresh from a conventicle—travelling without a pass?"

"Warrock bowed in affirmation.

"A rough gentleman-usher; but it serves the turn. What sort of a wench is it?"

"A brave lass and a comely, though not fit to hold the candle to Madam Anne."

"Pshaw!—but the better luck thine, Warrock, on whom I have some thoughts of bestowing poor Nan, and a cantle of Redheugh, in part requitance of the services of both of you. But of that anon?"

"Warrock looked more surprised than grateful at the announcement of one portion of the intended gift; but he seldom lost command of his bold countenance, and perceiving, as he fancied, how matters stood, he adroitly squared his speech accordingly.

"The Whig damsel is a fair wench, though of the slenderest, and a comely, though she has spoiled her pretty face for one day—first by whimpering at the outpouring of the Word by the gifted gentleman now safe in the dungeon; and next, so unreasonable are women, at passing into the wardship of your Honour."

"Take order of your tongue, Warrock. This lady is the daughter of a good house, though a Whig one. She must be treated with respect. How have you bestowed her?"

"In the sixth stage—Winram's Wing—a decentish apartment—of which Mistress

Anne craves the keys, to give the prisoner needful tendance.'

"'Humph!—tell Anne, with my service, that this lady, being a Puritan and country-bred, is unworthy the attendance of so accomplished a waiting-gentlewoman. Let one of your fellows take a horse and pillion, and bring up the Elshieshiels' wench from Red-heugh Mains.'

"'Ailie Elliot is gone to her father in Dunbar Tolbooth, please your Honour.'

"'That's unlucky. Then send up the deaf girl from St. Ronan's who assists the cook; but be rigid in your duty; on no account suffer a word to pass between them, nor permit the keys out of your own custody. From the adjoining secret chamber you can hear and see all that passes in the apartment, and order yourself accordingly. Be in the way,' he added, carelessly, 'lest I take a fancy to examine the girl myself touching the late conventicle, and her disloyal practices.'

"'Warrock clattered off, muttering—'Now, I see it all plain as a pike-staff. And the gentle Mistress Nan is to be my share of the spoils. D——n them! it will be long before they think of any of the great wind-falls for those to whose share the foul work falls; and the dead, white face of that silly wench, for all I have seen in my day, is ten times worse than slashing down a half-hundred Whigamores:—that's only good pastime. And how may she look on Warrock when Winram's dame? There's the rub. To whomsoever this bridal betokens good, it is scarce to Warrock; no, nor yet to that fractious dame prancing towards me.'

"'Good-morrow, Mistress Nan!' It is Sir Marmaduke's pleasure to be custodier of yonder little brittle piece of gear himself; so I cannot do your pleasure in that particular.' And the trooper escaped the angry remonstrance of the deposed empress of Randolph's Tower; and, speeding his errand, again returned to report to his master.

"'Sir Marmaduke was still wrapped in rumination; and, while the Sergeant waited his pleasure in silence, he continued to pace the room with unequal steps, as if his walk were measured by the speed of his thoughts. His eye, from time to time, fell upon his unhappy son, whose feeble character and low habits of coarse debauchery were to him the source of deep mortification; though the lad, a fool by nature, and a sot by indulgence, was much less a sinner than his godless and

profligate sire. But then his vices were not those of a Cavalier and a gentleman.

"'Clear the room of that carrion,' cried he in bitterness, pointing with his toe to the youth. 'Lock him up, and see you keep brandy from him for one day, as you shall answer it. Fling him into the dungeon—no matter where.' Warrock, not over and above delighted with the duty, which was a frequent one, dragged off the dead-weight of his young lord, who, once out of the reach of his father's ire, showed, by disobedient mutterings, that he had not been so insensible as he feigned.

"'I say, Sergeant Warrock,' he gulped, 'am not I a Cavalier and a gentleman—ay, and as good a Winram as himself? I'll be cursed ere I marry the Whig lass, to pleasure either Sir father, or his leman, Madam Nan. I'll be hanged ere I mix my gentle blood with Puritanic puddle. I say, Warrock—'

"'Will ye be pleased to hold the swollen tongue o' ye, Master Randolph,' returned the Sergeant, who, having been his young lord's instructor and wet-nurse, assumed freedom with him most unlike the watchful deference which Sir Marmaduke's demeanour, more than his commands, exacted from all his dependants. 'She is even owre good for you; and, if ye brutify yourself in this guise another day, I would not promise but his Honour kicks both you and pretty Mistress Nan to the back o' beyond, and marries the lady or her lands himself, just to spite ye; leaving you the heritage of the auld Tower, and to his younger heirs this brave new conquest.'

"'Will he, faith! Then have at him. I say, Warrock, what sort of gear is it—fair and bonny, like the maidens of Torwoodlee, or black but comely, like the proud Thirlstane dames?'

"'Neither like one nor other, yet well enough favoured. Come along now—try your own long legs.' And Warrock raised and steadied his burden.

"'So this Sir father mine, who never said a gracious word to me since I was whelped, has ruled that I'm to have the fash of marrying the lass, and he is to spend her tocher. But I know a trick worth two of that. I say, Sergeant, what if Mistress Anne think the court ladies might fancy the lout of a son the properer man of the two?' And the handsome and imbecile youth complacently surveyed his own fine limbs. 'I'll be hanged if she did not say so. Old gentlemen do not

live for ever, nor keep their galliard figures either.'

"'Hush, Master Randolph!' cried the Sergeant, clapping his hand to the simpleton's mouth. 'As I'm a living man, Sir Marmaduke has overheard you. I saw his shadow glide back; his pride cannot brook my having heard what chance has led him to know. Simple sinner as ye are, ye have done for yourself now.'

"They were here crossed by Mistress Anne, who again demanded the keys, that she might pay her respects to the imprisoned gentlewoman. The man pleaded his master's strict orders.

"'Begone, fellow!' cried the haughty harlot, a woman of a bold though fair countenance; 'this order does not concern me.'

"'I have shut up every other wench in the offices. Sir Marmaduke does not like prying eyes on his prisoners, however bright. The household has ta'en flight to hiding-places, like a brood of linties when the hawk is abroad: I would advise you, Madam Nan, to be equally tractable till certain little matters are arranged. Here comes his Honour.'

"Sir Marmaduke, without a word, waved the woman to follow him, and, instinctively bending her caprice to his more imperious will, she found herself confronting him in that stately hall where she had long reigned lady paramount, and from whence she felt she was now in danger of being for ever banished.

"'I should have expected more discretion from a woman of your breeding and experience, Nan,' was his scornful speech, 'than to give every booby the power of boasting of the admiration of a lady of your refined taste. The Master of Winram, my son, madam, is beholden to your flattering opinion.'

"'Jealous, Sir Marmaduke!—and of your own son!' was her bitter exclamation. 'To what am I fallen! Destining me, as I learn, with the few hundred merks that may grace the gift to the pitch of acceptance, for the high honour of being housewife to your ruffian varlet, now that you would wed with the well-portioned dame whose beauty, it would seem, so much surpasses whatever poor Anne Clive could boast; ay, even in her first fresh youth, when the favourite attendant of the Duchess of Castlemain, and, as such, fancied good enough to mate with any poor Scottish knight whatever.'

"'Tush, Nan; my patience has limits, even with a fair lady. You meddle with

matters above your concernment. Look to the household. There is the pedler in the court below, in whose books you tell me you are so deep dipped for paints, pinner, and Hungary waters—clear his score, and spend the balance as ye list.' And he chucked his purse contemptuously to the woman, who, struggling with passion, tossed it back, and, shrieking, fell into violent hysterics. He carried her himself to the apartments which she usually occupied, and carelessly left her to take her chance of recovery, under care of a housemaid.

"Simon Sloan had never before met such profound silence as on this day invested Randolph's Tower. On his arrival, no one, not even a dog, was about. Every window was close, every door was shut. After a patient survey, he made his way to the back-court opening on the offices, and gained admittance into the kitchen, where a solitary maid-servant was engaged in culinary affairs. Instead of the usual blithe jeering and jabbering which sets women's tongues agog when the packman arrives, her whisper was, 'Gudesake, Simon, keep quiet, and hie down the water as soon as ye like; for this is nae place for decent folk.' She lowered her voice, and placed her lips close to Simon's ear, 'There has been a sad stramash between his Honour and the Master; and Madam Nan has fallen into the hicksteries, and Lily Liddle is holding brunt feathers to her nose, because Sir Marmaduke is going to marry a rich lady at last.'

"'Ay, ay, Sarah, my doo, our Scottish lassies take no such qualms, or I suspect there might be a young gentlewoman about the Tower has more cause for the fits of the mother, and sic-like women's tantrums, whilk, when real and when feigned, I defy any man to discern, save when ye see them fairly beyond the remedy of Hungary waters.'

"The girl looked scared and alarmed. 'Whatever ye ken, or whatever ye dinna ken, keep it to yoursel', Simmie Sloan; here a' Winram's folk maun hear, see, and say nothing.'

"'But have their ain thoughts for a' that,' said Simon. And, forgetting her own counsel in the pleasure of keeping her tongue going and obtaining vent, she proceeded—

"'Every mother's dochter of the five of us was locked up for two stricken hours this morning, while the Whigamores were put down into the dungeon. Save us a'! They tell that ye may hear the water roaring aboon it in a speat. It's in one hotter and

crawl wi' asques, snails, and a' slimy, creeping, venomous things. — Such a place for Christian folk! — it's just awful!

"I heard, coming down the water, that Winram's hounds were out yesterday, and had struck the game; but they ne'er could put the Whig quean there?"

"Whig quean or Whig carle, ye might keep a civiler tongue in your head, Simon Sloan, for gentlefolks in trouble. The lady is a lady born, and no a Madam Nan. She's auld Redheugh's step-bairn, and the daughter of a good gentlewoman ower the way of Fife, with a grand portion; and a well-featured, setting maiden, wi' hair and complexion, they say, just the marrow o' mine."

"I'll be sworn, reddish haired, and a thought fairny-tickled' — for the creature Simon could not aye bite in the gibe, even when it hurt himself. 'Surely so gallant a Cavalier as Sir Marmaduke could not throw so fair a damsel into the dungeon?"

"He is no sae dooms bad as that: she is up in the Craw's Nest — what they call Winram's Wing, where wicked Sir William wi' the Blue Beard hanged his twenty wives by the hair of the head to cranks in the wa', in the riding-times, for drawing up with the Lord Warden o' the Marches. — They have aye been a fell family. — And now Miss Leslie may take her choice; for the Tower is twice as high as Melrose Abbey, and twice to that; and out of that she'll ne'er win (Jock Thrasher, the barns-man, is clear o' that; and he had it from Sergeant Warrock's man) till she be converted to Episcopacy, and wed either with the Knight or the Master; or else be hanged at Jeddart, for following the hill-preachers. She may take her choice; but life is sweet; and the Master, though a wee thought wild, is a likely young gentleman, an' ye keep drink frae him; so ye may have a guess how the day will go."

"The pedler groaned at probabilities he could not controvert, and threw down his pack, as if in a paroxysm of despair.

"I have no time to look at your gear now, Simmie. Ye maun just bide a blink till I toss up these flams for the young lady's dinner. The patricks on the broche are for the Tower, too. Sergeant Warrock puts them in a whirligig of a turnie-box i' the door, like what the papist nuns used in the auld times, he says, to get their dinners through. It would just be a divert to see it; but he lets nane of us near but deaf Jenny."

"The pedler started to his feet, like a man

that had been arrow-smitten. A chance was given him; and he was alert, ready-witted, and not easily put out.

"Speaking of brooches, Sarah, hinny, I have the beauty here — it might spit a lave-rock for size — set a' with Bristow stones and garnets."

"Dinna tempt me with your nonsense, Simmie Sloan," said the lass, as she whisked her pancakes, 'when ye ken we havena drawn a bodle wages for this three last half-years come Martinmas. I wish to peace Sir Marmaduke would marry the lady outright, and let his poor servants get their sair-won penny fee to buy duds to their backs.'

"But a look will cost ye nothing, Sarah, save a kiss, and a flam, or ony thing else ye like. I have a bit memorandum to draw out of sundries due me for five years bygone by Mistress Anne, against whom I'll need to get a fugie warrant, as she'll be fitting her quarters."

"Sikker Simmie, for one of the half-taught who pick up uncertain knowledge against all rule, was a deft clerk. In less time than might have been looked for from a tutored clerk, he had indicted a communication to the sorrowful captive in Winram's Wing, which, while playing some thimble-rig trick or another with Sarah, of pretending to swallow whole pancakes, he slid into the folds of the topmost of the tappy-tourie destined for the turning-box. It was a desperate venture, and Simon was too wise to await the event of his own experiment. He presented Sarah with a row of bodle pins, hoping for her custom when she was a sony guidwife, which such gigelets aye titter to be joked about; and, hitching on his pack, said, as Madam Anne was in so evil a condition, no audience could be hoped for, or settling of accounts that day.

"As he set off, all the bells of the house were in a peal, and he almost fancied that his daring epistle, still on the trencher before his eyes, had been read by the dreadful Knight.

"But how, all this while, ye may ask, was Magdalen Leslie sustained in her affliction? Her capture had been so sudden, that she never could distinctly recollect how it had fared with her until she awoke from a long and deadly swoon, and found herself alone in her prison-chamber. She could just understand that great disappointment had attended the failure of the first attempt to make prisoners of herself and her father, whose movements must have been known,

through the espials of the curates, before they left the shores of Fife. Warrock swore a desperate oath, that she should not escape him a second time. Her shrieks, on being seized, were heard by some of the stragglers returning home from the preaching; and it was wo to her that two poor fellows had been made prisoners when bravely attempting her rescue from the troopers. During the first two hours of the night ride, her brain had been alternately whirling in wild excitement, or steeped in merciful oblivion, until the chill morning air, and the crowing of the cocks about Earliston—that hamely and pleasing domestic din—recalled her senses, and by voice and gesture she appealed, as I have told, to the cowardly loons abroad at early labour. But who durst cross Winram's path? The scared peasants could only pity the prisoners, and curse in their hearts the cruel oppressor whom they feared to resist. "Tyranny, sirs," said the Dominie, "not alone fetters the body, but enslaves and debases the spirit of man."

"As soon as Magdalen was borne to her cage by Sergeant Warrock, and was so far composed as to be capable of continuous and rational thought, her despair for a time increased to agony. She was in the power of that Sir Marmaduke Winram whose idea had, from childhood, filled her with shuddering, supernatural horror. She was in the very scene of those perhaps exaggerated tales of savage cruelty and sacrilegious outrage which had curdled her infant blood. But a mind like that of Magdalen Leslie can never find pause for sober reflection, without working itself clear, and resting on sure grounds of consolation. In her own peculiar she soon gained composure, recollecting that the worst that could be inflicted was the death in which it had been the fate of hundreds of precious saints in Scotland to participate.

"The oracular warning of her Bible, which had at intervals pressed so heavily on her spirit, was lightened in the contemplation of speedy release from all her sorrows; and her keenest grief was for others, and not for herself. Besides, my friends, what shall we say?—the grisly Phantom with which she strove to familiarize her mind—Death, whose terrors can quell the strongest—was yet in reality far off, dim, and in the back-ground; and returning reason told her that, allied as she was, a young gentlewoman, and a prisoner of the King, at least in name, she could not be done to

death without some form of public trial, mockery of justice as it might be. Her most agonizing anxiety was for the safety of James Rutherford; her most deadly terror for the approach of Sir Marmaduke Winram, which filled her with something bordering on the preternatural terror with which frail humanity shrinks from and quails before foul beings not of earth.

"A draught of milk and water to refresh her parched lips was all that she had taken of needful refreshment, until Sergeant Warrock ushered in the deaf maid-servant with her afternoon repast; which, instead of placing in the turning-box, as the gossiping quean Sarah had said, was served decently and in order; the man informing Miss Leslie that the platters would be withdrawn at sun-down, when his master, who sent his respectful compliments, meant to wait upon her. Magdalen's heart sunk, and turned cold within her; although it had at times been her own purpose either to address a letter to her jailer, or to request an interview.

"The dainty viands and the sparkling wine-cup stood untouched. Once more the maiden passed into the overhanging gallery or cabinet communicating with her chamber, and with eager eyes measured the dizzying depths below, and the impregnable strength of her place of confinement; and once again she threw herself upon her knees, and implored strength and succour, where alone they are to be surely found. A small psalm book, which she had carried to the hill-preaching, was still safe in the bosom of her dress; and the desolate maiden found unspeakable consolation, and the dawning of hope, in exercising her mind with divers of those devotional psalms which had soothed the Royal Shepherd in his sorrows, and which accorded well with her afflicted state. Renewed and strengthened in her faith, and now clear in the course of duty, she compelled herself to adjust her raiment, as well as circumstances admitted, and then tried to partake of needful refreshment. Her obedience was rewarded with the discovery of Simon Sloan's letter, precious in its matter, however imperfect in seemly calligraphy or true orthography. But the ink had been imperfectly dried, the flams hot; and the amusing incident, at which another might have smiled or laughed, brought tears of distress to Magdalen's eyes, half blinded in trying to decipher the obliterated lines, which, from the cast of the characters, she knew to be the packman's. All she could

distinctly learn was, that she was exhorted to be hopeful and constant in spirit; for there were those now safe on Scottish ground who were able and willing to aid her, and who would peril all to ransom her captivity, either with the strong arm or the wily hand. Magdalen's thanksgiving was as lively as her supplications had been earnest; but her human longings and fond imagination ran more eagerly than ever on the means of deliverance which must precede the meeting with her betrothed.

"Again she surveyed her prison-house. From her strongly-grated narrow window, the clumpy heads of the tall pine trees appeared far below, and the view was clipped in on all sides, affording no greater scope than the shrubs and beetling rocks on the opposite bank of the stream. Of it a few foamy glimpses were obtained through the thick dark foliage, as it chafed and boiled over the rapids, with din that stunned rather than soothed. The very crows winged their clamorous way far below her line of vision. There was no hope on this side. Her heart again fell into the melancholy fluctuation of spirits incident to the afflicted; and again rallied, when she thought of her more pitiable condition within the last half hour.

"'Murmurer and doubter!' thought the maiden, chiding her unbelief and despondency. 'But now a ray of light is strangely darted into my thick darkness—and already I question and rebel! But now, I would have given my life to know that James Rutherford had escaped his enemies—and already I pine to be with him, and murmur because that cannot be.—Oh, that we might all reach the quiet shores of Holland, a free and peaceful Protestant land; and, with only the loss of fortune, were safe in one of those humble homes of which my dear Grizzel Home writes so cheerily! Would that the dross which does so little contribute to our happiness, were in the possession of that dreadful man who ravens for it, and with whose fate mine is so strangely mixed,—if its utter forfeiture might win us peace!'"

"While Magdalen revolved these matters, the sound of footsteps was heard; and, in a flutter of spirits, she thrust Simon Sloan's epistle deeper into her pocket. No one, however, appeared for some time, yet there came an oppression—a sense of suffocation—even upon her physical frame, as if some awful and invisible thing was in presence and beholding her; and her eyes involun-

tarily fixed upon a part of the dingy wall of the chamber opening from hers, as if from thence some one was gazing upon her aslant the side of that cumbrous cabinet which formed part of the furniture.

"Her instinct, or her knowledge, as it might be—for there is knowledge too subtle for the detection of the chain by which it comes—was infallibly true; for, when she summoned courage to try the door of this inner room, she found it bolted within, though no one had passed through her apartment into this, with which Warrock had falsely assured her there was no outward communication. She shook the door, spoke, questioned those within, but to no purpose. Her fascinated gaze involuntarily fixed upon the part of the wall where she could have sworn an eye had gleamed on her, like as of those shooting, spectral, hazy visages, seen in distempered dreams.

"From this stupor of horror she was roused by well-ascertained voices; for now the huge key grated in the lock, and Sergeant Warrock, stepping forward, announced his master. Magdalen rose to her feet, fully aware that composure, fortitude, and self-possession were strongly demanded from her at this juncture; and Sir Marmaduke approached, with that air of high-bred ease and courtesy which he could assume at will, and which sat so well upon him. If there was surprise on either side, it was certainly not of a repulsive nature. Instead of the ferocious and sinister physiognomy which the fancy of the maiden had assigned to this profligate, malignant, and cruel oppressor, she beheld a gentleman of lofty deportment, whose expression of countenance, if bold and haughty, was not ruffianly; while, in the 'Whig wench,' as he had unceremoniously termed her, Sir Marmaduke saw a graceful and modest young woman, who returned his courtesy in silence, but without any sign of weak alarm or awkward embarrassment. There might be traces on her cheeks of the floods of tears which she had shed within the last twenty hours, and deep, though sudden sorrow had already changed her young bloom to pallor; yet the sensibilities and varied mental expression of her pale and eloquent features might, even as matter of taste, have, to some spectators, seemed more worthy of admiration than all the lilies and roses of brilliant, dimpling youth.

"Sergeant Warrock, who, for many reasons, was a deeply-interested spectator, could only infer the impression which the daughter of

the Covenant had made, from the softened and respectful tones in which his master requested her to be seated, while he stood with a deferential, courtier-like bend of his stately figure, as if waiting her pleasure to follow her example.

“‘This attitude best becomes a prisoner in presence of her gaoler,’ said Magdalen. ‘Excuse me, Sir Marmaduke Winram; but during our brief interview I desire to stand.’

“‘Why so harsh a name, Miss Leslie?’ returned Sir Marmaduke, smiling, ‘for one who sincerely regrets this evil accident, and entertains the strongest desire to make your temporary detention as lightly felt as possible? Give me your parole of honour, madam,’ he added, gaily, ‘and permit me to lead you to the best and freest apartment in my dwelling. The seeming severity of last night—and my fellows durst not have shown an atom of disrespect to a young lady, for whom and her family I entertain so much esteem—will be best properly explained in the apartments below.—Warrock, withdraw; but be within call.’

“‘Stay, I pray you!’ cried Magdalen, ‘do not leave us. By this man, acting upon an authority of which I am still ignorant, I was forced with violence from the threshold of my kinswoman; dragged ignominiously through the country; and, for no cause assigned, I am now unlawfully detained a prisoner. For these acts, this man pleads the authority of Sir Marmaduke Winram.’

“‘To arrest all persons unlawfully attending conventicles, my troopers have, I own, a roving commission. How was I to surmise that Miss Leslie might be found in such disagreeable and dangerous circumstances? Pray be seated, madam, until we reason out this matter. You will find me disposed to take the most favourable view possible of an awkward case.’

“‘If I may expect any favour or courtesy at your hands, Sir Marmaduke, I pray you let me be set at liberty, and restored to my friends. My father’s dwelling of Redheugh cannot be far off, and I left him in evil condition: suffer me to go to him. You shake your head. If, then, I am really considered the true prisoner of the King,’ she added, in a bolder tone, ‘let me be at once transferred to fitting custody, in any tolbooth of the land, but not immured, in this lonely and unseemly way, in the private dwelling of a gentleman, who, if I may be bold to say it, is of no good repute as the guardian of young women of honour.’

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“The profligate Cavalier smiled merrily, as if the maiden’s last plea had been a compliment; and answered, jeeringly—‘I must ever lament that circumstances have given Miss Leslie so unfavourable an impression of the knight of Randolph’s Tower, and of his hospitalities to ladies. To be serious, madam, I charge myself with your safe custody; but I cannot so far outrage every rule of gentlemanly feeling as to transfer one so young, so fair, and gentle-born to the filthy holes of our burgh jails, though these may be good enough for the common run of the canting crew.’

“‘Oh, rather consign me to the blackest hole in Scotland, than keep me longer here!’ cried Magdalen. ‘Let me share your dungeon with my fellow-captives, but keep me not here!’

“‘I admire the delicacy of your sentiments, Miss Leslie, even when they display your strong prejudice against myself. Your spirit and fine sense of honour are not lost on me. They place you higher in my esteem than even those eminent personal charms which have been the burden of fame in Edinburgh circles, but to which fame has done imperfect justice.’

“Magdalen did not suppress the slight curl of her lip which spoke her sense of these compliments; nor was her impatient contempt misunderstood.

“‘You are right, Miss Leslie,’ he continued; ‘it will best serve us to come to immediate explanation. The terms are easy and honourable upon which you may dictate to me, and give me the felicity of converting, by one gracious word from those beautiful lips, the captive into the mistress of this unworthy mansion.—Withdraw, Warrock.’

“‘Nay, again I entreat you stay,’ cried Magdalen. ‘I can hold no private communion with Sir Marmaduke Winram, who might have spared an unfriended woman the mockery of his address.’

“Warrock obeyed his master’s haughty eye, and withdrew; while the latter exclaimed:—‘By my good faith, I am serious, madam, and you shall own it.’ And with gentle violence, but still with violence, he led her to a seat. Her indignation was now effectually roused.

“‘Few words may suffice between us, Sir Marmaduke,’ she said, with firmness. ‘Release me at once from this unworthy thralldom, or I demand to be transferred to the nearest public jail. I am prepared for any thing rather than remain another hour

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in this fearful place and custody.' As her eyes glanced round, they fixed upon the corner of the indented cupboard, and an involuntary shudder passed over her frame.

"You have not yet condescended to listen to my proposal, Miss Leslie. It is such, I flatter myself, as merits your consideration. It is, moreover, fraught with advantage to those with whom you are most nearly connected. I will not expatiate upon the perils of your present situation, or the dangers which menace your relatives. You are aware I am not without influence in the state. It shall be my pride and pleasure to obviate whatever unpleasant consequences may arise from your late rashness, which I am willing to impute solely to a misguided education, and the example of your family, who, with their ancestors' religion, have renounced loyalty to their prince and obedience to the laws."

"My parents have neither renounced religion nor loyalty. Pardon my presumption, sir; but I will not hear them maligned, and keep silence. My family are true Protestants, of the Reformed Presbyterian Kirk; who, not alone for wrath, but conscience' sake, follow peace with all men, and submit, in every lawful command, to the authority of the King and the Estates of Parliament—resisting only when such mandates are in opposition to those of the King of kings.—Alas! that their defence should fall to one so feeble and simple as myself!"

"Tears now first sprung to the eyes of Magdalen, overpowered by the sense of her own helplessness.

"Nay, by my faith, fair Puritan, you have fructified under the braying of the preachers. You are moving and eloquent, and that brings me to the true chapter. I must have you, Miss Leslie, take my case in hand. I long hugely, methinks, to be converted; true gospel light never beamed with softer lustre from Anna Boleyn's eyes than from the lovely orbs on which I gaze."

"Magdalen started to her feet, her glance rebuking the bold, passionate gaze of her new admirer.

"You abuse the advantage which fortune has given you, Sir Marmaduke Winram, in directing such light speech to an unhappy woman, who has no power of gainsaying you. If my request is not to be granted, do me the courtesy to leave me to my own sad thoughts."

"What has sadness to do with the thoughts of Miss Leslie—formed as she is

to be the life and grace of society—the ornament of courts, whither it should be my pride to transplant her?"

"Stay, stay, Sir Marmaduke!—is this the boasted gallantry and generosity of Cavaliers?"

"Forgive me, Miss Leslie"—and the proud and scornful man almost knelt—"this is no time for trifling. Upon my sacred honour, I never was more in earnest in my whole life than at this moment. In proof of it, I came with the intention of soliciting your favourable regard for the suit of my son—of tendering you freedom and indemnity through an alliance with my house. It is but the natural influence of charms like those which I now behold, if I prefer a dearer claim. Let not your delicacy be wounded by the abruptness of the declaration, if I confess that I now aspire to this fair hand as the crown of my individual felicity."

"Magdalen withdrew the hand so boldly seized as if a serpent had stung it, and shrunk backward, eyeing her suitor for a moment with haughty surprise, while he advanced, and continued to press his claim with a mixture of the complimentary, high-flown jargon of Courts, and the plain earnestness which demonstrated a resolute purpose of carrying the point he had condescended to start; for this violent man was of that resolute genius that never submits to the thwarting of the will, whether for right or wrong, good or evil. What he did he would uphold—what he began he would go through with.

"If I have used less ceremony than is befitting, the occasion must plead my pardon," continued Sir Marmaduke, "as there is slender time for its observance between us. Your generosity, Miss Leslie, must take example of my frankness. Within a few days I must go to Edinburgh. Let me hope to make the peace of my fair prisoner, and obtain amnesty for her friends by being enabled to present her as the bride of a man who, at need, can be as formidable to his friends as to his enemies."

"Magdalen was, for a moment, overwhelmed by the cool and determined air with which this was said. Sir Marmaduke had changed his tone from that of the suitor to the dictator. But, when she recollected that the man who stood before her in the plenitude of unlawful power, was perfectly acquainted with the circumstance of her betrothal, which was indeed patent to all the gentry of mid-

land Scotland, his insolent proposal carried insult which would have roused one less firm and spirited. In a tone of mock humility, and perhaps with a rash touch of woman's waywardness, she replied—'The Whigamore's daughter ought doubtless to be overcome with gratitude for the honour proffered her; though she is still at a loss to guess whether, as a spoil of war, she is decreed to Sir Marmaduke Winram or his hopeful son. Were the matrimonial alliances of the Whig gentry worthy discussion by the Cavaliers, Sir Marmaduke Winram might by chance have learnt that the humble maiden he so far forgets himself as to distress with his insulting suit, is the affianced bride of his neighbour proprietor, Mr. James Rutherford, the younger of Redheugh, the obscurity of whose family—though it is not of yesterday—must be greater than had been suspected, since his intended marriage is so profound a secret.'

"Sir Marmaduke knitted his brows, while his eyes glowed with lurid fire; but the maiden quailed not, though she changed her tone of sarcasm and irony to earnestness.

"'With the knowledge of my peculiar condition, which you cannot fail to possess, sir, to me your proposal, whether for your son or yourself, is either cruel mockery or wanton insult; both are equally unworthy of a man of honour, especially when offered to an unhappy woman, who has no means of escaping unprovoked outrage.'

"'By Heavens! madam, you trifle with me,' bellowed the Cavalier, whose courtesy was but lip-service. 'For what do you hold me, that I would regard the beggarly connexion into which you have been trepanned—formed too with a vile traitor, whose head is the forfeit of his crimes, and who shall not, by G—!' and he struck his hand on his sword-hilt, 'much longer cross either your path or mine.'

"It is not in woman's nature not to have felt some degree of trepidation at being exposed to violence flowing from a cause so interesting to her feelings. Alarmed for her lover, Magdalen gazed as if her eyes would have read the inmost heart of her persecutor. Twenty eager questions hovered on the tip of her tongue; but prudence and pride held her in check, and she dreaded to betray by her looks that she was aware of James Rutherford having reached Scotland.

"'You best know whither your menaces point,' she said, after a mental reflective pause—'the extent of your power I am

aware of, though, thank Heaven! it is that which endureth but a moment. From your mercy I expect nothing—ask nothing; and, though discourse is lost between us, I will avow to your face, Sir Marmaduke, once and for ever, that the solemn engagement which it pleases you to deride, was deliberately entered upon, and is ratified by my whole heart and soul, as the dearest hope of my life; and will be upheld by every faculty of my mind, while it shall please God to sustain my judgment under your unmanly oppression.'

"Magdalen turned away to struggle with her rebellious tears; while Sir Marmaduke, by strong constraint, subdued the outward violent expression of his boiling wrath, and said, in a low voice, 'You will think better of it, madam, ere I see you again; the curate of Earlsquhair will wait upon you, and perhaps make matters plainer to your excellent understanding than I can do.' And he went off, locking and bolting the doors outside, and consigning the afflicted young gentlewoman to sorrowful rumination.

"The presence of her adversary had acted as a burning stimulant to Magdalen's spirits, which ebbed low enough when that was withdrawn. So she sat her down on the couch and wept bitterly: but, as she wept she prayed; and where Faith is present, Hope cannot be far off; and where His presence is vouchsafed, Peace cannot be far to seek. It was with Magdalen Leslie in that strong prison; and, securing the doors as well as she could, she fell asleep, like a new-dropt lamb at the bosom of its dam."

"On the same night the careful landlady of the Cleikum Inn, having looked well to her household, and fastened in the doors, the landlord and his guests, among whom was Simon Sloan, prepared to join in worship, as was then the beseeching practice of all serious victuallers and folks in a public line, with the stranger within their gates. The rites of domestic worship, which some consider the most solemn of all modes of social devotion, were not ended, when the thick trampling of horse-hoofs was heard, which set the hostler body and the servant queans a-fidgeting, as, I have often remarked, very little will do in time of prayers; and presently came the thumps of a riding-whip, smiting the door; and the hoarse, peremptory voice of

Sergeant Warrock interrupted the psalm, as he and some of his cut-throat comrades swore they would lay the door on its back, and quell the conventicle, if it were not opened forthwith. These were alarming words at that era; and the landlady maybe whipped away the Bible and the Psalm-books as fast as was seemly, while the troopers came jingling ben to the kitchen, swearing and roaring for drink.

“My blackguards have no time to dally,” said Warrock; “they are escorting the crop-eared lads we ran down yesterday to Edinburgh, where they will be taken care of.”

“Win near to the fire, noble Sergeant,” said Simon Sloan, rising hastily, and with officious observance, as the man of war strode in, looking as if his feather would brush the rigging of the house. “Have ye with you the leddy and the minister?”

“The precious Master Kidd is tied a-cock-horse outby there; and, landlady, I must have your pacing nag. It is wanted on his Majesty’s service, to fetch up Mess John Otter, the curate of Earlsquhair, to whom Sir Marmaduke has intrusted the speedy conversion, to his advantage, of Mistress Magdalen Leslie, together with the lands of Lindores and Lochkeltie, and all parts and pendicles thereunto belonging.”

“Simon Sloan often told how his heart leaped to his mouth at this black news, and sunk again. He was taken aback, thrown down, and totally discomfited; matters were pressed on by fate far too precipitately for his rectifying; he gave the young lady up for lost, and could scarcely conceal his agitation under a forced laugh, while he said, ‘Ay, ay, convert her from Kirk and Covenantan to King and Cavalier, nae doubt; frae Whig damsel into Tory dame.’”

“Somewhere thereabouts,” said Warrock.

“Right, very right—and there will be brows needed at the bridal,” returned Simon. “I never had a lovelier assortment of lawns, cambrics, gograms, Paduasoyes, pearlins of Valenshines, Dresden ruffles, and Barcelona neck-napkins.”

“Let us have a vizey of some of these last,” said Warrock. And Sikker Simmie, ill as he liked the rough customer, durst not refuse his change. A half dozen of the best napkins were thrust into Warrock’s pocket, who spake not a word of either price or payment; but he graciously did say, ‘I dare to say you may drive a brisk traffic at the Tower tomorrow, if you bear a conscience. But stir your stumps, good folks—my fellows must

have refreshment: carry them out ale till they cry, Hold! ’Tis on the King’s service, d—me!’”

“And the Whigs would not be the worse of weeting their whistles either—that is, if they have siller to pay for ’t,” said Simon; “though I care not, for the good of the house, to bestow a stoup of sma’ ale on them mysel’. We in the trafficking line should keep on the square with all sides. We kenna, Sergeant, what us Malignants may need yet, if the Kirk come up and the King gang down.”

“The Sergeant, who had some sympathy with ale-drinkers, though no toleration for Whigs, made no opposition to this benevolence; and Simon accordingly stood pay-master for the copious draughts of which the prisoners refused to partake as his gift.

“Deil be in their sour, unsocial pride!” quoth Simon, returning in haste with the untouched liquor, which he took the freedom to place beside the Sergeant’s tass of brandy.

“The trumpet sounded to muster—the troopers set forward with their charge, as it was deemed safest to pass through the villages under night, rather than exasperate the discontented people with the spectacle of their fellow-subjects in bonds, and too probably going to death. As the packman’s ale, handsomely qualified with brandy, flowed down the Sergeant’s obstreperous throat, his discretion ebbed apace. The man was vain of the wicked trust placed in him, and of his power in his master’s household; and Simon, being a wily body, with his own ends to serve, plied him well with flattery and drink; and he swallowed both greedily. It was not ill to see that, notwithstanding his vaunting, Warrock was, at bottom, dissatisfied with the Knight, or with the rewards of his service; and anxiously did Simon lie in wait for a season to insinuate that honesty might, for once, better suit his self-seeking purposes than villany.

“Hark ye, Simon!” he said, in a tone of drunken confidence. “There’s the devil to pay at the Tower, and no pitch hot. The Master fancies the Knight means him a souple trick—he is sulky. Madame Nan—the proud callet, whom his mightiness decerns to a certain bold fellow, that deserved an honest lass, and a tocher with her, too—is also on her high horse, and off at a gallop, because Sir Marmaduke is guessed to mean Lochkeltie’s daughter for his own private picking, when we have wheezed up this

snivelling subject, Master Otter of Earlsquhair, to whillie-wha the wench, and mumble the marriage mass over them. This is what Madam is like ill to bear; but Nan must conform, like her betters. Winram tolerates no recsants about him.'

"But is not Miss-Leslie troth-plighted to young Redheugh, which is like the first loop thrown on the knot that is aye easy to tie, but kittle to loose? Sir Marmaduke would surely never marry another gentleman's wife?"

"And wherefore not, pray? His blade has slicked harder knots ere now; and I know who will back him—that is, if he make it worth my while.'

"He had not well spoken, when a second messenger arrived in hot haste, to recall Warrock, and take his errand to Earlsquhair. An express had arrived from Thirlstane Castle; another from the magistrates of Dunbar; scouts had come in—something was in the wind more than ordinary, and every voice demanded Sergeant Warrock, who, drunk as he was, lost no time in obeying orders. To the messenger—a sort of butler, whose functions the Sergeant usurped—the agitated Simon proffered the residue of the liquor; and, as nothing was then to be done with the great without gold, nor with the common sort without drink, any more than now, he called for yet another stoup.

"Na, na—nothing can be done up yonder at the Tower, without our richt-hand man,' said the new-arrived, sarcastically. "'Where is Warrock?'" cries the Knight for every thing wanted.—"Send me Warrock," says the Master, when he wishes to smuggle a flask of brandy-wine from the cellar, out of the kennin' of his father. And, as for Madam Nan, she's to get him a'thegither—joy go wi' the bargain they'll have of each other; for she is ae limb of Satan, and he is another. What think ye, Master Simon, of the Prelate harlot swallowing poison-draughts this afternoon, in her passion, because Sir Marmaduke trimmed his beard, and gaed up to the Crow's Nest, to court Redheugh's step-dochter—and is like to marry her;—for, though she be a Whig, she's a bonny lass, and the biggest heires in a' Fife or the Merse. My service to ye again, Master Simon. This house keeps up its auld character for pith o' mant.'

"'Naething to the double ale o' the Tower,' whined the packman, his thoughts wandering and drifting.

"'Ours good ale! We'll need to get the

holms of Lochkeltie and the riggs of Redheugh, to bear the barley first. We're a ruined family, Master Simon, unless we get this gentlewoman to set us right—which never was so likely as now. There's auld Redheugh i' the dead-throws. Word came down the Water he was gone; but he cannot put ower this night. Lady Edgelaw rode down to the Peel-house this evening—sent for express. Weel, he was a kind landlord and a good country gentleman; and the young Laird—in need be nae secret with me—for I found it out myself, and no thanks either to Sir Marmaduke or Warrock—is landed from Holland, about some trade of the rebel exiles, and is lurking about the country-side, in guise of a packman. Oh, hey! Ye are loupin mad at that, Simon; but sit ye still, man.' And he thrust Simon down on the settle. 'It's little he is like to take of your custom owre your head. There is a watch set at the Red Ford, below the Peel-house, and at Randolph's Pass, and scouts out every where, and three hundred merks on his head—so he behoves to be catched; for it is almost certain he will try all risks and put himself in peril to get his father's blessing, and close his eyne.'

"'An' mine will close o' themselves," said the packman, making a fashion to yawn; 'so I must to my pease-straw i' the barn. Many a weary fit, I trow, a poor body like me, in the merchandising line, maun travel to draw a penny. But I'll be your way in the morning.—Bridals are aye cannier than burials for packman billies.'

"So saying, Simon retired; but, when the confidential myrmidon of the Tower, in a half-hour afterwards, proposed setting off for Earlsquhair by the light of a late rising moon, the pacing nag which had been waiting, ready saddled and bridled, had disappeared. Search was fruitless; and the landlady, who had sat up to see her house clear and her doors locked up a second time, made light of the accident, saying that, for companionship, the beast would have followed its stable-fellows, pressed into the King's service for the prisoners, and now far on the road to Edinburgh. The sagacious woman suspected something in the wind, and that Simon had a finger in the pie; but kept herself to herself, according to the idiom of the vernacular. And never, I wot, had the pacing nag on which our dame's great gooddame went to amble to kirk, market, burial, and bridal, (for the Cleikum folk had gentle blood in their veins, both by father's side and mother's

side,) been put to its mettle as that night between this dwelling and the Red Ford, now reckoned five statute miles, which Simon, who was a brisk eel of a subject, long threeped he trotted within the half-hour. However that might be, there was neither watch nor ward set, which both the strong drink in Warrock's head (who, as is spoken metaphorically, was half-seas-over) and the commotion in which he found the household, delayed; and the young gentleman whose blood was thirsted for, as his living presence was a stumblingblock in the iniquitous path of Sir Marmaduke Winram, had put all to the venture, to receive the blessing of his dying parent. It pleased God to restore the aged man's judgment, which had wandered in his grievous sickness, before his spirit departed to the reward of the just; and he knew his son, who was kneeling in sorrow by the bedside, as Simon Sloan beheld, when he reverently slipped into the chamber of death.

"Bless thee, my son!" said the dying saint; "I receive thy return as a token of good. But where is my Magdalen, my twin-blessing, whose smile is aye the bow of promise in my blackened sky?"

"The old man wandered again, and recollection ebbed and flowed for a time like the wavering of an expiring taper, until to the prayer of faith it steadied, and he sent his dying farewell to his wife, and to his daughter his blessing ten times told. He was supported in the bed by his sorrowing sister; and, after a season of rest and quiet, he left it in the charge of his son to give way to wrath, and to leave vengeance to Him who will repay it, and to flee this land of blood, and tyranny, and trampling down—and go down unto Egypt, with all that was near and dear to him, and tarry abroad, until the wicked Herods had ceased from the land, and the indignation was overpast. Ye may be sure this was not the hour in which James Rutherford could say nay, or deny a request so made; but Simon could mark, in the agonized working of his features, the despairing thoughts that were rushing through the youth's mind.

"Flee this dwelling, my dear son," said the old man; "take care for my living ones, and let the dead bury their dead; though I hoped ye might have laid the gray head in the grave in peace. And fear not for our Magdalen: it is borne in on my mind that she will find a speedy and a great deliverance. In the Valley of the Shadow of

Death this hope comforts and stabilises me; and blessed be His name there are glad days coming for Scotland!—Lo! the day breaks and the shadows flee away! The virgin daughter of Zion raises her head from the dust. Ay, a season of peace is dawning for the persecuted household of faith; and every free-born Scot shall yet sit under his vine and under his fig-tree, and none shall make him afraid!"

"The last breath, wafted on the wings of prayer, left the shattered clayey tenement as the clock struck the hour of one; and, following his father's injunctions, young Redhugh, now laird of all, and yet not daring to show his head on his own land, rushed out in his sorrow, followed by Simon Sloan, who was, in a small way, the last faithful friend of this distressed family.

"Whither go ye, sir?" inquired the packman.

"Is that a question to be asked?" returned the young man.

"And they held on the open road leading towards Randolph's Tower, though young Redhugh was at last persuaded to take needful precautions for his own safety, by being reminded of Magdalen's condition, and how necessary his personal liberty was if her enlargement was to be effected. They held on by by-paths on the side of the stream opposite to Randolph's Tower—for, with every holm, and cleugh, and bush, and brake here, young Rutherford was familiar from the days when he had been a gatherer of hazel nuts and a fisher of minnows—until they stood on the rocks over against its gloomy strength, now frowning in the moonlight.

"I could dash myself against these rocks," exclaimed the unfortunate gentleman, "when I think of the prisoner within these walls, and know myself powerless to give her help.—I will dally no longer. I believe, my friend, that your counsels are honest; but they are not for my desperate case. I will to Edinburgh—I will surrender myself—I will wrest the release of Miss Leslie from the hands of the Privy-Council, or perish!"

"A bonny turn ye would do her!" replied Simon. "Get her guidman's neck, that is to be, into the wuddie, and make Sir Marmaduke sure of her! Na, na—we have a better plea than that. There's good hope Miss Leslie has got my bit scart of a letter. Even if Peter Otter, the vermin Prelatic creature, who was a Presbyterian

minister but the other year, and would be a Papist the next, to keep the stipend—even if he should be willing to mumble a marriage, the lady has but to say, No—a thing all womankind have an aptness to from nature, or their mothers, when it strikes in wi' their ain humour. But it will never come that length; even if Sergeant Warrock could not be persuaded to forget his keys for a few minutes, if he found twenty broad pieces in his pouch, dropt as it were by the fairies. Then, Madam Nan would think Miss Leslie's back the best view of her. So ye must not, Laird, give way to Giant Despair. I see it's vain for ye langer to try the pack—ye're found out there. Did I not warn you, in the sma' dealings with the guidwives that were forced on ye, aye to seek a good sikker price, to prig hard, and be rather scrim than lavish of your measure, if ye wished to pass for a true man of our ancient fraternity?

“Nothing could induce me to forego, for one hour, confronting this haughty oppressor, and rescuing Miss Leslie or perishing in the attempt, save the hope which arises from your having already been able to establish a communication with her, and my expectation of the immediate interference of powerful friends for her protection, even among the Malignants themselves.”

“It was finally agreed that, instead of again exposing himself in his assumed vocation, the young gentleman should lurk in the woods opposite the Tower, until Simon Sloan, under cover of his pack and traffic, should again venture, like the dove of the ark, to go forth and spy if the waters had abated, and the Earth raised her green, rejoicing head.

“The activity and zeal which you displayed in warning off the bark, and your personal services to myself, leave me much your debtor,” said young Redheugh; “but the redemption of Miss Leslie were worth more than all I am worth in this world, or ever shall be.”

“Very weel, honourable sir, we can settle that short account afterwards; let us see the work done first. If I could but see you and the young leddy on board Andro Baikie's brig, that blithe sight would far o'erpay my small services. But I maun back to St. Ronan's, and hear what is afoot. If Winram has seen through the flam, this is no country for me.”

“The lassies of St. Ronan's thought Sikker Simon was never to awake that morning;

and, at long last, the mistress went to the barn to shake him up from his straw.

“Ye are snoring there, Simon Sloan, and the auld Laird of Redheugh's dead-deal sent for this morning—Mr. Peter Otter away up to the Tower, to buckle the Knight to Miss Leslie—and our naig ridden all night by the witches or the wirricows! But ye'll ken naething about it?” And the shrewd landlady gave Simon a pawkie look that said much. ‘Ye may trust to me, Simon Sloan, and to a' the folk hereabout. Think ye our hearts are made of whinstones? I came out to the barn to speak privately to you. What *is* to be dune—for flesh and blood can thole nae langer this masterful oppression? The guid, kind, auld laird's gray hairs borne down to the grave with sorrow; and a price set on the stately head of James Rutherford! The cut-throat villain, Warrock, made tear the father's scarce-cauld corpse from the bed, this morning, searching for the son! That bonny, sweet, young thing, Miss Magdalen Leslie, led like a lamb to the slaughter!—Nay, never lift up your threatening finger to silence me, Simon; I carena who hears me, since it has come to this. If the men of St. Ronan's can thole langer, then the women cannot. If they winna use their swords, we maun try our distaffs.’

“Simon found this resisting spirit general throughout the village. Looms stood idle—smithy fires expired—the shoemaker's hammer and the carpenter's plane were silent; for the death of Redheugh and the peril of his son were severely felt in the neighbourhood, and the news of the forced nuptials, which Winram imagined his own profound secret, flew like wildfire, and excited universal, if stifled indignation. But, though there was the low growl of the coming tempest, our canny Scots folks are never rash of their hands—and, perhaps, it is just as well so, as once lifted they are no soon laid.

“Long before Simon Sloan reached Randolph's Tower, the worshipful curate had been called to minister spiritual consolation to that fair and penitent stray lamb of his prelate flock, Madam Anne Clive, with whom death was dealing hard, it was said in the household; though the reprobate, Warrock, remarked, ‘That it was long ere the De'il died at the dike-side—and there would be more news of Nan before she let Sir Marmaduke so easy off, as just to slip away when it best suited him.’ In her chamber of vassailry, the curate had often taken his pleasure at the cards and the dice, and in dainty

refections, and dyed his lips red in the blood of the grape; but it was a changed scene that morning. Instead of the wild paroxysms of the former day, this evil-conditioned, betrayed, and most miserable woman, affected great contrition, and sent petition after petition, beseeching that Sir Marmaduke would, for the last time, see and forgive her. He was in no humour of compliance, and, indeed, violently chafed at the escape of young Rutherford. He upbraided Warrock with treachery, and even threatened him with the dagger he usually wore, when the fellow replied with what he considered insolence. The friendship of the wicked, my friends, is a rope of sand, at best. Words waxed higher and ruder; and Sir Marmaduke in his frantic rage, struck at the man, who, in defending himself, at last struck again, threw down his haughty lord, and rushed from the room like an incarnate fiend.

“‘Where was the Master of Winram?’ was his eager question. And it afterwards was surmised that he had meditated the violent confinement of Sir Marmaduke, and the betrayal of Miss Leslie into the hands of the son. The Master of Winram had rode off alone, at day-break, to a great hunting-match at Borthwick, which would detain him for a week; and, what was more wonderful to the household, Sir Marmaduke had put him liberally in funds. Warrock had probably formed no other plan when he was summoned back to attend his master, in whom low cunning for once took place of the vindictive rage and thirst of revenge which belonged to his character. He apologized for his violence, and declared that Warrock was justified in defending himself, since he had so far forgotten their difference of place as to have first lifted his hand. But there was a vengeful light in his puckered eye, a swarthy streak on the brow, a distension and contraction of the nostril, which betrayed the strife of inward passions, and which Warrock read aright, though he affected to receive the offered apology with much gratitude and humility.

“‘And your prisoner, Warrock, my good fellow—the fair recusant of the Tower—how fares it with Miss Leslie this morning? She must not be disturbed with news of the old man’s death, nor yet with tidings of the cub, until we have hunted him down.’

“‘Of which I don’t despair, if your honour’s but patient. For the lady, she carries herself bravely; and, if she looked

beautiful yesterday, is far more lovely to-day. When I walked up deaf Jenny with the morning meal but now, we found her chanting psalms to herself like a lint-white.’

“‘Thanks, Warrock, for attention to my orders! Poor Nan, they tell me, is dying; but the remembrance of faithful service never dies with me. Other modes may be found to reward you.’

“Warrock bowed. ‘Simon Sloan, the travelling merchant, an’ please you, is here,’ he observed. ‘He begs me to say that he is well provided with such commodities as may befit Miss Leslie’s change of condition, and that he shall be proud to show her his parapharnels.’

“‘For your life, no!—no one shall cross that threshold. But you may yourself carry up his whole stock of trumpery for her inspection. All women are fond of gauds, and they may serve to divert her thoughts.’

“Simon, who afterwards told that he had been saying his neck-verse all the while he sojourned in this hold of violence, affected great reluctance to part sight of his goods in this unusual manner; and he stipulated firmly that they should not be exposed to the risks of any of the cutties about the place, who would think little of whipping out their shears and snipping off a suit of Mechlin pearlins—an article of choice delicacy, which he recommended to Miss Leslie, and of which he had sold the other half last week at Newark, to the ladies there.

“The pedler’s commodities renewed Magdalen’s hope of farther intelligence. They were searched over and over, until Simon became so clamorous for the restitution of his pack, that Sergeant Warrock, fancying the lady ought to have made up her mind in four hours, ventured to hint as much when he carried up her dinner; and, farther, that poor Simon was peculiarly anxious about his Flanders lace, in which so much of his money was embarked, and of which he would let her have a great bargain, as he wished to send to Holland, by a sure friend going in a few days, for fresh purchases, and on a clean new score.

“Magdalen, trying to extract a meaning from this enigma, craved farther time for inspection, and again with trembling hands undid the lace card. How welcome was Simon Sloan’s three lines—‘Be of cheer, madam! Friends are not far off. If driven to extremity, crave to be publicly married as befits your rank and fortune, in the neighbouring chapel of St. Ronan’s.’ Magdalen

was musing on this intimation, though resolved not to act upon it till driven to extremity indeed — when the finery and fal-als were again called for, and she directed some purchases to be made in her name, for which she said ‘she knew Master Simon would give her credit until better times;’ while Warrock gallantly protested all was at his master’s cost, who, with her good pleasure, proposed to inquire for her health that same evening. Magdalen protested vehemently against this visit. She was sick and worn, she said, and entreated for one day to be excused.

“‘I verily believe she wishes to be dabbling by herself at these confounded pearlins,’ said Warrock to his master, ‘and I consider this a lucky whim, as nothing now prevents me from setting out to look after her spark.’

“The duty was too pressing to be delayed. Permission was instantly granted, and he went alone, for Sir Marmaduke had sufficient occupation in writing letters and despatches, and preparing his friends to bear him out in the criminal act he meditated. The long and secret view which he had obtained of his victim—for, as ye may guess, it was Sir Marmaduke who caused the preternatural tremors of Magdalen on the previous day, when his baleful eye first fell upon her—had quickened his purpose and fixed his resolution.

“‘This is a creature who, with three months’ polishing, and a few weeks at Court, a gentleman may hold up his face for,’ was his secret thought; and the high spirit displayed by the maiden at their interview, confirmed the impression made by her beauty and natural air of refinement. Opposition to that indomitable will, which it was the madness of this violent man never to submit to any law, human or divine, whether of reason or justice—gave fresh zest to the enterprise. Nor was time to be lost; for already there were intimations from Edinburgh that Miss Leslie’s friends and kindred were clamorous in demanding that she should abide the consequences of her alleged breach of the laws against conventicles, in more decorous keeping.

“‘I’ll woo her as the lion woos his bride,’ was the proud and swelling boast of this presumptuous spirit. ‘I began with desiring her convenient fortune for my family—I am maddened with love for herself,’ he said to Mr. Peter Otter, the time-serving priest. ‘There is absolute fascination in her blushing, demure looks, and dove-like, downcast eyes.

Her glances intoxicate like philtres and love-potions. You fancy me bewitched, Master Curate—it is verily so; but, by Heaven, the sorceress shall burn in the same fires that consume me! By Heaven and Earth, she shall be mine ere twenty-four hours elapse!’

“‘The damsel will be much favoured,’ replied the servile priest.

