

THE
FEMALE FREEMASONS

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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INTRODUCTION.

THE church bells rung joyfully, one fine spring morning, as a carriage and four dashed through the little village of L——, and, finally, stopped at the Park-gate of the Manor-house, where a crowd of villagers and servants were awaiting, with anxiety, its arrival.

Two young ladies and a gentleman bent forward in the carriage, to return the salutations of the country people and domestics; and when the joyful acclamations of the latter had subsided, the postilions slowly drove up the avenue to the hall-door, followed by the crowd. In one mo-

ment both the ladies had alighted ; and, mingling freely with their poorer neighbours, cordially shook hands with many of them ; and returned the homely inquiries of the others with that easy unaffected condescension which wins the affections of both high and low. The gentleman who had accompanied our heroines in the carriage, now came forward, kindly bowing to the people ; and after enquiring of them, if they did not think his wards much grown and improved, during an absence of nine years on the Continent, invited them to sup that evening with his servants, to drink the healths of the future heiresses of the Manor House. The invitation was accepted with shouts and acclamations, which did not cease until Mr. Derby led his wards into the house ; where, telling them, for the hundreth time in his life, to consider it as their present home, and their future property, he conducted them into the drawing-room, where Mrs. Derby was seated on an ottoman, working.

"My dear Sophia," said Mr. Derby, "allow me to introduce my cousins, and adopted children to you, who will in future be their mother."

Mrs. Derby rose to meet her husband, and, kindly embracing her young cousins, begged they would consider Manor House as much their home, as it had been in their father's time; and, perceiving this allusion had not a little affected them, she proposed that they should visit their garden, whilst she ordered tea.

"Charles," continued Mrs. Derby, as that gentleman was following his cousins to the garden, "stay here, my love; for the present you had better leave those dear girls to themselves; the haunts of their childhood will probably call up emotions, they would not like to evince even in the presence of their best and dearest friend."

"You are right, perhaps, Sophia; so I will just visit the stables, and see that the young mare has got a saddle that fits her yet. We must

take our young girls everywhere, and the sooner the better ; so to-morrow we begin our amusements with a long ride."

Diana and Stella Stanhope had not needed a second hint to fly to that garden, where they had spent so many happy days, and from which they had been so long strangers. Every spot seemed to recall some little anecdote which had happened either to themselves or their young companions.

" Ah, Diana !" exclaimed Stella, " do you remember that day, almost the last we spent at dear L——, when you and I, with the young Drakes, sat gathering the nuts off this very tree, and poor mamma came and scolded us for eating such poisonous trash, as she termed it ? Oh, what days of unhappiness we have seen since then !"

" Yes," replied Diana, leaning against the tree in question, " we early knew what grief was ; but let us forget what is past ! a bright prospect is before us ;—with Mr. Derby, who can

fail of being happy?—*à propos*, shall we call on the Drakes, or shall they call on us?"

"Of course they must call first," replied Stella. "Shall we receive them coolly, or warmly?"

"That entirely depends upon themselves. If they choose to act the fine ladies, we will show them that two can play at that game."

"But, after all, remember they are our earliest, our best friends," replied Stella.

"That must be proved; I am sure I wish to be friends; but I will not bear affectation from Helen Drake."

"I dare say we shall find them nice girls after all," said Stella; "but nice, or not nice, we must not let them cut us out."

"No fear of the Drakes cutting out the heir-esses of Manor House," replied Diana, laughing.

"But Mrs. Derby may have a son, or daughter yet," said Stella.

"May have—to be sure—well! I should not

object ; for I think it would make Mr. Derby so happy ! But had not we better return to the house, and not keep our dear cousin waiting tea for us ?”

Diana and Stella Stanhope were the only daughters of General Stanhope ; their father and brother dying whilst they were very young. Mrs. Stanhope continued living at Manor House, in the hopes that the next male heir, Mr. Derby (who would, on attaining his majority, succeed to all the property) might make a match with one of her daughters ; although, at that time, Mr. Derby was only nineteen, and Diana seven years old ; but Charles Derby had, for some time, been the secret admirer of a Miss Freeman, who had just been introduced ; and, without the knowledge of their friends, the lovers had been affianced. On Charles Derby's one-and-twentieth birth-day, he made his proposals, in due form, to Mr. Freeman, who, being a clergyman, with a large family, made

no objections; and, when everything was arranged, Mr. Derby informed Mrs. Stanhope of his intentions; begging, at the same time, that she would not make his wedding an excuse for leaving Manor House, as though, by his great-uncle's will, it was to fall to him, as soon as he married, yet he could not bear the idea of his little cousins, Diana and Stella, quitting that home to which they were so fondly attached. Mrs. Stanhope, on receiving this letter, was incensed at her nephew having formed a match without her knowledge; and particularly vexed that her schemes for her daughters should have failed; therefore, without even answering Mr. Derby's letter, she left Manor House for London; and the sorrow expressed by her children on leaving home only served to hasten her departure.

Charles Derby, on his return from Mr. Freeman's parsonage, found Manor House quite deserted; he questioned the servants, who in-

formed him that Mrs. Stanhope had left at eight o'clock the preceding evening.

Derby was all astonishment; but without wasting more time, he ordered fresh horses to his carriage, and followed his aunt to town; luckily he stopped at the same hotel, and it was not difficult to prevail on Mrs. Stanhope's servants to show him their apartments, for young Mr. Derby was a general favourite with all who knew him. After a very cold reception from his aunt, and a most joyful one from his little cousins, all that Mr. Derby could obtain towards a reconciliation, was permission for Diana and Stella to spend two days with himself at Manor House; and immediately on their return Mrs. Stanhope declared her resolution to set out for the continent. The three cousins returned from their short holiday to their dear home, and the pleasures of those two days were never effaced from the minds of either party; on their return to town Mr. Derby saw them set off for Dover, and

with a heavy heart bent his steps towards home. Sometime after his marriage he wrote to his cousins a description of his Sophia, accompanying the letter with beautiful presents from his bride as well as himself. Diana and Stella, who had never ceased lamenting and crying for their former home, and dear cousin Derby, dried their tears on the receipt of this parcel, which made them so happy; but their joy was short-lived: Mrs. Stanhope, angry at Mr. Derby's writing to his cousins before herself, and irritated at seeing how deeply her children loved their cousin and their home, returned the presents, with an injunction to Mr. Derby never again to intrude himself upon her, or address any more letters to her children. This last command was disobeyed, and all the blame fell upon poor Diana and Stella; they were directly sent to a convent at Paris, where they remained until they were fifteen and sixteen, without once seeing their mother during a space of seven years. At the

end of this period Mrs. Stanhope was taken suddenly ill, and before a messenger could reach her daughters, expired alone and unattended, except by servants. On this melancholy event, her own maid, who had been much attached to Mr. Derby when in England, wrote the distressing account of her mistress's death to that gentleman, who lost no time in flying to see the last respects payed to his lamented aunt; and immediately after joined his young cousins at Paris: and as he was left their guardian by Mrs. Stanhope's will, he proposed moving them directly from their convent; but though it was impossible that much filial affection could have existed between his wards and their mother, from her unkind conduct towards them, in banishing them for some years from her presence, yet still the shock of their parent's decease came so suddenly, and affected them so much, that they declared, for the next year, they would rather remain where they were. And as

Derby knew that, whilst in mourning they could not go out, he did not say much to them on the subject, but after passing six weeks with them, returned to L——.

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“To-morrow, my dear Stella, only think, to-morrow, cousin Charles comes, and once more we shall see home ! Only think ! I am seventeen, and you eighteen,—nine long years have passed since we have seen our beloved home !” Such were the words of Diana Stanhope a few days before their departure for that home at which we have seen them arrive. But to return to Mrs. Derby’s tea-table.

“Well, my angels,” exclaimed Mr. Derby, as Diana and Stella entered the drawing-room, “Do you find all your old favourites well ?”

“Oh ! Mr. Derby, you have taken such care of our favourite nut-tree, and our little American creeper ! but we do not see our old arbour,” said Stella.

"I thought you would miss it, my dears, but it was not my fault; when we let the place two years ago, the tiresome people pulled it down, for fear their children should take cold sitting in it."

"What nonsense!" said Diana; "I am certain we never took cold there, did we, Derby? Do not you remember the time when you used to play in it with us and the young Drakes?"

"Indeed, I do; I recollect you used both to sit on my knee; and sometimes we used to get the donkey in there—to make him jump; *à-propos*, you will meet all your young friends to-morrow, as I mean to take you visiting."

"With all my heart," said Stella; "but tell me, first, what the Drakes are like: is Helen grown up well-looking?"

"A perfect fright! you need not be jealous,—she has been out these two years, therefore is a wall-flower; Edith is to come out this summer; she is not well-looking,—you will cut them both out."

“Your old friend, Miss Osmond, has made many enquiries about you,” said Mrs. Derby; “she is a very fine showy girl, and all the gentlemen admire her very much.”

“What Bona Osmond! why, if she turned out what she promised, she must be a monster,” replied Diana.

“She is certainly on the large scale,” said Mrs. Derby.

“And has such a mouth!” echoed Mr. Derby.

“And is Gertrude pretty?” asked Stella.

“Yes, very much so, and very elegant; but nothing to my girls,” said Mr. Derby.

“Is Miss North grown up much plainer than she was?” enquired Diana.

“I think there is not much difference,” replied Mr. Derby; “but, perhaps, I am not a judge, wait until you see for yourselves.”

“I am certain you will be both delighted with Mrs. Henry Crosby,” said Mrs. Derby; “she is such a nice young person, just twenty-one; and

Henry Crosby, I hear, was quite an old flirt of yours."

"Oh, he is such an old man now!" exclaimed the young ladies, laughing, "we will not quarrel about him."

"Old," said Mr. Derby, "why he is not thirty."

"*N'importe*, I consider him old enough to be my Pa," replied Stella, yawning; "but I am very tired, so I will go to bed. Adieu, cousin Derby—*au revoir*!"

"I see, plainly," said Mrs. Derby, when the Stanhopes had withdrawn, "that they will be the belles of L——."

"I never had a doubt on the subject, my dear Sophia," replied her husband; "really they are perfect, and so very clever; Oh! Miss Osmond will be nothing to them! just wait, and you will see what matches they will make. I intend Mr. Leicester Stafford for Diana, and young Wat Etherington for Stella."

"But why give the richest man in the country to Stella, in preference to Diana?"

"You know Stella is my favourite; but really both Stafford and Etherington are so well off, it does not much matter which way it is."

"Let them choose for themselves," replied Mrs. Derby; "they may not admire either of your beaux."

"We shall see," said Mr. Derby, as he lighted a taper and retired.

* * * *

"So we are once more friends," said Diana Stanhope to Helen Drake.

"Yes; was there any reason for our not being so?" replied Miss Drake.

"None at all," said Stella, "except that in one of your letters to Paris you gave yourself a few airs."

"I might retaliate," returned Helen; "for in one of your letters I thought you really conceited

—nothing but an account of yourself through the letter—”

“Never mind about the letters now,” interrupted Edith.

“Stella and I may as well tell you of our plans,” said Diana.

“Plans ! what plans can you have ?” exclaimed the Drakes.

“Plans for our future aggrandisement,” said Diana, laughing. “The fact is, we want to make a Club, or a Society. We are to have a secret, and all the members must take a solemn oath not to divulge it.”

“An oath ! oh, how shocking !” screamed the Drakes.

“Not at all so,” replied Stella. “We have already two members, and all we want to know is whether you will like to join us ?”

“I must first know what your rules are,” said Helen.

"To begin," returned Diana, "we mean to be faithful to our king, our religion, and our country. We are to assist our fellow-sisters whenever we meet, should they be in want; we are to pay a certain sum into the Secretary's hand every month, towards purchasing clothes and fuel for the poor; once a week we are to meet and work for them; and, once a month, the treasurer or secretary is to produce his accounts, or, rather, her accounts. This is to be our grand day, when our President is to make a speech and resign the office, which is only held monthly. All the members wear a black ribbonet with a little silver cross, and all must take an oath not to betray our secret."

"I do not see any harm in this," said Helen; "so I have no objection to become one of your society. What is the name of it?"

"The Female Freemasons," replied Stella.

"Do you admit married ladies?" said Edith.

"Oh, no! married ladies would tell their

husbands' said Diana. "Well, Helen, to-morrow, Edith and you shall become members; but, I forgot to say, no one can be admitted without writing a long or a short tale, as may suit them, into the 'Freemasons' book."

"Gracious!" exclaimed the Drakes; "what shall we do? Did your two friends who are to become members write a story each?"

"Yes, to be sure," replied Stella; "you will hear them read on our first meeting."

"What are the titles?"

"Caroline Power wrote 'Cecil, or the Odd Boy:' and Louisa wrote 'Stanley Brereton.'"

"What a sweet name the latter is!"

"Do you think so?" replied Stella: "really it may be, but I never thought much about it. Well, as soon as you can compose your tales, you shall be admitted. Do you think Bona Osmond would like to be a freemason?"

"Without doubt," said Edith.

"You may propose it to her then; you know the regulations?" said Diana.

“Very well : I shall see them to-morrow ; but where are you going to ?”

“Home,” said the Stanhopes ; “so, adieu ! for Mr. Derby is to drive us out this evening.”

The Drakes looked disappointed, and the friends parted.

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The Female Freemasons had for two years flourished, and numbers flocked daily to gain admittance ; but, where pedigree was wanting, nothing could be effected. On that point the founders of the club were immovable. One evening, after the annual feast, a trifling dispute about who should be proposed for Secretary occurred. After no small agitation, the Miss Stanhopes took the affair into their own management ; and, to the astonishment of Helen Drake, then the worthy President, ordered her to sit down and be silent. The Drakes, incensed at such a contempt being displayed for their authority, did not hold their tongues ; and the scene that ensued was like

the confusion of Babel. From words they went to threats—from threats to blows—until half of the Freemasons, who had sworn to assist each other, lay scattered on the floor, whilst the Miss Stanhopes, taking the chair, declared the meeting dissolved. The parties separated; and, in a few days, the weddings of the Miss Stanhopes being declared, all the other young ladies wished to renew the meeting without them. A meeting was held for this purpose, when the female sisters were petrified by seeing Mr. Leicester Stafford and Mr. Etherington arise from under one of the benches, just as Mrs. President was making a speech. Bursts of laughter ensued; and the unluckly volume of “Tales of the Female Freemasons” having been discovered by the quick eye of Mr. Leicester Stafford, it was carried off by the gentlemen with loud shouts. Shame be it to Miss Stanhopes, who never once attempted a rescue, although they well knew their power over their intended husbands. Suffice it

to say, this event completely destroyed the meetings of the Female Freemasons. The Drakes were angry ; so were the Osmonds ; and so was every one—but all to no purpose : and a few weeks after Mrs. Leicester Stafford's and Mrs. Wat Etherington's weddings, they had the pleasure of seeing a new work appear, edited by those ladies, under the title of "The Female Freemasons."

CECIL MERRYVILLE.



CECIL MERRYVILLE.

"And yet poor Edwin was no vulgar boy:
Deep thought oft seem'd to fix his infant eye.

* * * * *
Silent when glad; affectionate, though shy;

* * * * *

Some deem'd him wondrous wise, and some believed him
mad."

Beattie.

"WELL, Lucy! so I find poor Cecil has returned home again. How is that?"

"Why yes, he has, the stupid boy! I am sure I wish him in heaven! this is the second time he has left Eton, and no one can find out why he did it; he likes his masters and every thing; but he is so dreadfully stupid."

"I thought he was reckoned clever! but, at any rate, you should not speak so of your brother."

"A pretty brother it is too; I am sure he is likely to grace the gallows some day."

"For shame! for shame, I say! to speak so of poor Cecil; he never did you any harm."

"Yes, but he did though. He was trouble and expense enough at Eton, but now he is likely to be a burthen to us all his life. Pa and Ma wanted him to be a sailor, but he would not; and a commission was too dear."

"Poor fellow! how I pity him! So handsome, and with such good talents as he has, he might have made his way in the world. Indeed, Lucy, you ought to be kinder to him than you are."

"Me, indeed, Lizzy! aye, it will be some time ere I am kind to such a fool: it was a pity, when he set out on his travels, that any one sent him back."

"Well, Lucy, I can only say that I will be kind to him, for I know the poor fellow feels the unkindness you show him. But now come to the house; I want to see your mother."

Cecil Merryville, the subject of this discourse, was the third son of a gentleman of moderate fortune; he had been sent to Eton, where he remained till he was fourteen, when he suddenly disappeared from school; but was soon after discovered at Southampton, and brought back; but, on being questioned, he replied, that he liked his school and masters; and that he was well treated; and he would give no reason for quitting. He was sent back, but had scarcely been there two years more, when he again left it in a waggon, and being set down in London, at Charing-cross, and not being able to give any account of himself, he was shut up that night in the guard-house; and, next morning, being taken to a magistrate, a friend of Mr. Merryville, he was put into a coach, and conveyed home. No one could discover why he left; he was liked by his companions, and praised for his talents by the masters, but he persisted in remaining silent, except he declared that he would

leave school again as soon as sent there ; therefore his parents determined to keep him at home. He seldom or never spoke ; he would slide into his place at meal-times, and when he had finished, slide out again ; he continued to study a certain part of the day in his own room, conveying books there from the library : the rest of the day he wandered about the country, or the garden ; his brothers were away, and his eldest sister haughtily repulsed all his attempts to gain her affections, whilst the youngest was his only companion ; but the little girl was only three years old, and could not accompany him far ; the very time when the conversation between his sister and her friend Lizzy was taking place, poor Cecil was behind a hedge with his little sister ; his own name caught his ear, and his heart was wounded by his sister's unfeeling language. " And does she then wish me gone ? am I then still a burthen to my parents ? " burst from his lips, as he flung himself on the grass, as

soon as they were gone. "Then I will go," continued he, "for no one cares for me, no one loves me ! Yes, thou," continued he, addressing the little Charlotte, "thou carest for me ! thou wilt cry when I am gone ; and Lizzy Musgrave, she too feels for me—her feeling heart can imagine what I feel." As those thoughts passed his mind, he rose, and, taking his sister by the hand, proceeded to the house.

"Well, my dear Miss Musgrave," said Mrs. Merryville, "I am glad you are here ; I was just going to write to your mother, to know if she, and your Papa, will allow you to come to a little dance next week, which we propose giving, in honour of Lucy's completing her fifteenth year."

"Oh, madam, I am very much obliged to you ; and I am sure Papa will let me accept your kind invitation. I know he also proposes giving one when I am fourteen, which will be next week also."

“ I hope then you will let me know, my dear. But now, Miss Musgrave, let me ask if you have seen my odd boy ?”

“ Who, madam ?”

“ My odd boy ! Cecil, I mean ; I call him my odd boy, because he is so sulky ; he will never speak more than necessary.”

“ Why, indeed, I should have thought it rather a virtue than a failing, in a boy of his age, to be modest and unobtrusive ; most boys are too forward, I have heard ladies say : but really I should think poor Cecil rather modest, than obstinate, though, as I am but a child, I cannot pretend to judge.”

At this instant Cecil entered the room, and taking up a book, sat down, without appearing to notice any one.

“ Cecil,” said her mother, “ do you not see Miss Mulgrave ?” but Cecil did not reply ; he did not even raise his eyes. “ There !” exclaimed Mrs. Merryville, “ there ! you see he

pretends not to hear or see us; may I not well call him an odd boy?"

"Cecil, you stupid blockhead!" exclaimed his sister, "why do you pretend not to see my friend Lizzy?"

Cecil now rose, and approaching Miss Musgrave,

"Miss Musgrave," said he, "will accept my apologies for not seeing her, or speaking to her."

"Certainly," said she, extending her hand to him, which he took and pressed, whilst his eyes brimmed with tears.

"That is well said, Cecil; that is the first gentlemanlike speech I ever heard you make, and good need you had to make it, for Miss Musgrave has been defending your character, and will not let me call you an odd boy."

Poor Cecil blushed at this, and his dark skin became even more suffused, when Lizzy, who saw and pitied, added, "I am always fond of odd people, as I am rather odd myself; there-

fore, if Mr. Cecil, who I understand loves long rambles, will ever favor my home with his presence, we will do our best to countenance each other ; and as I have no brother, perhaps I may at last persuade Lucy, who has many, to spare me one ; and as you, Mr. Cecil, are two years older than me, I will choose you for my brother and protector."

" Indeed, Miss Musgrave," he replied, with a warmth he had never before displayed, " indeed, I will be anything to you, and do anything for you, you like."

" Then mind, brother Cecil, you come and see me to-morrow ; for the present, attend me to my horse, and see me off ; and now good bye to you Mrs. Merriville, and you Lucy ; and I must say, I congratulate both myself and you on this visit,—you for having lost a supernumerary brother, myself for having gained an invaluable one." So saying, the merry Lizzy left the room, and having mounted her pony, and

shaken hands with poor Cecil, she galloped home.

"What a nice little girl Miss Musgrave is," observed Mrs. Merryville next morning at breakfast.

"Yes," replied Lucy; "but it is a pity she is so very little of her age."

"Weeds grow apace," was the sententious remark Cecil made, who had hitherto never spoken, and who now sunk into his usual silence.

"Yes," said his father, "Lizzy Musgrave is a nice girl, she is very pretty though so little, and she is said to be very clever."

"She has had every advantage, at any rate," replied Mrs. Merryville; "an only child, and heiress to a large fortune, besides three months each year she spends at Bath."

"Still she must be clever to profit by these advantages," said Mr. Merryville.

"Humph," said his lady, who did not like any one to be thought prettier or cleverer than

her own daughter, "other people may have the same talents without opportunity of displaying them."

Now no one would ever have thought of comparing Lucy Merryville with Lizzy Musgrave. The former was a tall showy girl, with haughty manners, and little education: Lucy could dance, play a little music, and sing a little, and had a slight smattering of French. Lizzy had a beautiful face, superb hair, and a small and delicately made figure, lively yet modest, she had received a sound education as well as learned some of the accomplishments; but Lucy had been educated for show, and Lizzy for her own future happiness.

After the short conversation we have related, a silence ensued, which was broken by Mr. Merryville's exclaiming, "Why, Cecil, what have you done? What are you doing?" Mrs. Merryville turned and perceived Cecil with all his might grasping a knife in his hand, from

which a torrent of blood was pouring ; he had not been listening to what was said, but plunged in his own meditations, he had clasped his knife so tight that it entered his flesh.

"La ! Cecil," said his mother, " why you have cut your hand ; well, what were you thinking of ?"

"Nothing, mother," coolly replied the astonished Cecil, awakening as if from a dream ; "it is nothing, Papa," continued he, seeing his father hastening to him. So saying, and taking out his handkerchief, he bound his hand up.

"La ! Cecil, what an odd boy you are !" said his unindulgent mother, "to frighten me so by cutting your hand, and then to say it is nothing, and you were thinking of nothing."

Poor Cecil replied not ; but having wrapped up his wounded hand, took up his hat, and walked out of the room.

Lizzy Musgrave's birth-day was celebrated the first.

“Do not you dance?” and “may I have the pleasure of dancing with you?” were constantly heard.

Lizzy looked all enjoyment, and all happiness.

Waltzing commenced. One couple was the admiration of the room; the lady was beautiful; her dress was all white, a satin petticoat, and over it a crape dress. The rich luxuriance of her long dark brown tresses, which floated over her snowy shoulders, was only confined by a bandeau of pearls; her finely moulded arms and throat were also encircled by them. The gentleman, too, was strikingly handsome, and he moved with grace and ease through that beautiful dance, with his fine eyes resting admiringly on his beautiful partner; but when they met the happy laughing gaze of his fairy partner, even his gravity gave way to a smile. Unknown to themselves, they were the admiration of the whole room; and when Cecil conducted Lizzy to her seat, they were followed by her godfather, Colonel Delamaine.

“ Well, my little god-daughter,” said he, “ you have acquitted yourself very well ; I only wish my poor boy was alive, to be your partner. May I enquire who your cavalier is ? ”

“ He is my brother Cecil, of whom I have often told you,—Mr. Cecil Merryville, Colonel Delamaine.”

“ I hope, Mr. Cecil, we shall be better acquainted some day.”

Cecil returned a grateful bow, and the Colonel continued.

“ If ever you chance to be in town, I hope my Lizzy’s brother will call on me, and we will improve our acquaintance, or else we must wait till my return into the country. Well, Lizzy, I see you have deserted your old friend, Markham, for your new one.”

“ Oh no, not deserted ! only then a brother is nearer, and, of course, dearer, than a friend, and Mr. Markham is with his regiment, so he cannot be with me so often as Cecil.” Then wishing to turn the conversation, she exclaimed :

“ Dear Papa, what a pretty ring that is ! you never showed it me.”

“ Pooh ! well, I was just going to give it you, that you might present it to Markham, but now I think you must give it Mr. Merryville ; why do you say no to it ? what, you will not ? then I must. Mr. Merryville, this lady has commissioned me to give you this emerald.” So saying, he put the ring on Cecil’s finger, who was going to express his thanks, when Lizzy exclaimed—

“ Oh, Godpa, how kind you are ; I shall never thank you enough !”

“ But recollect, Lizzy, I gave it to cousin, and not brother Cecil. Oh, no ! a brother is dearer than a cousin, you say. Ay, you little rogue, but I think you will make a cousin’s business of it !” and, patting her blushing cheek, he added, “ there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother ; remember that.”

“ Then it is not a Godpapa, at arty rate !”

said Lizzy, as she skipped away, laughing at her own answer.

"Well, Musgrave," said Colonel Delamaine to Lizzy's father, "I quite envy you, in possessing such a lively darling as our Lizzy."

"She is, indeed, every thing that can gratify the heart of the fondest parent; and I should be ungrateful not to acknowledge what a blessing she is."

"Aye! aye! Musgrave, you have good right to be fond of her. I once had a boy, of whom I was as proud; but now——"

He paused and drew his hand across his eyes. "But no more of this! What a handsome modest lad is that young Merryville!"

"That is the one who ran off from Eton, as I told you."

"What, that one? is it possible? what could be his inducement? But, Musgrave, have a care, for though Lizzy now calls him brother, the time may come when he will steal her heart away."

“ I do not think it. He is an amiable lad ; but then he is a younger son ; and, from his unfinished education, not fit for a profession.”

“ For all that, she may love him ; when young people are much together, riches are sometimes overlooked.”

“ Certainly ; but if they like each other, I see no objection, Colonel ; for Lizzy, you know, will have three thousand a-year on my death ; and her mother and I place so much confidence in her good sense, that we are determined to let her choose for herself. If she were to live here all her life, this girlish fancy might continue ; but when she goes into the world, we shall see her pride put to contend with her love.”

“ Well, Musgrave, perhaps you are right ; for though she might, perhaps, command title with another, she may only find happiness with this one. But there goes the subject of our conversation with another smart beau ; so let us go and watch the dancers.” So saying, he took the

arm of his friend, and approached the gay crowd.

The day after Lizzy's birth-day, Colonel De-lamaine quitted Staplake; and the same evening a message came from Mrs. Merryville, to know if Cecil had been there that day. No! no Cecil had been seen. He had not been seen that day at breakfast, but that had created no surprise, as he frequently absented himself for some hours; next day, at an early hour, Lizzy rode over to the Merryvilles to enquire after poor Cecil, and found that Cecil had set the seal on his own address by abandoning his home; that morning's post had brought a note posted from B—, merely stating, that tired of being a burthen to his family, he had gone to seek his fortune elsewhere, and concluded by saying, "Miss Musgrave may rest assured of my everlasting gratitude to her for her kindness to me; others may judge harshly of my conduct, but she never will."

“ Well !” exclaimed his mother, after Lizzy had perused this epistle, “ did you ever see anything so odd ? What an odd boy he is to leave so comfortable a home, where he has his own way in everything, for his father never contradicts him in anything. I can only say, I would never have treated him so, but people never know when they are well off, and he always was an odd boy to manage.”

“ What an unfeeling mother, and how different from my own dear kind parents !” thought Lizzy.

But now let us pursue “ the odd boy.” Without well knowing what to do, poor Cecil left his home, and getting on the coach, was carried to B——. It was evening when he again stationed himself on the outside of one of the London coaches. He was scarcely seated, when, to his surprise, he found Colonel Delamaine stepping into the inside; fearing to be discovered, he wrapped his cloak about him, and pulled down his travelling cap so as to cover his features,

and the coach set off without any discovery taking place. But they had scarcely attained New-Common, when one of the leaders became restive, and succeeded in getting his leg over the traces; the coachman fearing an overturn might take place, desired the passengers to quit the coach, which they all did; but Colonel Delamaine was asleep, and when awoke swore they were all fools, and that he would not stir; but Cecil, forgetting his own fears of discovery in that of any accident befalling a friend of the Musgraves, and trusting to the darkness of the night and his own costume, urged him so, that at length the Colonel was descending, when unluckily he placed his foot, which was tender from the gout, on one of those sharp flints with which W——shire abounds; and such was the pain this occasioned, that it caused him to fall forward on a heap of the same stones; the Colonel did not suffer any injury, but Cecil, who fell directly under him, received a deep cut in the

temple, from which the blood gushed profusely. Colonel Delamaine was a kind-hearted man, and when he saw the wound, he instantly proceeded to bind it up. The darkness still preventing him from recognizing Cecil, and the coach being righted, and the leader brought to order, he insisted on Cecil's occupying the inside with him, which was vacant, till they should arrive at R—— to get his wound dressed; when there, they were ushered into a lighted room, and a surgeon was sent for, who came and pronounced the wound not dangerous, though likely to leave a scar behind; on his departure the Colonel took Cecil's hand, saying, "What! was it Mr. Merryville that I have so unintentionally wounded?"

"Yes, sir," said Cecil, "I am him, and I am glad that by this accident I have prevented your hurting yourself, and so partly repaid your kindness to me."

At this moment they were summoned to the coach, which was waiting.

"In what part of London do your friends live?" said the Colonel, as soon as they were seated.

"I have no friends there," was the calm reply.

"What! leaving your friends a third time? is it possible? What will your mother say?"

"Nothing!"

"And your sister?"

"—That she is well rid of me."

"Nay, but, young man, do you forget that Lizzy is an heiress, and might have, in time, become yours?"

"What, the wife of a poor fortuneless fellow? No, Miss Musgrave has a right to look higher; and, though I might have wished it, I might not dare hope it. Had I not then better remove out of her way?"

"Well, Cecil, you are really an extraordinary boy! I like and honour your frankness. Will you tell me what you mean to do?"

“ Enlist as a soldier, or get into some vessel, or anything for a livelihood.”

“ Will you come and live with me, and be my son ?”

“ You have children, and I must not deprive them of anything.”

“ No, Cecil ! I am childless ; once I had a son, of whom your noble frankness reminds me, and I could wish to adopt you. But tell me, Cecil, will you be my son ; or what can I do to oblige you ? I am rich,—ask what you like.”

“ And will you then be my father ?” cried Cecil with rapturous gratitude, seizing the Colonel’s hand, and pressing it to his heart.

“ Yes, Cecil ; and henceforth you shall take my name. Mrs. Delamaine, I know, will love you.”

“ Ah, sir ! but till I am forgotten by my friends, you must send me from England.”

“ No, my dear boy, I will not. You shall have anything you like, but you must not leave

me yet. Wait till you have seen your new mother and your new home a little ; and then, if you like to go, you may. You shall have a commission in the army ; and, in Captain Cecil Delamaine, no one will recognize Cecil Merryville."

"Oh, sir, you are too kind ! and I cannot refuse going to your house and being your son ; yet I had rather go abroad for a little."

"And why?" inquired the Colonel.

"Why, sir, you know I have had little education ; and a few years spent in foreign service would do me good."

"And where would you go?"

"To India, dear sir. Give me a commission, and let me prove myself worthy of being your son indeed."

"Well, Cecil, I will see ; but as yet you are young for that. But, never fear ; if it is your wish, two months hence you shall have it."

Colonel Delamaine took Cecil home with him, and there he remained for two months. In the

Colonel's lady he found a kind-hearted woman, who was ever ready to second any of the Colonel's plans, for the benefit of their adopted son; and Cecil soon learned to feel a warm attachment towards his benefactors.

It was a few days after Cecil had completed his seventeenth year, that Colonel Delamaine presented him with a commission in a regiment about to embark for India.

Thither our hero went; and, after encountering the usual troubles of a long and stormy passage, such as sickness and long confinement, he arrived in that land, to which his wishes had long pointed. We do not mean to follow him here through all his difficulties and dangers. Suffice it to say that he was a brave officer, and that he returned home after five years' absence, and shortly after exchanged into the —th Lancers. Colonel Delamaine received his gallant adopted son with truly paternal warmth; but Cecil was no longer the bashful boy he formerly

was. Well informed, well dressed, a showy figure, and handsome face, and with the deserved appellation of a gallant officer, Cecil quickly became a favourite of that sex who are generally won by valour, nor was he less liked by his own.

Good-natured, generous, polite, and, above all, having always plenty of money at his command, he was beloved by his regiment, and a favourite with all; for, the first week after his appearance in the gay world of London, it was a wonder why his father should have kept the heir so long in the back-ground; and it was kindly supposed he was an awkward lout; but when known by them, both ogling daughters, aspiring mothers, and tight-laced aunts, declared him a perfect eligible; and many were the beautiful eyes that darted arrows at him; and many a white hand, or pretty foot, were displayed before him, without bringing one syllable of love from him. What could be the cause of such hardness of heart? Was he insensible to

female charms? No, far from it! How then could he escape all those snares laid for him by the beautiful, the witty, and the gay? Not by being insensible to them, but, because, even before he quitted England, his heart had received an impression which time and absence had not been able to efface; a remembrance of a lovely being still floated in his mind; the idea of being ever worthy of her had even supported him through every sort of danger and fatigue; and, now that he was returned to his home, he only ardently desired to see her, and lay his laurels at the feet of one to whom he felt bound by gratitude and affection.

Will not our readers guess that the object of his love was Lizzy Musgrave?

Lizzy was now in her twentieth year, and was, at this time; at Bath, with her parents and her young friend Lucy, who had accompanied her there, in search of conquests, not easily made, where her character was known; for though, at

first sight, her showy figure might attract, yet her manners were not such as to create friendship. She was dashing, haughty, vain; but, though now in her twenty-first year, she had not received a single offer. Lizzy, it is not to be supposed, escaped so;—a beautiful figure, small, and about the middle size, with a lovely face, a good understanding, modesty, and spirit, were themselves sufficient attractions for young men of fortune; whilst, to fortune-hunters, the beautiful heiress would have been an invaluable prize.

Amongst Lizzy's former admirers were Captain Charles Merryville,—Cecil's eldest brother, the pride of his mother, and Captain in a marching regiment. He was what is called an amiable young man,—a round face, high colour, light hair, a long neck, and ugly figure, together with a small portion of common-sense, and great goodnature. His brother Edmund was also amongst the competitors for Lizzy's hand. He was considered clever, and was, therefore,

destined for the law; but, he was ugly and loutish. These were two of her suitors, nor can it be wondered at that she refused such beaux, particularly after having spent a season in London: but yet, not among her more fashionable suitors could she find one to her taste; and, when pressed by her father on the subject, she would reply—

“Why, dear Papa, we ladies are no sooner freed from one yoke, than you wish to load us with another! Here, am I, just finished my education, and liberated from the restraints of masters, and now you want to give me a fresh master; and not only for a few hours, but for my whole life.”

Lizzy, as we have before mentioned, was now at Bath, and Cecil determined to go there, too; and accordingly set off. (Colonel Delamaine, who had intended to accompany him, being detained in London by business), and, arrived at the York Hotel. That very night there was a

public ball, to which he determined to go, in the hope of seeing Lizzy. It was not without some trepidation that he could arrange his toilet; never had he before found his valet so awkward, or his dress so troublesome! and having, at last, completed his toilet to his satisfaction, and ordered a fly, he drove off, and was soon mingling with the gay crowd of dancers. He had not been there long, when he heard some one utter the name of Miss Musgrave; and, turning round, he recognized a young officer, by name Marshall, whom he had known in India, in conversation with a beautiful girl; his heart beat high, as he concluded that must be Miss Musgrave. His friend soon saw him, and, leaving his partner, joined him.

"I am a stranger here," said Delamaine, after the first salutation; "cannot you introduce me to some ladies, Alfred?"

"Oh, willingly!" replied Marshall, "to any one you like!"

“ Who is that beautiful girl you were speaking to? and who is that other fine one, who has just come up to her?”

“ The former is Miss Musgrave, an heiress; and the latter is a friend, from the same part of the country, Miss Merryville.”

“ Indeed!” exclaimed Cecil; “ and will you introduce me to them? I should like to know them, as Colonel Delamaine is godfather to a Miss Musgrave, and I think it must be the same.”

“ Very well! come, and I will introduce you; although I see you will add one more to my list of rivals.” They had now approached the ladies, and he continued,—“ Miss Musgrave, allow me to introduce you to my friend, Captain Delamaine, who, from that honourable scar on his forehead, is surnamed Le Balaféré.”

“ I believe,” said Delamaine, “ my father, Colonel Delamaine, has the honour of knowing your family, Miss Musgrave.”

"Oh, yes!" she replied, "he is my godfather, and you are his son, who have been in India. He wrote to Papa, to say he meant to come to Bath; is he here?"

"No, indeed! I am sorry to say he has been detained by business."

"How did you like India? I should think that scar on your forehead, to which your friend alluded, would make you regret being there," said Miss Merryville, unwittingly addressing her own brother.

"Oh, that is the fate of war, Lucy," said Miss Musgrave; "besides, it is lucky for us ladies, it is there; for, though his hair is now brushed over it, at another time we might see it; which would render Captain Delamaine less likely to steal your heart, Lucy."

"I did not think," said Delamaine, rather vexed at this notice of the least attractive part of his face, "that the scar was visible."

"Oh, cousin of Delamaine, be not vexed; it

will serve to remind you that, for once in your life, you faced the enemy.

"Indeed," replied he, "it was good before I went abroad, when quite a lad, and I ought to be proud of it, as, by gaining it, I preserved my father from obtaining it."

At this time the music commenced, and Cecil had the pleasure of leading Lily, as his partner, to join the dance.

"Ah!" exclaimed Lord Henry Parnell, who just came up, "how sorry I am to see you engaged, Miss Masgrave; nothing I assure you, would have induced me to come here, but the hopes of having so charming a partner. But I hope next dance to have better luck." So saying, Lord Henry passed on to where Lucy was sitting.

"Well, Miss 'Merryville,'" said he, "I hope you are not engaged for this dance?"

"Yes, indeed, I am; I expect my partner directly."

"Well, how unfortunate I am to-night! may I enquire who your friend is dancing with?"

"Oh, it is a Captain Delamaine, of the Lancers, I believe; not long come from India,—some relation, I think."

"Indeed! and when did he arrive?"

"I really cannot tell; but to-day I believe. He has got a shocking scar on his forehead; but here comes, at last, my beau."

"Oh, my dear Miss Merryville, I was afraid I was late for you to dance!" exclaimed Count Zelinsky, as he ambled up to his partner.

"La! Count, what could make you so long?"

"Oh, I was talk to some old vriend, vone Count vat is just arrived, and I did promise to bring him here, and introduce him to de most beautiful of ladies!" bowing to his partner; "and so I was just going to bring him, when I did hear de music; but den I did run off."

"Did you like India?" enquired Lizzy of her partner.

“ No, I cannot say I did much relish the climate ; and I was delighted to return home.”

“ Has Mr. Marshall been long known to you ?”

“ Yes, we were in the same regiment ; and once he rendered me a great service.”

“ Indeed ! what was it ?”

“ Why, we, and a party of other officers, were diverting ourselves with a tiger hunt, when one of those furious animals, having sprung on my elephant, dragged me to the ground, and would have made off with me, but Marshall fired, and so accurately, that the animal fell dead. My sensations, you may imagine, were not very agreeable, at first, on finding myself in the grasp of so ferocious an animal ; but in a few minutes I had lost my senses.”

“ How terrible !” said his fair partner.

“ Does Miss Merryville reside at Bath ?” asked Delamaine.

“ Oh, no ! she is only on a visit ; she is much

admired here; and Lord Glentallan is one of her most devoted admirers: another is that short gentleman now dancing with her: he is a foreigner; of Polish extraction, I believe, a great connoisseur in painting, and insinuating like most foreigners."

"Was it the brother of Miss Merryville, who, I have heard my father say, left Eton so often, and at last his home?"

"Yes, poor Cecil! he was a great friend of mine. I recollect so well the last time I saw him; it was on my birth-night at a ball; I was dancing with him: Colonel Delamaine said afterwards, he was such a handsome lad, and joked with me about him; but I forget, Mr. Delamaine, that you do not know him, and, therefore, this cannot interest you."

"Yes it can though, for I think I have seen this same young gentleman."

"Indeed! where was he? When was it?"

"The gentleman I mean was in India?"

“ Was he in the civil service ? ”

“ No, in the army.”

“ Did you like him ? Was he reckoned a promising officer ? Did he ever give any reason for leaving his home ? ”

“ He was a great friend of mine, but he went inland, and I never heard of him afterwards, as I left that part of the country.”

“ Poor fellow ! he promised to be very handsome. Was he so ? ”

“ Why as to that I cannot say ; you ladies are the best judges of the looks of gentlemen ; but I have heard he was like myself.”

The dance being ended, Cecil led his partner to her seat, and established himself by her, where they were soon joined by Lucy, the two foreigners, Lord Henry Parnell, Lord Glentallan, and the Honourable George Norton.

“ Well, Glentallan, how are you getting on ? ” said Lord Henry.

“ Oh, not at all,” said he, with a fashionable

drawl; "I am almost ruined; never did such a thing in my life; I betted five thousand on Favorite against Mr. Busby's Pussy."

"Did you win?" said Lizzy.

"No, I lost! very provoking; I just happened to want the money too; but can't help it, my bills must go unpaid."

"I think, my Lord, you were too much engaged, in serenading last night, to mind your bet; may I enquire who your serenade was meant for?" asked Norton.

"Honour forbids that I should reveal that; but was it not a charming little air?"

"Oh, delightful! Spanish, I should think! but did you not find it cold last night?" said Lord Henry.

"Love burned within, though all was cold without," said Norton, laughing.

"Oh, George Norton, you need not talk so much; but I suppose you know from experience."

"Oh, 'tis a bad ting to lose so much money," said Zelinsky. "I lose sometime, but I do not like it; I did see my vriend Dommino here," patting the shoulder of the other Count, "vin ten pound last night of dat old lady, Miss Bea——, vat you call her? 'Tis de name of a bird."

"Crow," said Lucy.

"Oh, no! point du tout, c'est un bird wid a long tail; you know Dommino, j'oublie tout à fait. I forget, I do forget all de fact of de name. Ah! ah!" said Zelinsky, striking his forehead as if a bright thought had crossed him, "c'est ce que nous appelons paon."

"Peacock! Miss Peacock!" exclaimed Lizzy, bursting into a fit of laughter.

"Oh, yes! dat is de nom, Miss Moosegrave; I do tank you, I do remember me now, 'tis Peacock."

As may be imagined, a great laugh was raised against the poor Count: when it was ended,

Lucy inquired, "how Count Dommino liked England?"

"Ah, 'tis fine country, dey all is rich, ver rich de English, dey live en Prince."

"And how do you like the English ladies?"

"Ah ! elles l'emportent sur toutes les autres demoiselles, et je commencerai par vous," bowing to Lucy. "But excusez moi, I do not speak mosh Engleesh, but I tink dey is rader bittear."

"What ! I suppose you mean fond of scandal?"

"No ! not exactement, but what you call bittear, cold ; not like de Françaises."

"Oh ! I suppose you mean more modest, more reserved," said Lord Henry : "modesty is the greatest ornament of our countrywomen. But, Miss Musgrave, the music has begun ; may I not have the honour of dancing with you ? Do you like foreigners?" continued he, as he led her away.

"No ; I cannot say I do ; there is a some-

thing in so many of those one meets, so different from our own English gentlemen."

"I am glad to hear you say so; I myself have a great aversion to the adventurers; not to really well-bred foreigners of rank and family, but to those adventurers. Look at that young man," pointing to a youth of eighteen near them, "does not he, though so young, look as if proud of his birth?"

"Who is he? I think I know the face."

"He is the only son of Lord D——; as fine a lad as ever lived."

"Oh! yes, I recollect him; when a little boy I knew him, and I was once speaking to him in Sydney Gardens, where I was amusing myself with some other young ladies; he was standing by, and I asked him to join us, when an old gentleman, a very odd man, asked me his name; I had forgotten it, and he began to scold me for speaking to a little dirty rascal, as he called him; when the boy drew himself up, and said

proudly, "I am the son of Lord D—, sir; the gentleman, as you may imagine, made many apologies."

"Oh! that is just like him! He gives fair promise of being some day an ornament to his country! By the bye, I wish to know, shall you be at Lady H—'s rout to-morrow?"

"No! I am engaged to Lady F—'s fancy ball; which are you going to?"

"Indeed I am not quite certain. I have tickets for both; but as the loadstone attracts the needle, so I think you will draw me to Lady G—'s."

"A very pretty compliment, indeed; to compare me to an ugly loadstone!"

"Not with respect to beauty; but only for the power of attraction, and for usefulness."

"Well; let it pass. You know I am at home next Thursday. I hope I shall see you. By the bye, I must now recommend to your care my friend, Captain Delamaine, whom I wish you

to be friends with, as most likely you will often meet him in my company."

"Oh, certainly I will."

"And now I must give you an invitation to ride with me and Lucy to-morrow towards Hampton-cliffs. I will tell you our party: Mama, Papa, Miss Harris, in the carriage; Miss Carowen, Lucy, and myself; Mr. Norton, Mr. Marshall, young Delamaine, and Lord Henry Parnell, if he will honour us with his company, and Lord Glentallan."

"Oh, certainly; I shall be most happy to accompany you. I had an engagement to go to Clifton with a friend, but that I will put off. But I am afraid it is not exactly the time of year for sketching, is it?"

"Certainly summer or autumn would be better; but it is very mild at present, and it is just something to do. I always like to have an object. Will you see me to the carriage, as I see Mama is leading the way?"

It may be imagined that Cecil never spent a day without calling on the Musgraves ; and his love and admiration of *her* grew with each visit. One wet day, on entering the drawing-room, he found her already surrounded by visitors (gentlemen generally visiting on a wet day). By degrees, however, all dropped off, except Lord Henry Parnell, who was the rival most dreaded by Cecil, as he was a most amiable young man ; intelligent, and well-informed. The conversation turned on Devonshire.

“ Were you ever there ? ” said Parnell, addressing himself to Lizzy.

At that moment the door opened, and in came Beecham Monsell, a young Irishman, handsome, sprightly, buckish, but fortuneless. Of this gentleman, be it remarked, that he was small and lightly made, who sat higher than he stood, being longer in body than legs ; rather shy, but a general favourite, and remarkable for his taste

in female beauty, and from his superior manner of tying his shoes and cravat.

Soon after the first salutations, Lizzy resumed the subject of Devonshire.

"You spent some time in Devonshire, Mr. Monsell, did you not?"

"Yes," said he; "I lived at Torquay one or two years."

"It is a beautiful country, is it not?"

"Beautiful!" echoed Parnell; "I never saw such splendid views! I have travelled all over Europe, but no where did I see more lovely prospects; particularly about Dawlish, the banks of the Teign, and near Totness. Lord Clifford's park at Chudleigh is beautiful."

"Pray, Monsell, did you chance to know B—— of Torquay?" said Lord Henry. "I knew the young man: a very nice family they are."

"Oh, yes," replied Monsell, with some con-

fusion: "I knew them a—little; but I was not much there, as I took a tour in Scotland."

Moncell, not exactly liking the subject of conversation, took his hat, pleaded a particular engagement, and withdrew.

"Poor Moncell does not like Devonshire," observed Lizzy: "his father died there."

"Oh, indeed, I was not aware of that. You are very partial to it, so am I. It is the country for romance. I was educated there, in a clergyman's house; but every thing there has a tinge of romance—the air seems to invite to love."

"No doubt you found that out by sad experience."

"No, I did not allude to myself; but if I was not afraid of being dubbed a proser, I would tell you as good a romance as ever was written."

"Oh, that is charming!" exclaimed Lizzy.

"Now, my dear Lord Henry, let us have it. Come, Delamaine, as this is a wet day, it will

be charming—quite romantic ! I will work, and you, Delamaine, can finish that little sketch for my album.” So saying, the young lady seated herself and her friends to her taste, and then Lord Henry commenced as follows :—

“ As an only child, and of rather a delicate constitution, my mother wished to avoid sending me to a public school, where she thought vices might contaminate my mind, and ruin my virtue. My father equally disliked home education ; so a middle course was adopted, and I was sent to a clergyman then residing at F——. He had a large family—five daughters and two sons—one, the eldest, two years younger than myself, the other quite a child. I was his only pupil ; but I shall never forget the kindness and motherly attention I received from his wife. My boyhood passed like that of most other boys ; and till I was eighteen no event worth mentioning occurred, except the good Doctor adding to his family an orphan, and portionless, niece. She

was about twelve years old. His daughters were plain, unassuming, quiet, good-natured girls, but the little Sophie was totally different—pretty, merry, gentle, and good-tempered. She was the life of the house ; but her little cousin Reade was her favourite. He had always something to amuse her with : he gave her a share in his garden ; in his play-time he was on the shore, following the ebbing tide, to collect the freshest shells for his little Sophie. Often as I have seen them walking together, I have thought how well they were fitted for each other, and how happy they would be one day together. Sophie had been with us about a year, when, one fine evening, Reade, a basket on one arm and Sophie on the other, walked towards the sea. Our house was situated on a hill ; not a tree was near ; a lawn sloped from the house to some stunted furze bushes ; there the rock terminated, and at least a hundred feet below was the sea. I knew where they were going, and I followed them. It was

a favourite spot, whence we often watched the sun sinking in the ocean. It was on the brink of the precipice, and a slight rail guarded the spot. Beneath, and to the right, stretched a beautiful sandy bay: immediately on the left were rocks descending to the shore.

“ ‘Take care, Sophie; do not lean against that rail!’ exclaimed Reade, as his cousin put her hand upon it.

“ Some minutes were passed in conversation; and, in the warmth of an argument whether sunrise or sunset was most beautiful, Reade leant against the treacherous rail: it gave way, and he was precipitated to the bottom! Never shall I forget my feelings! I saw nothing of him:—a wild shriek from Sophie rung in my ears; and, before a minute had expired, I had rushed down a path to the shore, and was at his side. His head was buried in the sand. I raised him; he was senseless. I felt stupified: a feeling of horror overwhelmed my brain, but I was roused

by Sophie's voice—'Thank heaven he is not dead !'

"The words brought comfort to my heart. I removed her hand, and put my own upon his heart : its till beat feebly. I raised him in my arms, and was about to carry him up the rock when his father appeared. He was carried home and placed on his bed. He soon recovered his senses, and we found that the only injury he had sustained was a broken arm ; but had not his hat remained upon his head, concussion of the brain must have taken place.

"When I was near twenty I went to college. Reade was my friend and companion ; and a fine, manly, handsome fellow he was. We had spent two years there, when Reade persuaded me to accompany him home for the Christmas. We arrived at Exeter : next morning we walked over to F——, sending our luggage by coach. My chief inducement was to see Sophie, for whom, almost unknown to myself, I cherished a great

affection ; but I knew that Reade regarded her as his future bride, and to interfere with him was contrary to all honourable feelings ; still I wished to see her once more. Our hearts beat as we drew near our destination : every tree, every turn of the road, became better known as we proceeded. At last we entered F——. A few inhabitants were walking on the lawn and the strand,—still we wait not to salute them, but pursue our way up the hill. The gates of Miss M——’s beautiful little residence are passed—we still press on, our steps hastening every minute—at last Reade’s home is seen. We reach the gates, we enter ; and, in the next minute, Reade was in the arms of his mother. I was behind him, hardly noticed in the first greetings which hailed this promising son. The girls pressed round him as he claimed a brother’s kiss, but there was one distinguished from the rest. Happy, she watched each kiss he gave, yet still shrank back the last. Her ripening graces and

her beauty betrayed that it was Sophie. Happy Reade ! how I envied him when I saw the more than brother's warmth with which he received his Sophie's welcome ! From that moment I saw I had no chance : my passion for the modest and beautiful girl was augmented, but I resolved not to mar the happiness of the cousins.

“ Each day was spent in happiness and gaiety ; the girls were good girls, and neither amused nor tormented me ; Reade and Sophie were always together, not that Reade deserted me, no ! I was always welcome if I joined them, yet I thought they would be happier alone ; I walked or hunted with some of the young men, and the evening we generally spent in society. But our visit was drawing to a close. One day it froze very hard, and Reade declared his intention of rising early next morning to hunt rabbits ; he asked me to join him ; I agreed to do so if I awoke, but he was not to disturb me ; with this arrangement we parted for the night.

I did not rise till seven ; I dressed, and went to Reade's chamber ; he was out, and I proceeded across the lawn to seek him ; suddenly I was met by his dog ; it howled wildly. Not knowing what to think, I flew towards the spot where I thought he would be ; the snow still lay on the earth ; there were footmarks ; in a hole very low down was his stick, and on a ledge of rock near were marks in the snow as if his foot had slipped. I dreaded lest the venturous youth had fallen ; I gazed over the precipice, nothing met my view ; again the dog howled wildly as before ; I was flying back again to the house ; I was met by Sophie,—‘ Good heavens !’ she exclaimed, ‘ What is the matter, my lord ? Where is my cousin ?’ ”

“ ‘ I have not seen him—I am looking for him,’ I replied, still hurrying on. Sophie followed me, thinking me deranged ; a noise in the road attracted me, I flew to the garden-gate, and opened it. I had scarcely done so, than I stag-

gered back ; immediately fronting me, borne by two or three men, I beheld my friend,—not such as I had parted from him, but pallid, cold, disfigured ! Sophie uttered a shriek, and fell senseless in my arms ; I bore her to the house, and placing her on the sofa, left her to the care of a servant. Reade had been carried to his room ; I flew there ; his parents were not yet up, and who should bear them the melancholy tidings ? Poor Reade was quite dead ! He had fallen on the rocks ; I took his cold hand in mine, and long remained kneeling by my friend ; a sob aroused me from my trance : it was Sophie ; love prevailed over friendship ; when I once more saw her fainting at my side, I took her hand, I tried to comfort her, and, finally, I succeeded in withdrawing her from the melancholy scene. I cannot describe the grief of the family,—I will not attempt it. The day before I left them I was alone with Sophie ; some interesting conversation took place, and finally I found I had offered

her my hand, but that I was refused. ‘No, my lord,’ said the gentle girl, ‘I cannot accept it; next to my cousin I esteemed you, but, alas! we have not been long enough separated, for me to forget him, or think of another; therefore, however flattering your offer may be, I must decline it.’ I left F—— with far different feelings from those with which I entered it — a rejected lover, deprived of my young friend. I have since mingled with the world, but no time will ever efface that day of sorrow, or the happy Christmas which preceded it.”

“Thank you, thank you, my lord, for your pretty romance,” exclaimed Lizzy, “I have long wished to see Devonshire, and this summer I shall to a certainty gratify my fancy.”

“I must now wish you good morning, for I have an engagement at this hour.” So saying, Lord Henry departed. Lizzy was now left alone with Delamaine, he drew his chair near the fire, and they began chatting.

“ You know Mr. Monsell, do you not ?” said Lizzy, “ have you heard if his marriage will soon take place ?”

“ No,” replied Cecil ; “ nor is it likely to do so ; Miss O’Sullivan is very young, and her mother is so averse to the match : indeed, did she know what was going on, her door would be shut against Monsell. Poor fellow ! it is a pity for him.”

“ And why is Mrs. O’Sullivan averse to it ?”

“ Because Monsell is a younger son, without fortune, and without profession, and her daughter is a co-heiress ; indeed, they say she wishes her to marry her cousin.”

“ Mr. Law ?”

“ Yes, the same ; he comes over the mother prettily ; is so good, carries his Bible and hers to church, and is quite the dutiful son ; but we, his companions, know him for an hypocrite, and no wonder, when he has such a prize as the beautiful and rich Miss O’Sullivan in view.”

“No wonder for him ; but if she is a co-heiress, it is odd her mother should wish to constrain her choice, and not let her daughter make herself happy.”

Delamaine only answered by a sigh, which my readers must explain for themselves.

“You dine with us to-day, will you not ? we are only our own family,” inquired Lizzy ; “and I am at home this evening, though I believe mamma will be out ; but your great attraction, Miss Merryville, will favour us.”

“Ah !” said Delamaine ; “believe me, my dear Miss Musgrave, your friend is not the principal attraction.”

“Oh, do not deny it, Delamaine ! it is no use. Farewell ! I must go dress.

The evening came. Miss Musgrave shone that night. When Lord Henry entered, he found her and Delamaine together. He almost trembled as he advanced, for Lizzy looked so handsome, and so did Delamaine, that he feared once

more that the object of his more manly affections was not destined to be his; but Lizzy's smile reassured him. They were soon joined by Monsell, whose spirits seemed lower than usual, though at the same time he forced himself to be cheerful. At last two ladies were seen approaching the group, leaning on either arm of a tall, awkward, red-haired man. One of the ladies was his sister, from the resemblance; the other was a very pretty young girl, whose eyes beamed with delight the moment they fell on Monsell. It was Miss O'Sullivan and her cousins the Laws.

Lizzy took Miss O'Sullivan's arm, saying, "You must resign your cousin to me, Mr. Law. I have just promised her as a partner to Mr. Monsell."

Mr. Law's brow assumed a gloomy aspect as Lizzy led off her gentle friend.

"Now, Mr. Monsell, thank me for your

partner. I have delivered her from the clutches of that dragon. I need not bid you amuse her."

Miss Musgrave, herself, gave her hand to Delamaine to open the ball, and Lord Henry Parnell had to seek another partner ; and, in that short night, he saw reason to dread that in Delamaine he saw a powerful, though generous, rival. Once more Lizzy's waist was encircled by Cecil's supporting arm through the graceful mazes of the waltz. What hopes for the future, what reminiscences of the past, now thrilled the bosom of that handsome youth, we will not stop to say. We will only notice that none of that gay crowd felt happier or prouder than Cecil Delamaine, when he recollected what he was when first he danced with Lizzy, and what he now dared aspire to, when no longer called "The Odd Boy."

* * * *

"Ah, Mr. Delamaine, is it you?" exclaimed

Miss Musgrave, as he entered the room. "Here am I all alone, you see, not able to get out for a bad cold;—have not been out since my ball; so do sit down, and tell me what news is going, true or false."

"Have you not heard *the* news?"

"No, on my word; what is it?"

"Well, then, I am come in good time to amuse you; and great as is always the pleasure I feel in your company, it will be redoubled if I think I can impart any to you. Well, to begin, Miss O'Sullivan is married."

"Married already! and who is the happy man? Is it Monsell?"

"No, poor fellow! he just missed her. You noticed, perhaps, that he seemed agitated the other night?"

"Yes, I did. Well?"

"Well, it seems that Norton lent him his carriage and horses—Miss O'Sullivan had consented to elope. The carriage was waiting at this very

door, when he missed his hat, and she her reticule, which contained the necessary for the trip. He ran back to find it. That same instant her cousin Law seized her, handed her to the carriage, and conveyed her home, without the least suspicion of the plot he had marred. The next Sunday, coming out of the Octagon Chapel, which is very dark, Monsell seized her hand, as he thought, but it was Miss Law's. Miss Law, who, like many other single ladies *d'un certain âge*, is sharp as a needle, guessed who the pressure was meant for. She immediately informed Mrs. O'Sullivan of it. The poor girl was instantly shut up in her chamber, there to be confined till she renounced Monsell, and accepted her odious cousin, which, wearied with unavailing resistance, she did this morning. Her mother's coach was immediately summoned, the half-terrified girl hurried into it, and conveyed to church, and married to that man, whom of all others, she hates and despises most."

“And poor Monsell, where is he?”

“Monsell, on finding Mrs. O’Sullivan’s door closed against him, was first *au dernier desespoir*; but soon his pride rose, and, taking all the presents he had received from his fair one, *billets-doux* and all, he enclosed them in a packet, and sent them back to her. Having done this, he set out for Clifton, where he now is.”

“Then he has not yet heard of the marriage?”

“Poor fellow! no; but it little signifies when he hears it, as it is what he must have expected.”

“Well, Mr. Delamaine, I must thank you for your kindness in coming to sit with me, now all my other friends have deserted me. I plainly see that out of sight is out of mind at Bath.”

“My dear Miss Musgrave, do not thank me. If you only knew what pleasure it gives me to be with you—” Here Delamaine took the poker, held down his head, and began to stir the fire.

Readers, perhaps you think he is going to pop the question. No, that is not the case. Perhaps Miss Musgrave thought the same, but we cannot answer for her thoughts. We are not magicians.

Having poked out every poor inoffensive coal that he could, he continued : " Miss Musgrave, I wish to ask you one question, only I am afraid you will think me impertinent : will you give me leave ?"

" Certainly not to be impertinent," said the lady, laughing.

" No, but to ask the question : you will not think it rude ?"

" That depends—however, let me hear it first, and then I will tell you what I think of it."

" Ah, but, Miss Musgrave, you are joking ; I am really serious."

" So am I ; really as grave as a mustard-pot ! Well, what is your plan ? Are you going to assassinate the King ?"

Delamaine was posed ; he was really serious ;

he was afraid of being thought impertinent; yet he wished to ask his question; he had formed a plan of proceeding, but Lizzy had not answered what he had determined she was to answer. Again, he resorted to the poker. Lizzy smiled, and, at last, said,—

“ Mr. Delamaine, am I to wait all day? Do let the poor fire alone; there! there! there is hardly a coal left; surely that will do.”

“ Will you now tell me why Miss Merryville permits Lord Glentallan to pay her such particular attentions?”

“ And is that the mighty question you had to ask? Really, I do not know, as I never cared; but as, perhaps, the reason may deeply involve your happiness, I will ask her.”

“ Miss Musgrave!” exclaimed Delamaine, in a tone of tender expostulation.

“ Pardon me, Mr. Delamaine, pardon my laughing; but really you look so grave, I cannot help it. But I am sorry I have irritated your

wounded heart. There, now I am quite grave, and I will answer your questions. The only reason that I can assign, is, that Miss Merryville, wishing for an establishment, considers that Lord Glentallan would be no despicable match."

"Match! but is she not, are you not, aware that Lord Glentallan is a married man?"

"Married? no, really, we never knew it!" Then, again resuming a bantering tone, she continued: "I will inform Miss Merryville that Lord Glentallan is not a marrying man; and also that a certain gentleman, who shall be nameless, not wishing her to be deprived of such agreeable attentions, will pay them himself; and, perhaps, shortly lay all his laurels at her feet."

"Miss Musgrave, I assure you, you are quite mistaken."

"Nay! now can you deny that you take great interest in Miss Merryville?"

"No," replied he; "I cannot deny it; but Miss Musgrave must be well aware that my

respect for her friend is not equal to that I bear herself."

"Respect, my good friend, no doubt; but I spoke of a tenderer affection; why, your informing me that Lord Glentallan cannot marry, which no one else did, betrays you."

"Oh, Miss Musgrave, do not say so,—you cannot think it! The day, perhaps, will soon come, when I can explain to you why I take any interest in her. But I expect my father, by the York House coach, so I must now take leave of you."