“Randolph, the degraded son of Sir Marmaduke, though so weak in intellect as to be sometimes deemed imbecile, was not without a spice of that spurious wisdom, low knavish cunning, in his mental composition, which just enabled him to perceive that his father had some secret object in sending him away at this juncture, and to guess it out. He also felt instinctively that ‘Madam Nan,’ usually his enemy, could, if willing, prove an able ally. He sought her privately, and, while his father and the household supposed him at a distance, he remained secreted in the suite of apartments appropriated to her use. She was found in apt mood. Her severe indisposition had failed to move the pity of her sated paramour, who not only excused himself from visiting her, but ordered Warrock to close up the private communication which connected their respective chambers. This act of repudiation, as she considered it, the varlet performed with the arrogance by which mean and vulgar minds revenge the whips and scorns inflicted by such vicious usurpers as this Southron concubine.

“‘Yes!’ she exclaimed, when the simple youth unfolded his object in clandestinely seeking her aid to circumvent his father and the confidant, Warrock—‘yes! thus does Sir Marmaduke Winram treat his only son. You, sir, he remorselessly makes over to poverty and contempt, while he riots in the wealth that should be yours; and, by a refinement of unnatural villany, in marrying the woman destined by himself for your arms, raises up a new race to undermine your rights of birth! While me!—ME!—he consigns like a cast-off, worthless suit, to his insolent jackman!’

“Her large, fierce, black eyes, whose brilliance had so often been toasted in the orgies and revels of this doomed house, alternately dilated and contracted, scintillating with the fury of rage and revenge, the more frantic that it was felt impotent, until now that the folly of Randolph Winram had opened a new way. ‘You have sometimes deemed me your enemy, Mr. Randolph,’ she said, with greater calmness—‘put my devotion to the proof now. Let me guess

your purpose: you would marry the heiress once destined for you. Is it not so?"

"To be sure I would, Madam Anne—my father himself said so. Miss Leslie must surely be the beauty of the world to have converted Sir Father o' the sudden to the Whigs, and made him forsake you."

"You shall marry her still," cried the woman, unheeding the close of his remark.

"By my faith, I hope so!—but how, or when?—My father will kill me."

"This night, or never, you shall so woo her that she shall be fain to consent. Sir Marmaduke has ordered the banqueting hall to be prepared for a solemn festival. His bridal cannot even be deferred until the corpse of Anne Clive is carried forth from her betrayer's floor. My charge of family jewels and papers has been reclaimed—wrested from me!—me! the wronged, the scorned wretch his falsehood has made. I have been insolently warned, and through a menial's lips, that I cannot remain beneath this roof for another day—consistently with *decorum*. The word, methinks, comes gracefully from the lips of Marmaduke the bridegroom!"

"This is nought to me, Madam Anne," interrupted the stolid person to whom the frantic woman appealed for sympathy.

"True—most true—nought to any one—and least of all to you. You cannot, however, marry this new paragon without seeing her. Think not, young gentleman, that I have for all these years been the domestic friend of Sir Marmaduke without sharing in his secrets—ay, even in the mysteries of Winram's Wing. I shall be your midnight guide; all unable as I am, I shall lead you to the secret chamber communicating with this girl's prison. It is for youth and gallantry to win and wed her."

"If there were dark meanings in this speech, made tenfold more dark by the fiendish glance which gave it force, they were probably lost on the youth, who had been plied with wine, and stimulated by the flattery and sarcasm adapted to his rude nature. Two hours past midnight was the time appointed. Mystery, excitement, and a feeling of curiosity which rose in his breast, combined to blind Randolph to the perilous consequences of his daring enterprise.

"You have the Blue Beard keys, Madam Anne?" he said in surprise. "Is it then true that you can so drug Sir Father's night-posset, that he sleeps when you will? These are the secrets of Court ladies."

"Master of Winram, pry not too closely into the nature of secrets which give the power of serving you.—Be silent, and follow me."

"She took the dark lantern, and they cautiously proceeded. Her pulse throbbed with the intensity of fevered blood and strongly excited passions, while her enfeebled limbs shook under her; yet she paused not, save to recover needful breath. The lonely passages were threaded, the narrow winding stairs were scaled, locks and bolts gave way to her morbid strength, while her companion shrunk too late from the consequences of his rashness. They stood in the strong chamber.

"Hist!" whispered the maddened woman, and she guided the quailing youth to the aperture in the wall, which commanded a view of the adjoining chamber. A night lamp, burning feebly, showed the forlorn girl, dressed, but apparently asleep, with her head reclining on the arm of her chair.

"Here I leave you," whispered the demoniac: "Yet methinks you scarce look the joyous wooer. Courage, Master of Winram! It is not with that cream-face and loutish air your father, Sir Marmaduke, wins or subdues women to his will. There, look—I have undrawn the bolt which divides you from this Sleeping Beauty. Now, good-night! You shall be released anon. The same priest who has come to minister at my deathbed, and to pronounce the nuptial benediction of the father, waits the pleasure of the son."

"The feeble-minded Randolph would now gladly have retraced his steps; but his more energetic companion allowed no time for repentance. Like a spirit she suddenly vanished, locking him into the chamber, in spite of his whispered entreaties; and, without a pause, she sought Sir Marmaduke. Her dire vow of vengeance was breathed over his sleeping head, while the candle, which waved about, glared in his unclosing eyes.

"Waken, Sir Marmaduke! and thank your stars, ingrate as you are, that fate has left you one watchful and faithful friend."

"Pshaw! 'tis you, Nan. How dare you, wench, venture this foolish intrusion? Then your dangerous illness was feigned, as I supposed? Get you back to bed, Anne—I am not disposed for trifling; and beware how you task my good nature in this fashion again."

"I scorn your insinuations, as I do your

menaces. *Your* affairs—that which concerns your interest, your honour—has dragged me from my dying bed—Ay, you will listen now. Call up your faithful Warrock, Anne Clive's intended master—ay, for that, too, I rest your debtor. You would marry the heiress whose person you have imprisoned. Even on this your bridal eve, your happy rival converts your prison into the chamber of dalliance. For this, too, thank your faithful, your convenient Warrock.'

"'Woman, you rave,' cried Sir Marmaduke, incredulous, yet perplexed.

"'I speak the words of truth. Do you fear to abide the proof? If so, turn ye round and sleep again.'

"'Though your tale is false as hell, I will be satisfied!' exclaimed the knight, and he snatched the huge bunch of keys which lay on the table by his bedside, left there by Warrock before his departure. Sir Marmaduke found the first door locked; but another and another of those at the feet of the different flights of stairs was found open. He ascended with hasty strides. Magdalen's prison-chamber was locked, and so was the strong room. He applied the key to the lock of the latter. It gave way; but his entrance was strongly opposed from within. He could distinctly hear the strong, quick breathing of the powerful person who resisted. He paused for an instant to form his plan. The powers of hell were busy with him then. The *Wierd of the Winrams* was sealed.

"'He shall perish in his guilt,' was the demoniac impulse; and suddenly Sir Marmaduke double-locked the very door he had just tried to force; and, unlocking Magdalen's door, and violently dashing away whatever impediments her slender arms had raised for her protection, he stood in the middle of her chamber, half-dressed, and in great disorder, bearing a candle in one hand, and in the other his unsheathed sword. Miss Leslie had awoke in horror at the crash of the furniture she had piled against the door; and now, uttering piercing shrieks, she gazed on the terrible apparition, as if an incarnate fiend had started up before her. A minute dispelled supernatural terror, but recalled her wandering senses only to make her situation more terrible. She writhed and recoiled, as if she would have shrunk from him into the wall, towards which she crept backwards and backwards.

"'Pardon me, madam, if I have too abruptly broken in upon your pious orgies—

the tender moments of your religious courtship,' said her visiter, in a low tone of bitter sarcasm, and ill-suppressed rage. 'Have I interrupted the innocent psalm-singing meetings of plighted lovers before the hour that the obliging go-between warned them to part?'

"'You speak riddles which I care not to comprehend,' returned Magdalen, trembling, and yet affecting courage and calmness.

"'I speak riddles, madam! Let me speak plainer: Where lurks the traitor who has suborned my servant to betray his trust? No wonder the villain, thus sheltered, has hitherto eluded me. Thanks, madam, to your tender care!'

"'I seek not to know your meaning, sir,' cried Magdalen: 'Why am I thus subjected to indecent, to intolerable outrage? Why is my chamber entered at midnight in this rude fashion? For God's sake, Sir Marmaduke, leave me, if you would not kill me on the spot by your presence!' And tears of agony and wounded modesty and pride burst forth in floods.

"'By my honour, madam, but the cool audacity of the godly is truly edifying! Have I indeed ventured to disturb your midnight assignations before your pious souls were satisfied?'

"'This is surely the language of madness,' thought Magdalen; and, again clasping her hands, she said, in a soothing voice, 'For Heaven's sake, leave me!—leave me but till day breaks! I'll meet you in the chapel of St. Ronan's; I will do any thing—only leave me now. I am a poor helpless thing; not worthy your care; nor yet your anger. If you would not see me expire before you, leave me!' And she wept in silence, while Sir Marmaduke, bending his dark visage over her, whispered—

"'Dare you affirm that this villain has not been here? That—see, madam'—and he snatched her hand, and pointed it in the direction of the aperture—'that he lurks not near you now!'

"'What villain, Sir Marmaduke? Surely you are disturbed in mind? What shall I do for you? Let me ring the Tower bell, and summon Warrock!'

"'Ha! Warrock—the faithful Warrock! No, madam, I will have no alarm sounded—no warning to auxiliaries. The traitor, James Rutherford of Redheugh, is concealed in my house, hidden here from my just vengeance—and you know it.'

"Magdalen became fearfully agitated. Could James, indeed, be near her? Had

his affection exposed him to peril in an attempt to see or relieve her? She coloured and trembled like a guilty thing, and now dreaded to utter a word, lest she might do some irreparable mischief.

"I ask again, madam, has not that felon and traitor passed the night with you—yesterday—the former night—in this chamber? Verily 'tis wise to creep close to the fireside when the chimney smokes—all Scotland had not been so safe a place of refuge for that outlaw as this house."

"You are distracted, sir," said Magdalen, rallying, 'nor shall I permit this stain to rest on me for one moment, though coming from so foul a source. No man has entered this chamber, save one who disgraces the name of man. I know not where the gentleman to whom you allude may be. Him your opprobrious epithets cannot injure; but God forbid that he too were beneath your roof!"

"A fiendish, exulting laugh burst from the half-maddened Cavalier, as he caught the struggling maiden. 'Then my charming Puritan is still my own! You swear, Miss Leslie, that you have not seen this person?"

"Let me go—for Heaven's sake—for mercy's sake!" cried Magdalen. 'I will swear!' But, disengaged and pausing, she added—'I am not of those who can tamper lightly with the sanctity of an oath, or presumptuously appeal to Heaven.'

"You cannot then swear it?"

"I will solemnly affirm on my honour, if that will satisfy you, that I have not been so happy as to have seen the gentleman you speak of. Alas! how should I?"

"The pathos of her tone of regret inflamed her tormentor.

"I will have you swear it!" he hoarsely whispered; and, clutching at her arm, he looked in her face with an expression which made her shudder and shut her eyes.

"I swear I have not seen James Rutherford," she faltered out.

"That he is not here?" demanded Sir Marmaduke, fiercely.

"I swear it!" she again whispered; and overwrought nature could hold no longer—she sank on the floor in a swoon.

"Doubly traitress, his blood be on your head!" he cried. And he flung her slender, inanimate form under his arm, and carried her away, deliberately closing and locking every door of the tower in his descent.

"At the last—at that fatal iron door which cut off Winram's Wing from the

mansion, a distant yell was heard echoing through the stairs and long winding passages. Sir Marmaduke laughed aloud like an exulting demon, little witting that he heard his own doomed son's maddened cries.

"He bore the still insensible girl into the banqueting room, and laid her on a couch. The windows of the apartment overlooked the cataract, and its boiling caldrons. He deliberately opened a casement, and dropped the fatal keys into the abyss.

"Sink like my foe!—Neither heaven nor hell can now move me from my purpose. I take this bond of pride against relenting humanity.'—*The Wierd of the Winrams*, was gathering fast around the doomed race.

"The household was roused, and a female domestic and the curate summoned to recover and prepare the maiden for her bridal. She listened in stupor to the wily, supple, and flattering discourse of the priest, and passively suffered the woman to arrange her hair and her dress.

"A sumptuous morning repast was meanwhile served in the banqueting room; and thither Sir Marmaduke, now attired in the gorgeous garbs of the period, conducted her through the marshalled servants, hastily attired in their best equipments. The family coach had been hastily prepared; every horse was ordered out, and every man in attendance that could swell the number of bridal riders. Installing Magdalen in the place of honour, Sir Marmaduke, enacting the part of the gallant Cavalier and joyous bridegroom, took his seat by her side; and, if her pale features and distracted air betrayed inward discomposure, it might, to strangers and to the servants, have seemed no more than was natural to her condition.

"When the repast was over, Sir Marmaduke, accompanied by the curate, again ostentatiously led the passive maiden through the line of domestics, to a small apartment, fitted up as a chapel or oratory.

"Every thing has been prepared," he said, looking round—'ring, altar, book, cushion. Prying eyes and idle observances are, at best, a tax upon the felicity of a season like this. I fancied that by this privacy I might better consult the delicacy of your feelings, Miss Leslie; though my fellows shall have their gallop to church, nevertheless. Nay, a million thanks for that sweet, consenting smile! Proceed, sir, with your office. Every minute seems an age that delays my happiness.'

"The expression of mortal agony which

quivered for an instant on the features of the maiden, and which he chose to interpret into a yielding smile, gave place to stronger emotion, as he attempted to lead her forward, that the marriage service might commence.

“‘Either this foolish jest is carried too far, or you, sir, are strangely practised on,’ said Magdalen, fixing her eyes upon the curate. ‘True, I am illegally detained in this house by Sir Marmaduke Winram; but there his tyrannical power over me ceases. I am neither so abject nor quite so helpless as he deems; nor can the crime he meditates be perpetrated with impunity, enslaved as Scotland is. Though you, sir, have deserted the faith of our fathers, and follow the Prelatic doctrine, you still profess yourself a Christian minister. In the name of your sacred office, then, and as you value peace of conscience, proceed no farther in this matter! I call upon you to succour me!—Against these unhallowed rites I shall protest, before heaven and earth, till the last breath leaves my body.’

“The curate was dismayed and silent.

“‘Proceed with your trade!’ cried the knight, in his most imperious tones, and knitting his brows—‘there will be time enough hereafter for the lady to play off such coy airs and caprices.’

“‘Surely, madam, this matter has gone too far between my honoured patron and yourself, to permit retreat now,’ whined the sneaking priest. ‘I take it for granted, that, whatever young ladies may fancy it becoming and maidenly to pretend, they know their own minds ere the minister is sent for. My function is too grave to be trifled with.’

“‘Grave and holy, and not to be desecrated to the sanction of a crime so foul as marriage between me, the affianced wife of Mr. James Rutherford, and him you call patron. No power on earth shall make me the perjured wife of Sir Marmaduke Winram. The very dross which he covets makes it needful that he should not at once take my life, were I his wife to-night; and, while I live, to all Scotland would I denounce the hypocritical wretch who, under the guise of religion, would act as the vile pander to the lust and rapacity of our tyrants.’

“‘Beshrew me, madam, but this passes!’ exclaimed Sir Marmaduke. ‘This virago is one of the meek, maidenly Whig damsels! But I shall find a way to tame the pretty termagant.’

“The curate interposed; he pulled his patron aside, and whispered in his ear.

“‘Well, well,’ returned Sir Marmaduke, ‘I leave you five minutes for persuasion. I will, meanwhile, to see poor Nan, since you are sure she is really dying; and you say she has some secret for my own ear. I owe something to her devoted affection.—Strange caprice of women, that one should affect aversion where another dotes and maddens with despairing love!’

“He locked the priest and the maiden into the cabinet; and, heated and chafed, but trying to look composed, he proceeded to the darkened chamber of his paramour, whose sands were ebbing fast.

“‘How now, Nan?’ he said, taking the clammy, yet burning hand, stretched out to greet him, more struck than melted by the expression of fretful pain and ghastly horror which alternated in the once beautiful countenance.

“‘You are come at last, Sir Marmaduke—thanks for the last kindness you can ever grant on the entreaty of the once idolized Anne Clive! Do I see in you a married man?’

“‘Tush, Nan!—of that hereafter. We must part—but be you wise and well, my girl, and you shall never lack a friend. Take your eyes off me, though—I don’t like their expression; yet I never saw them more lustrous, nor your complexion more brilliant—you are, in sooth, a rare beauty, Nan—of the brunette species; and, though Warrock, whom the Devil confound! has proved traitor, we shall find you a good husband yet in Scotland.’

“There is a coarseness and an obtuseness of moral sentiment in hardened profligates and debauchees, which render them unfit to comprehend the feelings and pride of even a depraved and shameless woman. The fascination of the basilisk was in the glance of contempt and vengeful hate which the wretched leman darted on her companion in iniquity; but it fell unmarked. He was, as ever, absorbed in self.

“‘There was a secret, Anne, you wished to impart to my private ear—so says the curate—let me hear it now.’

“‘There was a secret, Sir Marmaduke; but first—and she clasped his hand—‘I have one last request to make—the very last. Our sins have been mutual; so let the expiation be. In humility and penitence let us receive together the purifying and reconciling rites of the church—you, before

you go to the altar, and I before I go hence: to be no more!

“Sir Marmaduke, reckless reprobate as he was, startled at this.

“‘No, no, Nan! In the farce of life, the time demands quite different parts from you and me; but I will pledge you, nevertheless, for auld langsyne—the rather that I am burning with thirst and devilry. I believe the wine will hiss in my throat.’ He seized and raised a large silver goblet, brimming with wine, which stood on the table.”

“‘Touch not that cup!’ cried the woman. ‘Profane it not—the wine is consecrated!’

“‘Tush, Nan!’ ’tis never a hair the worse of the priest’s mumbling, as he meant not his mass for me.’ He drank long and greedily. ‘Ha! by my soul, generous liquor, though mine own. Come, Nan, now for your secret; but, ere I say farewell, you shall pledge to the Bridegroom—you shall not bear malice.’ He held the cup to her dry, quivering lips, and she greedily sucked rather than drank to the very dregs. The goblet dropped from her fingers, and rolled on the floor. She burst into a fit of shrill, delirious laughter, to which the chamber and the long vaulted passages rung in frightful echoes.

“‘I have pledged my Bridegroom!’ was her shriek—the secret is out—the *Wierd of the Winrams* is on you!’ She fell back in strong convulsions, in the strife of which she died as she had lived.

“Sir Marmaduke probably wished to believe her delirious; but a gloomy foreboding passed on his mind. He strove to shake it off—he drank more wine.

“‘The traitor in yonder tower is safe enough,’ was his thought. ‘Never again shall he cross my path, nor plot against his lawful prince. This stubborn girl shall bend to my will, and short space will reconcile a woman’s vanity to a brilliant fortune. Hell itself cannot thwart my purposes. Even a public wedding now suits me well. We will to church! No one shall dare whisper that her inclination has been forced in this matter.’

“When Sir Marmaduke rejoined the curate and the lady, he abruptly announced his change of resolution,—‘Miss Leslie shall be gratified. Our wedding shall be public. We will have no foul play.’

“Instantly the household was in a tumult; and, in an hour, the cavalcade mustered. Sir Marmaduke lifted the forlorn maiden into the carriage, and the curate took his place beside her, and closed the windows;

Sir Marmaduke mounted his high-blooded Arabian horse, the gift of the Duke of York, which pranced and curvetted in its pride, as if to give the cavalier an opportunity to display his mastery in horsemanship before the eyes of his bride.

“‘Heigh! but ours is a blithe bridegroom, Simmie!’ cried bleared Elspat Swinton, the henwife. ‘And ye are mounted, too—a fore-rider!’ The old crone had hobbled to the gate, to see the gallant cavalcade issue from the avenue. ‘Set up packman bodies riding bluid-beasts as if they were gentle Swintons or Winrams! And he is off like a fire-flaught, to warn the folk o’ St. Ronan’s, nae doot, o’ our braw bridal that’s comin’.’

“The train swept by.

“‘A blithe bridegroom, Elspat!’ cried Simon Sloan’s friend, Sarah Stobbie, who stood with Elspat; ‘he is mair like a fey man, rampaging and caprioling round the coach that gait. I wuss, I wuss bonny Miss Leslie may have gotten fair play among them. When I helped to prin her and busk her, but e’en now, she was liker a cauld corp than a blooming bride.’

“‘An’ it’s true that the breath is out of that painted Jezabel and harlot, Mrs. Nan, at last? Did ye try her with a looking-glass? It will be an uncanny thing to bring a new-married wife hame to her ain house, and a corp lying in’t. Sergeant Warrock, when he comes back, will surely dispose o’ the body before they return frae the kirk—unless the de’il o’ the wirricows flee away wi’t. Heigh! heigh! heigh!’ And the henwife half-choked with feeble spiteful laughter. ‘Madam Nan was unco clever at counting the chickens and the eggs—she’s gaie to her lang ’count hersel. She threatened to tak Elspat’s bit post ower her head—let her look to her ain. Heigh! heigh! heigh, Sarah!—I never saw gude come o’ them that crossed me—I aye got my wuss o’ them.’

“‘Save us, Elspat! binna sae devilish, and you sae auld; though I’m no believing you the witchwife the countryside says.’

“‘Witchwife, say ye, lass? Na, I’m nae uncanny body; but I somehow aye got my wuss o’ a’ them that crossed me or contred me—I dinna ken how it’s. And I’ll hae’t o’ Randie Winram, too—the graceless young villain that killed my cat and scored me aboon the breath wi’ his whittle; and black Warrock standing by laughing. I’ll get my will o’ them baith, master and man.’

“‘For Gudesake, Elspat, girn no that gait sae spitefu’ like! Ye shall put nane o’

your cantraps on the Master. Do as ye like wi' the other blackguard. But it's time I were looking after the dinner. An' they ride that gait, helter-skelter, they'll be back frae the kirk ere the broche begin to spin, and Simon Sloan will win the bruse.'

"As the bridal came in sight of the chapel of St. Ronan's, an ill omen met them. A long funeral train of country-people was seen leaving the burying-ground. Some were mounted, but many more were on foot, wrapped in their *mauds*, as the chequered shepherds' plaids of the south were then called, as now in our day. The curate, leaving the carriage, beckoned his patron aside.

"I like not yonder gathering of Whigs, Sir Marmaduke. Your eyes are better practised in war and strategy than mine; but I should not wonder if there were both swords, carabines, and pistols, under yon flutter of gray plaids. Are you quite well, my honoured patron? You seem evil-disposed. Had we not better turn back? The events of this morning have agitated you.'

"Armed!" cried the knight, carelessly. 'Why, the gray geese mean to give the bride a *feu de joie*, I presume, after having buried the Laird of Westercraft's grand-dame. It is the country usage; let us make haste. I do feel mortally unwell and disposed for home.'

"Had we not better——"

"Out upon you, craven!" interrupted the knight, angrily; 'you cannot mean it. I would not now turn back if all the muir-land Whigs in Scotland were embattled before me. I have been inactive of late—the churls have forgotten the terror of Winram's name. You'll see I'll but hold up my staff, and the bear broke loose shall take to his hind-legs and dance the saraband before his old tamer.'

"So saying, he struck the spur into his horse, and galloped to the church stile, his attendants pressing hard after him. Simon Sloan, who already stood there with two or three villagers, set up a cheer, which was gaily returned by the bridegroom's followers.

"The funeral train seemed to have dispersed; and the wedding party dismounted and followed Sir Marmaduke, between whom and the curate the bride was borne rather than led into the church. Her conductors recoiled for an instant. A coffin, covered by its wide floating pall, rested on trestles before the pulpit, and by it stood a tall, muffled, and armed mourner.

"This is an unpleasant rencontre,' whispered the alarmed priest—"let us retire until the chapel is cleared of the burial folks.'

"I will not retire,' said Magdalen Leslie, recovering from the apparent stupor into which she had fallen; 'this is the burying-place of the Rutherfords of Redheugh. Oh, welcome the sanctuary of their sepulchre rather than the marriage-bed you would prepare for me!'

"As she spoke, the chapel-door closed behind them with a crash, and retreat was cut off; but Warrock had entered.

"Sir Marmaduke, you are a dead man!" was his violent exclamation, as he approached his master; and the knight drew the pistols from his belt, one of which he levelled at the mourner, who was advancing—the shot had been drawn! with the other, he struck with the strength of madness into the hard skull of his liegeman, crying—"Hence to the hell which has rendered up this damned traitor!" With a last effort, he grasped the shoulder of Magdalen, as if to tear her away from the advancing stranger, into whose arms she sprang.

"James!" was the brief exclamation of momentary, indescribable rapture, ere Magdalen was claimed by her mother, and hurried into the vestry, while the confusion in the chapel rose louder and louder.

"Sir Marmaduke had sunk, overpowered with the agonizing illness which had been dealing with him for the last hour, while young Elliot of Elshieshiels, and another stout yeoman—who had pinioned his arms behind—attempted to bind him. It was long laughingly remembered that Simon Sloan, at this time, whispered, 'I darena lay a finger on his honour; but here's a bit gey teuch towie.' And he grinned, as he stretched the rope, to try its strength.

"Lay a hand on him, and I'll cleave you to the brisket!" said Warrock, who had been only stunned by his master's parting love-token, and who now raised him tenderly in his arms. 'His dead-ill is on him. Let him alone. See how he writhes and foams! He is poisoned, I tell you. That hell-bitch who has gone before him has been his death.'

"The dying man muttered some inarticulate words, while his eyes rolled frightfully in their sockets, and his soul seemed to pant with anxiety to be understood. He, no doubt, wished to tell that the prisoner he had doomed to a fearful death was his own son, and not James Rutherford, as he had believed. 'What said ye, my honoured master?—

Winram's Wing! Alack! he is raving,' said Warrock. 'Ho, there, ye villains! If ever ye had good at Winram's hands, ride for doctors, as if grim Death were behind you. Send an instant express to the Master of Winram.'

"The wretched man became dreadfully convulsed. He was carried out, and placed in the coach, to be conveyed home. It was said that the last breath went out of him as he was carried over his own threshold, and that the wind instantly rose, while dreadful yells were heard at the same time to issue from the old Tower. The superstition of the vulgar long had it, that the Enemy of Man had come to claim and bear away the soul of his vassal—of Winram, the manslayer, and bloodthirsty persecutor. Part of the wild tale was soon too fatally explained.

"Warrock locked the corpse of his master, now swimming in blood, into the banqueting hall, and took horse himself to fetch home the Master of Winram.

"Need I tell ye how all that remained of the last Winram was found, months afterwards, by the strangers into whose hands the heritage had passed? Thus the *Wierd of the Winrams* was fulfilled—even while Magdalen Leslie was beholding her father's honoured head laid in peace in the grave, and had been, in the same hour, joined in marriage with his son, standing by his coffin, in the chapel of St. Ronan's. She had yielded to the voice of her mother, who said—'It is now our duty not to lament the dead, but to obey his injunction, and preserve the living ones, for whom his soul travailed. So says your mother, my Magdalen, and so enjoins the man of God, who is ready to perform the office—the friend of your father.'

"'Dispose of me as you will, dear mother,' returned the maiden, hiding her face in her mother's bosom, and, at the same time, extending her hand to James Rutherford.

"The activity of that nimble-witted creature, Sikker Simmie, had provided against all mischances. Fleet horses stood, ready saddled, in the Cleikum stables; and, although the present circumstances of the House of Winram afforded the lovers a small respite from pursuit, they were far from being in safety.

"'Six hours of a good round gallop will bring us in sight of St. Abb's Head, whereabouts Andro Baikie's brig is rocking, and the Flushing sloop no' that far off,' said Simon; 'and I'll back the young guidwife

—that is, saving respect, the young lady o' Redheugh—at a hand-gallop, against Mary Queen of Scots or Catharine Jamfrie, when she has will to the road.'

"Magdalen smiled, even then and there. There was brief time for grief at parting. James Rutherford tenderly drew her away, while her mother poured those blessings and prayers on both in which many joined. In a half-hour, they had lost sight of St. Ronan's; and years elapsed before the exiles again saw old Scotland—though James Rutherford had been in London more than once, on secret business concerning the welfare of the kingdom and the coming over of the Prince of Orange.

"They came home at last, in the train of that great bulwark of Protestant Ascension and Civil Liberty; but a short time at court sufficed Magdalen. She returned to Lochkeltie to her lady-mother, with her three bonny Dutch bairns; and James lagged not long behind. He sat either for the kingdom of Fife, or for Roxburghshire, in the first Parliament after the Glorious Revolution of 1688, and was the very champion of the liberty of the subject. They were still but very young folks; but trial and hardship had wonderfully ripened their judgment, without hardening their hearts. Magdalen Rutherford cared little to speak of her early adventures, save to her husband or her mother; nor yet of the judgment-like dealings with the bloody house of Winram; but Simon Sloan, when he got a choppin of ale in his head, would scree it off. His sojourn in the Lowlands of Holland had given the creature a great insight into his calling; and he married Ailie Elliot, and became a bein merchant and bailie of Cupar, and supported the Whig interest, both in the Council and Convention of Burghs, to the day of his death. The united family of Redheugh and Lochkeltie, no doubt, made so zealous and useful a friend some fitting propine; but what the amount might be was a dead secret; only Simon left his descendants as many acres in the haughs of Leven as now makes a grand flourish on the brass-plate of a door in Edinburgh, and entitles his great-grandson to an esquire's dignity in the almanack. Though Elshieshiels was liberated by the Glorious Revolution after an incarceration of nearly four years, he was never satisfied, to his dying day, that the Immortal William was the warm friend of a Covenanted Kirk that he should have been; nor, indeed, much better than the Papist James VI. himself;

but he got the Mains of Redheugh at an easy rent, and fell calmer as old age drew on."

"And the vagabond Warrock?" inquired one of the Dominie's auditors.

"There was a kything o' good about that swaggering ruffian, too. He hung long upon the Border, countenanced by the Jacobite gentry, for his principles, and his skill in horse ills and the training of fox-hounds and harriers. If there had been such things as poachers in those days, Warrock would have been held one. He was hanged, at last, at Jeddart, for stealing a horse from the Cleikum Inn, (where the ungrateful vagabond got many a meal of meat in his necessity,) which

he sold at Carlisle. The worthy landlord and owner would have let the villain off, and strained sore; while our dame's grandmother swore it was aye believed that, since Sir Marmaduke gave him that clink in the skull, and he had identified the body of the man starved to death in the Tower as that of young Randolph, the Sergeant was not himself at the full moon. But a dour Whig judge was on the assize, who had no mercy for Jacobites; so Warrock shared the *Wierd of the Winrams*, and of all those violent and execrated persecutors of that time, none of whom, according to tradition, came to a peaceful end, and few of whom died in their beds."

NIGHEAN CEARD; OR, THE TINKER'S DAUGHTER.

BY MRS. JOHNSTONE.

THERE is a region of the Highlands of Scotland, lying far beyond the usual range of summer tourists, and comparatively little known even to Southern grouse-shooters or deer-stalkers, which, among the neighbouring clans and the Lowlanders on the border, once bore the name of *Lochnaveen's Country*. Among its own people, when it had a people, this wild and romantic region was called, by the more resonant Celtic appellation of the "Land of the race, [*sliochd*], or, of the sons of the son of Raonull."

Lochnaveen's Country, extending from the centre of the island to the western seas, displays a rare combination of soft and pastoral beauty, with the wild, untamed grandeur for which the scenery of the Highlands is celebrated. There is but one thing wanting:—the distant mountain peaks still rear themselves above the morning mists, or float in the golden ether of noon; the upland loch spreads its translucent waters to the sun; the sinuous frith winds up through the mountain ravines and sylvan glades, and the smaller streams rejoice, each as it hastens down its own glen, to join that abounding river which rolls its placid waters through the broadening strath;—those native pine and birch forests which have twice bowed their leafy honours beneath the golden axe of the Saxon, are springing afresh,—but there is now no human eye to note their

luxuriance. Those grassy banks and hillocks, and desolated *touns* and hamlets,—

"Eternal summer gilds them yet,
But all except their sun is set:"

and Lochnaveen, with all its pastoral softness and romance, and wild grandeur, is to the stranger but a melancholy country. There is no hunter on its hills, no fisher on its waters, no matron grinding with the quern, no maiden singing in the milking-fold—no aged woman plying her distaff in the sunshine—no husbandmen are returning from their daily labours—no little children paddling in the *burns*. A few Saxon shepherds, with their dogs, have taken the place of a numerous and tolerably happy, if not very enlightened feudal, or rather patriarchal population; and judgment must chide with imagination ere one can all at once be reconciled to a change which the progress of society seems to have rendered inevitable, and which, we are bound to believe, must be for the best.

But our tale belongs to a period previous to that complete revolution which sent the broken remnant of Lochnaveen's clan to the rivers and lakes of Upper Canada, or reduced them to solitary units in the aggregate population of lowland cities. In the deserted tract to which our story refers, there remains little to show that a swarm of human beings once found a home in its bosom; yet it is remembered that the Chief of Lochnaveen,

in a cause which he liked, could have led two hundred fighting men into the field. The rude sunken tombstones of a grave-yard placed within a Druidical circle, some remnant of the walls of a massive tower, or *keep*, overhanging the lake, and near which there seems to have been a rude landing-place or jetty, with here and there a few patches of the brighter verdure of the aquatic plants which still point out the trickling fountains of the ruined *Bhalies* or solitary cabins, are all that now remain to tell the traveller of what has been. There is, in particular, one mass of ruins which never fails to arrest the attention of the southern fowler or angler who chances to penetrate the mountain recesses of Lochnaveen's Country: in a correi, or hollow, of the mighty Maam Tamar, as the guardian mountain of the region once was named, he comes suddenly upon what at first sight appears to have been a rude chapel, or as probably a watch-tower, the crumbling remains of which are in summer richly mantled with ground-ivy, ferns, the wild bramble, and the smaller arbutus. One or two scattered yews and cypresses of stunted size, may strike him with more surprise, as these cannot be of native growth. If he inquire into the history of the ruin, and his guide in the hill be a man of intelligence, skilled in the legends of the country, he will be told that this was neither chapel nor tower, but that here stood the *shieling of Donhuil nam Biodag*, i. e. Donald of the Dirk, a once famous hunter and bard, and the Tanist of Lochnaveen. He will be shown that from one opening of the correi this hunter chief could command by far the most magnificent sight which Scottish scenery affords,—the Hebridean Archipelago, stretching northward and southward, and lost in the haze of the Atlantic; while, by another vista, Donald's *cyrie* commanded the mountain passes of the country, the castle of the chief, the fair strath and the narrower peopled glens, with all their blue smokes. If it be remarked, that the heap of stones in this singular spot, seems far too large for the remains of a hunter's bothie, he will learn that this is also the sepulchre of the clansman; and that it is, moreover, the monumental heap of the Tinker's Daughter, the cairn of *Nighean Ceard*. If our sportsman is not satisfied with this, he is, we fear, not likely to receive farther information from his Highland guide; while his imagination may be farther excited by recollecting that this singular name of the "Tinker's Daughter"

is given to one of the most remarkable of the pictures in a rare, small collection which the tourist, with some surprise at its locality, stumbles upon in a ducal hunting lodge in the remote Highlands. This picture is one of the few masterpieces of Art which, once seen, can never be forgotten. It is that of a girl in the dawn of womanhood, attired in a rich Celtic costume, though her touching loveliness shows no decided feature of either the Celtic or the Saxon race. The face of *Nighean Ceard* is such a one as Raphael might have painted in what is termed his "first manner," while his young untainted imagination still bodied forth its pure ideal of youthful womanhood. It is one of those faces which makes the gazer forget its excess of loveliness as his soul drinks in the divine harmonies which breathe from it. And the fascinated beholder may gaze till a new idea mistily arises, as if he viewed that angelic countenance through a thickening atmosphere; as if an overshadowing cloud was gathering over those sweet eyes,—half veiled by their tender lids, and looking down on the bridal ring—until he feel that those "dark unfathomable eyes" too surely—

"Speak of peace to be o'erthrown,
Another's first,—and then her own."

The impression carried away from the contemplation of this remarkable portrait, by persons of imagination and sensibility, will probably be a restless curiosity, not untinged with melancholy; especially when they learn that the Tinker's Daughter was a Saxon lady, fragments of whose mournful history are still floating on the broken traditions of the Northern Highlands.

On each side of the picture of *Nighean Ceard* hangs a portrait,—the three seeming to complete a historical group. One of them is described by the housekeeper of the Hunting Lodge as that of "the Chief of Lochnaveen." It represents a very handsome young man, with the crisp golden locks, complexion like the opening apple-blossom, and the sapphire eyes, bright as a falcon's at gaze, which bespeak the purest blood of Scandinavia,—of those valiant Berserkers and renowned Sea-Kings who conquered, and so long held regal possession of the islands and peninsula of Scotland, after having been expelled from every other part of the British coasts. The other portrait represents a man farther advanced in life, and evidently of Celtic blood; and if any of our readers can remember John Kemble, thirty years since, classically arrayed in the Highland garb, as he towered in his

stately march across the stage in the opening scene of "Macbeth" to strains of wild martial music, then "Donald of the Dirk" stands before his mind's eye. Highland tradition bears that there were two distinct races of the tribe of Lochnaveen, the Dark and the Fair; and here, on each side of the Tinker's Daughter, were seen their last representatives.

Our sportsman or tourist has now seen the monumental heap, and the picture of *Nighean Ceard*; but if, as we take for granted, he is a generous man, he cannot remain long in that part of the Highlands without hearing of her again and again, and still in a way to interest his feelings. As the courteous and grateful, though poverty-stricken Highland matron looks on the unwonted apparition of the "*Schellings Sassenach*," which unexpectedly relieve her extreme destitution, lying in her hand, she will, when supplicating fervent blessings on the giver, exclaim in her native language, in almost the words of a poor Irishwoman, "Oh, sure! — and this to myself is the 'Blessing of *Nighean Ceard*.'"

This has become a sort of proverbial phrase, to those who now use it, though its origin is completely lost, when a northern Highlander would express the deepest sense of unexpected deliverance from the extremity of his worst evils, hunger and cold.

And this brings us to our tale.

The state of the Highlands of Scotland, previous to 1745, and to the abolition of the hereditary jurisdictions, had no parallel among the civilized communities of Europe. While that picturesque state of society still retained all its boldness of outline and fresh glow of colour, it happened, from peculiar circumstances, to attract the notice of the poet Aaron Hill, who, after a life of considerable vicissitude, spent amidst the bustle of the world, and in various and polished society, was plunged for a length of time into the very inner heart of the Highlands, considerably more than a century ago.

Mr. Hill's business, in a country then reckoned more wild and dangerous than the mountains and savannahs stretching between the Mississippi and the great Pacific Ocean are considered at the present day, was to superintend the cutting down of those native forests, whose timber and bark had become an object of speculation to several companies of English merchants. No man could have been found better fitted for the enterprise. Hill was, by constitution, a projector — sanguine and speculative. He also possessed the activity and peculiar intelligence to which

business alone fashions men's minds; and few Englishmen of that day could have carried the same sort of mental preparation into the semi-barbarous North. Besides an extensive knowledge of life and letters, Hill had travelled for several years in Egypt, Palestine, and other eastern countries; and if not by natural inspiration, then by vocation he was a dramatist and a poet, — the JOHN GALT, in short, of a hundred years since.

Hill saw, in all its romantic and fascinating aspects, a state of society which has since been often described; the nobler and bolder lineaments fondly dwelt on, while those harsher features and dark shadings which fell under the eye of the Englishman, have been either dashed from the canvass or very lightly touched.

Among the young persons whose imaginations caught fire from Mr. Hill's enthusiastic descriptions of the wild grandeur of Highland scenery, the inspiration and pathos of Highland music and song, the patriarchal sway and feudal supremacy of chieftains, and the bravery and devotedness of clans, was Sarah Bradshaw:—"The Beautiful Sarah Bradshaw," as she was fondly called in her own circle; and rarely has the epithet been more justly bestowed.

Sarah Bradshaw was the only child of a wealthy London goldsmith. She saw Mr. Hill very frequently; for her father was a principal partner and director of the York Building Company; and ever the discourse between the imaginative girl and the romantic Aaron, was of dark pine forests, splintered mountains, gleaming lakes, and winding glens, with the sprinkling of chiefs and ladies, deer, capercaillie, and clansmen, necessary to give a living interest to the poet's delineations. It was to Sarah like reading Milton's *Comus*, or the most witching pages of Spenser's ethereal imaginings; like living with Miranda in her enchanted island, or wandering with Rosalind in the forest of Ardenne. Sarah could have envied Mr. Hill his greenwood life, his birchen bower by the margin of that enchanted lake, where the wild deer came to drink, and where the cushat crooded, and where those lovely melodies, of which she had picked up a few from Aaron's whistling, rang all day to the maiden's light toil, and the stroke of the woodman's axe on the old gray pines of that primeval forest.

In the window of the small withdraw-

ing-room of a very small house in Lombard Street, and immediately over her father's shop, Sarah was seated one fitfully bright April morning, occupied, or seemingly occupied, in making up a head-dress for her aunt, Mrs. Bridget; stealing, now a few lines of the garden-scene in *Romeo and Juliet*, which lay open on her work-table, now a quick glance at what gay dames and young cavaliers alighted from their coaches, and entered the shop below, and perhaps one more furtive at the large mirror, which reflected her whole *petite* figure, and all the substantial luxuries and tasteful decorations of her gay and pretty apartment; not more gay and pretty than its youthful mistress, as she sprang up, and, screening herself behind the drapery of a rich window-curtain, stole a yet closer view of the very handsome young man—"a young gentleman of very striking figure indeed," was her mental reflection—whom her father followed to the shop-door, and held there for a few seconds in earnest conversation. A profusion of golden, short curly hair, breaking round a face of the richest bloom, a nose slightly aquiline, and the small delicate mouth, and round, cleft chin of an Apollo, tempted the maiden to a yet nearer inspection, when "the hawking eye," the bright, sapphire, piercing eye, appropriate to such a face and complexion, pounced upon the peeping damsel, and, with a heightened colour and slight flutter of nerves, Sarah drew back as the young man very slightly touched his hat to her.

Mr. Bradshaw, at dinner,—then taken by London citizens at the fashionable hour of one o'clock,—could recollect of no gentleman who wore his "own curling, golden hair without powder;" and as Sarah's sly interrogatories—for she intended them to be very sly—disturbed his ordinary fifteen minutes' nap before going back to his shop precisely at three o'clock, he told her rather gruffly that he had something else to note, than either the eyes or noses of his customers.

"I dare say, my dear, it might be Lord John Montacute. He is getting his aunt Lady Betty's jewels set for his bride, Miss Courteney," said Mrs. Bridget Bradshaw, the sister of the goldsmith: "The family jewels go to the elder branch. All the Montacute family are sandy-haired."

"Sandy-haired, dear aunt! this was hair of sunbeams!"

"That may be, my dear child, though I

can't say I ever saw hair like sunbeams, often as I have been employed in plaiting hair of all shades for lockets, rings, and pins, for my grandfather, father, and brother. BRADSHAW & BRADSHAW is not a firm of yesterday, Sarah: we can, I have heard my poor father say, trace the company almost up to Shore, the husband of the unhappy Jane Shore you have seen in Covent Garden Theatre, my love."

Sarah heeded not her aunt's antiquities of the firm: her fancy was still disporting with the tangles of that "hair of sunbeams." "How noble and picturesque a figure were this—a hunter or an archer among Mr. Hill's wild-wood glens of the Highlands!"

The dignity and antiquity of the firm were, on this afternoon, quite lost on Sarah, though, in general, she entertained a becoming, if reasonable, value for the consequence she derived from the great wealth and the local respectability of her long-established family.

In ordinary circumstances, a new dress, a *drum*,—as a fashionable assembly was then called,—or a night's sleep, might have freed Sarah's fancy from "the tangles" of the stranger's hair. The impression was not, however, effaced when Mr. Hill on this afternoon appeared, self-invited, as he often did, at Mrs. Bridget's tea-table; to which, indeed, his chief attraction was the sweetness, sprightliness, and romance of a charming young woman, whom he had known from her infancy, and loved as if she had been his favourite niece, or younger sister; whose romantic tendencies he had helped to inspire and foster, and, above all, who understood and listened to him with evident pleasure.

"Ah, ha, sparkler! I have caught something worth showing you at last. I give you three guesses, fair Sarah: what is it, now?"

"Verses to the air I played you last night?—I know the wares you deal in, good uncle. Perchance your last ode to tear up into nice crispy papillotes; a fresh pot of mignonette for my cockney-balcony; or a mandarin, or other China monster, for my chimney-piece?—No bounds to your bounty, I know," said Sarah, laughing.

"Nor to your gratitude, my saucy mistress; at least since I presented you, fifteen years ago, with that little gilt Dutch-built husband of sugar-paste, at Bartlemy Fair, which you crushed to pieces in a pretty rage, because it did not speak and look like 'a right true man.' I have caught you a

'right true man' to-day, Sarah,—one of the finest-looking fellows I ever met with in any country,—Lochnaveen, a north-western chief: a real, *live* Highland Chief, Sarah."

"Heavens!" cried Sarah, dropping the Mechlin frill at which she plaited.

Mr. Hill smiled at what he imagined the effects of his former poetical discourses on the Highlands; and old Bradshaw, rubbing his eyes, said, half-awake, "Oh, ay, true!—Lochnaveen do you call him? That is the sandy-haired young gentleman you saw to-day, Sarah.—Get us tea, child."

Sarah needed not this information: instinctively she knew that the Highland Chief and the golden-haired stranger were the same individual. Destiny—presentiment—all the romantic machinery of incipient passion—were already at work in the fluttering bosom of the goldsmith's daughter. Her fate went far to prove that their mysterious fore-shadowings may sometimes be more than a jest.

"Don't be in such haste mustering your cockle-shells, Sarah," said Mr. Hill. "I took the freedom, as my friend Lochnaveen is quite a stranger in London, and, I dare say, tired enough of his solitary coffee-house, to ask him to take tea with Mistress Bridget. We must not deny hospitality to the most hospitable people on earth: besides, we have our oak-bark business to talk over, you remember, Mr. Bradshaw?"

Old Mr. Bradshaw, though rather disposed to resent this inroad on his domestic privacy, received his distinguished guest with that sort of gruff, blunt, but hearty civility, which well enough became the independent and wealthy London tradesman.

Mr. Hill had several motives in forcing the introduction of Lochnaveen upon the London citizen. Like most human motives they were oddly enough mixed and tangled. He wished to show the already half-enlightened Chief, whose bold, noble bearing and manly character he admired, that there were other worlds not inferior to that in which his towering pride and absurd prejudices had been formed and fostered. Besides Aaron, the philosopher, wished to contemplate the pride of hereditary wealth, (Bradshaw being, as Mrs. Bridget said, no new name in trade,) conflicting with the pride of Highland aristocracy,—aristocracy in this case in the pure abstract; for both Mr. Hill and a certain *Bhalie* Hossack, factor and *factotum* of Lochnaveen, knew how little of real and tangible metallic substance swelled out that

enormous magnitude which the young Chief occupied in his own esteem, and in the fond conceit of his clan. Nor were these Mr. Hill's sole motives in bringing about this acquaintance. The poet longed to witness the effect produced by his handsome high-born hero of the Highlands upon his romantic city heroine,—to test if it were indeed true that there might be more genuine nobility of nature, more of genius and feeling; and of the finer essence of humanity, in a London shopkeeper's daughter, than animated the mind and warmed the heart of the lofty and far-descended scion of heroes and bards.

"*Mac Mic Raonull*, the Chief of the Clan Raonull," said Aaron, gravely and formally introducing his friend into the snug city drawing-room, which, to the ladies, appeared at once filled with his stately presence. "In London, however, dwindled into plain Mr. M'Ranald of Lochnaveen," continued Mr. Hill. "He ought to be welcome at every fireside in England, whose hospitable castle door was never yet shut against the stranger of any land."

Mistress Bridget curtsied to the lowest dip of Queen Anne's last drawing-room, and Sarah, looking very demure, in spite of Mr. Hill's intelligent glance, which she studiously evaded, bended in courtesy like a *Clarissa Harlowe*; and was rather relieved that the Chief did not particularly notice *her*. It was an escape.

"I had the pleasure of seeing the gentleman in *My Shop*, this morning," said old Bradshaw sturdily. He could not undertake the pronunciation of Highland names nor titles. "I give him a hearty welcome to a plain London citizen's fireside,—to a castle, if you will, friend Aaron,—every Englishman's house, man, is his castle."

The young Chief would have belied his birth and his country, had he, when temper served, wanted *tact*,—a quality how inferior to intellect, how different from humanity, though often mistaken for both.

"Chiefs and clans!" said he, with a slight smile, "nonsense every where, but nonentities in England! I am astonished that Mr. Hill can have loaded his memory with our *trash* of bardic rhymes and clannish genealogies! To me, Mr. Bradshaw, no birth nor growth is at present of half so much consequence as that of my oak-sticks, and my two-year-old stirks.—This droving of cattle promises well for us."

"Come! the young Scot is not so very

rampant a fool, after all," thought old Bradshaw.

"I won't call my young friend an egregious hypocrite," thought Aaron; "yet in the halls of M'Raonull, six inches of the ready steel of my other friend *Donhuil nam Biodag* (Donald of the Dirk) had requited that speech, if seriously uttered by Saxon lips; ay, and no questions asked,—no 'crowners'-s-quest law' to interfere, nor any other law."

During this conversation, Sarah, not yet seated, had been arranging and disarranging the beautiful little filigree tea-china, which might have been made for the use of the Fairy-Court; and which, long afterwards, found an honoured place among the treasures of Strawberry-hill, as the "Bradshaw Porcelain." She had not spoken one word, and was relieved to find that she still passed unnoticed by the Chief. Yet intensely did she hang on every syllable he uttered; and at his equivocal and depreciating sentiment about his country, her sweetly-murmured, involuntary and half deprecating whisper of—"Ah, no, sure!" made him look hastily round.

"The hawking eye," was again all abroad over the lovely and suddenly-crimsoned face.

Sarah now, in deep confusion, played off and on with one of the richly jewelled rings she wore. It slipped from the slender finger on the Turkey carpet; and the young Chief, with that deference to her sex and personal charms, to which neither birth nor wealth gave her any claim with him, stooped, recovered, and gracefully presented it to the deeply blushing owner; his genial vanity not a little gratified by the maidenly, bashful flutter of her whom he recognised as the peeping girl of old Bradshaw's window.

Mac Mic Raonull had the catholic taste of a Highlander, and was, moreover, just of the age to admire beauty and womanly fascination, wherever he found them,—ay, even in "a Tinker's Daughter;" for such, in the pride of his Highland blood, prejudices, and education, appeared to him the beautiful Sarah Bradshaw.

Exquisitely beautiful she certainly appeared, and of a style of beauty as new to the Chief as were to her his fine form, his golden hair, and glowing complexion.

The scandalous chronicle of either the Ward of Cripplegate, or Farringdon Without, bore, that there was some trifling mixture of Hebrew blood in the family of the rich goldsmith. Mistress Bridget, however, stoutly

maintained, what was probably the simple truth, that the beautiful foreign wife of her ancestor, Nathaniel Bradshaw, was a Venetian girl of pure Christian blood, that had eloped with the young Englishman, who, for a year or two, had studied some nice branch of his art under the tuition of her father.

As has sometimes been observed in greater families, the beauty of the Venetian girl, after a slumber of two generations, had broken out with augmented splendour and more finished delicacy, in her granddaughter, Sarah. The fine painting by Sir Peter Lely, in his best days, to which Mr. Hill now directed the attention of the Chief, might, indeed, have been taken for the portrait of Miss Bradshaw. The resemblance was striking and true to the most minute particulars; even to the small and delicately-formed hands and feet, the long, slender, swan-like neck, and the arch sidelong expression of the up-turned side-face; but how could the painter's art represent those eyes, deep and dark as midnight, yet swimming so softly in humid brilliancy, or the delicious languid movements of the nymph-like figure, and all the bends and graceful undulations of that small finely-shaped head, so unlike in their light *contours* to the massive northern beauties which Lochnaveen had been accustomed to admire.

What a heaven of breathing loveliness was comprised within that little face, which he could have covered with his broad fair hand. Lochnaveen could less readily interpret the varying expression which often glanced forth the living soul of that beautiful countenance.

In the fashion of that day, Sarah's hair was drawn up from her high forehead; but, in defiance of fashion, a few stray ringlets, of a rich, warm, deep brown, shaded her temples and neck, and were partly tucked back behind the small, shelf-like, rose-tipped ears. Whether it be true or not that all semi-barbarians are fond of "baubles" and glitter, and that even the chiefs of the Gael were at that period little better than bold, warlike semi-barbarians, it must be owned that the rich ornaments of Nighean Ceard, *i. e.* "the Goldsmith's or Tinker's Daughter,"* came in for their full share of the Highlander's admiration.

Bradshaw, though a man of plain character and manners himself, was fully sensible of the claims he possessed from his wealth and

* Highland pride had no other name for those who trafficked in gold, and acted as the bankers of that age, than *Tinker*.

standing; a quality, in his regard, at any time equivalent to *station*. He would, besides, have thought, that to have his only child, and heiress, arrayed with less cost than she usually exhibited in her attire, was defrauding the commerce and arts of the country of the encouragement due to them from a man of his fortune. The costly diamond pendants that glittered, half-concealed, through those silky ringlets,—the diamond buckles of the embroidered slippers that sheathed those slender feet which

“Like little mice crept out and in,”

below the full drapery of the rich, brocaded petticoat, therefore came in for their full share of the admiration of our young Chief, though the loveliness of the wearer predominated.

“Could life and health be shut up in so slender and delicate a form?” came to be his mental question; and he soon learned that life, and health, and gaiety, fine talents, uncommon generosity and sweetness of nature, and, above all, a true woman’s heart, capable of the deepest and most passionate attachment, were all enshrined in that most delicate shape. Such knowledge was not acquired all at once; and, like many mortal lessons, if it came not too late to benefit, it came far too late to bless.

“Is not this a noble specimen of the Highland chief, fair Sarah?” said Mr. Hill, when Lochnaveen and her father withdrew. “Here is a man now, absolutely worth a fine woman’s falling in love with.”

Sarah, though not, in general, the most silent of damsels, at least with her adopted uncle, Mr. Hill, made no reply.

“I protest, Mr. Hill,” said Mrs. Bridget, “Mr. Makmukrandluk is, besides being handsome enough,—that is, for a man,—and I think, my dear, it must have been him you saw this morning—”

“I don’t think it was,” said Sarah, with quickness of manner, and yet mental hesitation.

“I mean to observe, Mr. Hill, that Mr. Makmukrandluk, besides being handsome enough for a gentleman, is a very well-bred man indeed; that is, never to have lived in Lon’on. I expected to see something like the Indian kings my poor mother visited, of which we read in Mr. Addison’s Spectators. Fie! then, Mr. Hill, the gentleman does not wear that short, chequered petticoat you spoke of,—which would, indeed, have been extremely awkward, not to say indecorous towards my niece and myself, had any gentle-

man appeared before us in such unseemly attire.”

“No, no, my dear Mrs. Bridget,—I only whispered that awful probability exactly as he was announced, to put you on your guard in case of the worst. I cannot, though,” he added archly, “imagine what frightened pretty Sarah; she could not have overheard my alarming whisper.”

“Don’t call me pretty Sarah any more, if you please, sir,” said Sarah, half pouting; “you forget that I grow old now.”

“Indeed!” cried Hill, smiling with meaning.

“But, my good Mr. Hill,” continued Mistress Bridget, “as Englishwomen,—celebrated over the whole globe for their extreme delicacy and modesty,—the bare idea of drinking tea in the same room with a gentleman in a—a—petticoat—a *short* petticoat!—to my niece and myself—”

“Lochnaveen would be shocked to offend your delicacy, madam. He leaves his *philibeg* at home, along with several other of his national habits, even more exceptionable, perhaps, than this offending garment—which, by the way, the Chiefs seldom wear. Their costume is the *truis*, a long light pantaloons and stocking in one piece. I assure you, Sarah, if you saw my friend *Mac Mic Raonull* in his native tartans, with his *skien-dhu* in his belt, and the breckan plume dancing in his bonnet, you would see a fine fellow. With his foot on the *Rock of the Gathering*, the war-pipe and the cry of ‘Craigdhu’ ringing in his ears, and his clan trooping in and mustering around him, Ranald looks twice the man he appears in London streets:—as mighty a difference as is between the eagle imprisoned and the noble bird hovering free above his mountain eyrie.”

“He looks the noble Chieftain even here,” thought Sarah,—and she said aloud, “Is it not mortifying to hear this gentleman, with his proud, brave looks and lofty port,—with the exterior of one born to command, and to lead on his fellows to noble and chivalrous deeds, and to whom high thoughts should be native and familiar,—lessen and scorn at his natural advantages.—Oh, if I were the head of one of those brave tribes!”—And the enthusiastic girl clasped her hands.

“You would be the thing in the world the most unlike this Chieftain’s mother, Sarah,” said Aaron, smiling. “*Nighean Donachd Ruadh*, or the *Daughter of Red Duncan*, is a proper Tartar—who would make less of a man’s life, who chanced to offend her, than

your cook would of a live lobster for fish-sauce. And, pardon the Chief, my pretty *old Sarah*; no man breathing has a loftier notion of the dignities and immunities of his High Mightiness, *Mac Mic Raonull*, than has Master Ranald. I don't know whether to smile or admire, when I know that in his secret heart, and with great natural shrewdness, and even a sort of half-civilized education to boot, my friend does, at this moment, consider himself at least twice as good a man as the King of England; or, as he would say, the Elector of Hanover. You admired his ease of manners, Mistress Bridget:—I assure you *Lochnaveen* would be quite as much at home in the Court of St. James' as in your drawing-room. You cannot surmise, my dear Sarah, what an immensely great man a Highland Chief is; and, like whales and krakens, and such sea-monsters, the farther north—the nearer the pole they are—the more swollen and huge do we find them."

Sarah permitted Mr. Hill to smile, or scoff, if he chose:—she admired with earnest reverence. "This was the true nobility—independent of every thing extrinsic; this was native grandeur of soul." Sarah saw that soul through a woman's eyes in her friend's animated pictures of the stirring pibroch, the thrilling war-cry, the thronging clansmen, and, above all, the handsome young Chief.

"*City marriages*" were much rarer among the English nobility at that period than they have since become. And Mr. Bradshaw had, at all events, even then, too much sterling, sturdy pride and English good sense, to be ambitious of a noble alliance for his heiress, though he might have suspected his daughter herself of such a weakness. But that she, the darling of a circle of wealthy kindred, and his beloved child and sole heiress, should place her affections on a Red-shank—a Highland Scot—something far more wild and outlandish than a mere Scot—appeared as improbable as if she had actually fallen in love with the leader of a predatory Arab tribe, or with one of Mistress Bridget's Indian Kings.

Had the passion been mutual, this feeling of astonishment was not likely to be confined to the goldsmith:—The clan, the proud kinsmen; above all, the mother of the Chief, would have been as little prepared to see him bear home, as his bride, the daughter of the veritable Irish Tinker who strolled in his valleys, as the heiress of a Saxon churl, however rich—a London Tinker. Her language had no appellation to distinguish be-

tween these professions; nor, in Highland minds of that day, was there a shade of difference, save that the "*Saxon Caird*" might possess a little more pelf,—an excellent commodity when it could be obtained from the Southron by strength of arm, or sleight of hand; but to gain which, no man boasting the name of Raonull could be so utterly base as to degrade his blood by matrimonial alliance.

The young Chief of the clan Raonull was a posthumous child. He owed his very existence to the prejudices of country and birth. The vast and unproductive mountain estates had fallen to a female, worthy to have inherited a male fief; to have led clans to battle; and better fitted to wield pistol and dagger than spindle and distaff. Rather late in life, and solely upon reasons of State, *Nighean Donachd Ruadh*, in preference to every other suitor, had married a distant kinsman, an idle, handsome, good-for-nothing fellow, who, by a rapid succession of deaths, was left the nominal Chief of his clan, though *laird* of only his dogs and fowling-piece. He died, or was killed—it was never well ascertained which—in a brawl, at a bridal, a few months after his marriage. The Chieftainess assembled the elders of the tribe, and declared her resolution, if her expected child was not a male, to marry, next in order, *Donhuil nam Biodag*, the next male representative of the tribe.

Donald of the Dirk, then a mere stripling, was, by the birth of Ranald, disappointed of the matrimonial honour thus intended him; but next to the boy-chief in influence as in rank, he, the *Tanist*, lived the guardian of young Ranald's person, and of the honour of the clan; that homage and reverence being paid to his blood to which fortune gave him no claim. His skill in the chase—for the country still abounded with game of all kinds—furnished Donald's only ostensible means of living. Most of his days were passed in the solitude of the mountains, where he stalked the deer, feeding an enthusiastic fancy on inspiring traditions of the past glory of his race, or amusing his loneliness with the wild songs and poetry which he composed in honour of the departed heroes of his clan; or with dreams of war, and love, and battle, diablerie and faery; and with the Boadicea of his imagination, *Nighean Donachd Ruadh*.

A lady who possessed such peculiar and independent notions of matrimonial ties as the Chieftainess, and who had gone such

lengths to preserve the blood of Raonull free from foreign taint,—that is, from Saxon intermixture,—was not likely to be easily satisfied with an English bride for her Chief, and only son,—no, not if that bride had boasted the blood of Plantagenet.

Though unfeminine in her tastes, haughty, violent, vengeful, and irascible in temper as the most fiery of her hot-blooded race, *Nighean Donachd Ruadh* was highly popular with her clan. Living in the midst of them, and acknowledging no interest but theirs,—bold, generous, and high-spirited, the daughter and the mother of their Chiefs, on her person declined the inherited love and loyalty of untold ages. Her prejudices and her pride were also theirs,—her will was law,—her person sacred,—and, to obey her wildest and most arbitrary commands was, by her people, esteemed a duty and an honour. The selected instrument of her ambition or her vengeance, as either preponderated, was *Donald of the Dirk*; and the highest-minded man of her tribe was the most devoted slave of her will. To do her hests was a distinction which he claimed and enjoyed as one of the dearest immunities of his birth and relationship.

The Chieftainess loved and was proud of her son, though her pride was not that of ordinary mothers. In his fine person she saw the manly strength and peculiar beauty for which the men of her ancient race were distinguished, and she trusted that Ranald would not show himself deficient in the spirit and bravery by which it had been even more illustrated. In manly and martial exercises he already owned no superior save his dark kinsman, *Donald of the Dirk*, who had been held up as his model, till the spoiled and petulant boy began to hate him. As the young Chief grew up, he came to fancy that there might be a fitter model for a Chief than a dreaming, half-savage man of the woods, his head lost in the mists of poetry and tradition,—his hand red with other blood than that of the deer.

At the earnest entreaty of a family friend and ally, who had served in the Low Countries under Mackay, and seen something of a world beyond the Grampians, an Irish priest was engaged as a tutor to the young Chief. An Aberdeen student of divinity was afterwards inducted into the same onerous office; but he, after having ventured gently to chastise his pupil, fled from the valley in the first week, in mortal terror of his life. A few months spent in Edinburgh, therefore, completed Ranald's education; and such

was his natural grace and *tact*, that a short time passed in good society did more in polishing his manners, than years might have effected in the case of a modest and clownish Saxon. Where an awkward, Low-Country youth, would have shrunk back, conscious of ignorance, and fearful of disgrace, Ranald dashed on, bearing all before him by the ease and charm of his manner, and the elegance of his person. There certainly were people who called his high-bred manner by an uncourteous name, and imputed his success to mingled ignorance of his own defects, and the unconscious effrontery of a spoiled, but spirited and handsome lad. The recent discovery of the value of the oak-bark and timber of his wild territory, had not been without its effect, either on his own character, or his acceptance in society.

The marriage of this youth had been an object of anxiety to his mother from and before the hour of his birth. In this anxiety many sympathized. Like the marriage of a sovereign prince, this was a public concern. The daughters of the proudest families in the north, were, one by one, inspected and deliberated upon. Highlanders have as boundless faith in the *breed*—in the transmission of peculiar qualities, whether mental or physical—as phrenologists. Recoiling from the *guile* of the Campbells, and the *cunning* imputed to the Lovat race—despising the cowardice of one family, the imbecility of another, the stunted stature of a third, and the wry noses of a fourth, *Nighean Donachd Ruadh* had almost resolved to choose and educate, as the bride of her son, the fairest and stateliest girl of his own tribe, provided she was the daughter of a *duine-wasal* or gentleman. Yet State policy forbade elevating any particular family so far above their equals in the clan; and Ranald was twenty-two, and still unmarried.

During her widowhood, and the long minority of her son, the affairs of the Chieftainess had been managed by a lowland *Bhalie*, or factor, Daniel Hossack by name, a person detested as devoutly in the country of Raonull as his mistress was beloved. For twenty years this honest man had lived in Lochnaveen, every night that he lay down expecting to have his throat cut before morning; but unable to leave the spot where his fold and his flocks increased, like those of Jacob during his long servitude. Dread of the vengeance of *Nighean Donachd Ruadh* protected her minister of finance, whose influence over his lady was frankly imputed to witch-

craft—a belief which the honest man rather encouraged as another lawful means of self-preservation. His value with the Chieftainess, who would have esteemed the meanest slave that shared the blood of Raonull beyond a thousand such as this “Saxon churl,” arose solely from his power of transacting business with Lowland graziers and the aforesaid York Building Company; for the Schoolmaster had not yet been abroad in Ranald’s glens.

By opposing the imperial will of *Nighean Donachd Ruadh* to the no less sovereign pleasure of her impetuous son, the *Bhalie* had lately manœuvred to send the young Chief to London, to complete an affair which his sagacity foresaw would be of much benefit to the estate, and also, perhaps, of some little advantage to the manager of the estate, namely, *Bhalie* Hossack. If *Mac Mic Raonull* found a wealthy English wife at the same time, here was another collateral good.

As soon as the *Bhalie* heard of the Chief visiting the family of that rich Goldsmith who had bought most of the standing woods of Lochnaveen, he took especial care to remind him of the many bonds, encumbrances, and *wadsets* on the estate; and of its immense powers of production, were there only a little “ready capital” to lay out judiciously upon it. As the Chief was at the distance of six hundred and more miles, the *Bhalie*, whose prudence and humanity might otherwise have induced their suppression, regularly transmitted to him certain threatening epistles, sent forth, (at peril of his ears,) by a certain Lauchlan Mackintosh, Notary Public, and the last, probably, who practised in a *philabeg*, in the Friar’s Vennel of the great northern capital of Inverness. Could the stout sons of Raonull have interpreted this functionary’s insolent missives, the *Prokitor’s* ears would have been but a poor morsel to the huge stomach of their revenge.

These letters produced their proper sedative effect upon the Chief, even while he swore the loudest that the Notary should eat them, ay, as his last mortal meal.

Lochnaveen’s protracted stay in London was bringing him into closer contact with that new power in society which was ultimately to supersede dirk and pistol. Was it better to swim at ease with the current, or exhaust his strength in vainly opposing the stream? Ranald was a man of quick, though limited observation, and, when he

so chose, of most ingratiating manners. His prejudices, though far from being eradicated, were considerably softened down; or, at least, tolerably well confined to his own bosom; and the nobler parts of his clan-faith, fostered by the enthusiasm of Sarah and Mr. Hill, expanded into what Sarah delighted to term, “enlightened, active benevolence towards the brave, faithful, devoted people, whom he was as much bound to improve as to protect and defend.” In short, in a prolonged residence among the luxuries and blandishments of the south, Lochnaveen began to discover, that an infusion of the *aurum potabile* of England was much needed to enrich that generous blood which had unquestionably flowed in his veins, unmixed with the red puddle of the Saxons, from the glorious days celebrated in the bardic rhymes of *Donhuil nam Biodag*.

The northern Chief, after a few weeks spent in the capital, had been moved to indignant astonishment on finding that the higher nobility and gentry of England, who had never even heard of his illustrious name, nor yet of the grouse or ptarmigan, since so much admired by them, did not at once throw open their doors to him, and court his presence within their saloons and drawing-rooms.

Now, in the eyes of *Mac Mic Raonull*, looking down from his mountain height, the family of the Bradshaws, the ancient rich goldsmiths, and the families of the inferior, new-created nobility, sprung from the bar or the counting-house, and the modern baronetage and gentry of England, appeared on much the same level; and the bitter draught of which, he began to think, would, were he doomed to swallow it, be less repulsive, if administered by the fair and gentle girl who had imbibed notions of the manners, usages, and scenery of his country which had been highly gratifying to his clannish pride and Highland nationality; and who, with all her natural retiring delicacy and sensitiveness, had certainly showed no decided repugnance to his person and attentions.

The heart of Sarah, a young, ardent, and romantic girl, was no difficult conquest to the gallant and handsome Highlander. Her exalted imagination fought the battles of love, and she was probably, at first, more the dupe of her own fanciful illusions, than of her admirer’s assiduities; yet was her young and warm heart finally given as hearts can be but once bestowed.

The prejudices, or rather reasonable objections, of the father were composed of sterner stuff than the prepossessions of Sarah against some few *traits* in Highland character. Deeply grieved to think that his daughter had sanctioned the application which the Chief proudly made to him, old Bradshaw decidedly and promptly refused to bestow her on this stranger ; the head, at best, of a tribe of lawless barbarians, the inhabitant of a wild and distant region ; and, as he greatly feared, not the man, either in principles or temper, that his daughter fondly imagined. The Chief retired from the conference choking with rage, and vowing revenge.

Sarah, submitting in silence to her father's will, though unable to conquer her own feelings, pined on in uncomplaining misery ; and strove to be, or to seem, cheerful and resigned, even when the physician called in by her alarmed aunt, ordered her instantly to the Bristol Hot-Wells.

Mr. Bradshaw, prudently seconding his daughter's silent and magnanimous attempt to regain lost peace, in submission to his will and his wisdom, had neither openly noticed her noble effort, nor yet the failure of her health in the conflict of her feelings. The prophecies, remonstrances, and tears of the tender-hearted Mistress Bridget were still less regarded by Bradshaw. He knew that Sarah had good sense, high spirit, and strong affection for her own family : she would conquer or die. The latter alternative, he was told, appeared the more probable to the physicians. But not yet would Mr. Bradshaw trust implicitly to the report of Mistress Bridget's favourite adviser, Dr. Coddler ; though a consultation of those gentlemen in whose professional skill he had the utmost confidence, at once sent the heart-broken father to his friend Mr. Hill.

"Aaron, few words may suffice between us. You can well guess the untold cause of my present distress. Am I to lay my child in an early grave in her own land, or give her to that scowling, haughty Scot, whose temper will as effectually send her thither, though many a bitter and sorrowing hour may first intervene ?"

Mr. Hill was a kind and benevolent, though a sanguine man. He loved Sarah ; that, indeed, was no wonder, for every one loved Sarah, who looked on her, or listened to her ; he respected her father, and he had a considerable regard for the young Chief, whose character Mr. Bradshaw understood, as he thought, very imperfectly. Lochnaveen's

unquestionable admiration of Sarah Bradshaw, pleaded strongly in his favour with Aaron Hill. He was sure that Ranald's natural dispositions were all good. He had indeed been spoiled by a strange cat-o'-mountain mother and a bad education. Of his passion for Sarah, the proofs were quite edifying to the translator of Zaire ; and Mr. Bradshaw shook his head, but did not say, that even those proofs cited, looked as like the ardour of disappointed self-will, as romantic and disinterested devotion to a beloved mistress by a generous lover.

"If you could only guess what it must have cost his proud heart to stoop to the daughter of a London citizen ?"

"I wish he had spared his proud heart that mortification," returned Mr. Bradshaw, proudly. "If Sarah Bradshaw had not sense enough to resist the fine person, and the other even more absurd attributes and attractions of your Highland hero, she would at least have had sufficient spirit to forget the man that thought not of her."

"I am convinced fortune is not his object," said Hill.

"Very good, Aaron ; yet, as there is nothing your Chief needs more than fortune with a wife, you surely don't bring this in proof of his sense."

"No,—but surely of his disinterestedness."

"Pshaw, man ! a Highland Scot's disinterestedness in marrying Sarah Bradshaw !—It may, — I hope it may be so ; — but don't mention it on 'Change, Aaron, if you would not be laughed at ! You have lived in these glens, Mr. Hill, till your older and stronger brain is as much excited as that of my poor girl. I trust I was not too proud of my daughter. God knows I never had less reason than now. Yet I fancied Sarah Bradshaw a match——" The father's voice faltered ; firmly compressing his lips, he remained quite silent.

"Sarah ! your beautiful Sarah, whom I love as my own dearest child, is a match for a prince, Mr. Bradshaw ! and the bride of a prince she will be, as the wife of Lochnaveen, — adored and worshipped as something above humanity. You have no notion of the adoration and reverence Highlanders show for their feudal superiors ; nor can I help taking into account the blessing which Sarah will prove — which this English connexion might be made to the poor, gallant people of Lochnaveen's wide, grand country. That princely domain, Mr. Bradshaw——"

"Ah, Aaron ! the poet will break out !"

said Mr. Bradshaw, shaking his head, and smiling, but mournfully. "I trust Sarah, and her wealth and kindness of heart, may prove a blessing to those wretched, idle, starving, half-naked serfs; but I had hoped my daughter might have proved a blessing to some honest man of her own country and rank, one with whom her own happiness would not have been imperilled, and who would not have quite estranged her from her father's home."

Mr. Bradshaw faltered and paused. "That was not to be," he rejoined, firmly. "But how is your mighty Chief to be managed now, Mr. Hill?—for, were he the Prince of Wales, instead of the greater man he conceits himself, the hand of Sarah Bradshaw must, as things stand, be asked a second time to be obtained. A London citizen has his pride, as well as a Highland laird."

Mr. Hill, naturally sanguine and speculative,—a poet, I had almost said, and consequently a very kind-hearted man,—was delighted with a match which was partly, indeed, of his own desiring and imagining, if not of his contrivance. He had seen the Highland character chiefly on the surface, and generally on the favourable side; but he had never yet fathomed the dark depths of clannish ignorance and pride, as they existed at the period of our narrative. He knew that many an English girl would have been miserable in the banishment of the rude Highlands; but, with the man she loved and adored, and the people she blessed, so would not the affectionate and imaginative Sarah Bradshaw. The character of the young Chief, manly and decided, and quite equal to the protection of his wife in all circumstances, was what, to Aaron's apprehension, in this alliance, most concerned Sarah. What signified the clan, or the mother—their fierceness, their wild pride, or their rooted prejudices! The world, and the experience it gave, had already corrected some of the worst faults of character in Lochnaveen, and had considerably lowered and rectified his inordinate self-esteem. The influence of a creature so noble-minded, and yet so gentle and winning as Sarah, was of itself enough to regenerate any young and generous-hearted man who passionately loved her. Mr. Hill had an excellent opinion of Sarah's understanding. Even had her judgment in the most important action of her life been in his estimation as erring as her father feared it was, Mr. Hill would have good-naturedly imputed this temporary aber-

ration to that bewildering passion which works the most strongly in the strongest minds, and to no real want of acuteness or energy of intellect. Her education, her cultivated talents, besides being a source of delight to herself in her northern solitude, must, he said, prove of infinite advantage to her husband; and to their children and dependants they certainly would. In brief, in the ruminations of her sanguine friend, Aaron Hill, Sarah was to diffuse the blessings of religion and civilisation among "savage clans and roving barbarians," Protestant faith, Whiggish politics, British literature, and English comfort.

"What a blessing will that wild country receive in little Sarah Bradshaw!" was his concluding, consolatory thought. "That I have in some degree been instrumental in sending forth this fair missionary, quits me of all obligations to those kind, generous, hospitable, lazy, thievish, faithful, treacherous, proud, beggarly, brave, good-for-nothing people, whom I have so long loved and hated, despised and admired!"

It was somewhat in this strain that Mr. Hill wrote to his oak-wood correspondent the *Bhalie*, the only man in the glen who, when the Chief and the Priest were absent, either wrote, read, or understood one word of English. Mr. Hossack, who had the attachment of habit to his young master's person and interests, was secretly transported with the prospect of this rich alliance; but he had that within, which made him deem it wiser to allow *Nighean Donachd Ruadh* and Donald of the Dirk, the vice-regal guardian of the clan-dignities, to make the discovery for themselves. Even when a letter arrived from the Chief to his mother, announcing the intended marriage, the *Bhalie* prudently deferred mentioning its arrival till he hoped all was safe, and the knot tied.

The composition of this letter had been no easy affair to Ranaid. He dwelt rather discursively and at large on the surpassing beauty of his chosen bride, considering the venerable years and stern character of the person he addressed. "Donald," he said, "would be charmed with the thrilling sweetness with which his beautiful Sarah sang '*Aridh nam badan*,' and '*Mor' nighnean a Ghibarlan*,' and with her admiration of Gaelic poetry. Her name was Sarah, her family exceedingly respectable, and connected with that of Sir Robert Walpole, whose god-daughter she was."

Lochnaveen felt his cheek tingle with

proud shame when he had thus written to his mother. This information was, indeed, partly false, — intended, at least, to convey a false impression ; and he was conscious that it was wholly mean and paltry. He shrank from mentioning his intended father-in-law's profession, and even passed over his name, merely noticing, in a few scarcely legible lines, that the *Bhalie* would be delighted to learn that his lovely Saxon bride chanced to be a very wealthy heiress ; and that with her ready-money fortune they could now pay off President Duncan Forbes's accursed bonds ; and, after clearing money scores with Master Tai M'Tai, notary-public in the Black Vennel, throw his ears into the Beauty Firth, in passing through Inverness, and, if he grumbled, send himself to fish them up again.

Finally, he desired a small party of followers, whose names he mentioned—the flower of the youth of his clan — to meet him and his lady in the Blair of Athole ; and “ if *Donhuil nam Biodag* would head them, he would have the pride of showing his young wife the handsomest, the truest, and the bravest of the race of Raonull ; one who, from description, she was already disposed to esteem and admire, as the model of a true kinsman and devoted clansman. The worthy *Bhalie* would,” he said, “ do his best to equip the *gillies* handsomely, and to prepare all in and about the castle for the reception of a lady accustomed from her birth to the elegancies and luxuries of London, but willing to sacrifice them all for the clan of Raonull and its grateful Chief.”

This epistle did some credit to the temper as well as to the address of Ranald. He did not, he durst not, insult his haughty and violent mother by soliciting a consent which he knew he never would obtain ; but he wished to conciliate where he could not hope to satisfy. He knew that high ancestry — high, and brave, and *Highland* ancestry — “ a noble strain,” was, with her, the one thing indispensable in his bride. She could sleep on the heather couch, quench her thirst at the mountain-spring, lace the rough deer-skin buskin on her foot, and live as hardily as the poorest of her vassals, for with them was she not the less *Nighean Donachd Ruadh!* — the daughter, the inheritor, the representative of chiefs and heroes, who had been terrible in fight, glorious in fame — who had never bent the neck to the Saxon, nor debased their blood by foreign admixture ; — the descendant of those who, in their own language,

“ *remained in their own place,*” as ancient as the eagle on the rock, or the deer on the hill, and as free.

When such ideas took possession of the mind of Ranald, he almost sickened to think of his wealthy matrimonial prospects. Was he, then, to be — or to be imagined — sordid, *greedy*, a low-minded Chief, a degenerate Gael, — was he to abide the withering indignation of *Nighean Donachd Ruadh*, or brook the contempt of *Donhuil nam Biodag*, — of his whole clan, and the scorn of his fellow-chieftains, with nothing to place against this fierce scorn save the charms of his gentle wife, and the approbation of his prudent functionary, *Bhalie* Hossack? Ranald quailed at the thought of his first northern letters.

The *Bhalie* prudently managed that none should arrive ; and the beauty and fascinations of Sarah, to whom her suitor had been led back by Mr. Hill, riveted the solemn engagement, to which he gave his whole heart, while his mind, or his pride, still fluctuated in torturing irresolution.

From the moment that the will of her father, and her own absurd notions of a daughter's obedience, — as Ranald scrupled not to term Sarah's weeping refusal to elope with him, whom she confessed she loved, and must ever supremely love, though in hopeless anguish, — when her absurd notions made marriage with her appear unattainable, Ranald's passion had blazed forth with tenfold ardour. His self-will, never before so thwarted and irritated, had never been half so much excited and resolute. Friends, fortune, pride of birth, were all, for a time, as nothing to the possession of this humble Saxon maiden. The judgment of Sarah had been startled by his violence of passion, even while its transports flattered her softer and truer tenderness. But now she had her father's permission to receive her lover's visits ; and now again Ranald hesitated, wavered, and admitted doubts.

Sarah's self-reproaches for bestowing her affections where her father's judgment and approbation could not follow, had been greatly soothed by Mr. Hill's representations of the good which her marriage might give her the power of dispensing in a very wide sphere. Her pale cheek and wasted person, had told both her father and her lover a flattering tale of her devoted love and of her filial submission. Imperceptibly they drew somewhat closer together, until, as time passed, all appeared exulting happiness in the lover, sober satisfaction in the family of

the citizen, and fluttering, subdued, secret rapture in the bosom of the maiden.

The order for Sarah's removal to Bristol was first delayed, and then, so rapid was her recovery, countermanded. She removed with her aunt to her father's villa at Richmond; and Ranald again, more in love than ever, gave all his time where all his thoughts hovered. He taught his mistress to ride—a very necessary accomplishment in her future country—and to speak his language. Mr. Hill was already charmed with the imagined fulfilment of his own prophecies. As their common friend, he often joined the lovers, and already remarked, that, under the influence of love and Sarah, the favourable points of the young Chief's character were daily developed and strengthened, and the darker qualities gradually shading off.

It was already evident, that, when quite alone with his beautiful mistress, Lochnaveen, though far from being in general what is called a domestic character—was nevertheless, for the moment, the happiest of the happy. No doubt nor fear then darkened his mind nor damped his affectionate ardour. The enthusiasm and delight with which Sarah listened to his clan-legends and ancestral traditions, enhanced his pride and enjoyment in those wild and stirring tales. The very simplicity, eagerness, and childishness of her anxiety to acquire a correct knowledge of his native language and customs, and her sympathy in the "fierce wars and faithful loves" of the Highlanders, would, of themselves, at this time, have made the English girl an object of interest to Ranald, wrecked in the chill latitudes of London. There—for as scornfully as he bore it—he often felt much more of the Chieftain's swelling and chafed pride, than in those regions where his unquestioned claims were chartered on mountains, heaths, and battle-fields, and lived in "the light of song."

In any other circumstances than those in which he was placed, Ranald might very soon have tired of playing the carpet-knight and the schoolmaster. But there is a system of tuition—not precisely the Hamiltonian—which lightens even that "labour dire," and "weary wo,"—and Ranald, with such a pupil as Sarah, was quite of the age and condition to discover it. The strangely-articulated uncouth gutturals which Sarah, refusing to lend her throat, churmed or lisped through her white teeth, or murdered with her delicate lips, might at least, on the twentieth mispronunciation, have tired her tutor, had

not the means of punishing the error, and revenging his ancient and immortal language, been so tempting, and so like retributive justice; and Ranald was so much of a Highlander, and of a true man of any time, as to relish a taste of revenge far better than the full and fair, but simple quittance of justice in the bond.

"I tire you with my blunders," said Sarah, one day, smiling and blushing "rosy red," as she withdrew herself from the punishment her lips had incurred by their bad Gaelic, and shook her curls into better order, probably on hearing the high-heeled patter of aunt Bridget's approaching velvet-clad feet. "I shall give up the study of Celtic literature till I get *Nighean Donachd Ruadh* for my instructress, and Donald of the Dirk for my professor of poetry; but every *lenau-beg* and old *caillach* I meet in the glens will be my teacher then."

Fortunately, Sarah was too much occupied in "smoothing the raven-down" of her tresses to notice the rapid change that flashed over the face of the Chief. His heart smote him. "Am I indeed about to peril, to wreck the happiness of this fair and trusting creature, who has formed such wild hopes?"

But *he* loved her, and he could and would protect her; and Ranald had that excellent and manful opinion of the supreme value of his own affection, which conceived any sacrifice that the woman blessed with *his love* made for *him*, no more than he was well entitled to expect and receive:—none could be too great. Poor Sarah, though on somewhat different grounds, was precisely of the same opinion.

"*Nighean Donachd Ruadh* is not remarkable for patience any more than her son," said he, at last; and his internal thought was—"But surely sweetness like thine, my Sarah, might soften a hyena, and teach a she-wolf gentleness." He looked at Sarah with melancholy interest—with tender pity, and almost remorse:—the hesitation at this alliance he had often felt for his own sake, he momentarily felt for hers. He kissed her forehead in silence, and with great tenderness.

"Ah, Ranald!" breathed the unsuspecting girl, with a sidelong, deprecating, bashful, yet gratified and grateful glance. Touched and subdued, Lochnaveen would at that instant have told her his apprehensions for her future peace—of the impossibility of his abandoning his country usages and the claims of his clan, and of the likelihood that,

from his kinsfolk, to whom her affectionate nature looked for kindness, she would meet with the fierce contempt and proud scorn, from which even his love could not always protect her. But Mistress Bridget entered.

This good old lady, in the blooming recovered looks of Sarah, and the honourable courtship of her niece by so great a man as she understood the Chief to be,—though she was somewhat perplexed about the exact nature of his dignity—appeared to live her early loves over again. Every evening that Mr. Bradshaw came to Richmond, he heard the same story told; tender tears floating in the eyes of Mistress Bridget, which, however, drew no sympathetic drops to the harder orbs of her citizen-brother. “Abram, Mr. Makmukrandluk is an angel of a young man, as I have always said; and our darling Sarah will be the happiest of women.”

Mr. Bradshaw *humped*, but he sighed too; and, as he had some relish of humour, rallied his sister on her sudden conversion to *philibegs*, and her discovery of angels in tartan plaids.

“Mr. Hill has explained all that properly, brother; and the diamond knee-buckles, my intended marriage present—and I trust they will be the handsomest ‘Bradshaws and Bradshaw’ ever sent from their workshop—is just the only sort of delicate hint an unmarried lady can well give on the subject, nor likely to be thrown away on my nephew that-is-to-be, Locknaveen—who, Lady Betty Montacute assures me to-day was out of sight the handsomest man in the rig yesterday. Indeed, Abram, I must say, *confidentially*, you are not aware of half the advantages of this connexion. I am assured you may ride twenty miles over the estates of my nephew (that-is-to-be,) and not see a house.”

“Sarah must be delighted with that lively prospect.”

“There is, I am told, a bullock killed in Locknaveen’s castle every second day—venison, lamb, and mutton, and game unstinted, and the best of fish—salmon for the servants’-hall table every day of the week, both dinner and supper—which I own I consider extravagant.”

“Four ounces of meat any day will do for Sarah,” said Mr. Bradshaw peevishly. “It is surely not for *beef* she wanders so far from Leaden-hall market.”

“La, no brother! surely not. And more men servants—a larger male establishment there, I am told, than is kept at Sion House.”

“But all without breeches—think of that, Bridget,” said the vexed father, who was in the strange and not infrequent mood of sporting with his own distress of mind.

“La, you there again, brother! that, to be sure, as I distantly hinted to Mr. Hill, is no subject for a lady’s discussion. But, if Mr. Makmukrandluk were to receive a hint of the excessive delicacy of Englishwomen—particularly those born and bred in Lon’on—I would not grudge out of my own pocket, before my niece goes to her estates, to put every man and boy of them in decent—you understand me, brother?—Sarah, poor dear, has her little head so carried just now—and no wonder—such a man, and such a match!—that she cannot even think of her own wedding clothes, much less of—” The spinster hesitated.

“Far less of clansmen’s breeches, or want of breeches,” interrupted Mr. Bradshaw more peevishly than ever. “For Heaven’s sake, Bridget, don’t make yourself ridiculous, nor worry a man whose heart is bruised enough already.”

“Ridiculous! Mr. Bradshaw,” said the indignant spinster; but she saw the muscles working and quivering about the usually firmly-compressed mouth of her brother as he hastily turned his back.

“My dear brother!—Abram Bradshaw!” cried the kind-hearted spinster, following him—“ten thousand pardons—for Heaven’s sake, *what is the matter?*”

“Is it nothing to lose Sarah, you foolish woman?” said Mr. Bradshaw, gulping down his feelings, and disguising his real fears from his sister.

“Our dear Sarah! surely it is, brother; but then *so lost*—a husband so adoring.” Old Bradshaw was about suffering a relapse into cross humour; but he checked himself, and let his good-hearted sister *maunder* on.

“My niece shan’t be lost to me, Mr. Bradshaw, more than every married young person is lost to her family. I am not quite an easy-chair old woman yet, thank Heaven!—and, if money and post-horses can do it, I’ll visit my niece at her castle next season, and every season—ay, were it fifty miles beyond York city!—I am pretty sure—and that is not what every old aunt can say—that I shall be extremely welcome to a slice of my nephew’s salmon, and a cut of his venison. Don’t you think so, Abram?”

“To a whole sheep—head, pluck, haggis, and all—I have no doubt of it, Bridget.”

“Nay, that is a stumbling-block, Abram ; but, as my niece is but a puny eater at best—and a Lon'on girl bred and born—I hope she will be excused there. Indeed, I think, Abram, I had better drop a few lines to the dowager Mrs. Makmukrandluk, about my management of poor dear Sarah's ways. I dare say she is a very motherly sort of body, and just the nice, chatty, experienced old lady, that, whatever may happen, will be such a comfort to our dear girl. I only wish I could induce her, when my nephew and niece return our visit—which I trust will be next year at farthest, unless especial family reasons prevent our dear Sarah from undertaking the journey—to give us a few months ; if she could put up with my little India chintz room, I would so willingly give it up.”

“For God's sake, Bridget, spare me !” cried the unhappy father, rushing from the room, unable longer to restrain himself.

If Sarah had nobly striven to conceal her feelings from her father, it was now his turn to try to deceive his child. He was more successful than she had been. His fears had been ever alive ; while Sarah's eyes and mind were delightfully preoccupied. Her father was not remarkable at any time for blandness of manners ; but he was civil and kind to her Highland Chief ; to herself, when he did speak to her at all, more tenderly complacent than he had ever been ; until, at last, every look and tone vibrated to her heart ; for “farewell” was in them all.

Good Mistress Bridget could not, meanwhile, divine what had come over her brother. However, she at last settled that the gout was getting, or had got, into his head.

“Sarah, my dear, a flying gout has got into my brother's head ; but I sent for Dr. Coddler. He is quite right this morning ; and I must insist on your not allowing our dear *unnamed* to wait on you to-morrow, unless he choose to accompany us to the milliner's and the India shops. I do believe, child, but for me you would go to your castle without a tolerable gown or shift to your back. Now, coming from Lon'on, and an only girl, I trust you will, as must be expected, be able to show the ladies of your neighbourhood something like a decent wardrobe.”

“Ladies of my neighbourhood, my poor aunt,” thought Sarah. But what cared Sarah for wardrobes, ladies, and neighbourhoods ? Were there not Ranald's noble-

minded mother—Ranald's kindred—Ranald's clan—Ranald's glens and lakes ? She attended her aunt, however, to London ; and for two days,—two ages they seemed,—bought finery, and never once saw Ranald.

If a day's absence did not lessen Lochnaveen's passion for his mistress, it ever produced conflict, or something like a revolution, in his feelings, and another manner of considering his approaching marriage. Alone with Sarah, his happiness was perfect ; not from the mere egotism of love, but by the exclusion of those persons and things which, in reminding him of her birth and position, disturbed his self-complacency, fretted his pride, and alarmed his fears for the future. To Mr. Hill, who might understand how very great a man and Chief he was, Lochnaveen was frank and courteous ; to Mistress Bridget, whose deference soothed his vanity, polite and attentive ; but the London goldsmith and the northern Chief were, in spite of themselves, repellant qualities. He loved Sarah fondly ; he was proud of her beauty, alive to all her fascinations of manner, and daily more and more sensible of her high and hidden qualities of mind, and inherent sweetness of disposition ; but then “old Bradshaw's daughter,” the “city heiress,” was a quite different being.

Sarah could scarcely allow herself to be displeased with his impatience of ordinary society. It was a feeling she shared, though, in her breast, arising from very opposite tastes and motives.

She already perceived that she was more admired, or in better accordance with the magnificent tastes of the Chief, in the jewelled splendour and rich brocades of her afternoon costume, than in the plain linen gown and mob-cap of the morning. She also sometimes feared that Lochnaveen knew or recked little of women, in their most endearing character—as the faithful and sympathizing depositories of fears and hopes, the charmers and soothers of firesides. But this it would yet be her privilege and delight silently to teach him. Though his tastes might differ from her simple habits, what so natural as that her high-born mountain Chief should relish splendour and magnificence. Little airs of impatience and petulance shown to such of her friends and visitors, as from some caprice he did not like, were readily pardoned. With his fine natural breeding and quick talents, how, indeed, could he be supposed to tolerate those worthy, kind, stupid, prosing, vulgar people ! Sarah could love

them all : yet she could also see and pardon Ranald's coldness and impatience. What could not her love have pardoned ? It could do every thing but wholly blind her understanding.

When Sarah's marriage-settlements came to be arranged, fresh difficulties and mortifications arose, though not from the ordinary causes. Ten times rather, Ranald said, and well believed, would he have carried off his bride without a *plack*, to some of the lonely shielings in the sylvan glens which she loved to picture, than have submitted to the exposure of his circumstances, and the torture to his pride occasioned by these endless questionings and legal arrangements.

Mr. Bradshaw, however, at last acknowledged to the peace-maker general, Aaron Hill, that his son-in-law elect had, though with abundant self-will and superfluous pride, shown at this time something like generosity : "of an idiotic kind," he added, drily, as if he had praised overmuch.

"This is ill-natured, Mr. Bradshaw."

"No, it is merely just. This map, with its tremendous muster-roll of Celtic names of places and *touns*, in our Bashaw's dominions, no doubt includes many future capabilities. This list of *Bhalie* Hossack's — to whom, by the way, make my compliments, as to the only man with a rational idea in that country — includes, I cannot tell how many mosses, moors, lochs, forests, grazings, ploughgates, and davochs of land, all of which might lie till doomsday under the original curse, before your Chief of three tails would deign to cultivate even a kail-garden with the paltry gold of a London tradesman. But poor Sarah has made her election. I ought now to consider their interests as one ; the son, if he shall ever come, may have more sense than the father."

The settlements which Mr. Bradshaw was left to arrange, at last, precisely as he liked, did equal honour to his liberality and intelligence. The whole debts of Lochnaveen were to be at once swept off ; and the Chief, with ample power and means to improve his estates, was only restrained from completely ruining his family, to which many of his contemporaries, as Mr. Bradshaw remarked, showed a very happy predisposition.

The Chief was now feasted and congratulated on all hands, till he became disposed to resent as insult attentions paid so *exclusively* to the accepted lover of the city heiress, and to remark that no such homage had been paid, in his own right, to the Northern Chief.

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Lochnaveen even feared that some shade of envy mingled with the contempt he felt, or tried to feel, for the profuse dinners, costly wines, and superb beaufets of rich plate exhibited by those new city connexions, of whose hospitalities he was invited, and in courtesy compelled to partake. He could have despised himself for the meanness of this feeling ; but, under it, the wish daily grew stronger that he were away from London — from all those pompous vulgarities of wealth — with his Sarah wholly his own. Even in his most jealous moments of watchfulness, he could not discover that *she* had any overweening pride of riches, or value for the costly luxuries to which she had been familiarized from her infancy.

Among the numerous dinner parties, principally contrived and executed by Mistress Bridget, was one given to Mr. Bradshaw's friend and patron, the favourite and powerful minister of the day. Sir Robert Walpole, on entering the room, heartily congratulated the handsome Highlander on the fair prize he was winning from England.

"This is a new species of depredation," said the sagacious minister. "We have found out the way at last to make honest and loyal men of the most warlike of King George's subjects. My pretty goddaughter will, I know, be the bond of fealty for one brave clan. Ay, that you will, my sweet Sarah, make loyal George's men of half the wild Jacobites of the North. Say I commissioned you to receive their allegiance, and sealed the warrant." And Sir Robert took the bride-elect in his arms, and kissed her cheek in the free manner of good-humoured godfathers of those days with pretty goddaughters ; nor was Sarah violently offended. But the red streak, the *fiery star*, kindled and burned on Ranald's brow, the hereditary badge of his ireful race. His scowling glance even rolled towards Sarah.

"Desert my Prince, too !" was his bitter thought. "Would — nay, God forbid that my mother heard this ! Am I longer worthy to be called her son ? Who are those around me ? Where am I, the Chief of Clan Raonnul ? This crafty Whig slave of the Elector ! — Sarah, too, to permit the old fox to pollute her cheek !" Ranald looked unutterable displeasure and disgust ; but he saw Sarah's timid, supplicating, brimful eyes, anxiously watching him, as if the day of maiden power were already past, the season of suffering and submission anticipated. That look instantly checked, if it

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did not disarm his wrath. He whispered an entreaty for pardon, and owned that he could not bear to see any one salute her; no, not her father—not even Aunt Bridget. This was a weakness of his:—she must forgive it. And Sarah smiled sweetly though gravely, and gave him her hand in amity.

It may appear inconsistent, but is quite true in fact, that three days after his bitter vituperation of Walpole, Lochnaveen was presented at “The Elector’s Court,” by that Minister, who wished to conciliate the Jacobite chieftains. Sir Robert also chose to grace the intended son-in-law of his city friend.

At the levee, Ranald met the Duke of Argyle, who, among others, congratulated him on his approaching marriage. The words of the Duke jarred on our Chieftain’s ear. “Would *Maccallum-more* himself have stooped to a *Goldsmith’s* daughter?” Ranald had now dismissed the “Tinker,” and adopted the English idiom even in *thinking* of his future father-in-law. “No,—Argyle never would; and was not the blood of *Mac Mic Raonull* as pure—his name as ancient—his pride as high, as that of the *guileful* Campbell?”

The first glimpse of Sarah’s face, now more lovely than ever, embellished by the flitting hues of varied feelings, the charm of that indescribable something “than beauty dearer,” beat down all such rebellious thoughts and proud imaginings. And time it was. It was the eve of her marriage; and Sarah sat in her chamber, her table heaped up with the wedding gifts of her numerous and wealthy relations, like the shrine of a favourite divinity. These gifts were triumphantly displayed, one by one, to the bridegroom, by the good, garrulous, and delighted aunt.

Sarah fancied that the Chief looked rather coldly on matters which Aunt Bridget herself mainly valued as tokens of the kindness universally felt for her-niece. A rich and very expensive set of gold toilette plate, for the bride’s use, had been the gift of an old uncle,—a retired Bristol merchant. Ranald, at once gratified and discontented, turned the different finely wrought and delicately fancied articles over and over; and, when Mrs. Bridget stepped out, said, “I hope you are aware, my Sarah, that, in the rude castle of Raonull, there is little in accordance with these delicate and costly fineries.”

“Ranald! is this reproach kind—or deserved?”

“Pardon me, my own sweet Sarah. Indeed it is not. If it be possible to correct my petulance, you alone can work that miracle. But when I see all those fine and expensive things lavished on my bride, by her own kindred, I grudge that I and mine can give her—nothing.—We have no jewels, Sarah. My mother may have some old, terribly old brooches or rings, I dare say, which she would not exchange for the crown jewels of England,—and which your father would only reckon at their value in old metal.”

“Her jewels are those of the Roman Cornelia, Ranald—as I trust ours may be.” And Sarah’s eyes sunk under their tender veiling lids, in maidenly consciousness of speech over-bold.

“Thank you, Sarah. One dark, or, rather, opal-coloured gem of that kind she does possess, which you, my sweet *Nighean Ceard*, must first polish with care, and then wear with pride.”

“With joy and pride, dear Ranald;”—and the bargain was sealed as lovers seal their covenants;—“but what pretty Gaelic name is it you now gave me?”

“Never mind, love. The name my Highlanders will give you—I mean—would have given you were you not my Bride—not their lady and their mistress,” said Ranald proudly.

“*Nighean Ceard—Nighean Ceard!*” repeated Sarah to herself, as if to impress the name on her memory,—“I like the sound.”

“Hush, Sarah!—that name was idly and fondly spoken, and must not be repeated.”

“But I choose, and insist, in this lingering hour of my maiden power, to be called *Nighean Ceard*,” said Sarah, sportively. “This your Highlanders would call me, you say?—Nay, Ranald, you are not angry sure with the phrase you taught me yourself.”

“Sarah, from the lips of a man, that phrase applied to you, were death,” said Ranald fiercely; and, to the agony of his over-wrought fancy, the *fiery star* started on his brow—and Sarah cowered into herself.

“This is wild discourse for the vigil of our wedding, Ranald,” she faintly whispered. “God forbid that I should ever live to be either the cause of quarrel or of vengeance!”

Ranald pressed the small, uplifted, fervently clasped hands to his lips and his bosom,—soothed her, and she was soothed,—cheered her, and she was cheered; and Sarah promised to forget all that had just passed—especially that mysterious name—forget it for ever.

No letters had yet been received from the mother of the Chief; but both Mr. Bradshaw and his daughter were aware of the difficulties and delays in the way of their transmission, and yielded to the wish of Lochnaveen, in celebrating the marriage on the specified day. "Delay," he said, "was in his country, thought of evil omen."

At the nuptials of the Highland Chief and the Goldsmith's Daughter, there was a most imposing array of "commercial wealth and respectability." There was likewise a sprinkling of aristocracy, which might have soothed or satisfied the scruples of a Yorkshire or Northumbrian gentleman of old family in swallowing that bitter though gilded pill, a "city heiress." Yet was the northern bridegroom visibly dissatisfied—abstracted in mind—almost sullen in mood.

The scene of the former evening was still to be traced in the white lips and heavy eyes of Sarah. With her, sensitive as was her natural character, there were, however, no blushes, few tears, nothing of a young bride's delightful flutter of spirits, which ever, when unaffected, commands so pure a sympathy. The jokes of the elders grew dull; the titter of the young folks died into a constrained simper; Ranauld stood proudly, if not sullenly, apart; and the prophetic heart of Sarah, when she had stolen one furtive glance at her moody bridegroom, even then presaged her destiny. And even then was the proud and chafed spirit of the Highlander questioning of itself, "Was this a Chieftain's bridal?—these the nuptial rites of *Mac Mic Raonull*? Where were the kinsmen, the clansmen, the senachies, the bards? There was not even one poor countryman present to bid 'God bless him,' in his mother tongue."

When her father placed Sarah's cold, damp hand in that of the Chief, with all her love, and all her pride in her lover, she could have fallen on the old man's neck and wept; and have said, "Keep your poor, self-willed child; she is indeed no fitting wife for this haughty, ireful, Northern lord."—How much misery might be spared in life were the fortitude and decision of women at such times found equal to their penetration and judgment. It cannot be.

Sarah was now the wife of Ranauld; and he wakened from his moody trance as "the bright circlet" of citizens were murdering his family name in attempts to congratulate Mrs. Mac-muck-rand;—few stammered even this length.

Sarah on this occasion gratified the taste

of her lord by dexterously avoiding the salute of the detested Sir Robert Walpole, and of the civic cordon who prepared to follow his illustrious example. She retired to make some change in her attire before going to Richmond with her bridegroom to spend some days, according to a previous, though then unusual arrangement.

Some of those excellent and good-hearted wedding-guests whispered to each other their hopes that "Sweet Sarah Bradshaw would be happy—though how so fond a father, so judicious a man as Mr. Bradshaw, had given his only child to one of the wild petticoat-men, was an inexplicable mystery." And well-powdered wigs and Mechlin lappets shook as does an ancient forest in the sudden breeze, which, in the depths of tranquillity, foretells the coming tempest. One of the old gentlemen present, who had patted Sarah's silken, curly head at two years old, and given her gilt books, and toys, and trinkets for fifteen Christmases, in now pledging to her health and happiness, said, "And, my dear, if these wild Highlandmen are not good to you, and don't value pretty Sarah Bradshaw as they ought, just let me know—your own old friend, and your father's friend, Joshua Brydges, late Sheriff of London, and I warrant we soon bring 'em to order."

On Ranauld this half-jocular address, better meant than timed, had an immediate effect, of which his pride, as well as his judgment, was afterwards ashamed: "Sir," he said, stepping forward with the air of a prince, and drawing himself up to his full height, while his brows knitted into that ominous corrugation which Sarah fondly called "his proud look," and her father, "his haughty scowl," "May I inquire if there be any particular meaning in the words you have just used?"

"Like all the words I either use or relish, they carry their meaning pretty plainly on their face, Mr. Macmickrandal," said the undaunted old merchant; "I wished to tell my young friend, now your wife, that however it may fare with her, her old friends and countrymen will not soon forget her."

"I thank you, sir, for my wife," returned Ranauld, with a high distant bow; "but as I presume the *new friends* and *countrymen* she has done me the honour to accept are fully equal to her protection, your interference is quite uncalled-for." He wheeled quickly round, snatched his half-fainting bride in his arms, and rapidly carrying her down stairs, placed her in the carriage, and

sprang in beside her, thus escaping all farther congratulation, or rather what he was disposed to reckon farther insult.

"Noble, gallant gentleman!" cried Mistress Bridget, over whom the Chief, and his rank and fine person, had effectually cast *glamour*: "We must make allowance for his high princely spirit. With how gallant an air he carried off my niece, looking round with such a glance!"

"As if he wished us all at the devil," muttered old Mr. Brydges.

Mistress Bridget saw that her eulogy did not tell. "My nephew, Lochnaveen, though at first sight a little shy, and rather *brusque*, and even high with strangers, is the most generous and amiable of men; and poor Sarah! I'm afraid he'll quite spoil her. My dear niece will be the happiest of wives."

"God grant it!" was repeated round and round by the family friends; but, not to Mr. Bradshaw's ear, in the hearty, bounding tones of belief and confidence.

Alone with Sarah—his own—his beautiful—flying like the wind from Ludgate hill—no "hill of deer"—without even "Aunt Bridget" to damp his joy through his morbid pride, Ranald was again the happiest of men.

Sarah, in her honey-moon, once more resumed her Celtic studies, and with less dread of Ranald's modes of punishment. Her musical talents were exerted in the way which best gratified his national tastes, intimately interwoven with his clan-vanity; and though Ranald had an instinctive, sick loathing, or natural antipathy to the very boards of a book, (probably from belonging to a nation whose *literature* is oral,) on their evening strolls he liked to hear Sarah recite poetry, and incidentally tell those romantic, animating stories of love, and war, and chivalry, with which her favourite reading had so richly stored her memory. Ranald, in return, could tell her those brave tales of his own country, and of his ancestors and kinsmen, which for her had now an overpowering interest; and as to poetry, he confidently assured her, all she knew of Spenser and Shakspeare was nothing compared to the strains of his native muses; but for these he referred her to *Donald of the Dirk*, that wild enthusiast, the lonely dweller in the misty shieling, the haunted man, the nympholept, the seer, and bard, and deer-stalker—a character composed of purely Ossianic elements, terror, vagueness, solitariness, desolation, and mystery.

Had the Chief of Lochnaveen remained long enough under this sweet and humanizing influence, it might indeed have wrought that change on his nature which Aaron Hill had so sanguinely anticipated. Alone with his wife, his mind was enlarged, his temper softened; while he was spared those struggles with self-will, and offences to his self-love, which must have ensued had his companion been less dear, or had there been but one spectator of their domestic intercourse. Ranald was shamed out of his habitual selfishness by the gentleness and unreserved and tender devotedness of his wife; and he now tried to check, in her presence, his frequent transports of passion, both from the desire of retaining her esteem, and to spare her the pain and horror which her countenance betrayed when he showed degrading violence and bad temper to his servants and inferiors.

Ranald, without bating one jot of his pride, began to have other notions of what belonged to manliness and personal dignity than the Highlands had taught him; and, though he still saw but faintly and through a haze, had he remained longer in this calm, pure atmosphere of affection, the mists might have cleared away, and have left self-command and propriety of feeling equal to the undeniable grace and spirit of his character. And ever as Ranald's brow cleared, Sarah's smile grew brighter. Her looks were the truest index to his varying moods; till the perilous excess of her devotion to a being so wilful and wayward, soon became her spirit's bane.

Though Mr. Bradshaw still wished that his daughter's happiness had been more wisely placed, and that her peace depended more on her own internal feelings than the humour of her husband, he learned to listen with greater patience, if not yet with entire faith, when, ten days after her marriage, he had kissed his Sarah's freshly-blooming cheek, and again heard his sister vaunt of her niece's great, grand, and most felicitous union.

While the heart, soul, and senses of the Chief thus held honeymoon in the citizen's suburban villa—a comparatively rare luxury for the London citizens of those days—and while clan, country, and mother seemed forgotten in the smiles and endearments of his wife, a very different scene was passing in his paternal halls.

Mr. Daniel Hossack, or "the Bhalie,"

knew the trim of "the young Laird" too well to have any fear that a marriage on which he had once set his heart, or his head—or, what was equivalent to both, his sovereign will and pleasure—would be broken off in deference to *Nighean Donachd Ruadh*, merely in her maternal character. But the English family might be more scrupulous; and, where "a ready-money fortune" was at stake, which Daniel, from his own painful calculations, set down, at the "least plack," for £15,000—perhaps £20,000—his imagination even rose to £30,000—it became him to be wary. This was something different from the 500 merks English, or 3000 pounds Scots, which, about that period, made a magnificent Highland dowery.