"What, Colonel Delamaine! Well, you are a dutiful son, so I will not detain you. Adieu! *au revoir!*"

Lizzy watched Delamaine, as he walked along the street;—had she ever felt a doubt which she preferred, Lord Henry, or Delamaine, she no longer did so. Delamaine reigned exclusively in her heart. She thought she had him; but yet he sometimes showed such interest in

Lucy, that she doubted a little. At present, though her doubts were almost gone, there was something in his voice, and eyes, a tone and a look, that none but lovers can display. "He does, then, love me," thought she; and she was happy. Again and again his every look and word recurred to her mind, and were dwelt on with pleasure.

To Cecil's great disappointment, Colonel Delamaine did not arrive. A note was put into his hand; he read it hastily, and "How provoking!" burst from his lips, as he finished. Colonel Delamaine was still detained by business. A fortnight passed on. Miss Musgrave was still confined to her house. Delamaine was often with her. Lord Henry, too, was there; and one morning, when alone, he found himself at the feet (to use his own expression) of Lizzy. Was he accepted? No. He was rejected, but not with scorn. Lizzy could esteem, and respect him, but she could not love him; so

poor Lord Henry retired, forced to content himself with being a friend.

Delamaine saw, or thought he saw, that Lizzy's heart was his, yet he did not propose. "How odd!" perhaps some of my readers will exclaim. Now he saw that heart was his, did he despise it? No. Earnestly had he sought, and highly did he still esteem it. Again, why did he not propose? That, as well as some of Cecil's former actions, must still remain involved in mystery.

It was a few days after Miss Musgrave had received Lord Henry's proposals, that she and her mother were alone in the drawing-room. "Who are you watching, Lizzy?" said the mother to her daughter, who was gazing earnestly at some one in the street.

"Mr. Delamaine, mamma."

"What! is he coming here?"

"No—yes, I think he is; but no, he has passed the door."

“Do you not think, after what he has said to you about Miss Merryville, that he will be sorry to hear of her marriage?”

“Sorry? No. I should think not—I hope not.”

“Why, you seemed to think he had more than a common liking for her?”

Lizzy did not reply, but she bent her head over a little piece of work, in apparent forgetfulness. She seated herself on the sofa: a sigh burst from her lips. Oh that sigh! it spoke volumes.

Mrs. Musgrave left her chair, and, placing herself by her daughter, said,—

“My Lizzy, we have not been much together lately; but I think you are changed. Is it not so, my love? Once, every thought of your heart was open to me; now, there is something you wish to hide.”

Lizzy’s confusion was great at this address, as it was not well founded. Every happiness

she had enjoyed from childhood, proceeded from her mother ; and, in return, her mother was her confidante. But it is easy to talk of those one does not love ; those whom we truly love, we rarely mention.

“ Lizzy,” continued her mother, “ do you not love Delamaine ? Do you not cherish a hope that you are dear to him ? ”

“ Yes, my mother ; you have rightly guessed my heart. But could I say so, when he had not given any signs of affection ? ”

“ I do not blame you, my child,” said the fond mother, pressing her darling girl in her arms ; “ I only wish to know the truth : he is oftener with you than Lucy ; why then are you jealous of her ? ”

“ I am not jealous now. But there is something in him I do not understand. His tone assures me his love, yet the interest he takes in Lucy——”

“ Makes you doubt him ; but be not un-

happy, Lizzy, perhaps he only awaits his father's arrival."

"Perhaps not," responded Miss Musgrave, as she kissed her mother's hand. Mrs. Musgrave left the room, for she had felt a scalding tear drop on the hand her daughter pressed; she saw the agitation of her heart, and did not wish to seem to notice it; tear after tear coursed each other silently down her cheeks; she felt unhappy, miserably so. Ere long a rap came at the door; starting from her reverie, she dried her tears, and tried to rally her spirits; hardly had she done so, when Delamaine entered, gayer and more cheerful than usual; as soon as he perceived her tell-tale eyes, he hastened up to her, and exclaimed, "Dearest Miss Musgrave, you look so ill, is anything the matter with you?"

"Oh, nothing, I assure you, of consequence; pray sit down. I have a slight head-ache, and I have some news for you: what think you? Lucy is going to be married."

"Indeed! I wish her joy! and, may I ask, who is the happy man?"

"That is right, do not show your disappointment;—well, I certainly expected you to have fainted; but it is Count Zelinsky who has gained the prize you were trying for. Now, really Delamaine, you did not try hard for it."

"Pardon me, my dear Miss Musgrave, whatever anxiety I may have shown for her, Lucy, Miss Merryville I mean, could never have been my wife, even had not my heart been occupied by another."

"Oh, that is very fine sentiment, indeed, but I do not like romance."

"Nor I, Miss Musgrave, and I speak the truth; perhaps, the time may come when you will understand my feelings, and when I may offer my hand to her who possesses my heart; at present it is impossible."

"Impossible!" thought Lizzy, "and why impossible? Who is this fair one of his affec-

tions?" She sunk into a reverie unperceived. Delamaine took her hand; the moment afterwards she perceived it: her womanly pride was roused in an instant, and her face was covered with blushes; starting from her seat she exclaimed, "Mr. Delamaine, I did not expect this conduct from you; I did not expect this insult from him who has just professed love for another!" She stopped; her feelings overcame her pride, and leaning her head against the mantelpiece, she wept bitterly.

Delamaine seemed confounded, he advanced towards her, and said, "Pardon me, Miss Musgrave, if my feelings carried me too far! I never professed love for another, and far be it from me to wish to insult, or annoy you, in the least; but for the present I will leave you."

"Have I then mistaken you, Delamaine? Oh, tell me! Do not leave me,—at least, leave me not in error."

"Dearest Miss Musgrave," said he, taking

her passive hand, and pressing it respectfully to his lips, "I must now leave you; it will be better for us both, but soon I hope to be able to explain my conduct to you;—till then forget me."

He left the room. Lizzy felt bewildered; she knew not what to think. Had she not betrayed herself?—must he not despise her for her weakness? and yet had he not given her to understand that he loved her. How should she ever dare to face him again? or would he ever return? Her mother and Lucy went out that evening as usual; Lizzy refused to go; she stayed to think of Delamaine, to hope and fear by turns; in short, to torment herself in every possible manner.

"Ah, Cecil, my boy! are you there? glad to see you again! all goes well, eh?" exclaimed Colonel Delamaine, as he alighted from the stage.

"Yes, sir, quite well, and delighted that you have joined me."

The Colonel, and his adopted son, proceeded to the latter's apartments; for a short time they conversed on indifferent subjects, then Cecil said,—

“ Pray, sir, will you, if not too fatigued, come to the Musgraves? they said they hoped to see you to dine.”

“ The Musgraves, eh? ah, yes, I recollect now, you are a great deal with the Musgraves; nice people; do you like them?”

“ Oh, yes, sir; Mrs. Musgrave is so agreeable, and they have such a nice house, and pleasant parties.”

“ What, then, you are there a great deal?”

“ Oh, yes, every day.”

“ And Miss Lizzy, what do you think of her? is it her, or the mother, that makes the house agreeable?”

“ Oh, both, sir,” said Cecil, in slight confusion; “ and my sister, too, Lucy, is with them.”

“ Ah, yes, I forgot, you wrote me word. I

ought to wish you joy of her marriage. How do you like her—better than formerly?—like your brother-in-law?”

“ Oh, yes, very tolerably,—it is a very fair match for her, I believe; but really, sir, it is getting late,” said he, taking out his watch.

“ What for, boy?”

“ I thought you would go to the Musgraves,” stammered forth Cecil.

“ No, not to-night; I feel tired, so sit down, and tell me which of the fair ladies is to carry off Cecil Delamaine, heir to five thousand a-year.”

Cecil looked disappointed, but sat down.

“ Really, to tell the truth, I like Miss Musgrave best, that is to say, I see most of her.”

“ And why should you not tell the truth? You know it was the openness of your countenance first made me like you: then tell me, boy, have you any intention of proposing?”

Cecil poked the fire, which, we have seen, was his custom when embarrassed.

"No, father, I have not yet. I do love Miss Musgrave more than ever, but you have been more than a father to me, and I could not go any farther without knowing your wishes."

"My own noble boy!" said the Colonel, grasping the hand of his adopted son. "But did you run no chance of losing her by waiting, or are you sure she likes you?"

"I can hardly tell,—and yet, if man may vouch for woman's heart, I shall not be denied."

"Well, then, my boy, delay no longer, you have my hearty consent, and you know that your leave of absence will soon expire, therefore again I remind you not to delay; and if she is yours, the greatest wish of my heart will be fulfilled. When the first time I saw you together at their house, I thought to myself how admirably suited you were to each other, and when we met again, I instantly resolved to educate you as my own, and give her to you, and to be a father to you."

"Indeed," exclaimed Cecil, "indeed you have ever been a kind father to me, and not the least kind in enabling me to aspire to her, who would otherwise never have thought of me."

Need we say at that moment Cecil was happy?

Next morning, Delamaine called on the Mus-

graves. Mr. and Mrs. Musgrave were out;

Lizzy was at home. The Colonel entered the

drawing-room, to pay his compliments to his

god-daughter; and then, thinking his presence

unnecessary, he left, under pretence of seeking

her mother, Lizzy and Cecil together. Cecil's

heart beat high; the hour that was to decide his

destiny was arrived. As if by intuition, Lizzy

seemed to know what passed in his mind; her

face was slightly flushed, and her eyes were bent

on the ground: she was on the sofa at his side.

At last he said—
"Miss Musgrave, the time is come when I

may be permitted to inform you of anything that may seem odd in me. Lizzy, dearest Lizzy, can you have doubted that I love you? A thousand times has an avowal been on my lips; but I felt in duty bound to suppress it, till I was sure of Colonel Delamaine's consent. May I not now call you my own Lizzy? May I not call this hand my own?"

He pressed her hand with ardour to his lips. His tone, his manner, reminded Lizzy of Cecil as a boy. She could not answer, but she pressed his hand in return.

"Will you not speak to me, Lizzy? Will you not be mine? O yes, you will, Lizzy. It was the dear remembrance of you that supported me under India's burning sun; the wish to merit you, stimulated me to exertion. Did you never give a thought to me, when oceans separated us? Surely you must have guessed who I was, or have you forgotten Cecil Mer-ryville?"

"Merryville!" exclaimed Lizzy; "Good God! Ah, yes, I see it is my own Cecil."

"A thousand thanks for that one word, my own adored Lizzy; it shows you have not forgotten the outcast Cecil. You loved me, then, as Cecil Merryville,—will you cease to love me as Delamaine?"

"No, Cecil, never!"

The ardent, happy Cecil, now clasped her in his arms; but in a few minutes she heard her mother's step, and, disengaging herself from Cecil, she flew into her mother's arms. "He is come back! Cecil Merryville is returned!" she exclaimed, and burst into tears.

The state of things was too evident to need explanation; and Mrs. Musgrave, seeing how overcome her daughter was, advised her to retire, which she did. Cecil, content with receiving an invitation to pass the evening with his beloved, took his leave.

A fortnight was soon over. Lucy was mar-

ried, and given away by the brother, who, as their apparent to five thousand pounds per annum, and the intended of her friend, she no longer despised. She and her husband set out for the continent; and in a few days Cecil was obliged to join his regiment. The time for their marriage was not yet fixed, but Cecil promised to return to his beloved one as soon as possible.

In May the Musgraves quitted Bath, for Clifton, where they had many friends. Monsell was still there, but he was no longer the same happy Monsell, Lizzy had known him formerly. At times he rallied, and then no one would have observed the difference; but at others, he was absent, distracted; he plunged into society to forget himself. Lizzy was his chief friend; and, now that Delamaine was away, he undertook the care of her in her rides on the Downs. Mrs. Law was also at Clifton, in bad health, but Monsell avoided meeting her. Law had

proved himself a decided gambler. Once in possession of his wife's property, he indulged his favourite vice: the night was devoted to gaming; morning still found him at the gaming table, and rarely he entered his house before six in the morning, and then never in a state of sobriety.

One fine evening, in the beginning of July, Lizzy and a large party of her friends, Monsell included, were walking on the Downs, when a servant put a note into Monsell's hand, and withdrew instantly. Monsell tore it open. It ran as follows:—

“ Monsell! beloved, cruel Monsell!—I am dying. Will you refuse to see me? My husband is out. Oh, come to your once beloved, but now unhappy”

“ ANNIE.”

Monsell was distracted; he had long resisted all his Annie's temptations to see her: he had

returned her notes unopened, but he no longer did so. Under pretence of sudden business, he left the party, and flew to Mrs. Law's house. He was let in directly, and conducted in silence to Mrs. Law's apartment. Splendidly dressed, Annie was reclining on the sofa; the silvery beams of the moon played on her pale countenance, and partly lighted the room. Monsell paused: he knew not whether to advance or retreat; he regretted having come, but yet what could he do? It was now, however, too late to retreat. Annie unclosed her eyes: she saw him,—she flew to him. Love conquered all other feelings, and Monsell pressed her to his bosom, with warmth.

“Oh, Monsell!” she exclaimed, “why did you never come before? Why did you neglect me? Why make me think that you had ceased to love me?”

“Annie,” said Monsell, “you should rather ask why I am here? Did you not know the

"unconquerable love I bear you?" "Annie, when once you became another's, I resolved to see you no more. You know I have resisted, but now my resolution is broken."

"Ah, dear Beecham, why remind me of my husband? Ah! did you know how miserable I am, you would not do so." "But this one hour I may devote to love and thee."

"Entice me not to break my resolution, fair temptress! You know how I adore you; for you I would sacrifice everything; but, Annie, think of your reputation—think of yourself!"

"Talk not so seriously. Oh Beecham! I have not many months to live. Will you then, refuse to comfort me? Ah! do not refuse still to continue my lover."

"Annie! Annie! you know not what you ask, my angel! Your lover? Oh, think of your husband!"

"Cruel, too cruel Beecham! is it you should remind me of my husband, whom I detest? Fear him not; at this hour he never returns.

The evening, at least, will be ours to devote to love. Reecham promises to come every day at this hour; and then I shall be so happy—oh, so happy! I know you will not refuse me, if you love me.” Reecham said not a word.

Monnell repelled her half-embraces; and, throwing himself on his knees, exclaimed, “Oh, Annie! my adored one! tempt me no more! After to-night, we meet no more. I could not withstand your temptations,—I must fly! Ah! the sacrifice is great, but it must be made. Promise me, then, my angel, to be virtuous; it is you should teach us most to be so; but if you tempt us, who can withstand?” and, covered his face with his hands.

“Oh, Reecham, do not leave me for ever! I will be any thing you like, if you do not go!”

“I must, even if it breaks your heart, Annie. I adore you, but could I bear to see your reputation blasted,—to be the cause of your disgrace; and what else could be the consequence. I will not ask you to love your husband, but I have your promise not to ruin yourself. Think

not of me; you will never see me more; and lest my resolution should fail, I will put a barrier between us. Adieu, then, my best beloved, adieu!"

Once more Annie was clasped in her lover's arms; on his shoulder she sobbed forth her adieu. Beecham felt that he could not leave her, but he also felt his resolution would give way; he therefore made an effort, and, placing her on a seat, darted out of the house.

"Yes!" he exclaimed, as with hasty strides he paced the streets, "yes! all is now over! the sacrifice must be made." He instantly ordered his horse; then, recollecting how late it was, countermanded it till day-light; and, having snatched a short and restless sleep, by four o'clock he was on his way to Bath.

We must now return to the other parties concerned in our tale. Towards the end of the month Lizzy received an invitation from a young lady, with whom she became acquainted

at Clifton, to spend a few weeks with her parents at T——y. This she accepted, and in a few days found herself travelling through that romantic country. A few days were spent at T——; and who should Lizzy recognise one evening on the promenade but Lord Henry Parnell. "Lord Henry," she exclaimed, "you here! What brings you here?"

"I might retahate the question, Miss Masgrave, if I was curious."

"Yes, and with more reason, for I now recollect there was a house here, in which you were educated; pray show it me."

"With pleasure, if you and your friend do not object to climb this hill; but I have some young friends visiting in that house, and I could not be so rude as to desert them."

"Oh, well, I have no objection to wait; have you, Fanny? By the bye, I ought to have introduced you."

"Never mind that," said Miss L——, "this

is not the first time Lord Henry and I have met."

"No, indeed," said his Lordship; "I have had the honour of being acquainted with you some time; but I did not know you were acquainted with Miss Musgrave."

"Nor was I," said Fanny, "till I picked her up this year at Clifton; and then I thought I should like to show her Devonshire. But here come your ladies: you may introduce us to them; but I think I can guess who they are," added she, smiling.

"And so can I," said Lizzy.

The ladies were introduced duly. Lizzy spent that day and the next at T—, and the third she set off with her friend for T—y.

It is proper that I should here pause, to give my readers a description of Fanny L—. She was the only daughter of an ancient and Catholic family. Her parents were still alive. She had two brothers; one in the army, the

other, the eldest, was at present travelling in Italy. Fanny was about five-and-twenty tall, a finely-shaped butt, handsome features, dark hair and eyes, and a clear olive complexion. Her features were agreeable, but generally tinged with melancholy; but when her eyes—which was very rarely—shot forth beams of joy, and her whole countenance spoke pleasure, then was Fanny truly beautiful.

Lizzy was delighted with them. They did not enter much into society, as it was far from good; but she and Fanny devoted their evening hours to riding in the neighbourhood, or walking on the shore. The sun was too fierce to admit of going out in the middle of the day, and that part of the day was consecrated to music and literature.

Not many weeks had elapsed when Lizzy and her friend were invited to Lord Henry's wedding. Lizzy smiled as she thought how soon the revival of an old passion had effaced

her inheritance from his Lordship's heart; that Lizzy was pious - but those who are angry at a man's proposing to another, after having paid homage to herself & their own, she was happy in meeting him united and open, she was likely to render him happy. "And when her melancholy began to leave you, she said Lord Henry, as he and the young ladies were walking, the day previous to his marriage, 'did you hear that Monsell is about to be married?' " "Yes, I did," exclaimed Lizzy, "to whom?" "To a lady," he said, "who was a lady who has property, but not much. It is believed to be quite a union of reason and beauty, and she has been staying some time at her house, and they say she is to be married." "To whom?"

"Where did he meet her?" "At Bath. He suddenly left Clifton, as you may remember, to avoid a meeting, it is said, with Mrs. Law. And can you tell me the name?"

"Fearneigh, I understand."

"Oh, Miss Fearneigh—I recollect. Good gracious! Monsell can never mean to marry her!"

"Why not? she has a fortune."

"Yes, certainly; and is a fine-looking woman, but at least ten years his senior."

"Oh, *cela ne fait rien*; but you know his dearest expectations have been disappointed; and after that, many a man has done the same."

"Yes," said Lizzy, nodding significantly at Lord Henry; then, looking at her friend, she added, "dear Fanny! what is the matter with you, you look so ill?"

"Let us return to the house, my dear Lizzy," replied Fanny; "I have such a head-ache, and the sun is so hot."

The party instantly returned to the house, and conducted Fanny to the chamber allotted her. She soon declared she was recovered, but wished to be left alone. No sooner had her friend withdrawn, than she exclaimed, "O

Heavens ! is it possible ? Are my hopes, then, at an end ? Oh ! can he be so faithless ? His dearest hopes disappointed ? Faithless ? Can he look for happiness far from her whose peace he has destroyed ? Blessed Virgin ! be my aid. Thou knowest I have sworn to devote myself to religion, should not that disappointment restore me to his heart. But he has forgotten me. He thinks no more of his own Fanny ! He has forgotten me ! Then, Blessed Virgin ! grant me but a few more months, and my vow shall be fulfilled,—yes, it shall. No more shall Beecham hear my name, till the Convent's walls and grating separate us, and till religion severs those hearts which once so fondly loved. Beecham ! cruel, ungrateful Beecham ! Whilst it was a young and lovely girl, I pardoned thee ! but now a woman—thy senior,—to wed for money ! Oh ! shame upon thee, Beecham !”

Had Fanny said her heart was aching, she would have said the truth. She had known

Montell had been adopted by him for a time and she had loved him, and loved him still. She went to Clifton. She saw and recognized her lover, unknown by him, but she recognized him as the ardent and despairing lover of a married woman. She quitted Clifton, hoping to see him return to her, but no. Now she heard tidings of his certain marriage with a fortune. The hopes she had cherished were overthrown in an instant; could it be wondered that her heart then ached? But one alternative remained, and that she soon decided on; but could not so easily execute; to forget her faithful lover. "Henry would not doubt Lord Henry's meddling by appearing with a sorrowful face; I she, therefore, conquered her feelings, and appeared serene as usual. The ceremony was performed at the handsome and beautifully situated church, by the resident clergyman, the worthy Dr. Adams. The bride and bridegroom set off immediately for town; and our ladies having passed

the remainder of the day with the family of the wife, Hester would next day, 17th, be at her home. It was one morning in the month 16th September, that Miss Mungro and Fanny were about the latter's sitting-room, reading the papers, the former employed at John's embroidery. Lizzy asked her friend some question, but receiving no answer, she looked up, and perceived their almost finishing. In an instant she seized a glass of water from the table and flew towards her. Fanny was recovered by this timely resort; and, leaping into bed, began to talk friendly to her sister. Lizzy, however, did not forget her first question; "Fanny, my dear friend, what ails you?" enquired Lizzy; "What has alarmed you? Or are you ill?" she enquired, and perceived her friend could not reply. But, pointing to the papers, Lizzy's eyes instantly caught this paragraph:—
"On the 20th ult. Beuchamp Mossell, son of the late Mr. Mossell, Esq. of New-castle, Bra-

land, to Caroline Anne, eldest daughter of the late John Fearneigh, Esq."

"Did you then know Mr. Monsell?" enquired Lizzy, who now guessed the truth.

"Did I know him? Oh, Lizzy, what a question to ask!

"Why, my dear Fanny, you never mentioned his name to me; how then could I know?"

"Forgive me, dearest Lizzy; but if you will listen to me, I will tell you all."

"No, my dear Fanny, I will not let you distress yourself'

"But do, it will comfort me, to have you feel with me. I have long kept my secret in my own bosom; but, now, I think, to tell it to you would relieve me."

"If you think so, I will listen willingly."

"Well, to begin, I must go back about five years; I was then nineteen, and not long returned from the convent where I was educated. Amongst others who came to this place for their

health, were a Mr. and Mrs. Monsell, with two daughters and one son; that son was Beecham. We became acquainted, but, ere long, I found that it was impossible to be a mere acquaintance with Beecham. He was one of those with whom you seem intimate from the first; he and his sisters were always with me. Each day he grew more attentive, and more pleasing. He was not one of those who strike at first sight, but one who stole your heart by degrees; in fact, ere a year had passed, I adored him,—I lived but in his presence, and he was not indifferent to me. I was then beautiful; my glass tells me I am sadly changed.

“One day we were walking on the beach, not a creature was near us; Beecham began to talk of love; I trembled, for, as he spoke, my hand was pressed to his heart. ‘Let us sit down,’ I said; ‘the heat is so overcoming.’ We sat down, his arm was thrown around me, as he said, ‘Fanny, I love you! I have long adored you. May I

dare to aspire to your love. Oh, will you not be mine ?”

“ I would have given worlds to speak, but utterance seemed denied me : my head fell on his shoulder. In a moment I was clasped to his breast, and my cheek was covered with his kisses ; but I heard a step, I withdrew myself from his arm, and kissing his forehead, I exclaimed, ‘ Yes, Beecham, I love you.’ The next minute my brother joined us. Beecham loved me. Oh, what rapture is there in that word ; never ! never can I forget it.

“ Beecham’s father grew worse daily ; at last he died, and the family removed to Bath. Beecham was a younger son ; the property went to his brother ; his father had a situation under government. Beecham had been his secretary, and was expected to succeed him, but the situation was done away with, and Beecham became dependant on his brother. He vainly sought a commission in the army ; he could obtain none ;

and he left us with the assurance he would soon return. But he has never returned; and, till the last year, I heard nothing of him; then, indeed, I heard he was to be married to Miss O'Sullivan. I heard also of his disappointment, and I came to Clifton, to see if he had forgotten me. I met him often, walking, but never in society, and he never once recognized me."

"Now, my dear Lizzy, you know the cause of my sorrow; I know it 'td be weak, yet, for a few days, let me indulge it; and then I must forget him for ever. I vowed that, if he had totally forgotten his love for me, I would quit the world, and pass the remainder of my days in the peaceful convent where I was educated."

"My dear Fanny, I pity you sincerely; I know what it is to love; but, may I ask, why you never made yourself known to Monsell?"

"Because he had forgotten me. Seven years had passed since we parted; I was independent; he knew it; he knew, also, that had he loved me

still, and sought my hand, we might have enjoyed a competency; but I could not stoop to woo him; he has pleased himself; and I will forget him. Let us change the subject."

The term for Lizzy's stay at T——y expired, and she parted, with deep sorrow, from Fanny, in whom she felt greatly interested; but her sorrow was not of long duration, when, on arriving at home, she found herself in the arms of Delamaine; and greeted by the smiles and kisses of her father and mother.

"Ah, Mrs. Merryville," said Lizzy to that lady, as they talked of the good fortune of Cecil, "did I not always prognosticate this; did I not always tell you that Cecil was something more than an ordinary odd boy."

Cecil pressed her hand affectionately, as she said this, and sighed almost involuntarily, at the thoughts of his former boyish miseries.

With his intended on his arm, he proceeded to the garden; and that, and many succeeding

days were passed in wandering through their old haunts, and talking of former days.

The marriage of the young heiress of —— was at last celebrated ; and Lizzy gave her hand cheerfully to the man of her heart ; for, as Moore poetically says,

“ When once the young heart of the maiden is stolen,
The maiden herself will fly after it soon.”

As it is not so long since this occurred, we cannot describe a numerous and beautiful family, the delight of many authors,—but must conclude with informing those who wish for instruction, that hitherto neither parties have found reason to wish the knot untied: not so Mr. and Mrs. Monsell. Every day of theirs is blessed by little contradictions, sharpness, and quarrels, regarding the servants, the cows, the pigs, the poker, bellows, &c.

The Count and Countess Zelinski are established at Paris, and Fanny L. fulfilled her vow,

and is, at present, a nun at the convent of Boulogne.

Having now conducted our heroes and heroines up to the present moment, we must take our leave, wishing them health, happiness, and long lives.

STANLEY BRERETON.



STANLEY BRERETON.

"Love rules the court, the camp, the grove,
And men below, and saints above :
For love is heaven, and heaven is love."—*Scott*.

"MY dear Alice!" said Julia Talbot, running to meet the former, "do tell me what has kept you so long? I have been waiting this hour! why, church must be half over, and you know how particular James Villars is about people being in time for service; really, I am quite vexed."

"Never mind," said Alice Lisle.

"Oh! but I must mind; you know that I wish

to please some one—I shall not say whom;” so off Julia set, running down the lane to the church at her best pace, with her bonnet hanging down her back, and her shawl half off. Her little friend followed her puffing, (for she was a fat little Venus) and found herself at the church-door so breathless, that she had to stay a few moments to recover her breath. Julia had gone into the church, and met, as she thought, a look from Mr. Villars, as much as to say, “Late, as usual, Miss Talbot.” Whether she had been astounded by this look, it may not be easy to ascertain; however, so hurried and so flurried was her entrance to her great-aunt’s pew, that she overset that lady’s companion, who was most devoutly kneeling, awoke her grandmamma, and threw down her aunt’s book, besides leaving half the fringe of her shawl in the door of the pew, with the corner of her veil to keep it com-

pany. In a few moments order was restored, for such scenes of confusion were not rare when Julia Talbot honoured any place with her company. Alice Lisle stepped into her friend's pew without being seen or heard; she never made any noise, or attracted any one's notice. When one had said she was a little good-natured girl, it was all that one could say. She was not remarkable for anything but fat. Her father and mother were dead, and she, though an only child, was left portionless, to the care of her aunt and uncle, who, luckily, had no daughter, and who were happy to receive the orphan as their adopted one. Her uncle, Dr. Lisle, had two sons, but both were well provided for in India.

Julia Talbot was the eldest of five children, and, as Mr. Talbot's income was limited, she had been adopted by her grandpapa, Mr. Pal-

mer, whose family, from ten children, was now reduced to one. Emily Palmer was, indeed, a delicate flower, yet in her were centred almost the last hopes of the Palmer family. Julia, about the time we introduced her to our readers, was in the seventeenth year of her age, tall, rather inclined to be thin, a little contracted before, and very pretty, nay, some said handsome; a little round face, with a beautiful complexion, fine dark merry eyes and eyebrows, with shining black hair. She was the gayest of the gay—all life and glee—but, with all these perfections, the most untidy dresser of the county; her bonnet was always at her back, or her collar crumpled under her shawl, which generally hung by one pin; her hair was either in her eyes or in her mouth, and her boot-laces and shoe-strings trailing on the ground; but Julia could dress well, and, when Mr. Villars was in the case, she could do like other people.

Alice was a slattern, but it was in another way; nothing sate well upon her little tub of a figure; she looked old-fashioned in everything, and had bad taste in the choice of her dress; moreover, she never had a shoe to her foot.

Emily was just what a lady should be in her dress—"neat, but not gaudy; elegant, but not expensive." She was, like Julia, very dark, but she had quite a different expression in her eyes: there was a languid melancholy in them, which seemed to say, "I am not happy." She was only twenty-one, yet a smile seldom crossed her lip, and sometimes there was a slight shade across her brow, but that soon passed, and she was again pensive; but some people remembered the time, and that not many years back, when Emily was like the smiling May—when her light laugh might be heard across the hills, and her joyful face seen at every house. Though

Emily's smiles were so rare, yet she had not forgot how to smile; no, that last month had seen her smile—it was but slightly, but still it was a smile. Emily had smiled on her mother's saying to her one morning, "I have received a letter from Stanley Brereton." There was a charm in that name which recalled to Emily's mind happy days never to return.

Stanley Brereton was a man of family and fortune. He was a widower, but not by his own consent, for he had been twice married, and had one little boy. His first wife was one of Emily's sisters, who died within a year; the second was a person respectable, but that was all; her beauty had been too great a temptation for Mr. Stanley Brereton to withstand. They were married; she died in a year and a half, leaving, most fortunately, no children.

To see Stanley Brereton was to admire him :

he was tall, yet well filled out ; walked beautifully, rode ditto, dressed well ; in short, he was perfection itself. His face was handsome, his features regular, his eyes large, laughing, wicked ones, of a light blue—in fact, he was everything that is desirable—quite an eligible. He was in the prime of life ; just turned thirty, and a professed lady-killer. Emily had been struck on first sight with Stanley, and most likely she would have been Mrs. Stanley, and been buried, like that lady, at the present moment, had not an unlucky journey to Wales taken her out of the dangerous vicinity of this men of men ; and as her sister and Stanley were always together, and as Georgina could vie with Emily in beauty, Stanley made his proposals, and Emily arrived in London to enjoy, if she could, her sister's wedding. Some said Stanley repented, on her return, of his choice ; but what is done cannot be undone ; so he and

his bride departed for Stanley Park, and Emily was left to mourn.

But when Georgina died, and left an infant son, that child was confided to the care of Emily by the fond father, and, as he laid the babe upon her knee, he said, "you will undertake this for my sake, Emily." But men, false men, how deceitful you are ! On the Continent Stanley met with a lovely foreigner, of low extraction—married her, and forgot Emily and his babe. Since this marriage, he had not been to England, but now in a short time was expected, again an eligible, and all the young ladies were preparing their Stanley dresses and their Stanley bonnets.

But to return to Julia, whom we left in church. Service was now over, and all her family were moving; some talking, some putting on boas, and the "demoiselle de compagnie" putting by the books, yet Julia stirred not; she seemed

pinned to her seat, until she saw James Villars open his pew, and walk gravely out, when up she sprung, and, darting through the crowd, contrived to meet him at the door, with an "How do you do, Mr. Villars?"

"Well, thank you," was the tranquil reply, with a grave smile, which, as the corners of his mouth were pulled down, might be mistaken for a cry.

"And I hope your mother is better," slipped in little Alice.

"Much better," was the answer.

Julia, not very well pleased with this silence, was trying to find something to say about the sermon, as Mr. Villars was a clergyman; but, not being able to recollect one word, neither the text, she made a dash, and said,—“A curious text, Mr. Villars.”

"Why, it was a very simple text," replied

Villars, opening his garden-gate, which was near the church; and letting himself in, as he said, "Adieu, Miss Talbot,—for the present."

Julia was quite indignant at such coolness: but, not liking to have no one to talk to, she called Alice, and set off running to join three young ladies of the same name as herself (but no relation),—Miss Sally, Miss Emma, and Miss Lydia Talbot, who, with their mamma and their elegant *gouvernante*, were lobbing from church in a true country style.

Madlle. Félicie, their 'gouvernante,' was a French lady, the most airy, elegant, lively, little tulip possible. With a tolerable face, and bright black eyes, she set up for a beauty; and having in vain tried to captivate James Villars, had now begun to throw some hot water on the innocent heart of Henry, or, as his ma' called him, Hal Talbot, brother of her pupils, who was a

tall carrotty-polled youth, just come from Rugby, as he said,—but just expelled, according to what others said; and expecting, in one short year, to become master of 300*l.* per annum, which Ma'mselle Félicie thought would keep her in satin bonnets and silk stockings beautifully,—“and be no bad ting neither, to become Mrs. Hal Talbot.” However, be this as it may, Hal had as yet never thought of such a thing; and further than swearing Félicie was an angel, and pinching her fingers, he had not yet gone.

But to return again to Julia. After running and jumping, and calling Emray, Sally, Lydia, a dozen times, she succeeded in making the three stupid frights look behind them, and elicited a “How do you do?” from them.

“Oh! very well, very well,” said Julia
“What is the news to-day?”

"News!" repeated the trio; "we do not know."

"Ah, chère belle Julie!" exclaimed Félicie, "do you want news? Why, Mr. Henry is at home de three days: he is come from Rugby. Ah, un ange! un beau garçon! ah, qu'il ressemble à sa mère."

"You must bring him to see me," said Julia; "you know I like society. But, 'à propos,' Mademoiselle Félicie, an old adorer of yours is coming here."

"Oh, moi, Julie, que vous êtes méchante!" I never did have admire in my life. "Mais qui donc voulez-vous dire? parlez bas ma mie?"

"Stanley Brereton!" shouted Julia, at the top of her voice.

"Ah, 'mon Dieu!'" said Mademoiselle, blushing, and turning away her head.

"What are you telling Félicie?" said Mrs. Talbot, with true prudence of expression in her countenance.

"I was only saying," replied Julia, "that one of Mademoiselle Félicie's many admirers is coming;—my uncle, Stanley Brereton. You know there was a little flirting in that quarter?"

"Flirting!" screamed Mrs. Talbot; "really I was not aware—here, Sally! Emmy! Lydia! come close to me, my dears. Mademoiselle Félicie," continued Mrs. Talbot, looking volumes at that lady, "oh! what is this? Pray!—really!"

"Indeed, my lady, I, no nothing; bote I say, I do lub—'moi j'aime'—Monsieur Stanley *Beetoron*, that is all. Ah, 'mon Dieu!' it is all."

"Is this it?" said Mrs. Talbot to Julia, who was taking fun, as she called it, out of an old screw.

“ Yes, ma’am, I was only jesting with Mademoiselle. You know I like to teaze her,—she is so kind.”

“ Kind! ‘bonne!’ ” repeated Félicie. “ Ah! who can live with Madame *Toe bout*, and not be kind? ‘ Elle est ma bienfaitrice, elle ma comblé de ses bienfaits.’ ”

Mrs. Talbot was not a little pleased at such flattery, which, Heaven knows, she did not deserve. But flattery is flattery; and Mrs. Talbot said, “ that as Mademoiselle had only made a mistake or a joke between the French word ‘amour,’ and the English ‘love,’ she would overlook it. But, my dear Félicie,” continued she, “ I have three daughters to protect.” And Sally, Emmy, and Lydia, were again called around their careful mother. “ And Julia,” continued Mrs. Talbot, “ how is little Arthur Brereton?”

" Oh, pretty well ; but aunt Emily was afraid of a little cough he had, so he has not been out for two days. I am afraid aunt must part with him when uncle Stanley comes here, for he wants to take him to Stanley Park. But aunt Emily is so fond of him, it will be her death, I should think, to part with a child she has brought up from a month old. It is just four years since Arthur was born, to-morrow."

" Your aunt will not, then, go out to-morrow ; for she never has, since her sister's death, gone out on Arthur's birthday."

" Oh, never ; I am certain she will not," replied Julia.

" Well, my children have a holiday, as it is the first of June. Will you join them in a gipsy party, to drink tea in the wood ?"

" Oh, with the greatest pleasure," said Julia, hereyes beaming with delight.

“ And Miss Lisle, too, I hope ?” said Mrs. Talbot .

Little Lisle replied, “ Yes, ma’am,” in her usual quiet tone.

“ And now I have only to ask my niece Laura Talbot, to complete our number.”

At four in the afternoon, a select party of young people were assembled in Mrs. Talbot’s parlour, where they only awaited the arrival of some beaux to escort them to the wood. Some were to ride, others to drive; and the saddled donkeys, and two little donkey chairs, were all ready. Julia Talbot was, as usual, the belle of the assembled circle. She had this day intended to pay unusual attention to her toilet, as she expected to meet Mr. Villars; but, thoughtless how the time passed, had sate talking with Alice Lisle, until the clock warned her that she had only half an hour to dress and find her way to

Brooke Lodge, the name of Mrs. Talbot's residence. In a great perturbation, she summoned her maid; and having tossed at least a dozen dresses over, from the plainest cambric to the richest silk, she chose a bright rose-colour silk to array herself in; and after tying on three straw and four silk bonnets, of all the shapes imaginable, a pea-green took her fancy, as matching with the pink dress; and, for the finishing stroke, her maid pinned on a beautiful French embroidered collar, which had not yet been seen by the inhabitants of Seaforth, but which, in our humble opinion, was more fit for a race-course, than a romping party in a wood. However, it pleased Julia, and that was enough. She little knew what vexations were awaiting her.

The beaux being come, we must introduce them to our readers—*videlicet*: Mr. Villars and

Mr. Talbot are already known, but the others were Sir Charles Leslie, Mr. Babington, and his brother Alexander Artaxerxes Adolphus Babington, and Lord Latimer, an Oxonian, with Mr. Wilmot, his humble servant and tutor. The latter young gentleman was twenty, and had come to study quietly at Seaforth, for his examination at college; he had gone with *éclat* through the *little go*, but the *great go* was now before him. He was a singular young man;—short, that is about five feet eight, very plain, and very eccentric; but he was handsome in the eyes of the world, for he had five thousand a-year at present, and would inherit twenty thousand from his father. Mr. Wilmot, his tutor, was about eight-and-twenty, very dark and handsome, but he, alas! had not as many hundreds as his noble pupil had thousands; it was said his family was noble, but more no one knew; the Babing,

ton's were not illustrious; their father had made money, and they were doing their best to spend it; the eldest was a married man, and had one child. Sir Charles Leslie was a nice good-looking lad, near twenty, quite a skeleton, and very consumptive; he was living in a gentleman's family at Seaforth, who took parlour boarders. But to return to the gipsy party.

Julia was the first to mount a donkey, expecting Mr. Villars would immediately come to her side; but Mr. Villars never thought of such a thing, and having placed his cousin Laura in a chair, seated himself by her, and very quietly led the way, looking quite at home, the skirts of his coat all the time hanging out of the chair behind.

Never had Julia been so jealous; only to think that Laura should be preferred to her! Laura, a natural daughter of Colonel Talbot's,

to attract the attention of her cousin Villars ! how could he think her pretty,—a nasty, fair-haired, or sandy girl. “ Really, Alice was right,” continued Julia to herself, “ when she said she saw no difference between Villars and other men.”

It was true that Laura was a natural daughter, and Laura only knew and felt it herself too well. She was received into society, yet some slighted her, and others were so condescendingly kind, that she rather drew back from their notice. She had been educated at school, and at seventeen was one of the most bashful yet engaging of her sex. She could not boast Julia's beauty, but she was pretty, had soft eyes, and long flaxen hair ; and when James first saw his cousin, on her return from a London school, he was struck by her engaging manner, and pleased by her timidity. Much was he astonished to see how

Julia, and some others of the Seaforth young ladies, scorned and insulted such an unassuming girl, who tried to please them without success ; he immediately determined to take her side, and defend her from her insulting and unmerciful companions.

Lord Latimer, having looked around him to discover whom his companion should be, darted up to Miss Julia, who, though not pleased, felt herself flattered in having a lord for her companion ; and followed the triumphant car of Villars. Miss Lisle got Mr. Babington. Mr. Wilmot and Sir Charles flew to Mademoiselle Félicie ; when Mr. Hal Talbot, declaring that Mr. Wilmot must escort Miss Sally, his eldest sister, slipped into Mr. Wilmot's place, next his charming Félicie ; and Alexander Artaxerxes Adolphus Babington undertook the charge of Mrs. and the two youngest Miss Talbots.

Mr. Villars and his fair companion were seated on a turf-bank in the wood, when joined by the others. That they had not been laughing was certain, for tears were in Laura's eyes, and Mr. Villars looked agitated—a very uncommon thing for him. Julia's laugh and voice were heard everywhere. At last, coming on Lord Latimer's arm to Mr. Villars and Laura, she said, "What, flirting, Mr. Villars! I could not have thought it!"

"What makes you think that I am flirting?" said Villars, very gravely.

"Bless my soul!" said Julia, not answering him; "why you have made Laura cry!"

"The sun hurts my eyes," said Laura, trying to smile.

"If you had said 'the sun hurts my heart,' you would have been nearer the mark," said Julia, with envy.

Laura and Villars both laughed; and, jumping up, proposed gathering strawberries, which were scattered in abundance.

In a moment Julia's dress had numerous stains on it, from kneeling down to gather the fruit.

"There," said Villars, "your dress is spoilt, Julia." "Why, how could you think of coming to such an expedition in a dress fit only for a ball-room?"

His speech was interrupted by an exclamation from Julia. He looked, and saw, with astonishment, her beautiful green hat carried off her head by a bramble, which had caught the ribbands as she was getting up from gathering the strawberries. Villars' first impulse was to run and rescue the poor hat, but this was not very easily effected; and when it was extricated, the

satin was much pulled and frayed, and, in fact, the hat was nearly spoiled.

Julia looked at it for a moment ; then, putting it on, said, " I do not care much about it, for I do not like the colour ; but what were you saying, Mr. Villars, when I interrupted you ?"

" I was only saying, Miss Talbot, that your dress was more fit for a ball, or a race, than for a wood, for you have spoilt your gown and your hat, and I expect your collar will soon follow."

" Indeed I hope not," said Julia ; " for grandma only gave it me yesterday, and it cost thirty shillings."

" Heaven forbid !" said Villars, " that my wife should wear thirty-shilling collars for picking fruit in."

" Let me take the collar off, Miss Talbot," said Laura. " It will be quite safe in my reti-

eule, and it will not be missed, as your dress does not require it."

"Thank you," said Julia; and the expensive collar was placed in Laura's reticule.

"Now, Julia," said Villars, "you see the misfortunes of fine dress. Look at Laura, and take pattern by her."

Laura blushed as Julia looked her dress through and through. She had on a simple straw hat, trimmed with pink, and a plain white dress without the smallest bit of work.

"Really," said Julia, with a little petulance, "I do not see why people should not dress according to their taste."

"Nor I," said Lord Latimer. "Indeed, begging Mr. Villars' pardon, you were most beautifully dressed, Miss Talbot."

"Julia," said Villars, "what makes you so

envious? You cannot bear to hear any one praised but yourself."

"You are so very particular, Mr. Villars," said Julia, sharply, "there is no pleasing you."

Villars laughed outright at this speech, and said, "Julia, I cannot afford to keep a wife who wants a new wardrobe once a-week; and, as there are many men in the same circumstances, I wish to tell you, that, to support such extravagance, you ought to marry a man with seven or eight thousand a-year."

"That is what I mean to do," said Julia, looking vexed.

Laura could not refrain a laugh.

Julia looked still more annoyed, until Villars said, "Belle Julie, we shall be good friends yet; I am certain the next place I meet you at, you will be in a white dress."

"Not if I can help it, Mr. Villars," said Julia.

"That is right, Miss Talbot," said Lord Latimer; "I like ladies to be determined. Come, let us stroll through the wood."

"With all my heart," said Julia, and, taking his lordship's offered arm, Julia turned from Villars with the air of an empress.

"What a pretty girl Julia is," said Laura to Villars, "but rather vain!"

"She is pretty," said Villars with a decided tone, "very pretty; but all the flattery she gets would ruin any one."

"Here comes my aunt," said Laura; "I suppose tea is ready."

"Laura, my love," said Mrs. Talbot, "all are assembled except you, in the tent."

In a few moments James Villars and Laura joined the party. Every one was very gay; Lord Latimer was paying Julia marked atten-

tion; Mr. Wilmot was amusing himself with Mlle. Félicie; and Villars seated himself by Alice Lisle, leaving Laura to her cousins.

The tent was pitched under a beautiful group of fir trees, on a slight eminence, which afforded an extensive view over a rich and lovely valley. When other subjects failed, this view furnished an excellent one for conversation; but none of the party seemed so much delighted with it as Laura Talbot; she was a painter, and therefore a judge of its beauties: her stupid cousins, however, could not admire it; they were half asleep, and thinking of the lessons they would have to learn the next day. Villars was so engaged with Alice, that he could not feel with Laura; and as to the rest of the company, Laura shrank from their notice.

As soon as the eating and drinking were over, it was time to think of going home. All the

beasts were caught; Miss Sally and Miss Emmy were sent forward in a donkey-chair, escorted by Sir Charles Leslie, and followed by Mlle. Félicie, on a donkey, led by Hal Talbot. Mr. Villars took charge of Alice Lisle; Laura shared a donkey-chair with her aunt; Alexander Artaxerxes Adolphus Babington escorted Miss Lydia; while Julia and Lord Latimer brought up the rear, preceded by Mrs. Talbot and Mr. Wilmot, who were canvassing the last speech of Dan O'Connell's.

When Mrs. Talbot and Laura got home, they found Sally and Emmy sitting weeping on the sofa, while Sir Charles Leslie was trying to comfort them. After a good deal of blubbering, it came out, that Sir Charles had kissed Sally, as she said, and pinched Emmy's little finger. Sir Charles denied the first accusation, and said he had touched Miss Sally's face with his hand,

whilst whipping the donkey. He pleaded guilty to the second, as he said Emmy's finger was so pretty, he did it out of gallantry. Sally and Emmy, frightened out of their wits, kept sobbing through the explanation, and it was not before they had swallowed each a pint of wine, that they were at all conversable. They had hardly recovered their usual stupid placidity, when the voice of woe was heard, and Mr. Alexander Artaxerxes Adolphus ushered Miss Lydia into the room, the blood streaming from her nose. It came out, that Alexander Artaxerxes had blown into the ear of Miss Lydia's donkey, and Asinus, not relishing such a trick, had kicked up his heels, and precipitated poor Lydia against a tree; the shock was so great that the concussion broke her nose, and the blood flowed in abundance. Another half bottle of port set Miss Lydia to rights, and Mrs. Talbot was

now the only agitated one of the party; all were safely arrived except Hal Talbot, Mlle. Félicie, Julia, and Lord Latimer. The clock had long since struck ten, and Mr. Wilmot and Mr. Babington both declared that they had neither seen nor heard of the former couple, but that they had left Julia and Lord Latimer far in the rear. Mrs. Talbot was on hot bricks; the evening had long set in, and if any of the Seaforth folk should meet the stragglers, what reports might not be spread in Seaforth the next day? What blame might not fall upon Mrs. Talbot for allowing such manceuvring, whilst so many young ladies were under her usually watchful eye? The surmises and conversations of Mr. Wilmot, Mr. Babington, and Sir Charles Leslie, did not afford her any relief. Mr. Wilmot looked like a saint, turned up his eyes in a most suspicious manner, smiled, and observed, "that Latimer

preferred the society of young ladies to that of Latin books—that, indeed, his lordship was particularly partial to moonlight walks; it was a peculiarity he had inherited from his mother—and that, with such a companion as Julia Talbot, no doubt his lordship had forgotten the hour—perhaps the road; his lordship was very often absent, especially when he talked sentiment.”

“Sentiment!” exclaimed Mrs. Talbot, looking like blighted grass.

“Hal told me,” said Sir Charles, in a big voice, trying to look like a man, “that no one need expect him home to supper, for he meant to row Félicie on the river by moonlight, and that he had ordered supper at the Russel inn.”

“And a bed,” said Mr. Babington.

“A bed!” repeated Mrs. Talbot, aghast—
“a bed! what for?”

“He knows that best himself,” said Mr. Vil-

lars, with a grave smile. At that moment the clock struck eleven, the hall door flew open, and Julia entered, on Lord Latimer's arm.

"Where is Félicie?" said Mrs. Talbot, almost choaking.

"Félicie!" repeated Julia. "Indeed, I do not know, ma'am; we never saw her."

"And what have you been doing, Miss Talbot?" said Mrs. Talbot, with a sharp tone.

"We lost our way," said Lord Latimer.

"And our donkey," said Julia. "We took the road to Halburt Common, by mistake; and the donkey tumbled over the stones in the dry bed of the river, and broke its knees, so I had to get off, and walk home without my bonnet, as it was trodden to pieces by the donkey. I am sure Lord Latimer must be tired, for I leaned such a weight on him. I thought I should never get home; it is three miles from this."

"Four," said Lord Latimer, wiping his face;

“ a good four miles. So sit down, Miss Talbot,” and he handed her to a sofa, where Villars sat like a blackbird on a laurel bush.

“ So, your hat is in Halburt ravine?” said Villars to Julia.

“ Yes,” said Julia; “ will you go and find it?”

“ To-morrow,” said James, “ I will go, and find it, if it is to be found.” This was said doubtfully.

“ What will you be doing at Halburt to-morrow?” said Julia, with a searching glance.

“ What were you doing there to-night?” said Villars, returning the enquiring look.

“ Nothing,” said Julia, laughing.

Villars nodded first at her, and then at Lord Latimer, who did not see him.

“ ‘ A propos,’ ” said Julia to Mrs. Talbot, “ grandpapa sets out for London to-morrow, so if you have any commands—”

"To-morrow!" said Mrs. Talbot; "why did you not tell me sooner, Julia?"

"I did not know it, until aunt Emily told me just after I left you."

"Your aunt Emily?" said Mrs. Talbot; "why, where did you see her?"

"At Halburt, ma'am."

"At Halburt?" said Mrs. Talbot.

"Yes, ma'am: aunt Emily came home with Lord Latimer and me."

Villars' countenance brightened.

"Are you satisfied now, Mr. Villars?" said Julia, archly.

"I am," said Villars, smiling.

"Will you go and look for my bonnet now?" continued Julia.

"There is no occasion," said Villars.

"No," said Julia, "you are right, there is no

occasion, as you could not afford *your wife* a new bonnet every week."

Lord Latimer smiled, and turned away. Villars looked serious, but meeting Laura's eye, he smiled,—such a smile was rarely seen on his face. Julia noticed it; she saw Laura blush. Lord Latimer looked at Julia; both smiled, as they hoped, unseen. Lord Latimer nodded,—first at Villars, then at Laura, as much as to say to Julia, "I comprehend." Julia smiled. To Lord Latimer's astonishment, Villars, in his turn, nodded, first towards Lord Latimer, then towards Julia. His lordship looked confounded; Julia never evinced the slightest emotion.

At this awkward moment, Hal burst into the room, followed by Félicie, who threw herself into a chair; she looked very hot, and was out of breath.

“ ‘ Ah, mon Dieu,’ ” were her first words.

As Hal turned to sit down, the company perceived that he had lost the tails of his coat, a loud laugh ensued.

“ Hal,” said Sir Charles, “ why do you not bring your tails behind you ? ”

“ He has got the tail rot,” said Alexander Artaxerxes.

“ By Jove ! he has been caught in a trap,” said Lord Latimer, examining the marks on the poor coat.

“ Hal ! ” said Mrs. Talbot.

“ Hal ! ” echoed his three sisters.

“ Mother,” said Hal, “ I went into P—— Park, on the road home, as the sun was so hot.”
—Every one laughed, and shouted, “ The moon, you mean.”—“ Well, the gamekeeper took us for poachers, and we had to run and hide ourselves in the little wood. I fell into a trap, and

Félicie into a bog; when we got out of that, a dog flew after us, and, scrambling over the palings, Félicie tore the skirt off her dress."

All eyes were turned on Félicie, who was mud to the knees, and seemed to have neither skirt nor petticoat; she sat sighing and sobbing on the sofa, and exclaiming against all moonlight rambles in future. Villars alone looked grave of all the gay assemblage; he looked reproachfully, first at Félicie, then at Hal, until the latter blustered out,—"Cousin Jim, what do you think of me?"

Cousin Jim, unused to such appellations, coloured, and calmly replied,—"I have, as yet, had no thoughts about you, Mr. Talbot."

"Mother," said Hal, "some wine, if you please, for me and mine;" and he took a bottle from the supper-table, helping himself, and was pouring out a glass for Félicie, when she looked

at him, then at Mrs. Talbot. Hal took the hint, and said, "Here, dear mother, drink my health." Mrs. Talbot, pleased with such an unusual attention, drank her son's health, and ordered him to help Félicie, which he was purposing to do without any advice.

The fly which Julia had sent for, now came, and wishing Mrs. Talbot a good night, she offered a seat in it to Laura and James Villars, "because," she added to the latter, "you are Laura's cousin." It was accepted. Lord Latimer handed Julia to her carriage, and Laura followed with Mr. Wilmot. Villars had Alice Lisle on his arm.

"Good bye, Lord Latimer," said Julia, as she seated herself in the fly, "good night, Mr. Wilmot."

"Good nights" being over, the door was shut, and Julia, Laura, and Alice, with James Villars, went to Oakwood, the seat of Julia's grandpapa, Mr. Palmer.

“ I have spent a pleasant day,” said Julia, with a sigh.

“ Then why that sigh ?” said Villars.

“ For your dress, perhaps ?” said Laura.

“ No,” said Julia, laughing, “ it was not for my dress ; but, *à propos*, will you, Laura, spend to-morrow with me and Alice Lisle ; I have some shopping to do, and you have such good taste ?”

“ I shall be most happy,” said Laura.

“ Well done, Julia,” said Villars ; “ with Laura’s taste you will be sure to please Mr. —”

“ Mr. Norton,” said Julia, sharply.

“ No,” said Laura, “ but Mr. Villars.”

Julia blushed, so did Villars, and he turned the conversation.

“ *A propos*,” said he : “ how came your aunt Emily to walk as far as Halburt ; it is a long walk for one so delicate ?”

“Oh!” replied Julia, “aunt Emily generally spends the first of April in Halburt wood: it was the last, and the favourite walk, that my aunt Georgina took. Who would have thought,” continued Julia, with tears in her eyes, “that the first morning of June would bring desolation to our house? Who would have thought, that saw aunt Georgina the eve before that fatal morn,—lively and beautiful, the life of our home circle,—who could have thought of what the dawning light witnessed. I shall never forget it. Grandpapa’s grief; grandmamma’s tears; and Emily’s silent, yet heart-rending sorrow; but, worst of all, uncle Stanley’s despair, when Dr. Lorton said he feared that—— ‘Save Georgina!’ exclaimed Stanley, in a voice scarcely audible, ‘Save Georgina! and the wealth of India shall be yours.’ But it was impossible; and when little Arthur was presented by Emily

to Stanley, he flew to the side of Georgina's bed, and holding the babe in one hand, he snatched one of Georgina's hands, which lay motionless on the bed, with the other, and kneeling by her, he said, 'Live, my Georgina, for this babe!' She opened her closed eyes for one moment, gave a faint smile, and sunk again into a doze. 'She lives! she lives!' said Stanley, as he fell fainting on a sofa, and the tears which streamed from his eyes fell on the face of his little babe. It was in vain that Dr. Lorton said all hope was over; it was in vain to reason with Stanley; and for half-an-hour not a word was spoken in this chamber of death; no one seemed even to breathe. At last a shriek of pain startled the silent mourners. All flew to the couch of aunt Georgina: the closed curtains were thrown aside at the moment that the sufferer closed her eyes for ever."

“To describe the scene that followed would be impossible. Stanley Brereton threw himself upon the corpse of his unfortunate wife! A thousand times he pressed her lifeless form to his beating bosom; a thousand times he kissed her cold hands. At last he was forced from her bed, and, almost raving, was left to seek some repose in a distant room. . . . But when his babe was brought to him,—and that was not until some weeks were passed,—what tears were shed over that unfortunate child, so early deprived of its mother. Who that has seen Stanley Brereton,—the most dashing, the most lively of men, the slave of fashion and appearance,—who would suppose that he would weep over a baby? . . .”

Julia paused, as a train of family misfortunes passed before her eyes. She was excited by

what she had been relating, and tears trickled down her cheeks; her face was flushed with anxiety; and had Lord Latimer then seen her, what would have been his admiration! Villars looked at her with pleasure, although his heart was heavy—(who is there in this world of woe who has not known what grief is?)—and his suppressed sigh startled Julia.

“Mr. Villars,” exclaimed she, “I have affected you too much, I am afraid?”

Villars took her hand, and, pressing it with warmth, replied—

“My dear Julia, I have been unjust in thinking you wanted feeling; I am now certain you have a good heart: you have touched my tenderest nerve, I must avow:” and he sighed again.

“What do you sigh for?” said Julia, trying to be gay.

“For one who is dead,” returned Villars.

"It is useless," said Julia; "you should sigh for the living."

Villars smiled. "I suppose you think," said he, "that the dead should bury their dead?"

"I do," said Julia. "But we are at home. The fly will set you all down at your houses. I am sorry I cannot ask you in,—it is so late. Good bye, Villars; good bye, Laura;—do not let him talk nonsense to you by moonlight. Adieu!"

* * *

I believe we have mentioned to our readers two Mr. Babingtons. We must now introduce the family.

Mrs. Babington, the mamma, was an old woman with a good jointure; she had two daughters,—the eldest Miss Bab, just thirty, the youngest nineteen. The former was tall, sticky, and cross, like many other ladies who have much to do, and little time to do it in.

Miss Bab wished for an establishment ; and for one past thirty, without gilders, that is a very hard thing to get. Miss Hannah, the second daughter, was a monster,—a true spanker of the elephant breed, with a foot like a dish, and a bustle like a round of beef.

Miss Bab and Miss Hannah were sitting in their drawing-room, labouring at a great ottoman, which was about half completed, and which they had executed in lamb's wool ; the centre represented three little cupids shooting at the heart of a very skinny-looking man, who was sprawling his whole length under a tree, reading a book. To show that the subject was oriental, oranges were spotted about the tree ; and the jetty face of a nigger was well thrown up, whilst peeping from the trees, by its coming in contact with the ripe fruit. The heavens were of the brightest azure, and the clouds had a strong

resemblance to curds and whey. The border was a complicated affair, composed of fruit and flowers, bees and butterflies. Twice had Bab sighed for some friend to drop in, when the door opened, and Mrs. Arabella Strutt, followed by her sister, Miss Becky, entered the room.

"My dear Bab, I am shocked," said the almost breathless Mrs. Arabella; "I am astonished; I always said no good would come of it. Only think, my dear, eleven at night—in a wood—quite alone!—man—Lord Latimer—no bonnet—no dress—new collar—donkey—found dead—came home together—in a fly.—Scolded—locked up—sent to bed—to school to-morrow.—Mr. Palmer, Mrs. Palmer—Mr. Talbot—Hal—Félicie—shoes, stockings!—my dear, I shall die——"

"Shoes and stockings?" repeated Bab.

"Yes, my dear," continued Mrs. Arabella, who had got her breath again; "only think,

at Mrs. Talbot's pic-nic,—who would have thought it?" and Mrs. Strutt repeated Julia's adventures with Lord Latimer, only much improved, and with the additions that she had lost her shoes, bonnet, and dress, and was to be sent to some distant school the next day; that Hal Talbot and Félicie had——and a shake of the head conveyed more than words could; that, in fact, it now must be—and Mrs. Hal's wedding-day was fixed.

"Arabella, Arabella," said the old maid, her sister, "do not talk scandal."

As Miss Becky always lisped, she set up to have weak lungs; and, as she was an old maid, she affected never to allow scandal; but as all the folk at Seaforth knew where to find it, Miss Becky's house was called "Reputation Hall."

"How!" said Bab; "can you believe it?"

"Believe it, my dear!" said Mrs. Strutt;

“why I had it from the best authority. You are so kind, yourself, my Bab, you do not like others to get blamed for anything.”

Bab tried to blush, but her day was over,—she was *passée*.

“And so Mr. Stanley Brereton is coming here?” said Mrs. Strutt. “I think I know a lady, who shall be nameless, who is not sorry. Well, to be sure, the Scripture says, ‘Judge not, and ye shall not be judged;’ or I should say that . . . in fact, it is a thing I would not do,—such a near connexion. Poor Emily!—very odd, indeed! My dear, they say it is owing to an unfortunate malady.”

This last sentence was in a whisper.

“Ha, ha! Scandal as usual, Bab,” said Alexander Artaxerxes Adolphus, entering the room. “Oh, Mrs. Strutt, I see:—my dear

Lady Arabella, a thousand pardons;" and he tenderly squeezed her hand.

The pressure was returned, for Mrs. Arabella was Mr. Alexander's *chère amie*; and he was her *caro mio*.

"He grows stout,—I mean Alexander," said the smiling Arabella to Miss Bab.

"When people are happy," said Alexander, "they often grow stout; and who would not be happy near my *belle*?" whispered he to Mrs. Arabella.

Mrs. Arabella Strutt could stand many things—but men and flattery were the exceptions to this rule. She was a widow, turned forty, and flattery, therefore, was very agreeable to her. She, therefore, returned Mr. Alexander's compliment with one of those sweet looks, which she could so well assume.

"Apropos," said Alexander, "will you come

and take a walk ? I am going up the Lovers'-walk ; if you are going home, I will escort you."

" The Lovers'-walk !" screamed Mrs. Strutt. " Mr. Alexander, you do not think of what people might say ; you know I have a character to maintain, and appearances must be attended to."

Alexander Artaxerxes Adolphus turned away his face, to hide a smile, for it was only three days since Mrs. Arabella had not been afraid of walking in Lovers'-walk, with him, for two hours, by moonlight.

" La, my dear Mrs. Strutt," said Bab, " how can you talk such nonsense to a boy ; no one will care what you do with Alexander."

" Well," said Mrs. Arabella, " if I must I must." So she took hold of Alexander's arm, and away they went to Lovers'-walk. But, alas ! hardly had Alexander got some flattering speech out of his mouth, when they heard an uncouth

noise behind them : and, looking round, saw Harry Percy, with a dog at his heels. He soon joined them, and the lovers were interrupted in their love.

“ Well, Harry, how are you ?” said Alexander.

“ Oh, pretty bobbish,” replied the boy. “ Almost bored to death. I am going to Mr. L—’s school, next month. I am so glad ; there is no doing anything at home. Mamma says, ‘ Percy, my carpet, you will wear it out, sir, with your romps.’—Papa says, ‘ Harry, sir, if you make so much noise, you shall sit in your own room.’ Then, one must not eat and one must not drink ; in fact, no one must do anything, but the dogs, and they do what they like. There is for you, brute,” said Harry, as he kicked one on its head ; “ really, I am sent out to air the dogs, and not myself, while papa rests his foolish wits,

by reposing on the sofa, and mamma studies Greek, with her book upside down. I will be hung if ever I saw anything like it. I wish they would send me to sea. Look at all these dogs ! why they live like kings to me."