Before the Chief's letter was allowed to reach the castle, the Bhalie had made tolerably sure that the writer was a married man. Like other sagacious persons, Daniel had great faith in the breach-healing adage, "That what is done cannot be undone;" from which maxim he had long drawn the most consolatory part of his own philosophy. He ought, on twenty years' experience, to have known, that what might reconcile an ordinary mind would only chafe and exasperate the "Daughter of Red Duncan."

The Irish priest, who was still an occasional hanger-on about the castle, was at this time absent; and the Bhalie was commanded to open and read the letters which he had brought. It must have been not a little amusing to see the smirking and wriggling, and airs of blandishment of the honest man, when, after due perusal, he pretended to discover, as if for the first time, the important contents of the papers. Though the mind of this respectable functionary was as purely Lowland as on the day when he, in an evil hour, left the parish of Dron, his manners and language were now tinged with the air of the mountains, and of a Chieftain's court.

"Hoi! hoi! this is news for Beltane!—great joy to you, my lady—ay, and a fine grandson before the year be out, to transmit to the latest posterity the honoured name and race of Raonull! and joy to you, *Donald nam Biodag!* and to all the Clan Raonull, and *usquebaugh* unstinted, and a balefire to light the whole country this same night!"

"Who made you the panegyrist of the race of Raonull?" cried the disdainful and stately lady—"stint homage and compliment that are not wanted of you, and speak plainly—or, since your master has not intrusted his

message for his mother's ears to a clansman's lips—read me those papers, ay, every iota of them, at your peril—and make no comment."

The Bhalie began with much the same ease, though probably with much less grace than the dragoman, whose head must answer, not merely for the fidelity of his translation, but for the contents of the despatch proving satisfactory to the capricious tyrant who commands his service.

The Chieftainess soon understood that Raonall had found for himself the treasure for which she had long and vainly sought. Very different motives had guided their search, and the estimation of the value of the prize might also be very different. While Master Hossack, pleading stupidity, pondered suitable Gaelic words and phrases that might soften the facts which they conveyed, she cast in her mind what great clan-families with marriageable maidens were then sojourning in London. *Maccallum-more* degraded himself, and confirmed the family stigma of *guile* and sycophancy by haunting "the Elector's" Court. Maclean of Duart was in London, and the crafty Lovat—cruel and cowardly, treacherous and fawning, even in youth—was also there, with maiden relatives. These connexions boded no accession of nobility of spirit, bravery of heart, or beauty of person to the race of Raonull. But, if they could not invigorate, neither could they greatly taint the line.

The speculations of the lady were brought to an abrupt close, by the *Bhalie* hitting on a delicate, circumlocutory phrase, by which he chose to render the term, "a respectable man," which had—as it yet has—no proper equivalent among a people who knew no middle class, nor any distinction of rank, save the broad one of the brave who led, and the faithful that followed.

But with all his study, Mr. Hossack, as will sometimes happen to the most scrupulous translators, was not happy in his hits. The phrase he used startled the Chieftainess. It was the same very ambiguous, newly-framed epithet which she now usually applied to a person of mongrel breed, who, after peddling the north-western glens for many years, had set himself down "in a dealing way," in the ancient Cathedral city of Dornoch—that Palmyra of the North. Mr. Hossack saw how it stood. "In for a penny, in for a pound," was his maxim in certain acts, designated by the Scottish law as something like "vitious intromission." It occurred to him at need. So with the Chief's letter he

mixed up his own private information, and reading off-loof, as the Scottish phrase goes, he produced first the beauty, then more boldly the *fortune*, and finally bolted up the goldsmith; by this time instinctively drawing nearer to the hall-door.

When the whole truth, so far beyond her fears or conception, burst upon the mother of the Chief, instead of giving way to her usual impetuous hurricane of passion, she looked as if she were visibly changing to stone. Every muscle became strained and rigid; her face and lips grew purpled and black, her hands clenched with frightful spasms, and she staggered and fell. This was something far more appalling than the fire-streak on the brow, and the dilated nostril heaving and falling like a bellows—an ordinary expression of Celtic wrath with which Mr. Hossack had long been quite familiar. The Bhalie was at his wits' end; he fumbled about for the fleam with which he occasionally performed the operation of phlebotomy, sometimes on the cattle, and sometimes on the fainting fair of the race of Raonull, and would have tried to open a vein, even at the same risk with which a European surgeon saves the life of the Sultan's favourite; but he was warded off by Donald of the Dirk.

The kinsman, the champion, knelt by the rigid, death-struck frame of the lady, holding his dirk over her body, and breathing sounds in that dark and figurative language which Highlanders call "*deep Gaelic*," and which only their bards and *senachies* understood or could use—the mystical language of Pagan rites, and of the wildest poetry.

Though very imperfectly comprehended, those solemn vows of a deep and speedy vengeance chilled the marrow in the bones of the native of the civilized Lowland parish of Dron. He remained rooted to the spot in very terror. It seemed as if, even while sense and life were suspended, the spirit of the Chieftainess held communion with her clansman, and was appeased by his fell vow and horrible purpose. She began to move, and *Donald of the Dirk* bore her to a lattice at the upper end of the hall, the only aperture, save the ever open door, by which air or light was admitted. The breeze played freely on her bared temples and throat—the cool, fresh, evening breeze that came dancing over the heathy mountains and aromatic pastures across the waters of Lochnaveen. She opened her eyes.

"That Beelzebub's homily has done *her* more good than a pithy prayer from an

ordained minister would a Low-country Christian gentlewoman," thought Mr. Hossack.—"Hoi, hoi;—out with the *skein dhu*, Donald!—that's the scissors to cut the laces of Nighean Donachd Ruadh's hoddice, when she takes a womanly *dwalm*, or fit o' the mother. Give her a smell o' the red blood on your reeking dirk, lad—that's the scent-bottle to rouse my lady.—Och, sirs, that a native of a Christian landward parish should have lived in a heathen, howling wilderness, without law or gospel, for a whole generation! If my soul be saved, after all, I'm sure it's by a narrow chance.—If Mr. Bradshaw but only needed a steady clerk or book-keeper, who writes a legible hand, though a thought stiff:—but, like the patriarch's, my flocks and my herds have had the blessing of increase even in this Laban-servitude:—and what ken I but that this wretched *Sodom* is spared for the sake of the one righteous.—But what now? Lord have mercy upon us!"

The scene and the group which the Lowland Bhalie contemplated, if his frightened stare could be called contemplation, was not a little striking.

He stood near the middle of the great hall of the castle, a long, narrow, and dusky apartment: the massive walls, arched roof, and rudely-paved floor of which were in the same rugged, naked, and desolate state that the Lowland masons had left them two centuries before. One side of the hall was nearly filled by a huge fire-place; opposite were several dark apertures, leading to chambers and stair-cases. A long oaken table occupied the middle of the apartment; and planks of the same wood, covered with the skins of wild animals, and placed on roots of trees, dug from the neighbouring mosses, served as seats. The decorations of Raonull's hall were skeins, battle-axes, broad-swords, targets, pistols, and dirks; as if, on passing the disarming act, the hall of the Chief had been chosen for the armoury of his clan: deer-skins, enormous antlers, and other sylvan trophies, formed the secondary ornaments of the apartment; and a huddle of roots of trees, lying in one corner, either formed supplementary seats at grand banquets, or fuel, as guests and circumstances demanded. Nothing could have appeared, to an English-woman, more rude and comfortless, or unlike all she imagines of a *home*, than this interior.

The charm of the festal hall lay without. It was the eye of a glorious prospect, and one which, above all others that the sun beheld

in his course, warmed the blood, and fired the spirit of the race of Raonull. From the low, arched, narrow door, as by the glass of a reversed telescope, the eye was led through the intricate convolutions of a serrated, hilly ridge, upwards and onwards, wider and farther, till lost in a magnificent perspective of the cones, peaks, and hazy summits that rose stretching along the western horizon, and floating in ethereal light.

The prospect afforded by the high-placed lattice, at the other extremity of the hall, was more confined, and quite different in character. The Castle stood on a promontory of Lochnaveen; and this lattice had, probably, been constructed to give a view of the mountain pass across that lake, by which the strong country of Raonull could alone be approached from the south-east, whether by friend or foe. The Castle stood on the north-west bank of the lake, which here narrowed to about the eighth of a mile. Almost under the walls was a straggling hamlet, and a ferrying place. But none of these objects could be seen till the spectator thrust his head out of this dizzying lattice; though from within he might see, high across the lake, the "Rock of the Gathering" hanging over the stupendous pass, which bore a Gaelic name, signifying "the steps of brave men." Though but of the moderate altitude of three hundred feet, this cliff, springing sheer from the lake, over which it threw lurid shadows, looked tremendous high. At this hour, the heather and breckans, waving on its ledge, might be seen traced against the clear, cool amber sky, like the minute fibres of plants in a *hortus siccus*. The first faint stars now twinkled like glow-worms over and among the sprays,—the blue evening smokes of a hamlet, of only five cabins, hanging in a hollow of the "Rock of the Gathering," as the cloudlets climbed the higher ledges and gracefully crept and twined through bush and cliff, gave a character of extreme softness to the scene. Standing in the middle of the hall, a spectator might have fancied that he could shake hands with the girl, in that air-hung hamlet, who was now milking her goats and singing a Gaelic chaunt, sweetly in unison with the breathings of the unseen lake below, whose little summer waves panted and lipped against the Castle walls, like an infant in blissful dreams of its mother's bosom.

It was on this quiet scene that the eyes of the Chieftainess opened while the clansman,

who supported her, whispered in her ear words of mysterious and dreadful meaning.

The family which originally possessed this hamlet of the *Glach an duich*, or the "dusky hollow," was one of high renown and trust, even among the families of the *Duine-uasals*, or "men of note," of the tribe. Their place, as keepers of the pass, had been one of great importance in former times; and "the keepers of the heart of Raonull," or of "the gates of Raonull," as they were called, still held apart, and looked down with pride on the common inhabitants of the other villages in the glen.

It was to this hamlet, on which she opened her eyes, that *Nighean Donachd Ruadh* now addressed herself in the style of passionate adjuration peculiar to her people.

"Keepers of the heart of Raonull, have ye slumbered on your rock? dwellers in the dusky correi, is it thus ye hold your trust? Have ye not sworn, that only wading in your blood, and your children's blood,—that only treading on your bodies, and your children's bodies, should the hated Saxon gain the halls of Raonull?—Brings the dark-haired girl disgrace less foul than the red-handed man?"

At this time, Mr. Hossack muttered, "She's clean aff the hooks—lost her links—fairly demented—tint the small grip o' common sense she ever had, or ever used, save to be a permitted scourge to a' that speak broad Lawlands, and have the fear o' either law or gospel before their eyes. As if the folk o' *Glach an duich* kenn'd any thing about Miss Bradshaw's marriage:—they ken about keeping, for an auld sang, the best grazing in a' the glens o' Lochnaveen though,—where, in a dropping summer, the herbage springs up the rocks with a pile like velvet, and as rich a clover as sawn grass i' the Carse."

The Bhalie would have seized this happy minute to have renewed a favourite proposal—summarily to eject the "keepers of Raonull's heart" from their rich grazings: but the flashing eyes of the lady drove him cowering back; and the courage which he had that evening reinforced by an extra *cuach* of *usquebaugh*, the "golden water" of the Highlanders, again ebbed down into his hose.

Though the Bhalie had stood the swarthy fire of those eyes for twenty years, he could not yet tell whether they were permanently red, green, or gray, or a changeful mixture of all these hues: opal-coloured,

like the Chief's temper, they probably were, but bright and wild as the falcon's. *Nighean Donachd Ruadh* had the pale golden hair, the bright, though darkly-freckled complexion and decided features of her family; the mouth and chin wanted the delicacy and beauty of Ranald's, but, to make amends, the forehead was more expanded and nobler; there was more breadth between the eyes; the same powerful frown was there, but no scowl, no pent-house glance sent from under lowering brows. Besides the chameleon colour of her eyes, the Chieftainess presented another riddle to her Lowland retainer. Her cast-off jupes and petticoats were not a hair's-breadth too deep for her foster-sister Marseley, the daughter of Black John Gow. Now, Marseley was but an ordinary-sized female, and the coil of *Nighean Donachd Ruadh* looked, in her moods of passion, as if it could have rustled against Aldebaran. Her head was set on her shoulders with the air which a sculptor of genius might have given to a Boadicea: here was the key to that secret of commanding stature inapplicable to Master Hossack.

The Highland tribes, whatever may be said of their origin, have evidently a strangely-mixed physiognomy, though peculiar features and complexions run in the great clan-families. The clansman who still supported the Chieftainess, was of that age when a man of sorrow may say "his way of life has fallen into the sear and yellow leaf," though his actual years should contradict the statement. The face of Donald of the Dirk had been withered and burnt—burnt and withered to the tanned hue of an Indian hunter. It was still a countenance which, under other circumstances, would have been called "highly intellectual." His small, finely-shaped head, covered with thick-set curls of the blackest hair, the dark, bright, deep-set eyes, and delicately chiselled features, looked like the Arab or Moorish race; so did the light, spare, and lithe form, of which the slenderness, approaching to leanness, probably took from the real height. At this moment, he towered far above his ordinary lounging stature, as, listening to his Chieftainess, his eyes emitted that wild unearthly sparkle, which his clansmen attributed to his mysterious gifts, his power over the unseen world, and frequent supernatural communings with beings not of earth; and the Bhalie, more rationally, to an incipient frenzy, "nursed

in solitude, with idle rhymes, Satan's own pride, and thin, muttonless *brochan*."

The adjuration of the Chieftainess to the negligent "Keepers of the heart" was but the momentary aberration of an excited brain. She now rained her imprecations and threats of vengeance, in that shadowy deep language, which made the heart of one auditor quail in terror, and the spirit of the other glow and thrill in sympathy; now stretching her hands towards the "Rock of the Gathering," to the lake, the mountains, and the moors, with frantic yet solemn gesture; and in wild, impassioned, and untranslatable words, she called upon them, as if living things, to avenge, as they had witnessed, her wrongs and sorrows; to roll over, to fall upon, and hide, with their waters and their cliffs, her ungrateful and degenerate son.

The twilight had deepened into gloom, as the Chieftainess stooped to the clansman, who knelt before her, and muttered some dark spell over the naked dirk which he held up. He kissed it solemnly; and, instead of returning the weapon to its sheath, placed it naked in his bosom, as if it were henceforth set apart and consecrated to some high purpose. And he still knelt, while, word by word, he solemnly repeated—his clasped hands fast locked in both of hers—a deep and thrilling oath of vengeance; and then, without another word, Donald of the Dirk passed out of the hall-door, and disappeared, like a ghost, in the gloom. The lady also retired.

"So they have taken their Satan's sacrament before my very eyes!" soliloquized the Bhalie. "Lord preserve my senses! but a tar-barrel has been worse bestowed ere now, than on a certain lady who, for good reasons, shall be nameless! Does the hardened woman mean to murder her ain bairn! Infanticide by the statute, but that Ranald's major. But what kens she, or what cares she, for gospel law, or statute law, or canon law! Or do they mean to strike fang into the bosom of the young, innocent Southron lassie, and the fortune, it's very like, depending, except the courtesy, on the birth of an heir, or else returning to the Bradshaw family, *toties quoties*. Lord direct me aright this night! But I'll raise the braes; I'll send an express to Duncan Forbes,—if not at Culloden, he'll be about Bunchrew, planting sticks. Is blood to be spilt, and gold to be thrown from us, without saying, 'Wi' your leave,' or 'by your leave?'"

With this bold determination, the Bhalie was hobbling off when recalled by the voice of the lady. She had now adjusted her head-gear—her attendant had rolled back those streaming locks, dishevelled in her madness ; and, from a frenzied sibyl she had sunk into an angry, violent woman. The symptom was favourable ; and the *Bhalie* took fresh courage. Her questioning had hitherto been brief ; now she poured forth inquiries in floods ; and, when these were satisfied, the Bhalie offered to throw in a word of his-own. "With your good leave, honoured and noble lady," he said, bowing, but retiring backwards, "the Saxon gentleman who is to be the honoured and worthy father-in-law of *Mac Mic Raonull* being a worker in gold, and fashioner in silver, which are, as we say, the lordly, being the precious metals—"

"Peace, dog of a Saxon!—dog, and son of a dog!—from your sordid spirit has this wretched boy imbibed that greed of gold which made him first forsake his country, and next barter his honour for a tinker's pelf! Peace, again! greedy kite." The Bhalie, who was attempting to speak, bowed, and was mute.

"Lauchlan Gow," she continued, "the blackened man, toiling and sweating in yonder forge, by the banks of Lochnaveen—he yonder, whose ancestors have, in this vale, for four hundred years, fashioned brave weapons for the hands of braver men,—sons of Raonull—how much nobler a bride for the son of *Nighean Donachd Ruadh* were that poor man's child than the mongrel brood of this Saxon Caird!"

"Oich! oich! oich!" muttered the Bhalie, but dissent openly he durst not ; and, with a little pardonable hypocrisy, he left the lady to construe his exclamation into regret for Ranald's degeneracy if she so chose. But again, ere he was gone, the clansman entered, equipped and armed like a Highland *Duine-usal*, or man of distinction, when he travelled in those times.

"The devil ever speeds his own black errand," thought the Bhalie, taken by surprise, while the lady proudly turned from him, as if ashamed to be seen by her kinsman in conference with one so sordid and so low. "There he is full rigged out already, pistol and dirk. Oich, oich, oich."

"O true-hearted Donhuil! that never yet failed me," cried the Chieftainess, as if disdainful to conceal what she held not merely a lawful, but a noble purpose. "Forth,

brave kinsman! remember the name you bear, the blood which you share in honour or in shame, with *Mac Mic Raonull*. Be *Nighean Donachd Ruadh's* command your warrant for every deed. Prevent, at all perils, this foul alliance ; yet"—and for the first time her voice faltered—"remember that Ranald, wretched boy—is your Clan's Chief—is the only son of his mother!"

"And a pretty wolf-dam he has of her," thought the Bhalie, who now purposely lingered, to glean all the intelligence possible. "But, if all the broad pieces in the old hose go for it, and that's the safest Royal Bank of Scotland that I wot of in Lochnaveen—my man shall reach London first.—'A ready-money fortune!' That may plaster all sores. The woman may come to her senses, and thank me yet. At all rates, I must instantly send the curragh and cobble to the *Glach an duich* side of the loch ; and if I put a graybeard of *usquebaugh* under old *Echan an Batan's* care—hang their Gaelic names, I cannot mow-band them in thirty years—it will go hard with *Echan's* honesty but he start the bung and *pre*:—that will seal honest Hector in the land of Nod till morning, if *Nighean Donachd Ruadh* herself screech the 'gathering' in his lug—and give my red-shanked Caitliness gillie a fair start ; and then do your best, Donald, my man, there will be whipping o' cadgers ere ye cross the Spey. And ye will have to mumble your Pagan Paternosters, before starting, at the auld ruckle o' stanes ye call the 'Druid's Clachan,' over the rotten banes o' your ancestors, no doubt—a part which ye call a burying-ground—though there's not a decent four-walled grave-yard, where a Christian corp could lie in peace, in hope of a joyful resurrection, in the hundred-mile-bounds o' your wild country. Poor ignorant, uncivilized heathens! and as full o' pride as the nut is o' the kernel ; and that I need not say, for I ne'er saw a sweet, well-filled nut since I left the bonny holms o' Dron."

Such was the soliloquy of Mr. Daniel Hossack, as he wended at a round pace down to the ferry-house. One part of his *ruse* succeeded to a wish. "Echan of the boat" swallowed *usquebaugh* to his heart's content, and took the exact care of the graybeard which the politic Bhalie had anticipated.

A sinister-looking Caitliness lad, a foreign mercenary, whom the Bhalie harboured, was on that night *Echan's* last passenger ;

and he was now up the pass, and some miles over the moors.

The Bhalie, stationed at the door of his own snug cottage, chuckled to hear the war-pipe and the small pipe, and the daughters of Raonull *skirl* in chorus a *reveille* in the dull ears of drunk Echan, to whom "the golden waters" had proved a mingled draught of Helicon and Lethe. *Nighean Donachd Ruadh* would at once have ordered a bullet or two to be sent across the lake, but that she knew this leaden messenger, though it might make Echan's sleep sounder, would not bring over the curragh. The Bhalie's triumph at thus getting the start of the Man of the Dirk, which he, however, confined to his own bosom with prudence and modesty, was complete.

Well he knew how the promise of gold in handfuls would string the sinews of his messenger; but he reckoned not of the nobler motives which impelled Donald of the Dirk. No obstacle could delay—no difficulty deter the clansman. He had visited the graves of his ancestors, a ceremony never forgotten, even on commencing shorter and less perilous journeys than that which lay before him. It was whispered in the hamlet, with pale cheeks and bated breath, that he must also have held a darker meeting, which no other man might share and live. Strange tales were ever whispered of Donald; but he had no confidant save one. *Nighean Donachd Ruadh* knew that her kinsman had, from about the age of eighteen, been haunted by a beautiful female, or Spirit that assumed a woman's shape; the Egeria of the solitary hunter,—who sometimes "made a sunshine in the shady place," but more frequently thickened its gloom, to his perturbed and melancholy spirit.

At times the Chieftainess was disposed to entertain the theory of her functionary of Dron,—that the fair and mysterious apparition which swayed the mind of her kinsman, was the creation of a distempered, but poetical fancy; of solitude and thin potatoes; and, at other times, this wild mystery enhanced to her imagination the lofty and enthusiastic character of *Donkuil Nam Biodag*; and Mr. Hossack was peremptorily ordered to be for ever silent upon what no cold-blooded Saxon could hope to comprehend.

Donald had taken leave of the Chieftainess in the circle of Druid's stones, the burial-place of their common ancestors. He had retired from her presence as may the mes-

senger of fate from the audience of an Eastern despot; and he now stood alone on a jutting cliff, near the place where the ferry-boats were usually moored.

"Ay, my lad, ye may just rest ye," thought the Bhalie, eyeing him from a distance, "unless the *Cailleach-dhu-glass* whisk ye o'er on her broomstick, if she has such an accommodation. No doubt she must have been flying scraiching about the auld walls and bunkers o' the castle last night foretelling the dreadful misfortune of the clan, in getting a Christian, Southron lass with a good tocher, for their lady. Spirits and ghosts are as plenty here as auld wives and bairns in the townend of a Lowland clachan. And, as I shall answer, if he is not stripping to swim! The de'il aye speeds his ain pets. Amphibious brutes!—How he takes the water, like an otter or a sealgh,—with his hail estate on his back!"

Donald of the Dirk went to avert the shame of his Chief; or, that too late, to redeem the honour of his clan. The task to which he was devoted was holy in his eyes,—what could retard its performance? Like the page in the fine old ballad,

When he came to waters' flow,
He bent his bow, and swam;
And when he came to grass growing,
Set down his feet and ran.

It was almost literally in this manner that Donald of the Dirk, in an incredibly short time, performed a journey of above six hundred miles; and, in the early dawn of the day when the Chief and his young wife were to be presented at court, for which purpose Sarah had already come to town from Richmond, the clansman stood alone in the pictured hall of Mr. Bradshaw's house, in Ludgate Hill.

Donald of the Dirk was considered a moody and singular character even among his own tribe. Though the bravest of the brave, the first man of his name, in the emphatic sense in which the term is understood by a race of warriors and hunters, the wildering superstition, of which he was the slave, and some unhappy incidents of his early days, had long made the clansman cease to mingle in social life. For months together he would not once descend to the hamlets in the glens, save, perhaps, to attend the obsequies of some elder of his tribe; or, if driven into social intercourse by the severity of the seasons, the first sickly smile of early spring, the first churm of a brown moorland bird, or

the emerald moss growing sallow in the suns of February, was to him the welcome signal of retreat.

It was, however, very well understood among his countrymen, that Donald of the Dirk "was never less alone than when alone," though in a very different sense from the philosopher who first used the phrase. The cause which had first estranged the hunter from all interest in life, was melancholy, and not soon to be overcome. In a moment of passion he had rashly stabbed a fine youth, his beloved foster-brother, who, though of the lower class, had been his chosen companion on the hill and on the lake; and who, for many a night, on their hunting excursions, had shared his plaid and his heather pallet, under the open sky. To this frenzy of passion he had been irritated by the light-hearted youth rallying him on the delicate subject of that mysterious and capricious mistress of the Mist, who often, at midnight, it was said, summoned the hunter from his couch, to follow her to the wild.

Before Donald of the Dirk had surmounted the shock of this rash action, he sustained what he considered the deeper misfortune, of being the cause of death to a beautiful child, to which he had become fondly attached, and which showed for him equal fondness. His little playmate had sprung from his arms into the lake, and infant life was instantly extinguished. In the agony of his despair at this catastrophe, the unhappy man, his mind already shattered, conceived the idea that he was a predestined homicide, the doomed destroyer of all he loved the best. It was then that he withdrew nearly altogether from society.

"*A Man, an Infant, a Woman!*" was the fearful climax of predestined crime which haunted his imagination. A third time must his hand be imbrued in blood before his guilty soul was required of him. He heard of the marriage of his Chief with a Saxon maiden, and trembled to know his destined victim.

The art with which the deer-stalker contrived to obtain information of the movements of his Chief, and to gain access to the house of Mr. Bradshaw, was more surprising in a man of his habits, than all his previous exertions and privations on his journey southward. The circumstance of Sarah being left alone for one night appeared peculiarly propitious, though his unscrupulous devotion would not have shrunk from

the deed he meditated had the assembled world been his witness, and his judge.

The chamber which Sarah occupied was very large for the size of the dwelling, and it was richly, though somewhat anciently furnished. It had been the apartment fitted up for her beautiful Venetian ancestress; and the pictures and old-fashioned filagree silver-framed mirrors remained from those days, when a city lady's chamber was also her *boudoir*, or drawing-room.

The draperies of the bed were thrown aside, on account of the heat, which flushed the usual pale rose-tint of Sarah's cheek to a rich crimson, and gave exquisite effect and relief to the deep, dark eye-lash, which lay as if delicately pencilled on its surface. One side of the face was sunk on the pillow; but by this the delicate profile was only the more perfectly defined. The laced night-dress, ruffled up about the bosom, had slipped off from the naked shoulder, and the little hand, on which was proudly worn Sarah's most valued ornament, her wedding-ring, flung carelessly out, lay half-sunk in the silken quilt. The slight figure altogether scarce dented the downy surface, of which it occupied so narrow a space. Sarah lay thus smiling and murmuring in the slumber of happy dreams, in which she fancied that, mermaid-like, she floated, now in summer-seas, now among the bright water-lilies of a *loch*, far away among Ranald's hills—

"A mirror in the depths of flowery shelves," a scene of enchantment which he had often described to her, and where he had promised to build her a summer shieling. It was a thrice happy dream. Now she plunged into the cool, green depths of the *loch*, re-appearing under the trailing birch-sprays that ruffled the glassy surface—now darted in chase of the little white-breasted water-birds that dimpled the wave on which they brooded, or wandered away into those tangled island thickets where the roe couched with her twin fawns.

On this dream, made up of every image of beauty and fascination that haunted the sleeper's wakening thoughts, stole the pre-meditated assassin—his step more silent and stealthy than ever was that with which he tracked the red deer on Maan Tamar. Higher animal courage than that which nerved the clansman never warmed man's blood; yet his raised and partially disordered imagination was often conflicting with his physical firmness. He was the melancholy and imaginative native of a semi-barbarous and

superstitious country, of which even the religion was still a wild mixture of Druidism with the Paganism of ancient Scandinavia, and the darkest forms of Popery. The Chief, and a few of his kinsmen, were now, indeed, nominally of the Reformed faith; but this had wrought small change, either on their practice or their creed; and even to the slight change, Donald of the Dirk had not acceded.

The Dark Dreamer, as he was often named, was the centre of a world of his own, a world peopled by phantasms and shadows. He had learned to give the roar of the cataract, and the whispering of the wind among the reeds of the lake, or its moaning sobs, as it swept over the heath, a living and articulate voice; and to shape from the rainbow and the mist, according to his prevailing mood, forms of mystery, of terror, or of beauty.

To the higher productions of the fine arts, the deer-stalker was almost an entire stranger, and in stealing along the dim-lighted passages of Mr. Bradshaw's dwelling, the tall, ghost-like, sculptured figures which he encountered, and the pictures, obscurely seen, yet starting from the canvass in the attitudes and hues of life, took, in his working brain, a strange and wildering character, hovering between that mystic ideal and gloomy reality, to which his spirit ever quailed. Still he glided on.

It was reflected in a large mirror, and by the light of a night-taper, that Donald of the Dirk first beheld the couch of his innocent and unconscious victim. The air of serene repose, the deep and holy tranquillity that breathed around the lovely vision softly pictured in the glass, could not fail to touch any heart allied to so exalted an imagination as that which made the bane of the Highlander. "Was this Ranald's low-born bride,—this shadowy being, so ethereal in her loveliness,—and was it into Paradise that he had stolen to do a murderer's work?"

The reflections which crowded on the clansman's remorseful and perturbed mind, though they shook, could not change his vowed purpose. He gazed more intently into the mirror; and now, most wonderful! distant, dim, and hazy, gradually rising beyond the sleeper's couch, yet seeming to hover above it, was revealed the beautiful, unearthly, and almost impalpable being, that from youth had haunted his solitude!—not such as she flashed upon him in midnight darkness; not the bright, sudden, glancing apparition, half seen at noon-day; nor yet

such as when she mysteriously gathered form from the mist or the moonlight: another she seemed, and yet the same, throned on clouds and stars, enshrined in glories, resplendent in power and majesty, yet bending downwards those meek, veiled eyes, with a humility so touching. In her arms, and around her head, a thousand and a thousand times repeated, was the same cherub face,—the very face of the lovely infant he had destroyed! Quivering in every limb and nerve, the Highlander sank on his knees.

Though this mysterious vision shook his mind, it could not long quell his courage. The clansman knew enough of civilized life, to be aware that he had looked into a mirror. The prominent figure which gleamed there,—his own,—worn and haggard as it now looked, was yet the same he had so often seen reflected in softer lines, and fairer hues, on the waters of Lochnavæn, and in the "Fountain of Peace." He rose, and firmly and calmly turned round, gazing intently on every side. The *Madonna* he had seen reflected in the mirror, and which hung behind Sarah's bed, was another portrait of the Venetian lady, whose beauty had been her husband's pride, and a study to all the contemporary artists, who had painted her in every form.

The movements of the sleeper, disturbed by the faint noise unconsciously heard, had made the curtains of the bed drop from the quilt, and they now concealed the picture which had received life and motion only from indistinct vision, and the superstitious excitement of a bewildered mind. Donald of the Dirk gazed on the spot where the reality of the mirrored image should have been seen, as if his soul would have escaped by his eyes. Nothing was visible but the draperies of the curtains, falling in rich folds. He drew a long, relieving breath; he grasped the dagger, which had never left his breast since he had received it from the hand of *Nighean Donachd Ruadh*; he looked down on the sleeper; she had turned her head round, so as to expose her front, face and neck. God! here again was the same image, the mysterious being that, through long years had haunted him, moving, breathing, flushed with rosy life, the bride of *Mac Mic Raonull*!

It was by a strong effort of self-command that the half-maddened clansman restrained himself from crying aloud in his agony and distraction. Was he haunted and mocked by a demon?—or was the Saxon bride of

Ranald, indeed, some fair creature, the earth-born representative of that yet lovelier sister-spirit ever with him in solitude? He returned the dirk to his breast, inwardly exclaiming, "I cannot slay her!" Then flashed on his mind his solemn soul-plaint—his predestined crime. His impulse was instant flight. The clansman drew the wedding-ring from the slender finger it encircled, and rushed from the chamber.

Two hours later, Stephen Bull, the staid elderly butler of Mr. Bradshaw, was horrified to find the hall door unbolted, and a skylight of the lumber-garret open. He, however, counted his spoons,—a duty in which he was at least as punctual as in saying his prayers,—found all right, and wisely kept the discovery to himself.

This was a busy morning in Mr. Bradshaw's household. The Chief arrived early from Richmond to attend his wife to the royal drawing-room. He had that morning seen Mr. Daniel Hossack's special messenger, and drawn the most unfavourable auguries, both from the *Bhalie's* hasty epistle, and the man's confused and exaggerated intelligence. He was, therefore, in bad spirits, and got into bad humour, on receiving a *diplomatic* note from the secretary of Sir Robert Walpole, his *patron*, advising him against appearing at court in the Highland garb, which he had got a previous license to assume, and which displayed his fine person to so great advantage, and had been prepared for this appearance without regard to expense.

He first resolved in a pet not to go to court at all; but to have been received in courtly circles, even in the "Elector's" court, with his *low-born* wife, gave a certain *éclat* to the alliance, in those sordid times; and the introduction to St. James's might facilitate, to Sarah, an entrance into the circles of Castle Dounie and Dunrobin, and the other northern petty courts. He therefore sought his wife in her chamber, to inform her how the hours went, and to wish her good-morrow.

Sarah had not been many minutes awake ere she missed her wedding ring. In haste and alarm, with fond and womanly superstition, she searched her chamber. It was no where to be seen; yet she could have sworn that she wore it when she went to rest on the preceding night.

But the morning wore fast away.—Sarah was compelled to abandon her search, and dress for her appearance at Court, and she was thus occupied when her husband came in.

It was with a glow of really affectionate admiration that Ranald found his wife attired for the first time in the costume of his clan and country, in which she looked, not merely a beautiful young woman, but to him most interestingly lovely, as hues of tenderness and pride chased each other over the face that beamed and blushed with joy in his praises.

"I wish my mother could see you this morning, Sarah."

"Would she think me worthy to wear her tartan, Ranald?—That kind wish,—it is indeed praise. I was half-afraid, as you did not *bid* me assume this garb, that I was too presumptuous,—that I was not grand enough,—*Highland* enough:"—and the wife of a month hesitated in revealing her fears, from a too painful anxiety about their cause.

"Grand enough, simpleton!—and *Highland* enough, you will become.—Are you not the wife of *Mac Mic Raonull*?"

In her secret thoughts, Sarah chose rather to consider herself the wife of Ranald.

"I know which will be the fairest cheek the grisly Hanoverian will lip to-day.

"Ranald! our gracious Protestant King!"

"Yes, even your gracious Protestant King," returned Ranald, laughingly.

He had now half-forgotten his chagrin, and he assisted in arranging in proper form the light tartan screen that veiled Sarah's head,—rich in the jewelled fillet, but richer still in the dark bright tresses which it confined, ere they fell below her waist, forming an under and more beautiful veil than her tartan plaid.

"This, I am told, is not quite the full matronly costume," said Sarah, smiling at the charming awkwardness of her novel tire-woman. "There remains for me that solemn investiture,—the matronly *curtch*, or kerchief, I presume, which Mr. Hill tells me is in all ranks performed for young matrons by the mother of the husband. I shall content me with my brown locks till I can obtain that important piece of female head-gear from the honoured hands of the Chieftainess,—my Ranald's mother and mine."

Ranald's face underwent a sudden change. He well remembered having heard his mother declare, in her energetic and passionate manner, on being told of some Highland misalliance,—“That the arms should drop from her shoulders, the fingers rot from her hands, ere they *busked* the *curtch* on the brow of a churl's daughter, though she were twenty times the wife of *her* son.”

"Tush," cried Ranald, peevishly, "better as you are,—without that odious housewifely tite:—besides, 'tis too late now; this always takes place the morning after marriage."

"O, not too late!" cried Sarah, who happily was too busy to scrutinize the face of her companion.—"I warn you that I shall dispense with none of my Highland honours, or matronly privileges.—Ours seems but half a marriage, till the clansmen share our bridal banquet. I believe we must be married over again, Ranald; for,—you must not be angry, —I am shocked to tell you that I have had the misfortune—to me it seems a very heavy one—to lose—to mislay, for it cannot be lost—my wedding-ring,—that old ring of yours,—almost an amulet."

"Lost your wedding-ring! In my country that would be reckoned of bad omen."

Sarah's eyes filled with tears,—she even changed colour,—she again renewed her search. She vowed, and with truth, that she would willingly give every rich trinket in her possession to recover this one ring. Ranald, gratified by her anxiety, and affected by her uneasiness, which his thoughtless observation had greatly increased, now treated the matter lightly. "Fie, Sarah, to slip your girths already,—but never mind the bauble. I fancy a woman losing her favourite ring is like a man losing his dog,—another will not supply the first loss; yet I must find you another, and apply to our friend Aaron for a posy."

This was all the consolation which the case admitted; and Sarah recovered her spirits, and described the enchanted lake of her dream,—that sylvan *lochán* by which Donald of the Dirk had his shieling. The name recalled to the Chief the intelligence and the feelings of the morning.

"Donald of the Dirk; and how will he welcome his Sassenach kinswoman?" said Ranald, thoughtfully. "By Heaven! I would not brook the scorn,—I would not fall under the contempt of that dark dreamer for the mines of Peru."

"Scorn!—contempt!" cried Sarah, while her heart throbbed with sudden apprehension: "Contempt of you? Say rather of—no; not of your low-born, Southron wife!" The swelling heart of Sarah—her proud and wounded heart—overflowed in tears.

"Scorn!—and of you, Sarah?—No, no, no! Nor dare this dreaming Donald, nor the boldest of his name, question the pleasure or the deed of *Mac Mic Raonull*! You have given me the trick of thinking aloud; and I

speak too much. I may now say that my tribe are fools,—half-informed savages, as you Southrons call us:—and I—I the veriest fool of the band.—But haste: finish your dressing. Let me kiss off those silly tears, and for ever stem their source. Here is your fan, that pretty, fairy sceptre which the stout sons of Raonull *must*, to a man, obey."

If the tears were kissed off, their source was not wholly stemmed; but Sarah took the cue that Ranald gave, and tried to talk of her dress.

There was no newspaper fame, nor three days' immortality for court-dresses at that period: that blessing we owe, with many others, to a free press. It is from the old picture mentioned in the beginning of this story, that the reader is favoured with the particulars of the remarkable dress worn by the Tinker's Daughter. The short, full *jupe*, or petticoat of velvet, of the bright and many-coloured chequers of Clan Raonull, fell in rich folds, and was bordered by a fillet of gold so delicately worked, as to be, though solid, perfectly elastic: this again was edged by a deep, heavy fringe of the same costly material. A corset, bodice, or tight-fitting jacket, of green and gold tissue, was slashed alternately with green or gold-coloured silk stuff,—laced in the bosom with gold cords and tassels, and fastened at the waist and throat by diamond brooches of antique pattern. Brooches of the same description looped up the short and full sleeve, leaving the arms naked almost to the shoulders. For the Highland buskin, or "low-heeled shoon," was substituted a green and gold-embroidered sandal. And over the jewelled brilliance of armet and bracelet, and of the rich diamond ornaments scintillating among the dark tresses, floated the tartan screen, like a rain-bow.

"I could not have fancied mere London milliners could do so much for you, Sarah, *ma cooleen beg*," said the Chief, vexed at having betrayed what he wished now to be considered as a childish degree of emotion.

Sarah replied with forced pleasantry,— "Don't let the milliners rob me of my personal merit:—they could do nothing for me. What a behooded, belappeted, composite piece of millinery architecture I should have been under the hands of Madame la Mode! But woman's wit, and woman's vanity, against even a London milliner's conceit, and a Spitalsfield weaver's stupidity!"

"And in what fairy loom was this gos-

samer tissue woven, which looks as if made of those bee-birds' wings you have in your cabinet?"

"You admire it?—It is most delicate, indeed, and has a superadded value. You know, or ought to know, that my good uncle Gilbert is one of the very first silk manufacturers in London: he has excellent taste himself, and fine and elegant invention; and he has spared no pains or cost to oblige me."

"He is very kind," said Ranald, coldly, taken quite *aback* by learning that his wife's fanciful attire was manufactured by so near a relation.

"So very *very* good, that we must spend a day with him before we leave London. You can't fancy what a pretty house he has; hid in a doleful court, too, but looking out behind on the Thames; and so handsomely fitted up and furnished. But he is a very wealthy man; and, what is ten times of more importance, one of the best, the most intelligent, actively benevolent of our citizens."

"A very excellent silk-weaver, I dare say," returned Ranald, petulantly, with the exact tone to give his words a poignant effect. "But we must make haste. This tartan farrago is but nonsense after all, Sarah: it would have been better had you gone to court in the ordinary dress of a private gentlewoman." Sarah raised her eyes in painful astonishment, and dropt them more in sorrow than in anger; her heart again rising to her lips, though wounded pride this time restrained her tears. Ranald, vexed and angry he knew not with what, again quickened her motions, for the purpose of concealing his own feelings. "We will be shamefully late: your good Protestant King will have imposed penance on half the beauty of his Cockney realm by this time." He gave his arm to lead her down.

"My aunt Bridget—she sent for me to her chamber; she will like to see me dressed. She fatigued herself so much about our purchases and northern packages yesterday, that she is unable to leave her chamber. I must show myself to Aunt Bridget: I can run up in one minute." Nothing could be more simple or natural than this wish. A man of sense and reflection would even have been pleased with this attention to a venerable relative, as the sign of an amiable and womanly disposition. But Ranald was in bad humour; and it became the worse that Sarah, as he thought, did not sufficiently appreciate his former efforts to command his temper. He must wait, forsooth! till Sarah submitted the dress

and decorations assumed to gratify him alone, to the admiration of a silly old woman—he, *Mac Mic Raonull!*

"Let the pretty baby go then, and show its new sash and red shoes to Aunt Bridget, before it takes its walk in the Draper's Garden," said the pettish, paltry Chieftain. Anger, nay, violence, had been less painful to Sarah, as something more manly and in character with the hero of her imagination.

"Lochnaveen," she said, calmly, "I am most unhappy in incurring your displeasure this morning. I am ready to attend you. My poor aunt can see my dress on my return;—that is, indeed, of small moment."—"God forbid that she should see the heart that lies under it!" was Sarah's thought; but already was Ranald at her feet suing for pardon, though probably without much fear of not easily obtaining it. "Sweet and most patient Grisel, I am a very savage this morning;—we have, indeed, been playing at cross-purposes—an English game, Sarah—and I have, I suppose, played worst. Kiss and be friends, and mind that mine is hot Highland blood, though for worlds I would not grieve or offend *you*."

"Nor, causelessly, any one."

"Nay, I don't quite promise that," said Ranald, kissing her hand with graceful animation. And Sarah looked on him, every shade of displeasure past, and exclaimed, with the softest tenderness, her eyes now floating in happy tears, "Oh, Ranald, suffer me either to *love* or to *hate* you!" This involuntary exclamation was beyond the depths of Ranald's fathom-line of thought or feeling; nor was his young wife, herself, probably aware of all its import.

Sarah was now, when it was really too late, compelled by him to go and show herself to Aunt Bridget.

Ranald strove, and with singular success, to keep down his temper, which the sight of the carriage and liveries of Mr. Gilbert Bradshaw, lent to his niece, as more gay and new than her father's plain chariot, had nearly roused again. Even his remark, that Mr. Joshua Brydges's gilt coach, which took precedence of their vehicle, was as fine as Whittington's in the picture-book, was made with gaiety which blunted its sting. And, as they sat waiting their turn to be set down, he, good-humouredly, told Sarah the tale of the Celtic Whittington, (a tale familiar in almost every language,) who obtained by his cat immense flocks and herds, and a Chief's daughter in marriage.

The court was thin ; but for this the handsome Highlander and his bride were the more distinguished. The admiration of the personal charms of Sarah, and the novelty and picturesque effect of her attire, repeated and re-echoed by patrician lips, was gratifying to Ranald's vanity, and to the kindly feelings which, in this case, mingled with its selfishness. He was soon in excellent spirits ; and Sarah caught, as at all times, the happy contagion. As they drove home, he gallantly reiterated all his former compliments ; for to Sarah's real charms might now be added the merit of success. She *must* be beautiful whom Maccallum-more and Earl Stair had declared the fairest ornament of the drawing-room on that day.

"Thank Heaven it is all over," said Sarah. "Do you know, Ranald, that *leetle* fracas we had this morning, — that *something* that was wanting to make us quite free of the married state, which, however, I do not particularly long to enjoy again — as I hope that, like the measles or small-pox, catching it once in life may do — that fracas did me infinite good. What a formidable affair seemed this presentation ! — I thought I would never get through with it ; but first came the loss of my dear ring, and then the fear of your displeasure, — of your unkindness — Oh, ten times worse than your displeasure ! And then, what was King George and all his court to me ? I shall know but one such fearful day in my whole life again — that on which you present me to *Nighean Donachd Ruadh* and her court."

Sarah paused for Ranald's encouraging reply ; but he was silent. She had now two ways of considering her unknown mother-in-law. In one view, this lady was the venerable and indulgent parent of her beloved Ranald, — in the other, the proud and haughty Chieftainess described by Aaron Hill, — ungentle and unfeminine, ignorant and contemptuous of all that was not of her own warlike country ; and more likely to scorn than to cherish the ignoble stranger who came to divide her sway, and intrude on her state.

Whatever were the truth of Sarah's surmises, they were soon to be put to the proof. Ranald had no farther personal interest in remaining in London, and every motive to seek his long-deserted home. The letter and messenger of Bhalie Hossack had irritated his natural impatience — for Ranald's was more the headlong temper that blindly rushes on an unknown danger than that which

calmly prepares for its approach. He had left Richmond, unable longer to resist the hospitalities of Mr. Bradshaw's numerous and wealthy citizen friends, and of Sarah's kindred ; who naturally wished to see as much as possible of one so beloved, before she was lost to them for years, perhaps for ever.

Every day was, therefore, a new festival, and, at every turn, the distasteful points of Ranald's new connexion were obtruded on his pride. There were hours when he would have given half his newly-acquired wealth to have been assured of regaining the favour of his mother, and of removing the prepossessions of his kinsmen and tribe against an ignoble and a *Saxon* alliance. Nor could he, who had been fostered and bred in all those vain yet inspiring illusions, call them prejudices, even when they were directed against himself. How had Ranald despised in others the irretrievable degradation of misalliance ! an outrage on established opinion, and on family dignity, as rare in his native land as it was every where despicable. There were the secret and bitter hours, when neither the beauty, the gentle fascination, nor the ample dowery of his wife, well as he esteemed them each and all, could give his mind peace.

Sarah, affectionate, anxious, observant, could not fail to perceive these fitful moods, over which her charms and her affection had, she began to fear, little power ; and though she hoped they originated in nothing personal to herself, apprehensive tenderness exposed her, above all others, to the consequences of their bitterness. On her the spleen was wreaked that had gathered she knew not how ; and though it was still sweet to receive Ranald's graceful and frank atonement — doubly sweet to forgive and be reconciled — she wished that such renewings of love as lovers' quarrels provoke, were less frequent between them.

Mr. Bradshaw was not slow to perceive, that the sooner his daughter followed the fortunes of her husband, and devoted herself *exclusively* to him, the happiness of both was the more likely to be secured. London was no latitude for the haughty and self-willed Highlander. He had come abroad into the world too late, and was still of too much consequence in one narrow corner of it, to profit by its teachings ; and those plastic feelings were still fresh in Sarah's bosom, which mould anew a woman's tastes and opinion, and create for her a paradise in the desert. Mr. Bradshaw was still willing to

hope, that violent, ill-instructed, proud, and unreasonable as his son-in-law certainly was, he was neither unfeeling nor ungenerous. He was evidently so warmly, though selfishly, devoted to his beautiful and equally-devoted wife, as to grudge that share in her affections which her own family possessed. This was a kind of love which Mr. Bradshaw could not admire; and it was his prayer that the eyes of his daughter's understanding might remain sealed until her influence, and time, and experience, had wrought that change in her husband's character, for which Mr. Hill's assurances, rather than his own judgment, encouraged the father to hope. Continued mental blindness was impossible to a mind which was as quick and intelligent as it was gentle and diffident. Sarah might resolutely endeavour to close her mind's eyes, but irresistible light darted through the veiling lids. The very medium through which she viewed his conduct—the medium of anxious affection strongly desiring the perfection of its object—made her sense of the failings of her husband's character more keen and more torturing. It was her misery to be more quickly alive to the faults of the man she loved, than if he had been the most indifferent stranger; and to feel but too often,

That to be wroth with what we love,
Doth work like madness in the brain.

Still, indulgent affection adjusted its own balance. Ranald, it was to be feared, had grievous faults; some that even savoured of unkindness, if not to her, yet to *hers*—to what was more dear than self:—“Yet who possessed such noble qualities as the man whose caprice and waywardness, redeemed by so much that was generous and frank, made him the dearer for his very faults?” Besides, most of those failings of temper, Sarah was willing to hope, were *local* affections. In *his* own country of Lochnaveen, her own Ranald would be a very different being;—and then, with all his failings, he passionately loved her.

The fixed, calm, manly regret of her father, who, without one complaining or doubting word, did all that he could to facilitate, and give comfort to her departure; and the kind, simple, and what the indifferent or heartless might have called *inane* prattle of her aunt, made Sarah meanwhile drink to the dregs, and drop by drop, the bitterness of farewell.

The anxiety of the worthy and benevolent old lady—one of the happy beings guided

by a few virtuous instincts, and in whom “innocence is Nature's wisdom,” who are “better than they know”—had prompted her to interrogate Mr. Hill very strictly concerning the character and domestic habits of the mother of the Chief. Aaron framed his answers exactly to suit “Aunt Bridget,” while he amused himself by mystifying the shears of Fate into the scissors of *Nighean Donachd Ruadh*, and saying that her skill in tapestry and embroidery had been acquired from those celebrated Northern Spinsters, the daughters of Odin and Fryggia, who had woven the shroud of Edward I. and of many more princes and heroes.

Mistress Bridget, industrious herself, had, *a priori*, an excellent opinion of all ladies who loved “work,” as civilized womankind gravely term their elaborate trifling with pins, needles, and shreds of muslin; the worthy spinster, therefore, felt quite consoled in the belief that she confided “poor little Sarah” to a *nice* motherly old lady, who, having no daughter of her own, must be doubly fond and willing to instruct “their dear girl.” Mistress Bridget was also Cockney enough—as many wiser persons have been before and since—to imagine that “a Lon'on girl,” with London manners, habits, fashions, and dresses, must have a *grand success* among the boors of the North. The person must be enlightened indeed, who, in its enlarged spirit, understands and believes the homely adage, “Every land has its own laugh.”

Among the most important of the preparations for Sarah's departure was Mistress Bridget's epistle of eight close pages. There was no *crossing* of ladies' letters in those antique days of bald or set phrase, curious spelling, and diagonal lines. But what was wanting in caligraphy and orthography, was made up in the etiquette and stately form of address, “To the honoured Dowager Mistress Makmukrandluk, at her castle,” &c. &c.

This elaborate epistle detailed rather circumstantially, and with strangely interwoven parentheses, what the worthy lady chose to call the “constitutional tendencies and delicacies of their dear girl.”

Next followed hints explanatory of her own successful management, always, however, “under Providence and Dr. Coddler,” with the date (27th September, according to the London meridian) when it was proper to compel Sarah to the adoption of a Welsh flannel petticoat, of which three dozen were sent in the trunk ticketed “No. 7.” Mrs.

Bridget farther hinted, that she—but she did not presume to advise, much less to dictate—had found it an excellent method to smuggle the glass of sack whey, or sherry whey—the dear refractory patient must be compelled to swallow on catching cold—up stairs *openly* on the withdrawing-room supper-tray; “for the dear child had so much of Abram Bradshaw’s temper as to hate all *fuss* about herself, as she was apt to call the care of sensible and judicious elderly friends; yet Sarah, ‘their dear Sarah,’ had the sweetest and most manageable temper in the world, and the most grateful heart.”

The simple instinct of affection made Bridget display both judgment and *tact* in this important epistle. Her grand error, and it was fatal, was, that she had not, nor could she possibly have formed any idea of the character of the woman she addressed. She went on to state, that “excellent Dr. Coddler, who had at least a forty years’ knowledge of the Bradshaw *female* constitution, recommended, when Sarah caught cold, a P. D. *lunium* at degrees *farren* heat,” (the blank was left to be afterwards scientifically filled up by the Doctor himself,) “which just meant a foot-bath, or bathing Sarah’s feet, in her dressing-room, in hot water, as long as Mrs. Makmukrandluk, *junior*, would submit to the operation.”

These hints were all given by the Ludgate-hill spinster to the Highland matron, with every mark of deference to her motherly experience; but also with a due reservation of complaisance for the superior knowledge and opportunities of a native and resident of “the city.”

Mrs. Bridget had, however, some glimmering indistinct light into the character of her self-chosen correspondent. “The mother of the Chief,” she wrote, “was not to imagine her daughter-in-law a puny, shivering, sal-low Cockney chit, taking cold, according to good Dr. Coddler’s joke, like the Cockney canary-birds if hung out of the window, over a bough-pot.”—“Sarah, delicate dear child, as she looked, enjoyed excellent and uniform health and spirits.” Farther, “she seemed to prefer—yet there was no getting her to speak out on the subject of dietetics—white meats and fish to red meats, and certainly relished best the very plainest cookery.”

Here followed abundant apologies before Mistress Bridget expressed her hope that the families might henceforth be as one; “for, in her heart, there was no difference between her own niece and her dear nephew Mr.

Makmuk—,” &c. &c. Farther, “proud and happy she would be, living as she did on the spot, and consider it no trouble, but a pleasure, to execute any little lady-like commission, such as procuring new patterns for embroidery, for which Sarah had a pretty turn, and selecting and assorting shaded silks, which she knew, by the experience of the season she had passed in Dorsetshire, was no easy affair to country ladies.”

This epistle was certainly the first of the kind that had ever crossed the Grampians.

The “Lady’s Postscript” was still wanting: “Mrs. Bridget hoped to be forgiven the great liberty she had taken, and to find the diamond earrings accepted by Mrs. Makmukrandluk, senior; the setting was considered very superior, both in pattern and workmanship, even by Abram Bradshaw. The gold-mounted ivory work-box was merely a pretty lady-like toy, valuable only as a Chinese curiosity, from the exceeding delicacy of the lace-patterned carving of the ivory. And, *à propos*, there was a neat, tidy young person, a daughter of one of Abram’s workmen, who did up laces, Dresden, Mechlin, or Valenciennes, to look almost as nice as new, and very reasonably; clearing with starch, and opening with the bodkin; who wanted a place as lady’s-maid, and would be a treasure.”

“She would make no apology for the liberty of the *sorted assortment* of needles, from No. 1 to No. 12 inclusive. Truly in her visit to Dorsetshire (summer 1721) she had discovered the value of a good needle when far from London. Those sent were genuine silver-eyed Whitechapel.” There followed a technical description of their superiority, as minute as if Izaak Walton, also a connoisseur in needles, had described one of his drest flies.

“The copy of verses ‘To a Lady’s Work-box,’ pasted inside the lid, was, as Dr. Coddler said with an eminent critic, ‘town-made.’ Though embellished like a true-love Valentine, they were, in reality, composed by the worthy Doctor himself, who, besides being the physician, was an old tried friend of the Bradshaw family, enjoyed the friendship of the ‘Bard of Twickenham,’ and had a pretty ingenious turn that way himself.

“Though the Doctor had apostrophized,” Mrs. Bridget said, “the thimble *she* had taken the freedom to drop into the box, as ‘Industry’s *silver* shield,’ whereas that with the circlet of emerald and ruby points was gold, and the handsomest in the shop of

'Bradshaws & Bradshaw,' Mr. Hill, whom 'their dear Sarah' thought an excellent judge of poetry, said 'it made no odds in the world, as any other word of two syllables, Gaelic or English, might be substituted, without injuring the doctor's poetry in the least.'

Nor did the "simple wiles" of Mistress Bridget terminate here. "She had heard," she added, "that Scotland was famous for short-cake, and begged the liberty to ask a specimen." And finally, "she rejoiced in consigning 'the dear child,' for fifteen years the object of her prayers and cares, to such a kind maternal bosom, and where goat's milk was so abundant. Nor was it a small matter in point of economy and house-keeping (a new 'Mrs. Glass' in box ticketed No. 12, generally attributed, and confidentially known by Dr. Coddler to be written by Sir John Hill, M.D. which every young married lady should study,) that chickens and eggs were so cheap; and that lace lappets and aprons kept clear thrice the time away from London smoke."—"Dear Sarah was, to be sure, an only daughter, and an heiress; yet, as Sir Richard said, whom Abram Bradshaw familiarly called 'his friend, Dick Steele,' 'Economy is no disgrace; it is better to *live* on little than to *out-live* a great deal.'

With this master-stroke of conciliatory diplomacy to a family, richer, as she understood, in honours and blood than in metallic treasure, Mrs. Bridget concluded her epistolary correspondence of ten days' labour, satisfied to have "opened up" what she called "a friendly, easy correspondence," and "established the families on a proper footing, which Abram Bradshaw had unaccountably refused to do."

The invitation to Ludgate-hill was postponed by high city breeding, till Bridget had obtained the right to make such an invitation, by giving the dowager "a week" when she went to visit her niece Sarah at her Castle. "Very odd, too, that my niece Sarah should never have invited me to her Castle," said the old lady. "But she fancies that a needless ceremony; and so it is, Abram; but neither has she ever asked any of her cousins, the Thorntons or the Smiths." Bridget probably could not have understood, even if she had noticed, the twitching about Mr. Bradshaw's eyelids and upper lip when she made this observation.

Afraid to trust one so heedless as Sarah with the diamond earrings, and unwilling to trouble her "dear nephew," of whom

she secretly stood in considerable awe, Mistress Bridget intrusted the important letter to Ranald's *gillie*, to whom she gave a liberal *do-sure*, as she called it, to make certain of his punctuality in delivering her richly-freighted packet.

Though Sarah's dream of romance was beginning to break up and dispel; though leaving her home, "forsaking her father's house, and the people that were hers," had almost broken her heart; and though she looked back on the dense dun-yellow smoke-fog which hung over fast-receding London, with irrepressible bursts of anguish, still she was by Ranald's side. Though his brows contracted on witnessing her continued unreasonable grief, they smoothed again; and the arms into which she flung herself, as her last, and only, and ever-dearest refuge, still enfolded her in undiminished kindness. And smiles unforced reappeared, and Sarah soon looked back with softened regret, and forward with livelier expectation.

If Ranald's manners sometimes showed a little falling off from the attentive and gallant courtesy of the days of courtship and early wedlock, this was, perhaps, to be welcomed as an approach to the easy and happy manner in which they were henceforth to pass their united lives. The most alarming symptom of their increasing confidence and intimacy was, that her presence could no longer always subdue or restrain those sudden flashes of the fiery and fierce spirit which, displayed by one less dear, might have excited aversion and disgust, or contempt. In Ranald they made her shrink trembling into the dark refuge of her own prophetic fears and saddened thoughts.

Yet was this, on the whole, a happy journey. Its memory dwelt with Sarah as does the farewell gleam of sunset on a landscape, "its brightest and its last."

The travellers passed slowly on until they had reached St. Johnstone's, where the Chief was met by the advanced guard of gillies, or "youths of the girdle," the Mamelukes or Swiss guards of the Northern Chiefs. The main body of these household troops, with a rout of hounds, and curs, and rough unshod garrons and ponies of the small but high-mettled breed of the glens, waited him about thirty miles off, in the Blair, or "great flat" of Athole.

By that most magnificent vestibule, worthy of the temple to which it leads, the travellers

approached the mountains. Athole woods and Athole braes, of which the very name is poetry and picture, were of that soft romantic beauty which Sarah could at once understand and enjoy. But though she had, from native taste, ever preferred Spenser and Shakspeare to the idol of her day, "the Bard of Twickenham," as Dr. Coddler and Mistress Bridget called Pope, her fancy was chilled, her sense of beauty, as it were, at fault, as the party climbed to the rugged and sterile table-land of the central Grampians. Her taste had been formed amid softer scenes, her imagination pitched to a sweeter, though a lower key-note. The desolate wildness of interminable heaths, gleaming lakes, yawning ravines, beetling cliffs, and splintered rocks, through which ploughed impetuous torrents, roaring and chafing over their stony beds; no trace of humanity to be discovered in all the wide tract, save the ruined watch-tower or monumental cairn; those scenes which have such power over minds who have early learned to interpret their grand and mysterious characters—over those who, from childhood, have wandered in loneliness through their misty solitudes, listening to the wild legends and inspiring traditions connected with them, and "holding each strange tale devoutly true,"—at first chilled and bewildered the gentle Southron lady. The people were to her as strange, and almost as repelling as their country; ragged or half-naked, but still bright-eyed rosy children, were the most pleasing living objects that met her gaze; smoke-dried bleary-eyed crones, "so withered and so wild in their attire," the most picturesque.

But Randal's *gillies* were fine specimens of Highland humanity. They were men either in the flower of youth, or the prime of manhood, the chosen of their tribe. *Bhalie* Hossack, who well understood what it was to throw his bread upon the waters, had gone desperately, "sounding on," to the lowest depths of the old hose, which served as his strong-box, in completing their equipments; and his correspondent on the Lowland frontier, "Duncan Sellars, of Elgin o' Moray," had, at least for once, acted an honest part. The *gillies*, therefore, made a creditable, and even a gallant appearance.

These picked men were, to the great body of their tribe, what the courtiers and bodyguards of an absolute monarch are to the bulk of the nation. For the very breath they drew, they depended on the smile of their Chief. Their sole duty and interest

was his pleasure, and implicit obedience to his will. The actual feelings and state of the clan could no more be augured from their conduct and report of home affairs, than could the real state of Paris, on the morning of the 5th October, 1789, have been learned from the courtiers of Louis the Sixteenth. They well knew—but which of their number would dare to tell this to their Chief?—that their departure on this southward expedition was considered open revolt against the hitherto unquestioned authority of *Nighean Donachd Ruadh*, the commencement of a civil war between the mother and son. Sweyn Oig, a brisk youth of their number, had said on that occasion, that—"goodwives should mind their housekeeping, their weaving, and their distaffs, and let Chiefs marry ladies and manage lands for themselves."

It was, however, not less true that the women and children of the clan had stoned and hooted the said Sweyn Oig and the detachment sent forward by the *Bhalie* to welcome and attend the Chief and the "Tinker's Daughter;" as her future subjects already scornfully named Randal's Saxon bride. The gillies had only laughed and snapped their fingers, in defiance, as they ascended the Pass, at these expressions of impotent fury among the elders of the tribe, and the women and children.

From Perth northwards, the Chief, and the principal persons of his retinue, travelled on horseback. Sarah's rough-coated, but docile and steady palfrey, was at all times attended by two running grooms, and this duty came to be claimed by the gillies in turns, as a privilege and an honour. At first, she had recoiled from those wildly-attired hirsute men of the hills; but when she saw the hardy, devoted followers, who lived but in the eyes of their Chief, plunging into every stream, to render the footing of her pony more secure, and actively removing every pebble that seemed to impede her way, or to render it unsafe, she learned to think of them with kindness, and even interest. She began to ask their names, and inquire into their histories; and almost every name or appellation involved the history not only of the individual but of his ancestors.

It was delightful to Sarah now, at dawn when the party mustered, or at even-tide when they approached the appointed halting-place, to hear the choral chant of those Highlanders who led the horses with the baggage.—It seemed the wild music to

which the Highland poet would have set his dream of romance and fairyland.

These resting-places were generally finely chosen, though sometimes, of necessity, in the middle of a dreary waste; yet, even then, it was in the soft, twilight hour that they were approached. The clachans * were often found "low down in a grassy vale," and then each had its sheltering hill, its clear stream, and its breckan brae, crested with gray cliffs, and garlanded with birch and hazel. There was always a picturesque, if not a comfortable arrangement of huts, with women and children; often a smithy, and a very small mill; sometimes a church, but more frequently only a place of burial. These, the "common shows of earth and sky," were enough for a contemplative mind, loving pensively to muse on humanity.

Ranald had now assumed his native garb. "His foot was on the heather;" the plaid was belted across his manly breast, the eagle plume and the breckan nodded together in his bonnet, his clan were around him, and his proud image danced in the brightness of Sarah's eyes, and made them yet brighter.

For the last two mornings, Ranald had hunted over the high-lying moors, as they journeyed on. It was sweet, in the noon-tide hour of rest which Sarah enjoyed in the shelter of some friendly copse, on the cushion of heath, and the pile of plaids spread for her, to hear Ranald's gun on the hill, or the baying of his hounds, the shouts of his scattered followers, and the hushed song of the rough sentinels stationed at a distance to guard her repose. When he rejoined her, flushed and animated with exercise and sport, looking so much "himself," his good spirits were to Sarah as reflected sunshine.

The evening half of the journey was often, by choice, performed on foot; and this, to Sarah, was the happiest time of the day. At these *gloamin'* hours, as they walked on alone, far behind or before their party, Ranald sometimes chose to communicate those legends, traditions, and superstitions of his people, which the Highlander, when abroad, usually confines to the sanctuary of his own bosom, shrinking from the scepticism and sneer of the cold, pedantic, reasoning *Sassenach*.

Sarah was superstitious, as some persons are Jacobitical, after a poetical and fanciful fashion of her own; loving to believe, in defiance of reason, whatever is inspiring and romantic, or awful and wild, but despising

or loathing all forms of superstition that were abject, dark, or malignant; so that Ranald, with all his vaunts and bravery, was in reality the truer thrall of superstition.

Among other communications, he informed her that the red-star, which now streaked the angry brows of the high-born of his race, had, in the times of Fingal and Ossian, the ultimate point of Celtic antiquity, been luminous, and blazed in the foreheads of the Chiefs of Raonull; but, in the degeneracy of the latter ages, had lost its radiance.

He recited a few stanzas of Gaelic poetry, composed by Donald of the Dirk, in which this remarkable distinction of his race was celebrated; and, with greater modesty, a few lines, in which some other and more venal bard of the tribe had hailed the "re-appearing star" on the brow of the young Chief Ranald. Sarah involuntarily smiled, and Ranald, peculiarly jealous on such points, stopped short, and inquired "why she laughed?"

"Nay, Ranald, I but smiled to find an Oriental fiction in so incongruous a locality. This, you know, is a Mahomedan legend, told of the tribe of Ishmael, known by the light on their brows. Is it not extremely probable, that some flattering minstrel, or cozening pilgrim, has brought home this tale from the East, and some cunning bard appropriated it to the Chiefs of Raonull? There may be, and, I dare say, there are families in Spain, in Sweden, in countries the most remote from each other, invested with the same imaginary distinction."

"I am no Oriental antiquarian," returned Ranald, coldly, as he hastily drew away the arm on which Sarah leaned, as if to adjust his plaid. The Chief was quite of the temper to have tried this point with the whole tribe of Ishmael, either with pistols or broadsword, which he would, on all occasions, have preferred to the Scottish law courts; a peaceful, though troublesome authority, hardly at all acknowledged amidst his hills in the quarrels of gentlemen.

"Surely you cannot be offended with *me*, Ranald," said the fair stater of the claims of the Ishmaelites. "I could not have dreamed of offence, in alluding to the origin of this Oriental fable."

"No offence whatever; truth should not offend; that, I believe, is a Saxon maxim."

"It ought to be a universal one," said Sarah. They walked a full half mile in silence.

* Literally, "Gatherings of stones."

“ Still silent, Ranald?— nay, punish me at once. You know I cannot live under your displeasure,— your unkindness. If I cannot believe in the supernatural radiance of your ancestors’ brows, you know how necessary it is to my peace to see serenity on yours. In this fine legend, which I have so lightly treated, may be couched a deep moral. The light of the forehead,— may it not typify noble qualities?— Ha! it reappears, it kindles, it blazes again on Ranald’s brow!”

Sarah playfully stretched forth her hand, and then withdrew it, as if from the ideal effulgence. How could Ranald, a youthful husband, resist the fascination? He even agreed to try, if it were possible, to obliterate the fire-star from his own forehead, if Sarah would assist him in recovering the mental brilliance from which had, perhaps, arisen this poetical fiction. Sarah agreed to keep watch by this beacon, and give instant intimation when the lustre was brilliant, and also when it became fitful, and threatened eclipse. Once more, Ranald felt that—

*The falling out of dearest friends
Renewing is of love.*

And once again Sarah regretted the employment of so perilous a stimulant to wavering affection.

We must now for a moment look back on Donald of the Dirk. The clansman, on leaving Mr. Bradshaw’s dwelling, struck out into the open country, flying from the wilderness of London, where he felt, as it were, his breathing choked, his free steps impeded. He wandered on for some time like a man in a dream. That he had been the dupe of illusion he partly believed. Was this spell cast over him to prevent the fulfilment of his solemn troth-pledge? or was it indeed the interference of an angel to protect a being that seemed scarce less holy?

This singular man had, in early youth, when sent to the dwelling of the afterwards forfeited Earl of C——, on some political mission from the Chieftainess, a zealous Jacobite, spent a long lonely night, between sleeping and waking, in a partially illuminated picture-gallery, where he waited a secret audience of the Earl.

Among the pictures in that hall was a fine copy of a Madonna by Correggio. The shadowy image, seen between sleep and waking, glimmer and gloom, dwelt for many a day in a heart thrillingly alive to beauty, especially of that ethereal kind, now first beheld, of which his country afforded no

living specimen. The image of the Madonna burnt into his excitable brain, and in solitude haunted his memory until the

Nympholepsy of a fond despair

gathered into the palpable form of the female Spirit which for long years had haunted him in the wilds. On this subject, reasoning was vain and hopeless. That he saw this beautiful Vision, heard her, conversed with her, received her warnings and capricious biddings forth at all hours and seasons, and was compelled to obey, was to himself, and to many of those about him, as certain as that he lived and breathed.

Though Donald of the Dirk rather shunned than courted the discussion of this mysterious visitation, and had long felt his perilous distinction a misery and a bondage, when he was forced upon it he talked so implicitly, with such calm and serious belief, that the conviction of his rude auditors was unavoidable.

From the hour that Donald had parted with the Chieftainess, this fair and capricious being had not once appeared to him. He began to hope that her power did not extend to this new and crowded Saxon world he had entered, and that here he might escape from his thralldom, and be at peace. But, no! she had again suddenly revealed herself in the form of the “Tinker’s Daughter;” while, more maddening strange! her sleeping image at the same instant lay on the bed! It was dreaming all;— but was the vision of heaven or of hell?

In the wife of Ranald had he seen, or had he only imagined the living image of the mysteriously visible—seen her in a human and breathing form of surpassing loveliness?

To the proud Highlander, vowed to prevent the shame, or revenge the disgrace of his clan, the “Daughter of the Tinker” was a thing of no sex. She was but the object of a just punishment, incurred by her daring ambition. But from the moment that she had been seen, and as soon as the first superstitious aberration had passed, reason, awakened by admiration and pity, assumed its empire over the mind of the clansman. He remembered that, be her origin and her name among men as obscure and ignoble as shame could make them, still she was a woman. She had, in her own land, and in her father’s house, been wooed, and won, and wedded. Was the deed, if evil, hers alone? was the gentle doe to be

hunted and stricken down, because the stag, in his fury, had turned and gored the hunter. Donald of the Dirk stretched out his fated weapon, and prayed aloud to his gods, that if a woman must yet be its victim, this fair creature might not be that devoted one. His feud was now with his Chief. If there was disgrace, Ranald had courted it ; it was for Ranald's blood to expiate Ranald's deed. And the clansman turned his face to the North, worn in body, and chafed in spirit ; fever in his blood and in his brain.

Donald watched ; he tracked ; nay, he often accompanied his Chief on the journey through the border, remaining undiscovered, till the country became more open, and the party more numerous. The conflict of his mind, and the personal hardships he sustained, now worked in his brain like madness, and the horrible temptation to do murder—to destroy himself, his Chief, or the Saxon girl, again became more and more irresistible.

The clansman's opportunities were frequent ; his hand had been more than once on his dagger to shed *her* blood whose innocence was the fittest offering to Heaven. His good angel still held him back, though the fiend that haunted him ever howled in his ringing ears, "a *Man*, an *Infant*, a *Woman!*" And again, how was he, his mission unaccomplished, to brook the scorn, to endure the reproachful glance of *Nighean Donachd Ruadh*—how return his coward weapon bloodless to its resting-place, and brook from her lips the names of "traitor and dastard."

For the last two days, Donald had hung so near the track of the travellers, that he had been perceived more than once by some of the keen-sighted hunters, though not individually recognised ; and it became a matter of discussion what scout of the Camerons—a hostile tribe—thus dogged their march, though their numbers and courage precluded all apprehension of an attack.

On the day following that on which the Chief had so pettishly resented the extinguishment of the supernatural lustre on his ancestor's brows, he again hunted over the hills with his gillies, while Sarah found a place of repose in a narrow defile, of which the steep and almost meeting banks were thickly clothed with hazel and birch, and that close underwood in which the deer find shelter. Her sentinels, to throw off the exuberance of their own animal spirits, and aid the sport of their companions on the

heights, began with loud shouts, to beat up the brushwood. They had thus left her alone ; but Sarah found a new and self-appointed guardian in a stag-hound, a very large animal ; one of the species of what is evidently the patrician order of dogs, stately and powerful. A few weeks earlier, Sarah would have shrunk to see so formidable an apparition approach her silken sofa. Here she welcomed the *follower* and the sharer of noble sports, patted him, and suffered him to *snook* his nose into her little palm, as if for food or caressing.

At this instant the eye of Donald of the Dirk, who couched among the heather and the tangled shrubs far over head, glared upon her ; his eye sparkling with the insane fury of a purpose abhorrent to himself, but to which he felt impelled by some resistless influence.

He had travelled onward in the night, and chance had directed him to choose his sleeping place above the very spot whither the genius of *Nighean Donachd Ruadh* had conducted the selected victim of her vengeance. Deserted by her attendants, Sarah was left in helplessness and loneliness that invited the perpetration of the nameless deed.

While the brain of the insane homicide whirled in frenzy, and the fires of hell flashed before his eyes, he knelt and took aim ; then, by a strange mental perversion, paused to pray for his victim, as a sinner about to meet his Judge may struggle with groans and agonies for the ransom of his soul. "And now I'll do it," he exclaimed, firmly wiping from his brow the cold damps which had burst forth in his supplication.

"Beautiful bride of Raonull—victim of a terrible destiny—in thy innocence ascend to heaven!" Donald drew his bow-string.

"*Vich Dei!* this is not of Earth!" cried the agitated man, and his hand relaxed, his bow dropped, and a film came over his sight. His hound, his favourite and companion, which he had left at home weeks before, had sprung forward, and now stood over, as if to protect, his unconscious victim. "This is not of Earth ; do the powers of Heaven and of Hell contend for me? Am I the doomed thrall of Darkness? Will the remorseless Destiny that enchains me, prove stronger than the blessed Providence which guards the Saxon girl?" The clansman gave a low whistle, and the hound, raising his ears, bounded off in joy ; nor could Sarah's call make it once look back. The wretched man flung his arms round his dumb friend, and

showers of burning tears burst forth, and relieved the tension of his brain.

This was a species of relief to which Donald of the Dirk had long been a stranger. In his heart the fountain of human tears, sweet and bitter, had long been sealed up. He felt the blest effects of this change in a clearer and cooler temper of mind than he had known since he had left his solitude. He even began to reason on his singular mental state. He feared, as he often before had done, that he was at intervals liable to demoniac possession; but a single hour had passed since his guilty hand had been raised to take the innocent life he would now have defended with his own. Did the same madness ferment in the kindred blood of *Nighean Donachd Ruadh*? Were both under some horrible delusion? That terrible vow, from which death alone could release his conscience and his honour, made death more welcome and desirable; his misery could hope for no refuge save the peace of the grave. Would that Ranald's avenging arm, or even a more ignoble hand, might speedily send him thither!

The hound had not left Sarah's side for many minutes, when her alarmed guards came rushing down the steep, bearing an avalanche of branches, stones, and soil, in their descent. Having at a glance ascertained her safety, for she sat very quietly, busy with some piece of female work, and singing to herself, they looked to the stream, the copse, the cliff, with great eagerness; and growled and sputtered their gutturals with unwonted animation.

Sarah imagined their discourse was of their sport, the bravery or escape of the poor roe which she had seen; till she heard the well-known name of "*Donhuil Nam Biodag*" associated with the *Cu More* (large dog.)

She concluded that Donald of the Dirk, the kinsman whose bold, brave character, and high and dark imagination Ranald's hints had enabled her fancy to portray, had arrived to welcome his Chief. This was, indeed, no unlikely event. Another straggler joined them just then,—a lad who had been despatched with some message or intelligence from the *Bhalie*, to hasten their return home. The hound of the clansman had followed this young man from the country of Lochnaveen.

When Ranald, at evening-fall, joined his wife, he was taken apart by her guards, who, for two hours, had not stirred from watching the secure position into which they drew her,

—an angular recess of a cliff, shaped somewhat like a huge cupboard. Sarah fancied they related the adventure of the hound, the precursor, as she hoped, of the hunter, who had not yet appeared. The conversation of her guards with the Chief, whatever its import might be, was earnest and eager; with rapid gestures the gillies pointed to the height, and to the spot where Sarah had first rested. Ranald's glance followed theirs, his colour deepened, his eyes kindled, his hand involuntarily grasped his dirk; he drew forth and examined his pistols, and Sarah, alarmed she knew not why, rose and inquired the reason of all this.

"It was nothing,—a buck tracked but not struck;—I'll have him on the haunch ere he skirt Maam Tamar." Ashe uttered these words, Ranald churned his teeth, as if choking with rage. He requested that, instead of their usual evening walk, Sarah should, to-night, ride forward to the appointed resting-place. Silent, but not deceived, she obeyed; and taking her bridle himself, Ranald made the gillies close around them.

The path, which wound through the narrow defile, hung so sheer and close above the stream, that the shadows of the plumaged cliffs, faint as the twilight now was, were seen to dance and quiver on its dark surface. Sarah was watching these intermingled dancing shadows of plants, foliage, and blossoms, as she rode on, not without some apprehension of being precipitated into the inverted heaven on which she gazed; and rather surprised that to her had been assigned the post of danger—the side next the stream, Ranald and the followers keeping carefully between her and the overhanging cliffs. As she gazed downwards, the image of a man glanced suddenly on the water—a face, a figure, a garb such as fancy may picture in some distorted dream of Alps, caverns, and banditti. Sarah saw the shadow, her husband had already recognised the real substance.

"I should know the sure foot that tracks these cliffs as steadily as would the mountain-goat." Ranald lowered his pistol, which he had held all this while in his hand. "Sweyn," he cried, addressing a favourite and confidential follower, who was ever nearest his person, "my arm is palsied when its aim is *Donhuil Nam Biodag*. Call Angus, call Roban,—I must examine them anew. If a life dearer than mine were his object, has he not, all day long, had fearful opportunity,—has he not had for the last ten

minutes, and has he not even now, our whole party at vantage?"

The hunter again stood forward on a high pointed rock, a few paces in advance of the party;—silently he stood, his arms wrapped in his plaid, like some dark statue on its colossal pedestal.

"Is the path of *Mac Mic Raonull* pollution to his kinsman, that *Donhuil Nam Biodag* strikes his perilous course so much higher than his Chief?" shouted Ranald, adopting the figurative language of his country. "*Mac Mic Raonull* will suffer no obstruction of his course. It must be free as the deer on the hills, the eagle in the sky, the wind in the forest,—wild and unfettered. But the open way lies broad for all; Ranald entreats his kinsman to descend and share it."

"Kinsmen, friends! how shall we know them?" was shouted back in a voice that thrilled to Sarah's heart. "Once I had one,—I fancied him brave as his broadsword; the eagle's plume in his bonnet was a poor emblem of his nobility. I gave him my heart. The steel in his belt, the emblem on his crest, the heart of his friend, he trucked and bartered for a Tinker's gold. By what high-born bride rides home, in his pride, the far-descended Chief of Raonull?"

Donald's steel had been less sharp in the bosom of his Chief than was this taunt from Donald's lips.

"Coward, traitor, lurking dastardly assassin, whose withered arm shrinks from the purpose of his murdering heart," he vociferated. In very despair Sarah threw herself upon the arms that raised the rifle, but the ball was sped.

"Sarah, keep a firm seat; ride for your life." The Chief tugged at her rein—they bounded forward. "No man ever provoked a blow from Donald of the Dirk and needed to wait long for its full quitance—ay, and with interest."

No shot was returned, at this time. "Have I done for him?" said Ranald to his henchman, with what Sarah, agitated as she was, felt to be a dreadfully stern indifference. He checked the speed to which he had urged his horse.

"Well galloped, Sarah! and not one scream.—Brave, for a Saxon girl, even Donald might confess you. I must give you time to breathe now:—how pale you look, poor Sarah!"

"And how terrible, Ranald, you look! And oh, can you thus lightly talk? your

kinsman, so loved, so valued, aimed at, wounded—perhaps mortally—and I the wretched cause. I know it all too well."

"Never fear him: but if so, it was a man's deed:—and so, good-night to Donald of the Dirk. You must not heed such trifles, Sarah; pistols and bullets are but as battle-axes and shuttlecocks with us in the glens. And here scamper up the gillies,—they will adore and report your courage. *Nighean Donachd Ruadh* herself, when her blood is up,—and 'tis seldom at ebb tide with her,—could not have stood a first-fire better than you have done." This, to Sarah, was fearful pleasantry. She attempted no reply. The followers, so far out-rode by their Chief, came posting on; not one was wanting. Not one, then, had shown the humanity and courage to seek and succour a gentleman of their own tribe, who, having incurred the displeasure of their Chief, was probably dying, by his hand, alone and untended.

The gillies gathered silently around their master like a pack of beaten hounds, and promptly obeyed Ranald's order to "move forward."

"Do I hear aright?" cried Sarah, in the language which not one of them could understand. "Lochnaveen, Ranald, husband! I implore you, for manhood's sake, for humanity, for pity—for my sake, if you would save me a life of remorse and misery—let us return,—seek and succour this victim of my —" Sarah wept in agony, unheeding the numerous and rude spectators of her grief.

"Spare your tears, Sarah, and me the pain, and the shame of witnessing them. Little do you know the man for whom they flow."

"Alas! they own a source less noble than the sufferings of the brave, loyal, though it may be misjudging man, who holds Ranald's honour more precious than the life of Ranald's low-born wife. I do know—I know all—and my tears flow less for Donald of the Dirk, than for him who has rashly raised his arm against a friend and kinsman—than for *her* whose reckless love, and, it may have been, guilty ambition, has already drawn down such signal retribution. But let us now return; the deed was hasty, and may yet be atoned." She turned her horse's head; and a low murmur of satisfaction ran amid the followers, who guessed her purpose.

"Do not think me the savage who would leave any man of my name, or even a hound, in his blood in a lonely wild. I meant to

have sent back a couple of these nurse-tenders to sullen Donald. You, Harold and Sweyn, look to the Man of the Dirk." He gave his hasty orders in Gaelic, and the men dropped off like shadows.

The hasty arrangement of the Chief for the succour of his kinsman, did not satisfy his agitated wife : — "Nay, let us too return," she entreated ; "if Donald be the generous man you have reported him, this is the very hour for atonement, forgiveness, and reconciliation. Oh, Ranald, as you would spare your own self-reproach, and my endless misery, show yourself a magnanimous enemy: have pity on yourself and on me !"

The Chief appeared to hesitate ; but again he resolved to move on. "Never fear but that Sweyn will leech him as well as could your own delicate hands, my Sarah. Because it is Donald's luck to lag behind, am I to expose my dainty Saxon coop-chicken to a night spent on an open heath ? — Forward, my merry men !"

He repeated the order in Gaelic, though in more appropriate words ; and the gillies prepared to obey.

"*I will not forward,*" said Sarah, resolutely. "This ill-timed pleasantry, my husband, wrongs your better heart. Though Ranald forget himself, I cannot forget what Ranald's wife owes to Ranald, and to Ranald's kinsman. Hark !—do you hear the howling of the poor man's faithful hound ?—Good God, can your heart withstand that ?"

"Follow at your leisure, then, my dear," said the Chief, with calm bitterness, determined to punish his Vashti for thus braving his sovereign will ; and, almost sure that five minutes alone in the dark would bring Sarah galloping at his heels, he affected to whistle an air as he slowly rode off.

For a mile Ranald never once looked behind, satisfied that he heard the clatter of the hoofs of his wife's pony on the stony track. But when he had slackened his own pace, he found that he had been deceived ; and when the running footmen came up, he was told that the lady had, at full speed, galloped back to the defile where Donald of the Dirk had last been seen.

It was rebellion against every generous feeling of Ranald's better nature to believe any thing foul or treacherous of Donald of the Dirk ; but he knew his strong prejudices of family and country. He had been told by his followers that Donald had undertaken a journey to the South, to prevent his marriage, even at the price of blood ; he well

knew his wild, moody, unsettled state of mind ; and the information of that day had been positive. And Sarah was now in the power of this roused madman, his gentle, his beautiful wife, whom execrable folly had made him leave behind. Might she not, ere now, have become the martyr of her humanity. Never had Ranald felt her virtues and his own slight deserts so strongly in contrast as on his backward desperate gallop.

It was no delicate Saxon maiden, fainting and sickening at her own scratched finger, whom Ranald found attempting to stanch the blood of which she had traced the source to the right arm of the wounded clansman, from which she had already cut away the sleeve. With every agonized movement of the man, the blood had welled forth afresh, until he had become insensible.

The cordials intended for the use of Sarah on the journey, with which Ranald's servant had been furnished by Mistress Bridget, were still untouched. They were instantly procured and administered ; and Ranald himself brought the bonnet filled with water, with which Sarah sprinkled the clammy brow of her new kinsman, till the faint pulses of the damp hand began to flutter below her finger.

The Chief was of the number of those men who cannot endure to look upon what they can nevertheless have the guilty rashness to perpetrate. The anguish which wrung the usually calm brow of his brave kinsman gave a pang to his bosom, which sober reflection on his own rash deed could never have inflicted. As the symptoms of returning life became more decided, Ranald withdrew from Sarah's side, and from the sight of the wounded man.

The clansman at once recognised in the lovely girl that knelt by him, chafing his hands, the Saxon wife of his Chief ; and he vainly attempted to raise himself, and to murmur the inquiry, where he was, and why thus attended. The hitherto mute attendants with one accord broke forth, pouring upon the wounded man the tale of the Chief's accidental shot, and of his lady's kindness, courage, and adventurous humanity. The clansman closed his eyes as if overcome by his feelings ; then by a violent effort raised himself as if he intended to crawl to her feet, —for Sarah had now risen.

"Spirit of Mercy as of Loveliness !" was his passionate Gaelic exclamation. — "Did blood rise against its kindred blood ?—was I forsaken of all that I might find a ministering

angel in you?" Sarah smiled softly, and shook her head to intimate her ignorance of what he said; and also made signs that he must keep very quiet.

The Chief had meanwhile given orders for the construction of a sort of rude palanquin of birch branches, which the followers quickly warped together. Over this their plaids were thrown, and the wounded man was borne forward with tolerable ease to himself to the appointed resting-place.

It was midnight before they reached the spot; for often, in the course of the short journey, Sarah had stopped the bearers to learn the state of the patient, and to force them, by her own intentional delay, into the slower and more gentle motion suited to his condition.

Ranald could again and unhesitatingly have openly braved his kinsman in the field, but to look on Donald's pained and bloodless face, and to bear the calm reproach of his eye, demanded courage of another kind. He next day, therefore, at an early hour, left Sarah to nurse the wounded man, and to recruit from her personal fatigues, promising to join them in the evening, and warmly approving of her proposal to remain at this stage for the length of time necessary to Donald's partial restoration.

The Chief now left her with the clansman, as fearlessly as if she had been in her own chamber in her father's house; and Sarah's generous confidence in her new relation was as unbounded.

Highland styptics of herbs, with cordials and restoratives of all kinds, were administered, and when Ranald returned from his day's sport, he found the patient and the leech sitting together in the open air, Sarah having ordered the attendants to bear the wounded man out of the smoky and stifling atmosphere of the hut.

Sarah was reading to beguile the time and the awkwardness of her situation. Donald of the Dirk had no scholarship, but he, too, was trying to read the wilder things passing around him, and in his own mind. He started from his reverie, and looked on with eagerness and interest, following her every movement when Sarah rose to welcome back her husband. And when she had placed Ranald by his side on the grass, and joined the hands of the estranged friends, holding them closed in her own, to resist her mute supplication was impossible. Donald gazed on the Saxon girl, and forgave her husband.

Though the kinsmen exchanged few words,

Donald accepted the assistance of the Chief's arm in returning to the hut, and a murmur of satisfaction circulated among the gillies.

"Sarah, you have conquered half Clan Raonull, in gaining the stubborn heart of that dark man," said the Chief, exultingly, as he came back to her. "I almost rejoice in having let out those few drops of hot blood, since it has brought you into immediate contact with Donald and his clannish whims: you have put them all to the rout. A few days more and you will have gained your final conquest,—the heart of my proud mother. Then begins the long reign of all the Lowland and domestic virtues: joy, and peace, and love. What a happy household will ours be! My brow as radiant every day as yon moon, 'round as my father's shield,' that is wheeling over the hill there.—But you were positively wrong, love, about that Ishmaelite tradition. I questioned Harold about it to-day on the hill, one of our most skilful sennachies: he inclines to think, that if any tradition of this family attribute of ours exists in the East at all, it must have been carried thither from our mountains."

Sarah was in no danger of splitting a second time on this sunken rock. She said cheerfully that she did not much care whether it came from the East, the day-spring of the Christian world, or from the West,* the paradise of the *Gael*, if she only saw the radiant light beam steadily on her Ranald's brow.

Donald of the Dirk had suffered more from previous agony of mind and privation, than from the Chief's bullet, which had rather proved a sedative. Food, rest, sympathy, the unspeakable relief of having escaped the commission of what he felt, in his sobered sense, would have been a deadly crime, rapidly brought back health, and, for the moment, peace of mind. Yes, though the Hell he had invoked to aid his black design might, for his deep perjuries to his Chieftainess, open and swallow him, yet should that lovely and gracious being live, long and blest, the beloved wife of the too happy Raonull.

On the third day, the party moved forward; and on the farther journey the protection of Sarah, for many hours of every day, was now tacitly confided to the kinsman of the Chief. Donald, though convalescent, was unfit or unwilling to join the hunting parties in which all engaged, and the pride and the

* The Celtic Heaven lies in the West. When a man dies, the common phrase in the North is, "He is gone West."

affection of Ranald were alike gratified when, at morn and eve, Donald of the Dirk still stood by Sarah's rein, gratified to see him who, Balaam-like, had come forth to curse, constrained, by her gentle mastery, to admire and bless. Ranald was quite of the temper to enjoy the triumph over his haughty mother afforded by this sudden conversion of her champion.

"I give you joy of your conquest, Sarah," said he gaily; "I only wish that the sense of living and mortal beauty could come between this enthusiast and his Phantasm;—he sometimes gazes on you as if he were at a loss to know whether you are indeed *Nighean Ceara*, my own charming Sassenach wife, or his own mysterious Bride of the Mist.—By what mere woman's bridle would Donald lag, and the belling of the red deer, and the whizzing of the deadly shaft in his ear, save hers to whom he feels that he owes his life, with his allegiance."

Sarah turned her gentlest look on the clansman, who appeared to understand that he was the subject of discourse. "I leave you once more to Donald's care," continued Ranald. "Your ride to-day will be delightful,—over yonder low ridge and through 'the glen of copsewood,'—the valley, which gives its name to Mr. Aaron Hill's favourite song,—then round and up my own Maam Tamar, which, on this side, divides the hilly region from the plains of *My Country*. I leave your own good taste to discover the rest.

"Exactly at the boundary between the territory always *ours*, and this country, which we have acquired by marriages and battles with the great northern clan of ——, there is a beautiful fountain—such a spot as you and the dreamer, Donald, might fancy fairy elves had shaped to dance around in the moonlight,—a fountain where the hunters linger to taste of the bright waters, though they be not thirsty. It is called 'The Well of Peace:' there pledge Donald of the Dirk, and there wait my arrival. 'Tis an old custom of our clan for new friends to pledge each other there, and for old feuds to be healed."

Sarah bowed obedience, happy to gratify her husband, and her own affectionate heart warming and expanding in the reciprocation of kindnesses with those among whom she was henceforth to live.

"The glen of copsewood," like all the glens she had traversed, had, for a road, only a rude bridle-track, and that frequently broken by the now dried-up channels of the hill

streams, which, in other seasons, ran furiously into the river that winded round Maam Tamar.

Sarah often required assistance on this day's ride, though not so often as it was watchfully, if quietly, tendered.

On this day, influenced by the conversation of the morning, besides her usual eloquent smiles and gestures of acknowledgment for the services she received from all about her, Sarah tried to employ her very imperfect Gaelic in establishing some mode of social communication between herself and her silent and melancholy companion. She was proud of her previous knowledge of the name of this lovely valley; and, though her language was certainly exceedingly defective, yet, lisped in her infantine imperfect way, and in a voice which Donald felt as "far above singing," the fascination was the more complete. The attendant gillies, as they listened to her attempts, smiled, but with the Highland courtesy which prevents the smile of an inferior from being felt as impertinence.

Neither smiles nor words betrayed the clansman's feelings, though they spoke an eloquent language of their own. At one moment his rapt and kindled soul flashed from his eyes, and spoke in every feature, in his anxiety to comprehend the lady's meaning, which he appeared to do with a facility that scarcely needed the medium of spoken language; then his silent, earnest, subdued gaze, would shade gradually off into that melancholy air of abstraction which appeared the habitual expression of his countenance. Sarah instinctively felt that of the clansman's musings she occupied a large share; but whether these perplexing ruminations boded good or evil was an enigma to which the troubled brow and melancholy eyes of Donald afforded no satisfactory solution.

"If there were truth in Highland superstition," thought she, "I could believe that this enthusiast sees a dreadful fate written on my brow; sees it, too, with pity."

When Sarah reached "the Well of Peace," she had no companion save Donald of the Dirk and his inseparable stag-hound, in whose regards she appeared to have attained the second place.

The bright waters, gushing from the living rock, and trickling over moss and plants of sheeny verdure, fell into the small natural basin which in the course of ages they had scooped for themselves. Sarah dismounted, drew off her glove, dipped the rosy tips of her fingers in the pellucid fount, and between smiles and sighs, and broken speech, made

her companion understand that she wished to have the use of the tiny silver-mounted *cuach* or *cuppan* which he carried as part of a hunter's equipage. It was instantly produced, purified in the fount with Oriental scrupulosity, and courteously presented to the lady : this done, the hunter turned away.

"Nay," said Sarah, "will you not pledge your new kinswoman in the Waters of Peace?" She held the little vessel to catch the trickling rill, placed a softly detaining hand on the sleeve of her companion, pledged him in her imperfect Gaelic ; and again filled the *cuach*, and, with a gentle smile, presented it to him.

The clansman shook as if in an ague-fit ; retreated, and gently pushed aside the fair ministering hand, at the same time fixing his remarkable eyes on Sarah's crimsoned face, with the perplexed inexplicable look of interest, pity, and admiration with which he had so often, in the course of the morning, regarded her.

"What does this mean?" cried Sarah, in her own language, vexed and hurt. "Would you intercommune the stranger? refuse 'the Cup of Peace' from the hand of the Saxon? . . . I am a fool to take this trifling in such serious sort. The clansman cannot have understood me. Churl!" she playfully cried, in her new language, "pledge your kinswoman.—To your health! Be peace between us!"

She kissed the cup, and again presented it ; nor could the slave of superstition resist the fascination which, for the moment, made his deep oath and the image of Nighean Donachd Ruadh melt into thin air.

Donald snatched the offered draught. Between their agitated hands the tiny goblet fell to the ground, and the contents were spilt to the last drop. With a stifled groan of horror and anguish, the clansman started back ; and Sarah, scarcely less agitated, looked aghast in his face for an explanation of the mystery, which she already fancied she understood.

"Am I, too, the slave of Highland omens! *Donhuil nam Biodag*, we may be true friends and kinsfolk, though a few drops of water are accidentally spilt between us."

She extended her hand in frank amity, as if to break the ideal spell. Instead of meeting her friendly, cordial grasp, Donald struck his own hands together, like one in wild despair, exclaiming, in the sudden frenzy-fit, "Beautiful being! oh, most beautiful! why is your innocent blood to rest upon me?"

Why did the bullet of *Mac Mic Raonull* for the first time fail of its aim?"

The paroxysm wrought higher. Donald led,—he almost dragged the terrified girl to the fount, and bent down her head over its bubbling waters, till her image and his own face, distorted by fearful passions, lay mingled there in troubled shadow : and on this picture he pored and muttered, as if reading the Book of Fate.

"There is doubtless some touch of insanity about this poor man," thought the alarmed Sarah. But, though ashamed of the weakness, she wished that she too could have known what fearful augury he read in the mingled and broken shadows of the Fountain of Peace. As his grasp relaxed, Sarah continued to look down ; and when she moved back it was slowly and gently, as if in compassion of his wild excitement.

Ranald had hinted that the deer-stalker was not at all times as other men. As he had supernatural powers, so had he conflicts and sufferings above mortality : then why leave her to such wild guidance? Fluttered and nervous, Sarah, instead of waiting by the "Well of Peace," as she had been ordered, resolved to push on towards a spot where a thin blue smoke, at the distance of a mile, up in a glade of Maam Tamar, told of some habitation. She trusted that Ranald would forgive her disobedience ; for the baleful expression of his kinsman's mad and melancholy eyes was, in this solitude, becoming unendurable. She sprang on her pony without the ceremony of leave-taking.

The cabin she had seen was placed, like a linnet's nest, among tall broom and dwarf birches. On one side of the hut was a small but very steep waterfall, which spread around an air and feeling of freshness ; the other side of the dwelling was protected by a tall, insulated piece of rock, lightly feathered with ferns and the mountain ash. In front was a grassy clearing of some yards wide, flanked by a peat-stack and a rude shed for a cow.

By the door of the cabin sat an old woman busy with her distaff, enjoying the warmth of the sun, in which basked at her feet, excellent friends though strange associates, a shepherd's dog and a tame fawn. The ancient matron was churning to herself in the broken notes of the low plaintive song of age ; and Sarah, who had left her pony at a distance, had listened for some time ere she was perceived. There was about the aged and lonely woman an air of quiet dignity and self-possession, and a calm thoughtfulness of

countenance which inspired her visiter with involuntary respect. Though in the strict costume of her country, she was better dressed than matrons of her presumed rank; and the short full mantle or *tunag*, fixed at the throat with a silver clasp or brooch of unusual dimensions, and the snowy *curch* of the finest linen, looked as if they were arranged for ceremony, and were yet the becoming garb of every day. Sarah afterwards obtained the clew to this mystery. The lonely widow by the Waterfall, whose hut was full three miles from any other human habitation, was a "born gentlewoman;" and though she had "stooped in marriage," "all the waters of Lochnaveen could not wash her blood from that of *Nighean Donachd Ruadh* herself, outcast and poor as Sheelas was the day."

The Highland matron showed no vulgar surprise when the young stranger unawares stepped up to her. It was, indeed, understood that strangers could not take by surprise the *Seer* of the Waterfall. With the breeding of a Chieftain's hall, she invited Sarah into her hut, and placed for her the only chair which it contained.

With curtsies and smiles, Sarah chose for herself a less distinguished seat, one of those bee-hive ottomans of twisted bent and rushes, which furnish home-made rustic seats to the more tasteful and industrious among the Highlanders. She sat with her back to the door; and, having accepted the proffered bowl of milk, solicited leave to try the antique spinning implements of her hostess. Thus was she engaged, the old woman leaning on the back of the chair, and opposite to her, regarding her with those calm looks which benevolent and prophetic age sometimes bestows on sanguine and unthinking youth.

The light step of the deer-stalker was unheeded by the amateur spinner, and the widowed Sheelas only recognised her entering kinsman by the bending motion of her eyes. Sarah took off and laid beside the tame fawn at her feet, her riding hat and her upper covering; and, absorbed in her new employment, laboured with all her art. Still the Highland spindle refused to play and whirl to her skillless hand; still the thread became more and more twisted and entangled; the over-violent impulse given made it only the faster whirl backwards. Flushed and vexed at her awkward failure, Sarah impatiently snapt what she could not unravel. The widow raised her hand as if to stop this youthful rashness. It was too late; but

Sarah commenced her task anew; and again the old woman fixed her eyes with melancholy scrutiny upon her fair guest, while the clansman riveted his gaze on the female *Seer*. The Highland widow, on her own part, had no pretensions to the gift of second-sight. She had been a solitary, suffering, and reflecting being, pious and thoughtful; and "the secret of the Lord was with her that feared Him." This was the true secret of her inspiration. It was not directly to Donald that the widow addressed herself. Gazing on Sarah, still childishly absorbed in her antique labour, she slowly and calmly said, "Ye are young, and ye are fair! alas, that the hands should already be old and withered which shall wrap the corpse-shroud over your blossoming beauty." Sheelas now addressed her clansman.

"Donald, my kinsman, welcome! This fair girl is then the Saxon bride of Mac Mie Raonull?"

The emphatic and solemn tones of the woman's voice, her intense and mysterious gaze, and the wild answering glance of the clansman, who now stepped forward, startled the playful spinster. Sarah rose in haste, and fixed her questioning eyes alternately on her silent companions.

"What spell hangs over me, and over every one I meet to-day?" she said. "To-night, and I shall sleep my first sleep under my husband's roof: to-night, receive the welcoming of Ranald's kinsmen to his Highland home. This to me should be a happy day, yet every voice sounds like a passing-bell: every eye bends on me in mysterious pity, as if the characters of a terrible fate were seared on my brow."

Sarah had been tracked by her little pal-frey, which she had herself fastened to a bush when seeking the hut. The pattering of the unshod horses, and the voices of the gillies, now sounded in her ears like the shout of a respite; and Ranald's greeting, gay and cordial, soon banished all *erie* bodings from her breast. He was in very high spirits, now *at home* in every happy sense of the word. Far and near, wherever he looked, from the mountain masses of the magnificent Maam Tamar, to the breckan bush,—from the lovely woman to whom his smile brought life and joy, to the meanest thing that breathed within a wide range,—all owned him lord, and loved or feared him!

His morning's sport had been uncommonly successful; and some of his tributaries and fosterers in the higher glens, where the cattle

were now at their summer pasture, met his lordly progress with that homage of mingled flattery and cordial affection on which his childhood and youth had been banqueted, and which *cold* England had never afforded to his heart or his pride.

"How like himself he looks to-day," was Sarah's fond thought, as he shook hands with her and welcomed her on "the side of Maam Tamar."

Several of the gillies were laden with the spoils of the chase. "A noble buck, Sarah: is he not? I wish we could send a haunch of him to Aunt Bridget; or uncle Gilbert, — ay, that were the better mark."

"How good-natured Ranald is to-day," thought Sarah.

"I have had no luck till now. But the deer of Maam Tamar know 'the Chief of a thousand hills with all their bounding roes,' as Donald's old rhymes recite. Your welcoming bridal-banquet shall not want 'the doe and the roe, and the hart and the hind,' and all sylvan cheer, fair Saxon."

Ranald showed her a variety of dead birds, describing their habits and species; and though Sarah would rather have seen them on the wing, or in the copse, than in blood-bedabbled plumage, she tried to sympathize in the exultation of the sportsman.

"And ancient Sheelas," said Ranald, "you have made acquaintance with her. She is not one of our ordinary crones. She has good blood in her veins, though she chose to disgrace it. She was the kinswoman and companion of my mother; but contracted a low marriage with a mechanic from Morayland; and was sent to the exile of our Siberia, the wrong side of Maam Tamar. Fortunately all her children died as they grew up; for not one of them could have told who was his father's Chief. When the last, the eighth, was laid within the Druids' Stones, many years ago, *Nighean Donuchd Ruadh* spoke for the first time to the widowed wife and childless mother, now somewhat freed from taint."

Here was "a thing to dream of, not to tell." Sarah had no heart to inquire what, in the judgment of the Chieftainess, constituted "a low marriage."

"But where is the Man of the Dirk? Have you pledged each other in the Waters of Peace — the 'fountain Arethuse' of Clan Raonull?" said Ranald, gaily.

"I have drank —"

"And pledged dark Donhuil." He happily did not pause for the answer, which Sarah

could not easily have found. "I wish you had waited my approach. — I could have wished to seal my peace with my kinsman ere we enter the last *Pass*. This, Sarah, is but the threshold of *our country*; across the next high-lying wild moor, on which we are about to enter, lies *Lochnaveen* proper, its green and fertile heart. Into it I would not wish to carry angry thoughts, nor unpleasant remembrances, — at least, not in your company."

"Thanks, Ranald; — though surely every spot on which the sun shines may be a fit place for the reconciliation of friends," returned Sarah.

The widowed Sheelas had, meanwhile, been dispensing her hospitalities in the inside of her hut. She now came forth to welcome the Chief, as did every one they met, with the observance due to a sovereign prince; which Ranald, to do him justice, received with the ease of one to whom both lip-service and the worship of the heart had always been familiar. While the band made a hasty meal on the green-sward, Sarah retired to adjust her dress.

"It must be in gay, gallant, — ay, and in Highland trim, that you enter the halls of Raonull, which we are fast approaching," said the Chief. "From the next height we have, what a certain supple Lowland knave, in my employment, calls 'a Pisgah-view' of the promised land, — a land of good performance to Mr. Daniel Hossack, however, who is the only ready-money man in *my country*."

In a few minutes Sarah stepped out among her courtiers and attendants, attired as befitted a Chieftain's bride; the tartan covering as graceful a shape as ever yet claimed the hereditary right of wearing it; the plaid screening as fair a countenance as its folds had ever veiled. There was also that tasteful intermixture of the jewelled ornaments which Ranald admired, and which gave sparkling relief and finish to her attire. Her ornaments received unqualified approbation from the spectators, though her claim to personal beauty was still the subject of secret dispute; some of the younger men of "the Chief's girdle" declaring her passing lovely! and others scouting all pretension to good looks in a slender handful of a girl, whose fairy face was not the breadth of a Saxon shilling; most unlike, indeed, as all must have confessed, to the strapping maidens and massy matrons of the race of Raonull.

Those who denied the Saxon stranger's beauty, acknowledged, however, her sweet-

ness of manners, kindness of heart, and openness of hand, — which last was, probably, after all, her chief merit, failing, as she so wofully did, in birth and country.

When the cavalcade again got into order, Donald of the Dirk was missing. He had deserted the party. The Chief knit his brows.

"*Ha me com,*" said he, scornfully, curling his lip, "I care not. Mount, Sarah: Donald of the Dirk does not, it seems, grace your triumphal entry into my glen.—Well—this evening — I must find you a more courteous groom than this moody dreamer, whose conduct becomes every hour more inexplicable. Did he not pledge you in the Cup of Peace?"

"The draught was, unfortunately, spilt between us," replied Sarah, hesitating, as if she confessed a crime.

"Son of Mercy, you don't say so!" cried the Chief. Sarah looked more distressed than before.

"If your kinsman had even refused to partake with me what, to his clan, is significant of the bread and salt, the sacred symbols, among other wild tribes, of confidence and hospitality, I should even then believe that he did so merely to retain the power of injuring, without breach of honour and of faith; but never that he would employ that power against me."

The Chief was evidently disconcerted. Lightly as he affected to treat the superstitions and usages of his country, their deep-struck roots were intertwined with every fibre of his mind. The spilling of "the Cup of Peace," the loss of the wedding-ring, the abrupt departure of the nearest kinsman, whose duty it was to ride by the bride, and lead her to the threshold of the castle, were ominous as well as vexatious. All else, however, went on smoothly; and group after group of young men still arrived to welcome the return of their Chief.

"Whip and spur, then, Sarah," said the Chief. "And again good-night to sullen Donald. We must make our grand entry into our capital city of *Porst-na-Baat* before sunset. For this, I believe, our rascally vizier, Daniel Hossack, has made rather splendid preparations."

Sarah obeyed with alacrity, and there was an animating gallop of some miles among the cavalry, and a brisk rush among the long-legged and kilted foot, till the cavalcade halted on a wild, wide, flat heath, — an ocean prospect in immensity and sublimity, with the added glory of an Alpine

range far distant, but stretching round on every side, its serrated peaks glittering, dusky, or half lost in haze. Overhead was the uniform deep-toned, dull, blue heaven, which harmonizes so well with the sombre grandeur of a wild and solitary scene composed wholly of the primary elements of moor and mountain; — the same low, brooding sky which a late distinguished landscape painter has, with such striking effect, diffused over a view of the plain of Marathon.

"Here, at last, is the true Highland scenery," said Sarah. "When you boast of your glens, and lakes, and forests, why are you silent about prospects like this; which, to softer scenery, is as the mighty ocean to a pleasant inland lake: — one's soul finds room to breathe freely here, — to soar and expand!"

"Ay, Sarah, so you have found the key to our scenery at last! Any one can admire a sweet green glen, or a wooded glade: it requires a Highland heart and eye, a clansman's associations, to wander in admiration over the gray moor. — To Donald of the Dirk, whom you see so far off, stalking ghost-like before us, this inspiring prospect is like the dance and song of the billows and the breeze to a mariner; like the sound of Bow-bell to a Londoner."