"Oh, Harry Percy, you must not talk so," said the affected Mrs. Arabella, putting her hand before Harry's mouth.

"But I will," said Harry ; "I will go to the d——l, if I don't."

"Oh, you frighten me," said Mrs. Arabella, shaking her tail, by way of trembling, and clinging to Alexander's arm.

"You are easily frightened then," said Harry, drily. "I wonder why you were not frightened the other night, when you walked with Alexander alone for two hours?"

"Oh, but we were not alone, Harry, my love,"

said Mrs. Arabella, in her most conciliating tone.

“ I will be hung then if there was any one but me near Lovers’-walk,” said Harry. “ But take my advice, Mrs. Arabella, do not trust a pin to Alexander ; he—”

“ Hold your tongue !” said Alexander Ar-taxerxes, frowning. “ I will not,” said the boy, pouting ; “ I will say you were out all night, for Belisarius Benedict Northumberland told me so. Did not he catch you and —— ?”

“ O my love, Percy,” said Mrs. Arabella, with her cambric handkerchief to her face, “ you make me blush. Promise, my love, not to say this ?”

“ No, I will not,” said Percy ; “ I only tell it you, Mrs. Arabella. Do you think I do not know everything that passes in Seaforth ? Well, good day, for I am going on Halburt Common,

to join Belisarius, and Octavius Northumberland, to have some fun. Good day, Alexander; mind you do not hunt in other people's parks."

Harry now took to his heels, and was out of sight in a moment.

"Alexander, what am I to think?" lisped Mrs. Arabella.

"My belle," said Alexander, "think nothing, and mind nothing,—for, see, here is your gate. Shall I leave you, and go home?"

"Oh, no, Alexander, do not be so cruel; pray stay one short minute. Oh, but here comes Mr. and Mrs. Palmer. Good bye, Mr. Babington, remember me to Barbara," said Arabella, with a distant air, as she turned to meet Mr. and Mrs. Palmer.

"How do you do, madam?" said old Mr. Palmer, with his usual shake of the head, as he spoke.

“ Quite well, dear Mr. Palmer ! How does this lovely day agree with you, my dear Mrs. Palmer ? All—all well at home ? How is dear Julia and the favourite Emily ? ” said Mrs. Strutt.

“ Oh, pretty well, thank you ; Mrs. Strutt,” said Mrs. Palmer. “ Julia, poor thing, spent such a pleasant day with Mrs. Talbot ; and my Emily, poor child, is seldom very well in spring ; but her brother Stanley will soon be here,—and she is so much attached to him, that I think he will be a pleasant companion for her.”

“ I presume, Mr. Stanley Brereton,” said Mrs. Arabella, “ will soon be choosing a lady from among our Seaforth belles ? ”

“ Indeed I do not know of any one likely to suit him,” said Mr. Palmer.

“ I was not aware,” said Mrs. Arabella, lisping, “ that Mr. Stanley had been so difficult.

I should have thought that the difficulty was on the other side of the question. I remember I often said, before Mr. Strutt died, ' Well, if my husband should die before me, I never will marry again,' and I have kept my resolution."

" I suppose you have not been tempted to break it, in such a place as Seaforth?" said Mr. Palmer.

" Oh, I cannot tell secrets," said Mrs. Arabella, trying to blush through her rouge.

" We will not press you, my dear ma'am," said Mr. Palmer, as he bowed, and passed on, for we are going to see the Miss Buttercups."

In half an hour, Miss Patience and Miss Prudence Buttercup were startled by a long ring at their little garden-door. Miss Patience, who was the housekeeper, was busy making queen-cakes in her little kitchen, and, expecting her butter-woman, ran out, with a dish in her

hands, and her arms covered with flour, to the gate, to scold the woman, as the last roll of butter was a half-quarter of an ounce short. What was Patience's astonishment to see Mr. and Mrs. Palmer as she opened the gate ! but, as retreat was useless, she put her arms behind her, and begged them to walk in, for Prudence was in the drawing-room.

Prudence Buttercup was two years younger than her sister ; and, goodness knows, the mark had been out of Patience's mouth long before she came to Seaforth,—and she had been there thirty years. So, by all accounts, Miss Patience would never see fifty again ; therefore she had given up all thoughts of changing her name, and turned blue-stockings, florist, and old maid. Miss Prudence might be about fifty ; she tried to be the fine lady, and never meddled with the ' *ménage*,' because she was near-sighted ; and

as Patience was deaf, Prudence said, "Of course she could receive and listen to her company best." Be this as it may, some ill-natured people made the remark, "That though the Buttercups were blind and deaf, they always saw and heard what no one wished they should." Miss Prudence Buttercup was very fond of flowers, as well as her sister; and, considering the smallness of their garden, and that they made a point of buying only one flower each a year, they were tolerably well off for plants of all sorts. Their cottage was crowded with all sorts of creepers: a little virandah shaded the drawing-room from the morning sun, opposite which were four little flower-beds, cut in the shape of diamonds, on the lawn, which sloped down to an old wall covered with ivy, which was built partly to hide a meeting-house, and partly to be a screen from the east wind. At one end

of the wall an ivied arbour ; at the other a labyrinth,—on a small scale, to be sure, but which proved a nice plaything for all the cats, rats, mice, and snails, in the neighbourhood.

It was in vain Miss Patience swept her walks clean ; the next morning she found them covered with the cats' offerings. Miss Prudence, incensed at a conveniency being made of her mignonette bed by one of those industrious creatures, opposite the window, and who, being alarmed, had not time to cover it in, set a large gin in the labyrinth, where the howlings of these animals were generally heard at night ; and the next day had the satisfaction of finding a very large black and white tail in it, which had been taken off as close as possible.

“ My dear Mrs. Palmer, how are you ? ” said Miss Prudence, pulling her apron off, and stuffing it behind her, as Mr. and Mrs. Palmer entered.

"Quite well, Miss Buttercup," replied the Palmers. "We have just called to say, that, as our geraniums have increased so as to fill our house almost up to the top, we can offer you a few, with some American seeds, which have just arrived from America. And you may have as much bog-earth as you wish from my gardener," added Mr. Palmer.

"Really, you are so kind, I do not know how to thank you," said Miss Prudence. "Will you step into the garden, and look at my flowers?"

"Pray what is this plant?" said Mrs. Palmer, going up to a large shrub in a tub on the lawn.

"Ah! that is a 'touch me not,' indeed," said Miss Prudence, in her most languishing manner.

"It comes from India, I believe;—but really such painful circumstances are recalled to my

mind, when I think of it, that I cannot now explain its history."

"What a sweet little '*pensée*,'" said Mr. Palmer, stooping, and plucking a leaf and a flower.

"My dear sir," said Miss Prudence, flying on him, "that flower is sacred;" and she snatched the leaf out of his hand. "Perhaps it will grow," continued she, as she stuffed it into the ground. "Yes, it is sacred,—for it came out of the King's garden at Windsor. It was given me by my gardener, whose sister's husband's cousin is married to the King's under-gardener."

"This seems to be a choice pet," pointing to a bit of geranium, about one-fourth of an inch in height, which was planted in an old tea-cup, and covered with a broken glass.

"Yes, indeed, that came from Mr. Villars' green-house. It is a slip of the plant which his intended bride gave him the last day he saw her," said Miss Prudence.

"And this is a lovely rose," said Mr. Palmer.

"Oh! Lord Henry G——," said Miss Prudence;—"you know when Lord Henry G—— passed through Seaforth, to stand for D——, he made a speech; and, as he was in the midst of a very clever effusion, he dropped this rose from his button-hole:—I picked it up, and planted it. For a whole month I nursed it like a child, and at last it has repaid my trouble;—for, see, what a fine healthy plant it is."

"What a pretty wall that is, covered with ivy; it is quite an ornament to your garden," said Mrs. Palmer.

"It is the real Irish ivy," replied Miss Prudence. "The original plant was brought to

me by my nephew, William Buttercup, from Cork."

"William Buttercup,—from Cork? My dear ma'am," said Mr. Palmer, "there is no ivy in Ireland that does not come from England."

"My dear sir!" exclaimed Prudence, looking through her eye-glass, and picking the dead leaves out of the ivy; "my dear sir! I assure you William gathered it himself from off an old wall at Cork."

"Very well—very likely," said old Mr. Palmer, tired of flowers and flower-beds.

"Well, I will send you the seeds and plants," said Mr. Palmer; "so I must say adieu! as I am going to call on Dr. St. Clair and his lady."

"Dear me! what stories one does hear of Dr. St. Clair and his wife," said Miss Prudence, with an affected sigh. "They say, poor woman! she has a hard life of it. He uses her very ill,—very ill indeed!"

"Nonsense!" said Mr. Palmer; "I wonder why people cannot let their neighbours alone? I must say that a love of scandal is one of the ruling passions of the Seaforthites."

"Oh, Mr. Palmer!" said Prudence, shaking her head; "I never saw a place where so little scandal was heard. I must say that, during a thirty years' residence at Seaforth, I have hardly heard a bit of scandal."

"I wish I could say as much," said Mr. Palmer. "But only take the present moment, and observe if every one is not trying to make the worst of a little quarrel between an old man and his pretty little wife; without considering, that when a girl of sixteen, like Mrs. St. Clair, marries a man old enough to be her grandfather, great allowances are to be made."

"But the Doctor has such a violent temper," said Prudence.

“ I should rather say,” added Mr. Palmer, “ that our worthy rector, Dr. St. Clair, is, like many old men, who marry young and pretty girls, jealous of his wife ; and perhaps she may not be careful enough to avoid all likelihood of blame. Considering her youth, that may be excusable ; but walking and flirting as she did for an evening, on the promenade, with Lord Latimer, and only attended by her handsome son-in-law, George St. Clair,—who is more of an age to be her husband than his father,—was a very imprudent step for any one to take ; and the old Doctor had reason to be a little discontented :—but then she is such a child, it ought to be overlooked.”

“ George St. Clair is just twenty-one,” said Miss Prudence ; “ and a very handsome youth he is.”

“ Very,” said the Palmers, as they wished

Miss Prudence good morning, and left the Buttercups' cottage.

Dr. St. Clair, the rector of Seaforth, was an old man of sixty when he married the pretty little Agnes Rochfort, eighth daughter of Colonel Rochfort, M.P. The bride was sixteen on her wedding-day, and seemed very much pleased with the idea of being Mrs. St. Clair, before her eldest sisters had any offers. Her idea of marrying was : to have her own way ; dine in the parlour, at the head of her own table ; make her own tea ; eat as much white sugar as she pleased ; and have balls and parties every week. She never once thought of liking the gentleman in question, or not ; and when her papa asked her if she loved Dr. St. Clair, her 'naive' answer was, " She did not care about him ; but that if she might sit down stairs, eat and drink as much as she liked, talk and laugh when she

chose,—she should love him very much, as she was quite tired of school-rooms and governesses.”

The wedding dresses were a source of delight to the little Agnes. She was in a state of rapture for three weeks before her marriage; for she had heaps of presents, new clothes of all descriptions, a splendid ‘trousseau,’ and, moreover, went out in the carriage visiting with mamma,—a thing she had never done in her life before, being the eighth daughter. The wedding-day she was charmed with her white satin dress, and with the compliments which were showered upon her from all quarters. Her papa made her a present of a great plum-cake, to eat in the carriage; and the only drawback to her happiness was, that her mamma would not allow her to fill the Doctor’s new chariot with her pet-cat and six kittens, for whom she

and her two younger sisters had made a set of white cambric robes, and had wadded a little basket with white satin, for them to travel in. At last, when all compliments and breakfast ended, the little beauty set off, in carriage and four, for Seaforth, where she was to find her new home.

About three months after the wedding, Dr. St. Clair's children by a former wife came to pay their respects to their mamma-in-law, who might have been the child of any of her sons or daughters, except the youngest, George St. Clair, who, as we have before stated, was twenty-one, a very handsome, clever, and interesting young man, who, on first sight, took a great fancy to his new mamma,—who, in her turn, gave him a dozen kisses, for promising her a little poodle pup, which he assured her would dance, beg, catch biscuit, and do anything but talk.

It was quite amusing to see the little Agnes, with her long flaxen ringlets, and bright blue eyes, with a figure like a fairy, and a 'tournure Parisienne,' talking to George St. Clair about her birds, her kittens, and all her little amusements; while he, such a contrast to her, with his handsome dark eyes and hair, was stooping, first in admiration, then in pity, over his little mamma, in admiration at her beauty and innocence, in pity that she had married such an old man as his father. So, like a dutiful and obedient son, he resolved to make her all the amends in his power, by gratifying every whim, and devoting his leisure to her amusement.

The good Doctor adored his little bride, and she liked him very well,—for he let her have her own way in everything; but still she would often vex the old man, when he was reading to amuse her, by jumping up to catch her kitten or

her puppy; clapping his book together suddenly, so as to stop him in the midst of a fine passage; or, if she heard George's voice, by running and begging him to play with her, to teach her cat to jump, or to carry her on his shoulder round the garden, as her dear brother Frank used to do at home. Sometimes she would be drawn round the garden in a little child's car, which she had found in the loft, and which had formerly belonged to her children-in-law; and if her dear George was not in, the poor Doctor was harnessed to it,—and Agnes, in a little hat, and provided with George's whip, would not allow the old man to stop for breath, which, in truth, he often wanted, as his wife took the greatest pleasure in driving up and down a little bank in her garden at a quiet trot. The little 'fracas' mentioned by Prudence Buttercup, between the pretty Agnes and her

consort, had arisen from the following circumstance, and would not have been worth relating, except to show the love of the Seaforth folk to magnify everything they heard.

Agnes had been for a week confined to the house by a sore throat, when Dr. St. Clair was obliged to go to London on business. He left his son George to take care of his wife; also having made her promise not to go out before his return, as the medical man wished it. He set off for London. George never knew what his father's orders had been, and Agnes never gave them a second thought; but, tired of staying at home, and fancying a walk with her dear George, she begged him to take her out. He at first refused, for fear of her cold, and offered to spend all the evening in playing with her at home; but Agnes jumped on his knee, and smothering him with kisses, he could not refuse

her anything ; so out they went, and a delightful walk George found it, with his little mamma, as he termed Agnes. The promenade at Seaforth, which consisted of a broad gravel walk, shaded by trees, was the fashionable rendezvous ; and as Agnes had made a 'toilet exprès' for her walk, she would go to the promenade, and George could not get her home till very late, when it was evident, from her hoarseness, she had caught a fresh cold. The next day she was worse ; and when Dr. St. Clair came from town, she was only well enough to lie on the drawing-room sofa. Her husband was not very well pleased, as may be imagined ; particularly as Dr. Latimer, her medical attendant, told him it might have been her death in her then delicate situation. Dr. St. Clair wished for another heir, though he had five children by his former marriage ; but they were grown up and provided for, and

he wished for a second tribe of nurselings. Not so Agnes ; she did not care for children, so long as she had George and her kittens to play with : but when old St. Clair promised her, if she would take care of herself at present, anything she might fancy which was within his reach, she was very well-pleased to find the power her present situation gave her over him. This was the quarrel which had been spread through Seaforth by the scandal-mongers, and magnified, as we have before related ; for though Lord Latimer had been on the promenade, and been introduced to Mrs. St. Clair, yet he never flirted with her, nor even walked by her side ; he had only stopped George St. Clair for ten minutes, to ask his opinion of a bet he had at Newmarket, and to offer him the riding of a horse for which he had no use.

But to return to Agnes. As soon as she was

well enough to come down stairs, after the doctor had promised her anything she would like, she made her 'demoiselle de compagnie,' Mademoiselle Mars, make her up a comfortable little nest, as she termed it, upon the sofa, with cushions and shawls; and having settled herself in an easy reclining posture, she took out her 'portefeuille,' and began making a list of everything she fancied, or desired to have, which occupied her for two hours, when George St. Clair came home from a ride, and was summoned, as usual, to his post of honour by the side of his little mamma. He could not help laughing when Agnes showed him the list full of her wants and wishes, which, for the amusement of our readers, we will insert here, with George's remarks on them:—

Imprimis, "A room fitted up as a boudoir, either with sky-blue or rose-coloured silk,

in the French style; a little piebald pony to ride on, with a new saddle and white reins, and a little whip with a whistle at the end."

"But," said George, "I am afraid you will not be allowed to ride at present."

"Why?" said Agnes, with her usual simplicity.

"Oh, I do not know," said George, laughing. "But such a little pony as you wish for, will be difficult to find, if it must be piebald."

"Oh, I do not care about that," said Agnes. "What colour do you like best, George?"

"Brown, bay, or black," said George.

"Well, write down those colours, instead of piebald."

George did as he was desired, and went on reading—"a pretty little house, to be built of fir cones, for my cat, in the garden, and one also for my puppy, with a little lawn and garden before each, and a little fish pond for them to

drink out of, as big as a large basin, filled with gold fish."

George burst out laughing, to the great annoyance of his little mamma, who said—"What do you laugh at, George?"

"Indeed," replied he, trying to look grave, "I did not know that you meant to feed the cat on gold fish."

Agnes laughed in her turn, and told her son-in-law to go on to the next.

"A little phaeton, to hold two people, with two little ponies to draw it, and a little boy to ride postilion, dressed in red and gold."

"You seem to like gold, mamma," said George; "but I advise you to change the livery to green and silver; and the ponies to horses."

"Oh! no," said Agnes; "for I want little ponies, because I do not mean Dr. St. Clair to

ride in my carriage, which you know he cannot do, if it is little enough to be drawn by sheltys. I mean it for you and me, as we do not take up much room. But you may change the liveries, if you like it ; only do not tell your papa what I said about not wanting him, or I will not give you a kiss for the next year."

"Well, give me one now," said George, "and I will not tell ; you know I will not tell of my little mamma."

"There," said Agnes, as she kissed George twice, "there is one more than the bargain ; but I will kiss you, George, whenever you like, because you are such a pretty boy ; so like my dear little brother, Frank. 'Apropos,' I will send for Frank here, to stay a few weeks with me. You will like him so much, George, because he is like me : and you love me, do not you?"

"Indeed I do," replied George St. Clair, returning the caresses of his little mamma; "but really I do not see that I deserve the epithet of a *boy*, as I am one-and-twenty; and if Frank is like you, if he is as pretty as his little sister, and as fair, I do not see how I can claim the least resemblance to him in looks, as you know I am quite a nigger."

"Oh, no, you are not," said little Agnes, throwing her arms round him; "you are my pretty boy. You really are so very pretty—you have the prettiest hair, the sweetest eyes, and the prettiest mouth I ever saw!" Agnes stopped, for a moment, and looked at him several times; at last she said—"Do you know, George, what I was thinking of?"

"Of me, I hope," said George.

"Oh yes, it was of you. Well, I will tell

you what I thought:—it was, that if I had not married your papa, I should like to have married you.”

“ Indeed !” said George, apparently not well pleased with the compliment.

“ Yes: I am not joking, I assure you,” said Agnes, shaking her long ringlets, “ for you are much handsomer than Dr. St. Clair.”

This was said with such *naïveté*, that George could not refrain from a smile. After a moment’s consideration, he said—

“ Tell me, Agnes, if you had seen us both together, which would you have chosen—me, or my father ?”

“ Dr. St. Clair,” said Agnes, without a moment’s hesitation.

“ So you prefer an old man to a young one ?” said George, in a disappointed tone.

“ I never said that, did I ?” asked Agnes.

"Not exactly; but you said, you would prefer Dr. St. Clair to me."

"Oh no; I do not mean that," said Agnes; "I only meant to say, that it would have been folly in me to marry you."

"Why?" said George, hastily.

"Because you have not money enough to keep a wife."

George's countenance cleared; he looked at Agnes, and said—

"Suppose I had had a thousand a-year, as well as Dr. St. Clair, would you have chosen me?"

"Yes," said Agnes.

George caught the little beauty's hand, and kissed it a hundred times. "Then you love me?" said he; "you really love me?"

"I always told you I did," said Agnes.

George left the sofa, and going to the window,

stood there for some time; at last, turning round towards Agnes, he said: "You must not tell Dr. St. Clair of what has just passed; he would, perhaps, take it amiss." And he left the room abruptly.

George St. Clair, on quitting the drawing-room, retired to his own room immediately, and for some time perambulated his chamber, in no small agitation. The state of his mind may be more easily seen by the following letter (which he wrote to a brother officer) than we could describe it.

"Seaforth Rectory.

"DEAR SAM,—According to my promise, I commence our epistolary correspondence, which I hope will prove a great pleasure to both of us, as, from the distance between our homes, we are at present debarred verbal communication, which you know I approve of much more than

letter-writing, as it is such a bore, having to sit down and write a lot of news. Now, my dear fellow, I am going to lay open my heart and soul to you, as I am very unhappy, yet still the happiest of all creatures at times. But to come to my woes. You are aware my leave of absence was obtained to enable me to pay my respects to my new mother-in-law, Mrs. St. Clair, alias Agnes Rochfort. Little did I think what trials awaited me at home. I found my new mamma a perfect little angel, about five feet high, and apparently a child about nine or ten years old—the most lovely, infantine, innocent little thing imaginable. When I was introduced to her, she treated me like her brother; told me she was very fond of me; admired my eyes, and loaded me with kisses. What was my surprise to find she was sixteen! To make a long story short,—being always with her, particularly when

Dr. St. Clair was in town, I fell in love with her, and was 'au dernier désespoir,' until she confessed to-day that she would have preferred me to Dr. St. Clair. I was at first pleased with this confession; but my pleasure was soon turned to fear, for Agnes is so young and thoughtless, that she is just as likely to repeat our conversation to the Doctor, as not. I warned her to keep it to herself, and I hope she will; if not, what will become of us? Advise me, my dear friend, what to do in the present emergency. Shall I go? It is impossible, as my governor has made me promise to stay over Agnes' confinement. Shall I stay? It will be destruction to myself, and perhaps to Agnes. Oh, the idea is odious! I can say no more, for Agnes has just sent for me. Adieu, my dear Sam, and remember your unhappy

GEORGE ST. CLAIR."

In a few days George received the following answer :—

“ Merton Hall.

“ DEAR GEORGE,—What has come over you? Your epistle is certainly written in a very melancholy style, and Heaven knows for what! Why, George, my dear fellow, you are the luckiest d—l ever kicked out shoe-leather! You have been home for a year; a comfortable house to dwell in; grub for nothing; a good old prosy father, and an angel of a mamma to amuse yourself with. Why, in the name of goodness, my man, what would you have? You must not be so particular, or you will never succeed in this world. Take a friend's advice —(do not think I mean to be impudent)—and make yourself as comfortable as you can at home. Flirt with the pretty mamma, and at the same time be the dutiful son to your

governor, and all will be well. If you must leave home, come here, and fall in love with my sister, if you like it; but for Heaven's sake do not grow romantic. Remember, if you *might*, you could not run away with Agnes,—you have not money enough; and you could not live upon air: so do not go such lengths. I have so much to do, I can say no more, except that I have had a famous horse sent me from Ireland, as a present from my cousin Jack. Adieu, my dear George, and belisve me

“Your's most truly,

“SAM TOWNLY.”

“Well,” said George, “perhaps he is right, and I had better stay here. I will make up my mind not to fall violently in love with Agnes, and I will not be so much alone with her,—if I can help it.”

Having made this good resolution, George lifted up two portmanteaus (which he had packed, with the idea of leaving Seaforth), and placing them on a window-seat, employed himself in unpacking them, with much more alacrity than he had before used in packing them.

We will leave him at this pleasant employment, and return to Mr. Palmer's family, who were anxiously expecting Mr. Stanley Brereton.

Emily Palmer had reassumed her absent smiles : her beautiful dark hair, instead of being tucked back as usual, since her sister's death, was brought forward to-day in clustering ringlets, as in former times, and her usually neglected toilet was now exchanged for a becoming and studied '*deshabille*.' The little Arthur was dressed in a new suit of nankeen, frock and trousers ; and, as Emily watched the nurse brushing up the child's hair from off its lovely

forehead, she felt her heart beat, as she recognised the strong resemblance which its features bore to Stanley Brereton. As soon as the nurse had left the room, she caught the child in her arms, and, kissing it a thousand times, called it her "Stanley Brereton."

"Aunt Emily," lisped the child, still sitting on Emily's knee, "you look so pretty to-day."

Emily blushed, and pressed the child to her heart, as she said, "Papa will soon be here, Arthur."

"Is he like grandpa, aunt Emmy?" asked the little boy, looking up into her face.

"No, my angel; much younger than grandpa," replied Emily, fondly gazing on the boy.

"How old is papa?—is he as old as me?" said the child.

"Yes," replied Emily, smiling, "your papa is a little older than you, Arthur!"

"He must be an old man," observed the child.

"Oh, no, quite young, and so handsome," said Emily,— "so handsome!"

A ring at the park-gate prevented Emily from finishing her sentence. She set little Arthur down, and, flying to the window, which commanded a view of the gate, distinguished something like a horse and rider coming up the avenue.

"It is him!" said Emily;—"no, it cannot be!—yet it is!" cried she, as she recognised the well-known brown mare, which was Stanley Brereton's favourite riding-horse; and, seizing Arthur by the hand, flew down stairs, and was the first to meet him in the hall. "Stanley!" was all she could say, as she fainted in his arms.

* * *

When Emily recovered, she found herself

sitting in her own room, on a couch. Stanley was bathing her temples with 'eau de Cologne,' and Arthur was crying at the top of his voice. She took Arthur on her knee, and, kissing him, burst into tears.

"Am I then forgot?" said Stanley, in a reproachful tone.

"Stanley!" said Emily, "can you suppose such a thing? Look at Arthur,—is he not grown? Do you think I have forgotten the father, in watching over the son?"

"Forgive me!" said Stanley, taking Emily's hand, and pressing it to his heart; "forgive me, Emily! And you, my little Arthur, will not you kiss your papa?"

"Arthur," said Emily, setting him in Stanley's arms, "kiss your papa."

"How like he is to Georgiana," said Stanley, with tears in his eyes.

"I think him more like you," said Emily, kissing the child.

"But why," said Stanley, looking at his son, "have you not put him into a page's dress?"

"He is so young," said Emily; "I should think too young for a dress of that sort."

"Why, he must be turned three," said Stanley.

Emily sighed.

"Do not sigh," said Stanley, "for what is passed; let us look forward to the future." He paused, then continued, "Emily, how that child loves you."

"I hope he does," said Emily; "but what makes you say so?"

"Because," replied Stanley, "Arthur has not ceased to watch your face; and when you look grave, he pulls down his little mouth; when you smile, he laughs."

"Poor little fellow!" said Emily, "he is very fond of his aunt."

"How very well you look, Emily," said Stanley: "just what you were like the first day I saw you. I think I see the likeness stronger than ever between you and Georgiana."

Emily blushed, and was beginning something about "You, Stanley," when the dinner-bell rang, and Stanley handed Emily into the dining-room.

"Uncle Stanley!" exclaimed Julia, who had not seen that gentleman since his arrival, "you have forgotten me."

"I assure you quite on the contrary," said Stanley, shaking her hand. "It was only yesterday I had a long conversation about Miss Julia Talbot with a gentleman in London."

"Oh, do tell me who it was!" said Julia.

"I must not tell tales out of school," said Stanley.

“I am sure it must have been George St. Clair,” said Julia, “for he told me he was going to town.”

“Oh, I saw George St. Clair this morning in Seaforth,” said Emily Palmer, “walking with his mother-in-law. ‘Apropos,’ Stanley, you have not yet seen the pretty Mrs. St. Clair. She is breaking all the gentlemen’s hearts in Seaforth.”

“I must keep out of her way, then,” said Stanley, “for my heart is gone already; and it is as painful to fall in love without a heart, as to be sick when the stomach is empty.”

“You speak from experience, uncle,” said Julia, archly.

“And you from inexperience,” said Stanley; “but you cannot guess who I was speaking to about you in London.”

“Lord Latimer, perhaps,” said Julia.

“I do not know such a person,” said Stanley ;
“but perhaps, some day, may be related to him.”

“As he is not married,” said Julia, pretending not to take the intended meaning, “I fear he has no daughter to marry Arthur.”

Stanley smiled, and said, “You must guess again.”

After a moment's pause, Julia, upsetting her plate, exclaimed, “It cannot be Mr. Villars?”

“Yes, it was James Villars,” replied Stanley ; looking very well satisfied that he was not seated near her, as she was sprinkling her neighbours with soup.

“Well, then, it is true,” said Julia, in a most discontented tone.

“What is true?” asked Mrs. Palmer.

“Only, grandmamma, that Mr. Villars is going to America.”

"To America!" echoed the party; "and what for?"

"Why, they say he is going to marry his aunt's housemaid; and as she would not be noticed here, they are going to America."

"And who told you this piece of news?" said Stanley; "the Misses Buttercup, I should think."

"Yes, they told me; and Lord Latimer, and Mr. Wilmot, and Hal Talbot, told me the same thing."

"I should think," said Emily, "that Hal and Félicie had better join them."

"Really, aunt Emily, Félicie is a sweet creature, and so accomplished!" said Julia. "They say she has a hard life of it with those two eldest Miss Talbots—they are such dunces; and the little one is such a spoiled child, no one can do anything with her."

"But then," said Stanley, "she has Hal to

recompense her for her pains." This was said in rather a provoking tone.

"That is more, certainly, than some people get," said Julia in reply. "For instance, aunt Emily looks after Arthur, and gets nothing in return; for I do not think you will marry her."

Every one looked astonished at this speech. Mr. Palmer said, "Brothers and sisters, of course, never think of marrying."

Stanley looked at Emily, his heart smote him, and he rushed out of the room.

When Emily rose from table, she directed her steps towards the garden, expecting to find little Arthur and his maid there. She soon heard the former's well-known voice, and hastening to the spot from whence it proceeded, found, to her amazement, Stanley alone with Arthur. A pause ensued, for each had deeply felt Julia's thoughtless cut. Stanley was the first to speak,

and his voice trembled as he said, "Though I hope you may never find me ungrateful, Emily, yet, if you should, this child will never be so." Emily stooped down to hide her tears, and kissed the little fellow, who was full of joy at papa's having promised him a man's dress.

Long after Arthur's bed-time did Emily and Stanley walk that evening; and as Arthur's papa had told him he was a man, of course he could not feel tired. Stanley had recovered his usual spirits, and he was, as he had formerly been, the pleasantest of companions. He had travelled much, and read more; and as Italy was his favourite country next to England, Emily forgot her sorrows under his lively and impassioned description of that beautiful country; and tea was fairly cold before the brother and sister returned home. Arthur was put to bed asleep, for Stanley had carried him most of the way

home; and Emily, in good spirits, retired as soon as she could. Lord Latimer, Mr. Wilmot, and Julia, kept up such an eternal noise, that her over-excited nerves could not stand it, and she fled for refuge to her boudoir. Stanley followed to his room, but for a different purpose, which will be explained by the following letter :—

“ Ten o'clock, night.

“ MY DEAREST EMILY,— I hardly know how to commence this letter to you; but as I hope it will, for the future, be happiness to both, I must fulfil the task which my duty imposes on me. Julia's thoughtless speech, at dinner, cut us both. I need not say I saw how you felt. My feelings were not less acute: living with you so much as I have done, and being more attached, and feeling a stronger affection for you than the rest of your family,

on account of your exemplary kindness and attention to my only child, I forgot, I must confess with shame, that you were my sister. I blush to own, that, in my letters and in my conversation, I have given you reason to doubt what my intentions were intended for. Any one but yourself, my dearest Emily, might (and with the greatest reason) have expected an offer of my hand. Living abroad, as I have lately done, I have unwittingly been induced to regard minor crimes as of no consequence; and, I blush to own, that I came from Italy with the intention of marrying you—with the intention of setting the laws of God and man at defiance. For Heaven's pardon, and your forgiveness, I must now plead. Let us pass a veil over what has occurred; in future let us be like brother and sister. I will never marry. Your friendship and Arthur's love, is all that I wish for. I

will pass six months at Seaforth, and the other six at Stanley Park, whither, I think, my sister may be allowed to accompany me. And now, my dear Emily (this is the last time I address you thus, for dear is too strong a term for friendship), I have only to conclude, with assuring you, that the life of your affectionate brother is at your service ; and that your happiness here, and your welfare hereafter, is the constant prayer of

STANLEY BRERETON."

When Stanley had finished this letter, in which he was to renounce all his views of happiness, and in which he had declared his resolution not to marry, he lighted a taper, and knocked quietly at Emily's door. She was sitting reading, and started, on perceiving Stanley at such a late hour.

Stanley did not speak ; but laying his letter

on the table, was retreating, when Emily beckoned to him; and, drawing aside the curtains of a little bed, he saw Arthur reposing on the downy bed. One arm was carelessly thrown over the quilt, and the pressure of its little head upon the pillow, had called into its little face a most lovely bloom. Emily stooped down, and dropped a tear on the child's forehead. Stanley stooped in his turn, but it was to kiss the image of his lovely Georgiana. Perhaps he was too eager in imprinting a kiss on the babe's rosy lips, for it awoke; and, drawing its little face into a cry, began to call for "mamma."

Stanley started as if he had been shot. "I thought, Emily," said he, "that Arthur called you aunt?"

"Generally," returned Emily; "but sometimes mamma."

"It is singular," said Stanley, "for a child who does not remember its mother."

“It is natural, though,” replied Emily; “for every child looks to its mother in time of need.”

Stanley changed colour; and, snatching up his taper, retired, without uttering a word, to muse on his misfortunes in his own room.

Emily’s colour changed many times in reading Stanley’s letter. “Alas!” said she, “it is only too true. My folly, blinded by love, would have led me to marry my sister’s husband; how Stanley must despise me—how vile I must appear in his eyes. Good heavens! how I have lowered myself in my own; but I will think no more of him; I will banish him from my thoughts. Yes, generous Stanley, you have divined my secret; I thought no one could read my heart, but myself: and on yourself you throw all the blame; that shall not be. To-morrow I will pay the penalty of my guilt; after to-morrow I will see Stanley no more.”

As Emily finished her self-accusations, the clock struck one, and she retired to bed, where, overcome with fatigue, and vexed with herself, she enjoyed a few hours of feverish sleep. The next morning found her very unwell; and, when she met Stanley in the breakfast parlour, her flushed cheeks excited his fear that she was very indifferent. Mr. and Mrs. Palmer were not yet up; and, as Julia was always late, and no one, therefore, would interrupt them—Stanley began his apologies for the note, when Emily stopped him; and, bursting into tears, exclaimed,—“Oh! Stanley, how degraded I appear in my own eyes! what must you not think of me?”

“Stop,” said Stanley; “I cannot hear this. I alone am to blame,—but let all be forgot.”

“I never can forgive myself,” said Emily.

“Why, you have nothing to forgive yourself

for," said Stanley; "only let me plead for pardon."

"Can you esteem me as you used to do?" said Emily.

"More than ever!" cried Stanley. "I will love and esteem my sister more than ever."

"One thing I must ask," said Emily, making an effort.

"What is it?" said Stanley.

"Marry and be happy."

"Never!" said Stanley, starting from the lounge on which he had been sitting; "never! by all that is sacred."

"Hush!" said Emily; "I hear voices on the stairs."

Stanley went to the chimney-piece, and pretended to be examining the china, when Mr. and Mrs. Palmer and Julia entered.

"Hey-day!" said Julia; "I hope, uncle

Stanley, I have not interrupted a very charming 'tête-à-tête.' Emily, you look pale this morning; evening walks do not improve your looks," remarked Julia, with a wicked look at Stanley.

The party had been seated for a few moments at the breakfast-table, when Julia, jumping up, exclaimed, "As I am alive, uncle Stanley, I had forgot to tell you my news!"

"What is it?" said Stanley.

"Guess," said Julia.

"Perhaps you are going to London, or going to marry Lord Latimer?" said Stanley.

"Or to assist at his wedding?" said Emily.

"You are both wrong," said Julia; "but, out of charity, I will tell you. As Mr. Villars told us last Sunday, 'Charity covereth a multitude of sins.' Grandpapa is going to give me a ball."

"Mr. Palmer is very kind to you," said

Stanley, "I wish all grand-children could say as much."

"Wait until you are a grandpapa," said Julia, "and see if you will be so kind to your little grand-babies."

Stanley smiled, because it was polite to smile, however he did not feel at all disposed to do so—for the idea of being an old man, with a stooping figure and limping gait, was far from suiting him. "I shall not care about having my coat sewed on me then," thought he; "or having my collars embroidered."

"And when will you give the ball?" said Emily to her papa.

"Next week," said old Palmer. "Any day you like, my dear; it is all the same to me. I have had enough of balls in my day; but you and Julia of course enjoy them?"

"Yes, to be sure, grandpa," said Julia.

Emily said nothing,—but she thought otherwise.

“Who will you invite, Julia?” said Stanley.

“Why, all my acquaintance,” said Julia.
“First, Alice Lisle, then young Hal Talbot, James Villars, Sir Charles Leslie, Mr. Wilmot, Lord Latimer, the Babingtons, and a thousand others.”

“Goodness!” said Emily, who was standing at the window, “who comes here?”

All crowded to see what the wonder might be, which was in reality a lovely little phaeton, drawn by two splendid ponies, bright bay, with long tails and manes, and about eight hands high. A gentleman, very dark, young, and handsome, was driving: whilst his fair companion, who appeared to be a beautiful child of ten years old, reclined on the soft cushions by his side, in a most elegant morning dress.

"Oh, it is Mrs. St. Clair!" exclaimed Julia;
"how glad I am she is coming here. Now, Mr.
Stanley, I will make you admire a fair beauty."

In a few moments Mrs. St. Clair and Mr.
George St. Clair were announced, and Julia in-
troduced her favourite blonde beauty to Stanley.

"Oh, my dear Mrs. St. Clair!" said Julia, "I
hope you will come to my ball. I mean to have
such a crowd, we shall be squeezed to death."

"How nice!" cried Agnes, her eyes sparkling
with pleasure. "I am so fond of dancing. I
will come with all my heart. If Dr. St. Clair
does not escort me, George will: will not you,
George?"

"Certainly," replied George.

"Do not you like my new carriage and po-
nies?" said Agnes to Stanley.

"Oh, I admire them of all things," said Stan-
ley; "the ponies, particularly the off one, are

very handsome—the most perfect little creatures I ever saw.”

“The off pony is called George,” continued Agnes; “the near one Frank, after my dear little brother; but George is much handsomer than Frank, so I called the prettiest pony after him.”

“He is a happy man,” said Stanley.

“La! do you think so?” said Agnes: “he very often sighs.”

“I hope you do not use him ill,” said Stanley, smiling.

“Dear, no!” said Agnes; “I do whatever he asks me.”

“Few beauties are so gracious,” said Stanley, doing his utmost to conceal a smile.

“He is so good-natured,” continued Agnes; “he gave me a little puppy,—a most valuable little creature; it begs, dances, goes to sleep;—

in short, would you believe it, Mr. Stanley, there is nothing it cannot do !”

“ Really,” said Stanley Brereton, “ if it were not a lady who told me, I could not believe it.”

“ Would you like another dog ?” said Mr. Palmer to Agnes.

“ Oh, yes, very much, thank you,” replied Agnes.

“ My dear mamma,” said George St. Clair, “ what can you do with another dog ? you have three at home, and are already promised three more.”

“ Oh, George, one dog will not take up much room,” said Agnes.

“ Oh, but it is a Newfoundland puppy that I meant to offer you,” said Mr. Palmer.

“ Oh, it would draw my carriage so nicely, George,” said Mrs. St. Clair.

"But you must feed it on horseflesh," said George; "and you will not like the odour of that, as summer is coming on."

"Well, I suppose I must not take Mr. Palmer's present," said Agnes, in a pettish, childish tone.

"Mr. Palmer will excuse my hurrying you away," said George; "but those little ponies, I fear, will take cold, they are so delicate."

"You see, Julia, I must go before I have had time to tell you anything," said Agnes; "but you must come and spend a morning with me, and Mr. Stanley, too, if he likes; and then you shall help me to arrange my ball, as Dr. St. Clair has promised me one soon."

"One word, Mrs. St. Clair," said Julia, darting after her, as she quitted the room.

After a few moments' whispering, Mrs. St. Clair exclaimed, "How nice that will be. You know

I have a French 'artiste : ' indeed you never saw such a lovely head-dress as she has made me. Well, come to-morrow, and Mademoiselle Mars shall arrange everything."

" Oh yes ; but do not tell any one," said Julia ; " I wish it to be quite a secret."

" Adieu, adieu," said Mrs. St. Clair, as Stanley handed her into her little carriage ; " do come and see me, Mr. Stanley, for I think I shall like you ; you are so good-looking—so like French."

Stanley bowed, smiled, and, wishing Mrs. St. Clair a pleasant drive, retired to the drawing-room, to read, like a kind brother, to Emily, who was taking a likeness of the lamented Georgiana, from a small miniature which had been painted a short time before her wedding.

Leaving them to enjoy their ' tête-à-tête,' we will return to Mrs. St. Clair, who was paying

a round of visits; as proud to display her new turn-out to the admiring eyes of the Seaforth people, as a child is to show a new bauble.

The next visit was to Laura Talbot, who was at home, but so busy painting in her 'atelier,' that she could admit no one. However, at Mrs. St. Clair's earnest entreaties, she came for a moment to the window, to look at the ponies and the carriage.

"They are beautiful!" said Laura, gazing on the ponies; "yet not so beautiful as their mistress."

Agnes laughed at the compliment, and inquired when Mr. Villars was expected home.

"To-morrow, I think," said Laura, and the colour mounted to her forehead.

"La! what makes you blush so?" continued Mrs. St. Clair.—"'Apropos,' do you know Mr. Stanley Brereton is here?"

Laura turned as pale as death, and pretending the sun was too strong, retreated to the furthest corner of her atelier. She covered her face with her hands, and, as soon as she heard the carriage drive away, exclaimed,—“Alas, poor Edwin! have you come here, only to be insulted by the presence of the destroyer of your happiness?—was it not enough that Violet was seduced from your love—was not that anguish enough for one possessed of so much feeling as you are?—but must you be thrown into the society of him whom you must ever look upon as the most hateful of men?” As Laura uttered these last words, the door of her room was opened, and Mr. Villars, and another gentleman, apparently about two-and-twenty, entered.

“My dear Edwin,” cried Laura, flying to meet the latter, “I did not expect you so soon.”

“But I think you are not sorry,” said James,

taking Laura's hand, "that I brought him so soon."

"Oh no," replied Laura; "you know, Mr. Villars, I like to see my friends, and Mr. Neville I think I may reckon as my oldest."

"Mr. Neville!" replied the youth in an offended tone. "Does time, then, make such a coldness between us, Miss Talbot?" and the Miss was pronounced with an emphasis.

"My dear Edwin, how can you take huff at such trifles?" said Laura; "you know that ours is no common friendship."

"Nor mine," said Villars, smiling.

"Pray hold your tongue, James," said Laura, "and let me and Edwin make up our quarrel."

"We are friends; is it not so?" said Edwin.

"To eternity," said Laura, shaking his proffered hand.

"Amen," said Villars. "Having seen your

head out of the window this morning," continued James, "I wish to know who you were talking to. I really did not think that *I* could myself have got your head out of the window, Laura?"

"But there was a lady in the case," said Laura, smiling; "no less a person than Mrs. St. Clair, with her handsome son-in-law, George."

"Ha!" said Villars, "and what may their news be?"

"Mr. Palmer is going to give a ball for Julia," said Laura, evading the question; "and I hear Mrs. St. Clair is to be the lion of the night."

"Lioness, you mean," said Edwin Neville.

"Why, I thought," said Villars, looking very thoughtful, "that old St. Clair expected a son soon?"

"I believe he wishes for one," said Laura, looking down.

"What ! is George St. Clair here now?" said Neville, awaking from a reverie.

"Yes, to be sure," replied Laura; "is there any reason he should not be at home?"

"No—yes," replied Neville.

"Neville," said Villars, with a look which would have steadied most men's thoughts, "remember you are in a lady's room."

If Neville heard, he made no remark; but, taking up a book from the table, sat down, and was soon deep in Pope's bewitching poetry.

Laura drew Villars aside; and, having told him of Stanley Brereton's arrival, a long conference ensued, which ended in Villars exclaiming, "I have done all in my power, but it is impossible; and I fear it must, sooner or later, come to pass; and, after all, it is natural enough. I have considered it several times, and I can see no way of getting off, with honour, but by—"

Here his voice dropped ; but, after a few moments, he continued : “ You know how contrary to my principles and my ideas such a step is ; but yet, you know, that one must pay deference to the ideas of the world, and such are the false notions of honour, that a man is branded as a coward, if he ——”

“ My goodness !” said Edward Neville, jumping up, and shaking Villars by the shoulder, “ there is nothing like a quiet squinting parson, after all. It is amazing how such an ugly fellow as yourself can get a young lady to admire you.”

“ Beauty,” said Villars, “ I cannot, certainly, boast of ; I am as God made me ; and, I believe, that is nothing striking.”

“ You are not far wrong there, indeed,” said Neville ; “ but beauty does not signify, either in man or woman.”

Edwin pronounced woman in a tremulous tone ; then, taking up his hat, said,—“ I shall go and take a turn in the garden, Laura, and leave you to flirt alone.”

“ I must take my leave for the present,” said Villars ; “ as my mother will think I am lost. Shall I do anything for you, Laura, in Seaforth ?” added James, putting his head into the room, as he was shutting the door.

“ No, thank you,” said Laura ; “ for my dress is ready for the ball ; and I want nothing.”

Villars had not been gone ten minutes, when he met Julia Talbot running, as fast as she could go, towards Laura’s gate.

“ Where so early this morning ?” said Villars to Julia.

“ Ha ! Mr. Villars, I am so glad to see you,” said Julia, almost shaking both his hands off.

"I am glad I did not set out sooner; I might have interrupted a 'tête-à-tête.'"

"I beg pardon," said Villars: "you would have had a 'tête-à-tête,' instead of interrupting one; for Laura has an old acquaintance with her; consequently, you and I might have flirted."

"But you cannot afford your wife a new bonnet every week?" said Julia, archly. "So that would have been a useless flirtation."

"Eight hundred a-year would not admit of such extravagance," replied Villars.

"Hundreds," said Julia, turning up her nose, "I only talk of thousands."

"I am sure of it," said Villars; "yet, Julia, you have feelings. Do you think that money alone will make you happy?"

"No," said Julia, blushing, and in a subdued tone, "money will never make *me* happy, Mr. Villars."

“ You need not be ashamed of blushing ; it is a woman’s greatest ornament.”

Julia hung down her head.

“ I will not detain you,” said Villars, “ for I know you want to see Laura. Do not talk scandal, that is all.”

“ Oh, but I must have a little,” said Julia, laughing ; “ you know I doat on it : ‘ à propos,’ have you heard about Archimedes Norton and Maria Nesbitt ?”

“ Hush ! hush !” said Villars, “ I cannot hear any nonsense : good bye for the present.”

“ Good bye,” said Julia, darting forward ; and clearing Major Talbot’s garden-gate with a bound, she flew without ceremony to Laura’s room.

“ Miss Talbot !” exclaimed the astonished Laura, who had been startled at Julia’s abrupt entrance.

“ Yes, Laura, here I am. I want you to come with me, to consult about my ball-dress. I wish you, Mrs. St. Clair, and myself, to be dressed exactly alike. Mrs. St. Clair has agreed to my wish, and I am to go to the Rectory to-morrow morning, to consult with her and her ‘*femme de chambre*,’ Mademoiselle Mars, about it. Now pray do come, and give us some of your advice.”

“ I shall be most happy, my dear Miss Talbot, to give you any assistance in my power, but I must decline the honour of being arrayed like you, as my dress is ready, and is such a very simple one, that I should not think that either Mrs. St. Clair or yourself would like to appear in a similar one.”

“ Dear me, I am so sorry !” said Julia, “ for I had set my heart on we three being dressed alike. But what is your dress? if I may be allowed to ask.”

"Only clear muslin over white silk," said Laura, "and trimmed with a few bunches of rosebuds down the side and round the skirt."

"Did it come from London?" said Julia.

"No: I made it myself," said Laura, smiling.

"How odd!" said Julia; "but really grandpapa gives me so handsome an allowance, that I never think of making anything at home. How much are you allowed, Laura?"

"Thirty pounds a-year for my clothes and everything but painting materials."

"Just the same as grandpapa gives me, I declare," said Julia. "Why do you not dress—I will not say better—but more expensively, with a great deal of lace and fine embroidery, like myself?"

"I prefer spending my money in charity," said Laura.

“ Well, I must leave you,” said Julia, rising from her seat, “ as I must call at Mrs. Norton’s, or Jane will not be well pleased, and I would not incur her displeasure for something. What an odd story that seems about Archimedes Norton and Maria Nesbitt, does it not ?”

“ I do not know exactly what you allude to,” said Laura.

“ Oh, only that Archimedes Norton spends all his time at Colonel Nesbitt’s, about six miles from Seaforth ; and Maria Nesbitt, the youngest daughter, is, they say, the principal attraction.”

“ Indeed !” replied Laura. “ Well, if it is to be a match, where is the harm ?”

“ A match, my dear Laura !” screamed Julia ; “ why, they cannot live on air and water. He has nothing, and she has nothing ; so what is the sum total ?—*Nothing*.”

“ And who can tell either what Archimedes

Norton or Miss Nesbitt may have?" said Laura.

"I cannot answer such a question; you are quite an infidel, Laura," said Julia. "However, remember our engagement: to-morrow, at twelve o'clock, I will call here in the pony carriage for you."

"Very well," said Laura; "I shall be ready."

A few moments found Julia seated by Jane Norton, engaged in a most interesting conversation.

"By the by, Jane,—my uncle is come," said Julia.

"Who?" said Jane, stooping her head, that she might hear better.

"Stanley Brereton is here," replied Julia.

"Good heavens! you do not say so?" said Jane, turning white and crimson, as she tried to conceal her agitation, by bending over her work.

"It is true enough," said Julia; "and I am

going to have a ball given to me, at which I hope to see you, Mrs. Norton, and Archimedes."

"I am really so ill this morning," said Jane, hardly able to command her voice, "that I can hardly thank you, as I ought, for your kind invitation."

"Oh! do not for one moment think of such a thing as thanks," replied Julia; "you know I hate ceremony,—but I cannot help saying that I think the name of Stanley Brereton has made you quite ill."

Jane Norton proudly raised her head from her embroidery, and, setting her eyes with a searching expression upon Julia, said, "That woman must be a fool, Miss Talbot, who would risk a moment's happiness for Stanley Brereton."

But if Jane Norton thought to silence Julia, she was mistaken: Julia knew just as much of the ways of the world as Miss Norton, and re-

turned the latter's searching glance by a haughty stare.

"I tell you," repeated Julia, to the now almost awed Jane Norton, "that such a passion is hopeless. Stanley loves another; and I know that if he does not marry her, he will never marry another."

Jane Norton burst into tears. "How unkind, Miss Talbot," continued she, "to wrest one's secret from one!—but, as you know part, you may as well know all. From the first time I ever saw Stanley Brereton, I have never ceased to love him. Look here," pursued Jane, unlocking her desk, and showing Julia a heap of manuscript poems, beautifully written on vellum,—“these, Miss Talbot, were my only comforts, when the man I loved married another. But now I will burn them:—it is useless, as you say, to indulge in vain hopes.”

"Stay!" said Julia; "change the names, and the poems will go on for the next love."

"And what name," said Miss Norton, looking steadily at Julia, "what name would be worthy of supplanting Stanley's?"

"Many," said Julia;—"for instance, George St. Clair's."

"He is engaged too well with another person," said Jane.

"Mr. Wilmot's, then," said Julia.

"A common tutor!" exclaimed Miss Norton, in a fury;—"a tutor to Lord Latimer?"

"Mr. Villars," said Julia, taking no notice of Lord Latimer's name.

"Say no more," said Miss Norton, "I wish to be alone; but mark me, Julia Talbot, if you know my secret—I know yours. One word from you—one hint of this hour's conversation—and I will proclaim yours through Seaforth."

Jane Norton was the youngest daughter of a Mr. Norton, who had run out everything, and just died in time to escape imprisonment for debt. Mrs. Norton had a jointure of five hundred a-year, which, on her death, was to go to Jane. Archimedes Norton, the only son living, was just of age, and inherited a wild disposition from his father; therefore would not settle to anything, and remained a burthen to his mother. Mrs. Leight, the eldest daughter, had been two years married to a man of large fortune, and lived in Westmoreland; and it was to Mrs. Leight that Archimedes looked for assistance in pushing him in the army—the only profession he could endure. He was a fine, tall, handsome young man—fair—with a particular way of putting on his hat and tying his cravat, which gained him the nickname of ‘Doudney & Co.’; as his style of dress bore a marked resemblance

to the prints of Doudney & Co., in the newspapers. Jane Norton was a fine girl, about twenty at the least. She had fine eyes, and fine brown hair, but she had a mouth like — we will not say what, and, to crown all, a splendid leg and foot. Such was the maiden who hopelessly loved Stanley Brereton, and who, to confess the truth, would have died for him. Mrs. Norton was one of the eternal tribe of *has beens*. She was still a fine woman, and had good qualities, but her stumbling-block was pride; and she was now looking forward to catch some duke, or peer, for her youngest daughter. Title and money were all she wanted;—if a man was mad, silly, or anything else, it was all the same to her;—her aim was money, title, and rank.

But we must return to Julia, who, having called on the Babingtons, Miss Lisle, the three ugly Talbots, the Misses Buttercup, and many

others, to invite them to her ball, returned home, not a little fatigued, to dress for dinner, as a small select party were to dine that day with Mr. Palmer.

“What shall I put on?” said Julia to her maid, as she fell into a chair, from excessive fatigue.

“I have cleaned your pink silk, ma’am,” said the Abigail, “and put a new breadth in front, so you can wear it,—or your blue silk, ma’am,—or your yellow silk,—or your chally,—or your Indian muslin,—or—”

“The Indian muslin will do, Esther,” said Julia; “so now just arrange my hair.”

“How would you like to have it dressed, Miss Julia?—in the Grecian style, or in the French style? or after that Italian costume you bought the other day?”

“Oh, quite simple,” said Julia; “in the Grecian style, with a rosebud, or my pearls.”

When Julia's toilet was finished, she hastened to the drawing-room. Mr. and Mrs. Palmer were there, with Mr. Lindore, his younger brother Robert Lindore, Mrs. Lindore their mother, Mr. Benedict, and Mr. Belisarius Northumberland; the rest of the company had not yet arrived. Old Mrs. Lindore was sitting talking about a daughter of hers to Mrs. Palmer, and describing her last confinement, from which she—that is, Mrs. Lindore—had just returned, leaving her uncommonly well. Mr. Palmer was engaged in serious conversation with Mr. Lindore, who was a very plain clergyman, in every sense of the word; and Mr. Robert Lindore was amusing himself in curling his whiskers, and eyeing the two Northumberlands, who stood at some distance from the rest, and looking not quite at home.

Julia nodded coolly to the latter youths,

bowed to Mr. Lindore, and shaking Robert familiarly by the hand, walked to the window, and sat down upon a couch. Robert soon joined her. He was a young man of twenty-five, dark, a great dandy, in the dragoons, and a very old flirt of Julia's.

"Idle, as usual, Miss Talbot," said the puppy, as he seated himself by her.

"Impudent, as usual, Mr. Lindore," said Julia, with a toss of her fan.

"Nay, do not be cross, belle Julie, or I will not give you something I have in my pocket for you."

"What is it?" said Julia.

"I shall not tell that," replied Lindore.

"Tiresome creature that you are," said Julia, "do you not recollect this time two years, when I dined with you, at the Babingtons? Well! what fun we had, teasing Barbara about Cap-

tain C——, and the note you wrote her, in his name, and ——”

“ And do you remember how we waltzed together, after supper,” said Robert, “when we were both half-tipsy. You know I persuaded you the champaign was toast and water ; and do you remember, Julia, what you called me ?”

“ No,” said Julia ; turning away and blushing.

“ You said,” replied Robert, in a whisper, “ that I was your own Robert. You called me Bob.”

“ Nonsense,” said Julia, trying to look cross.

At this moment the door opened, and the Mr. Babingtons and their sisters were announced ; also Mr. Villars and Laura Talbot, Lord Latimer, and Mr. Wilmot.

Lord Latimer immediately stationed himself by Julia’s lounge, and Robert Lindore was

obliged to put up with Miss Hannah Babington, who sat upon the edge of her chair, looking the picture of misery, for fear she should not be genteel.

Mr. Villars joined Mr. Palmer and Mr. Lindore, and Laura was engaged in a sensible conversation on painting and poetry, by Mr. Wilmot, who admired her unaffected manners and general deportment very much.

Barbara, the ancient Miss, as she was termed by those who had known her for some time, monopolized Belisarius and Benedict Northumberland; while Stanley Brereton and Emily, who had entered almost unperceived, sat, with Arthur between them, on a little sofa at the furthest end of the room.

Julia sate fanning herself with the greatest composure, though the window was open; and Lord Latimer amused himself by picking a rose

to pieces, and eating it. A few sentences passed between them, when Lord Latimer exclaimed,—

“Are those three frights your cousins?”

“Who do you mean,” said Julia, laughing.

“The three Talbot girls; sisters to Hal Talbot.”

“Oh no,” said Julia; “I would not own them if they were.”

“Humph,” said his lordship.

“Do you like scandal, Lord Latimer?” said Julia.

“No—hate it,” said his lordship, nibbling up the stalk of his rose.

“I was going to tell you something about Hal,” replied Julia.

“Well, what is it?” asked his lordship, as he swallowed the last morsel of his rose-stalk.

“I will not tell you, as you do not approve of scandal,” said Julia; “but I see you want some-

thing to eat." So saying, she stretched her hand out of the window, and brought in a handful of vine leaves.

Lord Latimer laughed. "I cannot eat such common food, Miss Talbot."

"What I have cleansed, call not common," said Julia.

"Julia," exclaimed a voice behind her, "for shame!"

Julia turned, and met Villars' disapproving eye. "Who made you my Mentor?" said she.

"No one," replied Villars, in a kinder tone.

Lord Latimer smiled.

Julia turned away scornfully, and whispered to her companion, "It would be difficult to please such a husband, Lord Latimer."

Lord Latimer started as if a cannon-ball had struck him. "For heaven's sake, what do you mean, Miss Talbot?" said he.

"Only that he would be too clever a man for me to marry—too particular."

"True, true," said Lord Latimer, breathing more freely.

"Do you know Mrs. St. Clair?" said Julia.

"Know her! why you introduced me to her, Miss Talbot," said Lord Latimer.

"Apropos, Mr. St. Clair," said Julia, calling to the other end of the room, "come here."

Mr. St. Clair, who had just arrived, came forward at Julia's bidding, and made many apologies for Dr. and Mrs. St. Clair's absence; "but his mamma had really fatigued herself so much, that she could not come out."

Julia was vexed, and so was George St. Clair, for he could not now bear going out without his pretty mamma. However, he fell into a chair by Julia, and, after paying her a compliment, said,—“Do give me that rose, Miss Talbot.”

"The one in my hair?" said Julia.

"Yes," replied George; "the moss rose in your hair."

"I will see after dinner," said Julia, laughing.

"That is right," said Lord Latimer, "give us as polite a refusal as you can; and, remember, never give away any of your things for nothing."

"You may depend upon that, Lord Latimer," replied Julia; "I never will give anything away for nothing."

George St. Clair bit his lips, and looking across the room, said, "Faith, Stanley Brereton and Emily Palmer! I never saw them before, or I would not have wasted so much time here." And taking his glove he had thrown on a table, he sauntered to join the Platonic conversation of the brother and sister.

Julia and Lord Latimer looked astonished at George St. Clair's cool and provoking speech;

at last Lord Latimer said, "Since we seem to be left alone, Miss Talbot, I think we ought to sit closer to each other. Suppose we move up the room, and both squeeze into that large capacious arm-chair, which, I believe, is intended for one person only. I like to be thought odd sometimes, and to attract attention."

"And so do I," said Julia; "so let us go."

"First let me arrange your boa," said Lord Latimer, as he placed the rich sable in graceful folds round her neck; then offering his arm, the fashionable couple lounged through the company to the arm-chair, when Julia dropped most gracefully into it, and Lord Latimer seated himself by her.

"These are close quarters," said Julia, laughing, as she glanced her eye round the room, and met, for the first time, the horror-struck eye of Mrs. Talbot, who was seated in full state, with her three frights behind her.

"But very comfortable ones," replied Lord Latimer, in an unusual witty tone, as he secretly enjoyed the dismayed looks of Mrs. Talbot.

Julia and Lord Latimer's eyes met, and a loud burst of laughter ensued, which might not have ended for an hour, had not dinner been announced.

Mr. Palmer led the way, with Mrs. Lindore; Stanley Brereton and Mrs. Palmer followed; George St. Clair took Emily; Mr. Lindore Mrs. Talbot. Hal Talbot wanted to have escorted Julia; but Lord Latimer would not give up his post of honour, as he called it,—so Hal had to put up with Hannah Babington, whom Robert Lindore had given up long ago, as a person he could get no good out of. Laura was handed out by Mr. Wilmot; Belisarius and Benedict Northumberland pounced upon Miss Sally and Emmy; Villars took Lydia, out of

charity; whilst poor Robert Lindore was obliged to put up with Barbara Babington; and the two Mr. Babingtons had to do without belles.

"Apropos," said Lord Latimer, after they had been seated some time at table, "I heard some one mention a Miss Norton the other day."

"Yes, Jane Norton," replied Julia;—"do you know her?"

"No—yes—by sight," replied Lord Latimer. Mr. Wilmot smiled, and looked odd.

"Do you think her handsome?" said Mr. Babington, from the other side of the table.

"A devilish fine girl!" said Lord Latimer.

"Never could admire anything so tall," said Alexander Artaxerxes Adolphus.

"We all know that, Mr. Alexander the Big," said Julia;—"or you would not always be following Mrs. Arabella."

Alexander the Big coloured furiously, and began blowing his nose.

"I think," whispered Villars to Stanley Brereton, "Miss Talbot should not bring people forward in such a manner."

"Perhaps not," returned Stanley, finishing an oyster patty with great composure.

"Where did you meet Jane Norton?" said Julia to Lord Latimer.

"Oh! at Weymouth, I believe," replied his lordship.

"Did you see her often?" asked Julia.

"Very often," was his lordship's sarcastic reply.

"At the balls, and parties, and everywhere?"

"Oh! no," said Lord Latimer, smiling.

"Where every young lady ought to be seen," said Mr. Wilmot, with a most gracious smile;—"at church."

Julia paused. "She cannot have deceived me," thought she, to herself; "it cannot be Lord Latimer she would have?"

"You do not eat," said Lord Latimer, surprised at Julia's sudden absence.

Julia started, and began devouring a heap of eatables Lord Latimer had laid on her plate.

"You are wrong," said Lord Latimer, whispering to Julia, as he pretended to be helping her to some sweetmeats. She was never a flirt of *mine*." And he glanced his eye, with a particular meaning, at Mr. Wilmot, who was enjoying some macaroni cheese very much.

Julia smiled. "You do not mean to accuse Mr. Wilmot?" said she.

"Accuse him ! no, there is nothing to accuse him of," whispered Lord Latimer. "To flirt with a pretty girl like Jane Norton, who likes admiration above all things, and our sex above all things, is no harm—at least, I hope not."

Julia laughed. "You do not mean to say," said she, "that Jane Norton likes gentlemen?"

“Do you think Wilmot would have troubled himself about her, if she had not,” said Lord Latimer, ‘*sotto voce* ;’ then raising his voice, he said, “Mr. Wilmot, we are engaged in a serious conversation about you.”

“No harm, I hope,” said Mr. Wilmot, turning up his eyes like a duck in thunder.

“Harm?” said Lord Latimer, and he turned away his face, to hide a laugh. “Would you believe me, Miss Talbot?” continued he, “all the time I have known Mr. Wilmot, I never knew *any harm* in him, except ——”

“Lord Latimer,” exclaimed the interesting pale lips of Mr. Wilmot, “you are too censorious.”

“Julia,” said Mrs. Palmer, “when you have finished your conversation, we will move.”

Julia rose, and followed her grandmamma into the drawing-room, yawning at the idea of

sitting at least an hour without the gentlemen. At last, she remembered to have seen Laura before dinner, and pouncing upon her, dragged her to a lounge, to have some chat, for want of better to do. The newest fashions, the latest gossip, were rattled through by Julia, until, tired of herself, and of her companion's want of taste in not liking scandal, she proposed a turn in the garden; and, as July evenings are sometimes very pleasant, Laura consented. The greenhouse was Julia's favourite lounge, as there she could gather handfuls of flowers, either to eat, throw away, or make bouquets; for after she had seen them often for ten moments, she did not care for them. And to the greenhouse she conducted her friend, who was not a little amused with Julia's lively conversation. There seemed to be no topic of which Julia was not perfect mistress: men, women, children, and

dogs, horses, cows, flowers, shells, pebbles, novels, books of all sorts—all came into her net; and she seemed on most familiar terms with the beaux and belles of Seaforth. There was George St. Clair and little Agnes;—she never called any one Mr., Mrs., or Miss;—Latimer, Wilton, Artaxerxes, Babington, Norton. Such was the conversation, which lasted until the ladies were summoned to the drawing-room; and Lord Latimer looked particularly happy to see some one to speak to, as he termed it.

After tea, music was proposed. Julia sang and played some pretty airs on the piano. Emily played the harp. Laura's guitar was much admired. And the two eldest frights, Miss Sally and Emmy, were set down to the piano, to strum a duet.

"I hate duets," said Julia to Lord Latimer, (whilst her namesakes were shaking their elbows

and humping their backs, to bring a fine tone out of the piano), "do not you?"

"Yes,—I detest them," said Lord Latimer, amusing himself with pulling the string of Julia's reticule, and tying sundry knots in it.

Julia began yawning, for she was very tired. Lord Latimer did the same; and both sank into a pleasant doze, at the opposite corners of the sofa. George St. Clair had been gone some time; he had promised to be at home to sup with his mother. Emily, Mr. Wilton, and Stanley Brereton, were engaged in a most interesting conversation about the education of children. Mr. Villars and Laura Talbot seemed to have much to say to each other; whilst Alexander Artaxerxes Benedict, and Belisarius Northumberland, with Robert Lindore, were comparing all their adventures, and all the fun they had enjoyed for the last year. The

other gentlemen were either asleep or talking politics.

The sudden cessation of the music aroused Julia and Lord Latimer; and, half yawning, half stretching, his lordship wished Julia good night, as he cordially wrung her little finger off, nearly.

Mr. Wilmot obeyed his pupil's summons; and, in a few moments more, the household were sunk in deep repose.

END OF VOL. I.

**THE
FEMALE FREEMASONS.**



THE
FEMALE FREEMASONS

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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THE FEMALE FREEMASONS.

STANLEY BRERETON.

THE next morning, about half-past ten, Julia drove to Major Talbot's door; and in a few moments Laura and she were on the road to Seaforth Rectory.

"My dear Laura," said Julia, whipping her pony, "is not he a charming creature, this 'joli Moustache' of mine?"

"Whom do you mean?" asked Laura.

"Whom? why Lord Latimer, my 'joli Moustache,' as I call him. Oh, is he not an Adonis?"

"I believe he is a clever young man," said

Laura, "but rather singular; as to an Adonis, I really do not think he is handsome enough."

"Oh, but he will be so rich," replied Julia; "but what think you of Mr. Wilmot? such a love of a man."

Laura smiled. "Mr. Wilmot is a most sensible man," replied she.

"How cold all your expressions are," exclaimed Julia, as she turned into Dr. St. Clair's gate. "Really you are like ice; *à propos*, we will have a party to eat ices some day. Grandpa has the only ice-house in Seaforth."

Laura had no time to reply; for they were ushered into Mrs. St. Clair's boudoir, which was all fitted up *couleur de rose*, and in which every comfort and luxury, which ingenuity could invent, and money purchase, was to be found. The windows looked out on a lovely valley, enclosed by hills, and shaded by the finest

trees ; in short, this little boudoir seemed to contain all that could conduce to captivate the soul, and delight the eye.

“ What a love of a room,” exclaimed Julia, as she entered it ;—“ and, dear Mrs. St. Clair, how well you look,” said she, flinging herself into an ottoman, on which Agnes was reclining, almost at her length, while George was reading a new novel ; in which she seemed much interested. George St. Clair rose, and politely wishing the young ladies a good morning, was retiring, when Agnes recalled him. “ My dear George, we cannot do without you,” said she.

“ Indeed, mamma, I see Miss Talbot does not want me,” said George.

“ Oh, George, how can you say so,” said Julia ; “ such old friends as you and I are. I did not expect this.”

“ Are you in earnest, Julia ?” said George,

returning, and taking her hand. "After what passed last night can you forgive my rudeness?"

"Nonsense," said Julia; "I have nothing to forgive; only let us be friends."

"We are friends now for ever then?" said George, taking her hand.

"Yes, for ever;" said Julia, who felt a few sparks of ancient love rekindle in her heart, as she gazed on the handsome face of her earliest flirt.

"Now, George, do just tell Mlle. Mars to come here," said Agnes; "and to bring all her patterns, blond laces, flowers, feathers, and all her 'boutique' with her, for we have not a moment to lose."

George obeyed his pretty mamma; and in a few moments Mlle. Mars, followed by the footman, carrying a pile of boxes, entered the room. Mlle. Mars produced patterns of all shapes and fancies; satins were piled against gauzes, and

gauzes were laid over different coloured satins; crapes of every shade, from the palest blue to the brightest rose, were hung over the chairs and ottomans, to judge better of the effect.

“What do you think of pink satin, with white gauze drapery?” said Agnes, as she pulled over all Mlle. Mars’s materials, without any ceremony.

Julia did not seem to fancy that much; she had already a pink dress, and she knew almost to a certainty that the Misses Babington would wear pink dresses, and she must be quite ‘distinguished’ from the common herd of rustics at Seaforth.

“Ah, mon Dieu,” exclaimed Mlle. Mars, putting her finger to her mouth, “attendez, il me semble, qu’une robe de satin bleue, avec le draperie de gaze, garni de fleurs, serait ravissante, le corsège en cœur. Oh, je le prévois, Mademoiselle en serait charmée !”

“ Oh, that will be beautiful !” said Julia and Mrs. St. Clair together. “ Laura,” continued the former, “ do you not agree with Mlle. Mars ?”

“ Perfectly,” replied Laura ; “ it will be very handsome, and elegant.”

“ That is the style of dress I like,” said George St. Clair ; “ something simple, to look well.”

The ladies laughed at the gentleman’s description of what he liked ; and Mlle. Mars withdrew, after having promised to cut out Julia’s robe, and instruct her maid how to make it.

“ But,” said George, after the femme de chambre had withdrawn, “ what will you put in your heads ?”

“ Pearls,” said Mrs. St. Clair. “ I vote for pearls. I have such a lovely pearl comb and flowers.”

"With all my heart," said Julia; "for grandpapa gave me some not long ago. Laura, what will you wear?"

"I have no pearls," replied Laura; "but I will wear something to look like them."

"Oh, pray allow me to lend you some," said Mrs. St. Clair.

"I hope you will not be affronted, my dear madam, if I refuse your kind offer," said Laura.

"But I make it a rule never to borrow anything."

"How silly," said Julia; "but 'n'importe,' I know one cannot turn you. I have one thing to say, videlicet, I hope none of the party now assembled will let out the secret of our dress: I would not for the world that Hannah or Bab Babington knew of such a thing. Oh, I do so love to cut them out!"

"No wonder," replied George, "that Pope said,—

'What mighty contests rise from trivial things.'

As long as I can remember, you and those bibby-Babingtons as I nick-named them, have always had a little jealousy between you ; and what astonishes me is, Julia, that you should trouble yourself about such people. I should just take my fun out of them, and laugh at them, were I you."

" And so I do," said Julia.

" But still you are afraid of them," replied George.

" But Bab does so cut up people," said Julia.

" She has such a sharp tongue."

" I can only answer," said George, bowing, " that I have had the honour of hearing some of Miss Talbot's *observations*, I will term them, upon her neighbours."

Julia laughed, so did Laura. Mrs. St. Clair said, " Oh George, I do love you, for you are so amusing !"

"Now," said Julia, looking at her watch, "I think I must go, for I have to make a hundred calls—to go shopping into Seaforth—and I must take Alice Lisle to see Mrs. Trimmer's show-rooms. I suppose you know, Agnes, that she has just come from London, with her Spring, or rather Summer, assortment of caps, bonnets, dresses, and collars, and I want Laura to choose some new hats, or bonnets, for me, and some summer dresses."

"Mercy on us," said George St. Clair, holding up his hands in feigned astonishment, "new hats! new dresses! Julia, why what would Villiers say if he heard you?"

Laura coloured, and said nothing.

"Why, indeed," replied Julia, "I do not know, and I do not care; I have a right to spend my money my own way, and I want no

guide, except in the choice of things, and I think Laura will assist me with her taste."

"And are these really your sentiments?" said George, fixing his dark expressive eyes upon her; "if so, I have been mistaken. Miss Talbot, I mean Miss Laura, pray allow me to arrange your shawl." Then offering his arm, he led the two Talbots to their carriage.

"Will the time never come for dressing," said Julia, as she tried to make the hours between dinner and the much wished-for ball, pass quickly.

At last the time came; and Julia was arrayed in her beautiful new dress of gauze over white satin, trimmed with roses, and lilies of the valley; her fine hair was plaited simply behind, and confined by a pearl comb; whilst her bright ringlets clustered as usual on her forehead, and shaded her cheeks, which her excitement

had already tinged with the deepest bloom ; a pearl bandeau encircled her forehead ; and one pearl rose was gracefully placed on the left side of her head. Never had she looked more lovely, or, as *Mdlle. Mars* would have said, “ ‘ *Made-moiselle est ravissante.* ’ ”

“ How do I look ? ” said Julia, surveying herself, in her large mirror, from head to foot.

“ Very well, indeed, mem,” replied her maid ; “ I never saw you look better, mem.”

Pleased with herself, and therefore disposed to be pleased with others, Julia descended to the ball-room, to assist her grandmama in doing the honours, for Emily never meddled in such matters, and was too much occupied with her brother Stanley, and Platonic love, to have eyes or ears for any one else. Julia seated herself on a sofa with Lord Latimer ; he had dined with Mr. Palmer ; and passed the time in flirting,

until the crowd of the expected beaux and belles, became too great for them to remain near the door in comfort.

"Do let us stand by the fire-place," said Lord Latimer, offering his arm to Julia, "we shall be squeezed to death, here."

"Willingly," said Julia; "for I want to see the company to better advantage."

"Who are those people," said Lord Latimer, after they had placed themselves so as they could overlook the room, "with the pink dresses and those horrid stiff heads?"

"Oh! those are the Babingtons," whispered Julia, as the brothers and sisters drew near. "Now, only see, Lord Latimer, how civil I will be to them." Aloud. "How do you do, Barbara? Hannah, you look charming to-day,—what have you been doing lately in the work line? is your beautiful ottoman finished yet?"

Barbara, did you really invent the pattern yourself?—well, I wish I had your genius. What ! you have finished the last new novel I sent you, —how quick you read,—I can lend you another;—allow me to recommend you ‘Forsina,’ if you have not perused it. Oh ! do not move on;—well, if you must, adieu for the present.”

“Miss Talbot, there are your three namesakes bowing to you, and looking as if they were going to be hung,” said Lord Latimer.

“Really,” replied Julia, “I cannot see them. Oh, yes, just by the door, all in green; mercy ! what have they done to their hair, it is like stags’ horns;—why, Lydia has got red eyes ! what is the matter with her, I wonder?—Lydia, what is the matter with your eyes?”

“Nothing,” said Lydia, who had gained, with Félicie, after a good deal of pushing and squeezing, the place which Julia occupied.

"Nonsense," replied Julia, "tell me what is the matter, child."

"Could not learn my grammar," said Lydia, beginning a little cry, "and Félicie scolded me."

"I am certain," said Lord Latimer, "that you misuse your words, Miss Lydia. Mdlle. Félicie might have reproved, but I cannot believe she ever scolded you."

"She did," pouted Lydia.

"Oh, 'ma chère!'" exclaimed Mdlle. Félicie, looking absolutely horrified at such an accusation.

"Félicie!" exclaimed Hal Talbot, running up to his sister's elegant governess; "will you do me the honour of dancing the first quadrille with me?"

"'Je serai charmée!'" said Félicie.

"Miss Talbot, just look through your glass,

and tell me who that dandy is, speaking to Mr. Palmer, with Laura Talbot leaning on his arm?" said Lord Latimer.

"How very handsome!" was Julia's expression, as she surveyed the 'inconnu' from head to foot. "Do not you think so, Lord Latimer?"

"Rather effeminate," replied his lordship, carelessly dropping his glass; "but who is he?"

"I should think he must be the person Villars mentioned, when I met him the other day," said Julia; "but his name I do not know."

"Indeed!" said Lord Latimer, turning half away from Julia. "I did not know you were on such familiar terms with that quiz, Villars."

"How do you mean?" said Julia.

"Oh, nothing,—nothing at all, only a foolish word."

"But I do not understand you, Lord Latimer."

"I meant to say, would you call me Latimer?"

"No," replied Julia.

"Then, why call Villars—Villars, or James?"

"Because I have known him since I was ten years old, and we are great friends."

"Humph!" said Latimer.

"Julia," said Mr. Villars, "will you allow me to introduce you to Mr. Edwin Neville, a very old friend of Laura Talbot's?"

"With all my heart," replied Julia; "but had you said, an old friend of the future Mrs. Villars, I should have been better pleased."

Villars smiled, and beckoning to Laura and her companion, introduced the dandy, as Lord Latimer termed him, to Miss Talbot.

"May I have the honour of waltzing with you, Miss Talbot?" said Edwin Neville; "I never dance quadrilles."

"I shall be most happy," replied Julia.

Mr. Neville bowed, and offering his arm to Laura, lounged through the saloon, apparently engaged in a most interesting conversation. He was a most singular looking young man; long black ringlets shaded an Italian-looking face; and long black eye-lashes shaded eyes of the darkest hue, which were generally bent on the ground; no smile was ever seen on that lip, which, finely formed, seemed to curl in proud derision of every one, and no neckcloth hid from view his throat of a most dazzling whiteness, which was displayed ‘à la Byron.’

“How very handsome Mr. Neville is,” repeated Julia; “how handsome!”

“Is he?” said Lord Latimer, biting his lips.

“Oh!” exclaimed Juliet; “what are all the people looking at, in the furthest corner of the room, by the door: see, Lord Latimer, how they crowd round some wonder,—all, except

Mr. Neville and Laura, are there ; look, the crowd is moving ;—I declare it is Mrs. St. Clair, who has attracted them all, leaning on that dear creature's arm ;—George St. Clair, I mean."

" Shall we go and meet them ?" said Lord Latimer.

" On no account, my Lord ; my acquaintance must come to meet me," replied Julia, proudly.

At last, the little beauty got clear of the crowd, and was led, by her dutiful son-in-law, to Julia, who payed her every attention that her delicate situation required ; a lounge was placed in the most comfortable spot, and Mrs. St. Clair being seated in it, with cushions to support her, she was, in a short time, quite at her ease. She looked uncommonly well in her new dress, with the finest pearls placed in her rich hair ; and George St. Clair, standing beside her,

appeared all happiness: the Doctor, poor man, was at home; he had been obliged to attend to some sick parishioners, and was too tired to come out.

"How well and happy you look to-night, Julia," said Mrs. St. Clair. "Where is Laura? I want to see her head-dress. George, do see if you can find Laura. Oh, here she comes; how very nice she looks. Laura—Miss Talbot, I should say—where did you get your pearls?"

"They are not pearls," said Laura, smiling.

"Not pearls! why, then, they are imitation. How well they look. Who is that young man standing looking at us, pulling his glove in two? You do not look the right way, Laura: he is straight before us."

"Mr. Neville, I suppose, you mean. He is a very agreeable friend of mine, and an old one, and has been living abroad a great deal."

"Do introduce me to him," said Mrs. St. Clair, "he is such a sweet pretty creature! just look at his ringlets,—oh, is he not lovely? I wish I could dance; I should so like to dance with him!"

"My dear ma'am," said George St. Clair, "I hope you will not think of such a thing as dancing: promise me you will not."

"Oh, George, you know I want to waltz. Now, dear George, do not say any more."

"I see," replied George, leaning over his little mamma, "you do not love me, Agnes, as you used!"

"Indeed I do love you, George! and I will kiss you, if you like, and will not dance, I promise you."

"Oh, no,—not here," said George, starting back, as his little mamma was proposing a kiss.

"Mrs. St. Clair, will you allow me to introduce Mr. Neville to you?" said Laura.

"I shall be delighted," replied Agnes, her eyes sparkling with pleasure.

"Mrs. St. Clair—Mr. Neville," said Laura. The gentleman bowed, and the lady gave a nod of recognition.

"May I have the honor of waltzing the second waltz with you?" said Mr. Neville.

"I am afraid I must not dance," said Mrs. St. Clair. "I am so vexed ;—it is particularly hard."

Mr. Neville bowed. "I am indeed destined to be disappointed," said he ; "but perhaps I may be permitted the felicity of a conversation with Mrs. St. Clair, during the first quadrilles?"

"I shall be delighted to talk with you," said Agnes.

"Will you not dance, Neville?" said Villars.

"I never dance anything but a waltz."

"Julia," said Emily Palmer, approaching the lounge where Mrs. St. Clair and Julia reclined in state, "you must lead off the ball, they are waiting for you."

"Where is Lord Latimer?" said Julia, "for I am engaged to him."

"Here," cried his lordship (advancing from behind a screen, where he had been reposing on a sofa), as he offered his arm to Julia.

The music commenced, and in a few moments the lively dance began. Julia was seen in full perfection in a quadrille,—it was the only dance she excelled in.

"How very like George St. Clair is to his lovely partner," said Sir Charles Leslie to Stanley Brereton, who was watching with interest the graceful movements of his sister Emily.

"There is really a striking likeness between

Miss Palmer and George St. Clair," said Stanley; "but I do not remember having noticed it before."

"Nor I," said Sir Charles Leslie. "Mr. Lindore, do not you see a great likeness?"

"I remarked the same likeness, not two moments ago, to Robert," said Mr. Lindore; "there could not be a handsomer couple: it would be a good match, Mr. Stanley, eh?"

"Perhaps Miss Palmer might look higher," said Stanley, not very well pleased at such a question. "I think, with her beauty, she might do better than marry a younger son."

"But I understand Miss Palmer would have a large fortune," said Mr. Lindore.

"You are quite wrong in that idea," replied Stanley Brereton; "for Mr. Palmer, though enjoying at this moment a princely revenue, and one of the finest seats in England, cannot

leave any of it to his children, as it is entailed on male heirs. Emily Palmer will have ten thousand pounds; but that could never support her and George St. Clair in the style she has been used to."

"Then that is the reason why Mr. Palmer was always so anxious for a son?" said Mr. Lindore.

"It was," replied Stanley; "and for some years both he and Mrs. Palmer were very unhappy on that point, particularly as there was always a little jealousy between the late poor Mrs. St. Clair and Mrs. Palmer, which of their families should be the greatest and handsomest. 'You have no son,' would Mrs. St. Clair say to Mrs. Palmer; 'And you have sons, but nothing for them,' was Mrs. Palmer's answer."

"How very wicked," said Mr. Lindore, "to taunt each other about the gifts of God!"

“ From what I have heard and seen, since I have been an inmate of Mr. Palmer’s house,” replied Stanley, “ I must say I think all the mischief arose from the housekeepers belonging to their respective families ; I mean those two horrid old women, Mrs. Spicer and Mrs. Bell Spicer. You must know they are sisters, and each of them possessed the most unaccountable sway over their mistresses. I often have wondered how Mrs. Palmer could let that old hag, Mrs. Spicer, tell scandal by the hour to her ; whilst poor Mrs. St. Clair used to walk arm-in-arm with Mrs. Bell Spicer, as if she was her own daughter : certainly she lived to repent it, for her last words to Mrs. St. Clair, were—‘ Take care of Spicer, but never believe a word that she says.’ ”

“ How very singular,” said Mr. Lindore, “ that a lady, who has moved in the first

society, should seek for an intimacy with her housekeeper ;—what a perversion of taste !”

Stanley was not in a talking humour ; and he wanted to gaze, unseen, on Emily ; so he loitered away to a retired corner, from whence he might observe all around him, particularly her whom he loved best.

Mrs. St. Clair was still talking to Mr. Neville, and looking up in his face with childish wonder, as he was describing the beauties of Italy and Switzerland to her, when George St. Clair returned from the quadrille he had just finished, and informed Mr. Neville that the waltzes were beginning.

“ How sorry I am that you have awakened me from such a delightful dream,” said Neville, in his low, musical voice ; “ such reveries are enchanting,—but they must end, sooner or later, some day ; so it little matters ; yet, one mo-

ment's oblivion of all past evils in this world, how soothing it is to the wounded spirit !”

He leant against the wall, and seemed lost in thought ; then, indolently lifting up his large dark eyes, “ Mrs. St. Clair,” said he, “ did you not say something about a waltz ?”

“ Yes,” replied George, looking astonished ; “ they are waltzing in the next room.”

“ Where ?” said Neville, looking around the ball-room, without once seeing the dancers,— “ where is he ?”

“ He is mad—positively mad,” said George St. Clair.

“ Oh,” said Agnes, “ do bring him here, if he is mad ; I should so like to see a mad person, to hear what he would say : I had a little puppy that went mad once.”

“ Hush !” said George St. Clair ; “ he is talking to himself.”

“ Yes,” continued Neville, his eyes still wandering wildly in the air, “ there was a time when I thought happiness was within my grasp—when I thought I was beloved. One person, at least, seemed to care for me, amidst the cold and heartless mortals who fill the world:—yet she fell, and her fall was great, for she was once an angel;—but what do I say? She was deceived; and woe to that man who dared to deceive the one I loved! Could I meet him, I would dash his brains out thus,”—and he hit his head against the wall;—“ yes, I could blight him with one frown, and tear those bright eyes which seduced her from their sockets. Revenge, I must, I will have!”

Neville paused, and, darting his fine eyes to the opposite side of the room, exclaimed—“ I see him, I see him! Revenge is mine!” and, bounding across the room, he caught Stanley

Brereton by the throat. "Now, villain, give me my revenge!"

The frantic gestures of Neville, the struggles of the half-choaked Stanley, the screams of Mrs. St. Clair, and the voice of Laura Talbot calling for Villars, brought all the gentlemen to the aid of the suffering man. Neville was secured by Villars and George St. Clair, whilst Mr. Lindore and Archimedes Octavius Norton laid the fainting Stanley Brereton on a sofa, and sprinkled his face amply with water, until the blackness disappeared and the natural colour returned.

Neville was now perfectly quiet, his eyes were bent on the ground, and he seemed sinking into an apathy.

"Mr. Neville, you had better withdraw," said Villars, "and take a little refreshment."

"No," said Stanley Brereton; "it is my turn to ask for revenge. Mr. Neville, if you are a

gentleman, either apologize before this company for your insulting behaviour to me, or follow me to the garden."

"I never will apologize," said Neville, with a contemptuous and disdainful look; "and, though you are a villain, I will not hesitate to stain my sword with your blood; and may the ghost of my injured Antoinette aid me to lay your proud body in the dust!"

"Your Antoinette! what do you mean, sir?" said Stanley. "I know nothing of your Antoinette."

"You know what I mean, Stanley Brereton," said Neville; "do not add lies to your other accomplishments."

"Heavens! this is too much," exclaimed Stanley; "come into the next room, sir, and explain yourself. Mr. St. Clair, if you will be my second, follow me."

"May I engage Mr. Villars to be my second?" said Neville, as he and Villars followed Stanley and Mr. St. Clair into the next room.

"Mr. Neville, I cannot be a second, it is against my principles; but I will be your friend."

"Now, sir," said Stanley, as they shut the door, "what do you mean?"

"Allow me to answer for Mr. Neville," replied Villars, "as he is too hasty. I believe an attachment had been formed between Mr. Neville and a young foreigner on the continent: her name was Antonia Di Carraci: they were even betrothed, when Neville was obliged to return for a short time to England to visit a property. During that time Antonia met another Englishman, and was seduced. When Neville returned, she had left the country to go to Italy, and report spoke of her living openly as the mis-

tress of the handsome stranger. She left a note for Neville, in which she accused herself of her infidelity to him, but threw the blame chiefly on her seducer :—that seducer, Stanley Brereton, was you.”

During this recital, Stanley’s countenance underwent many changes, and he sunk almost fainting upon a chair. When he could articulate, he exclaimed, “ Mr. Neville, I have wronged you, but unwittingly: you have also wronged me. Antonia Carracci was my wife, and I lived to repent I had ever married her; but let her memory rest in peace. Six short months have hardly passed since she was laid in her grave. She was as beautiful as she was vicious; and I never knew, until some months after our private marriage, that such a person as Mr. Neville existed. Now, I think, we may be friends.”

Neville held out his hand, and Stanley shook it with cordial friendship.

“ Had you but seen,” continued Neville, “ the letter Antonia wrote to me, in which she described you as the most unmerciful of tyrants, you would, like me, have sworn to defend and revenge her cause and her injuries; but let it be forgot. And now, adieu! I have been disappointed in everything, but this last is the worst of all. I go to-morrow to London, and sail the next day for America. Perhaps, amongst new people I may forget my griefs, and drag out a less unhappy life than in this country. Villars, remember me to Laura. She has my picture—may she be happy; for she is the only sincere friend I ever had. Make my apologies to Mr. Palmer: and, once more, adieu!” The tears were in Neville’s eyes, when he took up his hat, and, bowing to St. Clair, left the room.

“ It is useless to stop him,” said Villars; “ he

will go: he is one of those who cannot bear with adversity."

"And what misfortunes has he met with?" inquired Stanley Brereton, who had begun to recover his usual composure.

"He first lost his mother—then his father—was jilted by an English lady in the beau monde—lost most of his property in a law-suit—went abroad—and you know the rest."

"Suppose we return to the ball-room," said George St. Clair, anxious about his little mamma.

"By all means," said Villars, as he opened the door and led the way.

"George, my dear George! are you come at last?" cried little Agnes, jumping from a seat, where Laura Talbot and Julia had held her between them. "Do come home: I am so fright-

ened—so tired. I have been crying because you left me; do take me home?"

"In one moment, if I can get the carriage," said George, speaking to a servant to order his carriage round. "I hope you are not fatigued, Agnes?"

"Oh, do not go yet!" said Julia to George St. Clair; "it will quite spoil our ball."

"I cannot stay, Julia, I am in such anxiety. I do not know what Dr. St. Clair would say if anything should happen. I only wish to Heaven I may get Agnes safe home!"

"Do find my shawl," said Agnes, "for I am so cold—do, George?"

George flew here, and George ran there, until he collected shawls, and boas, and wraps, enough to fill a shop.

"Now, Agnes," said he, as he bundled her up in them; "never mind saying good-bye; just come away, and let us get home."

With some little coaxing he succeeded in getting her away; and, placing her in the chariot, he exclaimed, as he seated himself beside her, "Thank God! I am now at ease;" the door was shut, and the carriage drove off.

In spite of Julia's exertions, the ball did not recover its former gaiety, and it soon broke up. Emily Palmer had been too much agitated on account of Stanley, to re-appear, and every one looked uncomfortable. The splendid supper was left untouched, and the music was dismissed. Lord Latimer took his leave, and Julia went to bed. Thus ended this ball, which was to have been the finest and the gayest affair ever seen in Seaforth, and which terminated in disappointment.

The next morning every one had recovered their spirits; and were breakfasting on some of the expensive dishes which had been intended

for the last night's supper, when Lord Latimer entered, with Mr. Wilmot, and proposed a ride to Julia. The horses being ordered, Julia and Lord Latimer, escorted by Mr. Palmer's groom, set off to ride races on Seaforth race course.

"I wonder," said Lord Latimer, looking through his eye-glass, "who those people are, walking in the valley just beneath us? They are, I think, lovers. Do just look, Miss Talbot, through your glass."

Julia looked for some moments; then said, "As I live, Lord Latimer, it is Emily and Stanley Brereton, the Platonic brother and sister."

Lord Latimer laughed. "Platonic love, then, is the kind of love I like. See, he has got his arm round her waist!"

"Nonsense!" said Julia, who could not help seeing that Lord Latimer's remark was just.

"We had better ride another way," said his lordship.

"I do not see why two harmless lovers should frighten us away," replied Julia.

"I only thought," continued Lord Latimer, "that the servant might see more than we should like; and servants do talk so."

Julia turned her horse, and, setting off in a gallop, the Platonic lovers were left to themselves.

"I should like to know," exclaimed Julia, after a long pause, "what Lord Latimer can be thinking of?"

Lord Latimer made no answer, but continued biting the handle of his whip, apparently lost in deep thought.

Julia coughed, patted her horse, but all to no purpose. At last she began singing—

"A bachelor leads an easy life;
Few folks that are married live better;
'Tis a very good thing to have a good wife,
But the trouble is how to get her."

Lord Latimer started. "Just the song I was

thinking of," said he. "I beg your pardon, Miss Talbot, for being so absent. I hope I did not leave any question unanswered?"

"No matter," replied Julia; "but answer me now. Will you dine with us to-morrow?"

"You may be sure I will not refuse the pleasure of your company at any time," said Lord Latimer.

"Very well; I shall expect you," said Julia, as she dismounted at her own door. "Adieu, for the present. I cannot ask you in, as all are out, and I am engaged to meet Laura Talbot."

"Now, my dear Laura," said Julia to her friend, as they were comfortably seated in the latter's boudoir, "do tell me what you expect when you marry?"

"A husband!" replied Laura.

"I do not mean that," said Julia; "I mean what establishment would you expect?"

“ I do not know,” said Laura ; “ I never thought about it ; perhaps an establishment like the St. Clairs.”

“ What an idea,” said Julia ; “ why Dr. St. Clair has only one carriage ; yes, now two ; only one man, and three maid servants ; a small house, and a nice garden, if it was three times as large.”

“ I should be quite happy, with a man I liked, in Seaforth Rectory,” said Laura ; “ for I do not aspire to riches, or distinction.”

“ Well now, I could not be happy,” replied Julia. “ I want so many things ; I must have rank, and riches.”

“ I should like to know, what else you must have,” said Laura, smiling.

“ Well, to begin,” replied Julia ; “ I will tell you what I value myself at ; I will read you this list I have drawn out.”

*The description of Miss Julia Talbot, and her
valuation of herself.*

A fine head of hair	1,000
A beautiful face, fine eyes, teeth, and mouth	10,000
A pretty nose.....	500
A tolerable neck	200
Good arms, and white hands	1,000
Feet and ancles—as nature made them	300
A good voice, and plenty of wit	5,000
Accomplishments, taken in a lump	10,000
	27,000

“Upon my word, a modest little account,” said Laura, laughing at the conceit of the thing.

“Now,” continued Julia, “that is, you see, what I value myself at. I must tell you, I expect interest for myself—viz. what is the interest of twenty-seven thousand pounds—I expect to have over, to spend on my establishment and myself; of course my husband must have his

own allowance ; besides, he must keep the horses, carriages, and those kind of things. *Apropos*, are you engaged to James Villars, Laura ? what pin-money will he give you ?”

“ That is not a fair question,” replied Laura ; “ therefore you will excuse my answering it.”

“ I see,” said Julia, “ it hits too near home ; therefore we will say no more about it. Have you seen a newspaper to day ?”

“ No,” replied Laura ; “ is there any news going on ?”

“ None that I know of ; except that I should say that Talbot and Félicie were bringing matters to bear. I suppose you know Mrs. Talbot has been advised by some kind friends, to send Hal away for a year or two ; so he is going to travel on the Continent, with a tutor.”

“ Really,” replied Laura, “ I was not aware that young Talbot was likely to set out on his

travels ; I think, so young and wild as he is, it is rather a pity, for the Continent is a bad school for young men."

" I do not think so," said Julia. " Look at Lord Latimer, Mr. Wilmot, George St. Clair ! do not you think they are most entertaining and elegant young men ?"

" Certainly," replied Laura ; " but they have no morals, no religious principles."

" Men never have," said Julia ; " at least very seldom ; you do not meet a James Villars every day ; but, in honour and courage, neither Lord Latimer, Mr. Wilmot, or George St. Clair, are wanting."

" I suppose you mean to say," replied Laura, " that neither of these gentlemen would have the least hesitation in shooting his friend, if he thought himself affronted."

" What more would you have?" said Julia ;

“ without duels, there would be no peace in the world ; we ladies would be the losers, if this point of honour were given up.”

“ It is not true honour ! it is false honour,” replied Laura, “ and no good Christian would fight.”

“ Nonsense, my dear Laura, you must not be so very nice on these points ; the fact is, that in the present state of the world, duels must take place ;—were we in heaven, I grant you, it would be a different thing.”

“ I cannot agree with you,” replied Laura ; “ nor would James Villars, or Mr. Lindore.”

“ I can assure you,” replied Julia, with hauteur ; “ that neither James Villars, or Mr. Lindore are anything to me ; and I would not give a straw for what they thought on the subject.”

At this moment, a servant opened the door,

and gave Julia a note ; she opened it deliberately, (not like most young ladies, in a hurry) : it was as follows :—

MY DEAR MISS TALBOT,

“ Circumstances, over which I have no control, render my presence at home indispensable ; and I am obliged to quit Seaforth, without paying my respects to Mr. Palmer, or saying adieu to you ; may I hope that Miss Talbot will not forget me during my absence, which shall be as short as possible ; and may I hope, that when I return, we shall be on as intimate terms as we now are ; my future happiness depends upon it. I can write no more, my carriage is ready, and Mr. Wilmot waiting. Adieu, my dear Miss Talbot, and when you think on absent friends, remember

LEICESTER LATIMER.

“ Make my apologies to your circle, for my

abrupt departure without thanking them for all their kind civilities. Adieu !”

Julia turned pale, as she read the note, and with some little confusion crumpled it up, and placed it in her reticule ; then turning to Laura, said, “ it is only from Lord Latimer ; is it not provoking, he is obliged to set out for B—— park, the seat of his father, the Marquis of B—— ; so of course he will not be here for the Seaforth races ; and I had just ordered a box of new things from London, on purpose to cut out all the Seaforthites ; there are ten guineas’ worth of clothes gone for nothing ; for I am certain, any of my present wardrobe is good enough for the Seaforth beaux.”

“ Since you seem so disappointed, I am sorry that Lord Latimer is obliged to leave Seaforth,” replied Laura ; “ but really you do not treat your Seaforth beaux with much respect.”

“ And why should I ? ” said Julia ; “ there is George St. Clair, the best of them ; a pleasing young man, with only two ideas in his head ; first, how to set his beautiful face and eyes off to the best advantage ; and secondly, to take care of his mamma. Then comes Mr. Villars, a quizz of a clergyman, who would sooner be skinned, than have a bit of hot meat in his house on Sunday ; and who thinks it is all over with him, or her, who does not go to church twice a day, besides singing a penitential psalm morning and evening. Then, let us see, who comes next ? Oh, ‘ the glass of fashion, and the mould of form,’ Stanley Brereton, who is the best-tempered creature on earth, as long as his hands are white, his hair well dressed, his coat well padded, his cork calves well adjusted, and the silver top to his cane, bright and shining ; but surprise him in an old dressing-gown, and be

sure he would bite you. Then those Babingtons: the eldest is a censorious old viper; and Alexander Artaxerxes a good-natured demon; who, if he can give one a bad word, never fails of doing so. Next comes that worthy, respectable man, Mr. Lindore; who would not look at one of us ladies for ten thousand a-year; and if he had a better fellowship offered him, would take a fortnight to consider, whether it would be acting against his conscience to accept it. As for his brother Bob, the youth who goes tipsey to bed, and repents next morning—who left one regiment, because he said it was not Christian-like to drink, as that regiment did; and went into another, composed only of religious young men,—I must say, to give him his due, that he is always good, except when the spirit moves him to be bad. Then as for Norton”—

“Stop!” said Laura, looking very much an-

noyed; "I cannot hear any more,—I cannot hear my neighbours cut up in this manner, particularly such good men as Mr. Lindore and Mr. Villars. Adieu, Miss Talbot, for the present; and when we next meet, let me beg that you will avoid such a disagreeable topic, as that of pulling to pieces the people amongst whom we have every prospect of passing our lives." As Laura finished these words, she quitted the room, and left Julia to her own meditations, which, however, were of short duration, as a servant came to summon her to Mr. Palmer's study.

Mr. Palmer and Emily were alone; both seemed agitated; and Julia thought she could trace the marks of tears on Emily's countenance: after a few moments' silence, Mr. Palmer begun:

"My dear Julia, I have lived many years in

this world, and have been in the first and best society; but never, until to-day, was I aware that admitting a son-in-law into one's house, could be condemned by the most particular person, or misconstrued into evil: but so it is; read this paragraph, Julia, and you will see how the peace and happiness of families may be destroyed by the malice and ill-nature of their fellow-creatures."

Julia took the paper, and read with indignation the following lines:

" 'Delicate affair in high life.—' On dit,' that a fashionable widower, well known in the 'beau monde,' is now staying at his father-in-law's beautiful seat, near S——. The principal attraction is said to be the lovely Miss P——; of course, the gentleman's intentions are honourable;—but, as he never spared his remarks on others, of course, many strange rumours are

afloat concerning him. Were we in the place of the worthy host, we should certainly dismiss our guest in the most civil manner possible.' ”

“What nonsense!” exclaimed Julia; “it is all spite: what could have induced any one to trouble themselves about us? I am sure it is Jane Norton who has done it.”

“It is done; the person, therefore, that did it, does not much signify,” said Mr. Palmer. “But read this!” and he pointed to a paragraph in another paper.

“‘On dit,’ that a dashing widower, noticed in our last paper, has eloped with his first wife’s sister,—the beautiful and accomplished Miss P——, of S——. This occurrence has produced a great sensation in the ‘haut ton.’ ”

Julia dropped the paper, in mute astonishment, and Emily burst into tears.

“My dear children,” said Mr. Palmer, “it is

useless to grieve so ; Emily you will be ill,—go to your room ; and to-morrow morning every thing shall be ready for you to start for the Continent. Julia, you must accompany Emily, for she wants a companion : you must make one maid do between you, as you will be obliged to take a footman, and two servants are enough to carry abroad. You will reach Dover to-morrow, and the next day, Calais ; you may then bend your steps wherever you like. I forgot to say, Mr. Talbot is to escort you ; and as he is now a manly-looking youth, he will do very well. Stanley goes to Stanley Park, in a fortnight : were he to leave us as soon as Emily, it might appear odd, and occasion some remarks. Now go, my love, and pack up all you want,—you have not long to do it in. Stanley has arranged with Emily's footman, to pay all expenses and forward me the account, so you will have no

trouble. You had better take my travelling chariot, as, if you went to Germany, Emily's must be taken off its wheels. Now, my dear children, go."

"But, grandpapa,—" said Julia, and she stopped.

"What, my dear?" said Mr. Palmer.

"I had a note from Lord Latimer," and she took it from her reticule, and gave it Mr. Palmer.

"Well, my dear, I will arrange this; only go, I am impatient to send you off."

Julia left the room. She was not pleased at having to quit England at this moment, yet she could not refuse to accompany Emily; and, for the first time in her life, she sat down to reflect on what she wanted. Her maid was summoned, and as she could speak a little French, she was chosen in preference to Emily's, who was left to

take charge of little Arthur. The floor of Julia's room was covered with boxes, travelling trunks, linen, dresses, shawls, cloaks, books, boots, and shoes; and it was not until one in the morning that Julia and her maid had completed their packing, when the former threw herself upon her bed to seek a few moments' repose.

Julia rose, tired and feverish, at nine o'clock to breakfast, and having written a note to Laura Talbot, to Mrs. St. Clair, and to Alice Lisle, to beg them to correspond with her, she followed Emily, with a heavy heart, into their chariot: and Hal Talbot having settled himself between the ladies, the carriage drove on, and in half-an-hour Seaforth was out of sight. We will leave them to pursue their road to Dover, and return to Seaforth.

A coterie of ladies, and a few gentlemen, were assembled in Mrs. Trimmer's show-rooms, ad-

miring the new fashions, the new bonnets, and looking half-frightened at a very queer-looking statue-like sleeve, which fitted tight to the arm, and which Mrs. Trimmer declared would be all the rage in winter, although some ladies were afraid of venturing on it.

"Upon my word," said Bab Babington to Jane Norton, "the Misses Buttercup's old dresses will be quite in fashion now; what a pity the youngest is a little twisted, for these small sleeves do show the smallest imperfections."

"Yes," replied Jane, with a sneer, "and thin people look so ill in them." This was made for a cut at Miss Bab.

"Do you think so?" said Bab; "why my eldest brother says Hannah is too stout to look well in them."

"He is perfectly right," replied Jane, "for only a few, and they must be finely proportioned people, will look decent in them."

"Humph," said Bab, turning away, and asking for some wreaths of flowers.

"How do you do, Miss Norton?" said George St. Clair, bowing from across the table. "So we have lost our Seaforth belles?"

"Lost them! what do you mean?" said Jane, starting.

"Do you not know, that Emily Palmer and Julia Talbot, escorted by Hal, set off for Paris this morning?"

"No! you really do not mean," said Jane, "that they are gone?" her eyes growing bigger and bigger, whilst a flush of pleasure crossed her face.

"Yes, it is quite true," added Mrs. St. Clair: "poor Emily's delicate health is the sole cause of this sudden departure. How I pity Julia: she wrote a note to me this morning, in such despair at missing the Seaforth races.

Besides, she had ordered the most lovely dress and bonnet from the Queen's milliner in London, for that occasion. Dear, how sorry I am ! are not you, George ? I am certain Lord Latimer will not stay here now."

"As if there was no one left in Seaforth now worthy of notice besides the Palmer family !" said Bab, with a toss of her head.

"I must agree with Mrs. St. Clair," said Jane Norton, who always made it a rule to contradict Bab, "that there are very few in Seaforth to induce Lord Latimer to stay."

"I see how little you know of Lord Latimer," replied Bab, with some heat ; "I had the pleasure of his company at our last ball ; therefore, as he did not grace your mamma's last *select* party, I must be allowed to be the best judge."

Jane laughed, and replied, in a loud voice, so that the whole room might hear her, "Though

Lord Latimer condescended to eat Mrs. Babington's dinner and supper, yet he never once danced with her daughters; and the reason why Lord Latimer was not present at our select party, was a very good one, namely, he had no invitation."

The whole room full of ladies opened their eyes in mute astonishment, at the idea of Lord Latimer's not having been invited to Mrs. Norton's party.

Jane continued. "The fact is, that last year at Weymouth I met Lord Latimer, and an introduction took place: at every ball, at every pic-nic, Lord Latimer was my beau, and my torment; for I could derive no amusement from his stupid conversation, and his Newmarket bets. So completely tired was I of his Lordship, that when I heard of his arrival here, I begged mamma not to visit him, or invite him to our

house ; and after some little coaxing I succeeded, to my great joy ; but mamma is so fond and anxious to have a Lord for her son-in-law, that I verily believe she would encourage a ‘cul-de-jatte.’ ”

As Jane finished her story, she glanced proudly towards the centre of the room, and gave Bab such a look, that the latter retreated to the most distant corner of the room, vowing eternal revenge against the house of Norton.

There was an universal silence until Villars spoke.

“ Miss Norton, perhaps you are not aware, that the gentleman who has afforded you and Miss Babington such a good subject for a quarrel, left Seaforth yesterday afternoon for B—— Park ? ”

“ Did you see him depart ? ” asked Bab, in a soft little voice, as soft as she could make it.

"No; but Miss Laura Talbot was with a young lady when she received a note to announce his unforeseen departure."

"May I presume to ask who that lady might be?" said Bab, turning towards Laura, and trying to look amiable.

"Miss Julia Talbot," replied Laura.

This was the height of Miss Babington's vexations, and bursting with ill-concealed rage, she collected her flowers together, and flounced out of the room.

Jane Norton looked happiness itself: and when she looked happy, she looked handsome.

"Now, Laura," said Villars; "make haste, and get what you want, and then we will drive to see Lord C——'s park."

Laura assented; and, in a few moments, she and Mrs. Trimmer were in deep conversation, quite '*Sotto voce*.' In vain Miss Norton, Miss

Hannah Babington, and the rest of the assembled fair ones, tried to hear : the conference was soon ended, and Mrs. Trimmer was all smiles and nods. What could this important secret be ?

Hal Talbot, Emily Palmer, and Julia, were waiting patiently on board the steamer, for the time which was to land them at Calais. Hal Talbot had turned out, upon acquaintance, a better companion than could have been expected ; and the party were in tolerable spirits : the novelty distracted Emily's attention from less pleasing scenes ; and Julia was delighted with the sea, on which she had never been before.

" Aunt Emily, look, here is Calais !" exclaimed Julia, as they approached the harbour.

" What, that dirty-looking place, Calais !" said Emily, looking round ; " how can any one like to live there ?"

After the usual interruptions, of examining

passports, searching trunks, &c., the party ordered a breakfast at Meurice's hotel; and discovering nothing particularly inviting during a walk after that meal, ordered post-horses, to set off for Paris: but here an unforeseen difficulty arose; the travelling chariot was heavily laden, and four horses were necessary to draw it over the pavé; there were only two horses in the stables, and they had to wait two hours before others could be procured. At last all was ready; the postilions cracked their whips; and the evening of the next day they arrived at Paris. As Emily only wished to spend a short time in this capital, the party devoted this time to seeing all the sights.

Perhaps Julia's letter to Laura Talbot may give the reader a better idea of the amusements they found in the French capital.

“ Paris—Hotel d’Angleterre.
Rue Filles St. Thomas.

“ MY DEAR LAURA,—

“ You will be delighted to hear that Emily enjoys Paris very much ; we have been here a month, although we intended staying only a few days ; but we had so much to see, that we determined on spending two months in this delightful city. Here, everything, as Mr. St. Clair would say, looks ‘ couleur de rose ;’ so we have taken apartments in the Hotel d’Angleterre, as you may see by my date. We have been out in the carriage every day. We often go to the Boulevards, which is our favourite drive ; it is a beautiful belt, which encircles the town, and consists of drives, and walks, shaded by trees, and bordered by gardens ; it is so gay-looking, and so very cool and pleasant, that it is a most delightful drive. The first place we went to, was the

Musée Royal du Louvre; amongst the sculpture, are the choicest treasures of the Villa Borghese, and many other valuable works of art,* which have been taken from Rome. It would be impossible to mention all the productions of the chisel; so I shall only notice those which pleased me the most, and which are, I believe, considered the finest. First, in the hall of the Centaur, No. 134, the Group of the Centaur, supposed to have been executed in the time of Adrian, by Aristus and Papius, natives of Ap-prodiscus, in Caria. In the hall of Diana, No. 178, Diana à la Biche. In the hall of the Candela-brum, No. 230, the Statue of Marsyas. I cannot go on writing all the different halls, so you must wait for further information till I return. To continue; the celebrated Hermaphrodite of the

* Since this letter was written, many of the works of art have been removed.

Villa Borghese, supposed to be the finest imitation extant of the bronze Hermaphrodite of Polycletus, is a most wonderful production. The group of Silenus with the infant Bacchus, and the Vase of the Villa Borghese, struck my fancy very much ; particularly the latter. The paintings, which we viewed next, were all, or nearly all, excellent; those which I admired, were, in the French school, the Magdalene renouncing the Vanities of Life, supposed to represent Madame de la Valière ; in the Flemish, German, and Dutch schools, the Dropsied Woman, by Gerard Dow, (his ‘ chef-d’œuvre,’) and a landscape by Berghem ; in the Italian school, La belle Jardinière, by Raphael; and the Soldiery insulting the Messiah at the door of his Prison, by Titian.

“ We have also visited St. Cloud and Versailles. There is nothing worth seeing in the former, except the furniture, which is particularly splendid and elegant. In the latter palace,

the ceilings and theatre deserve notice. The Orangery is beautiful; the water-works are celebrated; and the chateau of Grand Trianon and Petit Trianon, in the grounds, are objects of curiosity. Now, I am certain, you are tired of Paris and its environs; but, were you here, you would be delighted with the 'gaité de cœur' which every one shows. Apropos; how is dear Mrs. St. Clair and her handsome son-in-law George? Remember me to both particularly. How do Jenny Norton and the charming Alcibiades get on? Has she found no Duke yet? Hal desires to be remembered to his family. Emily will soon write to grandpapa and Stanley Brereton. So now adieu! and, with love to all, believe me your's most sincerely.

JULIA TALBOT."

"P. S. Has Lord Latimer returned, and is James Villars yet married?"

We will leave Julia at her Hotel d'Angleterre, and return to Seaforth, to watch our interests there.

Stanley Brereton was making preparations to be at Stanley Park, and was trying to find some lady who would preside at his table, and take charge of Arthur and his nurse. This was a most difficult thing to accomplish ; a nursery governess could not take care of so large an establishment, and a more accomplished lady would not undertake the management of a nursery,—and the end was, that Stanley had to leave Arthur at Seaforth, and go alone and desolate to Stanley Park. For a few days the novelty of the place, the grounds, and the new improvements in the flower-garden, kept him tolerably amused ; but the month had not passed before he was a prey to ennui, and heartily wishing for

Emily, or some one, to share his fine mansion with him. For a little amusement, he began to think over all the young ladies he had ever seen, to consider if any might suit him in the present emergency. Black, brown, and fair beauties were all ranged in his mind's eye; but none would do, and he always returned to the point from which he had set out, namely, to Emily Palmer; but it was useless to think of her; so he put on his hat, and, mounting his horse, took a stroll to view some new cottages, which some speculator was building about two miles from his residence. He had not gone far, when he met a post-chaise. It passed so quickly that he could only catch a glimpse of what appeared to him a well-known face. Two ladies were in the carriage. He recognized, in the young gentleman, Archimedes Norton, and in a few moments the latter was at his side.

"Mr. Norton!" exclaimed Stanley Brereton, checking his horse.

"Yes," replied Archimedes, shaking hands. "No doubt you are surprised to see me; but, to tell the truth, my mother found the expenses of my commission exceeded her expectations, and she has taken a cottage, about a mile from Stanley Park, to enable her to retrench, as in such a country place as this one cannot have many expenses. There is no society; and as mamma has no carriage, she cannot visit the distant neighbours. Jane has almost cried her eyes out at leaving Seaforth; you know she doated on the place; but it cannot be helped; and we must think everything is for the best."

"But it is not easy to think so always," said Stanley, with a sigh. "I hope I shall have the pleasure of seeing you, Mr. Norton, at Stanley Park? Will you dine with me to-morrow? I

shall be happy to see you, although I have nothing but a bachelor's dinner. I do not invite your mother and sister, because I have no ladies with me; when the Palmers are here it will be a different thing."

"I shall be delighted to accept your invitation," replied Archimedes; "but what can you find here to amuse yourself with, Mr. Brereton?"

"Indeed I do not know," said Stanley, 'looking minus;' "but I am fond of flowers, and I take great pleasure in my garden; I also like riding and fishing in summer, and in winter I have my library and visitors—for I generally have my house full of guests at Christmas."

"Have you heard from Seaforth or Paris lately?"

"No; I expect a letter every day from both places. Do you know if Mrs. Palmer heard from her grand-daughter before you left?"

"Mrs. Palmer received a letter last Sunday-week from Miss Palmer, and Julia wrote a few days ago to Laura Talbot. They were all well, and seem to like Paris amazingly. I should not wonder if it would turn out as Mr. Palmer wishes it at last."

"What do you mean?" said Stanley Brereton, incensed at hearing Archimedes call his niece by her Christian name.

"Do you not know," replied Norton, smiling, "that Mr. Palmer's object in sending his daughter and Julia abroad with Hal Talbot, was that the latter and Julia might make a match?"

"Stuff!" said Stanley; "all stuff and Sea-forth scandal. It is not likely, that one so pretty and young as Julia, would admire or deign to think of Hal Talbot, with his three hundred per annum; and I am persuaded Mr. Palmer never once dreamt of such a thing: besides, only look

at the attentions Lord Latimer paid Miss Talbot; he may propose, and that would be a suitable match."

"Old birds will not be caught with chaff," replied Norton; "and Lord Latimer never even took leave of Miss Talbot. I fancy the St. Clair business sent him to the right-about."

"What have the St. Clairs to do with either Miss Talbot or Lord Latimer?" said Stanley Brereton, in no very sweet tone.

"Nothing; except that you know Miss Talbot's flirtations with George St. Clair did not please Lord Latimer; the fact is, Miss Talbot flirts with any one she takes a fancy to—and—"

"Silence, sir!" exclaimed Stanley Brereton, "Do you suppose I will allow any one to talk thus of my niece, and to utter such falsehoods? And, as you seem to have such a good idea of propriety, I wonder you do not give a little ad-

vice on that subject where it is wanted. Look at home, Mr. Norton—you have a sister ; but I will say no more, I see you understand me. Adieu, I shall expect you to-morrow ; but remember, you must be more guarded in your conversation.” Stanley turned his horse, and galloped home. He passed Mrs. Norton’s new house. Jane was in the garden ; when she heard the horse’s hoofs, she came to the gate to look over. Stanley bowed, and passed on. She tried to look astonished, as if she did not expect to see him. “ There,” said Stanley to himself, “ that is all done for show ; that girl may catch some one, but it shall not be me.”

The following day Archimedes dined with Stanley Brereton, and Seaforth news and scandal was let out by wholesale ; until Stanley, not a little amused, as none of it concerned his relations, was obliged to cry shame.

Mr. Norton left Stanley Park at a late hour, with an invitation to bring his mother and sister to see the flower-garden and conservatory. The invitation was accepted; and just as Stanley was going out, next day, to ride, the Norton family came over to Stanley Park, and he was obliged to accompany them over the house and grounds. Miss Jane took such an immense fancy to a little pony she saw in the park, which Stanley was breaking for Emily, and Mrs. Norton threw out such hints of her daughter being too delicate to walk, and of the difficulty of getting a pony, nice, little, and quiet, that Stanley Brereton was obliged to offer Miss Norton the use of the pony, as long as she remained in the neighbourhood; and half the place had not been seen, when Stanley wished himself well rid of the match-making mother and affected daughter. As they took

their departure, Stanley could not help smiling at all Jane's rapturous expressions regarding the happy, enchanting day she had passed; and when the party were out of sight, he clapped the hall door to, and exclaiming, "Thank goodness, I am at last alone!" proceeded to his study, and taking a little china smelling bottle up, which Jane had admired, and declared "a love of a thing," deliberately broke it against the fender, and burnt the fragments. But if Stanley thought his troubles were at an end, he was mistaken. Not a day came without bringing some of the Nortons to Stanley Park; if he took a ride, he was sure to meet or overtake Jane, on his little pony,—if he walked, he found her fishing,—if he stayed at home, some note or message came from the tiresome inhabitants of Myrtle Cottage, (Mrs. Norton's residence)—the pony wanted shoeing,

and perhaps Mr. Stanley Brereton did not approve of their blacksmith; or, perhaps, he shod his own horses, at home; or, Mrs. Norton took the liberty of begging permission for her dear Jane to walk in Mr. Brereton's delightful garden, and pluck a few flowers; or, perhaps, as it was wet, Mr. Brereton might possibly go in his chariot to church, and if he would allow Miss Norton to take a seat in it? It was not with every one Mrs. Norton would trust her dear child, but on such an old friend, as Mr. Brereton, she knew she could rely. Thus was Brereton tormented from day to day; and when permission was requested for Miss Norton to copy some pictures, in the gallery at Stanley Park, Stanley gave up all idea of peace and quiet; and having written to inform Mrs. Norton, her daughter might copy what she liked, he called for his valet and desired him to

have everything ready for a journey, as he would leave Stanley Park that evening. Accordingly, at nine o'clock, as soon after his dinner as he could move with ease, that night, his carriage came round, and four post-horses soon left Stanley Park and the Nortons in the rear. Stanley had intended going to Seaforth, but, on second thoughts, he settled he would pass through Seaforth, and direct his course to London. In London, an idle man, with plenty of money, can generally find something to do, which, if it does not interest him, will make the time pass quicker; so when Mr. Brereton's own gentleman, at the end of the stage, asked what road his master wished to pursue,—“London, as quick as possible,” was Stanley Brereton's concise reply.

“Really,” thought Mr. Pinkley, the valet, as he mounted the rumble, “something is come

over master lately: when he was abroad, England was always his cry;—when he arrived in London, he called for post-horses, and offered them double pay, to take him, at a gallop, down to E——, where Mr. Tailer was to meet him with his riding horse: and I must say, I felt my conscience hurt, on leaving London in such a hurry, as I had declared, on my veracity, as a gentleman, that I would call and pay my respects to the *ladies* at Lord G——'s, and Miss Smythe, so delicate, too, from sitting up with Lady G——'s youngest child. Why, the ladies are so perfectly polite, and well educated, at Lord G——'s, that they would never have depended upon my veracity again, had it not been for their superior minds. Indeed, I must say, I felt my honour concerned; and had Miss Smythe's brother hinted the most delicate word about it, I should not have hesitated a moment

in behaving as a gentleman. Well, as I said before, master was not easy until we got to Seaforth, and then, heaven knows, I thought to have a little repose; I even consulted Mr. Lorton, on my health, and had determined to undergo a course of bathing in the sea; when master behaves like one possessed, and flies off to Stanley Park,—the very day only before Mrs. Spice's ball, and I had engaged myself to Mademoiselle Mars for the first waltz. And now here we be on the road to London, and master as cross and unsatisfactory in his answers, as a gentleman may be. Well, they say, good comes of evil,—so, the day after to-morrow, I shall leave my card at Lord G——'s, and inquire after Miss Smythe."

As Mr. Pinkley was ruminating thus, a violent jolt shook him to the centre, and, before he had time to bless himself, another shock ejected

him into a small pool of water, and his nerves were assailed by a dreadful crash, and sundry shrieks. As soon as possible, he waded out of his uncomfortable lodging; and approaching the carriage, which was completely upset, opened the door, with some difficulty, and tried to help Mr. Brereton out; but that was not easily accomplished: the violent shock, when the chariot upset, had thrown Stanley against the glass, which had cut his head, and he had fainted from loss of blood. The frightened postilion, being a little recovered, came to assist Mr. Pinkley, and at last Mr. Stanley Brereton was brought out of the carriage, and laid, insensible, on some turf, close to the road. The traces being cut, the horses were found to have escaped uninjured; and Mr. Pinkley dispatched the postilion, on one, to Seaforth, the nearest town, for a surgeon: in the meantime, he

brought some cloaks and cushions from the chariot, and making a kind of bed for Stanley, rubbed his temples with some brandy, a bottle of which he always carried with him, but all in vain,—Stanley showed no signs of returning life; and Mr. Pinkley was just sinking into despair, when he thought he heard the sound of a carriage; he listened, the noise increased, and, in a few moments, he saw, by the light of the moon, a postchaise slowly descending the hill: leaving Stanley for a few moments, he stopped the driver, and told him it was impossible to pass, as the chariot stopped the narrow road entirely. A voice, from the inside, now called his attention, and he was not a little delighted to recognize, in the gentleman, Dr. Dod,—Mrs. Talbot's old medical attendant, when the former resided at Seaforth.

“Is any one hurt?” said the old doctor,

putting his head out of the window, and pulling out his spectacles.

"La! yes, Sir; master is dead; I do not think he will ever move again," replied Mr. Pinkley, with a kind of a sob.

"And who is the gentleman?" asked Dr. Dod, as he descended from the chaise, and walked to the spot where Stanley lay.

"Mr. Brereton, Sir, of Stanley Park," replied Mr. Pinkley, looking shocked at seeing some blood on his own shirt.

"Mr. Brereton! You do not mean Mrs. Palmer's son-in-law?" exclaimed Dr. Dod, with great earnestness.

"The same, Sir," said Mr. Pinkley; "I do think, he will never live, Sir."

Dr. Dod said no more; but approaching Stanley, felt his pulse, and taking out a lancet, bled him; then ordering his chaise to be turned

round, he helped Mr. Pinkley to lift him into it; and supporting Mr. Brereton between them, they desired the postilion to drive as quick as possible to Seaforth.

Stanley, who had revived a little after being bled, again fainted when he felt the motion of the carriage; and when they reached Seaforth, Dr. Dod ordered the driver to stop at Major Talbot's house, as Mr. Palmer's was some way on.

* * * * *

Stanley Brereton still lived, but he raved. It was in vain the doctors tried all their art; it was in vain that his family knelt around his bed. He tossed from side to side, and uttered incoherent sentences about himself, about Emily Palmer, about Miss Norton; but Emily Palmer was the word which was never out of his mouth. "I will, I will" marry her, he exclaimed, in the

most frantic fury ; and tearing the bed-clothes, he flung them to the furthest corner of the room. The fever was now at its height, and this night was the crisis. If this was once got over, Stanley Brereton might yet live. Anxiously did all his family watch through that long and weary night ; and as the morning dawned, Stanley Brereton sunk into a calm and profound sleep. Of all the people interested in his fate, no one seemed more so than Dr. Dod : he was seized with convulsions, whenever he heard Stanley rave about Emily ; and when he was almost given over, accused himself of his death.

* * * * *

From this time, Stanley Brereton grew better. The wounds in his head were healing, and no doubt was entertained of his life ; but he had lost his spirits, and seemed sunk in melancholy, the cause of which no one could divine.

Lord Latimer, who had returned to Seaforth, was sitting one evening with him, when Mr. Pinkley brought him a note, signed "Dr. Dod ;" it merely stated, that the writer had something of consequence to impart to Mr. Brereton, and he would wait on him, any day, or hour, that he pleased.

Stanley Brereton desired his valet to give his compliments, and he should be happy to see Dr. Dod the next morning ; then again, seating himself by Lord Latimer, continued his conversation.

" You are a happy man, Lord Latimer," said Mr. Brereton, as the former wished him adieu ; " you will have a charming wife."

Lord Latimer could only reply in the affirmative, and return his wishes for Mr. Brereton's health and happiness.