"You might have spared that illustration," replied Sarah, laughing; "but as Chaucer, and Spenser, and Shakspeare, and Milton, were *almost* Londoners, even that shall not offend me."

"At least the sun must not go down on your wrath."

In a few minutes more the married pair were rapidly descending a mountain gorge, threading a rugged unequal bridle-way, flanked by lumpish disjointed swells of mossy ground, covered with coarse heath and bent.

"Shut your eyes, now, my little dark-haired darling," said Ranald, in his native language: "close those diamond portals of the soul, whose opening brings morn to the glens, as Donald might say, till I cry, 'Look up, Sarah!'"

Sarah did as she was ordered; and, when desired to open her eyes, her burst of lively and rapturous admiration satisfied even Ranald's rapacity of praise for all that was his own.

"The strath of Lochnaveen!" he said, triumphantly throwing out his hand towards the glorious scene that spread in beauty beneath them. Sarah's heart, for a moment,

swelled, and throbbled with the pride of property and power, — a new and exulting feeling. Of all she saw she was the lady and mistress, and she held her rights by a tenure which tenfold doubled their value, — the heart and hand of Ranald.

The Chief had chosen his hour well. Sunset was fading fast into twilight. In a few minutes more would have fled all those magic and shifting lights that now tinted tower and tree, slanting across the bright lake upwards through the hanging-birch woods to the enshrining cliffs, — and bringing forward many of those little accessories that constitute the interest of a living scene, and give the landscape its sweetest touches.

The old gray hold of the Chief of Clan-Raonull, seen far below and across the lake, and yet looking near, could be no object of peculiar attraction, save to its owners; though the striking shadowed outline of its embrasures, loop-holes, steep roof, and rudely battlemented walls floating on the waters of the lake, might have been more engaging to the eye of taste than the heavy substantialities of the rugged structure. But it was on her *home* that Sarah gazed, — *her* home in weal or woe, — through life and all its changes. Dubious of her long silence, Ranald riveted his eyes on her face, as if to read her thoughts, and with no disposition to indulgent construction. Her low, involuntary sigh was breathed from causes very different from any feeling connected with the lack of architectural elegance or domestic accommodation in her future home; yet, when Ranald spoke, she wished that this involuntary sigh had been suppressed.

"The house, as you see, is no great things," said he, slightly. "I warned you not to expect a Hampstead Lodge, and its snug accompaniments, in Strathnaveen. When we have settled a while we must contrive some wing or jamb. In yonder hills of ours is marble enough to construct a million palaces. The present domestic accommodation is, however, miserable, and often scanty; especially when we have female guests. Yet daughters of the houses of Kintail and of Sutherland have chosen, and for life, yonder rude home. — I speak not of men's accommodation; even you, fair Saxon, would scorn the tall fellow who, with his plaid, and seven feet of the heath, could not find him a chamber. In such sort of sleeping room, thank Heaven and my brave ancestors, I am tolerably well provided."

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This contradictory speech pained the gentle Saxon. The want of a fine dwelling would, in any circumstances, have been the last subject of her regret. And what were entire squares of town-built palaces compared to the magnificent scene before her. There was something, too, — it was not meant unkind, but it was jarring, — in the allusion to the former splendid alliances of the family. The short-lived glow of the pride of rank, place, and property was chilled in the bosom of the Saxon stranger. She was, then, not reckoned of mind or birth sufficiently lofty to value the *noble* above the comfortable and the *convenient*. Sarah owned to herself that it might be so.

"A castle," she said at last, "and a wide domain, never made part in my dreams of romance. Some little shieling in yonder braes, — a bothie in the green-wood, by the lochan of the water-lilies, where, at morn and even, I could climb the next *tomhan* and count all the blue smokes rising from humble and happy hearths, under the kind protection of Ranald, were more to me than the grandest gold and marble palace in all the Arabian Tales; and Ranald methinks ought to know it."

"You are a sweet, little ingratiating *Nighean Ceard*, that is the truth, Sarah. A little more ambition and pride of place might, however, not misbecome the bride of a Chief; yet if the doughty sons of Raonull do not thank me for giving them so gentle a lady and mistress, they deserve to be ducked in their own lake. — But, speaking of your favourite blue smokes, the castle looks deserted to-night, — so does the hamlet. The chimney-tops, 'the wind-pipes of good hospitality,' give no sign of preparation."

"Perhaps the people are abroad," said Sarah.

"Ah, yes — just that — at the ferry under the cliffs below, where we cannot see them, all gathered to welcome us. But, hold a firm rein, my love. Here, at this crag, I was ever wont to fire off my piece as a call to 'spit and raxes,' a sort of first dinner-bell, or intimation to the ministering angels of my mother's kitchen, that their Chief is not quite a divinity; or is, at least, of kin to those gods who relish a savoury sacrifice, and can, even after a ten hours' fast, condescend to a mess of venison chops: — if their liberal language knew any such pinched, lean, niggardly word *avoirdupois*, connected with food, as *chops*." Ranald, as he care-

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lessly spoke, was loading his gun, which was carried by one of his innumerable attendants. "Are you quite steady, Sarah, or shall I not fire?"

Afraid, yet ashamed to confess her fears, Sarah measured the waters, that, through the opening of the cove, she saw yawning many fathoms below, but said she was ready,—"quite prepared."

Ranald fired. At this well-known signal, from an ambuscade placed by the *Bhalie* rose a yell of bagpipes, and the welcoming shouts of a rabble rout; and before the smoke of his piece was dispelled, Ranald saw his wife borne headlong down the *scour* which lay under the hamlet of *Glack-anduich*, and hung sheer over the lake.

Every man in sight started forward, but Ranald outstripped them all. From side to side of the lake, and along the *braes*, where groups of spectators were ranged, there was a suppressed cry—a moment of intense anxiety; and the small, beautiful pony which the lady had ridden, was seen plunging in the waters of the lake, but without a rider.

It was swimming across, as if to gain the castle lawn.

"Have the waters of Lochnaveen swallowed, and hidden in their depths, the shame of their degenerate Chief?" was the passionate exclamation of *Nighean Donachd Ruadh*, addressed to the aged matron who stood at the hall lattice beside her, her counsellor and companion.

"Daughter of Red Duncan, what is not yet done, remains to be fulfilled," returned the oracular crone, as she drew the lady back.

Instead of the sight of agony and horror which Ranald had anticipated, on his desperate plunge down the *scour*, he found his wife on the ledge of the precipice, faint and trembling, and by her side her rescuer, Donald of the Dirk. She threw herself into Ranald's opening arms, and, as he clasped his recovered and doubly-valued treasure, the clansman suddenly disappeared.

"To your brave kinsman I owe my life," said Sarah, looking round for Donald.

"I pardon Donald's former desertion, my beloved: God and his angels placed him here to atone for his mad rashness. And you bleed, my Sarah!—how shall I ever forgive myself?"

"The slightest scratch possible: not so bad as the prickle of a rose. Would you

believe that yon fierce Donald can grow pale at the sight of blood?"

"At *woman's* only, love. And see that imp of the devil, Kelpie, how he swims the lake!—He neighs by the castle wall, as if he had done some great feat. By my father's hand! I will have him shot and ham-strung."

"Hush, Ranald! See, and be thankful, how beautifully my tartan screen floats and curls down the lake, showing its changing hues like a wild drake."

"Let all go to the broad sea, since I have yourself, my own poor Sarah. This delicate hand mangled so cruelly, too!—I could curse myself!"

"Kiss it, and heal it rather, as poor mamma used to do long ago," said Sarah. "Oh, her kisses were balm!—My poor mother, Ranald, you have scarcely heard me speak of her. She died when I was only five years old; and I knew even then I was never again to have a mother."

Ranald kissed the bruised fingers, and would, at this moment, have given half his life and fortune to have been able to promise his wife a daughter's place in *his* mother's heart.

The Chief carried Sarah up the steep, so fortunately tangled, woven, and matted on the surface with underwood and creepers, as to have obstructed the wild career of her startled pony. Here had lurked Donald of the Dirk, waiting till the gay bridal party had passed over the lake, before, in darkness and shame, he went to give his lady an account of his baffled mission.

In a land where every event and accidental circumstance is construed into presage and omen, the occurrences of this day were peculiarly evil-boding to the young stranger. The last alarming accident had put a stop to all those demonstrations of joy and welcome which, on the south bank of the lake, had been secretly got up by the golden waters, (*usquebaugh*), and more golden promises, of the diplomatic *Bhalie*.

His bribes, however, and his cajoleries, had had no power over the loyal hamlet that flourished under the immediate eye of the Daughter of Red Duncan: There all was chill, silent, and lowering. Though a party of mercenaries had been stationed in ambush to yell a welcome in the Pass, the inhabitants of the mountain hamlet—"the Keepers of the Heart"—had also held at an inauspicious distance; the children peering slyly over their rocky battlements, but no

one offering welcome and greetings to their returning lord.

The "high hereditary piper" of the clan not only disobeyed the *Bhalie's* mandate, to raise the appropriate Pibroch in the Pass at the fitting moment, but when a mercenary ventured to profane the *clan-anthem*, he furiously plunged his *skein-áhu* into the bowels of the rival bagpipe, which was squeaking out its final agony as the Chief reached the ferry. The tumult was hushed on his approach. He imperiously ordered his men, who had broken into groups, to muster behind him; and, giving his horse to one of their number, drew his wife's arm within his own, as if he feared to trust her again from his personal protection.

Poor Sarah, "the observed of all observers," was now much discomposed. Her splendid dress was soiled and torn; her hair dishevelled; her head uncovered; her colour had fled with her spirits.

"I shall be more like poor Mary Stuart running the gauntlet of her scornful and rebellious subjects in the streets of Edinburgh, than the triumphant bride Ranald would exhibit to his subjects," was her sad thought. Had her father or her kind aunt been her companion, Sarah would now have implored for rest and leisure; but Ranald thought not of it, and she had not yet learned to express her wishes to him, save by her observance and ready obedience to his.

Of the few persons, besides the *Bhalie* and his household troops, who stood at the ferry, near the landing-place, all had silently disappeared before Ranald lifted his wife on shore on the opposite side, and bade her welcome to his own coast, and his capital of *Porst-na-Baat*. In another second, every door was inhospitably shut against them; or, in more accurate phrase, every bundle of dried fern, every wattled hurdle forming the rude substitute for a door, was put in requisition, throughout the hamlet, by the loyal, devoted, and high-spirited subjects of the Daughter of Red Duncan.

The women, usually so clamorous with their felicitations on such occasions, were instantly invisible. The children looked askance; the curs growled; and Ranald glanced rapidly around in every direction; his features swelling with disappointment and anger. He gnawed his lips till the blood started, as he looked on his deserted state, and left Sarah to receive and acknowledge as she might the endless congratulations and apologies of Mr. Daniel Hossack, who, in

grand costume, marched by her side, till sent back by the Chief to hasten the ferrying over of the gillies.

Ranald's passion reached the extremity, when, as he passed on, he saw the blockade raised, and the people coming out of their dwellings to gratify curiosity, or express muttered contempt.

"Base, rebellious churls!—dearly shall they rue this day!" was his exclamation; and his thoughts went to something little short of razing his hitherto favoured capital of *Porst-na-Baat*, and strewing its foundations with salt.

This hamlet consisted of a row of huts, fronting the lake, built with some show of regularity, while behind were many dwellings scattered picturesquely on a sloping rocky bank. It was by the path lying between the margin of the loch and the row of huts, that Ranald led his wife to his ancestral home, in silence and sadness. The path became more and more steep and narrow, the banks of the loch more high as they proceeded towards the castle; gloomy stillness before them, murmurs of discontent, clamour, and muttered reproaches following their course.

"So he came at last?" said gray Echan of the boats, addressing one of the gillies.

"And brought with him a fair excuse for loitering so long among the Sassenach:—the flower of all their land," replied Sweyn the henchman.

"A flower, and maybe a fair one, Sweyn; but not such as should flourish beneath the breckan, or be worn beside the stately eagle-plume," said an old woman.

"And why not, Marac?—the world is changed since Nighean Donachd Ruadh brought us her dower of naked gillies and sharp dirks. Raonull is the man for the world that is now—not for that which *cail-liachs* prate about at a lykewake, when *usquebaugh* and tobacco are plenty, and Callum Bhaird screaming the 'eerim in their old deaf ears."

"Evil meet you, son of a cur?—Is it thus you speak of the shame of your Chief, and the stain on your clan?" cried the beldame, her eyes darting baleful fires.

"Take it quietly, mother; my father's son has another name than that you give me. But if shame come to our country in a shape like yon, and both pockets stuffed with gold pieces, deeper shame be mine if I don't welcome it." The *caillich* looked fiercer than before.

"A bride whose steed refuses to bear her;

a matron who seeks her husband's dwelling without the *coif* should bind a modest matron's brows; a stranger in whose unlucky hand the Cup of Peace is spilt at the lip; whose screen falls from her dishonoured head, and floats to the wide sea ere she has passed the threshold of her spouse:—what bode tokens like these?" said the beldame.

"They bode, Marac," replied the same young man, "that you are going home to put on your best curch, and rub up your Strathspey steps before you foot it with me to-night at the bridal feast, to the tune of 'Lochnaveen's Rant.'"

"Pert churl's blood!—go *you* to the bridal feast. You, and such as you, are fit to keep company with the Tinker's wench, and not such as my father's daughter."

"Now, the devil meet me! if you were any thing but what you are, and that is a spiteful old witch, but I would come across the mouth that so named your lady and mistress."

"My mistress!"

"And what then? The wife of your Chief; the mother that will be."

"No!—never! never! The quick earth would first open and swallow what the waters yawned for! Never shall the red puddle of the Saxon *Caird* mingle with the blood of *Mac Mic Raonull*, if a dirk be left in one true man's hand, or a bodkin in a woman's!"

"Hush!—to your rock and spindle, Marac, and leave your Chief to choose his wife himself." The young man passed on.

"This is but a cold welcoming to one so fair and gentle," thought Sweyn.

A few gossiping stragglers again appeared; and when Sweyn reached a sort of rude stone cross that formed the rallying, or central point of the hamlet, he threw his bonnet in the air, shouting "*Raonull* and his Bride for ever!—Joy to *Mac Mic Raonull* and his Saxon Bride!" The cry was lustily echoed by a few mercenaries and the immediate household of Mr. Hossack. It was the signal for open revolt and outrage. The boys and girls first raised the cry of opposition, in which all soon joined. "The Tinker and his Callet are come!—haste out with your broken pots and pans! The Tinker and his Callet!"

Those who recollect—and who can ever forget?—the grosser and more outrageous insults offered to the royal family of France, by a people once as celebrated for their light-hearted courtesy, and the enthusiasm of

their loyalty as were the Scottish Highlanders, may imagine this scene.

The young Chief of Clan Raonull was not yet so subdued as the unhappy Bourbons. When the insulting cry reached his ears, he turned fiercely round, shook off his wife, and looking more like a demon than a man, drew his dirk, and started as if to rush back upon the insulters. Sarah clasped and hung on his arm in agony, imploring to know why he seemed so agitated, and supplicating that he would not leave her. He made no reply.

The cowardly insulting shouts were hushed for the moment on his turning round; but as they again moved forward, the cry of the children was renewed, at first timidly, and then more boldly. A small pebble, aimed at Sweyn, who, shouting, followed his master, glanced on Sarah's dress, and Ranald again flew round in a mood of fury that would have spared no living thing. At the same instant a little child, that could just totter and prattle, a curly-headed, smiling boy, incited by some females within the door from which he sprang, suddenly plucked Sarah's skirt as he lisped his well-taught lesson of "*Nighean Ceard! Nighean Ceard!*" With a kindly revulsion of spirits, Sarah stooped to kiss the rosy cheek of her infant traducer, fondly recollecting the caressing name which Ranald himself had once given her, and then so strangely retracted. Her arm was round the child's neck, her lips on his cheek.

"Cockatrice!" exclaimed the infuriated Chief, and, with one spurn of his foot, the beautiful boy was plunged down the bank into the lake.

"Deed accursed!" exclaimed Sarah, in horror, tearing her arm from her husband's clasp. There was a cry of anguish and horror all around, and men and women rushed to the water's brink. Sarah also would have flown down the steep; but she was dragged, almost carried, onward, though Ranald now appeared hardly able to support himself.

"Sarah, as you love me, or pity yourself, not another word," he said in a hoarse voice. "Shall the cause of my rash deed be the first to upbraid me with its fatal consequences?"

"And I the cause?—say it not! Oh, rather would I have suffered a thousand deaths, a thousand shames, than that you had committed so dreadful an act on this innocent child."

"You choose a bad time for discussion,"

returned Ranald, trembling with agitation himself, but still dragging her on.

"I may yet save him!" she cried, struggling to free her arm. "He may be saved. Those barbarous, ignorant people, cannot know how to treat the drowned."

"Save yourself, madam," said Ranald, the blood revisiting his face, and his step becoming again firm. But the heart of Sarah was now too strong in its indignant sense of violated humanity to be quelled.

"I will try to restore the child."

"Then go, if you wish to see yourself openly hooted and scorned; if you court outrage and insult from this 'barbarous' people,—go."

How strange was the waywardness and caprice that, at such a moment, felt and sneeringly resented, the ill-chosen epithet applied to the very people whom the rage of the Chief devoted to destruction. Sarah again voluntarily clasped her husband's arm, and, as she looked on his anguished brow, pressed that arm in silence to her side.

"Sarah, madden me no farther. I know not what I do; but 'tis time some peaceful roof were over your head."

"Alas, I shall never more know peace!"

The frantic cries of the mother of the drowned child now rung to the heart of the Englishwoman, who, though she knew not the mother's language, yet well knew that these were a mother's piercing cries of agony and despair. The wild imprecations of the bereaved woman, who, five minutes before, had, in wanton malice, incited her child to its fate, made even Ranald, proud and stout-hearted as he was, shudder, and draw their innocent and unconscious object closer to his breast.

"Haste, my own love — haste, Sarah! I regret nothing but that I have been so barbarous to you. My men are still on the other side of the lake. These people get frantic in their rage."

It was for her husband's safety that Sarah now trembled. It was a murderer's side, from which she had started in horror, to which she now clung, as she panted up the steep, and as if death alone could sever her clasp. It was this man, so feared, so loved, that she followed with new energy of affection, her heart, at his softened speech, gushing over with deeper tenderness than had ever blessed their happiest hours of unalloyed endearment.

"This is sorry welcoming for my Saxon bride," said the Chief, speaking now with

marvellous calmness. "This last lesson was severe, but needful; would that it had fallen on some older culprit. They shall all be better trained. Not even a cur, basking in the sun, between sleeping and waking, shall dare, in its dream, to bark, if but the shadow of the wife of Raonull cross it.

"You do not yet understand this people, whom you think 'barbarous.' They have wild notions on points of honour. Yet, turbulent, rugged, wretched serfs as to you they seem, without their fidelity and devotion, all the gold of England could not, I fear, make me happy. Their love is the air I breathe."

The unhappy pair now stood by the threshold of their future home, deserted and alone. Not even one menial was found, where the mother of the Chief, at the head of thronging friends and vassals, should have appeared, to break the emblematic cake over the head of the Bride, and to give her welcome.

The door of the castle was closed, for the first time Ranald had ever seen hospitality denied, by a shut door, in his father's halls, whether by night or day. Save the shock-head of a girl suddenly thrust from one of the loop-holes scattered at random over the walls, and as suddenly withdrawn, no human thing was seen. The anger of the Chief waxed hotter than ever. With the handle of his dirk he struck on the rough oaken door, with preternatural force. It flew open, though not to his stroke; and Sarah, who had leaned against it, by the violence of the motion swung round on his arm, and fell across the threshold, while blood gushed from her lips.

"Hounds!" shouted the voice of her who had thus impetuously thrown wide the door. "Who among you durst shut the gates of this dwelling against the meanest creeping thing to which it was the pleasure of *Mac Mic Raonull* to show hospitality? I will have your arms hacked off by the elbows. Tell the Saxon girl, 'tis not thus, in churl fashion, that *Nighean Donachd Ruadh* shows her resentment, not thus that she takes her revenge. Room for the Sassenach bride of *Mac Mic Raonull!*"

Without one glance at the fainting creature who sank on her knees before her, the Chieftainess wrapped the drapery of her plaid around her stately person, with the dignity of the dying Cæsar adjusting his mantle in the Capitol, and swept past; all the loftiness of her character, and pride of

her lineage, dilating her form and expanding her brow.

"Mother," said the Chief, in a subdued and pathetic voice, "Is it thus you receive your son?" He meanwhile raised his wife with affectionate tenderness, and, at the same time, clutched the drapery of his mother's plaid, as she crossed his threshold to leave the dwelling.

"It is thus I receive, thus welcome, thus bless my bridegroom son! The curse of his mother cling to him, and to his house, until blood has purified its deep, ingrained pollution! Till then, the same roof shall not shelter, the same hearth shall not warm, the same bread shall not nourish, nor the same prayer bless him and her who gave him being!"

She passed on like a slow-moving thunder-cloud.

"Then be the feud eternal!" cried Ranaid, with equal fierceness; and throwing from him his mother's plaid, he bore his insensible wife into the house in the same moment that his mother left it for ever.

The man whose hand was fresh from blood, and in whose heart there, at this moment, burned the thirst of a thousand murders, now watched and waited by a fainting woman's couch, with almost woman's patience, and more than woman's tenderness.

Sarah had scarcely recovered her senses, when a cry came from the hamlet that the Lowland Prime Minister, Daniel Hossack, was in danger of suffering for the offences of the Prince. Ranaid's passions, as well as his courage and generosity, were at this time strongly alive to the defence of the unpopular official. He therefore left Sarah, on her own earnest entreaty, and flew down to the hamlet.

But the Bhalie had already been happily rescued by Donald of the Dirk, and had made the best of his way to the Castle, though by a very circuitous route. These were not days of ceremony; nor was Sarah either offended or alarmed when the functionary, still half frightened out of his senses, planted himself by her couch. Besides Mr. Hossack's innate and insuperable regard for a "ready money fortune," his kindest feelings expanded to the fair stranger—half his country-woman, and so ungraciously received. As far as such imprudence was possible in so discreet a person, the Bhalie was, indeed, — and independently of all hopes or fears — a disinterested partisan of the persecuted faction of the Saxon stranger.

"Oich, oich, oich, madam, hinny, make yourself easy; no fear of *Mac Mic Raonull*. Whatever might happen to the like of you or me of the South, if their Hieland blood were up, they'll take good care of their own. Poor barbarians! their Chiefs are, as it were, in the place of gods to them. You, dear, young lady, fresh from a land of law and gospel, coin and commerce, are yet strange to their ways. But we must jouk and let the jaw go by; bow to the bush we get bield frae; and they'll come round, never fear them. A month of time, and an anker or two of *usquebaugh*, properly administered, and a few ribbons and mutches distributed among the women-folk, will make the sons of Raonull—sons of Belial!—screw their pipes to another guess tune. The Chief, with your leave, is like fire frae flint; but when he is on the hill—and he'll no be long from it—ye must take a saunter down among them. The *cailliachs*—that's the auld wives—like a pickle sneeshin, or, may be, a drap brandy; and in good time the Bucker* is just off the mouth of Lochnaveen: so will the *bodachs*—that is, the auld carles; then the young queans, the lasses, will give their hearts for a bit red ribbon to tie up their hassocks o' hair, or a string of glass beads will gang about as far here as in Madagascar. Every place has its own ways; every bell its ain clink. A kebbuck, or a peck or two of meal, will be welcome at many a door where there's bairns; and whatever else we may want, there's no want of them on Lochnaveen's property. So, never fear, madam; siller, time, and fair words go far. My lady, hinny, there are ways and means to bring all round. The auld lady is the worst job, and that unlucky brat of a bairn drowning. And all will be laid to the door of the innocent; for it is the very nature of them—and weel I ken it—let them quarrel and dirk each other ever so among themselves, to band and league against all sense, mense, siller, and civilisation."

Thus counselled, and thus reasoned, the Walpole of Lochnaveen; and, in her present strait, Sarah felt gratitude both for his advice and kindness. The death of the child was what pressed most on her mind, both as an event to be lamented in itself, and dreaded in its consequences. In her own happy land, life must answer for life.

"Must Lochnaveen surrender himself to justice?" she took courage to inquire. "Will

* Smuggling vessel. Probably a corruption of *Buc-caneer*.

there be a trial? But wild passion was his fault—no evil intention.”

“Justice! trial! whew!” exclaimed the Bhalie. “A Chief brought to justice i’ the Hielands!” He shook his wig knowingly, and smothered a long and meaning chuckle.

“Let not that disturb ye, madam. The law has not reached Lochnaveen glen yet, nor within a hundred miles of it. And we have more bairns among us, God wot, than brochan for them. A Chief’s doings are not to be over strictly looked into, whether in the way of rape, murder, or spulyie, saving your presence,—if he keep the squares about their *fretts* of gentle blood and grand deeds, and, aboon a’, the ancient name.—Names! their auldest charters are but of yesterday; nor was there till but like the other year, a Chief among them that had as much clerk-craft as could sign his own name, or make mair than a seart o’ a cross for his mark. Verily, they are a brutish people, among whom Providence, natheless for wise ends of ceevileezin’ and evangeleezin’ the heathen, has cast your lot and mine, my leddy, hinny;—good for nothing but to leister a saumon, or bring down a moor-cock, or beek their red shanks i’ the sun or before a smoky peat-ingle. Without clerk-craft, or mechanic skill, they could not even build their Chiefs a decent ruckle of a house, or make plough-graith for themselves to labour their bits of crofts with.”

“But you forget, sir——” gently interrupted Sarah.

“Na, na; I dinna forget. It’s me kens them weel, the deil’s pets! Ye see, my leddy, hinny, I came among the glens, lang before ye were born, on a small merchandeezing venture. Well, they spulyied my bit pack, and, but for the chield they call Donald of the Dirk, a stripling then, would have ta’en my life, I verily believe, when I said ‘How dare ye?’ However, that was going rather too far. The Chieftainess, like her forbears, would confine their *spreacheries* to Moray-land, or the Lowland Border, and keep her own nest clean; so I got a measure of justice in the long-run, and saw one long-legged gillie strap for it.”

“Good heavens! hung for such slight offence?”

“Ay; and what for no, my leddy? If the Highland Chiefs have the power of pit and gallows, how better could they use it than ridding the land of lawless limmers who, like the wild Arabians of the Desert, think it their glory to plunder peaceful,

industrious merchants, travelling in the prosecution of their lawful calling?”

“It is a fearful power for any man to possess,” sighed Sarah; “yet these wild people cannot be so very wicked, after all, Mr. Hossack; as you are still living and prospering among them?”

“Ay, that I may be, my leddy,” replied the Bhalie, lowering his voice to a whisper; but at the same time sliily smiling and closing his left eye, as if in compliment to his own sagacity. “Thriving, and upsides with them, and a bit mair, in spite of their blastin’ and blawin’, as if we Southrons were like the dirt beneath their feet. Proud peacocks! strutting back and fore with their arms across, or stringing up auld rhymes, and doodling a bag o’ wind below their oxters, instead of, ‘pretty men,’ forsooth! setting their shoulders to a spade or a plough. O, no! nothing but the gun and the claymore is fit for the handling of ‘the *Slichd Raonull*.’ And we could lick them, too, my leddy, that we could,” continued Bhalie Hossack, waxing hot and animated in his Sassenach pride, and including his lady in his own superior race. “Where met we ever in a fair field that we did not thrash the lurdanes? At the Harlaw, the very burgher boddies o’ Aberdeen drave them back to their moors and mosses, with weel-paid hides, I wot. But the other year, Mar’s Year, as it’s called, I think we showed at Glenshiel whilk were the best men; and ye must have heard of Killiecrankie! and how that pestilent malignant James Graham, whom they call Marquis of Montrose, was chased like a whaup about Edderachalis yonder;” and the Bhalie pointed with his thumb over his shoulder in the direction he specified, and was proceeding with great animation to recite the triumphs of Saxons and Protestants over Celts and Malignants, when Sarah, whose distracted thoughts were otherwise engaged, again interrupted him, saying, somewhat coldly,—

“You forget, sir, that this people are my people;” and then, with animation, “and the gallant, brave, unfortunate Montrose, he was the very hero of my girlhood!”

The worthy Bhalie started, looking half petrified. Had he, then, betrayed himself in almost the only unguarded moment of the life held for twenty years by a precarious tenure.

“A ten thousand pardons, my leddy! To be sure they are *your* people, and *my* people also; and a brave, loyal people too, if a little hot and fiery sometimes, and over ready with

their weapon. But let not my word be heard, I beseech ye!" and he lowered his voice to a whisper. "Daniel Hossack ne'er was the man to meddle or make in matters that are aboon his hand. I have long kept a calm sough; but the sound of kindly Lowland speech melted my heart somehow, and let loose my rash tongue by these waters of Babylon, where my harp has hung so long upon the willows."

"No compulsory, or very unendurable captivity to you, I should hope," replied Sarah, smiling. "Your raiment has not waxed old, nor has your manna failed in the wilderness."

"I dare not complain, the Lord be praised! I dare not complain," returned the Bhalie, again lowering his voice to a whisper, as he always did when allusion was made to his temporal prosperity. "I have sense to manage, and frugality; and the blessing on my poor endeavours has not been withheld. I cannot deny that."

"You have been, and will, I hope, continue, a most useful and exemplary man in this district. Mr. Aaron Hill has apprized me of your valuable qualities; and I hope to find in you, my countryman, the friend and counsellor which, alas! I fear that the stranger may need."

This was again assailing the Saxon functionary on the right side; and so completely was his heart taken, as if by storm, that he would at that moment have lent Sarah, had she asked for them, twenty gold pieces, or perhaps forty, on her simple note of hand.

He thrust his hands into his pocket, and jingled up his coins—a frequent practice with him, and one equivalent to a Highlander grasping the handle of his dirk—and as if in the fulness of his heart they were ready to jump out.

"Your friend, my leddy! ay, to the last drop of my blood. We'll be hand and glove; saving the reverence due from a poor auld body of a Bhalie to the lady of his Chief."

As Sarah appeared weary of his presence, as well as most uneasy at the protracted stay of her husband, the Bhalie went off, professedly to hasten the return of the Chief, but really to steal home, where, once in safety, he congratulated himself on the powerful auxiliary obtained by the Saxon faction.

The Bhalie had not indulged in such an outpouring of social confidence for many a day. The Saxon lady was to him the talisman which unlocked a thousand southern associations. All of heart and of romance

that he possessed had been touched and kindled.

The return of the Chief relieved the immediate apprehensions of Sarah arising from the exasperated temper of the vassals. His appearance in the hamlet had again spread desolation. The discontented or mutinous clansmen retired into their dwellings with their women and children, lest, as they said, more of their offspring should be sacrificed to appease the offended pride of "The Tinker's Daughter."

As another mark of sullenness, if not of open defiance, preparations were immediately made for a splendid lykewake of the drowned child. It was held in a barn belonging to a duine-uasal, which formed a rallying point for the disaffected; and here *Nighean Donachd Ruadh* herself deigned to appear; an unusual act of gracious consideration never paid by her save to aged or distinguished deceased members of the tribe. Now she herself led off the solemn *Dance of the Dead*, then a customary observance upon such occasions.

Every female domestic had left the castle to follow the fortunes of her lady, together with all the Maids of Honour, the daughters, namely, of the gentlemen of the clan, who, under the eye of the Chieftainess, were trained in arts and manners. Every hearth under the roof was cold, and the eyes of the Chief flamed as if they would have kindled stones, as he paced the chill, desolate chamber of his drooping wife, and, from time to time, looked out upon the illumination of the barn, from whence the candles placed round the infant corpse threw long lines of tremulous radiance on the lake.

By dint of bribes and promises, the Bhalie prevailed with an old woman, a wretched outcast, a Paria, with the reputation of being skilled in unearthly arts, to afford her services to the intercommuned lady; and to the medicaments and nursing of this beldame, Sarah was left on that first long, sleepless, and wretched night spent in her Highland home.

When Ranald visited her early next morning, it was a happiness so dear again to see him near her, again to cling to his embrace, that half her misery was for the time forgotten; and of self every thought was cast aside, when, perceiving that he looked worn and sad, her gentlest cares were given to soothe and cheer him.

Sarah's attentions were, for the first time, almost unheeded. The Chief walked about the chamber with an abstracted and troubled air.

"Sarah," he said at last, "you may, if you please, descend to breakfast. The Bhalie has sent you a supply of every thing, and proper attendants are now arrived from another distant glen. You are also freed of my mother's presence!—*Nighean Donachd Ruadh* comes no more under this roof."

To Sarah's aching heart and quick feelings there was deep unkindness in this address—deeper unkindness in its tone. Without spirit either to reply or to control her emotion, she wept in silence, striving to hide her tears as she feebly dragged her steps, in compliance with Ranald's invitation, into the rude and comfortless hall, of which the only cheering feature was a huge fire of bog-wood, which its chilly vastness rendered agreeable even at summer-tide.

Our tale must now revert to another group.

It was past midnight ere Donald of the Dirk, waiting until the Chieftainess had left the lyke-wake, silently followed her to the solitary shieling in the woods overhanging the hamlet, in which she had chosen to take shelter. To her every habitation in the glen was open; but, abandoning the now contaminated home of her ancestors, she would share none else. Ordering her attendants to lay down the burning bog-pine torches which they had borne before her, and to leave the hut, she seated herself majestically, and for some time calmly and fixedly regarded the clansman, who now bent before her, shrouded in his plaid, his bonnet pulled low over his troubled brow.

"When did Donald of the Dirk return to his Chief, and the errand on which he was sent not sped?" she said. "Let my kinsman show his dagger."

"Donald found the Sassenach maiden the wedded wife of *Mac Mic Raonull*," replied the clansman, without looking up.

"Have *your* lips said it," exclaimed the Chieftainess, starting up, and now giving way to ill-suppressed rage. "His wife!—in defiance of his mother's ban—in contempt of the vengeance of the Daughter of Red Duncan. And you! false clansman and base kinsman, has the Saxon sorceress also thrown her spells over you?"

"I brook, as beseems me, the name *Nighean Donachd Ruadh* bestows," replied the clansman, calmly:—"I hung on their track; I followed; I watched; I aimed. In the bridal chamber, I was there; this is

true token"—and he laid down Sarah's lost ring:—"I was there, but so was God, and the Angels of God. My arm withered; my heart melted; she lives! Her hand has healed, her heart has trusted me. My life for hers!"

"Felon! traitor! your oath!" shrieked the lady, now choking with passion. "The thousand perjuries, of which the least might damn you to the lowest abyss—your solemn soul-pledge, given within the CIRCLE OF STONES—that vow to which the ghosts of our common fathers were witness—your oath by your Father's spirit, summoned there from bliss or bale—by that good weapon that never yet kept the belt when its glance was needed in *Nighean Donachd Ruadh's* quarrel!"

Her voice softened to this recollection of the long-tried devotion and fidelity of her kinsman, and the agitation of Donald of the Dirk increased.

"Take my blood," he cried passionately, offering his dagger, and baring his throat; "freely as Lochnaveen gives its waters to the great sea, is it offered; and take with it the load of a weary life: but as you love your own soul, look in her face of innocence and loveliness, and spare that dark-haired and gentle one."

His appeal was as fuel to a flame already too fierce; as "fire to heather set."

"Has the Saxon witch not alone tainted the blood of the race of Raonull, but changed its truest and bravest into traitors and cravens?" she shrieked:—"Why do I hold such degrading parley? I will not, sir, look upon your minion: where the eye of the noble falls grace must follow; and highly as I have prized the blood of *Donald of the Dirk*, my spirit is athirst for a yet richer draught."

The clansman shuddered at the fiend-like avowal; but after a pause, he, with singular power and eloquence, poured forth his wild tale—a tale of ancient clan prophecies; of the rhymes of Torquil of the Amulet, a famed warrior and seer of the tribe, which foretold of a gentle White Doe straying from the far south, across Maam Tamar, whose coming was to gladden and bless the sons of Mac Mic Raonull, and to revive the fallen fortunes of their sinking name. The legend set forth, that in those latter times there was to be peace and plenty in the land—that the streams and the pastures were to yield a threefold increase; the fertile earth give forth new abundance of strange productions for the use of man and of beast.

"How oft, in the mist, and in the rainbow spray of the waterfall, has Donhuil seen that gentle Doe!—and lo! she has come, the blessed one, of whom-it was foretold."

In the mind of the Chieftainess passion at this time overmastered superstition. Her lip curled in scorn while the clansman talked of the strange likenesses, of the wonderful interpositions which had saved his soul from so foul a deed. The draught of vengeance would now, to the fierce lady, have wanted zest, if not offered by this tardy and reluctant minister.

Holding her vassal to his fealty, to the conditions of his bond, the Chieftainess commanded him from her presence, reminding him again of those awful oaths which conscience and superstition had already impressed so heavily upon his soul. Temporizing, or measures of policy and expedience, were altogether foreign to the character of the clansman; yet, for the sake of her who had acquired so strong an influence over his feelings—who was, he imagined, so mysteriously connected with his singular destiny, and that of his race, he departed at last, leaving the lady to hope that her terrible purpose, though delayed, might yet be accomplished; and retired to his solitude to indulge in reveries the most dangerous to his peace—to dream dreams and see phantasms—and to struggle with what he believed an overpowering destiny.

It was the counsel of Mr. Daniel Hossack, privately insinuated to his new lady, that the Chief should at this time give way a little to the tide; and even leave home until the death of the child, which he now warily talked of, as "having fallen into the water," was forgotten.

This untoward event had made a deeper impression on the inflamed and alienated minds of the clan than might have been surmised from their ordinary indifference to human life; and it had given the last stroke to the unpopularity of the young stranger, its innocent and unhappy cause.

The Chief had been so long absent, that both business and friendship demanded his presence in other quarters of the country; nor did his wife find it very difficult to send Ranald from his saddened and lonely home, though he angrily refused to make any overture for reconciliation with his mother, and far more angrily to solicit forgiveness of the

bereaved mother of the drowned child, to which Sarah timidly urged him.

With many charges, Sarah was therefore, after a few days, left to the good offices of the Bhalie, which, indeed, never failed her; and with abundance of female attendants, all from distant places, and a body-guard of a few lounging gillies, grumbling at being left at home, tied to a woman's apron-string, as they said, and liable to such taunting queries from their clansmen as, "Whether their Chief had set up a tinker's forge in the castle, and if they were kept at home to blow the bellows?"

Heavily and slowly did the first absence of Ranald, limited to a fortnight, but drawn out to several weeks, pass over her he had left. Spiritless and dejected, without comfort in the passing time, or hope in the future, Sarah remained mostly in her cheerless chamber, listening to the half understood legends and ghost stories of the girls, and of the old crone, introduced to her by the Bhalie—tales which still farther depressed and subdued her shaken mind. The few families that could be called neighbours, or that could have afforded her the comfort of social intercourse, were divided from her by difficult mountain ridges, unbridged torrents, perilous morasses, and impassable lakes and friths; and still farther by dissimilar tastes and clannish prejudices.

They might, however, have waived their dignities, and have condescended to visit the Saxon stranger, received at Court, if not held back from a family now openly divided against itself. No one, either from love or fear, chose to provoke open hostility with the Chieftainess; and the families of the Duine-uasals, or "men of note" of the tribe, were more immediately under her influence, and besides sympathized warmly in her contempt of an alliance degrading to the clan, and which brought no profit directly to themselves.

Ranald returned at last from his hunting matches, and political and carousing meetings, and a latter-spring of joy and gladness revisited the bosom of his wife. He came back with new tenderness. In all his wanderings, and Highland visits and festivities, he had seen nothing so fair, so gentle, so gifted, as his own Saxon bride. But would the world—*his world*—the few neighbouring chiefs and their families, and his own dependents and vassals—see with his eyes? Gradually Ranald began to look with theirs, if not on his wife, yet upon the lot he had chosen.

Tired of his lonely home, of Sarah's failing health and drooping spirits; displeased with his people, and half displeased with himself, Ranald's absences became more frequent and more prolonged; and when at home he had resumed those habits and pursuits which he made himself believe were needful in good policy, if he wished to retain a Chief's influence over a brave and martial people. Thus, days and nights were spent on the hills or lochs with his gillies and friends; weeks and months in distant journeys and visits, which Sarah's delicate health—such was at first the alleged pretext—did not permit her to share. But still a short-lived gleam of joy and welcome ever greeted his return.

If ever a feeling of remorse visited the bosom of Ranald, he chased it down by reflecting, that "English wives depended too much on the domestic habits and society of their husbands; and that the station and duties of a feudal Chief were very different from those of a London tradesman, or an English squire, who could walk over his whole territory, with his wife under his arm, before breakfast."

So again and again Sarah was tenderly kissed, ordered to make herself "happy" where she was "lady and mistress;" told that the vassal should be sacrificed that did not worship the ground upon which she trode; and again Ranald mounted and rode away to his boon companions and his pleasures.

Thus time passed, and, scarcely knowing how, Sarah had acquired a tolerably copious knowledge of the only language spoken around her; though her studies were pursued under very different auspices, and with very different hopes from those that attended their commencement. Her first efforts to conciliate the good will of her new neighbours; her anxious attempt to understand and adopt their manners and usages, had been so scornfully received, that her sensitive humility of nature shrunk from renewing them. Unlucky in every thing, she was peculiarly unfortunate in her unpopular, though zealous minister. The gold pieces which, with the humblest message, she ventured to send to the mother of the drowned child, on whom she feared to intrude—and an immense sum it was for that period and country—were contemptuously returned. "The people of Lochnaveen," they said, "knew nothing of the Saxon's coin; but they warmly felt the ties of blood and the

pride of lineage, and how in distress to help each other; and scorn a Tinker's gold."

The Bhalie, who doubted of the sanity of both parties, when he heard that twenty gold pieces had gone a-begging and returned unaccepted, remarked, "that with all this bravado, the sons of Raonull, if once besouth the Spey, would be quite as ready to take a purse as to give one."

Wine, warm clothing, and other comforts, which Sarah, richly supplied with from England, ventured to offer to the miserable, the decrepid, and the aged, were at first treated in the same way. "They had, thanks to God and the Virgin, those of their own blood who could well supply their wants, and who had the heart to do it; and they would starve rather than take alms of a stranger."

Sarah's heart was thus driven back upon itself, to brood in silence and sorrow among the ruins of its fond hopes.

One last effort remained to be made. Prompted by the simple instincts of her own affectionate and trusting heart, Sarah, about to become a mother herself, at last took courage to solicit, with the most humble supplications, an audience from the mother of her husband, the only near female relative on whom she had a claim. This humble prayer was received as another decided proof of the base, abject, and hypocritical spirit of low birth; and spurned with contempt and scorn. Sarah wept almost incessantly for two days over the insulting message which was returned to her, together with the simple epistle and offered gifts—the diamond earrings of her affectionate aunt.

What would Sarah have given to be near that aunt now—to be near any woman of her own country, of any country, who could understand her feelings, and look on her with kindness and sympathy! That she would die, so young, so far from home—from all that loved her, was from this period strongly impressed upon her mind. Yet, such is the fluctuation of human spirits and human thoughts, that though there were times when she looked forward to early death with melancholy joy, there were other seasons when she wept the chance with self pity and bitter sorrow.

The idea of leaving her infant to the mercies of those who had shown such causeless aversion and contemptuous coldness for herself, was of deeper concernment. Many times had she tried to beg of Ranald, that, in case of her death, her child, if it lived, might be conveyed to England; but the dread

of his displeasure, or of his harsh refusal, still stifled the petition on her lips. Would the proud Chief bear that the heir of his name and his possessions should be committed to the tutelage of its mother's low-born relatives? As often had Sarah attempted to pour forth her heart, her fears, and her wishes, to her kind and simple-minded aunt. Every attempt ended in her paper being deluged with tears. How durst she think, and how could she tell, that her husband, her Highland Chief—the pride and gladness of her fond, though wilful heart, could not be intrusted with the care of his own child and hers?—To Aaron Hill, her blotted journal of those days afterwards became the most precious of relics.

During all this time, Donald of the Dirk had not once crossed the threshold of the Chief; nor was his intercourse with *Nighean Donachd Ruadh* much more frequent. When he sought her presence, if she spoke at all, her usual taunting expression ran in this fashion: "Does Donhuil nam Biodag bring his Chieftainess a coward's sheathed weapon, — or a man's reeking blade?"

As the period approached which made it certain that Sarah, in giving birth to an heir, was to perpetuate the disgrace of the clan, the taunts and importunities of the Chieftainess became more frequent. She herself sought the hut of the deer-stalker, and after an hour of dark communion, in which all her arts of persuasion, threats, and terrors, were employed to rouse the mind of Donald to the frenzied pitch, she, with demoniac joy, saw him rush from the shieling, howling in his paroxysm, "*A Man, an Infant, a Woman!*"

The clansman had often seen, often watched and loitered to see, the neglected wife—the solitary excommunicated stranger—wandering about the turfy banks around the castle, or sitting lonely on the rocks underneath it. When on the loch in his *curragh*, at earliest dawn or latest twilight, or in the depths of midnight, he had, under the castle walls, listened to her plaintive songs in her unknown language, breathing the tones of a spirit that languishes for home and kindred. Once or twice he had met her at a greater distance from the castle, climbing, with much personal fatigue, a steep headland about three miles off, and near Donald's shieling, from which could be seen the western shores, and part of the Hebridean Archipelago; an aerial, boundless, and glorious prospect of sea and sky, with island specks, stars of earth, floating between.

Soothing as it was to gaze out for hours on the far waste of waters, and to lose memory and consciousness in musing, it was not altogether for this lonely enjoyment that poor Sarah encountered the toil of the ascent. But from hence she could see the ships that, having successfully doubled Cape Wrath, swept away round the island headlands, stretching their white sails towards dear England! From this spot she could also see vessels from milder latitudes, driven, like her, far from their natural and proper course, by violent tempests, and beating back on their return homeward.

These sights were among Sarah's dearest pleasures; and here she would sit, for hours together, on the cliff, watching the veering or the course of those happy home-bound vessels, and sighing her soul towards her own beloved land.

Not that she longer either wished or hoped to return to England. Her doom was sealed. It had been her own choice,—and it was borne with meekness and patience. Still there was a sad pleasure in gazing on those distant returning ships, and for each shaping out a history.

A sail was sometimes not to be seen for days, nay, for weeks, over all those dim, desolate seas; and at such times Sarah, after long gazing out on the dreary waste of waters, would return to her cheerless home, disappointed and saddened.

On these rambles Sarah had, as has been mentioned, sometimes met her former travelling companion, and her preserver from a fearful death, Donald of the Dirk. He had learned to give language to her wistful, fixed gaze; and, as he saw her thus wandering alone and melancholy, it would flash on his mind, that, in keeping his troth-pledge, he might send her from a world so cheerless and unworthy, and raise her to be an angel of heaven, who was already little inferior to pure and celestial natures, low as was on earth her birth and name.

The first glance of the living woman would banish those reveries of superstition and insane enthusiasm, only to give place to as wild a mood.

Little incidents meanwhile occurred to chequer, if not to gladden the life of the lonely lady. Her father's richly-freighted vessels, of which two arrived on the west coast during the autumn, for their cargoes of timber, and oak, and birch-bark, brought her an endless variety of comforts, luxuries, and productions of the domestic arts, quite as

wonderful in Lochnaveen at that period, as the freight of a Missionary ship might now be in New Caledonia. With her own taste and invention, and the zeal of the Bhalie and the gillies of her faction, "the Tinker's Daughter" had, therefore, by this time, contrived to make her desolate residence a comfortable and even luxurious abode; though its furniture and decorations contrasted as oddly with its rude architecture and uncouth joinery, and locksmith and glazing work, as may such things from the home country, in the hut of an Australian settler. She had also endeavoured to organize the original patriarchal, or feudal establishment of the household, and had begun the usual home manufactures, which had flourished under the eye of the Chieftainess, and of all former ladies. The distaff, the dyeing vat, furnished with native herbs, the loom, the brewing apparatus, were all attempted to be employed. The refined and wealthy London lady even constrained herself to superintend the salting of beeves and sheep, and the preparation of potashes, soap, and candles. She even listened to the counsels of the Bhalie to keep a sharp eye to prevent the pilfering of the stores of tallow, flax, and wool, by the fair daughters of Raonull; and to the doling out of meal and butter, and all manner of household stores; and to measuring the quantities of woollen and flaxen yarn returned for the amount of raw material given out; with all the other complicated details of the housekeeping of a great clan-family of that period.

Her natural taste found more scope in designing patterns or *setts* for novel tartans; and the chequer of "the Tinker's Daughter" may yet have a place among the few home manufactures of the North Highlands. In her first pride of office, as the presiding mistress of a large household, as "the dealer of bread," the Saxon lady resolved, that, in the diligent discharge of those duties which, in that state of society, gave women power, and a certain degree of consideration and dignity, no matron of the proud houses of Caithness or Sutherland, of Kintail or Kilravock, should surpass the despised London tradesman's daughter. Sarah, therefore, laid aside her drawing, her embroidery, and all her needlework, save the tiny wardrobe, moulded from her own, at which she stealthily laboured; and not only became a notable manager, but, as Bhalie Hossack proudly proclaimed, fairly beat all the high-born ladies of whose thrift, hospitality, and bounty,

fame spoke so loudly; as she was capable of keeping regular books, showing the state of her disbursements and receipts, though all her business was, in fact, transacted by barter. In bringing her into personal contact with whole tribes of women and girls, from distant places, who almost daily came to the Castle with yarn, or to pay their *kain* fowls and eggs, or make little presents of nuts, wild berries, or of any rare thing, denoting kindness and homage, her popularity gradually advanced; though, in her immediate neighbourhood, and under the eye of the Chieftainess, all was still scowling and inauspicious.

Ranald, when his carousing friends and followers now gathered round him, found his board spread with nearly as much profusion, and with far more propriety and elegance than during the old hospitable *regime*. And, as he had lived in Edinburgh, for a short time in France, and long in London, the change was noted and welcomed, and boasted of, to the farther displeasure of his mother. Saxon wealth, and Saxon education and intelligence, had overmatched Celtic ancestral wisdom, and old "use and wont."

The ruinous extravagance of the castle now became a favourite topic in the hamlet. The lady not only wore silks and laces every day, but made her attendants wear shoes and stockings, and printed linen gowns and white aprons, and had her table spread daily with the finest linen and silver-work, and grudged nothing, it was said, save wine to the *duine-uasals*, and usquebaugh to the commoners. Moreover, "the Tinker's Daughter," or her man, Bhalie Hossack, had their expresses and messengers never off the road to Dornoch, Tain, or Cromarty; and even so far off as Elgin or Aberdeen, to fetch letters and books, and other strange-looking, unknown commodities. Lady Janet Sinclair, or Lady Sybil Gordon, or *Nighean Donachd Ruadh* herself, had never, in this respect, assumed such high airs as this low-born intruder; who wrote letters to Parson Murdoch, afar off across the country, with her own hand, and also to the Doctor at Inverness, and had set about teaching her maids to cook strange savoury viands, and to sew, and knit, and clear-starch, with other innovations never before heard of in the halls of Mac Mic Raonull. Duncan Forbes himself had sent her a broad letter, and a Lowlander, named a gardener, to plant and raise what were called cabbages, and pot-herbs, and currant berries; things never before seen on

the earth or under the heavens of Lochnaveen.

Like all new and enthusiastic reformers, poor Sarah now proceeded too rapidly in her bold innovations on long-established customs and habits. Her activity in such small matters afforded some solace or relief to her aching heart; and they were, perhaps, more eagerly pursued as a diversion than as a duty, until her pride became interested in the strife; her pride of race and nation, as well as her personal feelings. And then came the dear reward of Ranald's praise, of Ranald's gratified surprise, at what wondrous change her fairy-wand had wrought during his absences. And, again, his changed mood and lowering brow would tell of the ungenerous jealousy of owing all this new luxury to "a Tinker's" wealth, to a wife's unaided exertions. And Sarah's efforts were again coldly checked, her hopes chilled, despair ever at hand.

And thus weeks, which, whether in languor or activity, seemed like months, and months that wore on like weary years, brought the season to a close, and made her hour of trial nearer, and more dreaded.

They must be exiles and women, knowing what it is, among a wild people of "a strange speech," to languish for their native land, and their father's hearth, from which they are for ever severed, to understand the feelings which the young Englishwoman now hid in her own deep heart. In the early part of her residence in Lochnaveen, while hope was not yet utterly extinguished, there was in every day one hour, during the long absences of the Chief, in which Sarah could indulge in that delicious melancholy which, to her temperament, resembled exalted pleasure. Those who have enjoyed the heavenly nights of the summer solstice in that northern clime, when the splendours of day receive that softening and indescribable charm which may be compared to the enchanting effect produced on a beautiful landscape, seen reflected in calm translucent waters, can never forget the soothing and bewitching influence of such nights upon the feelings and the imagination. From about the middle of June, when the people of the hamlet had repaired to the high and outlying summer grazings with their cattle, Sarah, in the absence of her husband, was left to enjoy those enchanting nights in utter solitude, there being only her attendants and a few old people left in her neighbourhood. It would have been sweet, after a long summer's

day, spent in instructing the girls, or in stealthily fashioning a baby wardrobe, out of the abounding stores of lace and cambric with which her poor aunt had enriched her, to have had some one to whom she might whisper, on her late stroll, "How lovely is evening in Lochnaveen—in this, the Highland home of my fond, girlish fancy;" but at such hushed hours, no one ever crossed her path save the dark clansman, who, though he seemed to haunt her steps, and still passed long hours in his *currach*, almost under her chamber window, would ever start and hurry from her presence if they chanced to meet. When wandering on the margin of the lake, in the clear obscure of those enchanting hours, Donald's stag-hound, his inseparable companion, would leap from the boat, and, swimming to the shore, whine and crouch at the feet of the lady, as if to do her homage, or as if proud of her caresses, and then return to his master, to be doubly caressed. Though Donald thus appeared to avoid, if not to repulse her advances, in their casual encounters, there gradually was established a sort of tacit intelligence between them; and, when he was seen at twilight on the lake, she would sometimes prolong the strains of the little lute—which, on their journey, had, when touched at their resting-places, appeared to possess such potency over the passionate temperament of the singular man—prolong it until a late hour, when its dying fall became the silent signal of a silent good-night; and the clansman would slowly row off, on the following night to take up the same station.

The Chief, when informed of the strange habits of his dark kinsman, felt only the triumph over his proud mother in the alienation of her chosen ally and champion, by the charms of his Saxon bride. When it began to be whispered among the more superstitious, in a country where all were more or less imaginative and superstitious, that the lovely "Ceard" was the earthly image of that mysterious Egeria who, for eighteen years, had haunted the deer-stalker, the Chief at first smiled, and then looked grave and troubled, till reassured by Sarah, who appeared to have a strong instinctive faith in the unhappy man, whose wandering intellect only, as she imagined, connected her image with the prevailing idea of his distempered fantasy.