" No, Latimer, never," returned Stanley ;

“ my sun is set ; I may live, and I bless heaven for it, but I shall never more be happy : but no matter—give my letter to Emily, and say a thousand things from me to your Julia. All I wish, is to see you united as quick as possible ; return soon, for I should like to see Emily. I can say no more, I am quite fatigued, ‘ au revoir.’” Stanley sank on the sofa, and it was not before he had received some cordial drops from the attentive Mr. Pinkley, that he revived.

Lord Latimer, as may be imagined from the preceding conversation, was to set out directly for the Continent, to bring home the Seaforth beauties, and Julia was to become Lady Latimer as soon as the wedding clothes could be prepared. They had left Paris, and were now with Hal, at Venice, with which city they were rather disappointed ; in fact, they were tired of their exile. Emily wanted Arthur, and Julia her lover.

The following morning, Dr. Dod, punctual to his engagement, waited upon Mr. Brereton, and was ushered by Mr. Pinkley into Stanley's dressing-room, which he had not yet left. After the first compliments, Dr. Dod appeared to grow very nervous: at last he begged Mr. Pinkley might quit the room for a short time. That gentleman obeyed with reluctance, and Dr. Dod, after a deep sigh, began.

"Before I can communicate my intelligence to Mr. Brereton, I must beg for his full forgiveness and acquittal of every bad intention towards him, or his family; for Heaven knows it was with no evil intent that I was guilty of the offence that was committed."

"Sir," said Mr. Brereton, "you have done nothing, I am sure, that I am aware of, to need my forgiveness; however, if you have, I forgive you, as I hope one day to be forgiven."

“ I have long perceived,” said Dr. Dod, “ your growing attachment for your late wife’s sister, Miss Emily Palmer, and she, I am certain, returns it. When I first came to Seaforth, I was called upon to attend Mrs. St. Clair, who then lived next door to Mrs. Palmer, who had taken lodgings in Seaforth, whilst her own mansion was painting. Mrs. St. Clair gave birth to a child at the same time as Mrs. Palmer, and—”

“ Pray, sir, what have I to do,” exclaimed Mr. Brereton, “ with Mrs. St. Clair’s and Mrs. Palmer’s affairs? Dr. St. Clair is still alive; also Mr. and Mrs. Palmer. I assure you, sir, so delicate a subject as this I do not wish to meddle with, particularly as it cannot concern me. I must—”

“ But it does concern you, sir,” replied Dr. Dod, “ for that child of Mrs. St. Clair’s is the

lady you now love hopelessly,—that child is Emily Palmer !”

Stanley started from his couch, and grasping Dr. Dod’s hand, exclaimed, “ Do I hear you ? or have I lost my senses ? Can it be true ? Emily, Mrs. St. Clair’s daughter ? Oh, no, it cannot be ; you have deceived me.”

Stanley made an attempt to speak, but his voice failed, and he sunk fainting on the sofa. His servant was called in, and every necessary assistance administered. He revived, but his harassed frame could not even bear such a pleasurable shock ; and on Dr. Lorton’s advice, a narcotic was given him, which lulled his over-excited nerves into a languid torpor.

Dr. Dod now took his leave, but without saying a word to Stanley, and proceeded to Mr. Palmer’s house : he explained his story to him at full length. Need we add, that the miserable

man, whose love of gold had tempted him to bring much sorrow on an amiable family, obtained forgiveness not only for himself, but for all those concerned in the affair; and Mr. Palmer's first impulse was to write the whole account to Lord Latimer—his next, to visit Stanley.

He had just awoke from that feverish sleep which laudanum produces, yet was much better: his mind felt light, and he had an idea that something pleasant had occurred. Mr. Palmer at his request related Dr. Dod's story, which was as follows:

Dr. Dod, at the time when Mrs. St. Clair lived next to Mrs. Palmer, had lately come to Seaforth, and was very poor. Mrs. Palmer encouraged him,—also Mrs. St. Clair; and he at last gained the entire confidence of the latter lady, who told him, that the Palmers expected

and hoped for an heir—that this heir would make their family of twice as much consequence as her own, and she could not endure the thoughts of it. Some time after this conversation had taken place, Mrs. Ben Spicer called one evening on Dr. Dod, and offered him a large sum of money, if, in case Mrs. Palmer had a son, he would either carry the child away or change it. Dr. Dod at first hesitated; but he feared a bankruptcy, and at last consented to obey Mrs. Ben Spicer's orders. Mrs. Palmer had a son, at almost the same time as Mrs. St. Clair gave birth to a daughter. Mrs. Ben Spicer and Dr. Dod contrived to change the children; and Dr. Dod received the reward of his baseness, and was saved from becoming a bankrupt, but from that time he lost his peace of mind; and when he heard the rumours relating to Mr. Brereton's attachment to Miss

Palmer, when the latter left England in ill-health, his heart smote him—he sold all his things, and left Seaforth. He was travelling to his new home, when he was stopped by Mr. Brereton's accident on the road; and, when he heard his ravings, as he tossed on what he then thought was his death-bed, he accused himself of his premature death. To conclude, he made a vow, that, if Mr. Brereton survived, he would disclose everything to him. Mr. Brereton recovered, and Dr. Dod fulfilled his vow.

As Mr. Palmer finished his narration, a slight bustle was heard below; the noise increased, and in a few moments Lord Latimer and his betrothed burst into the room, and Stanley was greeted, as usual, by one of Julia's merriest speeches, accompanied by the light laugh which denotes the happiness of the heart.

“We did not expect you so soon, Julia,” said

the delighted Mr. Palmer. "How can you have been so short a time on the road?"

"But," interrupted Stanley, "where is Emily? Is she well?"

"A little fatigued, and in a kind of minor melancholy mood," replied the gay Julia. "She will be here soon, as she only went home first to see Arthur, and bring him here. You have not seen Arthur lately, uncle Brereton, have you?"

"No," said Stanley; "I could not bear the sight of him when I was so ill—his name almost made me mad."

"Here," exclaimed Julia, as she heard a bell ring, "here comes Emily! Uncle Brereton, you are too ill to see her."

The door opened, and Emily, leading Arthur, appeared. "Stanley!" was on her lips; but when she caught a view of his changed form and death-like paleness, she gave a faint scream, and

fell fainting on the floor. Stanley flew to his beloved Emily, and placed her on a sofa, and called her by every endearing name. When Emily recovered, what happiness was hers! From Stanley she heard the tale of wonder, which was to place her in a nearer relationship to him than that of a sister, and which was to make little Arthur her son-in-law. She no longer thought of Stanley's altered looks—all unpleasant subjects were dismissed, and the remainder of that day devoted to pleasure.

In a few days the intended weddings of Lord Latimer and Julia Talbot, Stanley Brereton and Emily St. Clair, were announced. Much scandal, of course, circulated through Seaforth on the occasion. Some declared that they knew that the children had been changed, but, of course, did not wish to meddle with their neighbours' affairs. Miss Babington determined to

set her cap at George Palmer, late St. Clair, as a last hope. He was always a nice young man, and now that he would inherit eight thousand per annum, and a beautiful place, was quite an eligible. Mrs. St. Clair was quite delighted that Julia and Emily should marry such pretty young men; but she was very sorry that her dear George could no longer be her son-in-law. Dr. St. Clair, always in good humour, was as well contented to have Emily for a daughter, as he was before to call George his son. Laura Talbot was very happy because others were so—and because the day that united Lord Latimer and Julia Talbot, was to make her Mrs. Villars. Mrs. Norton shook her head, (she had returned to Seaforth when she had no longer an object at Stanley Park); was very sorry—very sorry, indeed, that such a nice young man, as Mr. Brereton, could marry such an affected proud girl as Miss St.

Clair, only a parson's daughter, and, besides, turned two-and-twenty. Mrs. Talbot (mamma of the three beauties), was shocked to see a girl of Julia's age thinking of matrimony, and declared her intention of not allowing her daughters to do so, until turned five-and-twenty; in this, as they were not fascinating, no one contradicted her.

In a month's time Dr. St. Clair married the three couples, on which occasion Mr. Palmer's house was the scene of rejoicing and festivity. Lord Latimer and Julia set off in their travelling carriage-and-four, to spend the honey-moon on the continent. Stanley Brereton and his bride retired to Stanley Park; whilst Mr. and Mrs. Villars remained at Seaforth.

On the evening of this eventful day, Mrs. St. Clair presented the Doctor with a son, which news, being brought him suddenly, as he was

returning from the marriage feast, occasioned a fit, from which he never revived.

Mr. George Palmer, of course, expressed all natural grief on the melancholy occasion, and attended the funeral as chief mourner. Mrs. St. Clair cried like a child as she was, for she had been promised two little Italian greyhounds, which she should now lose. George Palmer comforted her like a kind-hearted young man, and, as the living fell to Mr. Villars, took her home to Mr. Palmer's house. Miss Jane Norton eloped with Mr. Alexander Artaxerxes Adolphus, just to let the world see she could marry if she chose. Mrs. Arabella Strutt was left in utter despair, and made a vow, from that moment, never to speak to a man. Mr. Hal Talbot, who had seen better things abroad, as he expressed himself, left Félicie in the lurch, and, to Mr. Villar's satisfaction, married Miss Lisle.

The Misses Babington finished their ottoman, and, finding no one thought of them, gave up the idea of matrimony in utter despair, and became blue-stockings. To conclude, Henry Percy, tired of his home scenery, went as cabin-boy to America: there he was killed one night, whilst stealing from his ship, by jamming his head between a boat and the rudder.

About a year and a half from the Seaforth weddings, the following paragraph appeared in the paper:—

“Marriage in High Life.—We understand that Mr. George Palmer, only son and heir of Mr. Palmer, of Oakwood Hall, Seaforth, is about to lead to the Hymeneal altar the beautiful and interesting widow of the late Dr. St. Clair.”

A HAPPY DAY.

A HAPPY DAY.

THE morning dawned only to discover clouds and rain. Now, nothing is more dismal in this life than a wet summer's morning; the rain pelt-ing against the windows; the flowers half drown-ed, and the lilacs spoiled. In short, a wet sum-mer's morning is a dismal scene: besides, every-thing went wrong: the maids overslept them-selves; forgot to call me—brought cold water for breakfast, and stale bread and butter. Dis-gusted with the wet, and with the cold tea and bad eatables, I rose from the table; and after thinking what I would do, resolved to do nothing, but to

stand at the window and watch for fine weather. Soon, however, I tired of this uninteresting occupation, and taking a book, threw myself on the sofa; but the book reminded me that I expected a very dear friend to-day, and that the rain would probably prevent his coming; this thought was worse than all, and I might have been reduced to the necessity of hanging myself, had not my servant, just in time, brought me a note from my charming neighbours, the amiable Mr. and Mrs. C——v, a charming young couple, just married, to invite me to accompany them in their carriage, to pay Sir Charles and Lady Pelham a visit. Sir Charles is one of my oldest and dearest friends; and then his house, quite a palace—his hall fitted up in the old style, with oaken chairs, and tables, quite different to the modern reed seats, which crack under one. His picture-gallery splendid, and his statues exqui-

site. But what are these to his gardens? Oh, the gardens of Sir Charles Pelham! there really never were, nor ever will be, such gardens! Such beautiful green slopes, shaded by the sweetest scented shrubs, interspersed with fish-ponds, jets-d'eau, marble urns, and vases, and every thing ornamental and elegant; and then the orangery, and conservatory: in short, who would refuse to pay Sir Charles a visit? So I opened my desk, and wrote a little epistle to dear Mrs. C——v, and hurried to dress for the visit. Mr. C——v is always particular about dress, and I am sure his own is so beautiful; such well cut coats, and such well made boots, and such a hat! now really Mr. C——v's hat is not like anybody's hat; or if it is, it is put on with such grace, that,—in fact Mr. C——v is perfection in dress, figure, looks, style, conversation: in short, he excels in everything but making a sermon.

But, then he is young, and few young men like religious matters ; besides, he has been in such grief for the death of his first wife, (the present Mrs C——v being his second, and far less beautiful than the former), to whom he was so devotedly attached, that he was almost heart-broken at her melancholy death : but as I before said, he has now another wife, and of course is happy.

At this moment the carriage called for me, and as the rain had ceased, Mr. C——v opened it. We were all in great spirits, and our drive to Pelham House was delightful. Our spirits, however, were a little damped, on finding Sir Charles was not at home ; he had just set out to Windsor, to walk on the terrace, and hear the band. After a little conversation, we agreed to follow Sir Charles, as the day was now so fine. In about an hour we found ourselves on the terrace, listening to the beautiful band. Windsor was crowd-

ed with the gay and great, and it was not long before we met Sir Charles and Lady Pelham.

How disappointed they were that they were out when we called ! and Sir Charles, as he always does a thousand polite things, promised to call on me the next day, and bring some new and valuable flowers, just arrived from America. (Sir Charles, like myself, pretends to know a great deal about flowers and gardening). Just at this moment, a party of officers joined Lady Pelham, and Sir Charles wishing us a pleasant promenade, took leave.

We then visited the round-tower ; the view from the battlements was beautiful, and such as a Claude, or a Wilson, would not have despised taking hints from. Then we ran over the Castle ; some of the new apartments are beautiful, particularly the ball-room ; the floor inlaid, and the walls hung with Gobe-

lin tapestry. Our time passed so pleasantly, that we were not a little startled, when Mr. C——v looking at his watch, informed us that we could hardly reach home by dinner-time; this made us quicken our steps, and we soon were on our way home, quite pleased with our excursion, and with ourselves. As we reached Sir Charles Pelham's Lodge, that gentleman stopped our carriage, and in his most engaging manner told us, that he had invited a party of officers to dine, and that he wished us to meet them; indeed he would not hear of a refusal; which I cannot say any of our party were inclined to give; for really, to meet officers in these peaceable times is quite a treat, for officers are always pets, so gentleman-like, and so pleasant, and so devoted to the fair sex, as a fair friend of mine observed; in short, who does not like military men? Lady Pelham herself observed,

“that a ball was nothing without the military,”—the professed admirers of the ladies: besides, there was one little officer I had seen with Sir Charles, whose bright eyes had quite won my heart; and who knows, thought I to myself, but that he may be as much enchanted with my blue ones? As soon as I was landed ‘chez moi,’ I flew to my bed-room, and summoning my maid, commenced that tiresome, but important business, of dressing. I could not help thinking how happy and comfortable the Grecian ladies must have been, in their much-admired loose robes: certainly, we mortals are born to misery,—for what is greater misery than your maid pulling and tugging your dress to make it meet, though obviously an inch too little; and when just fastened, bursting,—hooks and eyes falling to the ground. But these reflections did not hasten my toilet; and though

I could not array my body 'à la Grecque,' I arranged my hair in the true Grecian style, entwining the plaits with pearls. After some time, I was dressed to my liking,—and who would not wish to be well dressed to meet officers?

As Mr. and Mrs. C——v were to call for me, I took up one of Byron's poetical works, to wile away the time. Everybody must allow that Byron's poetry is beautiful—dear creature that he was;—though I must acknowledge, that since I heard he was lame, I never have admired him so much as before. I always begin to think of my aunt's lame cat, hopping on three legs;—but still, Lord Byron was a genius, and is my favourite author;—and so taken up was I with my book, that I was quite angry when my servant announced the carriage. However, it was so late, that I rose directly, and again seated myself by Mrs. C——v. She looked quite like a

little goddess,—her beautiful hair simply braided, and herself attired in a plain white robe.

Swiftly we rattled over the road, and once more arrived at Sir Charles Pelham's, just as dinner was announced,—and a splendid dinner it was ! with a magnificent dessert of pines, peaches, grapes, and every description of fruit, both in and out of season, all from Sir Charles's own hot-houses ; and a pleasant,—nay, delightful company to enjoy all Sir Charles's good things. Each lady was between two gentlemen, so, of course, conversation did not flag. Officers are always great talkers,—I will not maintain that they always talk sense,—but there is a time for all things, and I suppose they excuse their love of rattling on that plea. And my black-eyed Adonis was there ; and if I may respect what the witty Sir Charles said, we were a Venus, “ that is, I was a Venus, and he an Adonis,”—Mr.

Byron, as he is called, or rather Captain Byron;—and a delightful companion he proved; very fond of literature; had read almost every book ever written; talked of Scott's last novels; admired Rose Bradwardine, in *Waverley*; called me his Rose;—then flew to his namesake, Lord Byron, repeated some of his most beautiful passages, showed the faults and merits of each line and thought:—from that, we ran on to Cowper, Miss Mitford, Captain Marriott, and several others. In short, Capt. Byron knew all the 'literati,' and could quote all their works.

After dinner, the ladies retired; and Lady Pelham, always willing to please and surprise her guests, had ordered tea and coffee in an arbour. Now, do not let my reader suppose a damp arbour, hanging with wet shrubs and dripping roses, in which one is afraid to sit; no,—an

elegant arbour, as safe to take tea in as the house—all lined with moss, and with beautiful flowers: geraniums, and all other sorts, in pots, quite dry, placed about it; besides commanding an extensive view. In this rural retreat, the gentlemen joined us. After enjoying our tea, we got up a dance on the lawn, and then walked about to see the lions, and to cool ourselves; and ended our day's pleasure in the ice-house, swallowing that delicious substance by wholesale. About eleven, we took leave of our charming host and hostess, and their guests, and I was soon dropped at my door by my amiable friends, Mr. and Mrs. C——v. Here a new pleasure awaited me; the gentleman expected in the morning had arrived, and had been waiting four hours for me; I must confess I had quite forgot him in my absence at Sir

Charles's; but I did all in my power to make him comfortable,—ordered tea and supper, and sate talking and laughing, till the morning surprised us and brightened us to bed. Thus ended one of the happiest days of my life.

HENRY CLEVELAND.



HENRY CLEVELAND.

It was on a fine summer's eve, that Mr. and Mrs. Cleveland passed an encampment of gipsies. A woman, with a child in her arms, sat at the door of the tent, whilst near it two others were playing. On perceiving the gentleman and lady, the oldest of the children quitted his play, to run and beg for a half-penny to buy a bit of bread for mammy and little sister, who had eat nothing all day." A tear fell from Mrs. Cleveland's eye as she listened to his artless tale of "poverty severe," and dropping a shilling into his hand, she took her husband's arm, and they continued their walk in silence.

Mrs. Cleveland had been beautiful, but an early decay of constitution had changed the bloom of youth to a sickly paleness ; but still she was interesting. She had been recommended a warmer climate, and it was almost for the last time that she was walking in that place, to which both herself and her husband were attached by so many melancholy recollections. Three lovely children had blessed the first years of their union, but death's unsparing hand had nipped the young buds ere they could have been said to live ; her's was a consumptive family ; and as her fond husband viewed her delicate form, he trembled at the idea that she too might be snatched from him ; and the advice of a celebrated physician being taken, it was with a heart overwhelmed with grief that he heard, that a few months' delay would have surely brought his wife to the grave.

“ Henry,” said Mrs. Cleveland, after a short silence, “ did you remark what intelligent eyes that child had ? I wish we had had a boy like that.”

A sigh was the only answer Mr. Cleveland gave.

“ I wish,” continued the lady, “ I could adopt that child : I feel as if I should love it so.”

“ If you really wished it, I dare say it could be done. You know you have not a wish which I do not delight to gratify ; but yet it is a subject which I should advise you to consider.”

“ My kind, my ever indulgent husband ! Oh, if you have no objection, it would delight me ! That child is too young to have imbibed any of the wildness of his people, and I feel assured he would love us.”

“ Then say no more, my dearest love ; and to-morrow morn, if it be possible, shall see your

protégé removed to our house. But now the evening dews commence falling, and we must return home."

Mr. Cleveland's first thought next morning was to have the gipsy boy ready to greet his lady when she descended: with this view he sought the encampment. The sight of a little gold soon induced the woman to part with the child. A few "natural tears" were shed by the gipsy boy on quitting his mamma and sister; but the promise of often returning to see them, together with that of being put in possession of pretty toys, soon dried them, and, with a cheerful countenance, he accompanied his new protector to his mansion.

It was Mrs. Cleveland's first care to have the boy christened by the name of Henry Cleveland, and then soon after she set out for the continent. The little Henry accompanied his adopted

parents, and, by the affection he showed them, rewarded all their trouble. Two years were passed in the south of France, and then the still milder air of Italy was tried, but all was in vain : the seeds of consumption were too deeply sown to be eradicated, and three years after she had quitted England, Mrs. Cleveland exchanged a mortal home for an immortal one.

Sorrowing and sad, Mr. Cleveland returned to his home, and the little Henry was sent to Eton. Well fed, and well clothed, he was no longer the half-starved child, which first attracted Mrs. Cleveland's notice, nor was any trace of gipsy birth remarkable in him. Time passed on, and when Henry was in his sixteenth year, he effected a discovery he had long wished to make,—that of his gipsy friends.

It was during his vacations, whilst walking with his gun on his shoulder, that he espied a

gipsy tent, pitched in the same spot whence he had been taken. He hastened to the place: a girl of twelve, and a boy a little younger, were stretched before it, whilst an old woman sat inside.

"I want my fortune told," said he, extending to the old gipsy his left hand, on the first finger of which was a mark, like a ring of blood, which he knew she would recognise.

The woman took his hand, and having examined it, said, "You were born under Jupiter and Venus: you shall be successful in love, and a large fortune will be yours, if the stars tell right."

"And cannot the stars tell you, when you see your own child before you?" answered the boy. "Do you not recognise in me the child whom you gave to Mr. Cleveland?"

"Think not, young man, that I did not re-

cognize you : yet you are not one of us, your father's blood betrays itself."

"And who is my father?" exclaimed the lad.

"Hush!" replied the old woman; "the time is not yet come to tell that. Some day you shall know it; be content, he was a gentleman."

"And Esther, my sister, does she forget me?"

"No!—be content! ask no more questions, none will be answered."

Esther, on hearing her name, had risen, and approached Henry and her mother, shaking back her long black locks, which gave a characteristic wildness, well suited to the gipsy beauty she possessed.

"Mother!" said she, in a soft wild tone, "did you speak?"

"Esther, have you forgotten your old play-

mate," said Cleveland, holding out his hand to her.

"Does the child forget the nurse that carried it, or the playfellow of its childhood?" was the reply.

Henry left his gipsy friends,—but to return again and again; he loved to talk over their childhood scenes with Esther; he carried her the birds he shot, the fish he caught; and the gipsy tent was his constant resort. But the holidays were soon over, and Henry returned to school. Time passed on, and Henry had completed his twenty-first year, when his adopted father died, leaving him all his fortune, which amounted to about a thousand a year. Mr. Cleveland, from the death of his wife, had shunned all society, but that of his protégé; he gave himself up to melancholy, yet it was not an unchristian

melancholy. No! his time was passed in relieving the wants of his poorer brethren, and instructing them in the way of salvation. At the time of Mr. Cleveland's death, Henry held a commission in the — Regiment of Hussars, which he had been induced to enter, with his school friend, Amherst Somerset, the eldest son of a gentleman of large fortune.

Some months had elapsed since the death of Mr. Cleveland, and Henry was alone in that oft-resorted-to spot, where the gipsy tent had stood.

“How different,” thought he, “would have been my lot, had I continued a little gipsy-boy! Lost to religion, to the arts, I should have remained in ignorance of that Being who bestowed on me such kind, such careful protectors. Had not the excellent Mrs. Cleveland taken compassion on me that evening, where should I have been now? Instead of possessing a home and

competency, I should be a wanderer on the face of the earth. Oh, my kind protectors, what do I not owe you? I could not repay the debt,—but that God whom you so truly served on earth, will bless you in heaven; and even now, doubtless you are enjoying the foretaste of everlasting felicity.” Cleveland’s reverie was broken by the sound of a well-known voice, exclaiming,

“ Whoop ! tally ho !—Cleveland ! Cleveland ! stole away !—Harry, where are you ?”

Henry replied in the same strain, and in a few minutes he was joined by a young man. The stranger was about the middle height, slight in figure, and actively made; his face was sallow, his hair black, and his eyes of an uncommon brilliancy.

“ Somerset !” exclaimed Harry, “ how are you ? how came you here ?”

“ On horseback, Hal ! I made bold to ride over, and see you, as I am on leave of absence ; —hope to bring you home with me, and will give you plenty of sport.”

“ Thank you,” said our hero, “ but I had rather not go out just yet.”

“ Oh yes, still in mourning I see ; surely you have been rustivating long enough ; but you can come with me, and yet not go out much, for we have no near neighbours, except our parson’s family.”

“ But then, you have some person in the house.”

“ No one, on my word, but my governor, and mother, and my two little cousins. Oh ! I see you relent ;—yes, you will come, I know,—and there is my pretty little cousin will romance with you by the hour. Now, I am sure, you cannot stand such a temptation ; you will come ?”

“ I will think of it,” was Cleveland’s reply.

“ Oh, then, I know you will come ; for the man who deliberates is lost ; and then you shall romance with Florence ; and if that makes you die with melancholy, Ada will bring you to life again with her fun.”

“ Suppose we come to the house ; I dare say you will like some refreshment.”

“ Faith, and that I will, for I have ridden thirty miles to-day.”

Henry took his friend’s arm, and conducted him to his home.

As may be imagined, Cleveland soon consented to quit his beloved residence for Somerset Park ; and as it was only thirty miles distant, their valets were sent in the morning with the portmanteaux, whilst the gentlemen themselves were to follow in the afternoon. About four o’clock they set off, and proceeded a good way,

Somerset whistling, and Cleveland giving way, as he usually did, to his own romantic reflections ; when Somerset interrupted his train of thought, by exclaiming, “ Well, Harry, I am tired of saying nothing,—a confounded melancholy thing it is, a silent ride,—so I think I may as well give you a notion of the people you are going to sojourn with.”

“ Oh yes ! do so, by all means,” replied his friend.

“ In the first place, then, comes my father, who, as Lady Anne Norbury says, is one of the ‘ melancholy family of *has beens*.’ Fair, and good-looking, he is one of those ‘ who never said a foolish thing,’—who never contradicted the whims and wishes of his young son and heir ; and, when he was grown up, wondered that he should prefer roaming about the country, with a gun and a dog, or keeping racers, and betting,

to remaining, with sheepy eyes and folded arms, in the paternal mansion. The next in order is my mother, who is, indeed, an indulgent one,—who never contradicts my father, never even replies to his daily grumbles,—and why?—because she is either fast asleep, or else buried in a novel. Then there is the only son and heir of these good people—a wild, good-for-nothing, pleasure-loving young man, and who, I believe, is not unknown to you.”

“ And if you added a very good-tempered fellow, I should, perhaps, sooner recognize the portrait of my friend, Amherst Somerset,” said Cleveland, smiling.

“ But, to continue,” pursued Somerset. “ The other inhabitants consist of my two cousins, Florence and Ada Devonshire. Florence is the elder; she is sixteen; a romantic, affectionate, gentle girl, the favourite of my mother; but

Ada is my favourite: she is always laughing, and singing, and skipping, and dancing; but of these I will say no more; I will leave you to find them out. Now, for our worthy parson's family. Mr. Blackstone, a tall, thin, Dominie Sampson, with sugar-tong legs, weasel body, swan neck, and a remarkably little head on the top of it;—in fact, one of Pharaoh's lean kine. Madame is a short, bony, little woman; an excellent manager; remarkable for her gastronomic propensities. It is she who manages the farm, chooses the cows, horses, pigs,—sets the hens and ducks, collects their eggs,—and visits and doctors the poor. They have the usual allowance of children, five boys and two girls:—first, George, whom you may remember at Eton, and who is destined for the pulpit; then, Miss Blackstone, or, as her family style her, Missey; rather a nice-looking girl, as long as she can hide her bright auburn,

or, rather, carrotty locks; the next brother is in the Treasury: the third in the navy; the fourth, Johnny, (as regular a John Bull as ever was seen) is destined to have the fat fried out of him in India;—the sixth is a girl, as ugly and wild a little monkey as you would wish to set eyes on;—and the last of this numerous family is a carrotty-polled boy, who is always in mischief, either chasing the pigs, or hunting on a cart-horse, or sliding with all the dirty little imps in the neighbourhood. By the bye, I must not forget Mr. Fox, the curate,—possessed of sandy hair, and really as sly a fox as ever ran to earth and disappointed the poor hunters. Now, what do you think of our immediate neighbours? By your look I see you think them charming people; but, indeed, then, you are mistaken; for I should find the woods and solitudes of Somerset Park intolerably dull, if it were not for my merry

little cousin Ada, who, like myself, can enjoy a good laugh at all the quizzes. But I seldom trouble my friends with my presence, for London is the place for me.—There, now, Harry, you can just get a glimpse of our place through the trees.”

Cleveland drew up his horse, to take a glance at Somerset Park and house. The house was square and picturesque; the road to the hall-door was partly shaded by an avenue of trees, the rest passed through the garden. The windows of the drawing-room, which was opposite to the hall, looked out on a beautiful lawn, at the bottom of which flowed a stream, and immediately on the other side rose a wooded hill, and, at a little distance from the house, rose another hill, so that the stream ran through a beautifully wooded valley, and formed a sort of lake, in which were two or three islets.

“What a beautiful place!” exclaimed Henry.

"Is it possible, Somerset, that you could be dull here? In summer you could fish in that stream, or ride or walk in those woods; and in winter you can hunt or shoot."

"True; but what are all those pleasures to the gay, the social life one leads in London?"

"I do not know; I think I should prefer a country life to a London one." Cleveland said no more. He was an ardent lover of the picturesque, and, as they ascended the hill which led to the house, the romantic view which he beheld enchanted him. A few moments more brought them to the house, and they were ushered into the presence of Mr. and Mrs. Somerset; the former of whom was prosing over a newspaper, and the latter holding in her hand a piece of work. The first welcome over, Somerset looked round him, and said, "Where are Florence and Ada?"

“ They are gone to take a walk, but will be back in a few minutes,” replied Mrs. Somerset, for Mr. Somerset had engaged Cleveland in a conversation respecting some parliamentary debates. Somerset retired to a window, and resorted to the amusement of rapping his boots with his whip, and whistling; then, starting up, declared his intention of going to meet his cousins, when a light step was heard in the hall, and a voice, singing,—

“ Aïmons, dansons, chantons ! tra la la ! tra la la ! Aïmons, dansons, chantons !” and the next instant the door was thrown open, and Ada flew into the room.

“ Ah ! cousin Amherst, how glad I am to see you ! I thought you never would return, and it is so dull without you !” she exclaimed, as Amherst gave her that kiss to which their relationship entitled him.

Five minutes more had hardly elapsed, when

Florence entered. Gently and gracefully she shook hands with her cousin, who pressed her hand to his lips; and, as the two girls stood in the recess of the window, talking to their cousin, Cleveland had leisure to observe them. They were both lovely. Florence was the taller, yet she was not above the middle size. Their features were cast in the same mould; their complexion was a clear olive; their hair long, black, and silken, their eyes were of a dark brown, but those of Florence were tinged with a gentle melancholy, whilst Ada's beamed with life and gaiety.

"Dear Amherst," said Ada, "have you brought me any more of those funny songs you used to sing?"

"Yes, I have brought you one,—at least, part of one,—for I could not get it to buy, and I only know a few lines."

"Oh, pray repeat them now for me."

“Well, let me think!—I do not remember the first line; it is called the ‘Merchant of Rotterdam;’ it goes on,—

“ ‘A poor relation came to beg,
So he kicked him out without broaching a keg,
And in kicking him out he broke his own leg.
With a tirra, lirra, tirra, lirra.

An artist of Rotterdam, it would seem,
Had made cork legs his study and theme;
Each part was as strong as an iron beam,
And the joint was a compound of clock-work and steam.
With a tirra, lirra, tirra, lirra.’ ”

“My dear Amherst, what are you singing?” exclaimed Mrs. Somerset; “you really seem to forget my poor head, pray do be quiet.”

“Whew!” exclaimed Amherst, whistling in a low voice. “Oh, Giove Onnipotente! but we must be quiet, girls! so, Ada, tomorrow I will make my valet write out that song for you. Cleveland!” and he beckoned to his friend, “come here; allow me to introduce you to my cousins, Florence and Ada Devonshire. Flor-

ence, Mr. Cleveland is particularly fond of romancing on a starlight night, amongst woods and waterfalls, and, therefore, I recommend him most strongly to your care; and if you like you may feed him with

‘ Apricots and dewberries,
With purple grapes, green figs, and mulberries,’

and so forth; but I suppose such food is too gross for your ethereal frames. Heigh ho! Ada! I begin to feel dull in this magnificent Somerset Park, already. How are your friends, the Blackstones?”

“ Oh, very well! It is expected that Mr. Fox and Miss Charlotte will make a match at last.”

“ A pretty red-haired couple they will be then;—and does Foxy look as sly as ever?”

“ Oh, yes! and as much tormented as ever by little Dick: it was but the other day, that poor Fox was dressed in his best, going to dine

with Sir William and Lady Grafton, when Dick got behind him, and contrived to slide into his nice clean pocket-hankerchief a stinking fish: you may imagine poor Foxy could not think what scent-bottle he had about him, when he got into the drawing-room; and having occasion to use his handkerchief just as dinner was announced, he pulled it out, and then this nice morsel fell on one of her ladyship's embroidered sofa cushions."

"Ha! ha! ha!" exclaimed Somerset, "capital! capital! why, Dick improves,—he begins to lay his plans well."

"Was it not good?—but Netty, who was in the secret, told me, the most laughable part was, that Lady William's little terrier, Spot, would go jumping about, and sniffing and snapping at Foxy's coat tail, all the time he was bowing to the lady."

“ Oh, excellent ! capital ! ha ! ha ! ha ! Oh, Ada, I have got such a pain from laughing. Cleveland, did you ever hear such fun ? Oh, that Dick is worth his weight in gold ! ”

“ And Netty, too, played Foxy such a trick ; she managed to get into his room, as she was visiting Miss Spinnet, one morning, just before church, when he was to preach, and abstracted one leaf from his sermon ;—when the poor fellow commenced preaching he went on very glibly at first, till he came to the explanation of the fifth head,—and then the leaf was missing. Oh, had you seen how aghast he looked ! he first turned white, and then red, and then stammered out the conclusion ; so we got home ten minutes sooner than usual.”

“ But, Ada,” said Florence, “ you forgot to mention Mr. Fox’s great good-nature in not telling of this trick ; for had Mr. Blackstone

known it, Netty would have been severely punished; and she, knowing this, told Mr. Fox herself, and he never mentioned the subject once to Mr. Blackstone."

"Well, what a wild child that Netty is!" exclaimed Amherst.

"Child, my dear cousin!" said Ada, "why she is only six months younger than myself."

"True! yet I always think of her as a child. Cleveland, you do not seem to enjoy these jokes."

"Indeed, I must confess that I am a very dull fellow, for I have been more engaged in looking at the stars, than in joining in your mirth."

"It is, indeed, a lovely night," said Florence. "Suppose, Amherst, we take a stroll on the lawn, after tea?"

"By all means," replied her sister; "but

now tea is waiting for us, and uncle does not like to wait."

The little party moved to the tea-table, and that social meal passed amid jokes and laughs occasioned by the witty laughter-loving Amherst, and Ada. When it was over, Mr. Somerset withdrew to his study, to settle his accounts, as was his wont, and Mrs. Somerset established herself in her easy-chair; and Florence and Ada, with the two young men, opened the window, and sauntered on the lawn.

"What a lovely night!" said Florence, "how silvery is the moon! Oh, Ada, is it not like an Italian evening?"

But Ada and Somerset, who were before, were laughing too heartily to hear Florence; therefore Cleveland replied,—

"It is, indeed, more like an Italian sky

than an English one. How I love to breathe the balmy, fragrant air at this time of night."

"So do I," rejoined Florence. "Were you ever in Italy, Mr. Cleveland?"

"Yes, I spent a year there; I was but a child then,—but the remembrance of those beautifully mild, cool, refreshing evenings, will never fade away from my memory."

"Nor from mine! you are not perhaps aware that I was born in Italy; it was there I spent my childhood, and the happiest days of my life. Oh! never, never, can I forget my country! never can I forget those delightful evenings, and walks with my dear mother!"

"And is your sister also Italian?" asked Henry.

"No! 'la belle France' is her native land; she was born at Paris, and she possesses all the vivacity of the French; she does so enjoy a laugh!"

“ And do you prefer solitude ? ”

“ No : I cannot say that. I am, I believe, very romantic, and I love to wander alone about this beautiful park, which has so many romantic views. But I would like it better if I had a companion, one who would think just as myself; and I think that this would be far better, than to go every day into the dirty little town of Somerset, or to join the little Blackstones in teasing poor Mr. Fox. He really is a very good-natured, worthy young man, and they are so mischievous ; and laughing at them encourages them.”

“ Were you ever in London ? ” asked Cleveland.

“ Never ! nor do I wish to go there ; I love this place so much. Amherst says you are romantic ; if you are so, you will be delighted with it.”

"I daresay I shall, it looks so pretty;—how beautiful that stream is with the moon-beams dancing over it; and how calm and tranquil everything seems," said the delighted Cleveland. "It brings to my mind some lines I have read somewhere, perhaps you will excuse my repeating them."

"Oh, do not make excuses,—that is just what I like to do."

Cleveland repeated the following lines.

" 'Tis eve, balmy eve! and above thee,
Like a mother's red cheek o'er her soft-sleeping child,
On the east, with her pinions of crimson unfurl'd,
The twilight is stooping, soft, dewy, and mild ;
And the planet of eve looks on mountain and lake,
Like a sentinel spirit just glancing from heaven ;
Oh, thus may we live, and its trials forsake,
And the hour of our parting be calm as this even! "

"They are very pretty," said Florence ;
"where did you meet with them?"

"I almost forget; but I believe it is a stanza
I took out of one of the annuals."

“ Are you fond of quoting poetry ? I am ! I never see a pretty view without its bringing some passage to my mind.”

“ Poetry ! poetry ! Ada !” exclaimed Somerset, suddenly turning round. “ Why Florence, I just made a bet with Ada, that you and Cleveland could not be an hour together without quoting poetry. Well, by that I see, that you are sworn friends already. Do you know, Ada and I have been laying a little plan for our amusement to-morrow, and as you like quotations, ‘ en voici un,’ how,

“ ‘ In sweet amusement to employ,
The present sprightly hour of joy.’ ”

“ Thank you for your quotation,” said Florence, laughing ; “ but what is your plan, cousin ?”

“ Oh !” interrupted Ada, “ we are going to make a little excursion to the Somerset rocks ;

and we are to have the Blackstones, and Mr. Fox; and when there, you may either partake of our refreshments, or refresh yourself with poetry."

"And how are we to go?" asked Florence.

"Oh, never mind that! leave the arrangements to us," exclaimed Ada and her cousin at once. "But now," continued Amherst, "had we not better return to the house?"

Our party returned to the house, as suggested by Amherst, for fear the ladies should take cold.

"My dear girls," said Mrs. Somerset, "where have you been?"

"Only walking by the river, mother," said Amherst.

"My dear boy, how could you be so incautious as to take your cousins out at night? you know how delicate their health is; it was really

very thoughtless, especially by the river; it must be so damp there at night; indeed it always is; I never venture near it, without catching a sore throat."

"Oh, my dear mother, I assure you there was not the least damp, or dew even, on the ground."

"Besides, my dear Amherst, the ground is always so very slippery there," continued the lady; "you did not consider that they might have fallen in, and have been drowned in an instant; indeed I hope you will never go there again;—Florence, you have got a sad cough."

"Oh, no, my dear aunt, I assure you I am quite well."

"Are you sure you do not feel the least indisposition? if you do, pray send for Dr. Penzance."

"Pray, aunt," said Ada, "will you allow us

to make a party to the rocks to-morrow, to show them to Mr. Cleveland; only ourselves, the Blackstones, and Mr. Fox?"

"To the rocks, my dear niece! it would be my death! you know I never could bear the sight of them, Amherst, since your poor uncle was killed there."

"But, my dear mother, you know that it is only a supposition that he was killed; besides, we never knew him, and we have often been there."

"Well! perhaps you may as well go; only take care not to go near the edge; and Florence, mind you and Ada do not quit the party to run on the rocks; and if you ride or drive there, do not let the horses go near the edge, you know they might take fright, and throw you over the precipice."

“ Oh, yes,” exclaimed all the four, “ we will take all possible precautions.”

“ Well, young ladies !” exclaimed Mr. Somerset, who just then entered ; “ you will now favour us with a little music, to calm our souls, and then to bed.”

The young ladies did as they were desired ; and then, having chatted a little over the plans for the next day, and obtained Mr. Somerset’s approbation, the household was summoned to conclude the evening by family prayers ; then all retired to their rooms, and by eleven o’clock everything in Somerset House was hushed and still.

Next morning Cleveland was up with the dawn ; and following the course of the little stream, he wandered down the valley, admiring the scenery ; here the little stream wound through

the verdant park, and there it was almost lost in a tangled copse. "What a lovely place this is!" thought he; "how happy might a man be here! with this variety of hill and vale, and wood and water; one need never wish for anything beyond. Even at Cleveland Grove I was happy, and what is that compared to this?" Cleveland had been many hours on his ramble, and his watch warned him that it was time to return (at least so he imagined) to breakfast, for which his walk had given him an appetite; but before he reached the house, he was met by Somerset, who exclaimed on seeing him—

"Why, what an early bird you are this morning! what have you been doing?"

"Taking a little stroll: I am fond of early walks."

"So it seems! why it is but just eight o'clock, and I, thinking to be up very early, was going

to take a swim in the bath : will you accompany me ? we never breakfast till nine o'clock."

Henry accompanied his friend, and on their return they found the rest of their party assembled at the breakfast-table. Cleveland was seated next Florence.

" You were out early this morning, Mr. Cleveland," said she.

" Yes ; I am particularly fond of morning rambles, the air is so fresh," replied he.

" Ah ! of the evening too you are particularly fond ; I think you told me so ?" said Florence, smiling brightly.

" ' But who the melodies of morn can tell ?
The wild brook babbling down the mountain side ;
The lowing herd ; the sheepfold's simple bell,
The pipe of early shephard, dim descried
In the lone valley.'

You see I can quote poetry too."

" I do not doubt you possess every accomplishment, as well as that of quoting," was Henry's reply.

"Florence," said Ada, "let us make haste to get down soon to the Blackstones, to have time to arrange our party."

"Yes," said Mrs. Somerset, "you had better make haste, and ask Mr. and Mrs. Blackstone to take their dinner with us, as you will not be returned by dinner-time."

"What a condescension!" whispered Amherst to Ada: "ask the Blackstones to a family dinner!" then raising his voice, "well, Henry, are you ready?"

"Do you want me?" replied his friend; "as I do not know them, perhaps I shall be in the way."

"Bless you, no! Why I want you to make acquaintance with Miss Blackstone."

"Do not force Mr. Cleveland to go," said Mr. Somerset; "perhaps he would rather come with me into the library, and rest a little after his long walk."

"Thank you, sir, I would," replied Cleveland,
"if my friends will excuse me."

"Ah, I thought so," said Mr. Somerset.
"Amherst, I wish I could see such a steady disposition in you; but now, perhaps, you and Ada will go and engage your friends, and Florence can superintend the preparation of your provision basket."

"Yes," echoed Mrs. Somerset, "that will be best, for I want Florence to arrange my embroidery for me,—the silks are all entangled."

"Oh, then I must say, you should not keep poor Florence at home for that," said Amherst.

"Thank you, my dear cousin, but I would rather stay; you know I do not like walking under the hot sun."

"That is just what I thought," said Mrs. Somerset. "You are very right, Florence; you might get a 'coup de soleil;' and, perhaps,

Ada, you had better not go; at least, put up your parasol."

But Ada preferred going; therefore, taking her cousin's arm, they left the room, both giving a shrug of compassion to Cleveland and Florence, who preferred staying at home.

At four o'clock, the little party from the parsonage arrived. It consisted of the two Miss Blackstones, their brothers John and Dick, and Mr. Fox; to each of whom Cleveland was formally introduced, and, the order of march being arranged, they set out. First, in a jaunting car, (kept for these occasions, and driven by Somerset), were seated Ada, Miss Blackstone, John, and Dick; close in the rear came a pony phaeton, containing Florence and Netty, Cleveland and Mr. Fox. A road through the park was followed for about two miles, when the party alighted to ascend the woody steep, which led

to the rocks. The party in advance continued their route, but Florence turned aside to show Cleveland her favourite waterfall ; and, as she pointed it out with delight to him, she exclaimed, smiling, " Perhaps you could repeat some lines now ? "

" I think I could," replied Cleveland, smiling in return.

" Pray do, then ? " asked she ; and Henry complied readily :—

" ' From rock to rock, the headlong waters leap,
Tossing their foam on high, till leaf and flower
Glitter like emeralds in the sparkling shower.' "

" How odd ! " said Florence, " that you should have thought of the same lines which I always think of when I look at this waterfall ! "

" Not at all odd," replied Cleveland, " that the same scene should inspire the same thoughts."

" Now," said Florence, " if we keep this little track here, we shall gain the rocks as soon as our friends,"

In a few moments they entered a thicket. Florence glanced her dark eye on Cleveland; she saw a smile lurking in his eye, and, laughing outright, she said, "I should like to know what poetry you are thinking of?"

"Perhaps the same as you."

"Beattie's?"

"The same. Perhaps you will favour me with a quotation?"

"I would with pleasure, only Mr. Fox will think us mad."

"He will not hear—he is too busy."

A loud laugh was heard from Mr. Fox and Netty, in the rear; so Florence, feeling safe, repeated these lines:—

" ' At last an ancient wood they gain'd,
By pruner's axe yet unprofan'd.
High o'er the rest, by nature rear'd,
The oak's majestic boughs appear'd;
Beneath, a copse of various hue,
In barbarous luxuriance grew.

No knife had curb'd the rambling sprays,
No hand had wove th' implicit maze ;
The flowering thorn, self-taught to wind,
The hazel's stubborn stem entwin'd ;
And bramble twigs were wreath'd around,
And rough furze crept along the ground.' ”

“ Except the last line the description is perfect, is it not ? ”

“ Yes ; and its beauty is enhanced by the manner of repeating it, and the kindness with which you granted my wish, as I am very fond of ‘ Beattie’s Minstrel,’ ” said Cleveland.

“ So am I,” rejoined Florence. “ Indeed I love all poetry—all true poetry I mean ; such as comes from the soul.”

Netty’s joyous laugh was now heard, and in an instant Mr. Fox and she bounded forward, whilst Netty exclaimed, “ Miss Devonshire ! Mr. Fox wishes you to allow him to give each of us our fruit at the pic-nic. He says, he will give you and Ada a peach and a nectarine, and Missy

an apricot, as that will best suit her complexion. Is it not a good idea?"

"Indeed, my dear Netty, if it pleases you, and you take care only not to vex your sister, you may do it."

"Oh, thank you! thank you! We only wanted your leave," exclaimed Netty, as she again dropped in the rear. "My dear Mr. Fox, how I love you for that idea! It will tease her so if she suspects it; at any rate, we shall have fun."

"Netty," said Mr. Fox, "let us sit down for a minute; we shall soon overtake Cleveland, and we shall not be missed. I want to speak to you seriously." They sat down, and Mr. Fox continued: "You know you are now fifteen, and you are a great deal too wild for that age. As a child I put up with your tricks; but now I want to make something better of you."

"Gracious heavens!" exclaimed Netty. "You are not going to give me a lecture, are you, Mr. Fox? Pray do not spoil fun to-day; wait till next Sunday."

"Nothing, I assure you, was farther from my thoughts, than to lecture you at this moment, as I meant this day to be one of pleasure."

"Do, then, make haste, and say your say," said Netty, giving him an arch look from her laughing eyes.

"Well, then, you must not interrupt me. You know that the incumbent of the living of R—— is not expected to live, and I am promised to succeed him. Now, if you would but promise to give up all your giddiness, I should like to marry you whenever I get this living. You are very young—almost too young; but I think we should be happy together."

"Mr. Fox," replied Netty, more gravely

than was her wont, "to tell you the truth, I have never yet thought of loving you. I like you very much, because you have been very kind to me, and because you alone of all my family have not laughed at me, and thought me incapable of improvement. Now, after what I have said, should you still wish to marry me, I will try to love you with all my heart."

"I thank you, Netty, for this frankness; it is what I expected of you. So, then, when I obtain this preferment you will consent to become mine?"

"On one condition—that we are married at Gretna Green, and that you tell no one but Dick."

"But, my dearest Netty, why be married at Gretna Green?"

"Now, do not ask me why and wherefore, for on these points I am invulnerable."

“ Well, then, Netty, be it so. Before the knot is tied I must obey you ; afterwards it will be your turn.”

“ Do not be too sure of that,” replied Netty, with one of her arch laughs, as she rose from the seat and took his arm.

“ We must make haste, or we shall be late,” said Fox ; and, seizing her hand, they commenced running ; but, in spite of all their efforts, the party had arrived at the cliffs before they could overtake them.

Rocks over rocks were piled in wild sublimity ; here interspersed with brambles, there a patch of green, and there, again, a few wild flowers. At an immense depth beneath rolled the little stream. But here it was no longer calm ; it dashed over the rocks which were in its way, and filled the air with its sound. The party were just admiring this scene, when Fox.

and Netty arrived; the former joined the admirers, whilst Netty quietly slipped to the side of her favourite brother Dick, to reveal to him her important secret; but before the half was told, the now united party moved on to where the refreshments awaited them. Mr. Fox, with the greatest gallantry, offered his arm to Miss Charlotte, and succeeded in smoothing her clouded brow, by a thousand well-timed compliments; and Netty and Dick lagged in the rear, to tell and hear the tale of wonder. Dick was delighted; he promised never to tell any one, and never to tease Foxy without her leave.

The pic-nic was laid out on a kind of stone bench, within a wood. Just before it there was an opening in the trees, which formed a sort of amphitheatre around a rock; here our party seated themselves.

“This is also a favourite spot of mine,” said

Florence. "The water here is so calm and tranquil, and the deep shades thrown on it by the trees make it so beautiful!"

"Amherst!" said Cleveland, "what a beautiful place this is of yours! How can you prefer town to such a place as this? I must ask you, in the words of Beattie—

" ' Oh, how canst thou renounce the boundless store
Of charms which nature to her votary yields?
The warbling woodlands, the resounding shore,
The pomp of groves, and garniture of fields;
All that the genial ray of morning gilds,
And all that echoes to the song of even;
All that the mountain's sheltering bosom shields,
And all the dread magnificence of heaven;
Oh, how canst thou renounce, and hope to be forgiven? "

"Faith, I do not know!" replied Somerset, "except it is that I am no admirer of scenery; I cannot help saying, this is a pretty place, yet I don't care about it, it is so 'triste;' a grove of chimneys for me."

"Well!" said Ada, "I see the fairies have set

out our repast, who is willing to partake of it?" In a few minutes the little party were seated.

"Miss Blackstone, I think you are fond of apricots?" said Foxy, giving Netty a wicked smile; "allow me to give you one."

"Thank you!" said the young lady. "Bless me, Netty, what have you been doing to your face, it is as red as a carrot!"

"Is it?" replied Netty; "at any rate it is not its natural colour."

Miss Charlotte bridled up at this cut, and returned in no very sweet voice—

"I think you might answer one's question! I say, what makes you so red?"

"Only Mr. Fox and I were running together, till I was very hot."

"Humph!" exclaimed Charlotte. "I wonder Mr. Fox can put up with your nonsense; I am sure he is very kind to you."

"I am sure he is," replied Netty, glancing at Fox, "and I am not ungrateful :—but, Mr. Fox, you have helped all the others, and have forgotten me."

"Indeed I have not; I am only deliberating what sort of fruit will suit you best. Oh, I have it now, a plum,—which you know is sometimes very good, and sometimes very bad; but this at any rate is the colour of your eyes."

"Yes!" said Charlotte, "and there is an ugly crack in it, very like her mouth too."

"I never set up for a beauty at least," rejoined Netty laughing; "but I guess I know a skin here, as red and freckled as the apricot on your plate."

Fox and Amherst scarcely refrained from laughing out loud, for Netty looked all pleasure, whilst Charlotte's cheeks were glowing with ill-concealed rage; the former whispered, "Pray

be quiet, Netty, you have said quite enough;" then aloud, "pray, Miss Blackstone, forgive your sister, you must recollect what a child she is."

"Oh," said Charlotte, putting on her softest voice, "I assure you I have nothing to forgive; as the cap did not fit, it could not annoy me; I am only hurt Netty should so expose herself."

"Well, Johnny, what will you eat?" said Amherst.

"Oh, Johnny is not particular," said Dick; "just give him the hardest and sourest thing you can find."

"Oh, no," said Florence, "I will not have my friend Johnny ill-treated; what will you have?"

Johnny's large, round, stupid eyes rolled in his head, as he replied that he would prefer a nectarine; and having obtained it, he split it in two, and opening his huge jaws, he dropped in first one half, then the other, and con-

sumed them both in an instant. Mr. Fox's assiduous attention had again dispelled the cloud from Miss Charlotte's brow, for Miss Charlotte was very jealous of Mr. Fox's attentions;—not that she had the slightest designs upon his heart; oh, no! she was aiming at higher game, even at Mr. Amherst himself;—still she was a prudent young lady, and thought it wise to have two strings to her bow; and as Mr. Fox had three hundred a year of his own, besides a valuable living in prospect, she thought that he might do, ‘au pis aller.’

“I heard, yesterday,” said Mr. Fox to Miss Charlotte, with one of his sweetest smiles, “that the incumbent of Horsley is not expected to live; he is a very old man, and leaves no family; so without hurting my feelings as a Christian, I can say, I shall hope soon to become the possessor of it myself.”

“ It is a very pretty house, is it not ?” said the young lady.

“ Very pretty indeed, I understand,” replied Fox. “ I hope some day, I shall have the pleasure of seeing you in it; I am sure there are some improvements your good taste would suggest,—you have such excellent talent in the arrangement of a garden.”

“ You are very flattering to say so,” said Miss Charlotte, who was now all smiles and affability.

“ Ladies, and gentlemen,” said Somerset; “ do you not think it is time for us to return to our carriages ? I do not wish to deprive you of your amusement, but it is eight o’clock, and I am afraid my mother will be getting nervous. Dick, my boy, will you run on, and see that the carriages are ready ?”

“ Oh, willingly,” said Dick. “ John Bull, let us see which will be there first;—one, two,

three, and away ;"—and off the great boys set, as fast as they could go ; but Dick, who was the most active, soon outstripped the heavy John Bull, who was found by our party in a most woeful plight, he having fallen over the roots of a tree, knocked his eye nearly out, and received a severe contusion on the nose, which bled most plentifully, whilst he blubbered all the time. In a little while, Florence succeeded in comforting the poor fellow ; and his nose having left off bleeding, and his eyes being wiped, the party continued their route, and soon reached the carriages ; and whilst the ladies were seating themselves, Dick managed, unperceived, to creep up to poor Fox, whose hand he wrung most cordially, as he whispered, " I know your secret ;—wish you joy ;—do not ever be afraid of trusting me, I shall never betray you. I am true to the backbone,—go through fire and water for you ;

only tell me when you want anything done, and I am your man."

"Thank you, Dick," said Fox; "I do not doubt your zeal."

The ladies being now settled, the gentlemen took their places, and drove back to Somerset Park, where they arrived without any accident; and finding Mr. and Mrs. Blackstone already departed, Somerset undertook to escort the young ladies to the Vicarage, which he did, and then joined the party in the drawing-room.

"I wish," said he, "we could have such a party every day, for I never saw you, Florence, smile so much, or look so happy before."

A month had elapsed, and Cleveland was still at Somerset Park, a general favourite with the inmates, when an invitation to dine at the Blackstones arrived, and was accepted, after a great many pros and cons, because Mrs. Blackstone's

niece and nephew were on a visit to her, and Florence and Fanny Elton were great friends, and Florence wished to go.

“How shall you dress?” said Ada to Florence, as the young ladies commenced their toilet for the dinner party.

“Quite plain, in our muslins, I think; and I shall only put this rose and jessamine in my hair, for you know poor Mrs. Blackstone is very fond of taking one out to her poultry-yard.”

“Indeed I wish she was not quite so fond of it; I recollect in one of these excursions I spoiled a new silk gown.”

“Yes, and for that reason we will not put on silks, or anything very easily spoiled.”

“But why put flowers in your hair, Florence?”

“Because Mr. Cleveland took the trouble of bringing them to me from Bucklands, and he asked me to wear them.”

"Oh, dear ! what shall I do ? Amherst did not bring me any !"

"Just dress yourself; and before we go, ask him to gather you a rose, and I will put it in your hair."

The young ladies finished their toilet, which was quite simple, yet becoming. It consisted of a robe of clear white muslin, trimmed with real Valenciennes lace; their long black hair was plaited behind 'à l'antique,' and fell in front, in glossy ringlets; and immediately above them Florence placed her flowers; the whole costume was completed by a mantelet of muslin, which was likewise edged with lace.

Amherst gratified his cousin, by presenting her with some flowers, and Florence having adjusted them, the party set out. As we have described the Devonshires' dress, we must, in justice, describe that of the Blackstones. To

commence with Mrs. Blackstone, she was a short, bony, masculine woman, arrayed in a flame-coloured silk, trimmed with beetles' wings; a profusion of gold chains decked her neck, and, upright in her hair, stared two dahlias. Miss Charlotte wore a 'ci-devant' handsome flowered gauze, now rather the worse for wear, decorated with streamers of ponceau satin ribbon, from shoulders, elbows, and waist; a ponceau velvet band encircled her head, and bows of the same colour were stuck in her hair. Miss Netty was attired in a clean cambric dress, and she had really taken some pains with her toilet, and was not bad looking. Fanny Elton was a showy looking girl, handsomely dressed in a pink silk, and a few natural flowers twisted in her hair. Her cousin Frank was a handsome, gentleman-like young man, lieutenant in the same ship as Robert Blackstone, who was also one of the

party: Very different was Robert from the two brothers, with whom our reader is already acquainted. Robert was fair, his countenance good-natured and pleasing, and his manners mild; he was small, and even delicately made; for although nineteen, he did not appear more than fifteen. Dick and Johnny were in high glee at being admitted to the dinner-party, and were grinning at their friends from a corner where they sat, their faces shining from the effects of the scrubbing and soaping they had undergone; and Mr. Blackstone, who alone is wanting to complete this family group, was standing with Mr. Somerset. The reverend gentleman was indeed "a lengthened sweetness long drawn out;" he wore a rusty black coat, short inexpressibles, black silk stockings, and a very neatly tied shoe. In a few minutes, dinner was announced, and the worthy parson was very

fidgetty, because Mr. Fox and Miss Spinnet had not appeared ; and Mr. Robert Blackstone seized this moment to walk up to Florence.

“ I hope you have not quite forgotten me, Miss Devonshire ?” said the little Middy.

“ Oh, no, Robert, I assure you, I do not easily forget old friends. I am very glad to see you back again. How do you like your profession ?”

“ Of all things ! Mine is such a lovely frigate ; I have a drawing of her, which I hope you will accept ; and I also took the liberty of bringing you a little slip of willow from Napoleon's grave ; I cut it myself when we touched at St. Helena, and I have taken great care of it,—I looked at it this morning, and it was quite safe, so to-morrow I will bring it up to the Park.”

“ Oh, thank you, Robert. I shall prize it so much : you know what an admirer I am of Napoleon.”

"Yes, and therefore I brought it for you. I have also made a small collection of shells, which I have classed; perhaps you will do me the honour of accepting them also, to add to yours?"

"Thank you, you are very kind; but I cannot think of depriving you of them, therefore I must decline them."

"Indeed, Miss Devonshire, I hope you will accept them, otherwise I shall feel very much vexed."

"Oh, indeed, you must excuse me."

"Then I will throw them away to-morrow."

"Oh, do not do that, it would be such a pity."

"Then you will accept them; I am sure you will, for auld lang syne."

At this moment Mr. Fox arrived, escorting two ladies, viz. Miss Spinnet and her niece; and the next instant the procession to the dinner-room commenced.

Cleveland was seated between Ada and Netty ; but at first his attention was withdrawn from the ladies by his astonishment at the plentiful feast before him. At the top of the table was a huge Norfolk turkey ; at the bottom, ham ; the intervening space was crowded with ducks and chickens, roast, boiled, and fricasseed ; vegetables and made dishes ; whilst on the sideboard appeared a round of beef, a roast sirloin, saddle of mutton, and a quarter of lamb.

Cleveland was thunderstruck, and could not help whispering to Ada, " Is this a dinner ? this a genial room ? "

" Provisions certainly are not wanting," replied Ada, with an arch smile, " and Mrs. Blackstone will do justice to them, if you do not."

" How do you like mamma's dress ? " whispered Netty to Cleveland. " Missey says it is

very handsome, but I do not like it, nor Charlotte's either; I think Florence's dress much prettier,—do not you?"

"Miss Devonshire's is certainly very pretty," replied Cleveland.

"Oh, you are afraid of speaking your mind out to me, because I am her sister; but that is nothing; you see I am all in white, because Mr. Fox told me not to put red bows on like Charlotte's,—he says he does not like them."

"And is Mr. Fox your 'valet de chambre?'" asked Cleveland, smiling.

"Oh no, only he told me all white was prettier."

"I thought," said Ada, "that Mr. Fox was too great an admirer of your sister to find fault with her dress."

"Perhaps," replied Netty, "when she is his wife, he will improve her taste in dress."

“ Would you like him for a brother ?” asked Ada.

“ Oh, Miss Devonshire, that is not a fair question !” exclaimed Cleveland.

“ But I will answer it,” said the lively rattler : “ I like Mr. Fox because he has been very kind to me, but I do not wish him to be my brother.”

“ Indeed ! and why not, may I ask ?” said Ada.

“ You may ask, but I shall not answer. Mr. Cleveland, you must not let Ada persecute me ; you know we are both mad-caps.”

Mrs. Blackstone’s voice was now heard, saying, in a loud tone, “ Richard, I do not approve of your eating fowl, give Thomas your plate for some sirloin ; and you, John, are to send for some beef, and do not take so much vegetable, and eat slower. Mr. Cleveland, what will you

take? you are not doing justice to our country fare: let me recommend this fricassee to your notice."

"Thank you, ma'am, I have had enough," said Cleveland, who was much amused at Mrs. Blackstone's business-like manner of eating. Her plate was filled with all sorts of eatables, and she set to work, never once speaking, or raising her eyes, till all had vanished, and then whilst it was refilling, she managed to put in a word to the conversation.

Course succeeded course, and Cleveland's patience was quite worn out, when at last the cloth was removed, and the ladies, having partaken of the dessert, rose to retire, and the gentlemen drew their chairs together, and were soon deep in politics, or the pleasures of the chase, et cetera. The little middy soon grew glorious, and finding that none of his auditors

had read Captain Marryat's works, he bagged the adventures of the captain's heroes, and related them as his own, so that all the young men were soon in roars of laughter.

"You are not a wine-drinker, Mr. Cleveland?" said Lieutenant Elton to Cleveland.

"No: I seldom drink after the ladies are gone."

"Nor I. Suppose we join them; it must be past nine o'clock, and I have seen them walking on the lawn. This room is dreadfully hot: shall we come?"

"With all my heart," replied Cleveland, and in a minute the two young men opened the window, and slipped out unperceived.

Florence, Ada, Miss Elton, and Netty, were alone on the lawn, Mrs. Blackstone and the two Miss Spinnets being gone some other way. The young lieutenant slipped in between his

cousin and Florence, and Cleveland gave his arm to Ada, for Netty, having asked what o'clock it was, made some excuse, and ran away.

"Where is Mrs. Blackstone?" said Cleveland to Ada.

"Oh, she and the Miss Spinnets are gone to see the young calf fed, and to look at the hens and rabbits, and Charlotte has stayed in-doors to amuse my aunt. I am very glad you came, for Florence and Fanny are talking very gravely, and I was very dull. Where shall we go? I am tired of perambulating this lawn."

"Any where you like, I am at your service."

"Then, let us come down this walk. Can you 'gallop?'"

"To be sure I can," said Cleveland, rather indignant at the idea of his not knowing how to dance.

"Oh, pray do not be affronted," exclaimed

Ada, laughing; "but I was going to ask you to 'gallope' down this walk with me; I do love dancing so."

"And I am very willing to dance whenever asked by a lady," replied Cleveland, and taking her hand, he began to 'gallope' down the walk, till Ada was out of breath.

"There, stop now!" exclaimed she, laughing, "I am quite out of breath, and gravel walks are not made for 'galloping.' Do you know, I did not think you would have 'galloped' with me."

"And may I ask you, why you thought I should be so uncomplaisant?"

"Oh, because you are so grave and so poetical; I thought it would have been beneath your dignity."

"Indeed, I assure you, though I may be grave by your cousin Amherst, yet no one loves fun

better than myself. When I was quartered at W——, with my regiment, Amherst and I got acquainted with a little fellow of the name of Sedley. He had been in India. He was always talking of himself and what he did,—how he used to go out in his silk dressing-gown and pantouffles to command his regiment,—in fact, he was quite a ‘Gascon’; and the best of it was, he hardly reached five feet, and he strutted about as if he thought the place too small for him. One day Amherst and I were riding, when he came up to me. I was mounted on an immense tall horse, which I wanted to sell. ‘A nice horse that of yours, Cleveland!’ said the little gentleman. ‘I am in want of one; I hear you want to sell it. Will you let me try it?’ I did not want to do so at first; but Amherst gave me a wink, and I wished to play Sedley a trick for all his conceitedness, so I replied, ‘Willingly;

but I tell you fairly, that he is rather vicious.' 'Never mind,' replied he, 'I pique myself on my horsemanship.' So I dismounted, and, with a little trouble, I hoisted up little Sedley. As I had foreseen, the horse began to rear and kick. 'Gently,' said I; 'pat him; do not strike him.' However, Sedley would not heed me, but gave him a slash with his whip. The horse made a tremendous bound, and set off galloping as hard as he could. In vain Sedley tried to stop him; at last he abandoned the reins, and flung his arms round the horse's neck, and clung with all his might, till the animal stopped of his own accord at my door. Poor Sedley was almost dead with fear. He was as white as possible, and shook like an aspen. We asked him to dine at our mess. We told the story, and had a good laugh at him for it."

"Your mess-table must be very amusing, from all I have heard," said Ada.

"Oh, yes ; as to that, we have plenty of fun, such as singing and drinking. At the time, one enjoys it ; but, after all, it gives no lasting pleasure : the heart demands something more to satisfy it ; at least, I think so."

Ada was going to reply, but the following words caught her ear :—

"So, when I return, you will become mine ; and, meanwhile, you have promised me to improve yourself as far and as much as possible."

Ada's eye glanced the way whence the voices came, and she saw Netty press to her lips the hands that clasped hers, as she replied :

"Can I refuse you anything—you to whom I owe every good quality I possess?"

"Had we not better turn back?" exclaimed Ada, who saw that Cleveland was looking in the same direction as herself.

"As you like," replied he ; "only I think we might have more fun by staying here."

"Do unto others as you would be done by," said Ada, turning him round; and, walking quickly the other way, she continued, "At present we have neither of us any secrets; but the time may come when you will not wish your actions to be watched."

"Well, certainly," said Cleveland, laughing, "this beats everything! Mr. Fox does, indeed, deserve that appellation. Whilst every one thinks he is paying his attentions to the elder sister, thus to be making love to the younger!"

"It seems to be the fashion for our curates to do so. When I was about twelve years old, there was another curate here. He was a great friend of mine; and the 'on dit' was, that he was to marry a young lady in the neighbourhood. She was pretty, and he always dined at her father's house once or twice a-week; so it was very natural to suppose it would be so. One day we

went to a ball, and I danced with him, and he said, 'This is the last time we shall dance together, I suppose.' So I laughed and replied, 'I conclude, then, you are going to marry Miss G—?' 'What makes you think that?' asked he. 'Only it is the 'on dit.' 'And do you believe it?' 'I really never thought about it particularly,' said I. 'Well, then,' replied he, 'I tell you fairly, Miss G—will never be my wife; but do not tell this to any one.' After that no more passed on the subject; till one fine morning, (for such things never happen in wet weather) it was discovered that my young parson had eloped with Kate G—, Miss G—'s younger sister, a girl of sixteen."

"Upon my word!" said Cleveland, "your parsons seem to be fond of running off. What would poor Mrs. Blackstone say, if she had been in our place just now?"

“ Oh ! she would have said, ‘ Netty, I do not approve of such things in a child like you.’ But really I do not think you can call a person a child after fifteen. I do not look upon myself as one.”

“ Nor I neither. If you like it, we will seek Mr. Fox, and get the fatal knot tied. I am quite ready.”

“ Now, Mr. Cleveland, I assure you that I do not approve of jesting on such subjects. My choice, you know, has long been made; therefore you think you may joke with me; but I doubt whether you would have said the same to Florence.”

“ Certainly not; as your sister is disengaged, I would not venture on such a subject, though I can joke with the future mistress of Somerset Park.”

“ Hush ! no more of this. We are just at the house; let us go in.”

On entering the drawing-room they found all the others there, except Netty and her beau.

"Where is Mr. Fox?" asked Charlotte.
"Have you seen him?"

"Yes," replied Ada; "he and Netty passed us in the shrubbery. They said they were only going to the end and back again," and Ada gave a look at Cleveland to implore silence.

In a few minutes the absent ones returned, and dancing was proposed. Mrs. Blackstone offered to play for the dancers. She had no quadrilles; however, she did not doubt but that a country-dance, played slow, would answer the purpose as well. So the dancers stood up, and the piano was opened, and Mrs. Blackstone began to produce some very jiggish sounds, without either harmony or time; but that was nothing; the dancers were in spirits, and the buz of their voices soon exceeded the squeak of the piano.

Waltzes succeeded quadrilles, and gallopes waltzes, but all to the same tune; and little Middy Blackstone had partaken so freely of the bottle, that his neighbours were obliged to push him forward through the figures. Mr. Fox looked slyer than ever when galloping with Miss Charlotte; and Frank Elton looked happy as he danced with his cousin Fanny; and Amherst shewed the whites of his eyes, and danced 'à la Negre,' to the great amusement of all. Then came coffee and tea, not handed round, but made in the same room by Mrs. Blackstone and Charlotte, and distributed by the young gentlemen, with huge lumps of heavy, half-baked, home-made cake, which Netty informed Cleveland, by whom she had seated herself, was made by their housekeeper and cook, Mrs. Prune, and that it was also made with stale butter, for mamma said, though the butter was so bad, as to be un-

suitable, it would not be tasted in the cake, any more than in mashed potatoes, and therefore Mrs. Prune had used it for the potatoes at dinner. Cleveland was, of course, much obliged for this information, and, in return, when dancing recommenced, he led out Miss Netty, who took the opportunity of letting him into many other details of the household and the farm-yard; and, by the time his party were ready to leave, Cleveland was perfectly instructed into the mystery of housekeeping; then, taking leave of his partner and her family, he entered the coach, and drove home.

The next morning, all the Somerset party were assembled at breakfast, canvassing the last night's amusement, when the post arrived. What a delightful moment is that! What eager eyes glance at the letter-bag! With what rapture is the well-known writing of a

friend hailed ! With what delight is the seal broken and the contents perused ! Ada had no letter ; she, therefore, watched the countenances of her friends. Amherst's looks were those of pleasure ; Cleveland looked much the contrary ; and Florence smiled, as she commenced the perusal of a long letter crossed, but gradually that smile faded, and gave place to an expression of melancholy.

“ Who is your letter from, Florence ? ” asked Ada.

“ From Theresa di B—.”

“ Is she well ? is she married yet ? ” said Mrs. Somerset.

“ No, aunt : her parents would never consent to that match, and they gave her the choice between the Prince de M— and taking the veil. She could not, she says, consent to marry the Prince, whilst her heart was wholly given to

another, so she has chosen the latter alternative, and by this time, those vows are pronounced which sever her from the world."

"Poor girl!" exclaimed Ada, "how I pity her! So young, so beautiful, to be immured for life in a gloomy convent."

"Cleveland, you look gloomy," said Amherst: "have you received bad news?"

"Very bad! I am reminded that my leave of absence will expire next week."

"And you call that bad news! to be recalled to all the delights of our regiment! to the pleasures of society!"

"Mr. Cleveland is not so dissipated as you, Amherst," said Mrs. Somerset.

"Well," said Amherst, "I have a letter from Tom and Jane Strafford, to ask the girls, myself, and any one else I can find, to Linden Grove for a few days. So, Cleveland, we will go down

to-morrow, and then, as I see I am also recalled, we will go on to our regiment, and my cousins will return here."

"Oh, how delightful!" exclaimed Ada; "I shall be so glad: the Straffords are such nice people! and most likely they have company in the house."

"Shall you go, Cleveland?" said Amherst.

"Oh, certainly: I am always ready for amusement."

"I am glad to hear you say so, my boy. So to-morrow, my cousins, have all your trinkum trankums ready, that we may start early."

The morning for the excursion to Linden Grove came, dawning bright, and at an early hour Amherst's phaeton drove to the door, and our party set off in high good humour. They soon overtook Mr. Fox, who, they found, was bound to the same destination as themselves;

they therefore agreed to keep together, and after a few hours' drive they arrived at Linden Grove, to whose inmates our hero was introduced. First came Sir Sampson Strafford, a pompous, important-looking gentleman, in whose presence all mirth was forbidden. Next came his three daughters :—Jane was turned twenty, Anne and Mary were each a year younger :—they were all good-looking, merry-faced girls, but much in awe of papa ; and there were three sons, Sam, Nick, and Tom ; the guests consisted of Mr. and Mrs. Percival, Captain Dundas, and Jack Lawson.

Somerset and his cousins were acquainted with all the assembled party, and, as Sir Sampson had left the room, conversation soon commenced. To Cleveland all were strangers except Sam Strafford, but he soon found the means of making himself both agreeable and useful to

Miss Jane,—the former, by holding a lively conversation with her, and the latter, by holding her netting. But Sam, before long, moved, with a tremendous yawn, from the side of the pretty Mrs. Percival, exclaiming,

“ Who will come to the billiard table with me ? Somerset, Cleveland, I have a nice stud of horses ; will you come and see them ? I can also show you some beautiful little pointer pups.”

“ Oh, you cruel creature ! you are not going to leave me for your dogs and horses ?” lisped Mrs. Percival.

“ I am really very sorry, but I cannot help it. I do hate the house in the daytime :—so confoundedly stupid and hot, hotter even than the sun, and that is confoundedly hot now !” And so saying, Sam drew Cleveland’s arm within his, and lounged out of the room ; the other gentlemen soon followed in a troop.

“ Well, what shall we do now ?” asked Jane :
“ shall we take a walk, or remain here ?”

“ Oh, how cruel to desert us !” exclaimed Mrs. Percival ; “ really, I am always ‘excédée’ without men. My dear Jane, do not you think they will return ?”

“ Return ! no, my dear Mrs. Percival : Sam hates ladies’ society. And to say you cannot live without men, is really paying them too great a compliment. My dear Florence, what would you like to do ?”

“ Suppose we go into the garden ; if you have no objection, I should like it.”

“ Oh, I should like it of all things ! I want to show you——gracious, Anne ! what are you about ? you have thrown the ink over my netting ! what will papa say ? make haste and ring the bell !”

The bell was rung, and the ink wiped up,

but, alas ! the beauty of the purple and green-striped purse was gone, never to return.

“ It cannot be helped !” said Jane, as she tossed it into the drawer. “ Now, Florence, I am ready : who will be of the walking party ?”

“ All of us : lead on, and we will follow !” exclaimed the others, as they put aside their various employments.

“ Where shall we go ?” said Jane : “ to the conservatory, the garden, or the grotto ? to the garden, I think. I was just telling you, that my brothers have been making a grotto, but I will not show it you till after dinner : twilight is the time for those things. Pray how long has Mr. Cleveland been with you ?”

“ About a month,” replied Florence.

“ He seems a very nice young man,—so gay, so attentive ; do you like him ?”

“ Oh, very much ; but I do not think him gay.”

"Oh,—'very much !' pardon my repeating your words ; they are simple in themselves, and just what you ought to say,—but the tone,—oh ! my dear Florence, the tone is melting, and the air, oh, it was worth anything !"

"Why, what was there in it ; I simply said, I liked him very much, and I meant no more."

"I do not doubt it," continued Jane, in her rallying tone ; " but, my dear girl, the tone, the expression."

"Well, Jane, you are an odd girl ; you always find something to laugh at in what one says."

"Heigh ho ! what must one do in this wide world if one cannot find something to laugh at ? I wonder if I shall ever quit this stupid Linden Grove ? Papa is so precise, and my brothers are such thorough sportsmen, that they are no companions : and my sisters and I have nothing to do, but to sigh for present dullness, hope for better times, and sing—

“ ‘ Oh, what will become of me, oh, what shall I do ?
Nobody coming to marry me, nobody coming to woo.’ ”

“ Why, Jane, if you despair so, I wonder you do not take some of the gentlemen now in the house.”

“ But just tell me which I should take ? besides, they are my brother’s friends, not mine. First there is Captain Dundas, a conceited puppy, a desperate fox hunter, a terrible gambler, and, in fact, a perfect roué ; Mr. Lawson, a tremendous fox hunter, and a horrid country-fied bore ; Mr. Fox, a sly, demure parson, who knows more than any one suspects ; Mr. Somerset is engaged,—and Mr. Cleveland, the only one that seems to suit me, I hardly know ;—perhaps, he too is engaged,—is he ?”

“ Not that I know of,” replied Florence, smiling.

“ Perhaps, then, he is one of those—

“ ‘ Who barren hearts avow ;
Cold as the rocks on Torneo’s hoary brow.’ ”

"No, on the contrary, I should say Mr. Cleveland would love with devotion where he did love : his soul seems made for such passions ; he is an ardent admirer of nature, and passionately fond of music and poetry."

"Hah, say you so ! he is then rather romantic ; and if so, I am sure he will not leave Somerset House with as sound a heart as he entered it !" And as she spoke, Jane cast her dark penetrating eye on Florence ; but the calmness of the latter's countenance soon dispelled any suspicions that had arisen in Miss Strafford's breast ; and as she beheld the quiet smile with which Florence replied to her scrutinizing gaze, she said to herself, "No ! as yet she does not love him. But he, has he escaped ? I must try him."

"Oh, my dear Ada," continued she, but aloud, "how blooming you look. You have been very happy lately, I suppose."

“ Oh, very happy ! Somerset House was never so delightful. We were so happy, Amherst and I, Florence, and Mr. Cleveland. He is such a charming young man, but quite different from my cousin ; he is so well-informed, so quiet, so obliging, and so pleased with everything. Florence and myself are delighted with him, and we shall miss him so much ; but I heard him promise my uncle and aunt, to come as often as he could to see them ; they like him as much as they do Amherst ; indeed he is a general favourite.”

“ Mr. Cleveland is a happy man,” replied Jane, with a sarcastic smile.

“ Oh, Jane, Jane, look here,” exclaimed Mary, running towards her sister, with Jack Lawson behind her, and followed by a huge Newfoundland dog ; displaying at the same time her muslin gown, which had two great slits in it, besides sundry other holes.

“ My dear Mary, what have you been doing ?
you are always in mischief !”

“ Indeed now, it is not my fault. But Mr. Lawson set Pop at me, and he tore my gown to pieces. Indeed, Mr. Lawson, it was not at all polite in you.”

“ Polite ! faith I don’t know, but it was capital fun. Ha ! ha ! ha ! never laughed so much in my life ; excellent, ’faith, Miss Jane, to see Pop and your sister at romps together. You would have died—I wish Sam could have seen them. Come here, Pop, poor fellow ! Miss Jane, shall I set him again at it ? it will amuse you so ! Here Pop, Pop, eat here, eat !” and Pop again flew at the poor gown ; but in an instant Mary turned round, and with her open hand, she hit the poor squire across the face ; he roared most lustily, exclaiming, “ Oh, oh, ’faith Miss Mary, I do not call that fun, or genteel in a young lady either.”

“Nor do I call it fun to have my gown spoiled,” retorted she. “I do not say it is genteel, neither was your conduct so; and when one associates with people of a lower class, one must act as they do.”

“Bravo! bravo! ‘Faith, Mary, that was well hit; a confounded good slap, and it told true,” exclaimed Sam, “who had just come up in time to witness the blow. But look here, my girl, when you go to hit another time, clench your fist; there, like that, you see:” and Sam clenched his own fist for example.

“Oh, how shocking! do come away, my dear Jane, it really makes my blood run cold, I shall faint;” lisped the pretty little Percival (as Sam called her) as she took Jane’s arm, and walked away, followed by the other ladies.

“There now, Mary, be a good girl, and make it up with Lawson,” said Sam, kissing his sister,—“he meant nothing.”

Mary had begun to cry, and only muttered something about "papa," and "a new gown."

"Confound papa, and new gown, and all the bunch of you," said the hot-headed young squire. "Don't look minus about your gown, I will give you two more, and papa shall know nothing about it. So dry your eyes, my girl, and look merry once more. Lawson does not admire tearful beauties."

"As if I cared what he liked!" said Mary, scornfully.

"Confound us, but there is the dressing-bell," said her brother; "so home with you, I shall only go to bring back the little Percival, whom you have frightened away. Now, do not scratch out Lawson's eyes, he looks terribly afraid of you." And with that Sam started off, and Mary began to walk towards the house, Jack Lawson bringing up the rear.

At length she turned, saying to the crest-fallen hero—"Well, I will forgive you, Mr. Lawson, this once, though your rudeness is unbearable."

"Most humbly do I confess it, and ask your pardon, for really I meant no offence."

"Well, then, henceforward be less boisterous; for remember, one more trick like that, and we are enemies for life."

"Thanks for your pardon," said Lawson, as with an unwieldy motion, that an elephant might have envied, he brought his no little personage close to Miss Mary, and offered her his arm, and then they amicably proceeded towards the house.

At dinner all the party were again assembled, and placed in due order round a table where everything was propriety itself; each plate was placed in a line with its fellow; each dish had its

correspondent, and each piece of bread was exactly the same size; that is, three inches by two. Grace was said, and business commenced. The conversation was of a solemn nature; remarks on the weather, on carving; but all slowly and gravely spoken, and after two hours the ladies left the room. After each gentleman had finished his bottle, Sir Sampson proposed joining the ladies; and, accordingly, he, Mr. Cleveland, Somerset, and Captain Dundas, left the dining-room; the others, preferring the bottle to the ladies, remained. Cleveland found Jane and Florence seated in the window, conversing.

“Your conversation appears interesting,” said he; “do not let me disturb it.”

“Oh, no!” said Jane, laughing; “I forget how it began, but I have been trying to persuade Florence, that you gentlemen are not so good as we ladies.”

“ Indeed ! And does Miss Devonshire defend our sex ? ”

“ Yes. I cannot persuade her that you are all a worthless set of beings, whose whole delight is in drinking, shooting, and hunting.”

“ And do you think thus of us all ? ”

“ Oh yes, every one of you. You see I am frank. Others may think so who do not say so, but I have not that happy faculty of concealing my thoughts.”

“ And I,” said Florence, “ must deny that all men are devoid of all affections except those of hunting and drinking.”

“ My dear Florence, the truth is, you do not know men as I do.”

“ Perhaps not ; but I will never believe that there are not some men as good and well-principled as ourselves ; for instance, Mr. Cleveland, I am sure, is as good as myself.”

"Now, Mr. Cleveland, what do you say to that?" exclaimed Jane.

"That, whether true or otherwise, if such is Miss Devonshire's opinion, I would not deceive her for the world," exclaimed our hero, as, urged by the impulse of the moment, he pressed the white hand of Florence to his lips. Florence blushed, and Jane looked vexed, as Cleveland continued,—

" 'Where ignorance is bliss, 'tis folly to be wise.' "

"Yes," replied Jane, sarcastically; "for those who prefer ignorance to knowledge."

"Which I do in this case," said Florence; "for, were I to think ill of Mr. Cleveland, I should not like him, as I do now."

"Who is that purse for, which you are netting?" asked Jane, wishing to change the subject.

"For my cousin Amherst, he said he wanted one."

"Is it not pretty, Mr. Cleveland?" asked Jane.

“Very much so. I wish I had a cousin to net me one whenever I said I wanted one, for I do want one now.”

“I would net you one,” said Florence, smiling at him, “if you would wear it; but I am afraid it would not be worth your acceptance.”

“Will you?” exclaimed Cleveland. “Oh, do, then! I shall prize it so highly!”

Again Jane’s lip was curled sarcastically, as she asked, “Do you ever play at draughts?”

“Oh, yes; Miss Devonshire often played with me at Somerset Park.”

“Perhaps, then, you will play with me till coffee comes, and, after that, I dare say Florence will play with you. At any rate, I will play with you now.”

“But,” added Florence, “Mr. Cleveland never plays after coffee.”

“And why?” inquired Jane.

"Because he always writes."

"What, letters to a Miss D—, who shall be nameless?"

"No; you are wrong, Miss Strafford," said Cleveland. "I seldom write letters; it is only a diary."

"I should like to see it," answered Jane.

"What do you write in it?"

"I never show it to any one; I write everything I do."

"No! You are right; for if you write everything you do, I dare say it would not be suited for the public eye. But why do you keep one?"

"My father taught me to do so from a child—to write everything I did, good or bad; for he said, that, on reading it over some time after, I might so be ashamed of my faults, as not to fall into them again, and that the good I had done would please me so, that the remembrance of it would incite me to fresh acts of virtue."

“ Really, that is a very odd idea for a man.”

“ Why, what a prejudice you have against men !” exclaimed Florence, laughing. “ You think they can do nothing good—nothing right; but I hope you are now convinced that they can.”

“ At least, that Mr. Cleveland can,” said Jane, laughing in return. “ I never doubted that your favourite was perfection. Now, Mr. Cleveland, shall we begin ?”

“ Oh, yes ; after such a compliment I must not delay, for, were I to receive such another, I should be too proud !”

The next morning at breakfast, after a preparatory and portentous-sounding cough, Sir Sampson began, as follows :—

“ I am fully aware that it is not the custom to invite guests to one’s house, and then to quit them ; and I feel convinced that no one can ima-

gine such to have been my intention ; it, therefore, grieves me to state, that a letter I have received this morning, forces me to quit those guests who have honoured my house with their presence. This circumstance was unforeseen, and my business will not admit of delay ; I must, therefore, set out immediately, though, as before said, it grieves me much. Sampson, you will order my carriage round directly. Nicholas, go and acquaint my valet ; and you, Thomas, remain here till your brother's return."

This pompous harangue finished, the stately Sir Sampson recommenced his breakfast. The travelling chariot drove round, and Sam accompanied his father to the door, and bounded into the house as the carriage drove off.

" Hurrah ! hurrah !" he exclaimed, "the governor is gone ; and now for fun and mirth, my boys ! Dick ! Tom ! Jack ! Dundas ! Where are you all ?

We'll have a roaring day of fun and romps !
Jane, my girl, what shall we do ? I know you
love a game of romps as well as any one."

" Ah ! what shall we do ?" said Jane. " Let
us play at ' Hunt the Slipper,' shall we ?"

" Oh, yes ; by all means !" exclaimed all ;
and in an instant the floor was cleared. Tables,
chairs, sofas, were dragged away, and heaped
one over the other. A slipper was procured,
and the circle formed, and, amidst roars of
laughter, the game proceeded. But even ' hunt
the slipper' will not last for ever. Magic music
was tried, and went off well. Two or three
other games succeeded, when all declared for
' hide and seek.' But what should be hidden ?
was asked.

" Why not ourselves ?" replied Sam. " Let
us go, two and two, to hide. I will set the ex-
ample ;" and Mrs. Percival and he set off to do
so.

The signal was given, and searches commenced. Every closet and spare room was searched, but nowhere could Sam and the lady be found.

Somerset declared he heard a stifled laugh near a sofa, but the room had been searched. Again they returned to it. Above the sofa, under it, they looked; still no success:—but Amherst was not to be discouraged; and, seizing the cushions, he dragged them on the floor. A shout of joy proclaimed his success and the discovery of the lost ones.

“ Well ! ” exclaimed Sam, “ I could not have stayed there much longer ; I was quite smothered. Who will go next ? Cleveland, do you and Jane start ; she will show you the best hiding-places. Off with you ! That is right—hand-in-hand, like babes in the wood.”

“ Let brotherly love continue,” said Nick,

with a sly glance at Jane, which was returned with a "For shame, Nick!" from her as she left the room. Cleveland and herself squeezed themselves into a travelling trunk, where in due course of time their hiding-place was discovered.

It would be endless were we to follow all the joyous troop through the game, and to tell, how Jack Lawson hitched himself to a clothes' peg, and was at first taken for an old coat—and how Captain Dundas, putting on a bonnet and cloak, and busying himself in Miss Strafford's wardrobe, passed himself off for the '*femme de chambre*.'

"It is a pity the younger Miss Blackstone is not here!" said Cleveland to Fox, during one of the pauses.

"Or the elder either," added Sam.

"As to that," said Cleveland, "I could not fancy the demure Miss Charlotte at a game of romps."

“ Could not you !” retorted Sam. “ Faith ! unless she is turned saint, I could. It is not so long since I remember meeting her — (it was before your time, Fox)—meeting her, as I said, coming home, perched up behind the village carrier—a dirty little scoundrel—on a donkey. ‘ Miss Blackstone, as I am alive !’ exclaimed I. ‘ How came you here ?’ ‘ Oh !’ replied she, with perfect unconcern, ‘ I had leave to go and see the hounds, and I was so tired, that, meeting this little man, I asked for a ride. Good day, Mr. Strafford !’ ‘ Good bye, Miss Charlotte !’ said I, and I galloped off. I never shall forget her. There she was, like a mad thing, seated astride on Neddy, her face to his tail, behind a dirty little errand-boy.”

“ I do not think Miss Blackstone would like to be put in mind of such an adventure now,” said Fox.

“ No ! but hark ! they are shouting : off with you. Cleveland, do you recollect what a delightful tour we made last year in Scotland ? ” asked Strafford.

“ Oh, to be sure I do ; nor have I forgotten Margaret and Kathleen M’Guire.”

“ And do you recollect how jealous their old ncle was of them : how he locked them up every night, at eight o’clock, in their rooms ; and how we got across the ladder into their rooms ? ”

“ To be sure I do ; and I have often thought since, what a chance we ran of breaking our necks, if the fastenings of the ladders had given way, or if we had slipped.”

“ Yes. I never shall forget the first night. Just as I got to the middle, I thought I heard it crack, my head swam round ; there was I obliged to pick my steps, from one round to another,

not daring to stoop, and with nothing to support me,—oh, it was dreadful ! Hurrah ! hurrah ! the chase is up,” roared Sam, as with a kick from his huge foot, he dislodged Captain Dundas, who was squatting behind a chest, and sent him sprawling into the midst of the room. “ Well, but, Cleveland, you were a monstrous favourite with Kathleen ; confound me ! but, do you know, she was an uncommon pretty girl ? ”

“ Indeed she was ! She had beautiful blue eyes ! I liked her very well : she was a nice girl ! ”

“ By the by, did not she give you a pebble seal,—what did you do with it ? ”

“ I put it in my pocket one day with my keys, and when I came to take it out, I found it all broken to bits.”

“ It does not rain now,” exclaimed Sam, looking out of the window : “ how lucky, for I

am tired of the house. Here, girls, I shall not play any more. I shall go out ; who will come and ride ?”

“ Oh, Mr. Cleveland, do not you go !” said Jane ; “ we shall be so dull without a single gentleman.”

“ Nonsense,” exclaimed Sam, as he left the room, “ you teaze him—”

“ I shall be most happy to stay, and make myself useful to Miss Strafford,” said Cleveland, as the others left the room.

“ Florence, what shall Mr. Cleveland do ?” asked Jane.

“ Will you not read to us, Mr. Cleveland, as you did at home ?” said Florence, smiling at him.

“ Most certainly, if you wish it ; but what shall I read ?”

“ Oh, any of those books will do, if they are new,” replied Ada.

"Stay," said Jane, "I will give you a manuscript to read," and unlocking her work-box, she took out a neat little book: "it is the life of a clergyman, written by himself, and given me by a friend."

"Is it grave or gay?" asked Cleveland.

"You will see, when you have read it; and when it is finished, you shall see the pretty purse Florence is netting for you."

Cleveland took the book, and read the following tale.

THE CLERGYMAN'S TALE.

My father was a Colonel in his Majesty's Service; my mother was of a noble family. I was their first-born, and their only son; but I had five sisters, beautiful, and virtuous,—alas! too good for this world. I was educated at Eton; and in my twentieth year, I obtained a

Commission in the Guards. Soon after, my father died. All my sisters, except the youngest, had gradually sunk into the grave in consumption, and on my father's death, my widowed mother, and her only remaining daughter, quitted London for Devonshire, as the only chance of preserving Julia from following her sisters.

I was then wild and dissipated. I thought less of the loss I had sustained, in the death of the most indulgent of fathers, than of the ample but not immense fortune, to which I had succeeded.

When I was three-and-twenty, I formed a most violent attachment for a young lady, which I believed was reciprocal. By my extravagance, I had almost ruined my fortune; but she was an heiress,—I could pay my debts with part of her fortune, and live on the remainder

of both. I proposed, after having paid her my attentions some months, and to my delight was accepted: I clasped my angel in my arms, and left her presence, vowing to reform, -and to live only for domestic happiness with her. Alas! how cruelly was I disappointed! the very next day, she wrote to acquaint me, that her father had received the proposals of the Earl of W—— for her; and when she informed him of her engagement with me, he bade her renounce it, declaring that he would never have for a son-in-law, one, who, like me, was ruined both in constitution and fortune.

My Harriet dared to expostulate, but she was peremptorily ordered to see me no more, and to accept the husband of her father's choice. We met once more, in secret; I urged her to fly her father's roof; Harriet wept in my arms; she could not bring herself to disobey

her parent,—to merit his curse. I raved; she wept; we were discovered; I was turned from the house, and Harriet was confined to her chamber; until, unused to disobey her father, she consented to marry the Earl. I would hardly believe it! I never saw her; I dared not write! I was distracted. They invited me to her wedding; I spurned the thought; my blood boiled at it. I cared not what I did! I sold out of the army, paid my debts, and quitted London. I cared not where I went. But after the marriage I grew calmer, and I determined to go to my mother, who, as yet, was ignorant of this affair. She received her son with open arms, but soon, with a mother's fondness, and a woman's quickness, she discerned what it was had changed me from the utmost dissipation to sorrow. My sister Julia, too, loved me with ardour. She would sit with me

all day, and if she saw an unbidden tear steal to my eye, she would sing to me, and, throwing her arms round me, would bid me be merry. I soon loved her with all a brother's affection. she was scarcely sixteen, and beautiful ! oh, how beautiful ! she was of the middle height ; her form, perfect and elegant, but slight ; her skin, fairer than alabaster ; her eyes were grey and full ; her eye-brows dark, and beautifully arched ; and her light brown hair floated in airy tresses over her shoulders ; her disposition was mild and contented ; in fact, her whole soul was made for love. Never did brother and sister love as we did ; not a thought in her breast was concealed from me, and I found relief for my own sorrows in revealing them to her : lovely creature ! how often did she shed tears for my misfortunes !

“ I ardently wished to see her married, and,

with my mother's leave, I invited my best friend down to our humble residence. He was charmed with Julia: he wished to marry her, and Julia promised to love him for my sake.

At this time, we lived not many miles from E——; it was summer, and Julia and I often rode there, on two ponies; we had no acquaintances, but we saw there a gentleman and two young ladies often riding. The gentleman and the young ladies were very handsome; he seemed their elder brother; we inquired about them, and heard that the two girls, their mother, and aunt, resided at D——, but the gentleman and a lady were on a visit. It was thought they were relations, but as they lived in the strictest retirement, no one could tell. One said he was brother to the girls, another said he was their cousin, and a third conjectured that he might be a lover. Julia often wished we were acquainted with them.

Julia and I, with our mother, went during the absence of my friend to a race-ball at P——. My friend was eager to be married, and Julia had consented to become his bride in the autumn. He was, therefore, gone to town to make arrangements.—However, to return to the ball. It was the first Julia had ever been at; her eyes shone with animation as she surveyed the gay scene; I marked them well,—a heightened colour deepened her cheeks, as they rested on the handsome gentleman from E——. Soon after, the Steward came up, and requested permission to introduce Mr. Danby to Miss Mackinnon. Julia consented; and she danced the first quadrille with him. I would not dance,—I watched her, as losing her reserve, she laughed gaily at the conversation of Mr. Danby. After the dance Danby addressed me: he lived near London; not a person of any note in England that

he did not know—his conversation was delightful. Little had I expected to meet so gentlemanlike a man in Devonshire. Such a ball too I had never seen ; the men were half tipsy, the ladies vulgar, and at an early hour we quitted the room. The next day Danby called on Julia ; he had made a strong impression ; I feared almost too strong for her happiness. I thought of my friend Compton, and sighed, as I wished that we had never gone to the ball. But Danby did not show any particular attention to Julia, he seemed to like her as well in my society as alone ; his learning was not very deep, but he was a man of the world, and had frequented good society. He visited us about once a week, and soon I perceived that Julia watched his coming. Her eyes brightened, and her cheek flushed as he approached. She seemed sorry when he was gone, and almost her only topic was Mr. Danby. Mr.

Danby did this ; Mr. Danby said that. About two months passed thus. I received a letter from Compton, he was coming down to claim his bride. I was alone with Julia in the garden,— I put the letter into her hand.

“ This is good news, is it not ?” said I, when she had read the letter. Julia cast down her eyes, and sighed, but returned no answer.

“ How, my sister,” said I ; “ are you not glad Compton is coming ?”

“ Yes !” said she ; but the tone was so mournful, it startled me.

“ Dearest Julia,” said I, “ are you not well ? what is the matter ? Are you not well ? positively something is the matter with you.”

“ No ! nothing, dearest Frederick.”

“ Have you quarrelled with Compton ?”

“ No !”

“ What is it then ?”

“ Nothing !”

“ But, Julia, something does ail you. Tell me, my dear girl. Am I no longer your brother ? can you no more confide in me ?”

She answered only by throwing herself into my arms. Her conduct agitated me ; at last she whispered, still hiding her face on my arm, “ I fear I do not love him enough.”

“ Not love him enough ? why, do you love him less than before ?”

“ No !”

“ What then am I to understand ? that you love some one else better ?

“ Yes !” here she sobbed so for some minutes, that she could not speak ; and then she continued—“ Frederick, I will tell you all. I love Mr. Danby.”

“ Danby !” exclaimed I. “ Did he ever address a word on the subject to you ?

"No, never!" said she, half terrified; "it was only seeing him, and hearing him."

"Alas! poor girl!" said I, as I kissed her pale cheek; and placing her on a seat, left her. I walked towards E——. I met Danby, and I immediately addressed him. "Danby," said I, "circumstances have rendered it necessary, that I should ask you the purport of your visits to Julia. Will you tell me candidly?"

"Candidly," answered he; "candidly then, my visits are as much for the pleasure of your society, as for your sister's."

"Then," said I, "you never meant to pay her any attentions; in short, to win her heart?"

"No, by my honour! never! Surely you could not think, that, situated as I am, I would do it."

"I do not understand you."

"What! do you not know that I am married? married to the lady I am living with at E——"

It was now my turn to be surprised. "Indeed, I never heard it!" said I; "but to be candid with you, Julia was engaged to marry a friend of mine this autumn; but since that untimely ball at P——, I have perceived that you had conquered her inexperienced heart. What now must be done?"

"Take my advice, Mackinnon, take her to London; take her to everything that is gay; she is young, and depend upon it, she will soon cease to think of me."

"Well," said I, "we must try; but you also must refrain from visiting us; much as we shall both miss you, we must see you no more."

With this we parted: I returned home, and told my mother that we must take Julia to town. We left Devonshire, and though at that season of the year London was empty, yet to her previous retirement it was gay.

Julia was everywhere sought for, and admired, but nothing could drive Danby from her heart. She never mentioned his name, but she would sit lost in thought for hours. It was ever Danby that occupied her mind. To Compton she seemed almost indifferent, although his constant attentions did not fail to make a deep impression on her. But, when I pressed her to marriage, she would sigh, and say, "I am too young, wait but till next spring."

Compton was contented to wait, and I was satisfied she had forgotten Danby.

In October, we went to an immense assembly. Never had Julia looked so handsome, so angelic; her eyes sparkled with unusual animation, the roses on her cheeks were of a deeper dye, her beautiful locks were braided, and she wore a wreath of roses on her head. I did not dance, but I watched with rapture her airy form, as she

moved gracefully through the dance. Little then did I think of the cause of her beauty.

The next day she complained of a slight cold; she kept her room. The following day she felt worse; I visited her in her bed; I was surprised by the hectic colour that flushed her cheeks; I remembered my other sisters' fate, and feared that Julia was following them. Instantly I sent for a physician. He confirmed my fears; my darling sister was in a decline, and she was ordered to Torquay. With a sad heart I accompanied her there; at first, leaning on my arm, she was able to walk every day in the neighbourhood. Her favourite walk was over the cliffs to Tor Abbey, and often she would walk on the shore before the Abbey, to seek shells, and Madrapores; but soon her strength declined, and she was obliged to have recourse to a carriage, or a bath-chair; and as winter came on,

she kept the house. She was visibly declining ; she knew it ; she had early learnt to trust in God ; and now that she was removing to his kingdom, she was happy.

What can more distress the heart of man, than to see a beautiful young girl, sinking to the grave, resigned to whatever may be the will of her Maker ! Spring came round ; Julia kept her bed ; she would look out of the window, and say, “ Ah, my brother, I shall never see another summer,—I am going to my home ; I go to rejoin my father, my sisters : oh, we shall be so happy, and you, and dear mamma, will come and join us there.”

The day before her death she felt better. She was moved to a couch near the window. I sat by her, and was congratulating her on her recovery, when she said, “ No, dearest Frederick, the time is at hand, I cannot last long.”

“ Do not say so, my Julia,” said I, “ you are already better, you will soon be able to go out.”

“ No, never, dearest brother. Why even should you wish it ? I die, and shall be happy.”

“ Oh, my sister,” cried I, “ how can you bear to die,—so young, so lovely !

“ Ah, Frederick, had you been brought up, as I have, to think that all is for the best, to submit to the will of God, and to think of Heaven as your home, you would be glad to leave this miserable world, to fly there. Ah, my brother ! why do you never go to church ? Pray to God, for resignation to his will.”

I cannot dwell any more on this subject ; even the thoughts of it now affect me. Suffice it to say, next day she breathed her last, and, ere the summer was over, my mother followed her, broken-hearted from the loss of all her daughters. I wished I could have followed

them: little did I think how unfit I was to enter the presence of my Maker. I spent some weeks at E——. I recollected what Julia had said of religion, and I went to church. It was the first time I had entered one for four years. Oh, with what attention did I listen to the sermon! What relief did it bring to my heart! The text was the fourth chapter of the Epistle to the Thessalonians, fourteenth and fifteenth verses:—"But I would not have you ignorant, brethren," &c. From that time I became altered—a changed man. I sought, and gained, the friendship of the preacher. He himself had suffered, and therefore best knew how to administer consolation to others. He opened to me the knowledge of the mercies of God, and I became penitent and resigned. The smallness of my fortune rendered it necessary that I should adopt some profession; I chose the church. I went to Cam-

bridge and studied, and, after some years, I had the good fortune to obtain a living, of which I took possession, intending to devote my time and money to my parishioners: but I did not intend to seclude myself from all society. I visited the few families in my parish, and occasionally had friends staying with me at my vicarage, which was within a few miles of Bath; but ere a year had passed, I found that my happiness was not yet complete. My days I spent in visiting and relieving the poor, in reading, and in cultivating flowers. I was contented; but I thought, that had I some dear domestic friend, to whom I could reveal each secret of my heart, who would participate with me each joy or sorrow, my happiness would be much increased.

I had already cast my eyes on a young lady, the daughter of an officer, who lived in my parish with her mother and two brothers. She

was a gentle, modest creature. Her features were not regular; yet there was something so attractive in her, that no one could pass her by unnoticed. Her mother scarcely heeded her, so much was she occupied by her sons; and this neglect evidently hurt the young and feeling mind of Caroline. I visited her often: I lent her books and drawings, and brought her flowers. These kindnesses evidently made an impression on her; but I feared she would think me too old. She was scarcely seventeen—I had entered my thirtieth year; but I knew that she had no fortune, nor did she expect a brilliant match.

Often when, with her mother, she visited me, she would say, "Indeed, Mr. Mackinnon, I love to come to your vicarage; everything, even the very flowers, seem so contented. At other times she said, "Were I mistress here, I would alter this seat, or make that improvement." Not

a hint did she give that was lost; her taste was excellent, and I always adopted her improvements. At last I ventured to offer her my hand. She was astonished, yet delighted, at my proposals. In the innocence of her heart she had never dreamed of my thinking of her, though she confessed that she herself had often wished it. She did not attempt to conceal from me that I had gained her heart: but she bade me first obtain her mother's consent. This was easily granted, and, ere long, I was united to my angel Caroline. Her manners, her thoughts, her conversation, all reminded me of my sister Julia. Each day I discovered in her fresh cause for admiration and love—each day I loved her more. If I was absent from her for only an hour, she would fly to meet me on my return, as if we had been parted an age. I could dwell on this subject for ever, but I have already said enough on

it. Suffice it to say, we have been married five years: my house is gladdened by three pledges of our love; and never, I believe, did man possess a more lovely and affectionate wife, or more beautiful and obedient children; and never does a day pass, but I bless the memory of my sister, for having induced me to go to the house of God, as from that single circumstance arose the cause of the enjoyment of these best blessings.

"Well, what do you think of it?" asked Jane, when the story was finished.

"It is very pretty," replied Florence. "Do you not think so, Mr. Cleveland?"

"Very much so, and very fairly written," said Cleveland.

"Oh, yes; interesting," drawled Mrs. Percival.

“Of course, the names are feigned,” said Cleveland. “But what is the real name of the hero, and where does he live?”

“In this parish,” answered Jane. “The hero of this tale is no other than our clergyman.”

“And what age is he now?” said Ada.

“Not quite sixty, only very near it.”

“And is he still so happy as when he wrote this?”

“I believe so; oh, no—what was I saying? To be sure not. He lost his charming Caroline two years ago; but his children are alive, and well. The two girls are married—and the young man—do you know anything particular about him, Anne?”

“No, nothing; except that he was preferred last week to some living or other in the North, and that he carried off all the prizes at Cambridge, while he was there,” answered Anne.

"I should like to see this hero," said Cleveland.

"So you will to-morrow," said Jane; "for we always dine at the rectory, on Sunday, to our horror, unless the young people are at home. But there is the dressing-bell, as I am alive! I did not think it was so late. But it does not signify being exact to-day, for papa is away; and 'the mice will play when the cat is away.' Florence, shall we go? 'Au revoir,' ladies and gentlemen;" and, so saying, Jane and her friend left the room, and the others retired after them.

Far different was the dinner on this day to that on the preceding one. All formality was banished, and every one seemed to vie with their neighbours in trying to make most noise. Before the ladies left the table, the gentlemen were glorious; and after the departure of the fair ones, Sam quitted the governor's chair, and,

locking the door, swore none should leave the room, but that they should have a glorious revel. Toasts were drank, and exploits of former days told, and the night wore on in joy and mirth, till some of the party sunk asleep in their chairs, and others dropped beneath the table in a stupor. Cleveland looked at his watch ; it was one o'clock. He jogged his neighbour, who happened to be the pious clergyman, Mr. Fox.

“ Had we not better go to our rooms ?” said he.

“ Why,” replied Fox, “ is it late ?”

“ It is Sunday morning,” answered Cleveland.

“ You don't say so ?” exclaimed Fox, rising : “ why, Cleveland, how are you ? my head feels giddy,—I am not steady on my legs.”

“ I am afraid that I must also say the same ; however, we must get out of this place, it is so

hot ; but I cannot open the door, Strafford has the key in his pocket."

" Well, then, we must search for it."

So saying, Cleveland approached Sam, and putting his hand in the pocket, half awakened Sam, who saluted him with a hearty curse, and muttered, " What do you want ?"

" The key of the door," replied Cleveland.

" What !" exclaimed Sam, " do you want to shirk off? No, no, that's no go : so sit still, and finish your wine."

" But, Sam," said Fox, " we only want the key to get some more wine ; come, give it us, my good fellow."

" Hey ! hum ! what !" muttered Sam, relapsing into his slumber.

" What shall we do ?" said Cleveland : " he is drunk."

" As to that, I think we were all more sober

before dinner ; but, thank Heaven ! here is the key," and Fox extracted the key from his friend's pocket.

In a few minutes the door was opened, and our gentlemen having first sent the servants in search of their dormant friends, themselves retired to rest.

In the morning Cleveland awoke with a bad head-ache : it was ten o'clock. " I shall be late for church," thought he, as he dressed himself hastily, " and what will Miss Devonshire think of me ?" The duties of the toilette being finished, he flew down stairs ; the breakfast room was empty.

" Where is Miss Strafford ?" said he to the servant.

" The ladies are gone to church," was the reply.

" To church !" exclaimed Cleveland ; " I did

not think I was so late." And he hastily swallowed his breakfast, then snatching up his hat, he set off for the church, and overtook the ladies near the door.

"I knew you would not miss church," exclaimed Florence, with a smile, as they shook hands.

"And I," said Jane, "was sure Mr. Cleveland would miss it,—for your feast was kept up so late last night; but you look rather tired. Now my brothers always drink so much at night, that their heads ache all the morning."

"And I too," said Cleveland, "must plead guilty to having exceeded my usual quantity; for which I am now paying dearly, by a headache."

"Indeed! then even *you* were half seas over; well, that will write well in your journal."

"For shame, Jane," said Florence; "how

can you teaze him so? we are none of us perfect."

"Never mind, Miss Devonshire, I have deserved it."

"Well, a truce to this: let us in to church. Now, Mr. Cleveland, for the hero of my tale, viz. Mr. Dickson."

On entering the pew, Mr. Cleveland was attracted by the figure of Jane's hero, as he walked up the aisle. He was of middle stature; his once raven locks were changed by time to the whiteness of age; his look was cheerful, but sedate; and his whole appearance strongly expressed benignity.

"Well, how do you like his appearance?" asked Jane, when the service was concluded, and they had left the church.

"I think it is extremely prepossessing; what a clear voice he has, for a man of his age."

" Yes. Now I am sure he is dying with curiosity to know who you are."

" Why do you suppose he would trouble himself about me ?"

" Why, because you are the only man that has been seen in our pew for the last century."

" Surely you forget your father and brothers ?"

" ' Du tout ! du tout ! ' my father never enters a church ; in fact, he is a natural religionist ; and my brothers have never set foot in a church since they left school ; and, indeed, none of us are very regular in our attendance on Mr. Dickson's lectures."

" How very singular ! Most ladies are so much more regular in their attendance than our sex ; and even I have been taught, that it is a duty which ought not to be neglected."

" The difference certainly lies in the difference of education. Florence and Ada are constant

church-goers, they have been accustomed to it from childhood,—they go ‘*par habitude*,’ if not from principle ; but for myself, I never professed to be a saint, and if there is a fault any where, it is in my education.”

“ But surely you ought to know whether it is right or wrong, and it cannot be indifferent. I suppose most young ladies in the neighbourhood attend divine service,—and why do they do so ? ”

“ I do not know, I am sure ; either from habit, or because they are saints, or ‘*parceque c’est à la mode*. ’ ”

“ And why do not these reasons influence you ? ”

“ Because I care for none of these things ; or, perhaps, because it is a deal of trouble.”

“ And why, then, do they influence me ? ”

“ Oh, I do not know : because you are different from all the world.”

"I hope not."

"Well, then, because just as the twig is bent the tree is inclined."

* * * * *

"Now, then, for town!" exclaimed Amherst, as next day he sprang into Cleveland's room, ready equipped for the journey. "What!" continued he, "not yet dressed? and breakfast waiting, and the horses, carriages, and all ready."

"Stay one moment, Somerset," said Cleveland, putting the finishing stroke to his toilette; "there, I am now ready,—so off for breakfast."

Somerset was all gaiety at the idea of being so soon in town, but Cleveland's spirits were depressed at quitting his friends; breakfast was over, and the carriage drove to the door.

"Good bye, Miss Devonshire," said Cleveland, as he handed Florence to her carriage.

"Good bye, Mr. Cleveland," echoed Florence; "I hope we shall soon meet again, and that, for the present, you will accept this little token of Ada's friendship and mine;" and as she spoke, she put into his hand a purse of her netting.

"Oh, thank you, thank you!" exclaimed Cleveland: "this purse will serve to remind me often of the happy days and the friends I can never forget."

"Do not be too sure of that, Mr. Cleveland!" exclaimed Ada, laughing; "however, for the present, adieu, and forget me not till we meet again. Adieu."

"Adieu, adieu! and a pleasant drive!" exclaimed all the party, as the carriage drove off.

Now came the leave-taking with the Straffords, which was a much longer ceremony; but at last, however, the gentlemen were seated in their carriage, and rolled away for town.

“ Well, Cleveland, you are a nice boy !” exclaimed Somerset, after they had gone some little way.

“ Why, how do you mean ?”

“ Oh, you are a nice lad, for turning young ladies' heads with : you quiet fellows are always ten times worse than we mad-caps.”

“ Why, my dear fellow, what do you mean ?”

“ Ha ! ha ! ha ! a pretty joke ! why, what fun have you been taking out of that Jane Strafford ; I never did see anything like it. You have her under your thumb completely. Why, that girl would dance on her head if you told her.”

“ Indeed, my dear Somerset, you give me credit for more than is my due. Miss Strafford being a wild, high-spirited young lady, I fell in with her humour, and romped a little, that was all.”

“ That was all ! really ! Well, I beg your pardon, but I don’t know but sometimes these romping young ladies steal one’s heart, and no place nicer for popping the question than a band-box, so it might still be a match.”

“ Oh, my dear fellow, you are quite on a wrong scent ; my heart, I believe, is still disengaged, at least I think so ; but at any rate, I have not the slightest fancy for Jane Strafford.”

“ Oh, oh ! So you are not quite sure whether your heart is disengaged.”

“ No, not quite.”

“ Your mind is not then made up ?”

“ On one point it is.”

“ What is that ?”

“ That of marrying whenever I feel incline to it.”

“ A wise determination. But who will be that happy one ?”

“ That I must reflect on seriously.”

“ Well, then, you may do that now ! for I shall go to sleep, and dream of my charming cousin. Egad, but it might be one of them you fancy ! not Ada, I hope !”

“ No ; you may make yourself easy on that head, and on every other, for my mind is not made up.”

“ What a methodistical animal you are ; there is no getting anything out of you !”

Our travellers arrived at their destination safely, and passed the winter without the occurrence of any important event, beyond the daily routine of an officer's life. It was the month of March when Somerset entered Cleveland's apartment, with an unusually agitated countenance.

“ Cleveland,” he exclaimed, “ I am for home directly ; this dreadful influenza has seized Ada, and—” he stopped, he could say no more.

" Shall I accompany you ?" exclaimed Cleveland, seizing his friend's hand.

" Oh, if you would, I should be so much obliged. But I do not know how to ask you to leave all the gaieties."

" Oh, do not mention it ! you know I am a free man now. I have parted with my commission ; you can take me in your carriage, and my servant will follow to-night."

" Well, then, come ; and thank you, Cleveland," said Somerset, as he flew down stairs, and sprang into his carriage. Cleveland followed, and the next instant they were going towards Somerset Park as fast as four posters would carry them. Not a word was spoken on the road they reached the door of Somerset's home ; he threw open the carriage door, and flew to his mother's room. Cleveland entered the drawing-room, it was empty ; from a servant he heard

the distressing tidings that Ada was not expected to live.

“What is life?” thought Cleveland to himself; “how uncertain is it. Poor Ada! She, whom I left a few months back, with health blooming on her cheek, and joy sparkling in her eye;—even she is now at death’s door. How will Somerset bear this separation? Life is almost valueless, when one is thus liable to be separated from one’s dearest friends.

That evening Ada expired. All were in tears, all regretted her loss; but Amherst was insensible to any grief but his own. Cleveland tried to comfort him, but in vain.

“Till now,” he exclaimed, “I never knew how I loved her! I wish to heaven I was dead! Cleveland, go! Your intention is kind, but you know not what it is to lose the one you love. Go to your home; I cannot bear

the sight of mortal. Go, and be happy ; I alone am miserable !”

Cleveland left the house of mourning, as Amherst was deaf to the voice of friendship.

Some time elapsed, and the violence of Somerset’s grief abated. He then recalled his friend, in the hope of deriving comfort from his presence. Cleveland readily obeyed the call, and once more took up his residence at Somerset Park.

“ Cleveland,” said Amherst, “ I sent for you to accompany me ;—for leave this place, I must ; I cannot stand it ! it is insupportable. Formerly, Ada made it less disagreeable ; but now she is gone. Even all Florence can do, cannot retain me,—can it, my dear cousin ?”

Florence replied not ; but smiled mournfully, as her cousin pressed her hand.

“ I do not doubt,” said Cleveland, “ that you feel a great change. But how can you think of

leaving your parents and your cousin at such a time?"

"Stay, Henry,—I know what you would say. Yes, without doubt, my conduct may appear selfish, and I do not deny that it is so, but, you know, I never liked home: you know my disposition naturally inclined me to a rambling life; and now I have determined to go, and go I must! I would to heaven," continued he, "I had been born a gipsy! Oh, what a delightful life is theirs! ever roving from place to place. Oh! how I envy that thoughtless race of people."

"I imagine," said Florence, "the reality would not be so pleasing as the idea; you forget what they must suffer from hunger and cold."

"Yes," said Cleveland; "depend upon it, you, who have been used to every luxury, and every indulgence, would never like their life of continued hardships."

“ Perhaps not that part. But, I will just tell you what I should like. An independency of about five hundred a-year,—a horse, a gun, and a couple of dogs—and, with those, to travel all over the world, just where fancy led me.”

“ And would you never return home?” asked Florence.

“ Oh, yes; once during the year perhaps, or so, to see you, my dear cousin, and you, Cleveland.”

“ And would you really like to leave my aunt and uncle? Oh, Amherst, you are very ungrateful for all their kindness to you !”

“ I am, I am, I know I am ! very selfish, and very ungrateful; but I cannot help it. I cannot feel towards them, as others do towards their parents; and I know not why. I wish I could love them more, and be a better man; such a one as Cleveland. Oh, Cleveland, how happy

my father and mother would be to have a son like you,—how happy you would make them! and yet to you, who would know how to appreciate such a home as mine, Providence has denied relatives. Surely, this is unjust!”

“ Say not so, Amherst! Whatever Providence does, is and must be right; and surely I have no reason to complain. Have I not rather right to rejoice? Have I not a home and friends? Is not your family almost the same as mine? Are we not friends and brothers?”

“ True,” replied Amherst; “ you are of a contented disposition, and I am not; but I must go abroad, and try to find content there.”

“ There,” exclaimed Florence, “ there is Charlotte Blackstone! How unusually bright she looks to-day! What can have happened! Good morning, Charlotte!”

“ How do you do, Florence? Pretty well! Ah, that is right. Well, I have not a moment

to stay. Only just came to see you, and to say that mamma and I are going away to-morrow for a week."

"Indeed! Where are you going?"

"Oh, my dear girl, I am so glad! Mr. Fox has invited us down to his house, as he wants to give a ball; and mamma must be mistress of the house, he says, till he provides another one. Perhaps you may guess who the other will be? I can. Ha! ha! ha!"

"Indeed I cannot imagine."

"No! cannot! Ha! ha! ha! Well, how odd! To me it is as plain as a pike-staff. Ha! ha! ha! Well, I cannot stay. We shall leave Netty with papa. Good bye! When we next meet, perhaps you will know the lady I alluded to. Good bye! Ha! ha! ha!" and Charlotte walked off.

"Capital!" said Somerset. "Why, Charlotte thinks herself Mrs. Fox already."

“ I am afraid she will be disappointed, Amherst.”

“ So am I, poor girl ! Shall we go in now ?
I must tell my father of the tour I wish to take.”

END OF VOL. II.

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**THE
FEMALE FREEMASONS.**

THE
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IN THREE VOLUMES.

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THE FEMALE FREEMASONS.

HENRY CLEVELAND.

“WHERE shall we go, Mr. Cleveland?” asked Florence. “Amherst is just gone to take a ride.”

“I am quite at your service, Miss Devonshire; ready for a stroll anywhere you like.”

“Shall we go to the cliffs this fine evening? I think we might venture.”

“You are not, then, afraid of the gipsys?”

“Afraid! no! particularly when I have such an able protector.”

“Oh, then let us go by all means!”

Cleveland and his young friend sauntered through the park, towards the cliffs. On the very spot where, the year before, they had spread their pic-nic feast, was seated a gipsy girl.

"Esther!" exclaimed Cleveland, involuntarily.

"Do you know that girl?" asked Florence, in a low tone.

"I do," said Cleveland; "you know my history; that girl was my companion."

"She is beautiful, very beautiful! Let us have our fortunes told."

"If you like it!—Esther, will you tell this lady her fortune?" said Cleveland, addressing his former companion.

"No! no! no!" exclaimed the gipsy-girl, wildly, as she fixed her dark eye on Florence. "She is lovely, but I could curse her, for stealing the heart which should be mine! Lady,"

continued Esther, "you know not what it is to love in vain; and never will you feel the pang of a disappointed heart: you are dear to him you love, and, after a few months, your fates will be united. I watched your stars last night;—though lately they have been overclouded, yet now they shine, with hope, with peace, and love! But now no more of this! Henry, I was seeking you. If ever you wish to know the secret of your birth, follow me now!"

"But I cannot," said Cleveland; "I cannot leave my companion. Wait till I take her home, and then I will."

"Then it will be too late. Follow me now, young man; the secret may be necessary to your happiness, and to that of numbers; follow me now, or you will never know."

"Oh, go! do go!" exclaimed Florence; "leave me! do not mind me! I am not afraid!"

“ How can I leave you here in this wild place ? No, never ! never ! Afraid ! I see you tremble at that wild girl's energy. I cannot leave you.”

“ Come, come, be quick !” exclaimed Esther, “ I cannot wait : decide—will you follow me, or not ? Afraid ! what are you afraid of, Henry ? is it of me, of your sister ? Heavens ! can you fear your sister ? Come on, and naught shall harm you.”

“ Lead on ! lead on !” exclaimed Florence, “ Mr. Cleveland, I will follow you !”

“ Will you indeed !” said Cleveland ; “ then I will go, for it was only leaving you alone that deterred me !”

Florence, half frightened at the gestures of impatience which Esther betrayed, hung for support on Cleveland's arm, as they followed their gipsy guide, who, with rapid strides, quitted the rock on which they had stood ; and, forcing her

way through the tangled bushes, soon reached the water's side.

"Where are you going?" asked Cleveland with astonishment.

"Follow me," replied Esther, as she stepped on a ledge of rock, not three inches wide, that hung over the stream.

"Shall we follow?" said Cleveland to Florence. "Can you walk on that ledge, without feeling giddy?"

"Do not be afraid for me, Mr. Cleveland!" said Florence, smiling; and, instantly stepping on the rock, she stood by the gipsy. Cleveland followed her close; and, in another minute, they fronted the entrance of a cave.

"Stay!" said the gipsy-girl, "till I return!" And, entering the mouth of the cave, she was lost in the darkness.

"What will all this lead to?" said Cleveland

to his companion. I never should have thought of a cave being here."

"Nor I," replied Florence. "But see where our guide beckons us to come in!"

They entered the cave, which was about five feet high. In one corner, on a heap of straw, sat an old man, apparently at the point of death. Raising his eyes, he looked at Cleveland attentively for some minutes; then muttering, "It is—it is him!" beckoned him to be seated.

"And who are you?" said he, addressing himself to Florence.

"That is Miss Devonshire," replied our hero; "and I am Henry Cleveland."

"Cleveland!" exclaimed the old man, as he laughed wildly. "No, young man, you are mistaken; your name is Amherst Somerset, and you are heir to this estate."

"He raves," said Cleveland to Florence; "he takes me for your cousin."

"Stay," said the gipsy. "Is your name Devonshire? Are you the daughter of the sister I loved?"

"My mother," replied Florence, "was the sister of the present possessor of Somerset Park."

"And she is dead?" asked he, with emotion.

"She is," said Florence, gravely.

"Dead! My sister dead, and I am following her!"

"Your sister!" exclaimed Florence.

"Yes, my sister; in me you behold your uncle—the eldest brother of the present Mr. Somerset."

"And are you, then, my father?" asked Cleveland, impatiently.

"Did I not tell you before, young man, that you are the son of Mr. Somerset; if you will listen to my tale, you will learn all. My father

had three children,—I was his eldest; Mr. Somerset, and your mother” to Florence, “were the others. Our father was a younger son; I was educated at my uncle’s expense; he was the owner of this place; he was rich, old, and childless; I was acknowledged as his heir; but I scorned to cringe and play the servile flatterer to my rich uncle. We had frequent disputes, but for these I cared not. My uncle took a religious turn, he kept a chaplain in the house, had regular prayers three times a day; and when the chaplain held up his finger, every person present was to drop on his knees, and there remain till the finger was lowered, and permission given to rise. During my childhood I was contented with laughing at the chaplain; but when I grew older I absented myself from the prayers; neglected to kneel at the given signal; hunted, danced, and drank in spite of all the admonitions

I received; and finally ended by reproaching the chaplain for his duplicity, in preaching against what he practised. For this conduct my uncle read me a long lecture, and gave me permission to quit the house, and never to return, though he continued to make me a handsome allowance. For ten years I never saw him; I was then recalled, and told that, as I was now thirty, I ought to think of marrying; and, as a last effort of his kindness, my uncle offered to settle everything on me if I would marry a young lady he pointed out; but if I refused, I was to be disinherited. I asked time to consider; I met the young lady; but she was so insuperably dull and inanimate, that I could not support her; besides, during my wanderings, I had formed a violent attachment for a young gipsy, which I believed was warmly returned; and I could not bring myself to betray the one I loved, for such a per-

son as my uncle pointed out. I therefore declined the intended alliance, and was dismissed from my uncle's presence. I flew to my sister; she was many years younger than myself, but we were warmly attached. To her I related all that had passed; she wept, but could not blame me; for she herself harboured an unauthorized passion. Your mother," continued the narrator, addressing Florence, "was lovely; she was then what you are now,—young, ardent, affectionate, and romantic!" The old man paused, exhausted by the exertion.

"Esther!" exclaimed Cleveland, "your father faints."

Esther shook her head mournfully, and replied,—“No! he will die,—but not yet; and then I shall be left alone, and none will love me,—for you cannot love a gipsy.”

“Love you, Esther!—what do you mean?”