Bhalie Hossack, who devoutly held, that every Highlander was mad on some point, either of dirking, drinking, foraying, string-

ing up nonsense rhymes, making love, or playing on the bagpipes, and who concentrated his own peculiar superstitions in the abject belief of witchcraft, concluded that Donald was only a very little more insane than his compeers, and insinuated, that the Saxon lady should not scruple to convert his vagaries to her own uses; in short, to inspire supernatural terrors in the clan, and give forth oracles. The honest man had himself been driven to such expedients, if not through his own spells, yet by means of Marac Crotach, the reputed witch, to whom he gave a hovel, with small rations of barley-meal, and an allowance of peats; not, taken altogether, much more liberal, indeed, than the guerdon with which his Satanic Majesty is reported to reward the vassals whom he has seduced to his allegiance.

"Let them be saying, my leddy hinny," the Bhalie would whisper, winking his eye significantly, though not directly in the face of Sarah, from which mark of confidence he had shrunk after their first interview:—"let them be *jalousing* and whispering—ay, let them,—deil's bairns as they are,—believe and tremble! The like of you and me, with reverence! had need of all the little helps skill and cunye can give us among the breekless salvages, in order to hold our own: so, if they choose to think ye have the power of the *Iu Ee*, hinny, never ye let on. It's been worth gold to me that same mad notion. Nay, I'm not sometimes altogether sure, but that, as a sinful man, greatly favoured by being born in a reformed land, and sittin' lang under a gospel ministry, the Lord may not, in this howling wilderness, have graced his unworthy servant with gifts and powers by ordinar'—"

The listener could no longer brook this mixture of spiritual pride and pious craft. She disclaimed, for herself, all such powers in assumption as in reality.

"It was odd enough, though, my leddy, that that same imp of the deil, Kelpie the pony—and it's said among their lying freits that the sire of that mettle race was the Water-Kelpie—should have died just seven days after he, unchancy brute, threw your leddyship; and that the bairn ye made of, and kissed and praised—and that was an honour!—should so soon thereafter have dreed its wierd, misdeedy brat."

"Good Heaven, sir! surely you, a man of sense and education, a Lowlander, a Protestant, cannot believe that glance or word of mine has such potent and evil influence?"

"These are great mysteries, my leddy; and ye may not yourself be just fully aware, mair than myself, of the power vouchsafed to the like of us in this benighted land, for upholding mastery over the evil spirits about us, and for the protection of the godly, and,——"

"Say no more," interrupted Sarah. "My influence, whatever be its consequences, must be that only of truth and honour. Heaven forbid that the perilous gifts you would impute were mine! that I were made the involuntary instrument of fate and of deeds from which my moral sense revolts! No; God is merciful! That unhappy gentleman, my husband's kinsman, in whose strange affliction I feel so deep an interest,—I have written to a skilful London physician, describing as well as I can Donhuil's singular hallucination.—How much I wish that I had power to draw him into closer intercourse with us; that, as the Chief believes, the living voice and eye of a poor mixture of frail mortality might haply banish the Phantasm with which his madness connects me!"

Bhalie Hossack sagaciously shook his head, as the best reply he could find at the moment; but again insinuated, that even with the Chieftainess it might be good policy to have it believed that the fate of the clan mysteriously depended upon the Chief marrying a Saxon lady, who had, in her *Shadow*, for eighteen years been prefigured to Dark Donald, as something for which he, less favoured, was through life to suffer and sigh, but which the head-man of the tribe was alone to win. Something of this, as we have seen, had already reached the Daughter of Red Duncan, and set her fervid imagination to work. From the first, she had instinctively felt that the Saxon witch, with her fair face and glozing speech, had cast deeper spells over the clansman than even those which held her devoted son. The fatal influence had wrought the most passionately in the most impassioned mind. And now the lady, like all her race the slave of fantasy and superstition, would muse for hours upon the singular fate of her house; her pampered imagination readily crediting that, in the fortunes of the *Sliochd Raonull*, the powers of Heaven and Hell might take active part, and together band in amity, or meet in conflict.

On the evening of the day in which the Bhalie had held the conversation with Sarah alluded to above, the Chieftainess took her

favourite solitary walk to the *Circle of Stones*, the graves of her ancestors and kinsfolk, musing darkly as she went, questioning fate, and forming wild conjectures of the future. She seated herself on the headstone of Torquil of the Amulet, the famous seer of her tribe, whose prowess had, in a former age, retrieved the fortunes of the clan.

"The Son of God himself came into the world lowly born, brought forth of one of mean rank, cradled in a manger," was her proud, presumptuous thought, as for the first time she admitted the idea Donhuil had whispered, namely, that the dark powers which, she unfalteringly believed, watched over the honour of her race, might have high and mysterious purposes to fulfil in bowing the pride of her house to a low and Saxon alliance.

"Spirits of my fathers! Ghosts of the mighty dead, vouchsafe your daughter one true token?" was her adjuration. Almost at the same instant she caught, in the dusk, a glance of the white robe of her solitary daughter-in-law—"the White Doe" foretold in prophecy—wandering among the grave-stones; and, not many hundred yards behind her, the clansman, haunting, but, as usual, keeping aloof from the stranger lady.

The stern summons of the Chieftainess, as soon as she perceived him, made Donald start and hasten to her side, while Sarah took her hasty way homeward, fearful of offending.

"Who is he that thus, from gray dawn to darkest midnight, presumes to dodge the footsteps of her who is called the wife of his Chief? With what intent this daily waylaying and watching to catch the glance of an eye, which, save for blighting or evil, can never fall on him?—By what spell does the sorceress draw to her side Dark Donhuil? Is the infamy of my kinsman to be added to the dishonour of my son? Whose babe carries the Tinker's Daughter in her bosom—that of Ranald or of his traitorous kinsman?"

The clansman threw himself at the feet of his lady, passionately crying out, "Blaspheme her not who is as the angels of God! and pardon, Daughter of Red Duncan, pardon and pity me! You who have known my soul-conflicts, grudge me not one gleam of returning peace! I haunt her footsteps,—but has she not been mine?—mine she will again be.—Before this world was created, when it has ceased to roll, in some wide region of sunny space, when the veil is with-

drawn, and when soul leaps to soul,—mine, mine, my own, my beloved, my beautiful! I will clasp her who through life has been near, though, for my sins, ever clouded, suffering, tormenting."

The gestures of the clansman, and his quivering form, as he lay on the earth, betokened stronger passion than his words; yet there was in them what struck a powerful chord in the heart of the Chieftainess. Here was the mysterious prophecy handed down among the tribe, that the Dark Chiefs of Lochnaveen, who, at a very remote period, had, it was said, been supplanted by the treachery of the Fair race, were yet to triumph over their supplanters, and that by means of some female spirit or genius. Was this Being now first revealed to their descendant, Donald of the Dirk? Had the time so long foretold arrived? The Fair Chief, her noble son, still stood firm in his high place. An heir was about to be born to transmit his name and honours to latest posterity. Was it the evil Genius that protected the Dark race, which now tempted that Chief's mother to sacrifice these high hopes, and to become the fated instrument of avenging the wrong which her fathers had committed,—avenging it upon her own son? Her thoughts were in tumult and perplexity, as she boldly questioned, "What affinity holds the Tinker's Daughter to the Spirit which haunts my kinsman? Are they one? Or is it befitting that he should thus waylay the wife of his Chief?"

"The wife of Ranald! Yes, alas! in this dark world his! But yonder—far off among those rolling spheres, where my dreams tell me we once lived together in bliss."—And the frantic man stretching forth his clasped hands towards the stars, which now began to glimmer, muttered on.

"Silence!" cried the impetuous lady. "If I knew not Donhuil's manly honour, Donhuil's clan-faith, I should know how to rebuke this worse than madness. The Tinker's Daughter is to me as the dust I tread on; but the mother of Ranald prizes the honour of her son; nor must suspicion rest on her purity who bears his name, were she the most abject wretch in Christendom, to whom Lowland churls and their base laws allow that distinction."

"Daughter of Red Duncan," replied the clansman, "it wrongs your noble nature to doubt of your unhappy kinsman. And that fair Vision!—Goodness and Mercy are around her. The angels of God have charge con-

cerning her. From peril and from death, how often has she been mysteriously preserved. Holiness surrounds her. Where she is, Evil comes not. Suffer Donhuil to live, ever unseen, but in her eyes, and to feed on her breath; for where she is, the SHADOW cannot find him."

"Then they are not one—the dark-haired Saxon girl and the fell Temptress that ever pursues my unhappy kinsman?"

"Oh, no, no! They twain be as light and darkness, as heaven and hell,—though the demon, to torture me, may borrow that angel shape. Daughter of Red Duncan! it is a terrible mystery. She, my Spirit bride, to be incarnated—to become a woman, born in sin; doomed to do penance here on earth as the wife of Raonull,—and I the accursed witness. She, sent hither to redeem our race, to raise the fallen!—It is a deep mystery."

"It is passing strange," whispered the Chieftainess, unconsciously muttering the ancient rhyming tradition, which, in dark metaphors, foretold the fate of the clan.

The clansman had risen, and was now standing by her side.

"And how strange this meeting, in this sacred spot! But the wierd must be fulfilled. You constitute yourself this woman's champion:—Dare you, my kinsman, in her name, challenge the Ordeal? There must be Expiation, Death, Judgment, the Grave, the Resurrection, before there can be returning Peace."*

"In her name, and in the name and strength of Heaven, I can, and do."

"To-morrow is the Eve of Hallowmas," said the Chieftainess; "and then I find a daughter worthy of my house, or my son is a widowed and a childless man,—my father's house desolate:—the dark-boding Raven shall have prevailed over the bright-eyed Falcon."

"In the name of the Son of God, so be it," returned Donald; and, as the attendants of the Chieftainess, marvelling why she held such long communing with him in the Circle of Stones, approached, he disappeared.

It chanced that next day, a great fair, the "Hallowmas Fair," was to be held on a central moor, about twenty miles distant;

* Those familiar with that darkest, and most wild record of human crime and passion, "The Proceedings of the Supreme Criminal Court of Scotland," may recall a tale of superstition and sorcery more hideous than any thing here indicated, of which the scene lay in the same neighbourhood.

and Sarah, who pitied the solitary life of her humble courtiers and maiden domestics, so different from the daily feast, the nightly dance, and merry minstrelsy of a Chieftain's hall, suffered the whole household to seek for enjoyment, and liberally dispensed ornaments and money among those bound on pleasure.

Bhalie Hossack had already gone off to attend this great Fair, there to meet with the cattle-dealers of the South, and the "merchants" from Elgin, Forres, Aberdeen, and other more distant places, who annually attended it, stretching their "white sails" across the Moray Firth, and then travelled inland for a long day's journey. And here the Bhalie was, by appointment, to meet and escort to Lochnaveen the "wise woman" from Chanonry, who spoke Sassenach, and whom his pious care had engaged to attend his lady in her hour of need, in contempt of the matrons of the clan who practised the same art.

After the Fair the Chief was also expected home, from a long visit to the Isles, and from a Jacobite meeting, held in Lochiel's country under the guise of a great hunting match. The day of All-Saints was, besides, Ranald's birth-day, and it had always been one of great festivity to the clan. Never had Sarah so languished for his presence; and he was not again to leave her;—not until he had kissed and blessed his child, if such happiness was in reserve for one on whose rash hand lay the blood of infancy.

In spite of this reflection, her drooping spirits rose to these sweet hopes; and, on the expected All-Saints day, the Eve of which was ever a grand holiday in the glens, she resolved that mirth and music, dance and revelry, should, under her auspices, once again gladden the halls of "Raonull." Before the people went off to the Fair, great preparations had accordingly been made for the feast, to which all around were invited; and, though it was feared that terror of the displeasure of the queen-mother might keep many back, Bhalie Hossack ventured to hope, that the magnificence of the Chief's birthday, and the christening of an heir, would soon make ample atonement for the "mained rites" of the bridal.

A late, wet, and boisterous autumn had, far in October, been followed by that calm, delicious weather of subdued and tranquil brightness, which in northern latitudes is fondly called the "little summer." Relieved from domestic cares, by the absence of the

household at the Fair, Sarah spent a long quiet morning in writing in the journal, the "Missionary Record," kept nominally for Mr. Aaron Hill, but really for her father. The sagacious Bhalie Hossack had predicted to her a spring and summer of great scarcity, if not of actual famine, from the previous cold and tardy spring, and the late and scanty harvest. Such seasons were then periodical in the Highlands, and of very frequent occurrence, and the people were often reduced to a condition of distress hardly conceivable by a native of England. The young Englishwoman had exerted all her eloquence to move her father to send timely supplies from the South for her Ranald's clan. She had another sacred duty to fulfil; to speak to her father of Ranald himself, of their child, if it should survive—to commend both to his love, and to bid him what might be a last farewell! This solemn letter she resolved to intrust to the Bhalie, to be forwarded only in case of her own death. In penning this epistle, the overbrimming tenderness of Sarah's affectionate heart gushed forth in feelings for her husband, which, if saddened, were yet more deep and holy than the most rapturous emotions of her virgin love. How inexpressibly dear did *he* become, from whom death might, within a few days, sever her for ever; and how she chided with herself that one harsh thought of him, one repining feeling, had ever found a place in her bosom; how longed, in one lingering embrace, to implore and to exchange forgiveness, with him for whom she prayed! Thus, and in sundry little arrangements connected with the celebration of the Chief's birth-day, and her anticipated confinement, passed the long, quiet morning; Sarah sometimes fondly indulging the sweet stray thought, "If our child should be born on its father's birth-day, would not that be a token to propitiate Ranald's proud mother!"

In the afternoon, the few people in the hamlet, where the Chieftainess had a whole host of volunteer spies, observed the reputed witch, Marat Crotach, or the *Crooked*, steal from the shieling of the Chieftainess, and, by a roundabout path, repair to the Castle. Though this hag was known to be in the pay of Bhalie Hossack, it was as well understood, by the elders of the tribe, that she was also the secret emissary of the Chieftainess, and more than suspected that she might, as suited her, play false to both. Some of the better disposed, and more intelligent of the clan, were now beginning to long for

peace in the family of the Chief, and to confess, that the "*Tinker's Daughter*" had borne her faculties meekly; while others were as inveterate against her as ever. Yet those aware of the fact, agreed that it were better Nighean Donachd Ruadh drove that malignant crone from her secret counsels, whom they all alike hated, and feared. Why condemn her daughter-in-law for trinketing with the sorceress, while she secretly gave in to the same practices herself? This was bold judgment to pass upon a superior.

With the crone there entered the castle a respectable matron, whom Sarah had sent to invite the young gentlewomen in attendance on the Chieftainess to the ball that was to celebrate the birth-day of Ranald. Her message, requesting this favour, had been modest and humble; and she had previously been made aware, that the girls longed to be present, and to see with their own eyes those wonders of the South, of which their more fortunate companions told them, and perhaps participate in the bounty and bravery so liberally dispensed by the "*Tinker's Daughter*."

The insulting answer returned to her humble message probably lost nothing in passing through the lips of the teller. The Chieftainess was reported to have said, that, though her gentle-blooded damsels would gladly partake in the bridal or birth-day festivities of the meanest of the clan of Raonull, or of any neighbouring sept, they better knew their own place, and what belonged to it, than to appear where a "*Tinker's Daughter*" presided as mistress; and, on peril of some dread penalty, it was commanded "that the preparations should be abandoned."

This unprovoked insolence was as the last drop poured into the overflowing cup; and, for the first time, hot indignation took that place in the bosom of the Saxon lady, which hitherto had been filled by meek grief, patient regret. How little congenial were these feelings with the tender and hallowed emotions that had filled her heart that morning. Now suddenly roused, she started to her feet, her colour rising, her eyes flashing as she exclaimed, "Proud and cruel woman! the time of endurance is for ever past. Go back to your haughty lady, and tell her that the wife of her son returns her scorn for scorn—defiance for defiance! and will—holding her true place—at every hazard, preside at the banquet which she gives in honour of her husband's birth-day!"

It was remarked by those around, that when this bold defiance was, with due emphasis, delivered to the haughty Chieftainess, and when it was expected that her rage would burst the roof of the shieling, that she smiled proudly, merely saying, with something akin

To the stern joy that warriors feel,
In foemen worthy of their steel :—

“Ha! so the Tinker's Daughter does not fear:—Then she may yet learn to love me.”

The long-enduring Saxon blood was thus at last suddenly inflamed; but Sarah's mood soon changed, and she almost repented having braved the fierce lady, though Ranald had more than once reproached her forbearance, as want of spirit. She was now left alone with *Marat Crotach*.

The original attendance and continued visits of this beldame, on whom Sarah looked with disgustful pity, relieving her wants, though scorning her pretended supernatural powers, was, with every other action of her life, construed to evil by the inhabitants of the glen; while at the same time it was boasted of as a proof of her own influence by the forlorn hag, who wanted not the cunning of her kind.

“By the aid of the sorceress the Tinker's Daughter seeks to keep what the Devil gained for her,” had been the common remark, as the wrinkled witch daily passed to the supposed employer of her incantations.

“Please God, the heart of *Mac Mic Raonull* will yet come back to its right place; already it struggles in the toils,” was the ordinary rejoinder.

More than once had the beldame tried to engage the neglected wife in those dark rites, potent, she alleged, to gain or fix the roving affections of wayward man, which it was her boast to understand.

Sarah indignantly forbade the repetition of a proposal revolting alike to her understanding and her feelings. Still, highly imaginative herself, she listened with a very natural curiosity to the crone's wildering tales of love-spells, and philtres, amulets, and witcheries of sovereign power to rekindle waning affection. It was with the fears and hopes of the living the beldame drove her trade, leaving to *Nighean Donachd Ruadh*, or Donald of the Dirk, the more heroic, but less profitable branch of dealing with graves and ghosts.

“You laugh at my rede, lady fair,” said this hag, concluding a tale of a girl in the upper ranks in that country to whom she

had in a glass shown her lover, then lying wounded in Flanders. “Think you, then, it is not possible to bring the distant near—to make the seen invisible, the invisible seen? What should be her reward that should restore to you the wedding ring lost in your bridal chamber seven hundred miles from hence?”

“Were that possible, ten times its value and my best thanks were poor requital,” exclaimed Sarah, in surprise. “Who told you of my loss?”

“They told me who know that and more. But it is not reward—gold, nor gold's worth—can obtain this. They do not well who would set limits to what *Nighean Donachd Ruadh* can accomplish.”

“How can I hope to induce this lady to exert her wondrous powers for me,” said Sarah, her heart slightly fluttering even while she smiled in derision of her own fears.

“Have you courage?”

“I have the affection which inspires boundless courage,” said Sarah, looking up; “but how came you to know of my loss; while I, indeed, would give much to repair?”

“Dare you alone, and at midnight, receive back the Token?”

“I dare.”

“Alone, at midnight, within the *Circle of Stones*, amid the graves of your husband's fathers, from those who would meet you there, receive back the Token, the symbol of wedded union and enduring peace!—The Mother of the Chiefs of Raonull must not know fear: the daughter to whom *Nighean Donachd Ruadh* wills to restore the marriage ring should despise it.”

“You dare not trifle with me?” cried Sarah, impatiently; and the thought which flashed through her mind was, that the haughty lady now relented; but that, having vowed never to cross the threshold of her son, and in all things following the exalted genius of her country, she had devised this strange mode of trying the courage of her Saxon daughter, and accomplishing a gracious purpose without any sacrifice of pride.

“You speak not without command?” inquired Sarah. “Shall I be welcome?”

“As the fawn to the doe!—To-night there is no moon: the hour is midnight. In my mantle you will be well screened. It is an interview to which no third party can be admitted. Does your courage quell?”

“My courage will be measured by my welcome.”

"That is assured," said the crone, a gleam of malignant triumph lightening in her evil eyes.

"The blessing remain with you, lady dear," she whined. "Already I see on your brow the matron's *curch*, and on your finger the bridal ring of Raonull."

The woman departed before Sarah's enthusiasm could have time to abate; and she sate for more than an hour at her loop-hole lattice, pondering on what had passed, and shaping out a bright future, until the twilight began to fall. It was a still, gray evening, and very warm for the advanced season. The inhabitants of the hamlet, some of whom had but lately returned with their cattle from the high-lying summer pastures, were either absent at the Fair, or out of doors enjoying the serenity and sweetness of the hour. The young women were singing as they milked the cows in the fold, by the margin of the lake, and the little girls made a sport of aiding them. The aged looked on, and the blue smokes, circling to the clear heavens in wreathy spires, told that the evening meal was preparing by the matrons—the Hallow Eve supper.

This was one of those soft pictures of Highland life, which, in the bosom of luxury and refinement, Sarah had delighted to imagine. With a yearning sigh she saw these poor people cluster together in social or family groups, and heard their mirthful voices, their cheerful laughter; but in all this, she, the stranger, the *intruder*, had no portion. Involuntarily, in taking her wonted evening saunter, her steps bent towards them, though slowly and hesitatingly; and so much were the people engrossed with their own amusements and enjoyments, that, not daring to venture farther, she stood at last by the green mound and rude stone cross, which formed the rallying-point of the hamlet, and where, on high festivals, the beal-fire blazed, and the banner of the Chief was wont to be displayed.

Her presence—the her imagined Evil Eye—the instant that she was perceived, spread silence and blighting. The girls ceased their carols; the old women, scowling, muttering, and signing the cross for self-preservation, retreated to their huts. The elder children, trained to hate, remembered their drowned playmate; and while the timid drew back, the bolder imps muttered the opprobrious name, "*Nighean Ceard! Nighean Ceard!*"

Faint and trembling, the insulted lady

turned to retreat, sustaining herself on the stout-hearted squab wench who usually attended her, and who now would willingly in this quarrel have done battle against a host, while her timid mistress shrunk from a child's cry.

They were met on their retreat by a young and very pretty woman—a matron, by her dress and her figure—who was carrying a vessel with milk; a Highland beauty in her station, and having, indeed, a remarkably candid and pleasing countenance. The expression of care and mortification so poignant at this moment in Sarah's beautiful face affected this young woman, who had never before seen her so closely.

The pale, subdued, woful countenance of her, the wife of the Chief, the lady of the land, the *stranger*, far from her own, in a condition so calculated to awake matronly interest and sympathy, was too much for a kind woman's surprised heart.

"*Cretur voght!*" was her involuntary exclamation, as she gazed on poor Sarah; and hastily setting down her *crogan*, she offered the fainting lady a draught of milk. This was the first unbought kindness or civility that any one in the hamlet had ever tendered to the obnoxious stranger; and so feeble were Sarah's spirits, so full her heart, that at the sound of this woman's pitying voice, her tears rushed forth in floods, and she sobbed on the shoulder of her attendant. This was but the nervous weakness of a moment. She recovered herself, and with sweetness and dignity accepted the offered draught, and in the Gaelic language courteously thanked the giver.

In that language thanks are ever mingled with blessings; they mean the same thing; and Sarah's thanks, spoken in her sweet, low, tremulous voice, were kindly and respectfully returned: "Thanks and blessings be with yourself, lady dear; and evil meet them that would wrong you!"

They parted thus; and Sarah, regretting that she had not tried to prevail with this young matron to visit her, and to remain with her in her fast approaching hour of trial, sent back her attendant to make this request in her name.

She then returned alone to the Castle, in which there was this evening no living creature except herself.

When this little adventure was related by the young matron in the first glow of her feelings to the groups who had reassembled as soon as the lady turned away, a spark

of compassion was kindled in the gentler womanly bosoms, which time might have nursed into kindness. But others declared, with unabated vindictiveness, that "her father's peaking, pining, cream-faced daughter was but too happy in filling the honoured place she did, though ten times more were to be suffered than the neglect to which she was already consigned."

"Was it to be thought that *Mac Mic Raonull* was to remain tied to the apron-string of a Caird's wench ; or long to continue infatuated and bewitched as he had been ; or to show the same worship and observance of this Saxon girl as if she had been the daughter of a Chief of his own land, his equal in birth, station, and country ?"

The thoughts of Sarah had often turned to the lonely widow exiled to the far side of the hill, who, in other years, had preferred love to pride, and who, in the midst of suffering and poverty, cherished a gentle spirit of humanity, and an enlarged charity and benevolence, which placed her far above her competitors. Once or twice, in visiting during the night the graves of her low-born husband and their children, this poor woman had spent an hour with Sarah, breathing upon her soul, in homely but striking language, counsels of heavenly wisdom — of meekness, endurance, peace, submission ; bringing forth, of the rich treasury of pious thought accumulated in long years of solitude and suffering, whatever might establish the faith, or tranquillize the mind of one whose few and evil days were, as she believed, already nearly told. But to form a league with a person who had so deeply incurred the displeasure of the Chieftainess, was an imprudent hazard ; and of this the pious widow was aware, and on her last stolen visit had, therefore, taken leave of Sarah as a mother may do of the daughter whom she is to see no more. Among her many affectionate and pious counsels, this humble friend had hinted to the stranger, that her matron girdle, "all too tight," was ill in accordance with her uncovered tresses, and with *Nighean Donachd Ruadh's* Highland ideas of matronly propriety ; so, in preparing for the awful midnight interview to which she was bound, Sarah, in the absence of her messenger, lighting her lamp, employed herself in braiding back her luxuriant hair, and in trying to adjust on her brows the *classical* kerchief, once the object of her ambition.

"Ranald will smile to see my baby-fea-

tures so demurely framed in cambric and lace," was her thought ; but another idea, sent up from the hidden recesses of her heart, whispered, "Ranald may never perceive the change, nor care of it if he should. If it was his love alone that had been grudged to me, I might be pardoned now." The evil, intruding thought was chided away as harsh ; but it would not depart at the neglected wife's bidding.

In this manner were Sarah's fingers and thoughts employed, her looking-glass giving back an image faded from the brightness of its blossoming, but to the eye of affection more lovely than ever, from the very air of languor and delicacy which so well accorded with the soft and spiritual style of its beauty.

Whatever might be the anxiety and hurry of her thoughts, Sarah's looks and movements, gentle and languid, were at all times those of a graceful and refined woman, nursed in the lap of elegance and indulgence into a creature so far transcending all his actual previous perceptions of womanly grace and delicacy, that the senses of the clansman, who, unperceived, had now stolen upon her privacy, were bewildered as he gazed. This "sweet composure" was hardly disturbed, even when his presence in the chamber was perceived. Sarah gathered about her the folds of her short Highland mantle or tunag, and, though her colour changed, and her voice faltered, as she looked on the haggard features, and wild, raised expression of the hunter's face, his faint smile brought instant recovery. Nor could Sarah ever believe that Donald of the Dirk, though a half insane dreamer, the slave of superstition and clannish pride, could mean ill to her.

The Bhalie's warnings, that she should have a care of this moody man, nor venture alone on distant rambles to the headlands, nor so often hang about the banks of the lake, were treated with indifference ; for her heart told her that Donald of the Dirk, in his right mind, could never be *her* foe, and his mental affliction made him much more an object of interest and pity, than of alarm.

The sweetness and serenity which breathed around the refined and delicate woman, her gentle words of welcome and courtesy, murmured in his own language, which sounded as music between her lips, acted on the disturbed mind of her guest, like the tones

of David's harp on the maddened passions of Saul. The wild-fire waxed dim in his eyes, and the hues of more healthful life revisited his brow; he remembered his sacred purpose, which was to brace and prepare this lovely vision for the fate that awaited her—for the issue of the Ordeal.

"Lady of the Saxon land," he said, in his national idiom, "do I find the wife of Ranald preparing to welcome a new life? Doubtless one so pure, so holy, is doubly prepared to quit that dark Earth, so little worthy long to hold her from her Father's house." He laid his hand on the English Prayer-Book, which, in its rich binding, lay in strange contrast on Sarah's rudely-fashioned table. In common with many of his countrymen, the Prayer-Book was to Donald as the breviary had been, more regarded as an amulet than prized for its sacred contents.

"Alas, my kinsman," said Sarah, looking up at him with gentle earnestness, "worthless and miserable, at the best, are our most earnest preparations for that dread change; and death, awful to all alike, must bring to every bosom its terrors;—but this is grave discourse; let us descend to the hall. We must make much of a guest so rarely seen there. *Mac Mic Raonull* would have rejoiced with me, to welcome the kinsman to whom I can never forget my deep obligation, though he has seemed to forget us."

"Donald of the Dirk has not forgotten; but Donald better loves the loneliness of the mountain than the riot and wassail of the hall."

Sarah's sigh was now more the trick of grief than the movement of any present feeling of regret that her Ranald loved the festivity of halls more than the endearments of hearths. She sighed as was her custom.

The hunter, unheeding her movements, rapidly turned over the leaves of the Prayer-book. "Lady, you read like the cowed clerk," he said; "repeat for me, from this book, the Prayers for the Dead."

"Our Church has no prayer for the dead. Their state we hold as fixed while the soul yet informs the body,—fixed, for bliss or wo, far beyond the power of human prayer. They slumber in their graves till the resurrection—the day of wrath and power—the Judgment-day, for which may God in mercy prepare us!" She looked upwards, as if in mental supplication.

"Amen, amen!" said the clansman, with deep emphasis, bowing his head on his bosom.

Again he rapidly ran over the leaves of the book,—“Lady, there *be* prayers for the dead. If your gospel owns them not, it at least owns the supplications for the dying; repeat these now with me.”

“For the dying? Surely this is no fit season; nor can I make mockery of so dread a solemnity.”

“Donald of the Dirk is not a mocker. Lady, he seeks not now your smile. He beseeches not your favour. But he will see you this night kneel before him and repeat the Prayer for the Dying. Let the guilty soul perish in its guilt, you shall pass to bliss on Earth or in Heaven!”

Sarah did not comprehend, and scarcely heeded this boding language, so firm was her trust in Donald's kindness and honour; but she dreaded an impending paroxysm of his malady, which her refusal might irritate to violence, and which he perhaps believed prayer might avert or soothe; and so she obeyed his strange command.

Kneeling down before him, on the cushion which he placed for her, with clasped hands, and the touching solemnity of look and tone inspired by the awfulness of her singular office, Sarah repeated aloud, and very slowly, in the best Gaelic she could frame, selected portions of the Service for the Visitation of the Sick. She soon became too much absorbed in the solemn thoughts that had of late dwelt so much on her own mind, to notice the movements of her fellow-worshipper. With his face muffled in his plaid, he hung over her, shaking like an aspen leaf, and ever breathing the deep “*Amen*,”—that most emphatic word, significant of meanings so solemn and affecting, and adopted into the language of every Christian nation.

When Sarah would have risen, he still, though with gentle violence, pressed her shoulder, and made her sign her brow and her bosom with the cross, and pressed to her lips the Prayer-Book. This done, she rose,—when he prostrated himself at her feet, reciting, with intense devotion, and with the agonizing tones and pleadings of one who goes to meet his Judge, and whose moments are numbered and fast running low, a wild chant, between a prayer and a spell, as Sarah conjectured, from the mysterious and figurative Gaelic words picturesquely intermingled with what she knew to be phrases of the Romish Liturgy, of petition and adoration, fragments of the Penitential Psalms and the “*Dies iræ, dies illæ*.”

All this while, he held by her mantle. A

dead silence followed for a little space, and then the clansman rose, saying more quietly, "Lady, at peace with your God, and in charity with all men, you may now face the dread Ordeal,—Death, the Grave, the Judgment to come,—and live the wife of Raonull till the Expiation be accomplished, or, through the gates of Death, reach again the heaven from which we have fallen; from which, Bright Spirit! my sins have dragged you down!—Do you, too, not recall that long-past, bright, and rapturous existence, beyond the stars?—Do you not, with me, languish for its renewal, though the dark way should lie through the grave?" He grasped her hand, and gazed into her face with a look which made the lady tremble.

"You would warn me of some dreadful fate," she said; "of secret enemies,—or this, my husband's kinsman, is strange, wild speech. If I have any enemy, it is not Donald of the Dirk; if I have one, may God forgive him, as truly as I, frail and sinful being, pray for myself mercy and forgiveness."

"Yea, though he had sought your blood?" And as Sarah's wild guest hissed these words in her ear, his insane eyes, lately so calm, again contracted to a point of concentrated, blasting light.

Sarah shrunk quailing back, fixing her fascinated gaze upon him.—"Donald, these are fearful words, and to a woman. You seek to try me,—before I go to *Nighean Donachd Ruadh*,—to the Circle of Stones. It is scarcely well done, nor manly, nor kind. You find me, indeed, a very helpless creature. I have not the courage of the women of your race. I was, perhaps, over-bold, and over-ambitious, when I came among you, and I have lately not been well. Leave me, I pray you, to-night, the hour waxes late; and to-morrow shall Donald of the Dirk be received by me, in the banquet-hall, as becomes a brave man, my deliverer, and the kinsman of his Chief."

With the softest tones and smiles, though with eyes in which tears yet glistened, laying her hand on his arm, in token of confidence, Sarah tried to soothe and to dismiss her visiter.

"We have not yet," she whispered, "pledged each other at your Well of Peace;" and she continued more earnestly, "but together we have sent up our joint petitions to the Fountain of Mercy. Remember you of the pair who stood together by the Well of Samaria? of her who boasted, 'Our father

Jacob built this well,' and of Him who said, 'A greater than Jacob is here?' In that presence we have been together: we cannot be at feud. Then leave me, my kinsman, you whom from the first moment I have trusted, and come again to-morrow.—The blessings of the night be with Donhuil!" She stretched out her hand; and his damp hand, leaving its dagger-bilt, trembled as it met her clasp. All this while his fixed melancholy gaze had never left her face.

"Beautiful Being," he whispered, in a voice that thrilled to Sarah's heart, "Fate and *Nighean Donachd Ruadh* reckon not of to-morrows. This night shalt thou pass through the fiery trial to the glorious brightness of thy first state—that from which the blood-guilt of Donhuil drew his twin-spirit—or, before the sun wheel twice above Maam Tamar, the prophecy shall be fulfilled, and the bride of the Dark Chief shall have given an heir to the Fair race, and ushered in a long day of joy and gladness to his clan.—And where then will be Donhuil? He will rest within the Circle of Stones, unwept and forgotten; but not unblest, for his penance will be past; and in the narrow house the Dark Shadow may not find him."

"Oh, not forgotten, not unwept!" said Sarah, deeply affected by the tone and manner of the moody man. "I will long remember, I will weep for Donhuil; but first we will rejoice together through many happy years.—And go now, my kinsman, the night wears apace; and I have solemn business on hand."

"In which Donhuil's arm may not aid you. I know it well. And you, Fair Being!—Does your memory bear no trace of our first state? You, my Bride, the twin-spirit of my paradise! ere the proud Rebel fell; ere his blood-guilt drew you down? Lady, your creed forbids all homicide; and commands the forgiveness of enemies. So says not the gospel of the Gael. But he who fell by my hand was no enemy, but the brother of my soul. The blood of innocence next imbrued it. The Fair Spirit, who, for years had blessed my solitude, who took form from the sunny mist, the arching rainbow, the spray of the cataract, fled from the scent of blood; and the Dark, the Wayward Shadow stood ever in my path, by my couch—yea, even where my people had gathered together to worship God, She came. The penance was not yet complete. It is nineteen weary years; and you, loveliest blending of the divine essence with human clay,

were incarnated for my guilt, and grew up the fairest of the Daughters of men. My hell-devised punishment was to behold in you the wife of Raonull!"

The excitement of the clansman grew so strong, that Sarah, startled even more by his looks than his wild tale, became exceedingly alarmed, and hastened out of doors to be nearer help, or the means of flight, though the violent throbbing of her heart made her almost unable to move. The distant noise of the Hallow Eve sports was heard from the hamlet; and, oh joy! amidst the deafening sound of her wild, quick pulses, she heard, or fancied, Ranald's whistle from the opposite eminence; the spot from which he was wont, on his return, thus to announce to his wife his coming, and whistle his hounds to swim the lake and welcome their master. The groan, followed by the thrilling shriek, the almost frantic yell of the clansman, who fled into the darkness, told that he also heard and understood the signal. "Ranald, Ranald!" was whispered by Sarah, in an agony of fear, and she stretched forth her arms in the darkness, as if seeking the refuge of his embrace. Forgetting her awful appointment, she hastened on in what she believed the direction of the ferry.

As the beldame had said, there was no moon that night; but sudden streaks of a blue, lurid, unearthly light streamed fitfully on the darkness, and, all at once, Sarah found herself stumbling and sinking among the sepulchral stones and grave heaps of the Druid's Circle, — and then first remembered her dark midnight Tryst; and recalled in dread the words of the clansman, "Fate and *Nighean Donachd Ruadh* reck not of to-morrows."

The scene in which the Saxon lady found herself suddenly plunged might have shaken nerves the most firmly strung. There was nor moon nor star in the heavens that night, but a soft, warm mist brooded over the earth; and the fitful gleams of light which at intervals had laced the darkness, all at once, and as if at her feet, sprang up in wavy spires of lurid flame — lamps of hell — disclosing the new-dug grave which yawned in her path, and around which demon forms of preternatural height, in shrouds and winding-sheets, and linked hand-in-hand, performed a mute and mystic dance. Opening their ranks as Sarah sank on the ground, some of the number sprang forward with a terrific yell, and, suddenly enclosing, bore her on, while others threw over her the grave-clothes,

in which they roughly wrapped the ill-fated lady. They were waved back by one spectral figure that detached itself from the group, and confronted the victim, who now half reclined, supporting herself against the monumental stone of the redoubted Torquil More.

"Has the daughter of the Saxon Ceard thus boldly adventured to reclaim the bridal ring which she so presumptuously gained?"

That voice had been heard by Sarah but once before; but its deep, yet thrilling tones were never to be forgotten.

"Does the Saxon woman know that the only path of the sinner to happiness lies through Expiation, Death, the Grave, the Judgment, the Resurrection?"

The rapidity with which the human mind, in moments of passionate excitement, may pass from the extreme of terror and weakness to sublime tranquillity, or to what seems an awfully concentrated and supernatural strength, is among the most marvellous of its marvellous phenomena. This wondrous change now came over Sarah, as with calmness and courage she fancied not her own, she stood up and replied, "The unhappy, yet proud wife of Mac Mic Raonull, deeply as it may be her fate to expiate the rashness which made her such, may well claim in the face of Heaven and before men what is so dearly hers; — ay, though a demon held it."

"Ha! — Then the Mother of the future Chiefs of Raonull lacks not the courage which should distinguish the Mother of a heroic race. — Take back the symbol you have bravely won. The word of Nighean Donachd Ruadh, plighted for weal or wo, was never yet broken."

In a transport of conflicting, but joyous feelings, poor Sarah found strength sufficient to seize, to place on her finger, and to kiss with eager fondness what she considered the offered pledge of peace and happiness, and, falling at the feet of the Chieftainess, to exclaim, "Oh, pardon and thanks, Mother of my beloved Ranald!"

But the dreaded Ordeal had not yet been passed, though the Chieftainess, moved to sympathy by the courage and suffering of the stranger, had, in restoring the ring, anticipated the event depending on the awful solemnity, and the excited assistant hags were not thus to be cheated of their fiendish rites. Again was the kneeling lady rudely seized, and borne to the brink of the grave prepared for her, with yells and mutterings which drowned the fierce command of the Chieftainess that the rites should be sus-

pended; and again rose the feeble cry, "Ranald, Ranald! my beloved! why comes he not?"

It was too much: the overstrained chord snapped; and the crimson tide, welling from the broken heart, choked all further utterance.

"Daughters of Demons! have ye done it?" was the exclamation of the maddened clansman, who sprang among the group of women assembled to celebrate their Pagan orgies:—and his voice sank to the softest tenderness as, raising the unfortunate lady in his arms, he whispered, "Ranald is far off; but here is Donhuil."

The sight appeared to change the mood, and to madden the fierce Daughter of Red Duncan.

"Caitiff!" she exclaimed, "lay down that burthen.—Fate has done for Nighean Donachd Ruadh that from which your coward arm shrunk. The churl's base blood burst to the churl's baser fears. The honour of my house is redeemed. Homicide! your *wierd* is accomplished—a Man—an Infant—a Woman!"

The clansman groaned in agony; nor offered farther opposition to the women whom the Chieftainess commanded to bear the Saxon lady to the Castle, in what had been provided as the mock coffin of their victim, in the solemnities of the Ordeal.

When Donald of the Dirk awoke from his long trance it was a star-light morning, and around him utter solitude, the rising wind whistling among the tall stones of the Druid's Circle.

* * * *

It had been truly Ranald's whistle of return, his signal to his hounds, that Sarah had heard so many hours before. The conference of the Jacobite faction, far off in Lochaber, had broken up with ill-blood; the sun of his good spirits had sunk low, and he experienced that sudden longing to be at home and with his wife, and that mysterious boding of evil which in after-times was set down as presentiment; that dark, inexplicable feeling which men thus name, though it may as often arise from the retrospective musings of an accusing conscience. But at the Fair he had met his functionary the Bhalie, and had received flattering accounts from home, and of the grand preparations for the celebration of his own birth-day. It was, therefore, without remorse that, after his signal had been given, he accepted of the hospitalities of the patriarch of Glack-an-

Duich, and with the hereditary "Keepers of the Heart," celebrated the revels of Hallow Eve till far into the next morning.

Ranald had ever a fatherly indulgence for his own failings. Even when confessed to be such, they were of a kind that, in him, were fitting and graceful. Without accusing himself very deeply of late unkindness, and certain that he loved Sarah dearly, his memory dwelt with fondness on the circumstances of his early love, and on the virtues and endearments of a wife, whose only fault was not being in all things suited to the position in which he had placed her, or not having spirit sufficient to contend with, or to brave circumstances which few women could resist. She certainly, sometimes rather importunately, wished to see his character more closely assimilated to her high English standard of morals and manners, to her Sydneys, and Hampdens, and Harringtons; while he chose that she should adore him alone and peerless in the higher grandeur of his own loftier state. But all this was pardonable in an Englishwoman; and creditable to her conjugal affection, if not to her nobility of spirit,—and all would yet be well.

Ranald's Castle on his return home usually met his sight in stillness and darkness; but as he emerged from the prolonged revels of Glack-an-Duich two hours past midnight, there were lights streaming from every casement and slit-hole, and flitting about as if carried by people in haste and alarm. His impatience and anxiety on seeing this grew extreme. Perhaps his wife had been taken suddenly ill:—but no, a clansman had been of his convivial party who had seen his lady at twilight walking by the lake.

His return, it has been said, was unexpected, and Echan of the Boats, on Hallow Eve, owned another Chief more puissant than even Ranald,—namely, Usquebaugh, which, after ferrying over the people from the Fair, had laid him by the heels on the Castle side of the Loch. The impetuous Chief was at no time of a temper to be impeded by trifles. He plunged at once into the lake, and, wringing his dripping hair from the waters of Lochnaveen, and throwing on the scanty clothing brought over by his gillie Sweyn, who, in earth, air, or water, alike faithfully followed him, he flew up the steep, and burst into his illuminated hall.

There were many females there, much flitting about, and low mutterings. At the far end were ranges of close-set lights, placed round something elevated and covered with

a white sheet; and there sat Sheelas, the lonely widow of the mountain waterfall,—and there stood the Chieftainess,—and there lay——

The thrilling shriek of the tall and powerful young man, as he convulsively leapt backward from that sight of horror, might have startled the pale, beautiful sleepers who, side by side, lay there, if the strongest cry of despairing love could pierce the ear of the dead. It penetrated one heart, in which the voice of nature had long been stifled. *Nighean Donachd Ruadh* advanced to her son. He fiercely pushed her back;—and, in his frantic grief, was only restrained from dashing himself against the walls by the overmastering force of the gillies who closed round him.

The low, calm voice, the deep, fixed eye of Donald of the Dirk, who bended over the bier as if there were hallowed delight in gazing on the tender repose of the mother and her infant, first fixed his attention.

“All angel now!” whispered the clansman, in his peculiar, low, deep voice:—“Thou who, for a brief space, wast the wife of Raonull;—nor needs even she who hurried thee to join thy sister-spirits fear to look on thee.”

The clansman retired slowly backwards from the bier, Raonald’s conscience applying what was said to himself and his mother. He flung himself passionately on the dead body of his wife, embracing it in transports of despair, imprecating curses on his own head, and on his clan, nor sparing her who gave him birth in his stern denunciation of the cruelty shown to his beloved wife, his murdered Sarah! On the rigid, small, thin hand resting on the bosom, glittered, in contrast with that hand’s marble whiteness, the long-lost bridal ring! Even this unaccountable circumstance could not, at this moment, change the current of Raonald’s thoughts. In his raving despair, Heaven, Earth, and Hell, were impiously dared as unable to add one jot more to the sum of his misery.

The women who, as he well remembered, had ever shown such inveterate feelings of hostility to his wife, were fiercely driven from the place they had assumed as watchers by the corpses,—all save the lonely widow, Sarah’s friend, whom he rapidly and incoherently questioned.

“And did she not speak of *me*?” he cried; “not once of *me*, nor forgive me, nor bless?—Oh, how once she loved me!—and in that angel bosom lurked no drop of bitter.”

The young Chief buried his face in the sheet that covered the remains of his wife, his breast labouring with convulsive spasms that shook his powerful frame. The kind woman, without telling all that she knew, or aught that might further afflict or agitate, merely whispered the last words of poor Sarah,—“Why comes he not, my beloved Raonull?” These words were as a talisman to unlock the flood-gates of Raonald’s heart, and he wept aloud; nor did his pride now heed the presence of that poor woman, whom he pressed by the hand, and entreated not to leave him.

In the torpid sleep of exhaustion, the Chief was carried to his chamber, and the watchers resumed their post, under the direction of the *Bhalie*; who was in deep and sincere grief at the sudden, awful, and mysterious death of the unfortunate lady, strangely chequered by doubts whether she had had fair play, and moreover whether the point of the babe being born alive could be legally established, but especially how all this might affect the ready-money fortune.

At that period, and for many a year afterwards, it would have been thought an act of great irreverence and impiety, even in the Lowlands of Scotland, not to have watched a corpse. In the Highlands, the ancient custom still remains unchanged; but even under the awakening and relenting feelings caused by an untimely and awful death, the people of Lochnaveen would have considered watching “*Nighean Ceard*” rather a hospitable condescension than a sacred duty, till some of the crones remarked, “There were a few drops of Raonull’s blood in the babe that slumbered by her side, and this, at least, was worthy of all reverent observance.”

All night long numerous lights blazed in that dreary hall, and preparations were already going on in the Castle offices for the funeral banquet, the *Bhalie* remaining to give orders, and lay out stores, and finish the *precognition* as to the infant being born alive, which the Chieftainess, to whom he applied, thus abruptly ended:—“Yes, I was present at the birth,” she said, “and *I* was appeased. The blood of the offender had washed out the stain, as far as the taint of family honour may ever hope to be cleansed. Happily—I say it now—that babe, sprung of blood so fatally and so daringly mingled, never breathed the free air of Lochnaveen; *happily*, I say, ay, though three gasps of its strangled breath had brought my son three kingdoms.”

“Now, the Foul Thief burst your pride,”

muttered the Bhalie, grinding his teeth, as the haughty lady swept from him. "If ye dee a fair strae-death on the broad o' your back, wi' friends looking on, it's what many an honest woman has not done who has justified the law in a tar-barrel. If Mr. Bradshaw should big kirks wi' his siller, ay, or playhouses, it would be a better deed than sending it to an ungrateful pack of barbarians here. And how am I to tell even Mr. Aaron Hill that the bonny flower is cropt so soon,—the gentle lily, that could ill haud up its fair head among the snell winds o' thae blae hills. Hear ye me, queans there, you at the lyke-wake, keep within bounds with the *usquebaugh*, and remember that ye watch by your lady's corpse."

With this reverent and frugal admonition, Mr. Hossack withdrew, in affliction as deep as it was possible for him to feel for any thing, save the loss of his gold by the Highland *stouthreif*, of which he lived in perpetual terror.

Much as the Hallow Eve had witnessed, the night of horrors was not yet sped. The numerous voluntary watchers around the corpses, stinted in the revels then appropriate to such scenes, had dropped off: and, as the struggling rays of the cold gray dawn began to dim the lights placed around the bier, the few drowsy women still left, had squatted together round the embers of the huge turf fire, which had fallen into ashes. A chill feeling roused them, and they began speaking in whispers of the late events, and of the appearance of *Nighean Donachd Ruadh* in the castle, to which, it was said, she and her women had borne home the "Tinker's Daughter" floating in her blood, though, strange to tell, there was no visible wound on the body they had laid out.

"And, think ye, is it herself needs go to work with dirks or skeans?" said one. "Can she not say the word will make the life's blood spring from the living body,—ay, or the dead corpse rise and walk?"

With ghost stories of the Highlands were mingled the peculiar legends of their own clan, the power of its dominant living genius, *Nighean Donachd Ruadh*, and of its attendant spirit, the *Cailleach-dhu-glas*, whose boding voice had, it was affirmed, though unnoted, assuredly been heard in the fitful gusts attending a past wild night.

The weeping Caithness girl who had long attended Sarah, albeit her having, unfortunately, a squab figure, sandy hair, and very high cheek-bones, had a good plain under-

standing, and a feeling heart, and, joining the party, she indignantly denied that any spirit of good would ever harm her gentle and beautiful mistress.

"Was she then so beautiful!" said one of the young women; for few of them had ever seen the Saxon lady close at hand.

"Oh, yes, beautiful, beautiful!" cried the girl, in the idiom of her country, in which the simple repetition of an epithet, so powerfully deepens the sentiment. "Look on her still. How sweet was her smile! how benign."

The young women went hand in hand to the head of the hall, and approached the bier.

No corpse lay there, save that waxen infant image of Ranald's manly beauty! The girls shrieked and fled. Had the Chief's frenzied defiance of Heaven drawn down this awful judgment?

When the elders, and pious and thoughtful heads of the tribe heard of the speedy and terrible visitation drawn on himself, by the daring and almost blasphemous rebellion of their Clan-head against the will of that God, which had removed the object of his fond idolatry and strange infatuation, they were dreadfully shocked; and they communicated this mysterious event to the young Chief, with all the caution possible, after a vain attempt had been made to deceive him. He sank at once speechless and prostrate on the earth. What were his former feelings, to the agony he endured now! He had been bred in a land still shrouded in the darkest mists of superstition, and he must have been a moral monster, less or more than man, had he escaped the prevailing influences. They now crept round him, in wild and unimaginable forms, curdling his blood. The terrors of hell encompassed him. He had presumptuously dared to say, that Heaven had already poured on his guilty head the last and fiercest vials of its wrath. What was he yet fated to endure!

"Could he have kissed, but once again—but once—the cold lips of his beloved, and have laid her remains with her babe in the Christian grave, over which he could pour his sorrows, his lot had been blessedness." Thus he poured out his tortured soul to the lonely widow. "His benign, his beautiful, his most gentle wife, in every way his destined victim since his baleful eyes had first rested upon her beauty, had been snatched from him, by the most dreadful and inscrutable fate that ever fell on sinful man; from him

who had sinned so deeply against Heaven and against her."

Long before Ranald awakened from the eclipse of soul into which he had sunk, his infant son had been buried with the mingled festivity and barbarous pomp of the country; and, as strange rumours had crept abroad among the neighbouring clans, it was deemed expedient by the Bhalie and the elders of the tribe, that the mock funeral rites of the lady should be solemnized with like observance. A timely fall of snow, by blocking up the passes of the country, prevented the gentlemen invited from the adjacent counties from attending the burial; and, though it was impossible to stifle the prevailing whispers, who durst say that the coffin of the youthful lady of Lochnaveen held but a clayey image; or that there had been dark and foul play!

From the hasty and confused letter of the Bhalie, Mr. Bradshaw too soon learned that he no longer had a child, that his daughter slept in the peaceful grave with her new-born infant. In all this there was deep, deep affliction, and also pious submission to the will of God; but nothing of the doubt and horror awakened in the soul of Aaron Hill, by a mysterious letter which he received from Edinburgh. Without saying one word to the bereaved father he set out for Scotland, vowing that if he went to the ends of the earth, and roused all England, he should be satisfied that she to whom he had been so strongly attached, and for whom he had judged so rashly, had been fairly, if not kindly dealt with.

In passing through Edinburgh, Hill had an interview with the sheriff of the county, himself a Highland gentleman, who affected to treat the prevailing idle rumour of the disappearance of the lady's corpse with contempt, as a piece of pure Celtic exaggeration.

The condition in which Mr. Hill found the Chief, when, about Christmas-tide, he reached Lochnaveen, at once changed the current of his thoughts and feelings. Aaron Hill was the first human being, save the lonely widow of the water-fall, to whom Ranald had ever spoken of the loss of his beloved wife, and of the mysterious visitation which had tenfold increased his misery. It was to Hill that he showed all those scraps of letters, which were now his most precious treasures, and which poor Sarah had from time to time begun to address to himself, to her father, and to her aunt. And as he mournfully restored them to their sacred

repository, in the agony of parting with his lost Sarah's dear friend, the whole truth came out:—"I have more to tell, sir," said Ranald. "You who know my sins against her, ought to know the full extent of my punishment. You who know my guilt;—my people dare not whisper of this—by a fate terrible, and without example, that angel was snatched from the wretch so unworthy of her.—To be bereaved of a beloved wife has been many a man's fate, and a man's spirit must sustain it. But mine—in the night! it was in darkest night, her dear remains!—Oh, there were no obsequies for Sarah! The babe was buried with Christian rites, but the mother!—It was not with her as with other mortals. I was all unworthy to give the 'dust to its dust.' That angel was mysteriously borne away to the angelic, and I am left to endless wailing and remorse."

This was not new to Aaron Hill, who had, under the seal of secrecy, been told all by the Bhalie, one of Sarah's sincerest mourners; but he suppressed his previous knowledge, and, deeply affected, offered such consolation as he could, and resolved to carry the young Chief with him to England. Ranald had shown utter indifference; but the Bhalie was overpowered by gratitude, on hearing that Mr. Bradshaw, notwithstanding the death of the infant, intended to treat the husband of his daughter's choice as if he were his own son.

Though the worthy Lowland functionary had his own suspicions that the pride which had spurned the English lady while living, might have grudged her remains a few feet of earth among the chiefs of the Clan, and that her corpse had been conveyed away to prevent such desecration of the ancient tombs, he was considerably staggered by the testimony of some of the watchers, who asserted that the body had been borne away on a cloud by the *Cailleach-dhu-glas*, whose boding screams had long portended the death of some one connected with the family of the Chief. One of the sleepy watchers solemnly swore, that as day dawned, and just before the cocks began to crow in the hamlet, a dark cloud suddenly invested the upper part of the hall, and dimmed the corpse-candles, and next minute no lady lay there! The Bhalie owned it was a mystery,—“Not,” as he remarked to Mr. Hill, “that any Christian friend or parent need grieve that the dear lost ledly was not laid in their Pagan burial-place, set round with blocks of

granite with scarts upon them, in the language of Fion Maccoul,"—as the Bhalie described the Runic characters—"and no a wiselike ashler-wark thruch-stane of reformed masonry among them, either with a *Hic jacet*, or a plain *Here lies*; so I should ne'er grieve for that; had it only been the Lord's will that devout men of her ain country and kin had borne the precious lady to her burial. And what ye say of Mr. Bradshaw anent these *wadsets*, really shows the noble spirit of the British merchant, and is far more than a certain clan's pride deserves at his hands; though twenty of the queans are ready to swear the poor bairn *screagued*, if that were needful to secure the succession. And as for our Laird paying any siller back, ye ken the adage, 'It's ill taking the breeks aff a Highlandman.'

"It is not at all needful. The money will never be sought for. Little does my poor friend mind it to-day," replied Aaron Hill.

"Well, that being so, I fancy I must draw out too, and give Lochnaveen another year o' my services; though I am in terms for the mill and mill-lands o' Dron. He needs, at this creesis and predicament, both a *doer* and a friend, poor young gentleman. And he has shown something of the Christian of late, to give him his due; that is, he rampaged like a Turk, as if he would have pulled down the firmament, when he lost the poor dear lady, that he maybe thought less o' when he had her. But, Lord pardon me! for when I fall in with a friend and countryman, I let out overly muckle o' my breath. But all is safe."

"Quite so," said Mr. Hill. "But where is the Man of the Dirk all this while? He is again presumptive clan heir. Is the Shadow with him now?"

"'Od, and we would need the mill o' Dron under our lee-bow an *Donhuil nam Biodag* were Laird. He is just as he aye was, 'ance vude and aye waur,' as we say. A fine stramash he kicked up at the poor lamb's funeral, when I, as factor, in absence o' the Chief, bedfast at the time, wanted to lay Mr. Bradshaw's grandson's head i' the grave. Plaided and plumed, dirk and pistol in belt, comes my hero, looking soberer, in ae sense, than he has done for seven years, and dafter in another, and pushed me from my lawful post, in sight of all. Poor savage! had I been of his ain wild-cat temper, there would have been the wonted service of dirk-stabs and bloody crowns in the kirkyard, fully as common at our Hieland burials as red wine

and wassail bread,—brutish, barbarian race! How I am ever to escape their fangs, unless I fall on the Patriarch's plan wi' Laban the Syrian, set off wi' my sma' gettings, and cross Maam Tamar, under the cloud o' night, after a thirty years' sore bondage——"

"And, like the Patriarch, with no small increase of flocks and herds," said Mr. Hill, smiling. "But I would fain see Donald of the Dirk ere I go, and I must carry Lochnaveen off if possible. Both his mental and bodily health require this. *Nighean Donachd Ruadh* is, I presume, invisible to me. I thought, Mr. Hossack, I had helped to send an angel of peace among you; my attempts at healing have only produced strife."

"True, sir,—ower true. The son would now dirk the mother that bore him; and the mother would swear away the bread of life frae her ain bairn's lip. She would swear to your face that the bonny lamb, who was heir to Mr. Bradshaw's heritage, in right of its mother, never drew the breath o' life. As for Donald, her auld pet, she will not look on him now; so he has bigged a new bower o' wands to himself about the head of Glendhu, near the lochan, in the little vale where the poor dear young thing, that never kened what it was to sit at a cauld fireside till she came amang us, wanted to big a bit bothy i' the last summer. It's a place no ceevilezed foot can reach from October to March. Ye cannot see Donald of the Dirk, Mr. Hill."

The Chief accompanied Mr. Hill to England; the Chieftainess seldom left the Castle through the whole season; and Donald of the Dirk, more recluse than ever, unlike his usual custom, kept the high ground through all that severe winter. The preceding harvest had, it has been said, been scanty; and the long stormy winter, and cold, tardy spring brought all, but famine to the glens of the North. Those who were far from the coast, where, their more fortunate compatriots could pick up a few shell-fish to allay the pangs of hunger, lived for some time on a little meal mixed with the blood of their cattle; and at last, having ate up every thing possible to be eaten, were under the temptation, as he sometimes feared, of eating up the Lowland Bhalie, the only plump, juicy, and well-conditioned animal now remaining in the valley.

In the midst of their own distress and famine, the people of the hamlet had not forgotten their gallant, brave, and mentally afflicted clansman, Donald of the Dirk. After a heavy fall of snow, lasting for some

days, about the end of February a few young men who had been accustomed to supply the hunter with the meal and other necessaries of his hardy and abstemious life, resolved to penetrate at all hazards to the Glen-dhu to ascertain his personal safety.

Donhuil was found alone, with his faithful hound, leaning, in his wattled shed, on the little mound of earth covered with fern and branches of juniper, which served at once for his seat, his couch, and his altar. Dying, they perceived at the first glance, he evidently was; though he complained of no particular ailment, and suffered, he said, almost nothing. He told his friends that he was calmer and happier now than he had been for many past years; that this last had been to him a blissful winter, and that he felt and ardently welcomed approaching dissolution.

The wild-fire of his bold, quick eye, was quenched now, and the raven hair was blanched to the whiteness of the snows that lay, far and wide, around his dwelling. He had but one remaining wish on earth; it was to see Mr. Aaron Hill.

Many of the inhabitants of Lochnaveen would have travelled to the ends of the earth on this dying man's errand; and luckily Mr. Hill had, about this time, come to Speymouth on his forest business. But Speymouth was far off, and it was the middle of March before Aaron, astonished by the message, could reach the clansman. Donald of the Dirk had, meanwhile, peremptorily refused either to be carried down to the inhabited strath, or to suffer a stranger to sleep within his shed, even for one night.

It was with some difficulty, even in March, that Mr. Hill, the Bhalie, and a party of gillies, reached the solitary spot, so fresh and lovely in its summer greenness, so desolate now, when the only contrast to the chill universal white of Nature's shroud, was the dim gray *lochán*, the black crags that beetled over it, and the dark wattled shed of the hunter, which rose exactly where poor Sarah had wished to rear her imagined Bower of Bliss.

Mr. Hill had but a slight knowledge of the Gaelic tongue; yet it scarce needed spoken language to make him understand as wild a tale—the man and the place considered—as ever was poured on a poet's ear.

The dying clansman first tore open his vest, and showed him Sarah Bradshaw's Prayer-book, and round it a tress of her long silky hair; then, more hurriedly, he swept away the pile of fern and juniper from the little mound of earth on which he usually

reclined, and pointed, with wild gestures, to heaven and to it, and passionately clasped and kissed the book and the tress, and wept and knelt over that earth-heap, fervently muttering his mingled Christian prayers and heathen spells, until he sank exhausted on the grave which he had dug for her he had worshipped!

Almost as faint as the dying man, Mr. Hill at once comprehended all the meanings which Donhuil wished to convey—the story of Sarah's grave. But the wild wish, the anxious prayer on his lips, in his eyes, and in his whole speaking face, could not be understood by the anxious Englishman, whose hand Donald of the Dirk now wrung in entreaty, as with the death-gripe.

Between fear and stupidity, the Bhalie's interpretation, when Aaron at last called him in, was at first confused enough. The dying man had passionately entreated that his corpse might be laid near the remains of her "who," he said, "had ever been his spirit's bride, and who all his life long had haunted him, though, for his sins and impiety, latterly in the guise of a fair and tormenting Phantom. She had, he said, for a brief space, and for the heavier punishment of his deep guilt, been taken from him, and given, in a mortal shape, to *Mac Mic Raonull*; but fate had snatched her from Ranald: now she was all his own, and he was blest. The SHADOW darkened his path no more; and she, his mysterious own, whose fair body slept in the dust, ever hovered around him,—not now armed with unearthly terrors, but in holy and blessed dreams descended to cheer and soothe him; reciting her prayers, and chanting her Christian psalms, for the dying sinner.—Soon would he sleep by her side in the narrow house, who now in heaven pleaded for the fallen Rebel, and the Dark Man of the Dark Land."

"But Lord pardon me," said the Bhalie, pausing in his rude interpretation, "for deaving you, Mr. Hill, with a daft man's raving heathen jaunders. And to steal the corpse, the sacrilegious villain! It must have been for her gay gold rings, like, as the story gangs of the auld Beadle o' Dron——"

"I don't think it was," interrupted Mr. Hill, gently disengaging his hand from the convulsive clasp of the dying man. "Poor Donald," he said, "were his bright Twin-spirit and his Dark Shadow, after all, things less substantial than the Phantoms of Pride and Ambition, which those around him alternately chase or are pursued by?"

A long pause followed.

"Think ye the breath is out o' him?" whispered the Bhalie. "Ay, Donald, lad, ye lie quiet enough now on the broad o' your back, that would have braved the Deil himself'.—Sacriligious savage! plead in heaven for him! Ye'll ken better about it, or I'm mista'en, ere your soles be mickle caulder."

The Bhalie luckily spoke in the impunity of his Lowland Scotch; for there were dirks in other hands besides Donald's.

"Hush!" cried the Englishman, as the Highlanders, with heavy heart and wet eyes, having for above ten minutes gazed on their clansman, arranged the body, and, swathing it in linen, threw over it, as a pall, the ample folds of the belted plaid.

"Ye shall not lay the corp there; we must have up the lady's body;—and drive out that yelping hound of his," said the *Bhalie*, now assuming the master.

"Let his poor remains even rest, my friend," said Hill. "Brave Donald, with his astonishing mental and bodily energies, was 'of imagination all compact.' In another state of society I know not what he might have been,—whether a hero, a poet, or a madman."

"The last, be weel assured," said the Bhalie. "But his Pagan corp shall not lie for another hour beside that of a Christian English gentlewoman of good fortune."

"Nay, nay," said Aaron Hill, "you forget Him who has made of one blood all nations to dwell together upon the face of the earth. Donhui's madness cannot now disturb the gentle sleeper; nor can I command those to be separated whom death has so mysteriously united:—let the Enthusiast keep his Basil Pot."

The Bhalie probably knew as much of the pathetic tale of Boccaccio as did, in that day, any other man of that Northern county, the Sheriff not excepted.

"What's your will, sir?" said the gaping factor.

"Nothing, Mr. Hossack, save that the obsequies of the lady, and those of the kinsman of the Chief, must be cared for; nor poor Lochnaveen, your master, have his green wounds opened afresh."

"And where would ye have them laid, sir?"

"Where the tree falleth there let it lie," said Aaron, mournfully.

* * * *

It was after sunset, on a dewy April

evening, just two years from the time that the Goldsmith's Daughter had, from her father's casement in Ludgate Hill, first seen her Highland Chief, that the remains of the clansman were, though in secesy, yet with wail and weeping, dirge and coronach, laid by the side of a wattled coffin, lined with the softest deer-skins and moss; the shrine which the hunter's hand had secretly framed for his treasure, and which Aaron Hill would not allow to be touched, save to be enclosed in an outer casing of rough oak planks. And over it as many tears were shed, and prayers were said, as if the lonely tenant had been a lady of the land. And oft at midnight was the Chieftainness seen to repair to, and sit by, the distant lonely Cairn; though none might guess of the dark communings that *she* was said to hold there, who never again looked upon the sun, or received any guest, save the Widow of the Waterfall and the Irish priest.

Before Mr. Hill left Lochnaveen, he made it be proclaimed to the famine-struck people, that a ship from Leith, laden with oatmeal for the sustenance of their starving women and children, was now lying at a place, which he named, on the western Sutherland coast,—“The Blessing,” he said, while bitterness, and kindness, and sorrow, and even humour, were all strangely mingled in his eye,—“the Blessing of *Nighean Ceard* to her *Raonull's* proud ungrateful clan.”

Thus, if smiles had been wanting at Sarah's welcoming, there were plenteous and grateful tears shed at her farewell; and her memory, though the date is placed far beyond the actual time of her existence, still lives in the traditions of that now broken and dispersed clan, as that of a wonderful, blessed, and mysterious being, to the cruel and inhospitable treatment of whom, the ruin of the family, and the breaking up or scattering of the tribe, are to be traced. But though thus talked of with *Caen-beg*, *Lamdh Dearg*, *May Mullach*, and the other formidable personages of Highland superstition, the memory of Sarah Bradshaw has its one gentler distinction. The terrible famine of the season following her death is still well-remembered in the glens of the North; and when, as was said at the opening of our story, any one in the extremity of destitution receives unexpected and providential relief, the grateful Highlanders will still call the unmerited boon “*The Blessing of Nighean Ceard.*”

* * * *

Of the Clan of Lochnaveen, the proud "Race of the Sons of Raonull," all else that now remains are a few floating fragments of tradition ;—the unpeopled country ; the chapel-like *Cairn*, which the Southern grouse-shooter starts to meet in the mountain correi, by the *lochan* of water-lilies ; and the solemn lesson, to those who can apply it, on which Aaron Hill spoke to the mourners — to Celts and Saxons alike — of that gracious Power, who has made of one blood all nations to dwell together in unity and peace upon the face of the earth.

There is a certain township bordering on Lake Michigan, where the Gaelic language is at this day more purely spoken than in the Highlands, and clan legends are more freshly remembered ; and where, on a winter's night, round the blazing log-fire, a merry tale is sometimes told of the adventures of a Lowlander called "Bhalie Breekish," or Bhalie "Broad-bonnet," who on his return to the South with the accumulated plunder of thirty years, was waylaid in *Slough Muich*, or the Hole of Swine, by a detachment of the clan with blackened faces, and compelled to disgorge. Shouts of laughter would follow the comical description of the rueful looks of the factor, stripped to his shirt, and turned adrift on the moor, when his brass knee-buckles were generously returned to him by one Sweyn Og, who pretended to believe that they were gold. Another edition of the same tale relates, that the wily Bhalie, before taking his departure, had, under the walls of the castle, buried three *crogans* filled with gold pieces. Yankee or Saxon superstition must have vulgarized or rendered tame Celtic imagination, before the prophecy was added, that a Mac Ranald from over the broad sea, having six fingers on each hand, and six toes on each foot, was

one day to discover this treasure, and with it buy or win back the country of Lochnaveen, and reinstate the scattered tribe in all its ancestral pride and glory.

* * * *

It is also, according to the tradition, believed, that the Chief and his mother never again met during the few years of solitude and rigid penance which that lady survived the death of her Saxon daughter. Ranald, after the death of Mr. Bradshaw, passed to the Continent, and was known to have been attached to the Pretender's cause ; and, in the Rebellion of 1745, a few of his people followed the banner of his ancient ally Lochiel ; and on the fatal field of Culloden, for the last time the "Keepers of the Heart" displayed their clan pennon. From thence they bore away, with great risk to themselves, the body of a brave foreign leader, who had distinguished himself in the fight, which they piously concealed in the woods of Strathglas, until the hot pursuit of Cumberland's soldiers was over. Though the elders of the scattered tribe at once identified the stately if faded person of their Chief, there would have been doubts among the younger men, save from the circumstance of the body of the henchman, Sweyn Og, having also been found, as if the faithful follower had fallen in attempting to cover his Chief from the sabre stroke of the English trooper, which had cleft his own skull. Then Sweyn had recognised his beloved master ! — The stranger was, at all events, solemnly, if secretly, laid within the "Circle of Stones" at the feet of *Nighean Donachd Ruadh*, and the tattered banner of the tribe, for concealment and safety, was dropt into that grave.

The sun of Lochnaveen had set. The glory of the Race of Raonull had departed with "THE TINKER'S DAUGHTER."

THE ELIZABETHINES.

BY MRS. GORE.

Sad as the heart of Ruth, when, sick for home,
She stood in tears amid the alien corn ! KEATS.

I HAVE had reason hitherto to complain of ill-fortune in the visits I have made to convents and monasteries. Other travellers are sure to meet with some interesting novice or dignified lady abbess, — some celestial sister already "enskied and sainted," — or some

wasted votary, bearing the impress of secret and silent affliction, — of suppressed passions, — of self-resignation ! For my own part, I must acknowledge that I never yet chanced upon a cloistered victim in any way worthy of sympathy. The reverend mother has

usually proved a cross old woman much addicted to snuff; with a skin like yellow flannel, and a gait like that of the Fairy Carabosse; and I have always found the Sister appointed to do the honours of the convent, dull, corpulent, middle-aged, and contented, as well as self-contented. The only nun I ever saw who could lay claim to personal beauty, was a very lovely creature, with whom, some ten years ago, I passed a rainy afternoon at Tournay. Instead, however of adding the grace of pensive *Eloiseism* to her other attractions, the holy sister proved as arrant a giglet as any reproved by the Lady Beatrice of the Tor Hill; and laughed and crowed like an idiot, while I sat admiring her skill in ironing, — a most unsentimental employment for a heroine!

Henceforward, however, I will make no complaints on this head; for I have recently witnessed a scene within the walls of a religious institution, which has proved the source of many deep and painful emotions. I will not call it *interesting*, for such a term is most unfitly applied to the real right-earnest calamities of human life.

The convent of the Elizabethines, or *Elisabethinerinnen*, is situated in one of the suburbs of Vienna; and was endowed by the Queen of Hungary whose name it bears, as an hospital for fifty poor women, to be served and attended by as many professed nuns. The institution closely resembles that admirable one founded by Saint Vincent de Paule, — the *Seurs de la Charité*, — and maintains the same character of universal benevolence, of self-denying and pious activity. In addition to the fifty objects received into the ward of the hospital, the Elizabethines distribute their charitable offices to such of the neighbouring poor as apply for assistance or advice; and the holy sisters are not only adored by those who have been restored to health through their skill and gentle care, but are regarded as the tutelary angels of the quarter in which their convent is situated.

Anxious to observe the internal regulations of an institution I had so frequently heard named with the blessings of gratitude, I presented myself at the *parloir* of the Elizabethines; and having referred my request for admittance to the reverend mother, I was instantly and graciously received.

The sister appointed by the abbess to conduct me over the building, was a cheerful intelligent woman, — cheerful from the consoling sense of duties diligently per-

formed, and from the remembrance of a long life spent in the service of her fellow-creatures. She was gentle and even elegant in her address, although slightly deformed in person; but I beg my readers will not despond over this untoward circumstance, for I respectfully forewarn them that Sister Agatha is not the heroine of my adventure.

"This is our laboratory," said she, throwing open a door which emitted a rich steam of spicy decoctions; and I perceived that the antique oaken compartments within, were closely filled with mysterious jars which appeared to contain all "the syrups of the East." A little boy beside the polished counter was receiving from the hands of an old nun, a basket of medicines for his sick mother; accompanied by more counsels and injunctions than I thought so small a head might well retain; and in an inner chamber I caught a glimpse of three reverend sisters seated round a table, on which stood an air-pump, an electrifying machine, and a ponderous pair of scales. Their dress, — the flowing black robe and milk-white scapulary, worn somewhat after the fashion of a Roman *contadina*, — their dignified gravity, which might have become "Tyne-mouth's haughty Prioress," formed a strange contrast with their several occupations; which were those of pulling lint, weighing poppy heads, and shelling small seeds for some medicinal purpose.

After exhibiting "an alligator stuffed," and some other objects of natural history, — the marvel and glory of the simple nuns, — Sister Agatha led me successively through the wardrobe, where a detachment of the nuns were busily stitching garments for the rest of the community, — through the sacristy, where another division was occupied in preparing decorations for their church, to be used on some ensuing solemnity, — and finally, into the kitchen of the convent, — the neatest and most appetizing, I should think, that exists in the German empire.

Wherever we passed, the nuns crowded round to kiss the hand of my conductress, and to welcome her with loquacious delight. She was evidently a person of importance and a favourite, for even the sisters occupied in the confectionary in preparing delicacies for their convalescent patients, left their sugar to burn while they indulged in a passing gossip with Sister Agatha.

The order and distribution of the extensive building were admirable; and the long spotless corridors paved with polished Salzburg

marble, — the cream-coloured stone used for lithographic engraving, — formed a striking contrast with the usually filthy passages of Vienna mansions, and spoke strongly in favour of the superior cleanliness of female occupations.

"You are fortunate," observed Sister Agatha, as we ascended the stairs, "in having visited us at the hour appointed for the reception of visitors into the ward. It is the bright season of our day, and will diminish the painful impression arising from the sight of the afflicted."

As she spoke she threw open the door of the hospital, — a long gallery containing fifty beds, each bearing a German inscription, purporting that the wants of its sick tenant were relieved "through the love of God." A murmur of joy and surprise saluted the entrance of Sister Agatha into the ward; and the numerous visitors, many of them belonging to a highly respectable class of life, deserted the beds of their sick friends to salute her with expressions of welcome and gratitude. Many of the poorer order, unable to lose their time, although in the offices of affection, had brought their work; and were diligently knitting or sewing while they listened to the monotonous recitals of the sufferers — the mother, the sister, the friend, they were come to visit. On several coverlids lay little tokens of interest, — a flower, a biscuit, a handkerchief, — or some other humble offering, bestowed by the poor, in honest good will, upon the still poorer; and every ghastly countenance among the sufferers was lighted up by an expression of joyful and grateful excitement. There was one among them, old, and apparently heavily afflicted, who was gazing with an intensity of affection, almost painful to behold, upon a well-dressed young man, a student of some German college, who sat beside her bed, holding her poor thin hand.

Their history was evident. She had sacrificed much to secure to a beloved son the education and appearance of more liberal means; and if I might judge by the affectionate expression of the young scholar's countenance, her motherly self-denial was neither unappreciated nor unrewarded. Several of the convalescent were dressed and seated among their friends; and the appearance of some even justified the information I had received, that the poor and needy were detained by the Elizabethines long after their recovery, provided they

were unable to work for their maintenance elsewhere.

"It must be highly gratifying to your feelings, dear sister, to see those poor creatures restored to health and usefulness through your ministry," said I to my guide. "There are many here whose looks do equal honour to the skill and to the tenderness of those by whose care they have been tended."

"You must remember, however," replied Sister Agatha, "that we frequently receive incurable patients; and that among so large a number, we have the grief of seeing many die, notwithstanding our most anxious exertions. There," she continued in a whisper, pointing to the last bed we had passed, "there lies one to whom it only remains for us to administer the last offices." I looked, and saw a wasted pallid face, turned towards the pillow, as though to drown the murmur of the crowded ward. Her eyes were closed, and her slight delicate hand lay open upon the sheet in the relaxation of debility. She was young, and as far as I could judge from the adjustment of her linen, was of a better order than the other patients.

As I paused for a moment at the bottom of the bed, to look upon her with the reverence due to one who is about to put on the garb of immortality, my shadow fell upon her face. She unclosed her sunken eyes for a moment, and then shut them, after a look of despair, — a shudder of hopelessness, which I can never forget. I passed on hastily; and looked at my attendant for an explanation, as she led me into a little chapel at the end of the gallery, opening into it for the service of the sick.

I observed that the eyes of the compassionate nun were filled with tears; but as we were now before the altar, she knelt down to repeat a paternoster, without replying to my mute inquiry. Some minutes afterwards, as we were descending the stairs towards the church of the convent, I took courage to question her concerning the dying woman.

"You say that she will not long survive; yet of all the hospital, hers was the only bed unsoothed by some kind visitor. The poor creature appears totally deserted, — has she no friends in Vienna?"

"She is heavily visited both in mind and body," replied Sister Agatha, evasively. "The Almighty hath been pleased to deal with her as with those he loveth. When she first became our inmate, she was placed

next unto the bed of the young student's mother; and the sight of his assiduous filial affection proved so great a trial to the poor creature's feelings, that compassion induced me to remove her to the end of the ward; where her desolate condition is less apparent to others,—less painful to herself."

At this moment we entered the church; and from a feeling, intelligent woman, Sister Agatha became at once the narrow devotee,—the blind votary of superstition. Her order, and its dignity,—her church and its relics,—her director, and his anathemas, became paramount in her mind; and she proudly claimed my admiration for the skeleton of the giant St. Columbus, which sparkled through its glass coffin with ribs set in false stones and tinsel,—and for the choir behind whose mysterious curtain, the hymns of the veiled Elizabethines are heard with reverence by the congregation. From the church we passed into the inner sacristy; where the good nun expatiated right eloquently upon the beauties of several gilt calvaries and holy sepulchres, presented to their treasury by Maria Theresa and her successors. Despairing of bringing her back to the subject of the dying woman above, I prepared to take my leave by presenting a trifling offering towards the funds of the institution; and I was indiscreet enough to venture a second donation, with a request that it might be applied to the especial use of the poor deserted woman.

Sister Agatha, who had accepted my first gift with gratitude, put back my hand with indignation when I tendered the second. "Have you observed," she inquired, "any symptoms of partiality in our arrangements,—or any want of general comfort? What do our sick require that is not instantly administered? Nay—what fancy or caprice do they express, which is not anxiously gratified by the reverend mother?"

I craved forgiveness for my involuntary offence, which I attributed, and truly, to the heartfelt compassion inspired by the deserted condition of the dying patient; and Sister Agatha, after silently examining my countenance, as if to assure herself what degree of confidence she might place in my discretion, replied, "Well, well; say no more of it,—I perceive that the request, however indiscreet, arose from a gentle feeling. Stay!" she continued, leading me back into the sacristy and closing the door after us, "you are young,—you belong to the children of the world,—and the history of

that unfortunate woman may prove a useful lesson. Have you leisure to listen?"

I seated myself by her side with grateful alacrity; and Sister Agatha, taking out her knitting, commenced the following narration.

"I will call the poor soul Cecilia; and as I have no fear that you will discover her real name and title, I will fairly own that she is born of one of the noblest houses of Hungary,—her ancestors have even been among the most liberal benefactors of the convent in which her last sufferings have been alleviated. Cecilia became an orphan shortly after her birth; and as her fortune was considerable, she was bequeathed to the guardianship of the head of her father's family. Even now you may judge that she was once a lovely creature; and when I add that her disposition was volatile, and her education totally neglected, you will be the more inclined to look with lenity upon the indiscretion that induced her at the age of sixteen to elope from her uncle's palace, and to bestow her hand and affections upon a very unworthy object."

"It was during the occupation of the army of Napoleon; and at a period when the Austrian nobility found themselves compelled to admit into their domestic circles many French officers who, at another time, would have been spurned from their society. Among the rest, a Colonel of cuirassiers was quartered in the palace of Prince —— of ——, Cecilia's uncle. He proved to be a man of ignoble birth,—ignoble character,—ignoble habits; but the poor child who had been accustomed to receive among her proud relations only the harshest usage and coldest severity, was too easily touched by the adulation of the wily Frenchman to be sensible to these defects. His anxiety, too, to possess himself of Cecilia's ample dower, taught him to conceal them,—if not from her family,—at least from her deluded self. To dwell as little as possible upon her errors, permit me to say that Cecilia was induced by her lover to elope from Vienna; and that she became a wife and a mother before she had attained her seventeenth year.

"Were you better acquainted with our national habits, it would be useless to add that she was immediately denounced as an outcast and an alien, by her indignant family; that her name became a forbidden sound, and that she was soon accounted as among the dead. Well would it have been for the unhappy creature, had the Almighty

indeed so ordered her destiny! for long before her splendid fortune was dissipated, — and a few years enabled her depraved husband to squander it away, — Cecilia had become an object of disgust to him for whose sake she had sacrificed her kindred and her country; and neglect and cruelty sufficiently justified the antipathy conceived against him by her relations on their first acquaintance.

“The fortune of war was fated to relieve her from the persecutions of him whose obscure name she bore; — at the age of twenty-one, Cecilia found herself a widow and the mother of three children as destitute as herself! And now, for the first time since her imprudent marriage, she ventured to address her exasperated uncle, — for the wants of her innocent babes taught her to overcome the suggestions of her innate national pride, — to forget the sensitive delicacy of her character; and in a letter dictated by humility and repentance, she craved the charity of her haughty kindred.

“A tardy and brief reply was vouchsafed to her supplication; — but it contained a small remittance; and in the present relief afforded by the gift, Cecilia forgot the wound inflicted by the terms in which it was bestowed.

“A second time, however, the young mother found herself penniless; and her sufferings were now aggravated by the loss of her youngest child. ‘I nursed it,’ said she, when she told me her pitiful story, ‘and I verily fear it died of famine, for I was well nigh starved myself. But the despair which overcame me when I stretched its little wasted limbs for the grave, gave me courage to apply once more to my cruel uncle.

“A second supply was the result of my appeal; but as it was accompanied by an assurance that it would be the last, I resolved to profit by its temporary relief, and return to my native country. I thought that the sight of my babes, in their destitute condition, might win the compassion of those on whom they possessed other and stronger claims. I longed, too, to hear the accents of my fatherland, to breathe once more my natal air; for, alas! the country of my adoption had proved but a harsh step-mother. Since I had left my native land, my lot had been one of mortification and misery; and the remembrance of home — even of the unendearing home of my early years, grew sweet by the comparison.

“But on my return to Austria, I found myself a greater alien, — a still more reviled,

more desolate creature! I was assured by the survivors of my family that in renouncing their name by my imprudent marriage, I had forfeited all claims upon those who bore it; and that by intruding my beggary upon the joys of their prosperity, I had but hardened their hearts towards my wretched children.

“I shall never forget the day,’ said poor Cecilia,” continued the nun, “on which I turned from their lofty portal towards my own obscure retreat; my heart swelling within me as I clasped my lovely children to my desolate bosom. I had then some means of support still remaining, — the savings of my frugality; — and I had still strength to work; so that when I shut myself up in my own chamber, I resolved that no extremity of want should induce me to court a second repulse. But I had not duly calculated upon the nature of the trials I should be doomed to undergo. I had thought but of ceaseless labour, — of domestic drudgery; — of want of food, of want of rest; and these miseries I could bear, and I *did* bear them cheerfully. But with all my hardships I was unable to earn sufficient bread for my children. I saw the loveliness with which God had gifted them, gradually fade away; — their strength wasted, — their little voices grew feeble as they breathed their endearments to their miserable mother, — their growth was suspended by want of proper nourishment, — and already my fears foretold a still more fatal result.

“Could my heart resist such a suggestion? Oh! no; I addressed myself again and earnestly to my estranged connexions; and my adjuration was so fraught with the expressive wretchedness of my mind, that it could not be utterly disregarded. It chanced also that my boy had become, through the death of a relation, the heir presumptive to a distant branch of my family; and my uncle, mindful perhaps of this contingency, was moved to offer him his protection. ‘Resign the care of your children to me,’ he wrote in reply to my petition. ‘Your conduct has proved that you are unfit to become the directress of their education; and, by your own declaration, you lack the means for their support. I will provide liberally for them both; if they are permitted to assume my name, and if their mother consents to leave this country at once, and for ever.’

“Rather beg their bread, — rather perish

with them!' was my first exclamation on perusing this barbarous request. And I *did* beg—again and again—humbly and earnestly; but perhaps I wanted something of the lowly air of habitual supplication, or hunger and despair might impart a look of repellent ferocity to my countenance, for the hearts of the humane were seldom touched by my supplications. In a few weeks therefore my fears recurred with added force; my pride, my courage failed under the solitudes of a mother's love, and I formed at length the desperate resolution of obeying my uncle's commands.

"It was a heavy morning that which I had fixed for the execution of my project, and my mind was fevered by a night of sleepless horror. I had sat up to render the rags of my poor babes as little revolting as possible to those unto whose mercy I was about to commit their destiny; and when daylight came I roused them gently and tenderly from their calm slumbers. I dared not look upon their sweet faces as I dressed them for the last time; and when I imprinted a burning kiss upon the glossy curls of their little heads, I felt that the Almighty was dealing with me more heavily than I might bear!

"Perhaps despair had already numbed my heart into endurance, for I gathered courage to tell them that their troubles were over;—that they were henceforward to dwell in a fine house,—with sweet food,—with soft rest to restore them; and that they must learn to reverence the noble hand from which they derived such gifts, and try to forget—but no—no—no! I could not for worlds have told them to forget me;—and had I done so, the request would have been unavailing. They clung to me,—they wept and implored, and finally prevailed. No! I could not part from them that day!"

"I repeat Cecilia's words as nearly as I can remember them," said the nun, after a painful pause; "but I cannot give the expression of a mother's voice to my narration;—I remember that *hers* reached my inmost heart."

"And did she at last gather strength to part with the poor babes?" I anxiously inquired.

"The separation was effected by an unpremeditated meeting with her uncle," continued Sister Agatha. "They were at the moment almost expiring with hunger; and the fine equipage and dainties proffered by the Prince, induced the little innocents to consent to

what was at first announced as a separation of a few days from their heart-broken mother. Young as they were, they did not notice how frequently the visit was prolonged; and after repeated disappointments of returning home, their restlessness was at length changed into contentment. They were kindly used; and, like all children, they learned in time to forget the absent. The mother who had been so missed and so lamented,—for whom they had hoarded their luxuries, and renounced their infantine enjoyments, was soon rarely mentioned,—and finally—forgotten.

"In the mean time poor Cecilia, who had accepted a limited pension from the Prince, and had fulfilled the necessary condition of quitting the Austrian territories, was for a time reconciled to her miserable destiny by the certainty that her children were rescued from the sufferings and dangers of privation. 'In the grievous loneliness of my existence,' said she, 'I had the consolation of knowing that my treasures no longer fixed the eager eyes of starvation upon the morsel I was unable to purchase to appease their famine. I was supported during the day by a sort of feverish excitation which led me to wish for the return of night, that I might lose in sleep my sense of sorrow; but when the night came, and I missed from my side the little beings who had slumbered there from infancy,—I could not rest! And thus longing by day for the night,—by night for the return of day,—long weeks, long months passed over my miserable head. Nothing but my flattering trust that my son's accession of fortune would one day or other enable me to clasp in my arms the precious creatures for whose well-being I had forfeited my own happiness,—enabled me to support existence;—and even that hope could not long suffice to smooth the path of self-denial. My mind, fixed with constant and dreadful intensity upon the absent objects of its affections, became enfeebled; my courage relaxed with my judgment,—the yearning of my heart grew too strong for mastery,—and in a moment of frenzy, I returned to Vienna!"

"My first object was to seek a furtive interview with my children. I was well aware that the greatest caution would be necessary for the accomplishment of my end; and for some days I contented myself with watching, at dusk, under the windows of my uncle's palace. I thought that among the shadows of its inmates, revealed by the

lights within, I might perhaps distinguish those of my children. I was aware that they inhabited the same chamber which had been mine in childhood; and I have stood on the bastions beneath it, through rain,—through snow,—through piercing frost,—in the expectation of catching the joyous echoes of their young voices; at length I took courage one morning to watch their coming out for their daily drive.

“I thought I had sufficiently disguised my altered person; and with trembling limbs I slowly paced along the street, when the gorgeous carriage bearing the arms of my family rolled out of the court of the palace, and passed close beside me. I could not refrain from looking up;—and in a moment I saw the fair face of my youngest born,—glowing with health,—radiant with happiness; but the smile of her sweet eyes fell upon her mother without recognition,—she had forgotten me!

“Could I bear this! I fell senseless upon the pavement; and the menials of the carriage, which wounded me as it passed, recognised in the poor wretch they humanely ran to raise from the earth, a rejected daughter of their master’s house!

“This public exposure, irritated—and perhaps justly—the feelings of the Prince. He wrote me a letter filled with a torrent of invective,—upbraiding me with ingratitude, and threatening me to withdraw his protection from my children, if hereafter I sought, directly or indirectly, to come into their presence. He reminded me of the dangers that would await them in case of my death, under such a desertion. He painted in strong and appalling terms, the perils which poverty and desolation might entail at some future time upon my daughter. But he might have spared his eloquence;—the blow was already struck,—the bruised reed bowed unto the dust,—and death was about to release the wanderer from her sufferings, and himself from my further intrusion.”

“It was precisely at this period,” resumed the nun in a more cheerful tone, “that the destitute condition of our poor Cecilia drew towards her the attention of the Holy Father Director of our order. In visiting a sick parishioner, he learned that a young person of interesting appearance was dying in a small attic in the house; to the proprietor of which she was a total stranger. He did not, as you may suppose, hesitate to visit the bedside of the desolate sufferer, whom he found sinking under a slow fever, destitute

of the common means of support, and oppressed by all the terrors of mental despair. Within a few hours Cecilia was removed at his suggestion into our hospital; and few were ever sheltered within its walls unto whom its comforts were more vitally necessary. It was my own turn of duty the night of her admission,” said the nun, “and her youth and beauty exerted, in the first instance, a blamable influence over my feelings. Other motives of compassion speedily declared themselves. I found that my lovely patient’s disorder originated in the exhaustion arising from a long endurance of cold and hunger. She had fasted for many days together during an inclement winter, in order to increase the scanty meals of her children; and during the first night that I watched by her side, I heard the names of those beloved children, murmured again and again by her parched lips, as though their very sound were a watchword of salvation!”

“And was her case hopeless, even at the time of her admission?”

“The cares lavished upon her failed not to procure a transient revival. In a few days Cecilia recovered her consciousness; and her gratitude for my attention in removing her from the painful position which chance had assigned her in the ward, opened her heart towards me, more than towards her other attendants. It appeared as if her feelings were relieved by confiding to me the history of her afflicted life.”

“But surely, surely something might still be done to save her,” said I, interrupting the good sister; “surely a malady resulting from temporary privation cannot affect the powers of life?”

“We are not reckoned unskilful, even by the faculty of Vienna,” answered Sister Agatha, with an air of professional dignity. “The influence of the mind is all-powerful over the body, and we know that few diseases are more important than those arising out of moral causes. You must remember, too, that Cecilia’s frame was weakened by want and toil during three entire years,—that its powers have been exhausted by prolonged fasts and prolonged vigils; nothing now can save her.”

“But you will apply, without doubt, to her family,—to her cruel, selfish uncle. Surely you will attempt to bless her dying eyes with the sight of those beloved objects to whom she hath sacrificed her existence?”

“Impossible!” replied the nun with provoking calmness. “The Prince is one of

the most powerful and liberal benefactors of our convent. Were the reverend mother,—to whom, however, I have not thought it expedient to apply on the subject,—were the reverend mother to provoke his Highness's displeasure by such an appeal, she would be injuring the cause of the poor, and bereaving the many in order to gratify the worldly passions of a single heart. To the suffering multitude we owe an account of our ministry; and their wants and claims, alas! will long survive the sorrows of poor Cecilia."

"At least permit *me*, who as a stranger can incur no risk, to make immediate application to the Prince. His name,—his name,—I entreat you do not let this victim of maternal love die unrewarded."

"You are an enthusiast," replied the nun with a gentle smile, "and forget that the slightest motion will extinguish the flame of an expiring lamp; one moment of agitation would destroy Cecilia. Besides, although a heretic, you must be sensible that the consolations of religion alone become the bed of death. It would be cruel to rekindle earthly affections in a heart where the hopes of faith should alone prevail. But I must not loiter here," continued Sister Agatha, respectfully kissing my hand. "Farewell, sister! farewell; may your journey prosper! and when you return to your own remote country, remember that the sick and the poor are comforted by the lowly order of St. Elizabeth, *'through the love of God!'*"

The day following my memorable visit to the convent of the *Elisabethinarinnen*, I departed, not under the influence of Sister Agatha's benediction, "to my own remote country," but on a tour through Hungary, which occupied some months. Previous to leaving the city of Pesth, the principal residence of the Hungarian nobility, I chanced one morning to enter a bookseller's shop in search of books of instruction for children, written in the national language. The master of the shop, in reply to my inquiries, observed that he could supply me with the newest and best as soon as the Countess Woleska had finished her selection. I looked towards the lady thus referred to, and saw a slight figure in deep mourning, accompanied by two children,—an elegant little girl, and a noble boy about six years of age.

The bookseller whispered that he was the young *Fürst Reussdorf*; and at the same moment the Countess turning round to desire her little girl would offer the books to the

English lady, discovered to me a face,—no! I could not be mistaken!—a face which I had seen but once, to remember for ever; and which I had for months past believed to be shrouded in the damps of death,—that, in short, of Sister Agatha's heroine. Even as it was, it was totally colourless; and as I was in the very land of Vampirism, I literally shuddered as I fixed my wondering gaze upon the Countess, and could not recover my voice to thank the lovely child from whose hand I received the books. I concluded my bargain as precipitately as I could; and walked out into the street, without well knowing what I was about, or where I was going.

My first anxiety on returning home was to question our German courier respecting the family of Reussdorf, and the Countess Woleska; but I received only those vague and tormenting replies which one is sure to extract from such a source. "The Woleskas," he said, "were a very noble race,—very powerful,—very wealthy; settled in several provinces of the empire, one branch in Hungary,—one in Styria——"

"But the Countess?"

"*The Countess!*—the young one or the old? The Countess Dowager of Woleska is of the *Schwarzenwüldchenwesterhofsche* family—a lady of the highest descent and——"

"No—no—the young Countess."

"The young Countess? There are several, *gnädige Frau*; the Countess Wenzl, the Countess Rudolf, the Countess Moritz," &c. &c.

Finding it impossible to come to the point, I resolved to wait for the evening's opera, when I felt sure of learning the gossip of the city from some of the visitors to our box.

"Ah! you have seen the young Countess Woleska," was the ready answer to my inquiries. "A charming woman, although rather *passée*, but still a very interesting ruin."

"Can you inform me whether she has been long resident in Hungary?"

"Scarcely a month,—can it be possible that you have not heard her history? a very eventful one, if the *on dits* are accurate. Her little son came suddenly into possession of the principality of Reussdorf, by the death of a relation in whose house he was educated; but the Countess, having formed a connexion early in life with a French adventurer, a Buonapartist, which of course had obliged her family to cast her off, was at the time of his unexpected succession, concealed in some obscure retreat, some say

a prison, some a madhouse, and was brought forward, to the amazement of all Vienna, by the family confessor; some meddling Capuchin, who had never lost sight of her. She was in a most precarious state of health, and was not at first expected to survive her change of fortunes."

"And what has brought her hither?"

"She remains at Pesth while the family castle in Esclavonia is fitting for her reception,—for she has resolved to educate her son upon his patrimony, till he is old enough to commence his studies at the National University. We know nothing of the Countess but from report; for she has declined entering into the society of the city, and has had the *maladresse* to refuse an invitation from the Palatine himself, on the grounds of ill health and recent affliction. *Entre nous*, I rather imagine that the fair lady is conscious her long seclusion from society has rendered her somewhat unfit to move in the circle to which her descent admits her."

It was not for a stranger like myself to controvert this opinion, or to assure my self-important friend that not even the Countess

Téléki, the Lady Jersey of Pesth, might vie with the young Countess Woleska, in a gentle, graceful timidity of address, which cannot become either out of date, or *déplacé*; I ventured, however, to assert that she had never been confined either in a prison or a madhouse.

"You are acquainted with her then, and have been betraying me into relating anecdotes of your friend. This is not fair, but it affords me at least the pleasure of assuring the Countess's enemies that her intimate acquaintance has vindicated——"

"Permit me to assure you that I never interchanged a syllable with the Countess Woleska; but I again repeat on the authority of those best informed, that there never existed a brighter example of the first virtue of womanhood,—motherly affection."

I never saw this interesting woman again; but I was satisfied to leave her in the possession of every earthly blessing; and to know that a life of suffering and resignation, had been repaid by moments of joy such as can have rarely fallen to mortal lot. May they be long and frequently renewed!

OLD MASTER GREEN.

BY MISS MITFORD.

A PARTICULAR sort of mould, which in this county is scarcely to be found except in the tract of land called Chittling Moor, being wanted to form a compost for that very dear part of my small possessions, my beautiful geraniums, we determined to accompany, or rather to follow, in our pretty pony phaeton, the less aristocratic *cortège*, consisting of two boys with wheelbarrows, and old Master Green with a donkey-cart, who had been despatched to collect it some two hours before.

The day was one of the latest in August, and the weather splendidly beautiful, clear, bright, breezy, sunny. It would have been called too warm by one half of the world, and by the other too cold, which I take to be as near an approach to perfection as our climate, or any climate, can well compass. We had been sitting in our large parlour-like greenhouse; a superb fuschia, bending with the weight of its own blossoms, reaching almost to the top of the house, on one side of the door, and a splendid campanula, with five distinct stems, covered with large yet delicate lilac bells, on the other; the rich

balmy scent of the campanula blending with the exquisite odours of tuberoses, jessamine, mignonette, full blown myrtles, and the honey-sweet clematis, and looking out on gay beds of the latest flowers, china asters, dahlias, hydrangeas blue and pink, phlox white and purple, the scarlet lobellia, and the scarlet geranium. In short, all within my little garden was autumn, beautiful autumn.

On the other side of our cottage the season seemed to have changed. The china roses and honeysuckles, with which it is nearly covered, were in the profuse bloom of early June, and the old monthly rose by the doorway, (the sweetest of roses!) together with a cluster of sweet-peas that grew among its branches, were literally smelling of summer. The quantity of rain that had fallen had preserved the trees in their most vivid freshness, and the herbage by the road side and the shorter turf on the common had all the tender verdure of spring.

As we advanced, however, through the narrow lanes, autumn and harvest reasserted

their rights. Every here and there, at the corners where branches jutted out, and in the straits where the hedges closed in together, loose straws of oats and barley, torn from their different wagons, hung dangling from the boughs, mixed with straggling locks of hay, the relics of the after-crop. We ourselves were fain to drive into a ditch, to take shelter from a dingy procession of bean-carriers. My companion, provoked at the ditchy indignity, which his horse relished no better than himself, asserted that the beans could not be fit to carry; but, to judge from the rattling and crackling which the huge black sheaves made in their transit, especially when the loaded wain was jerked a little on one side, to avoid entirely driving over our light and graceful open carriage, which it over-topped, and threatened to crush, as the giant in the fairy tale threatens Tom Thumb—to judge by that noisy indication of ripeness, ripe they were. The hedgerows, too, gave abundant proofs in their own vegetation of the advancing season. The fragrant hazelnuts were hardening in their shells, and tempting the schoolboy's hand by their swelling clusters; the dewberries were colouring; the yellow St. John's wort, and the tall mealy leaved mullein, had succeeded the blushing bells of the foxglove, which, despoiled of its crimson beauty, now brandished its long spikes of seed-vessels upon the bank, above which the mountain-ash waved its scarlet berries in all the glory of autumn; whilst, as we emerged from the close narrow lanes into the open tract of Hartley Common, patches of purple heath just bursting into flower, and the gorse and broom pushing forth fresh blossoms under the influence of the late rainy weather, waved over the light harebell, the fragrant thyme, and the springing fungi of the season. In short, the whole of our Berkshire world, as well as that very dear and very tiny bit of it called my garden, spoke of autumn, beautiful autumn, the best if not the only time for a visit to the Chittling Moor.

These Moors were pretty much what the word commonly indicates, a long level tract of somewhat swampy pasture land, extending along the margin of the Kennett, which in other parts so beautiful, rolled heavily and lazily through its abundant, but somewhat coarse, herbage; a dreary and desolate place when compared with the general scenery of our richly-wooded and thickly-peopled country, and; one where the eye, wandering over the dull expanse, unbroken by hill, or hedge,

or timber tree, conveyed, as is often the case in flat, barren, and desolate scenes, an idea of space more than commensurate with the actual extent.

The divisions of this large piece of ground are formed of wide ditches, which at once serve to drain and to irrigate these marshy moors, so frequently overflowed by the river in spring and winter, and sometimes even in summer; it being no unusual catastrophe for the coarse and heavy crops to be carried away by a sudden flood, disappointing the hopes of the farmer, and baffling the efforts of the haymaker. A weary thing was a wet summer in the Chittling Moor, with the hay field one day a swamp, and the next a lake; and the hay, or rather the poor drowned grass, that should have been hay, choking the ditches, or sailing down the stream! The best that could befall it was to be carried off in wagons in its grassy shape, and made up comfortably and snugly on dry ground, in some upland meadow; but people cannot always find room for the outer integuments of three hundred acres of grass land, and, besides that difficulty, the intersecting ditches, with their clattering hollow-sounding wooden bridges, presented no ordinary peril to the heavy wains, so that the landlord was fain to put up with little rent, and the farmer with small profit—too happy if the subsequent grazing paid the charge or the loss of the prolonged and often fruitless hay-harvest.

A dreary scene was the Chittling Moor; a few old willow pollards, the most melancholy of trees, formed the sole break to its dull uniformity, and one small dwelling, whose curling smoke rose in the distance above a clustering orchard, was the only sign of human habitation. This small cottage had been built chiefly to suit the circumstances of the Moor, which rendered a public-house necessary during the long hay-making; and it was kept by a widow, who contrived to make the profits of that watery but drouthy season pay for the want of custom during the rest of the year. Not that the Widow Knight was absolutely without customers at any period; the excellence and celebrity of her home-brewed having ensured to her a certain number of customers, who, especially on Sundays, used to walk down to the Chittling Gate (so was her domicile entitled) to partake of the luxuries of a pipe and a pot of ale, scream to the deaf widow, gossip with her comely daughter, or flirt with her pretty grandchild, (for the whole estab-

ishment was female) as their several ages or dispositions might prompt.

Of this number none was more constant than our present attendant, old Master Green, and it is by no means certain, whether his familiarity with the banks and pollards which afforded the true geranium mould may not have been acquired by his hebdomadal visits to the Widow Knight's snug and solitary ale-house.

Old George Green was indeed a veteran of the tap-room, one to whom strong beer had been for nearly seventy years the best friend and the worst enemy, making him happy and keeping him poor. He called himself eighty-five; and I presume, from the report of other people, as well as his own, (for when approaching that age, vanity generally takes the turn of making itself older,) that he might really be past fourscore. A wonderful man he was of his years, both in appearance and constitution. Hard work had counteracted the ill effects of hard drinking, as an equal quantity of labour, under the form of hard riding, sometimes used to do 'by a jovial fox-hunting squire of former times, and had kept him light, vigorous, and active, as little bent or stiffened by age as the two boys who were delving out the earth under his direction. The only visible mark which age had set upon him—mark did I say? a brand, a fire-brand—was in his nose, which was of the true Bardolphian size and colour, and a certain roll of the eye, which might perhaps, under any circumstances, have belonged to the man and his humour, but which much resembled that of a toper, when half-tipsy, and fancying himself particularly wise.

The very Nestor of village toppers was Master Green; hearty, good-humoured, merry, and jolly, very civil, and a little sly. He was quite patriarchal in the number of his descendants, having had the Mahomedan allowance of four wives, although, after the Christian fashion, successively, and more children and grandchildren than he could conveniently count. Indeed, his computation varied a little, according as he happened to be drunk or sober; for he was proud of his long train of descendants, just as his betters may be proud of a long line of ancestry; and, being no disciple of the Malthusian doctrine, thought he "had done the state" (that is, the parish) "some service," in rearing up a goodly tribe of sons and daughters, many of them in their turn grandfathers and grandmothers, and most of whom had conducted themselves passably

in the world, as times go—thanks probably to a circumstance which he sometimes lamented, their being, men and women, but puny tipplers compared with their jolly progenitor. Even his favourite grandson and namesake, only son and heir of the most prosperous of his innumerable family, Master Green, the thriving carpenter of East Hartley, who, like a dutiful lad, came every Sunday afternoon to the Chitling Gate to meet his grandfather, abandoning for that purpose the cricket-ground at Hartley, where he, a singularly fine young man, had long been accounted the best player—even this favourite grandson was, he declared, little better than a milk-sop, a swallower of tea and soda-water. "I verily believe," said Master Green, "that a pot of double X would upset him!"

A friend and a promoter of matrimony in all its shapes, especially in the guise of a love-match, was our worthy great-grandfather, whether in his own person, or in the person of his descendants. Four wives had he had of happy memory, and he spoke of them all with mingled affection and philosophy, as good sort of women in the main, though the first was somewhat of a slut, the second ugly, the third silly, and the last a scold, which, as he observed, "might be one reason that he missed her so much, poor woman! the house seemed so quiet and *unked*;"—whereupon he sighed, and then, with a roll of his eye and a knowing twist of his Bardolphian nose, began to talk of the necessity of his looking out for a fifth help-mate.

By this time the operation of collecting the geranium mould was in full activity; and the conversation of the old man and the two lively boys, to which we were authorized listeners, and in which my companion soon became an interlocutor, gave us to understand that they were in possession of some farther information respecting Master Green's matrimonial intentions.

"We all know why he goes to the Chitling Gate every Sunday," said Ben, an arch saucy lad, of whom we have before heard.

"Any child may know that," responded Master Green, trying to look demure and innocent, like a young lady when rallied on her admirers; "any child can tell that. The Widow Knight brews the best ale in the parish."

"Ay, but that's not the only reason," said John, a modest youth of sixteen: "is it, Ben?"

"It's reason enough," rejoined Master Green.

"But not *the* reason," retorted Ben.

"What! the widow herself?" quoth my companion.

"Lord, no, sir!" interrupted Ben.

"'T would be a very suitable match, and a snug resting-place; only I'm afraid he would drink up all the ale in the cellar," pursued the interrogator.

"Lord, no, sir!" again exclaimed Ben.

"Master Green thinks the widow too old."

"Too old! Why, she's a score of years younger than himself; but I suppose he prefers the daughter?"

"No, no, sir," rejoined Ben; "she's too old, too. The grand-daughter, the grand-daughter! That's the match for Master Green."

"What! the young pretty girl, Susan Parker, a girl of eighteen, marry a man of eighty! nonsense, Ben."

"They've been asked in church, sir," said John, quietly; "I heard it myself."

"Asked in church! But I thought the young carpenter was after Susan? Asked in church! Master Green, are you rivaling your own grandson?"

"His father, the sick carpenter, would not hear of that match," cried Ben, "because Susan had no money."

"And what does he say to this match, Ben?"

"Sir, he says that he likes it worse than t'other, but that he can't help this; that his

father is an old fool, and must answer for his own folly."

"Well, but Susan! she never can be such a goose. It must be a mistake. Have you really been asked in church, Master Green? Have the banns actually been published?"

"Twice, sir, in full form," answered the old man, gravely. "I wonder your honour did not hear them."

"And is the match really to take place?"

"Next Monday, your honour, God willing."

"Pshaw! nonsense! the thing's impossible! you are all joking."

"Time will prove, sir," rejoined Master Green, still more gravely; and, the geranium mould being now fairly collected, we parted.

And on the next Monday the marriage did take place, sure enough, though not exactly in the way anticipated, George Green the younger proving to be the bridegroom, to the surprise of bridemaids, parson, and clerk: whilst the rich carpenter, unable to resist the double pleadings of his father and his son, and somewhat pleased to be spared the scandal of so youthful a stepmother, forgave the trick and the stolen match; and old George Green, in the fulness of his delight, got tipsier than ever, in honour of his success, and toasted the Widow Knight so often and so heartily in her own home-brewed, that it's odds but he becomes the landlord of that snug ale-house, the Chitting Gate, after all.

END OF VOL. III.

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