Have I not known you from childhood?—were we not friends when at Cleveland Grove? Have you forgotten?”

“No! no, no!” exclaimed Esther, pressing his hand to her heart;—“it is here,—it is here! I remember but too well;—but, hush! my father begins to speak.”

The old man raised his head, and, looking round, continued:—

“I must make haste,—my strength fails,—I feel that I am going. In a few months my uncle died,—I found myself disinherited; and to my brother—who, by long compliance with my uncle’s whims, and finally by marrying the lady I rejected, had wormed himself into his good graces—was left all my uncle’s property. I raved like a madman at this blow, for I had never believed my uncle’s threatenings. I was now at the mercy of my numerous creditors,

without a 'sous' in my possession. My brother could have helped me,—but he and I had long quarrelled, from our different tempers ; and to sue to him for aid was too much for my proud spirit. It ended in my taking up my residence in a prison, where I remained, till my sister, by generously sacrificing her whole fortune, obtained my release. To see her, I came to Somerset Park ; but my heart burned with anger, to see my brother in possession of what I had so long considered as my own. I saw my sister,—clasped her in my arms,—thanked her for her generosity ; and, bidding her an eternal farewell, left the place, to seek for her whose love was to recompense me for the loss of my riches and society. She became mine :—I adopted their manner of life, and I was happy, till I became a father ; then, as I looked on my child, and felt that, but for my folly, he would

have been heir to these vast estates, I again felt rage kindling in my heart. My brother also became a father :—I resolved, at any risk, to attempt to change the children ; that his son should be brought up to the life of a wanderer, whilst mine revelled in every luxury. And then I proposed to gratify my revenge on him for cheating me of what ought to have been mine. By bribes I gained the nurse, during the absence of my brother ; and you, Henry,—for you were that child,—were brought to our camp, whilst my son was dressed in your robes, and enjoyed the caresses of your real parents. The nurse I bribed is still living, and can prove the truth of this statement. I never meant to make this discovery, till the near approach of death prompted me to do you justice, and to seek your forgiveness. Can you forgive me ?”

"I can!—I do!" exclaimed Cleveland, solemnly.

The old man's head sunk upon his breast, as Cleveland pronounced these words. Esther sprung to his side, and caught his hand: it grew stiff and cold in hers.

"Give him some cordial!" exclaimed Cleveland, as he started from his seat.

"Hush! hush!" whispered Esther, "do not disturb him." She paused,—then added, "he is dead! Go, leave this place,—leave me, for he is dead—the only one that cared for me, the only friend I had!"

"Esther, my dear Esther," said Cleveland, "I will be your friend; I will take care of you. Miss Devonshire, will you not leave this place? and in a few minutes I will join you."

Florence left the cave, and Cleveland continued:—

“ Say not that your father was your only friend, Esther ; am not I your friend ? Are you not my cousin, and shall I not love you and take care of you ? ”

“ And will you then love me, Henry ? ” said Esther. “ Oh, no ; it cannot be. I know your heart : it is your cousin you love,—it is her whom you will marry. No : leave me—leave me to myself, I shall not be alone, my brother soon will join me.”

“ But, Esther, hear me : why will you not go to my house,—why not live there ? Circumstances will most probably oblige me to leave England ; but to you my house and purse are equally open. You have not forgotten the happy days we passed at Cleveland Grove ; why, then, can you not go there ? ”

“ No, Henry,—no. You mean this well, and I feel your kindness. Oh, had you loved

me, it might have been ; but now—oh, never ! I have been educated a wanderer, and as such I must live. I could not bear to be confined to a house—to be tied down to one spot : no, I will rejoin my people, and with them live all the rest of my days. I have not long to live ; my fate is decreed ; I have traced it in the stars. Vainly would I have endeavoured to struggle with my destiny. My hopes are gone. I see, and I submit.”

Cleveland left the cave, and rejoined Florence. For some time they walked without speaking. Florence at last broke the silence, by saying—

“ What do you mean to do, Mr. Cléveland ? Do you mean to declare what the gipsy has told you ? ”

“ I do not know what to do,” replied Henry. “ For myself, I am content with what I have. But it is you, Florence, who must decide for me.

I love you, Florence ; and could I think that the smallness of my fortune would be any bar towards that return of affection for which I hope, I would instantly make known my claim to this estate ; but if you can love me, and be content with what I have, it shall be a secret between us."

"Mr. Cleveland," replied Florence, "do not suppose that what I have heard to-day, has any influence on me ; but believe me when I frankly say that I love you, and can be just as happy in your smaller home, as in these larger estates."

"Then, my lovely Florence, you consent to take me as I am, and leave my friend the heir of the Somerset property?"

"I do ; and I heartily wish that my cousin was as happy as I am at this moment !"

"Say, 'as we are,' my dear Florence, for henceforward we are one—one in our joys, our hopes, our sorrows ! Oh, Florence ! if I at all

regret my birth being still a secret, it is, that as I am, I cannot lay at your feet what I might otherwise do :—that I cannot, perhaps, give you everything you deserve,—everything you are entitled to.”

“ Stay, my dear Henry,—for in accepting you, I obtain all that I could wish for ; and think how ungenerous, how unfriendly it would be, to deprive our cousin of those hopes in which he has been educated, for the sake of a slight addition to our fortune, which could not make us happier.”

“ You are right, my dearest love !” replied Cleveland ; “ right in this, as in everything. Oh, what a Paradise will my home become, when thou art there !”

“ But, Henry, you must not forget your promise of accompanying Amherst in his travels.”

"How, my dear love? . You cannot surely propose to me to quit you now?"

"I do not wish it; but yet, remember your word is pledged. Think of poor Amhurst, and how short an absence will probably cure him. Oh, yes! Mr. Cleveland; even I must beg you to go with him."

"And if you entreat, how can I refuse? But surely, Florence, you will not banish me for long?"

"Of the length of time you yourself shall be the judge. But see where Amhurst comes, with an unusually cheerful look. Well, my dear cousin, what news?"

"News!" replied Somerset. "Aye, I have news! Such news as would make you almost expire with envy, Florence. Why, all the world is going to be married!"

"Well, but who are all the world?"

"Why, in the first place, Jane Strafford and Mary are going to be married to Captain Dundas and Jack Lawson, and here I have invitations for you to their weddings.—Well, Cleveland, what think you of this? Miss Jane, I think, was a flirt of yours last winter in town?"

"Every one to their taste," answered Cleveland; "but Jane Strafford was not to mine; and, therefore, I shall be most happy to appear at their wedding."

"But, who else has clapped up a match, do you think?" asked Amherst. "Who, now, can you guess at for a nice sober runaway couple?"

"Really I cannot imagine," replied Florence. "Surely, you cannot mean Mr. Fox?"

"Right! quite right! But the lady, who was kind enough to accompany him in his matrimonial tour to Gretna Green?"

"What, Charlotte Blackstone?"

"No! not quite her! guess again."

"Oh, I cannot think! Do tell me, Amherst, who is it?"

"I guess," said Cleveland, with a smile, "her sister."

"You have it right," exclaimed Amherst; "Mr. Fox and Netty are the runaways."

"But how could they contrive that?" asked Florence; "for Charlotte and Mrs. Blackstone were at Mr. Fox's living, and Netty was here."

"Yes! but it was the best thing in the world. Mr. Fox finding that Netty did not come with her mother, persuaded Mrs. Blackstone to let him go and fetch her. So off he went, arrived here, told the old gentleman his errand, and so got Netty away. But, once out of this place, instead of returning to his home, they directed their steps northward. First despatching a

letter, to say that Fox had found old Blackstone so ill that he could not leave him; and then, having tied the knot, they returned to Mr. Blackstone's, where they found the trio in wonder and amazement, each party having been deceived, and neither knowing where the lost ones were."

"Well, if that is not the best thing I ever heard!" exclaimed Cleveland. "I have long known what terms Mr. Fox and his bride were on; but I never thought they would have cheated their friends so cleverly as they have done!"

"But who told you this news, Amherst?" said Florence.

"Who but Dick! he was the only one who was let into this plot: and now they are all safely lodged at home, he came grinning with joy, to tell me of their exploit; but now Mr.

Fox is gone, I wonder what Charlotte will do."

"Wait till she can tempt you to lead her to the altar yourself, my dear cousin."

"Then, indeed, she must wait a long time; for I shall never marry! But I should really like to see you married, Florence, before I go abroad. I should like to give you a better protector than your roving cousin."

"That is exactly the subject Miss Devonshire and I were discussing," said Cleveland, "when you joined us, Somerset. I am exactly of your opinion on this point, and I have reason to believe that Miss Devonshire will not differ from us on any material point; in fact, I have brought her to choose a protector, who, with the consent of her friends, is ready to become her husband."

"Indeed!" exclaimed Somerset, "is this the case? Who is this said person, Florence?"

“ Perhaps,” said Florence, as she quitted her cousin’s arm, and entered the drawing-room,—
“ perhaps Mr. Cleveland will have the goodness to save me that trouble ?”

“ What !” exclaimed Amherst,—“ is it you, Cleveland ? It is what I have ardently wished for, to see the friend of my heart united to my cousin !”

“ Yes ! Amherst, it is I,—I am the happy man, whom the lovely Florence has chosen to be her companion through life. From the first moment I saw her, I was charmed with her beauty, her talents ;—but now she has crowned my happiness.”

“ Stay, Cleveland !—spare me !” exclaimed Amherst, interrupting his friend ; “ I cannot bear this subject. I, too, should have been the husband of one as lovely :—but where are all my happy prospects now ? Gone for ever !

gone!—and I am alone on this earth. I must leave you now, Henry,—for I must be alone. This thought has stirred a chord in my heart, which I thought was laid. Go to my cousin, and be happy!”

Amherst darted from his friend, and was soon lost in the grounds; whilst Cleveland entered the drawing-room, to indulge in thoughts of a happiness that such as he only can feel.

“Cheer up, my dear Florence, and do not be so low!” exclaimed Cleveland, on the morning of his departure for the Continent, with Amherst. From the breakfast table the lovers had retired to the drawing room, and there sat awaiting the moment of their separation.

“How can I help it, Henry?” sighed Florence, “when I am to lose you?”

“But not for long, my dearest girl! Away from you I cannot long remain; for every hour

will seem an age, that separates me from my love. But I cannot bear to see you sad. You will think of me when I am away, and you will write to me often—every day.”

“Yes, every day, my Henry! every moment shall I think of thee.”

“Henry, are you ready?” exclaimed Amherst, as he entered the room. “Good bye, Florence. I know I am selfish in taking away Henry from you, but you will pardon me; and when next we meet, you will be all happiness.”

“Farewell, dear Florence, my own dear love,” said Cleveland, as he pressed the fair one to his heart, and followed his cousin from the room.

Florence flew to the window; she saw the carriage roll away; she followed it with her eyes till lost in the distance; and then shutting herself up in her own room, she indulged in a flood of tears. “It is folly!” she exclaimed at last,

“ thus to weep, for am I not much happier than many ! Do I not love, and am I not loved by, the best of men ! Oh, Henry, if ever man was like an angel, thou art that man ! So good, so generous, so kind ! who, who could equal thee ? and thou art to be mine ! Yes ! a few months will unite us for ever ! Why then should I be melancholy ? Let me rather go to my aunt, for she is thy mother ; and, as such, I will cherish her ! ”

Our travellers continued their route through England ; they passed through France, visiting only the most worthy objects : but, as in these enlightened days every one has travelled, and has seen these objects, we will not trouble our readers to follow our hero. Suffice it to say, that six months after they had left England, and whilst they were proposing a tour from Naples, where they had taken up their residence, to Con-

stantinople, Amherst, one morning early, sought his friend's room.

"To England," exclaimed he; "to England, Henry!"

"England!" said Cleveland, "what are you dreaming of? Are all well? Have you had a letter? Is Florence ill?"

"Not that I know of," replied his friend; but I have been reflecting that I ought not to keep you any longer from England, and from Florence; so, the moment I was up, I ordered our valet to prepare for England, and to procure horses, for we should start to-day; and then I came to tell you!"

"And do you really mean to return directly to Somerset Park? Oh, what happiness for me, once more to behold my Florence!—to make her mine for ever! But you are sure you have no bad news from England?"

“ Why, how suspicious you are, Cleveland !”

“ Pardon me, my dear friend ; but you know I am anxious ; it is so long since I heard from Florence !”

“ Well, cheer up ! next week you will see—”

“ Thank heaven ! I hope so,” rejoined Cleveland, with warmth.

A few days brought our travellers to England. Hardly had they landed, and entered the hotel, when Somerset put a letter into Cleveland’s hand, and, addressing him, said,—

“ Pardon me, my dear Henry, if I have caused you any uneasiness, by withholding from you this letter. It came to our lodgings at Naples, when you were out ; and I opened it, and the contents were such as induced me to come immediately to England, as I have done.”

Cleveland opened the letter, which was from Florence, and read the following lines, which appeared to have been penned in haste :—

“ Return to England, my dear Henry ! I am happy to be able to beg you to return. My aunt and uncle wish me to do so : the reason I must endeavour to explain to you. A few days back, Amherst’s nurse was taken ill, and sent for my aunt, on her death-bed. I accompanied her ; and in our presence the woman confessed that Amherst was not my aunt’s child ; but she had been bribed by my uncle’s brother to change the children,—which she had done ; and that since that time, she had never seen or heard anything of you. Finding the secret now revealed, and my aunt in a terrible agitation, I thought it best to inform her of what had been told us in the gipsy cave ;—that you were really their child, and that Amherst was their nephew. On this intelligence, they immediately begged me to recall their long-lost son ; which I do with every feeling of joy, knowing that even

this change will not alter the heart of my beloved Henry! To your judgment also we confide the task of acquainting my poor cousin with the change. That you will share his feelings as much as possible, I am sure,—for the sake of your affectionate

FLORENCE."

"Cleveland," said Amherst, as the former finished the perusal of the letter, "you have acted towards me nobly and generously. You meant well; but had you made yourself known, when you discovered who you were, you would have saved me much pain."

"What I did," replied Cleveland, "was what any one else would have done in my place. I wanted nothing: I was happy in your friendship,—in the esteem of my parents,—and in the love of my Florence. Your estate was nothing to me."

“ True,” answered his friend ; “ yet, had you declared this secret, I should have been spared the many reproaches I have given myself, for not sufficiently valuing and loving my supposed parents. But now I feel independent ; and, to a mind like mine, independence is bliss. Now, bound by no ties, I shall roam wherever fancy leads ! But a truce to this : we will now hasten home ;—you to your parents, your home, your wife. I, to take a last look at all these objects :—to see my cousin become yours, and then to set out on my travels. Thus each will be happy in his own way,—and that is decidedly the best way !”

“ Depend upon it, Amherst, in your cousin and myself you will ever find sincere friends ; and though, in this respect, we did not sufficiently know you, to act as would best please

you, yet you will never find any more ready to act for your advantage."

* * * *

Great were the rejoicings at Somerset Park on the arrival of the heir. The bells rang, and great were the signs of joy evinced by all; yet none felt sincerer pleasure than Florence, who, with a light heart and beaming eyes, watched the carriage, as it approached the house.

"Here they are!" she exclaimed, as she bounded into the hall, and was the next instant clasped in the arms of her lover.

"Yes," replied Amherst, "we are here, Florence—the old cousins and the new! and it is your own fault if you have been unwillingly separated. But, however, all is forgotten; and now I must wish you joy as the future mistress of Somerset Park."

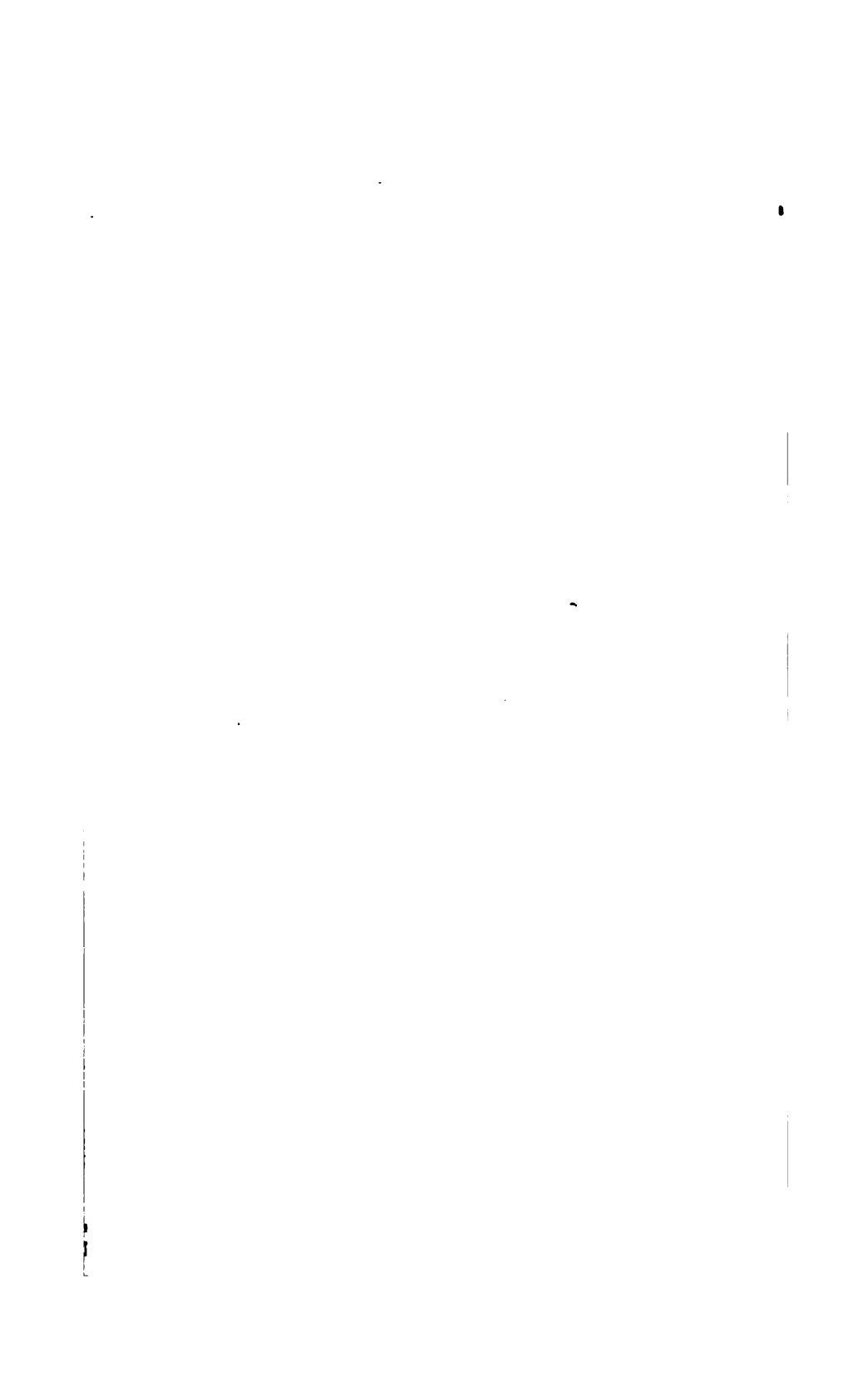
The rest of the congratulations must be

imagined; and Henry Somerset (for so by way of distinction we must call him) was overpowered with caresses. In a few days more the whole party adjourned to town, to make preparation for the approaching nuptials. Settlements were drawn out; the 'trousseau' arranged; and all affairs being concluded, they again returned to Somerset Park, where the ceremony was performed by the worthy Mr. Fox; his interesting bride and her family being the only witnesses of it, as both Henry and Florence disliked all vain parade.

After their nuptials, Somerset and his lovely bride set off for Cleveland Grove; and Amherst, after taking a last farewell of all his childish haunts, and bidding adieu to his friends, quitted the place of which he had so long been the reported heir, to become a wanderer on the face of the earth.

And now, to end our tale, suffice it to say, that a few months after the latter event, Miss Charlotte Blackstone, vexed and chagrined above measure at the marriage of her friend and sister before herself, made a journey to another part of the country, where she was seen and admired by a young ensign at a public ball ; and, next day, unknown to any one, the knot was tied ; and a few hours more found Miss Charlotte (now Mrs. O'Grady) on board the vessel which conveyed her husband with some troops to the West Indies.

THE SILENT GENTLEMAN.



THE SILENT GENTLEMAN.

"WHAT a pleasant evening,—what a gay promenade!" said Anne Lisle to her friend, Mrs. Manby, as they walked on the beach of a fashionable bathing-place on the eastern coast.

"Yes, it is. Do you know who that girl in green is, with the ugly eyes?" replied Mrs. Manby.

"La, Mrs. Manby, what are you thinking about? Why, that is Miss Johnstone, the celebrated belle of this county. But, however, I do not think her pretty."

"Pretty, indeed! I wonder who thought

her pretty, except her own mother. I think her a perfect fright!" returned Mrs. Manby.

"Have you no news?" said Miss Lisle, after a long pause. "Is there no news to-day?"

"Why, yes; but I cannot tell it, for it is most confidential," replied Mrs. Manby.

"So Mrs. Manby will not trust her friend? Is that fair play?"

"Well, I know I can trust you, or else I should not have said a word about it. Captain Knighton has proposed for Miss Barton."

"What, this week? And will she have him?"

"I cannot yet say. But do not tell any one for the world; for as I am Miss Barton's confidant——"

"Oh, make yourself easy upon that head; I never repeat what you, my dear Mrs. Manby, say to me. But, look, who is this gentleman?"

"That is the Silent Gentleman," replied Mrs. Manby. "Do not you think he looks mad?"

"The silent gentleman? And who is he?" said Miss Lisle.

"Why, have you not heard that he arrived here about five months ago; that he lives at the Paris Hotel; that he pays very well for everything; but that he never speaks?"

"What, never speaks?" exclaimed Miss Lisle.

"Oh, sometimes he says 'Yes,' or 'No,' but nothing more than that."

"How very singular!"

"Particularly so, my dear," replied Mrs. Manby. "He frequents the billiard-rooms; sometimes plays—never very high; but returns no answer to any casual questions. One evening, some time back,—it was New-Year's-Eve,—he came late into the billiard-room, evidently

a little intoxicated ; he went up to the fire, and began rubbing his hands : at last he said,— ‘ Well, gentlemen, I wish you a happy New Year ! Suppose you accompany me home ; we will spend the evening over a bowl of punch, and be merry.’ The gentlemen went ; and the Silent Gentleman—for no one ever heard his name—treated his guests to a bowl of punch and plenty of wine. He never spoke to his companions, but, leaning his elbows on the table, covered his face with his hands, muttering every now and then, ‘ Drink, gentlemen, drink.’ At one o’clock he sent them away ; and he has never noticed them since,—not even bowed to them on meeting.”

“ How odd ! ” said Miss Lisle. “ Now I should really like to make acquaintance with the Silent Gentleman. I think he looks unhappy. Perhaps he is in grief ; perhaps——”

"A truce to 'perhaps!'" exclaimed Mrs. Manby. "Pray tell me who this lady and gentleman are?"

"What, that pretty girl in blue, with that good-looking young man?"

"The same."

"That young lady is Miss Fanny Layton; and the young man, Mr. Johnstone, junior, brother to the girl we were first talking of."

"Oh, how charming!" said Mrs. Manby. "You know I was dying to see them! I hear it is to be a match?"

"What, young Johnstone going to marry that girl, who is, at least, four years older than himself?"

"Yes, he is; and one of the principal attractions of the match to him, is to get a quiet home; for Mr. and Mrs. Barton are always fighting."

“ You do not mean to say that Mr. Barton is alive ?”

“ To be sure he is, and a very good-for-nothing man he is. There was a regular flare-up in his house the other day ; and the finale is that Miss Barton and papa leave the place to-morrow for London ; while Mrs. Johnstone and son remain here.”

“ Look, look, here comes the Silent Gentleman,” interrupted Miss Lisle. “ See how he turns, from side to side, and stops suddenly ; if you observe, he never lets his face be seen.”

“ Dear me,” said Mrs. Manby, “ I heard he was branded with ‘ murderer,’ or some such name, on his forehead.”

“ What ! branded ! let us observe him closely, —let us go straight up to him.”

“ It is of no use,” said Mrs. Manby, after some vain endeavours to approach the object of

their curiosity. "Yet I thought I saw a mask on his forehead. Did you?"

"I cannot exactly say; for his hair is so combed over it."

"Yes, yes," returned Mrs. Manby, "you may depend upon it he has good reason to hide his head."

"Dear me, I had quite forgot to tell you something very important, Mrs. Manby."

"Oh, pray tell it me, I am dying to hear it, my dear Anne."

"First guess, Mrs. Manby. It is about a gentleman."

"Oh, charming! La, a gentleman! Do I know him? Is he good-looking?"

"I think you know him by sight; and, in my opinion, he is a favoured man in the county, besides being a clergyman."

"La, Anne, I cannot think who it is you can mean. It cannot be Pemberton?"

“Yes, he is the man. Well, he has got a governess for his children, a clergyman’s widow, and he is a clergyman widower. It is thought that the parties might suit, and that it will terminate in a love affair.”

“Well, that is news,” returned Mrs. Manby ; “but I thought his cousin had been the one he admired.”

“Oh, but she would not have him ; and so it is whispered that he is over attentive to the new lady in his house.”

“Indeed, I have heard it hinted that——,” here a whispering took place ; and, “Oh, shocking ! but you do not believe it ?” burst from Mrs. Manby’s lips.

“Why, I should think so ; for I had it from good authority. You know I hate ill-founded assertions.”

“Oh, so do I ; but why was such a thing

supposed? There must have been some cause, my dear," said Mrs. Manby.

"Oh, yes, plenty of causes. Why, he was seen handing his governess into his pew, reading out of the same book, or, what is just the same, giving her his book, as her's had no psalms in it. Then his servant, coming suddenly into the room, saw them sitting opposite to each other by the fire, with the children between them; and a thousand other instances I could give. Now, does not this look so?"

"Certainly, these observations are ominous of no good."

"But, after all," said Miss Lisle, "I hope he will not demean himself by marrying this woman; for I am really interested in his welfare!"

"My dear Miss Lisle, your kind heart makes you like every body; but, believe me, Mr. Pemberton is not what he appears. He says

such dreadful things of people. Now, just answer me one question. I know I am ordinary ; but, altogether, my figure and all, do not you think I look better than most people—handsomer than most people ?”

“ Why, nobody ever doubted your distinguished appearance, my dear Mrs. Manby,” returned Anne, who could not refrain a smile.

“ There now,” replied Mrs. Manby, “ I was told Hamilton said I was not at all genteel ; or, in fact, he said vulgar. Now, though I am not vain, everybody always allowed that I was distinguished for air and gentility ; and, though I despise all worldly attractions — you know I do—yet it was cruel to slander me falsely, was it not ?”

“ Certainly,” returned Miss Lisle, who was almost choked with laughter at this speech ; “ certainly it was untrue, ungentlemanly, and rude. But do not be alarmed, or hurt, at what

Hamilton has said ; for I know somebody, a very handsome gentleman too, but we will not say who, who admires a certain person very much. You know, my dear Mrs. Manby, I hate flattering, but I now speak the truth."

"Nay, I have no pretensions, you know," said Mrs. Manby, who was smiling with pleasure ; "but who is the gentleman?"

"You shall not know him," said Anne, laughing ; "you shall not know."

"Oh, you certainly delight in teasing me, Anne, but I love you, and we are confidants ; therefore I will tell you what was said of you at our last ball. Mr. Pemberton said you were a pretty, nice girl, and I heard it remarked that you were beautiful ; and, in short, that you were the belle of the room. Besides, you know, that ugly old-fashioned clergyman, I heard him ask

who you were; 'Miss Lisle,' was the answer. He nudged his brother, that ugly lout with the broad-brimmed hat and fair hair, and said in French, 'Your love is Miss Lisle; she is pretty, and has twenty thousand pounds.' The young man blushed and smiled, and continued looking at you; but, after all, who cares to be praised by such louts?"

"Stay, Mrs. Manby," said Anne, gravely: "Mr. Langford, Senior, I esteem; I will hear nothing against such a worthy man. His brother I admire, and also esteem; he has become a clergyman from principle: say nothing but good of him; he is neither handsome nor ugly, —but he is a gentleman. And who can have spread such an untrue report, as that I have twenty thousand pounds?"

"Untrue! why, I did it, my dear. Sure, every

body likes fortunes, and I meant to oblige you. Why, you will have all the smart men about you."

"Dear Mrs. Manby, contradict this nonsense as soon as possible; I know you will."

"Certainly, if you wish it; but it will be no harm, and will be great fun, to take in the young man."

"The young man! Why, what young man?" said Miss Lisle.

"Why, young Langford. He is in love with you,—has a large fortune;—and, if you can get introduced to him, you may easily snare the youth."

"Snare the youth! how you talk. Why do you think I would marry a person I did not love, Mrs. Manby?"

"Love! Why if you wait till you meet a man you love, you will die an old maid. Be-

lieve me, no fashionable person ever thinks of love, my dear Miss Lisle. Why, you do not think I love, or ever loved that little man, Mr. Manby—I mean my husband? *I* love that little grizzled fright?—not I! I married him for his money, and he does very well. I always send him out of the way of my company.”

“A truce, a truce to this topic,” said Miss Lisle, now ashamed of Mrs. Manby’s declarations and avowals.

“Look, who is this,” said Mrs. Manby, “coming limping along here, with the red whiskers?”

“This,” returned Miss Lisle, “is Mr. Finney, the apothecary, and his spouse.”

“And who is the lady with the crimson ribbands and a snipe face, leaning on that young man with black hair and eyes, and his head, for all the world, like a cock’s-comb, if it was but red?”

“Why that is young Hare and Miss Finney.”

“They are going to be married,” said Mrs. Manby. “Oh, it is quite true, I assure you: every body knows it, for they are always walking and talking together.”

“If that is all,” said Anne, “we do that, and yet we are not going to marry.”

“Oh, now you jest: why it is the way the thing is done,” said Mrs. Manby. “But who is this over-dressed person with a face like a squeezed lemon?”

“That is Captain Hardy’s wife,” said Miss Lisle.

“I think it is time to retire to our homes,” said Mrs. Manby, “for the company has dispersed. See, a thunder-shower is coming on!”

“Well, adieu till we meet again!” said Anne Lisle, as she ran towards her home, exclaiming, “How odd this strange man looks—the Silent

Gentleman. I will, I must, get acquainted with him. I would give anything to know his life, birth, and what he is. But patience—I will know all about him, or I will know why.”

* * * *

“ Oh, my dear Mrs. Manby ! what a time it is, since I have seen you. I have so much to say to you, I do not know where to commence.”

“ Oh, Miss Lisle, I hope all are well ? What news to-day ? Come, commence.”

“ Well, I first will tell you what has happened to myself;—a delightful adventure with a gentleman.”

“ With a gentleman !” echoed Mrs. Manby ;
“ ah, how I long to hear it ! How I envy you !
—out with it.”

“ Well, the Silent Gentleman—”

“ Mercy !” said Mrs. Manby, starting from her chair, and upsetting the table ; — “ the Silent Gentleman ?—you surely joke ?”

"No," said Miss Lisle, "I do not joke. Once more, the Silent Gentleman has met with an accident, and is—in our house!"

"Was ever any mortal so fortunate as you? Oh, let me hear all!" said Mrs. Manby, reddening with pleasure.

"One morn, the Silent Gentleman was riding by our house, when his horse threw him. I was at the low window: I screamed,—called the servants;—and, in fine, he was brought into our house. I led the way, and he was placed upon the bed in the room next to mine. His head was deeply cut, and he was insensible. Mamma was out, I therefore had the management of him. I sent for Dr. G——s, who bled him; and, leaving him in the care of the servants, I went to my own room. Dr. G——s soon came to me,—gave hopes of his life,—and departed home. Still I sate in my room:—I

tried to write, work, and read; but nothing could I do: so, in a pet, I went to bed. Next morning, I met mamma; she approved of my conduct, and I went to the Silent Gentleman's room. I gently opened the door, and walked in: he was lying awake, and quite sensible;—stared at me, and seemed confused. I begged pardon for intrusion,—hoped he was well attended,—and was retiring, when his voice arrested me. ‘Stay!’ cried he, ‘angel, or whatever you are, stay!’ I stood as one of marble. ‘Tell me,’ cried he, ‘are you Lady Harriet?’ I started, but replied, ‘I am Miss Lisle.’—‘Miss Lisle!’ he repeated;—‘not Lady Harriet? Yes, you are right,’ he said, looking at me; ‘you are not so handsome as Lady Harriet, though beautiful.’ He then stopped, mused, and at last recollecting himself, said,—‘Miss Lisle, I beg pardon,—I have mistaken

you for another person; but you will excuse me.' I assured him I was not offended, and left the room.

"This, my dear Mrs. Manby, is all I yet know of the Silent Man."

"Well, how singular, but how delightful! I dare say he will turn out a romantic youth, and fall in love with you."

"Oh, Mrs. Manby!" said Anne, laughing, "I am sure I shall not fall in love with him. If Lord Byron is right, his romantic days are over."

"Why, what does Lord Byron allow to be romantic days?" asked Mrs. Manby.

"At five-and-thirty the romantic age ends; and this man is more like five-and-fifty," said Anne.

"Oh! but," returned Mrs. Manby, "Lord

Byron is not right. I am more than five-and-thirty,—yet doat on romance !”

“ My dear Mrs. Manby, you are an extraordinary woman,” said Anne, with an assumed gravity.

“ Pish !” said Mrs. Manby ; “ you would turn an angel’s head with flattery !”

“ No, Mrs. Manby, I hate flattery ; but have angels heads, like us mortals ?”

“ Dear me ! I never thought of that ; but it does not matter,” said Mrs. Manby. “ Let us go out to walk. Look ! how do you like my new bonnet ? I think the pink and black agree charmingly ; and so neat,—is it not ?”

“ Oh, what a tastey hat ! Really, Mrs. Manby, you have such angelic thoughts ! Who but you, could have arranged these flowers so beautifully ? Ah, I see I cannot pretend to vie

with you in dress;—but this superb feather!—might I ask where your milliner lives?—no doubt in Paris?”

“There, now!” said the delighted Mrs. Manby; “I made it myself:—but, you will allow, with taste and execution.”

“Made it yourself?—you joke!” said Miss Lisle, yawning, and looking at some gentlemen who were passing. “But let us go out, and hear the news.”

“I am dying for news!” returned Mrs. Manby;—“indeed, I awoke very ill this morning, and was nervous to a degree, till you came and told me that sweet little bit of news. I am very delicate, you know.”

“Oh, I know it very well,” said Anne, laughing to herself;—“but there is a ball to-night.”

“A ball!—oh! where?—where, my dear?”

I am delighted at the news ! Can I go to it ?—
is it a public one ? Ah ! what pleasure !”

“ Yes, I know you look delicate !” said Anne, pretending not to hear Mrs. Manby’s questions ; “ yes, I know you look delicate ! yet your quiet life ought to afford you relief. Believe me, nothing like rest for nervousness, Mrs. Manby.”

“ Why, you do not hear what I say,” said Mrs. Manby. “ Tell me about this ball ;—I should like to go so much !”

“ Oh ! the ball is at L——b. But you look pale ;—you will not go ?”

“ Go !—to be sure I will. Oh, I can put a little rouge on. I never felt so well,” said Mrs. Manby, jumping upon a chair, and viewing herself in a glass ;—“ why, I have colour enough for a lady. You would not wish to see me like a dairymaid !”

“ Oh, you now look very well,” said Anne,

much amused at the change the ball had worked in Mrs. Manby's bulletin. "But I must now leave you; for I must go home to—"

"The Silent Gentleman," said Mrs. Manby; "but do not fall in love with him, and become the Silent Lady; for that would be dreadful. Adieu. Come soon: I long to know more of your *Intended*."

"A ball is a good receipt to cure Mrs. Manby," thought Miss Lisle; "and in future she shall have a ball instead of a pill. But I must run fast home. What a deal of time I have wasted with Mrs. Manby, doing nothing at all! I wonder what the Silent Gentleman would say to such a clack?"

* * * *

"Oh, Mrs. Manby, would you believe it? the Silent Gentleman quitted our house last night, unknown to us. He left his history on

my table, and he set off by the coach this morning, for Scotland, or somewhere in the North."

"Do you mean to say that he is gone?" said Mrs. Manby. "What has caused his flight?"

"Why, I would not marry him."

"And did he really ask you? Oh, you lucky girl! But why did you drive the man to despair, you cruel wretch?"

"Really I do not know; but here is his life. Shall I read it to you?"

"By all means."

"But you must take an oath not to reveal what it contains, for——"

"Very well. Here is a Bible. Now begin."

THE HISTORY OF THE SILENT
GENTLEMAN.

I was born in England. My county and name I conceal, as there are those of my family living who would be surprised if they thought me in existence. My father was a man of small fortune,—proud, austere, and formal. At an early age I was sent to one of the public schools. I got on slowly, as I was idle, and loved nothing but amusements. I might have continued there all my life,—(for my father repeatedly declared, that, until I had gained the head of the school, I should never leave it),—if I had not been obliged to fly,—yes, to fly with shame, and ignominy, and everlasting reproach. My father made me a small allowance of pocket-money; but it was not enough to satisfy me. I was

desperately fond of gambling ; and to support that passion—or rather to indulge in it—I stole money. Twice I committed this offence—this crime—when I had no other means of satisfying my creditors ; but it was twice too often, for custom made me forget the crime, and it became a daily practice. One day I entered the room where the boys kept their money in their desks ; having looked all around me, I hastily opened one,—a bank-note was in my hand,—when I saw a boy looking at me. For a moment I lost my self-possession ; but, on seeing it was only a child,—one who ran errands for the boys,—I, with the money still in my gripe, locked the desk, went up to the boy, bribed him to keep the secret ; and frightening him with the most dreadful imprecations, if he let the secret out, I left him, and joined my companions.

At night I was again gambling, and again

lost. My watch I had long parted with : everything I had was gone. I promised payment in the morning, and in despair left the billiard-room.

On my entering my chamber, the boy before-mentioned met me ; he was pale and trembling, and beckoned me aside. He told me that several had missed their money ; that he had been accused, and had denied it ; and he begged me to confess my guilt. Mad with anger—with despair—and drunk with wine, in a fury I raised the boy, and dashed him with all my might on the ground ; his head struck a stone, which entered his temples, and—oh, how shall I write the end ?—he lay before me lifeless. Any body but myself would have been frightened with what they had done, but I had no feeling, charity, or compassion ; and, without taking a second look at the child, I climbed the wall, and escaped. But after I had

travelled about twenty miles, where was I to go—what was I to do? A band of soldiers came along; I enlisted, and marched to Ireland; but still I never gave up my favourite play, and, for once, I won—yes, won a hundred pounds.

I left the army, which I detested, and went to London. My principles were bad, or, rather, I had no principles at all. I became a swindler; one of those dandies, who game, and cheat, and yet get into good company. I was known by the name of 'Upton.' At a ball I got acquainted with Lady Harriet Boston. I was an agreeable partner,—had plenty of talk; and, in short, I resolved to marry her. She was young—about seventeen—and beautiful. I, though abandoned to every vice, was handsome. We met several times. Her parents forbade me coming to the house. I apparently obeyed; but still we met in private. Their house had a

splendid garden and wood ; I used to await my mistress there. It was not till some time after we had thus met, that I learnt she had a brother : that brother was, or had formerly been, my Captain. From Lady Harriet I learned that he was daily expected. His knowledge of my meeting Lady Harriet would have defeated all my schemes. I forbade her, therefore, to mention it. It was a beautiful summer's night, when, scaling the wall, I entered the grove, where Lady Harriet expected me. She was there. Our meeting, at least on her part, was happy. As for myself, I never knew happiness. Among other things she related to me, was, that her brother had arrived two days before. She hesitated, and blushed. I asked the reason. He had never heard of my name in the army, but would have much pleasure in seeing and knowing me. The blood rose to my face, and I

exclaimed, "This, then, Lady Harriet, is your love for me. To tell your brother what I begged you to keep quite secret. You have ruined me."

"Dear Upton, hear me," said Lady Harriet. "I told George that circumstances would prevent your knowing each other at present. I begged him to keep my secret, but he refused, except on condition that you should meet him, and inform him of your family and connexions; will you refuse to do this?"

I could have killed myself at that moment, so angry was I at this affair: but I concealed my rage, and answered calmly.

"My lovely Harriet, hear me:—my father and I do not agree. He does not like the thought that I shall be his heir. My step-mother makes home hateful to me; I, therefore, have left my father's house, under a feigned name. My real name and title are highly above

your idea. But at present I must conceal them ; and I know you will believe me. What more need I say, but offer you my hand, my heart ? Oh, make me a happy man,—deign, Lady Harriet, to answer me.”

She was much moved, but replied,—“ I confess I love, I adore you,—I am ashamed to allow that I have prompted you to this by so often meeting you against my parents’ consent ; but I cannot marry you,—I have promised not to marry without their permission.”

“ And who has induced Lady Harriet to make this foolish promise, to break my heart, and her own ? Oh, listen to me,—you are the only woman I have ever loved ; forget your extorted promise, and consent to become mine !”

“ Oh,” exclaimed Lady Harriet, “ how can I leave my parents ? You counsel me wrongly. I see but too plainly my error in meeting you alone.”

"Lady Harriet, does not every wife forsake her father and mother, and follow her husband? Oh, say that you will marry me."

"I will," was on her lips, when Sir George Boston darted from the shrubbery, and exclaimed—"Villain, would you counsel my sister to marry you." He stopped short, for he knew me; and remembered the common soldier. "Do my eyes deceive me? you are Henry Bolton? Speak."

"I was," I replied, eyeing him with disdain.

"You are an impostor, and are well known. I only let you escape on my sister's account, and on the condition that you leave England."

"I do not accede to any conditions; and I will neither leave England nor Lady Harriet, my affianced wife."

"Insolent," said Sir George, raising his hand.

"You dare not again say that."

"I dare—Lady Harriet is, and shall be, my affianced wife."

"I command silence," thundered Sir George.

"You, Harriet, go to your room. And you, sir, depart; let me hear of you no more."

I smiled contemptuously at him; and taking Lady Harriet's hand, would have kissed it, but Sir George pushed between us. I let go Lady Harriet, and Sir George having collared and shook me, threw me from him. This affront I revenged. At once, turning short, I plunged a dagger into his heart. He fell. Lady Harriet screamed—"Fly, wretch, fly, and save your wicked life." But, now inflamed, I seized her; and, swearing that she should go with me, we struggled. Her screams brought the servants, and I was secured, and placed in confinement.

* * * * *

My trial at length came on, and Lady Harriet

was, of course, the principal witness. Bathed in tears for her brother's death, and for my crime, for she had really loved me, she was forced to depose her evidence against me; and I was sentenced to be hung. As the judge finished these words, I looked in Lady Harriet's face. She was pale, and tearful, and was soon taken out of Court. As I was removed to my cell, thousands crowded to see me. I was, of all the crowd, the least concerned; for I concealed my feelings in a proud disdain of death. But in my cell very different were my thoughts. I would have killed myself in despair, but had no means of any kind. At last, I thought of hanging. I took off my garters, and, tying them together, pulled them, but they broke. Angry with myself, with the whole world, I sat down on my bench, resolved to await death. I counted the hours,—ten, eleven, twelve: only ten more

till I should be either in Heaven or Hell. I knew the latter would be my portion ; for in Heaven, I, so wicked, so horrible, could never dwell. I was reflecting on this, and many other dreadful things, when I saw my door open. I looked—a figure, shrouded in black, entered. I would have spoke, but a sign, made by the intruder, prevented me. After shutting the door, and looking all around, the person approached me, and lifted up her veil. It was Lady Harriet.

“ Silence,” she whispered, “ or all will be lost. You die to-morrow ; but I have provided means of escape ; change your dress ; here are some clothes, and a little wine. Be hasty, and make no noise.”

I did as I was bid. Lady Harriet opened the cell-door ; and, sliding softly along the passage, entered the Governor’s house. I was dressed as her maid. She tapped at a win-

dow—it was opened—and the Governor's daughter let us out by the front door. After we had turned the corner, a carriage awaited us; and, stepping into it, we drove rapidly towards the Dover road; we had to pass Lady Harriet's residence to get to it. At the back of the wood the coach stopped, and Lady Harriet spoke as follows:—

“ You are now released by me, for though you killed my brother, yet I could not bear the thought that you should die in such sins. The Governor's daughter I obliged, when she was dangerously ill, and she opened her father's door, to let you fly. This carriage will take you to meet the Dover coach, by which you must escape to France. And now we part for ever; and if you have ever loved me, be warned,—repent, whilst you have time, and leave off your sins:—think no more of me, for I now *despise* and abhor you.”

Without one look she leaped out and entered that fatal grove. The coach rattled on; and I, instead of swinging on a gibbet, was on my road to France. It was some time before I perceived that Lady Harriet had left a purse in my hand. It contained fifty guineas, and was of great use to me; for, without it, I could not have paid the expenses of my journey. When arrived at Dover, I was obliged to wait the tide.

To pass the time, I entered the coffee-room. Three gentlemen were in deep and important conversation; I took up a paper, and retired to the window. I pretended to read, but, in fact, was listening. Judge of my fright. The mail had brought the news that Upton, the prisoner, had escaped;—that warrants were out, and that a hundred pounds were offered for me, by the parents of Lady Harriet Boston.

I let fall the newspaper in my fear. Luckily

they saw it not; and I took the first opportunity for escape, and hurried to the beach. I saw a fisherman just going to follow his trade. I offered him five guineas to take me over to Calais. The hurry of my manner, my alarmed and wild look, astonished him. I collected myself and again said, "Delay not; I have a dear friend at the point of death: my presence in Calais is of the utmost importance; and I cannot await the steam-packet." He eyed me cautiously, and said, "The bribe is persuasive; I am poor, and will convey you over; but I doubt your story." He hastily arranged his boat; I stepped into it, and in a few moments was out of sight. The sea was tremendous; and often did I wish I had remained on land: but of the two deaths, drowning was the best; and I encouraged the fisherman by a further bribe. Again he looked closely at me, but was

silent; and, after a night's rough work, I landed on the French coast. Hastily I pulled out my purse, and, hardly knowing whether I was safe or not, gave ten guineas to my preserver, and was turning away, when he touched me, and said, "Do you remember me?" I started, and, quivering with fear, looked at him,—and I saw the boy I had believed dead. I nearly fell;—but, with my hardened manner, I recovered, and looked haughtily; and I demanded what he meant, with the air of one who knows his victim is in his power. He said, "I think you best know what I mean. Do you remember the time you left me senseless? Long was it before hopes of life were given; and when I did recover, I was accused of theft;—I was accused for what you had done, and was forbid to be employed about the school. I did not mention your guilt, for I knew you were a gentleman,

and young,—and at eighteen, crimes may be committed which afterwards are sorely repented of. But who would now employ me? Nobody. My mother alone knew the truth; she left the place, and came here. I turned my thoughts towards the sea, and became what I now am. I knew you the first moment I saw you. I heard your plausible story, but did not believe it; for I recollected your early expertness at that art; besides, I had just heard of a person having escaped from prison. Guilt was on your brow: I recognised in you the murderer of Sir George Boston. But I did not desert you, as you once left me. No: I pitied you. I have saved your life. Go, then; repent. Your secret is safe with me.”

I hesitated, and offered more gold.

“Hold, wretched man!” said he; “dost thou think that all are like thyself?—all as wicked, as mercenary as thou art? No: I have enough—

too much. I would not have taken it for myself. But my mother is old and infirm. I have a large family; and it will be better spent on them than on gaming. May you, when next we meet, be as altered in soul as you are now in face; for nobody but myself would recognise you as the handsome youth of eighteen."

He turned; and I looked like a statue, till the boat was out of sight. I then slowly entered Calais; and after finding a little inn, I entered it, and ordered refreshment. I remained within and alone all the evening, and tried to make resolutions to live better—to give up play, and, in short, to become a repentant Christian. But it would not do. I could not live without being wicked: I could not become repentant; my heart was hardened, and I was a sinner. I did not retire to rest all night, for I was afraid—

yes, afraid—afraid to be alone in the dark—afraid to be alone in the presence of my Maker, and in the dark, for then that deed of darkness was committed—the murder of Sir George Boston,—and it came before me in its most terrific form. Any noise alarmed me; every blast of the wind startled me. In such a state sleep would not visit me; bed was useless to me. I dozed by the fire, every now and then frightened by horrid dreams, till morning came to my relief. It was Sunday. I wished to stay at home; but I felt I ought to go to church. The bell ceased tolling, and I strolled into one, but not as a contrite sinner. The service seemed tedious to me, yet every word went to my soul; and when the clergyman preached of repentance, of faith, of forgiveness of sins, I trembled. I thought the sermon preached against myself, and tried to conceal myself from

observation. It was a Protestant congregation. I rose the first; and before the crowd had left their seats, I was in my chamber. I again made resolutions, and wished to adhere to them; but my principles were weak, and easily led astray.

In the afternoon a party of young men came into the coffee-room; they joined me, persuaded me,—laughed at my reminding them of its being Sunday, said a little play was no harm, and made me agree to go to the gambling house. Need I say that I lost at first, and lost every penny. The next game I cheated; it was not perceived, and I won a hundred pounds. I declared my determination of leaving off play; the party remonstrated; I was firm, they grew angry; said it was not fair. From words I proceeded to blows; a battle ensued—every one was fighting. I hit my antagonist a blow on the stomach; he reeled,

and in the tumult I escaped. I ran to the inn, paid my small bill, and, with my change of clothes in my pocket, left Calais immediately in the diligence, and arrived at Paris. Need I say I again became an impostor? I determined to act the fine gentleman. I laid out fifty pounds on my dress and equipments, took good apartments at one of the hotels, and frequented the billiard table. At it I got acquainted with some young noblemen. One of them, as dissipated as myself, I had almost said as wicked, became my intimate friend—Count Girode Bassenvelt. He introduced me to his family, and I formed the intention of marrying his eldest sister, *Mademoiselle Zélotie*. Never lover pushed his suit more ardently than I did. Not that I loved the lady, but her money; for she was not comparable to Lady Harriet, but proud, conceited, vain; yet it was all the same to me, and I resolved to

woo and win. One day I repaired to her house. She was in her boudoir. I was admitted. She was playing on the harp, but stopped.

"Will Mlle. Zélotie do me the honour of continuing her delightful harmony?" said I, as I seated myself by her side, with infinite grace.

She smiled affectedly, and began to cough. She was so sorry she had a little cough; and her fingers were stiff; besides, she could hardly strike a decent note in common; but she wished to please her friends, and would try. Throwing back her scarf, and making one or two pretty faces, she struck up a beautiful air, accompanying it with her voice. Long did she sing, and well; but I hated music, and only listened to it to gain her favour. When she stopped, she looked at me. I exclaimed, with all my natural deceit,

"Oh, what can be more delightful than to hear such sweet sounds issuing from such lovely lips.

I would sooner spend all my life in Zélotie's bower, than in Paradise. Yes, at Zélotie's feet would her slave sit, and listen to her heavenly melody from morning to night."

Zélotie leant back in her chair, and, setting her harp aside, looked languidly about : at last, her eye was caught by an immense brilliant upon my finger, which I had won the day before at the gambling-house. I took it off, and said, " Will Zélotie deign to accept this bauble from her devoted servant? Oh, hear me, charming goddess! listen to my tale of love. Consent to become mine, and I will carry thee to a secluded retreat, where, free from all interruptions, we will pass our days on mossy banks, listening to the little streamlets, as they flow through woods enamelled with wild flowers, and scented by sweet-smelling shrubs : — thither, thither would I lead my

heavenly queen ! Oh ! will you accept the offer of your devoted servant ?”

Zélotie’s eyes swam with tears, and her cambric handkerchief was quite wet. She looked at me, —sighed, —took my ring, —fastened it to a chain,—dropped it into her bosom, and softly said, “Zélotie loves you !”—and left the room.

Emboldened by my success, I left the house, only to return on the morrow,—and was again admitted to her room. I found her in tears : I begged to share her sorrow. She pointed to a low ottoman, on which lay her lap-dog, just dead. I approached it, and gently moved it ; but life was fled : the pampered pet had died of repletion. I in vain endeavoured to assuage its mistress’s grief ;—but to no purpose. In an unlucky hour, I offered to do anything to please her. She only said, “ Mon pauvre petit chien !” I took the hint, —left the house,—and, after an

infinity of trouble, purchased a dog exactly like the deceased one, for which I gave a hundred francs ; and with it under my arm, hurried back to Zélotie. When I presented my gift to her, she graciously accepted it, and spent half an hour in examining it ; till at last she found out that it wanted a silver collar and bells. I would have gone after them, but she stopped me ; and, ringing her bell, desired her servant to go to the silversmith's, and order him to bring the richest collars he had in his shop immediately, for her inspection. I began to be a little afraid of my money ; but I could not recede. The collars came, and Zélotie showed her taste in choosing the most expensive. I asked the price ; —a hundred francs. I was desiring the jeweller to call at my apartments ; but he bowed, was civil, and said, " he only took ready money." I was done for ; but there was no evasion. I

pulled out my purse, paid the man, and let him go.

I now again fell on my knees at Zélotie's feet, and urged her acceptance of my hand. Again tears came to her assistance : she answered between each tear, " I love you ! . . . to-morrow . . . I will tell you—more."

Again she arose, and left the room ; but she smiled at me, and I once more returned home, and went to the billiard-table. Heated and impatient, I could not brook my losses, and began to quarrel with everybody. The Count Girode tried to calm me, and was dragging me across the room ; when, impatient of being kept from fighting, I struck him. I shall never forget the look he gave me : it brought me to my senses. I tried to mutter an apology : he turned, and said, " We meet elsewhere !"—and, with a haughty and offended air, left the room.

Morning found me a beggar ; and my only

hopes were to go to Zélotie, and marry her. I repaired to her house,—was admitted to her room,—again begged a decisive reply, for a friend expected me, and I must meet him coldly.

She told me she would not marry me. I upbraided her,—demanded why she had received my presents? She coolly sneered at me, and said such trifles were nothing to a man of fortune like myself; and hinted that I had committed some action that would separate us for ever. I required an explanation. She added—

“You best know where you got this ring;” and she held up the diamond. “You are accused of theft; your safest course is to quit France.”

I grew passionate. The Count entered the room; he said, “You are unworthy to fight me, or you should not have left this place alive. I hear you have stolen many things, and you have cheated at play. Your course is

flight." I protested my innocence. He opened the door, and pushed me out.

I returned to my rooms, and left them unpaid for, as I had not money enough left, and fled into Italy.

I will pass over some parts of my life totally, as they were without interest.

I was now about forty. I had maintained myself, since my arrival there, by play and cheating. In fact, so secure was I of not being discovered, that I at last became careless. One evening we had been playing for immense stakes; I had won repeatedly, therefore all were against me. I was narrowly watched: I was discovered cheating—was taken in the fact, and was desired to return my winnings,—but I would not, and a battle ensued, as usual. I had forgotten my dagger, which I had usually carried about me; and, whilst trying to overthrow my opponent, I was stabbed, and fell down. I was taken up for

dead, and humanely left, or rather tossed over the wall, into the garden of a convent. I was found by some monks, and was carried into the convent, and my wounds dressed. After three months' continual ravings I recovered myself, my senses returned, but I was full a year before my life was entirely out of danger. Thank Heaven, the piety of the monks, during my illness, reformed me, and I became a Roman Catholic. Truly, indeed, did I repent of my sins, and commenced a new life. I had determined to pass the rest of my days here in peace, secluded from the world, all its pleasures and vices. My determination was applauded by the Abbot, and everything would have induced me to adopt the monkish character, when an unforeseen, an unwished-for event prevented me.

Whilst walking in the environs of Rome, I met my father ;—need I say what a shock it was to

both of us? he remembered me only with horror. I remembered him also, only as a tyrant:—however, we were father and son. I related my history to him, and my present intentions: but time had not robbed him of his favourite amusement,—that of thwarting every body. I still remember his frown, his stamp, when I told him I was a Roman Catholic: and his answer,—“ Though a Catholic, you are still my son; go, leave this convent and return to England. My fortune is now large; you shall have an annuity sufficient for your wants. But, mark me, let nobody know your name, family, or life: if you do, my curse be upon you for ever. An hundred and fifty pounds per annum will be enough for you. Live in no particular place,—but travel:—no answer, I will not be trifled with. Here is money for the present;—you know my address. Begone, and never let me see you more.

I was not in a humour to stay after this reception. I returned to England, and wandered about, from one place to another, never or hardly ever, speaking to any person. I came to L——. I saw the people, in the billiard-room, asking each other who I was; their curiosity, though natural, offended me. I asked them to sup with me on New-Year's Night. They came. Still were they curious. To evade their questions, I never spoke but in monosyllables, and soon sent them away. I knew that whatever I did, or wherever I went, I was watched.

I own I looked odd. I frequently turned about, and stood for some time, whilst walking. This I used to do to collect my thoughts. But L—— was too public a place for me to dwell in. I was about leaving it when I met with an accident. I was taken to Mrs. Lisle's house, treated

with kindness, and Miss Lisle, herself amused me. She reminded me of Lady Harriet. I, in short, fell in love with her. She was the only being upon earth I ever had really loved; for, to say the truth, I had never felt love before. But now, I, a man of upwards of forty, deeply loved, but, alas! loved vainly. At first, I thought that Miss Lisle liked me. She used to read to me, and work by me; but I soon guessed, indeed found, that I had a younger rival. However, I flattered myself that in the end I might win her. I admired her paintings,—I learnt myself,—I played the flute to her,—I made myself as agreeable as possible, for she was the only person I ever spoke to. At last, I asked her hand;—she started. I again repeated my wishes. A decided “No!” was returned. I looked at her—I could not believe my ears. I saw love was not in her eyes, as she looked at

me. I begged her reason. "She did not like me." I asked why? "I was neither handsome, young, nor known! and, were I a king, she would not marry me." "Strange!" said I to myself; for I had always imagined that girls married for money and show; "strange, that she will not marry me, because she does not like me. Had she said I was poor, I would have readily believed her." But my doom was sealed, and I was refused. I resolved to leave L——. I quit it for ever. And this memoir is all that Miss Lisle will ever know of "The Silent Gentleman."

"Ah, the villain!" said Mrs. Manby, as Miss Lisle concluded. "I cannot help weeping, though, for the dear Lady Harriet," said she, as she wiped her eyes.

"Poor man!" said Miss Lisle; "though he was wicked, yet he is no longer so. He must not now be blamed for what he has paid so dearly.

I like him, though I do not love him; and it is a pity I should have been the cause of his flight. I really pity him !”

“ If the girl is not in love with him !” said Mrs. Manby. “ Well, I also pity him, poor man !” And here she dropped another little tear. “ But how touching was the account of the lap-dog—poor little animal !” And another tear would have been shed for it, had not that stubborn drop of water *refused* to come.

“ Well, I must go,” said Miss Lisle. “ *Remember your oath !*”

“ Oh, but tell me first, are you going to marry Mr. B—— ?”

“ Why, what do you want to know for ?” said Anne.

“ Why, to say the truth, Miss C——w wished to know.”

“ Then Miss C——w must remain untold,

for I do not choose my affairs to be talked of," said Anne.

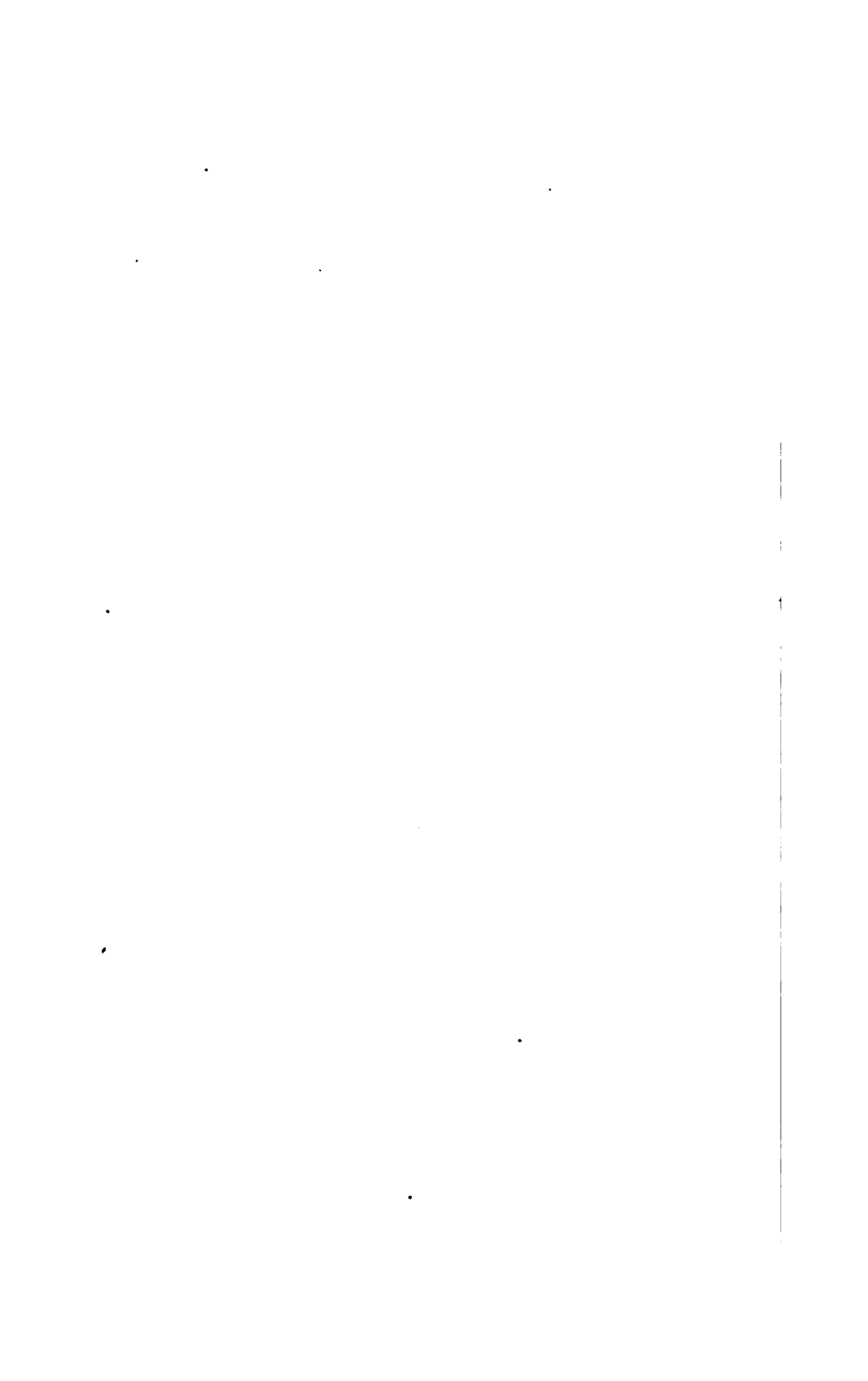
"Nay, but tell me ; I am your friend," said Mrs. Manby.

"You are my friend," said Anne Lisle, shaking hands. "I tell you all chit-chat, but my own affairs I tell no one. Adieu !"

THE SISTERS.

VOL. III.

F



THE SISTERS.

"REALLY, now, Mordaunt," exclaimed Lord Lenox to his Oxford friend and companion, as they lounged on a bench in the promenade of a fashionable watering-place in Dorsetshire; "really those are not bad-looking girls, in that open carriage!"

"Indeed!" said Mordaunt, raising his glass to his eye, and stealing a look, but, suddenly dropping it, he exclaimed, "Good Heavens! Lenox, did you ever see such eyes, such brows, such silken lashes, as the youngest has?"

"Hush! hush!" whispered Lenox, "for we shall be overheard. Do not you see that

knowing-looking snob in the claret cut-away and yellow waistcoat? He has passed us three times to try and catch something."

"I do not care," replied Mordaunt, with apparent unconcern, turning up the walk with his cane; "I wonder what their names are?"

"If we could get introduced, we might find some fun in this cursed dull place," said Lenox, yawning. "What a bore it is, Mordaunt, to be rusticated!—an awful bore!"

"I really do not think it is fair to be rusticated for keeping racers," replied Mordaunt. "Suppose we ask Jemmy Smith here for a week—eh, Lenox?"

"By Jove! I have had enough of Jemmy Smiths for this year, at least," said Lord Lenox. "I shall not so soon forget the night we spent in the black-hole together, just for trying to warm a watchman's nose with a little pitch and lighted tow. You have no idea what we suf-

fered, all through Christmas-eve, in that abominable hole! 'Jem, my man,' said I, 'here is some reptile crawling over me, and for the life of me I am afraid to touch it, for fear it should be a viper.' 'Just guide my paw to the gentleman's quarters,' said Jem, 'and I will eat him, whatever he be!' With that, Jem makes a dash, and he seizes a great toad. 'Ho, ho! my boy, you are a nice neat little chap,' said he, 'just to come when I am hungry.' So with that, Jem opens his mouth, and bolts Mr. toad. I really could not believe it; but Jem swore he did eat it."

"I am a great infidel, I dare say," said Mordaunt, laughing; "but I cannot believe such humbug. Suppose we go to dinner, Lenox, it must be late?"

"What a starveling you are, Mordaunt,—you are always eating," replied Lenox; "however, come to the Hotel, if you will."

"Did you see those young men on the promenade?" said Georgina Montgomery to her younger sister.

"Yes, certainly, I saw two; but chiefly noticed one for his 'air distingué.'"

"Which do you mean?" said Georgina.

"The fair one, with the gay countenance. I wonder who they are? So fashionably dressed! Did you notice their canes and quizzing-glasses?"

"One could not help noticing them," replied Georgina; "and, if I may presume to give my opinion, both the young men had no small opinion of themselves."

"Isabella, do you know who those nice-looking young men were?" said Mrs. Montgomery to her daughters.

"No, mamma, we do not," replied Isabella and Georgina.

"They seemed very nice gentleman-like young

men, indeed, and very quiet," said Mrs. Montgomery.

"Very much so, mamma," said Isabella, smiling at her sister. "Ah! here comes Miss Lawson, we will ask her about these gentlemen."

"How are you to-day, my dear Misses Montgomery?" said Miss Lawson, as they alighted from their mother's carriage, which drove on; "and how is your mamma? This fine warm weather is good for invalids."

"I am happy to say that mamma is much better to-day; and we soon hope to see our brother Arthur," said Georgina.

"Can you tell," said Isabel, "who those two fashionable-looking young men are, who have just arrived here?"

"I do not exactly know, Miss Isabel, but I hear the elder is Lord Lenox; and the other,

a Mr. Henry Mordaunt, his cousin," replied Miss Lawson.

"Indeed! This is some news for mamma to-night, at our tea-table: she was asking who they were."

"Ah, my dear Miss Montgomery, you are always so attentive to your mamma; she must be happy!"

"It is our pleasure, as well as our duty," replied Isabel.

"Oh, certainly; but then it is so seldom that young ladies of your age, and with your high spirits, think of this duty."

"But then our mamma is so kind, and gives us every amusement possible; so we should be very ungrateful, if we did not love her and make her happy."

"Well, my dear Misses Montgomery, your attention to your mamma does not pass un-

noticed ; I heard Mr. L——, our curate, remark to-day that——”

“ Hush ! hush !” said Isabel, “ here is the very gentleman you were speaking of : and now we must wish you good evening ; it is getting late, and mamma will be waiting for us.”

“ Good evening,” said Miss Lawson ; and the young ladies parted from their elderly friend.

“ Well, I do like that Mr. L——,” said Georgina ; “ he is such an elegant preacher—so insinuating !”

“ And so do I,” replied Isabel ; “ but I suppose we must not say so. But just look at my watch : Gracious ! it is past eight. What will mamma say ? There is our maid looking out of the window for us.”

“ I am very tired to-night,” said Georgina, as she and her sister entered their home.

Mrs. Montgomery had been twice married.

Her first husband was a captain in the navy; her second, Mr. Montgomery, a gentleman of property. The former died in two years, leaving one son; the latter, when Georgina was in her fifteenth year. During four years Mrs. Montgomery resided with the widow of her husband's eldest brother; and then she went to Bath for the education of her daughters, whilst her son was sent to the Naval College.

Arthur Kennedy was sincerely attached to his half-sisters. He was their constant companion during their holidays (with one of his friends, a Mr. Darwin) at Bath. Mrs. Montgomery spent some years there; and then for her own health, which was very delicate, she removed to the beautiful bathing-place where she now lived. Her sister-in-law was dead; her niece had married, and she had not seen Arthur for two years, when, on the latter occasion, they met at the elder Mrs. Montgomery's house.

But, in spite of Mrs. Montgomery's removal to a warmer climate, her health declined daily, and she felt she was following her family to the grave. With Christian resignation she awaited her last hour, blessing her God for the dutiful children He had given her.

* * * *

"Isabel," said Georgina, "what are you about?—how much longer will you be dressing? Do you forget it is regatta-day?"

"I shall be ready in one moment," replied Isabel. "I declare, if Lord Lenox and Mor-daunt are not out already!"

"Now do make haste: for the carriage is waiting,—and that young horse has such a cough," said Georgina.

"I am ready," replied Isabel; "so come."

In a few moments, both were seated in the carriage; and they drove to the beach.

"What a cheerful scene!" exclaimed the

Montgomeries, as they drove about; "what crowds of people!"

"Just look!" said Georgy; "there is Mordaunt, and Mr. L——, and Lord Lenox, and Cornwall, and Henry Busby, all standing together."

"Yes," returned Isabel; "and how genteel and graceful young Mordaunt looks, compared to Busby and Cornwall, and all the others who are walking about."

"Here comes Miss Lawson: now for a conversation, Georgy. Put on your most pious face, and inquire after Mrs. L."

"What a delightful day!—and what a gay scene!—and how well you look!" said Miss Lawson, cordially shaking hands with the young ladies.

"Is it not a pretty scene?" said Isabel;—"every one appears so happy. Will you come into the carriage?"

"Thank you," replied Miss Lawson; "I will accept your offer, as you are alone. I suppose you will attend the ball and breakfast?"

"No, indeed; mamma does not like to come out to-day,—and we have no one to 'chaperone' us."

"If you would like to go to the breakfast, it would give me the greatest pleasure to take care of you."

"Oh, thank you!" exclaimed the Montgomeries; "as you are so kind, we will go."

To the breakfast they went; and Mr. Mordaunt followed them, in hopes of sitting next one of them: but he was not quick enough, and had to put up with a Miss Vincent for a companion. However, Mr. Mordaunt consoled himself with the idea that he should, at least, dance two quadrilles with the Miss Montgomeries in the evening at the ball.

Never had the young Oxonian paid such attention to his toilet as he did for that ball.

"Really, now, I am not a bad-looking fellow!" exclaimed that young gentleman, as he surveyed himself from head to foot in his looking-glass. "What do you think, Lenox? I do not see why I should not meet with as much success and admiration as other people, if I were but a lord, like you, Lenox."

"You would do wonders, no doubt! But, remember, lords are not always handsome," replied Lenox.

"I always think of that, when I see you, Lenox: it gives me great comfort." And Mr. Mordaunt again glanced at his pretty pink and white cheeks in the glass, with evident satisfaction.

"Well, Mordaunt," said Lenox, after they

had been about an hour in the ball-room,—
“where is your Dulcinea?”

“I wish I knew,” replied Mordaunt, in a very minor tone. “If I had thought the Montgomeries would not have been here, I am certain I should not have come:—at least, I would not have put on my new coat.”

“Ha! ha!” said Lenox; “by Jove, my boy! you are desperately in love. I should recommend you some new bread for supper: it is the best cure possible.”

“I wish, my lord,” replied Mordaunt, with great dignity, “you would not meddle with, or laugh at, my affairs. I think I could turn the tables, if I chose.”

“Well, not another word shall be said on the subject; and Mr. Mordaunt’s flirtations shall pass unnoticed; and the ladies shall flatter him, and tell him what a pretty little flush he has on

his cheeks, and many other pretty little things," said Lenox.

"Pray, Lenox," exclaimed Mordaunt, in a very pettish tone, "pray who may that stag be you were dancing with?"

"That stag, my young friend, is Miss Merton,—and a very fine stag she is: so, with your leave, I will try the next waltz with her. You know I was always partial to tall ladies." This was said with a very knowing look.

"I know what you allude to," said Mordaunt, trying to find a beard on his chin; "and, to show you how much I *really* care for that young lady, I will go and dance with Miss Vincent."

"And I with my stag," said Lenox, as his companion left him.

The Oxonians found no trouble in getting partners: every one was mad to dance with

them. "Will you introduce me to Lord Lenox?" "Will you introduce my daughter to Mr. Mordaunt?" was the never-ceasing cry with which young ladies and their mammas assailed the steward's ears.

At two the ball broke up, and Lord Lenox and his friend returned to their hotel, after having had what they termed "uncommon fun."

The next day, two o'clock, found the Oxford friends devouring their 'déjeuné' with great appetite. After muffins had pushed down crumpets—and toast, muffins,—and French rolls, toast,—and tea all the above-mentioned eatables,—Mr. Mordaunt arose from his seat, and, after stretching till he had strained the sinews of his legs, declared "he did not feel quite comfortable."

"Suppose we take a stroll on the beach?" said Lenox.

"Just as you like," replied Mordant. And to the beach they went.

"Really, now," said the latter, as he and Lord Lenox sprawled over a bench, "really, when we left Oxford, I never expected to have such fun as we had last night."

"Nor I," replied Lenox; "but I confess I was disappointed at not meeting Miss Montgomery."

"And so was I, at not seeing her sister," said Mordant; "but Miss Vincent is a tolerably pretty girl."

"Pshaw! hem! Something like a milkmaid!"

"At any rate, she was better than yours, Lenox;—that stag, Miss Merton!"

"Stag, or no stag, she is an uncommon fine girl; while your Miss Vincent is so vulgar, so affected!"

“But your Miss Merton has not one good feature,” said Mordaunt.

“I deny that,” said Lenox; “besides she is agreeable.”

“And so is mine,” said Mordaunt. “But here comes young Vincent, and Busby after him. Fine day, Vincent; how are you after last night’s work?”

“Oh, gaily, Mordaunt; but I cannot stay a moment. I must dance attendance on my fair partner.”

“Indeed! I heard she held you in chains.”

“Oh, yes, indeed! I believe some one said so for me,—people must talk;—faith, she is a pretty girl, but I do not think she is good enough for me. I must look for a fortune as well as a beauty. I suppose you will be here this evening, looking at your fair Isabel?”

“ ‘ Qu’est que cela vous fait ? ’ ” replied Mordaunt, very pertly.

“ Oh, ‘ cela ne me fait rien du tout. ’ Good day, Mordaunt,—good bye, Lenox. ” So saying, off walked the young squire, to dance attendance on his fair one.

“ Well, Busby, ” said Lenox, “ Mordaunt and I want you to decide which of the young Montgomeries is the prettiest ? ”

“ That is not difficult to do, ” interrupted Mordaunt ; “ the youngest is best. ”

“ I am sorry to differ with you, ” said Busby ; “ but I think Miss Montgomery prettiest. ”

“ Good heavens, did you observe the youngest’s eyes ? ” exclaimed Mordaunt.

“ Yes ! perhaps she has the finest eyes ; but look at the superior height of her sister,—her beautiful figure, and hand, and——”

“Humbug,” interrupted the impatient Mordaunt, “the youngest has the handsomest face. Miss Montgomery is certainly pretty, but not to be compared with her sister. Then Isabel’s figure is just as well proportioned, only smaller. I hate tall women, and her foot is just as beautiful as her sister’s hand.”

“I believe we had better say no more,” said the pacific Lord Lenox; “let us each keep our own opinions. Busby is for me, and Vincent admires Isabel.”

“I hear,” said Busby, “that Miss Isabel is a great admirer of Mr. Campbell! Not only his sermons, but himself.”

“What can she find to admire in that ugly old clergyman?” muttered Mordaunt. So differently people think! he whom Isabella looked upon as an angel, was denominated, by her admirer, an ugly old clergyman.

“Are you thinking of spending this summer in Dorsetshire, Lord Lenox?” said Harry Busby.

“Oh, I suppose so,” replied Lenox. “Faith, it is not such a bad place after all,—one or two uncommon pretty girls here,—by the by Busby, what is this flirtation between Miss Vincent and that long spider of a boy about,—I mean that dark curly-headed scamp?”

“Indeed I cannot tell you anything about it; but Miss Vincent is never happy without a tribe of boys after her,” replied Busby.

“So I thought,” returned Lenox, looking at Mordaunt.

Mordaunt blushed very prettily, and returned Lenox’s look with a bow.

“Have you any objection to a walk, Lenox?” said Busby, “for I am going along the sands, by way of exercise.”

"None at all; have you, Mordaunt?" replied Lenox.

"Cannot one get hacks here?" said Mordaunt, yawning, and kicking his feet out. "I really do not feel quite at home to-day. I am not up to a walk."

"Oh, let us ride, by all means," interrupted Busby. "Give you credit, Mordaunt, for the idea; if you will wait here one moment I will cut up to the hotel, and order three clipping hacks."

"Off with you, then," said Lenox, "and get me a decent-looking horse, if you can."

Busby started, and, in a few moments, returned, ready mounted, on a black charger,—an awful bone-setter,—which boasted less flesh than bone; two steeds followed, led by a boy—one grey, or rather white, from old age; the other a bright chesnut. Lenox seized the latter,

much to the discomfiture of Mordaunt, who, for some time, would not mount the grey, on account of its vulgar appearance.

“ Really, now, Lenox, what is the use of my getting on that old horse ? Just look at its fore-leg ? why, it is as good as broke,” exclaimed Mordaunt, in a pitiful tone.

Lenox did look at the leg above-mentioned ; indeed it was a piteous sight, for it stuck out like an old stick ; but he, cruel man, only burst out laughing.

“ Pray,” said Mordaunt, addressing the boy who was holding it, “ how can you expect me to ride on that horse ?”

“ Why, he don’t look very well, to be sure, sir,” replied the boy ; “ but when you are once on him, he is a good little horse to go.”

Finding that no one would help him to a

better steed, Mr. Mordaunt mounted, and followed Lord Lenox with a dejected air. "I hope," thought the young Oxonian to himself, "that Miss Montgomery will not see me on this horse." Unluckily, just as the gentlemen turned on the sands, they met those young ladies, walking with Miss Lawson. Lord Lenox immediately set off at full gallop, and the Montgomeries were soon out of sight and quizzing distance.

"What very gentleman-like young men those Oxonians are," said Georgina to her friend.

"Are they not? but, Mr. L——, oh, Miss Montgomery! is not he a delightful young man?" said Miss Lawson.

"Yes, certainly. His sermons are excellent, and also insinuating."

"But," said Isabel, "though I am delighted

with his sermons, yet I like those of Mr. Campbell still better."

"You do not think that," exclaimed Miss Lawson; "Mr. Campbell is so very insipid."

"Oh, hush, Miss Lawson, I cannot allow that. It is sheer scandal. Mr. Campbell wants, sometimes, a little energy. But he is so amiable and gentleman-like."

"Poor young man!" replied Miss Lawson. "He certainly deserves to be pitied: to be deprived so soon of a lovely bride!"

"What, was he ever married?"

"Yes, about two years ago he married a beautiful girl, with every prospect of felicity. Scarcely had two short months elapsed, when Mr. Campbell was obliged to quit his bride, for a short time; on his return, she flew into his arms, and there breathed her last;—at least almost her last, for she burst a blood-vessel, and

ere medical aid could arrive, she expired. Poor Campbell has never since been seen to smile."

"Poor man!" exclaimed the Montgomeries; "we always thought he looked melancholy."

"He is a most amiable young man, indeed," said Miss Lawson, "and very clever; he has received an excellent education."

"Is he English?"

"I really hardly know what countryman he is, but I believe he is an American. But now, my dear Misses Montgomery, I must wish you good morning." So saying, the ladies shook hands, and parted.

"Let us go on the promenade, and sit down, Isabel," said Georgina.

They went, and watched the gay crowd, as they passed to and fro.

"Here comes Mr. Camberwell, and his sis-

ters, and Mr. Somerset," said Isabel; "what a slang appearance those young men have."

"And here come a tribe of snobs," said Georgina; "Mr. Lucas and Mr. —; but look, Isabel, whose carriage is that? Is it not like cousin William's?"

"Surely it must be! no, it cannot be! but yes it is, it is William and Fanny! Oh, how delightful," exclaimed Isabel. As she spoke, a handsome britzka drove up, and a gentleman and lady alighted.

"Oh, Fanny! is it you? and you, too, William?" exclaimed the delighted Montgomeries; "how glad we are to see you! What brought you here?"

"Dear Georgy, dear Isabel," replied their cousin, "how you are grown and improved! William proposed taking a little trip this summer, to see you, and here we are; but where is my aunt?"

"Mamma is at home," replied Georgina. "She had a slight headache, but will be delighted to see you."

"Well, Isabel, how do you like Dorsetshire? I need not ask how it agrees with you," inquired William.

"Oh, I am delighted with it. You see it is gay here now," replied Isabel.

"William," said Fanny, "Georgina and I will drive to my aunt's; and Isabel and you can wait till the carriage returns."

"Oh, no," exclaimed Isabel; "I would rather walk home, as it is not far, if William has no objection to accompany me."

"Well, Isabel," said William, "suppose we take a turn before going home, and tell me how you are getting on. You are no longer my *little* favourite Isy, but quite a woman. You must soon be thinking of settling."

"Oh, William," said Isabel, blushing, "I should be sorry to think I was no longer your favourite; besides, I am still quite a child; not yet sixteen."

"Well, I assure you, young Darwin inquired very much after his pretty little friend, Isabel."

"What, Darwin! When did you see him?"

"At home; but I assure you he is no longer little. He is a handsome Oxonian—quite a lady-killer."

"But when did you leave Spring Vale? and did you see Maria Eastcourt?"

"Yes, I did, just before leaving Spring Vale, which we did a week ago. But tell me, Isabel—the company here does not seem very illustrious; you do not mix in such society?"

"Oh, no!" replied Isabel, "we never go out. Indeed, as you observe, there is nothing very great here—only one or two good families; and

my pride would revolt at the idea of mixing with this common crew of doctors and attornies."

"That is right, my dear cousin. I am glad you hold yourself so high. Depend upon it, one with your connexions, and with your beauty, is not a fit companion for such people. No; you must come to Spring Vale, and there you will meet proper people—young lords."

"Ah, William! but I do not like young sprigs of nobility."

"Very well, if you do not, there are plenty of gentlemen of good fortune. And now, Isabel, let us go to your mother's."

William Mervyn was an Irishman. He had been educated partly in England and partly in Scotland. After leaving the latter place, he passed some years in London with his mother. There he first met Fanny Montgomery, then only sixteen. Always an admirer of early beauty,

and tired of the dissipated life he had led, he paid a visit next year to Spring Vale, and Fanny became his wife. They passed some time on the Continent, and then visited Ireland. On their return to England, they resolved to pay a short visit to their cousins, before they finally settled themselves at Spring Vale ; and, taking the opportunity, whilst their mansion was repairing, they set out for Dorsetshire.

How happy now did the days of Georgina and Isabel seem ! They were continually riding, driving, walking, and talking with their cousins ; but every pleasure has a termination, and the month of October saw William and Fanny quit their cousins. All the bathers flew off to their residences, and Lord Lenox and Mr. Henry Mordaunt returned to Oxford.

Day after day rolled on in weary succession. November set in chill and dreary. The promenade was deserted. The beach was worse.

Even Mr. Campbell was absent, and the Montgomeries were 'au dernier desespoir;' when, one cold evening, the bell rang. In a few moments the door was thrown open, and Arthur Kennedy flew into his mother's arms.

"My Arthur! my own boy!" exclaimed Mrs. Montgomery, as, with a mother's pride and fondness, she pressed her son to her heart.

"My mother! and you too, Georgy, and Isabel!" said Arthur, embracing them in turn. "I thought I would take you by surprise," continued he. "I have leave to pass this month with you."

Georgina's and Isabella's faces once more beamed with delight. They walked with their brother when the weather was fine; at other times, he was the life of the house. The stories he related of himself or his friends, and all the observations he had made, the curiosities he

had collected,—were listened to and viewed by his sisters and mother with wonder and pleasure.

Arthur was grieved to see his mother so much thinner and older-looking than when he last saw her ; and often, with foresight far beyond his age, he sighed to think, if she should die, what would become of his sisters, if he were at sea ! “ But my cousin ! ” exclaimed the youth. “ Yes, in honour he would not leave them without a protector.”

A letter from Georgina to Maria will show her fears for her mother’s health.

“ Dorsetshire.

“ DEAR MARIA,—I would have written to you sooner, but poor mamma has suffered so from the cold, that I am afraid she is worse than ever ; but she does not complain. We were shocking dull here after William left us. What

can be so 'triste' as a bathing-place in winter? Arthur is a very good boy; we like him amazingly; but he cannot ride, and all his stories relate to the sea. The only animal at present here, of the man-kind, is a young officer. I often think of you when I see him. How do you and your young 'militaire' get on? Isabel sends her love to you, and hopes her old friend, your brother, is quite well. I wish I could tell you more; but I have no news. Adieu; and believe me your affectionate friend,

“GEORGINA MONTGOMERY.”

The leave of absence which Arthur Kennedy had obtained, was expired, and he was obliged to leave his dear relations. Mrs. Montgomery seemed much worse. “Arthur, my son,” she exclaimed, as she folded him in her arms, “I shall never see you more. I am going to join

thy father—that father whom you so much resemble. Oh, like him, be virtuous and brave, and protect your sisters when I am gone.”

Arthur tore himself from his mother and sisters, and left the house.

“Dear mamma,” said Isabel, “do not cry so much; you will make yourself ill.”

“My dear children, I must submit; but I cannot help shedding a few tears on parting with my boy—never more to see him!”

“Oh, dear mother, do not use such language!”

“My dear children,” exclaimed Mrs. Montgomery, embracing her daughters, “you have ever been dutiful and affectionate, and have made the happiness of my life; but still I feel I cannot long be here. If God in his goodness sees fit to remove me from you now, he will assuredly give you protectors as long as you

serve and love him. And though I might like to see my children settled in life happily, before I die, yet Heaven knows what is best for us all ! And we may be always sure that whatever is, is right !”

Thus Mrs. Montgomery passed the evening, in giving advice to her daughters, and in impressing on their young minds the duty of submission to the Divine will.

The time for retiring arrived, and the young Montgomeries were desirous to be allowed to take turns in watching by their mother’s couch.

“ No, my children,” said Mrs. Montgomery, “ retire to your rooms. I am not ill,—only a little weak and agitated. In the morning, if it please God, you will find me better. Should I want anything in the course of the night, I will ring. Go, my dears, to your rest, and may Heaven bless you !”

Georgina and Isabella retired, and were soon visited by that sound and refreshing sleep which peculiarly belongs to youth and innocence. In the morning they arose, and went to their mother's room. She was kneeling by her bed, her hands clasped. Supposing her praying, they remained quiet for some moments; but Isabel, perceiving her dress to be the same as she had worn the preceding evening, observed her more attentively. Her eyes were fixed; a smile was upon her lips; but they were motionless. A shriek burst from Isabel, as she exclaimed, "Mamma has fainted!" Their maid, attracted by her voice, entered, and by her the fatal truth was discerned.

Mrs. Montgomery was dead! But Georgina and Isabel would not believe it, until the doctor, who had been summoned, arrived, and confirmed the truth, that Mrs. Montgomery had

been dead some hours : then, flying into each other's arms, they burst into tears.

* * * *

William Mervyn came to Dorsetshire as soon as the mournful tidings of Mrs. Montgomery's death reached him. But as Fanny had just presented him with an heir, she could not leave Spring Vale with him ; though, as soon as possible, she joined her cousins, and husband. William was of opinion that the Montgomeries should be taken to Spring Vale, and brought out ; but Fanny thought that as their education was not yet finished, and they would be, for some time, in deep mourning, a year on the continent would be of great advantage to them. To the continent, therefore, they went, and Brussels was the city fixed upon for their residence. Masters of every kind and description were found at moderate terms ; and as the mornings

were devoted to study, so were the evenings to amusement. Georgina and Isabel made many complaints of the particularities of their masters, and of the time they were obliged to give up to them. Fanny heard all these complaints, without making any observations; but William took his cousins' part, and declared he really pitied them very much. However, people must learn, and it was as well to get over it as soon as possible.

Sometime after the Montgomeries' arrival at Brussels, Isabel addressed the following letter to Maria :—

“ Brussels, ——

“ DEAR MARIA,—Here we are safe and sound at Brussels, and very gay, in comparison to our former seclusion. We have been to several balls and concerts already. I do not like the Belgians at all,—I mean the men,—they are neither hand-

some, clever, witty, or gentlemen-like. At first I was very much afraid of speaking French, and the few words I did speak were uttered with a great deal of 'mauvaise honte;' but I soon gained courage, and then I launched out as fast as a woman's tongue can go, and faster than a man's wit can follow; in fact, I was very pleased. I cannot tell how it is, but I am so much changed in all my ideas, since I left Dorsetshire! I no longer think a country parson and romantic parsonage the height of human bliss. I have just heard of a young gentleman, in England, who I think will suit me. He has, or will have, an immense fortune. I shall meet him at Spring Vale, and will then have him; no doubt he will have me! Georgy has fixed on his cousin, but he has not half the fortune of mine, neither his good looks,—what a charm, is there not, in the word *establishment*. I think it is the

author of *Tremaine*, who observes—‘that, like charity, it covers a multitude of sins.’ I do not care to marry, but I look upon a husband as a necessary evil, and upon an establishment as a necessary comfort. How do you and your little Lieutenant get on? Is he still very civil? However I might be in love, I would never say :

‘Fame, wealth, and honour, what are you to love?’

that is, I might say it, but I would never sacrifice those blessings for love; and I hope you only say it, but do not mean it. How I do love Pope’s *Eloisa*, as well as his *Satire on Women*. Do not you? Adieu, my dear friend, and write soon to your affectionate

ISABEL.

“P.S. When does Evelyn go to college? how is he? I hope he grows stronger every day. I often wish myself back in Dorsetshire. I often sigh to think I never more shall see that amiable

Campbell; so handsome, so quiet, so gentleman-like! or hear the beautiful sermons of the polished, insinuating L——. Every day then brought pleasure. Once more, adieu.”

Isabel received the following answer in a few months:—

“Knowles Cottage.

“DEAR ISABEL,—I was glad to hear you were in the land of the living, which, from your long silence, I was beginning to doubt. We are all quite well here, and getting on as usual. Pa’s old chum, and his son, are our only visitors. Without the latter, I should be dead of ‘ennui’, for Evelyn is at the rector’s, studying most of the day, and, when he does come home, he is always moping about. Now, Lieutenant Medwin has some life in him, and is so attentive to me, and so amusing. You, Isabel, who are not acquainted

with Medwin, cannot tell what a delightful, fascinating creature he is; there is not a thing on earth I would not do for him. As your favourite, Pope, says,—

‘Trifles themselves are elegant in him.’

I love to walk with him in these long evenings. He has never yet told me he loved me, but I see it in his eyes. I do love him so! I wish he knew it! So handsome, so kind, and so charming is he; oh, when will you return to see, and know him?

“MARIA.”

Maria Eastcourt was the daughter of a half-pay officer, who had retired from the army on the death of his wife (which happened when Maria was ten years old), to a pretty little cottage, about a quarter of a mile from Spring Vale. When the Montgomeries resided at the

above-mentioned place, an intimacy was formed between the families, which, on their removal to Dorsetshire, they had kept up by corresponding regularly. Captain Medwin, also a half-pay officer, and a great friend of Major Eastcourt's, had been settled in the same neighbourhood about half-a-year from the time of Maria's letter; and he, and his son, were the only visitors admitted into Knowles Cottage, as the Major lived in the strictest retirement. Henry Medwin had not much solid learning; he was clever, handsome, and good-natured, but unprincipled. Maria was also handsome, and became his companion during his stay with his father. Major Eastcourt, though he regularly sent his daughter, and Evelyn, who was her junior, to church, had never impressed her with any feelings of religion; and, with time, Medwin saw that he could make her as great a sceptic as himself. He was

a declaimer against marriage, and a despiser of all religion, which he called superstition. Such was the chosen companion of Maria Eastcourt in her solitude.

But to return to our heroines. The year of banishment had elapsed, and they returned once more to their beloved Spring Vale, and to all the pleasures which the society of friends can afford. Need we say that their first visit was to Knowles Cottage? It was the middle of May; the flowers had begun to blow, and the trees to put forth their leaves; everything seemed cheerful; Georgina, with William, had gone out riding, whilst Isabel had walked over to Major Eastcourt's, to meet Maria. Arm-in-arm the friends wandered through the latter's garden; they had each much to say; Maria began:—

“ You have not yet seen Henry,—my Henry. When you have, you will not wonder at what I

have often said, namely, that I would do anything for him."

"But, Maria," replied Isabel; "whatever he may be like, or however you may love him, there are some things you ought never to do for him. For instance, you would not run off with him?—you would not live with him, without being married?—you would not renounce your God, or your religion, for him?"

"Yes! yes, I would!" interrupted the enthusiastic Maria; "I would do either of the former. And for the latter,"—she lowered her voice,—"*I own no religion; and there is no God!*"

"Maria!" exclaimed her astonished friend; "do you know what you say?"

"Yes, Isabel, to you alone will I declare my sentiments; you alone must know the secret thoughts of Maria Eastcourt. I acknowledge

no God but love; I scorn what you call religion ;
andas for marriage, what does Pope say ?—

‘ Love, free as air, at sight of human ties,
Spreads his light wings, and in a moment flies.’ ”

“ Maria,” said Isabel, “ if these are really
your ideas, I pity you ; for I see you adore
young Medwin, and that it is for him you have
adopted these notions. Surely you have read
your Bible ;—what do you think of it ? ”

“ As a wonderful, well-invented fiction,” re-
turned Maria.

“ And if you do not believe in a Supreme
Being, how do you think the world was formed ?
What is it that causes the trees to live or die ?—
what causes their leaves to shoot forth in spring,
and to decay in autumn ? ”

“ The world,” answered Maria, “ I believe
to have always been as it is ; the rest is the work
of nature.”

“But still,” interrupted Isabel, “it must have had a beginning.”

“Why so? Do not you say that your God has existed from eternity?—may not the same thing be said of the world?”

“So, Maria, you wilfully shut your eyes, for fear of discovering the truth. You do not believe in another world, where virtue will be rewarded, and vice punished. Why has my friend adopted such pernicious notions?”

“Dearest Isabel! I do not wish to vex you; but I must repeat it, that I consider all your belief as a Christian as idle superstition. Almost all the cleverest men of all countries have been unbelievers. And one plain proof to me that there is no God, is, that scarcely one nation worships him in the same way.”

“But yet you know, Maria, that all nations, even the savage Indians and Africans, acknow-

ledge an all-powerful Being, though they worship him under different names."

"Now, Isabel, as my friend, cease. It vexes you, and I cannot profit by it. Keep my thoughts on religion in your own breast, and let us continue friends."

"Oh, Maria, I pity you!—from my soul I pity you; and some day I hope you will see the error of your ways. If Medwin can have thus taught you to scorn religion, he is not worthy of your love."

"Do not say any more, dear Isabel! You believe in God—it is well. I do not. If I did, I should be unhappy, because Henry does not."

As Maria finished these words, she quitted her friend abruptly, and Isabel returned home.

* * * *

The county races took place in June. Georgina and Isabel, of course, attended them with their

cousins, and were quite delighted with the gay scene.

Some days had elapsed, yet Isabel had not seen Maria. She (that is Isabel) was too well engaged. The fact was, a gentleman was in the case; and when that happens, a female friend is sometimes forgotten.

Mr. Mervyn, wishing to make his house agreeable to his young cousins, had invited two gentlemen for the races. One, Sir Edward Man-nering; the other, Mr. James Hamilton. Of the latter Isabel had heard so much, that she was almost in love with his description. Nor did the man himself disappoint her expectations;—just four-and-twenty, tall, dark, and handsome, with an elegant figure, insinuating address, and polished manners. When these qualities are considered, as well as his being master of ten thousand a-year, is it to be wondered at,

that he should make some impression on Isabel? Sir Edward was not distinguished for any particular talents or beauty; but he was what is generally called a very amiable young man, and was particularly polite and gentlemanlike.

Now it was so ordained that Hamilton should become Isabel's constant companion. He danced with her,—rode, drove, walked, and talked with her; and so he did sometimes with Georgina,—but it was in a different way. Hamilton was very particular about ladies: he liked modesty, not bashful awkwardness; he liked a lady to be accomplished, but not to boast of it. A lady should ride, and know how to leap; but she was not to hunt, or display her leaping. And, some way, Isabel managed to please him. Her style of beauty reminded him of his dear country; but her English education had preserved her from that ignorance, idleness, and

vulgarity, which so often distinguishes the inhabitants of the Emerald Isle.

He prolonged his stay long after the races, from day to day, and from week to week, until he himself was astonished at what kept him at Spring Vale. He questioned his heart ;—could he love her ? He did not know,—he certainly liked her ; but it did not amount to passion. No ; he satisfied himself it was only friendship towards a countrywoman. And so, feeling ashamed of having remained so long at Spring Vale, he announced his intention of departing on the morrow ; but quickly repented of it, when Isabel exclaimed,—

“ What ! you, too, Mr. Hamilton, going to desert us ? ”

But he stuck to his resolution ; promising, however, to call soon again.

Isabel's mind was not so unknown to herself,

as not to feel that if there was a man she loved, Hamilton was that man. The more she thought on the subject, the more she discovered her attachment to him; and finding home, for the first time in her life, disagreeable, she went to her dressing-room, to prepare for a walk to Major Eastcourt's.

"I think, someway, Maria likes you better than me," said Georgina, who was working, as her sister entered their room, and informed her of the visit she was going to pay: "but I am not jealous. I am going to ride with William; and, as I hear, Hamilton's cousin Charles will be over to dine, I hope you will not let Maria detain you. Well, if Mr. Charles does not turn out something to my taste, I shall be quite vexed. I can make nothing of the baronet, he is so stupid. Now, remember, do not stay late."

"Oh, no," replied Isabel, as she left the room.

The friends were soon together ; and Isabel having explained the cause of her long absence, Maria rejoined,—

“ And now, Isabel, that you know what love is, you will see how I could give up everything for it.”

“ No, Maria,” was the reply ; “ love is strong, but reason and principle are stronger. Nor would I sacrifice my fame on earth, or my happiness in heaven, for any man.”

“ Isabel,” said Maria, “ will it not make you vain, to hear that some one loves you ?”

“ No, my dear friend ;—why should it ?”

“ Well, would you believe it ?—Evelyn does. I have sometimes suspected it, from the way he mentioned your name and your abilities. Last Sunday I watched him in church ; his eyes were fixed on you all the time. This morning I found some verses of his, in which his senti-

ments were clearly expressed : I taxed him with it, and he confessed it all. I showed him the folly of thinking of you. He said, ‘ He never aspired to your hand, or wished for a return. He only asked to be allowed to adore you in secret.’ Now, there is a nice, quiet, studious brother !”

“ Oh, you are joking ! I am very fond of Evelyn as your brother,—as a friend ; but he is a boy.”

“ I assure you, Isabel, it is quite true.”

“ Well, my dear Maria, I must go home now.”

“ You will come to-morrow ?” said Maria, taking her friend’s hand.

“ No, I cannot : I am going to ride over to Mr. Darwin’s, to ask Edmund to spend some days with us. But you have your lieutenant, and cannot want me.”

Isabel returned home, and at dinner was in-

troduced to Mr. Charles Hamilton, a fair, good-looking, and good-humoured young man ; but, with all her endeavours, she could not keep her thoughts to the present company. James Hamilton, Maria Eastcourt, and Lieut. Medwyn, were strangely blended together in her wandering ideas ; and, after one or two unsuccessful attempts to join in the conversation, she sunk into a profound reverie ; from which, perhaps, she might not have been roused that evening, had not the name of James caught her ear. She started, and the blood rushed to her cheeks : happily for her, it was twilight, and her confusion was not perceived. At that moment her little cousin came in, to have some dessert ; and as she stooped to play with the child, she heard these words :—

“ I think your cousin James was not so gay

as he generally is?" This was William's voice, and Hamilton replied, laughing—

"I do not know, but it was whispered in Dublin that one of the belles there had treated him badly; so, in return, he forswore all his fair countrywomen, and came directly to England."

A pause ensued——.

"Then all my hopes are vain," thought Isabel, as she fondly bent over the little Augustus, and parted his curling locks. Isabel was very fond of this child, and it seemed also particularly partial to her; and many an hour did she wile away in playing with her little godson. After tea, Isabel was called on for a little music. She was a first-rate performer on the piano. Her touch was clear, and her finger powerful and rapid. Charles Hamilton liked music, but he was not a connoisseur; whatever had any

melody in it, he admired indiscriminately, but James Hamilton loved only good music. Isabel had often played for him, and now she took up his favourite piece with a sigh, as she thought, "Ah, had I but known that he had foresworn his countrywomen, I would not then have loved him." However, she sat down, and played several pieces, glad even to oblige the cousin of the man she loved. Charles was very amusing; and his tales and anecdotes of his military comrades, soon drew Isabel from less pleasing thoughts; and she shone forth as brilliant and agreeable as she had ever been.

When the party retired for the night, Hamilton thought to himself:—"Isabel is too reserved, though beautiful and agreeable when she likes it; but Georgina is the one for me: always open, good-humoured, and entertaining."

The next morning the Montgomeries rose

early, as Isabel was in a hurry to set out for Mr. Darwin's, before it should be too hot; so, leaving Mr. Charles Hamilton to the care of her sister, she mounted her horse, and, followed by the groom, took the road to Mr. Darwin's residence.

Edmund Darwin had been a friend of Kennedy's, and Isabel loved him as a brother. Let no one imagine that, under that name, any stronger feeling was concealed; no, it was pure friendship. But no men could be more different than Kennedy and Darwin;—the former bold, open, headstrong, good-looking, but not clever;—the latter possessed a fine dark eye, as mild and quiet as that of Kennedy's was fiery. His temper was placid, his manners gentle and pleasing; little given to bodily exercise, but delighting in literature. Isabel rode on, anticipating the pleasure of seeing him. She had arrived near his father's house, when, turning a corner into a

shady lane, who should be before her eyes but Darwin, and, leaning on his arm, a beautiful girl, apparently scarcely sixteen. Isabel coloured; so did Darwin. She spoke first.

"Mr. Darwin, I was coming to call on you; but as I see you are better employed, I will go on to your mother's."

"Isabel," stammered out Darwin, "I shall be at home directly; my father and mother are out."

"Very well, Edmund, I shall wait for you. Do not hurry yourself," replied Isabel, as she passed on to the little cottage; and, having alighted, entered the garden, where, as a child, she had so often played. Darwin soon joined her there.

"Truant!" she exclaimed, as they sat down on a bench, "is it even so? and have you deserted your old friend for another! Oh,

treason ! treachery ! for shame ! But, joking apart, who is this charmer of yours ?”

Darwin seemed quite abashed, but replied—

“ Dear Isabel, you are joking. But that young lady is an orphan ; she lives with her uncle and aunt ; her name is Louisa Napier ; she is just sixteen ; a most charming girl. I do not often see her ; but her uncle and aunt, with my father and mother, are gone to a Missionary meeting.”

“ So Mr. Edmund stayed at home, to walk with Miss Louisa, and to lead her young mind astray, if he has not done that already ?”

“ Oh, no, indeed ! There is not a more innocent creature on earth than Louisa, or a more kind and gentle one.”

“ The likelier to be led astray. But now to the purport of my visit. If it would not be too great a crime to deprive you of Louisa’s com-

pany, and if you could put up with Georgy and myself for a few days, we should be happy to see you at Spring Vale."

Edmund was sorry he had at present some engagement; but certainly he would spend some days there before returning to College.

"I hope," said Isabel, "you will introduce me to your charming 'inamorata;' I must know her for your sake, if not for her own; and perhaps, if you do not change your mind, I may be useful to you some day. But I see," added Isabel, gaily, "this is a delicate subject, and one you do not like; only I will beg you, Edmund, always to think of Georgy and myself as your sisters."

After another hour had passed in conversation, Isabel was introduced to Miss Napier, and then returned home.

Georgina and Charles Hamilton, left together,

had not misemployed their time. Charles, like most officers, was devoted to the fair sex, and was well acquainted with the art of pleasing them. Possessing a large and independent fortune, he had no need of seeking a monied lady, but was only waiting to find one who would make his home happy. As we have before stated, he was good-humoured and lively; so was Georgina. Was it to be wondered at, then, when both were trying to amuse the other, the hours should fly to their mutual satisfaction? Georgina had her greenhouse and her flowers to show; and, though Hamilton was no florist, yet he admired them. Then came the scrap-book and album. This last brought on discussions about the various beauties of English poets. From poetry they went to the poets themselves; and from the poets, to mankind in general.

“ You, gentlemen,” said Georgina, “ always

think of money: for money you fight,—you marry for money,—and sometimes you die for it.”

“ Oh, your pardon, fair lady! you are too severe. We fight for honour, and marry for love.”

“ A pretty sort of love it is you soldiers feel! Wherever you go, you swear love to every woman you meet.”

“ Oh, indeed we do not,—only when we feel it. Love, you know, is the deity we worship; and it is for your sakes we venture our lives in battle. Love forms the best part of man’s nature.”

“ Oh, you are an able advocate for the blind boy; but, after all, pure friendship is better than love.”

“ And what is love, but friendship? or where will you meet pure friendship?”

“ In my sister,—in Isabel,—she is my best, my only friend. There is not a thing on earth she would not sacrifice for me ; nor am I her only friend, though she loves me the best : a great part of her time is passed with her neighbour, Miss Eastcourt. The poor girl is secluded from all society, so Isabel goes to spend hours with her.”

“ Indeed ! that is an amiable trait. But here comes Miss Isabel, riding along for her life.”

“ Yes, she has been eight miles to-day, to see an old friend of ours, and to invite him here. But I see she has not been successful.”

“ Indeed ! is this friend a gentleman ?”

“ Yes ; a Mr. Darwin.”

“ He is going to be married to your sister ?”

“ Oh no ! to one of his neighbours :—but here is Isey. Well, Isey, where is Edmund ?”

“ He could not come to-day.”

“ Does report say true ?”

“ Yes! for once, ‘on dit’ is no liar; but, hark, Georgy, there is the dinner bell. Mr. Hamilton, we must leave you for a little.”

The Montgomeries left the room; and, after arranging their dress, spent some moments in interesting conversation, about Edmund, his ‘inamorata,’ and Mr. Hamilton, and then returned to the dining-room.

One day, soon after Mr. Hamilton had left Spring Vale, Isabel and her friend Maria were enjoying a solitary walk in the neighbouring woods, when they were joined by Evelyn, his eyes flashing fire, and his whole appearance denoting anger. “ Maria,” he exclaimed, “ what is this that I have heard of you? Young Medwyn has been boasting that you love him enough to grant him anything. I ask not if it

be true. I would not suppose my sister capable of it; and if I did, your rising colour proclaims the villain's falsehood. To-morrow will show that even a boy like me can defend the injured honour of a sister."

Maria supported herself against her friend, and covered her eyes with her hand, exclaiming,—“ Evelyn ! no ! you must not fight him ! he will kill you.”

“ My own sister !” said Evelyn, affectionately taking his sister's hand : “ my dear Maria, my life is as nothing to the honour of a beloved sister.”

“ Evelyn ! you must not ! it would kill me, if anything should happen to either of you !”

“ Unhappy girl ! is it possible ? can you then love him ? can you think of such a villain ? oh, drive him from your thoughts !”

“ If then I must, let me but see him in half-an-hour ?”

“ I go, to tell him; but, Maria, after that you must see him no more.”

“ Go, Evelyn, you distract me !”

As soon as Evelyn was gone, Maria flung herself into Isabel's arms, and sobbed wildly; then recovering, and still leaning on her friend, she said—

“ Isabel, you do not speak ! I know your thoughts. You wish for an explanation : you shall have it. Ungenerous Henry ! to betray me to so fondly-beloved a brother ! Isabel, listen to me ! This is the last time we shall see each other, perhaps. Yes, Isabel, I must tear myself from my father, brother, friend ! But I shall be recompensed, and in the arms of my Henry I shall find perfect happiness !”

She paused, and then continued :—

“ Still you do not answer me,—still you do not understand me Isabel, I have sacrificed what the world falsely calls honour and virtue. You start ! Yes, Isabel, it is true. To-morrow’s sun will see me quit this place with the man I love—the God I worship !”

“ Maria ! Oh, Maria, my dearest friend ! is it possible you have thus sacrificed everything to the villain who betrays you ? How could you grieve thus the tenderest of fathers—the best of brothers ? Oh, come with me to your father’s feet, and I will implore your pardon !”

“ No, Isabel ! My doom is sealed. I have sworn to follow Henry through fire and water ! With him I must live and die.”

“ But your father ? what will your father say, when he hears that the daughter of his heart has gone to live with the murderer of his son ?”

“ Stop, Isabel, I entreat you ! Say no more !
I cannot meet my father’s anguish, Isabel !
I dread the duel ! Medwyn has never yet
missed his man ! I must speak to him. Poor
Evelyn ! I would not have you cut off in the
flower of your days ! Mark me, Isabel ! I was
not born to tread the same path as most of our
injured sex. No : my spirit is too high to
grovel on in decency and virtue. Religion
I despise. The world will soon be too enlight-
ened to dread an after-life : nor will it then
require us women to sacrifice all earthly bliss
for an imaginary heaven ! The only power
I adore is Love ; and him I adore in Medwyn.
And I have sworn by all that you hold sacred—
but which I despise,—I have sworn to follow
him, and live with him, and die with him, and
for him. Isabel, I have said enough. I see
how shocked you are. My dearest, best-loved

friend ! the companion of my infancy, the friend of my riper years ! farewell. We shall meet no more ! I go to be happy with him I adore,—there to find that bliss which flies wedded love : as Pope says :—

‘ Love, free as air, at sight of human ties,
Spreads his light wings, and in a moment flies.’

You, my dear girl, will meet the destiny that awaits most girls of your beauty and shining parts. You will marry, and experience some days of happiness, and many of trouble and vexation ; but you will be ashamed to notice your poor Maria, as the mistress of the man of her heart.”

“ Yes, Maria, my heart will ache for you ; but whilst the shameless mistress of Medwyn, I may not know you. But the day may come when he, and all the world, cast you off—when, ashamed of your faults, you know not where to hide your head. Then, Maria, try your friend,

penitent and humble, fly to her ; and, though all reject you in the day of distress, she will pity and comfort you !”

The friends flung themselves into each other’s arms and wept.

“ Oh, Isabel,” sobbed Maria, “ you will comfort my father, when his daughter is gone ; and, should anything happen to Evelyn, you will watch him,—you will close his dying eyes,—you will soften his last moments,—you will be a better sister to him than I have been. Will you not promise this ?”

“ I swear it solemnly !” exclaimed Isabel. “ Oh, Maria,” she continued, “ with such feelings as yours, who could go wrong ?”

“ Hark !” interrupted Maria, as starting from her friend’s embrace, she exclaimed, — “ No more of this ! I hear my Henry’s voice. He must not think that I have wept : he must not

see me thus : again he whistles ; he grows impatient," she added, as a low shrill whistle was heard : " Adieu, my Isabel, I may not stay ; it would anger him,—dearest, best of friends, farewell."

As she uttered these words, Isabel slipped an emerald ring on Maria's finger, and said, " when I see that, I shall remember my promise. Adieu." Maria pressed one more kiss on the pale cheek of her friend, and shaking her long black tresses into a little more order, stepped forwards with so proud and unmoved a look, that Isabel was astonished that all traces of her recent emotion should so soon have vanished. Maria was speedily out of sight, and Isabel returned home, where we will leave her for the present, to follow her friend.

Maria found Medwyn leaning over a gate, his arms crossed, and his eyes on the ground. She

approached him, and touching him gently, said,
“ Henry ! why have you betrayed her who
adored you ? ”

“ Pardon ! dear Maria, pardon ! ” exclaimed
Medwyn ; “ but I was intoxicated ! I knew not
what I said. ”

“ Oh, do not meet Evelyn,—he is my brother,
he loves me fondly. Yes, Henry, promise
me not to harm him ; for your sake I have
sacrificed everything ! cannot you then do this
for me ? ”

“ What, Maria ! sacrifice my honour ? No,
never. I would sooner sacrifice that love, which
I prize above all earthly blessings. My own
Maria, do not ask it. Are we not the same ?
You love me still ? ”

“ Love you ! oh, Henry, yes, ” whispered
Maria, as she leant her head on his shoulder ;

“but what must we do? Will you fight Evelyn? Surely not!”

“I must, my love; we meet at five to-morrow behind the church; near it my gig will wait. To-night I will bring a dress to your window,—disguise yourself, and join me at the gig. Now, go home, I have business.”

Maria went away,—“there she goes, as lovely as credulous,” thought Medwyn. “Ha! ha! ha!”

Isabel, as we have said, returned home. She had scarcely entered her bed-room, when the gay good-humoured Georgina, starting up, exclaimed—“Oh, you are come at last! I have such good news for you!—But, Isabel, what is the matter with you, my dear girl?” enquired she, on perceiving the paleness of her sister, whose recent agitation had deprived her cheeks of their bloom.

Isabel sat down and related her interview with Maria.

“ Now, my dear girl,” said Georgina, “ I understand your conduct always with Maria ; you were trying to turn her from such ideas. How like the friend of Edmund Darwin ! How like yourself, incomparable Isabel ! But now,” continued the cheerful girl, “ listen to my news, it will put you in spirits, for it is a tale of wonder. Come, rest yourself.” She placed her sister on a sofa, and leaning over it, and playing with her hair, she said, “ Now for it, Isabel,—I am going to marry.”

“ When did you make up your mind to that ?” said Isabel, smiling.

“ Nay, you do not understand me ; somebody has offered to me to-day. Guess who.”

“ Indeed, my dear Georgy, you must tell me ; for I cannot imagine who has been here.”

“ Mr. Hamilton, then.”

“ Mr. Hamilton ! when did he come ?” said Isabel, bounding from off the sofa. “ Where is he ? which of them ?”

“ Nay, do not be frightened, sister mine ; I have not been poaching out of my own preserves. It is Charles, not your St. James ; and as to where he is, St. Nicholas knows as well as I do.”

“ Did he write, then ?”

“ No ; he came ‘ in propriâ personâ.’ All were out but me, and then he tendered me his hand ; but, to say the truth, though I accepted him, it was not what I expected ; for whether he was stiff, or not, after his ride, I do not know—but certainly he did not go on his knees.”

“ That was a pity. But what did you arrange, and when will this affair take place ?”

“ Soon, I hope, for I hate procrastination ; but

he will come over to-morrow, and settle all ; and if we marry, he will leave his regiment."

"Well, my dear Georgy, I wish you joy. But this is rather a sudden proceeding ; you have not known each other two months."

"So much the better ; I was in a hurry to be married, you know. Here is a farewell couplet to our Dorsetshire beaux :—

'Now, Rochester, Campbell, and Cornwall, to you,—
And to Camberwell also, a long, long adieu !'

Oh, my dear girl, you know how fond I am of laughing ; I could hardly help laughing in Charles's face. I was so glad, and so nervous, and so happy, that I did not know what I was doing."

"Well, Georgy, you are a funny girl. I think the old gipsy said true, when she told you love would never trouble you, and that your face would never lose its smiles."

“ Oh, I shall never forget the day when we had our fortunes told at charming Seaforth. We had just passed by Campbell’s orchard—dear, pensive, melancholy Campbell—and we had met him, and the gay, dashing Mr. Rochester, arm-in-arm. Oh, I can never forget it !”

“ What ! still sighing for Seaforth friends, and ‘auld lang syne,’ even when about to become a bride.”

“ Yes ! the prophecy is nearly fulfilled. I have crossed the seas, I have returned safe, I have felt a slight touch of ‘the magic of a name,’ and now—now I am at the ‘comble’ of my wishes ; and I only wish you were as lucky as me.”

“ Every dog has his day, as I have often told you, Georgy, when you were afraid your day would not come. Now go down stairs, and say I have too bad a head-ache to appear.”

That night passed without much sleep for the anxious and feverish Isabel. The first thing she heard from her maid was, that Major Eastcourt's servant had been to borrow a horse, to ride for a doctor; that young Eastcourt was wounded; and that Maria was missing. Isabel, remembering her promise, instantly acquainted Mr. Mervyn of her wish to go and offer her services to Evelyn. Her pony was ordered, which she only used for short country rides, and in a few minutes she found herself in Evelyn's bed-room, or rather in the parlour, now converted into his bed-room. Evelyn was stretched on a couch; his father, plunged in the bitterest grief, leaning over him: but, on Isabel's entrance, he rose, and, taking her hands, said—

“ Miss Montgomery, for Heaven's sake tell me where my dear girl is. Why does she not come to her brother ?”

Isabel shook her head in silence ; and he continued :—

“ Ah, you do not know. But did you come to see her ?”

“ No, sir. I heard that your daughter was missing,—that Evelyn was wounded ; and I came to offer my services to the brother of my friend.”

“ Ah ! Evelyn, my son, the pride of my age, to be thus cut off !” exclaimed the old man, rushing out of the room.

“ Surely, sir,” said Isabel to the surgeon, who stood by ; “ surely Mr. Evelyn’s wound is not dangerous ?”

“ Yes, Isabel,” murmured Evelyn, “ it is dangerous, though perhaps not mortal. But, Isabel, where is my sister ? Where is Maria ? I know she concealed nothing from you.”

“ Maria,”—said Isabel, taking his extended

hand; "Maria,"—and she turned away her head,—“is gone!”

“Mr. Davis,” said Evelyn to the surgeon, “leave me for a few minutes: I will not speak much.”

The surgeon obeyed, and with the servants left the room.

“Now, Isabel, dear Isabel!—oh, let me call you so,—where is Maria? where is she gone? Did that villain speak truth?”

“Yes, Evelyn, he did. You knew not Maria. Mr. Medwyn had gained her heart—had uprooted every religious principle, merely for his own base purposes; and now Maria has fled with him.”

“Villain that he is!” exclaimed Evelyn, “thus to betray my sister. But, Isabel, Maria herself has given me the deepest wound. Medwyn—Medwyn may have hurt the body;

but Maria has plunged a dagger into my heart ! Oh, do not tell my father ! it would bring his grey hairs to the grave ! Better he should rest in ignorance of her crimes. And you, Isabel,—you whom I have secretly adored ;—nay, blush not ; do not withdraw your hand, I can do you no harm, dying as I am : it will be my only happiness to be watched by you—for you to close these eyes. Oh, will you not do it ? will you not, for Maria's sake ? and bear to her my forgiveness ?”

“ Oh, Evelyn !” exclaimed Isabel, “ do not talk thus : dear Evelyn, do not talk of dying !”

“ Dear Evelyn ! Would to Heaven, Isabel, that I was dear to you ! Do you love me, Isabel ?”

“ Yes, as a brother,—the brother of my friend.”

“ And no more ?”

“ No : Evelyn must be no more to Isabel.”

“ Her talents, her beauty were never meant ‘ to blush unseen ’ with Evelyn ; why, then, should I live ? to see you the bride of another ! to know that you could not be mine ! Oh, welcome, death ! to take me, from such misery, to my God.”

Evelyn fell back exhausted. Isabel sprang to his side : she would have rung the bell ; but he still held her hand, and pressed it to his heart. She called ; the surgeon re-entered, and forbade conversation, or the wound might prove mortal. Evelyn promised not to speak, so that Isabel might sit by him ; which she did till evening, when the carriage was sent to bring her home.

The next morning found Isabel again at Knowles Cottage. Evelyn’s wound had taken an ill appearance, and he was not expected to live over forty-eight hours. Isabel wept at these

tidings. To see one so young and good, sinking patiently to the grave, generally affects the bystanders. But Evelyn was perfectly resigned; and his only earthly thoughts were, for his father, and for that unworthy sister, whose conduct had brought him to an untimely grave. The day passed in an almost complete silence; but when Isabel took leave of him, he took her passive hand, and, pressing it to his lips, said,—

“Isabel, we meet no more! I feel these hours to be my last!—each minute brings me nearer to my God! Oh! let me now thank you for all your kindness to me and to my sister! Oh, Isabel! should you hereafter meet her, you will surely be kind to her;—you will not let her perish, both body and soul. And my father,—my dear father,—you will comfort him for the loss of his children!”

He ceased speaking; and Isabel, bending

over him with a sister's fondness, impressed one kiss on his pale, feverish forehead, and then left the room. Next morning he was dead !

We will now return to Georgina's affairs, which had been settled to her satisfaction. It was now August, and she was to be married in September. The Montgomeries now spent most of their time together. Attached as they were, they felt that their separation would be a painful one: they therefore wished to see as much as possible of each other. But the time soon passed, and the day was very near at hand; visitors were expected, and all in a bustle;—when who should appear but Edmund Darwin. And Isabel finding her sister happily engaged with her intended, flew to request him to make Spring Vale his residence for a few days, and then proposed a short ride with him. But

Darwin would rather walk ; so Isabel agreed to accompany him on a pony.

“ How is Miss Napier ?” said she, as soon as they were out in the lanes alone.

“ Indeed, Isabel,” said Darwin, “ I came here purposely to speak about her. I love you, Isabel, as a kind, sincere friend and sister, whom I may trust with a secret. Louisa Napier I have long loved, and she returns my affection. You know I am as yet too young for the church ; my father is poor,—I need not blush to say it : so, without preferment, how could I marry her, to entail certain poverty on her I love ? But this is not all : Louisa would wait till I procured a curacy ; but her uncle, who says that her beauty merits a higher match than the poor son of a beneficeless clergyman, will not hear of it, and forbids her seeing or writing to me.”

“And does your father know it?” inquired Isabel.

“He does; and at first persuaded me to give he up, but I could not. So he says no more—nay, encourages me in it. But you know Louisa, and could not you contrive to take her letters, and post them for me?”

“I will, I will, dear Edmund! and more, you shall inclose your letters to me, and I will give them to her. Should anything happen, I, myself, will acquaint you. Oh, Edmund, I wish I had interest, and fifty benefices should be yours!”

“And, now, Isabel, I cannot accept your invitation for to-night, for I have an engagement with Louisa this evening, and perhaps it may be the last.”

“Beware—beware, Edmund, of indulging in too many moon-light meetings! Remember

poor Evelyn Eastcourt and his sister—think of them !

She led the way to the garden-wall, and showing him a newly-erected grave-stone, continued,—“ There, Edmund ! there lies Evelyn Eastcourt, who lost his life in a duel, brought on by his sister, who had indulged in moonlight meetings with an officer : be sure, Edmund, that your's have not such a termination ;”—and she fixed her bright eyes upon him, but Edmund replied softly,—“ No, Isabel ! you may rely on my honour ! I am no villain ! Sooner would I murder myself than injure one hair of my angel Louisa's head.”

“ I believe you, Edmund ! I believe you ! ” she exclaimed. “ I only said it to warn you. But you will forgive your friend, your sister, will you not ? ” said she, placing her arm on his shoulder.

“Forgive you, dear Isabel ! for what ? You have not even offended me ! No, Isabel, your kindness will never fade from my memory ; and Louisa and I——”

At this instant a carriage and four horses whirled round a sharp corner, and discovered to Isabel, James Hamilton. Her confusion may be easily imagined ! She hoped at first to escape his notice, but a glance from James's eye showed that she was recognized ; and, in fact, he thought she had never looked so handsome,—her face, crimsoned with blushes, was shaded by a large straw-hat, and her riding habit displayed fully the elegance of her form ; but the carriage whirled on, and he was soon out of sight.

Edmund now took his leave ; and Isabel, taking a short cut, arrived at home, dressed, and taking her fancy-work, had time to seat herself

in the parlour, which was unoccupied, before his arrival.

What was Hamilton's surprise to find Isabel there, when he was sure he had seen her two miles off, leaning familiarly on a handsome youth.

However, they entered into conversation, discussed the state of the weather, et cetera, when Hamilton said,—“ How forgetful I am ! I should have congratulated you on your sister's approaching nuptials ; but, really I was so surprised to see you, for I thought I had passed you on the road.”

“ Indeed ! how odd ! Are you sure you were not right ?”

“ I must say I am rather puzzled ; but, at the time, I certainly thought it was you.”

“ I have certainly been out, and have not long returned.”

“Were you at the church-yard with a—a—a young gentleman?”

“Yes, I was; and I saw a carriage and four, but did not know it to be yours.” But Isabel’s looks contradicted her tongue; her looks betrayed that she had recognized him.

“The gentleman was your brother, I suppose? I have been told that your brother was handsome, but I had fancied that he was fair.”

“So he is. This gentleman is a neighbour of ours; he is my brother’s greatest friend. But really, Mr. Hamilton, you should condole with me on my sister’s quitting me—not congratulate me on her marriage.”

“Oh, no, Miss Montgomery, I beg your pardon. But marriage is the point to which the wishes of most young ladies turn; and even had not your sister been the cause of your separa-

tion, by marrying, it is very likely you yourself might have been——."

Here the 'tête-à-tête,' which was getting rather embarrassing, from the thoughts of each party, was broken by the entrance of the lovers.

The day before the wedding arrived, Georgina and her sister were closeted in their sitting-room, upstairs; Mrs. Mervyn was also in her room; Mr. Mervyn, and the younger Mr. Hamilton, were gone to look at the horses, with some other gentlemen; and James remained alone in the drawing-room, stretched in an easy chair, with a romance open before him; but he did not read. His thoughts were far from his book; he was meditating; Isabel occupied his mind; he thought that he should like to marry, and that he never saw any one he liked better. He could not say he loved her, far less could he say he was indifferent to her. He had almost

come to the resolution of proposing, when the door opened, and a gentleman was ushered in. He started in confusion, for one glance had assured him that it was the youth he had seen with Isabel; he pretended not to notice him, and seemed buried in his book. Edmund loitered about the room, looked out of the window, came back, sat down, took up a book, began to read, and at last addressed Mr. Hamilton:—

“Pray, Sir! I beg your pardon for interrupting you; but can you tell me where Miss Montgomery is?”

“No, sir;—I cannot exactly say;—but I believe she is invisible this morning, as she is with her sister.”

Hamilton then recommenced reading; and after a little time, Edmund, wearied with waiting, rang the bell. A servant answered.

“Is Miss Montgomery at home?”

“ Yes, sir.”

“ Where is she ?”

“ Up in her ‘boudoir,’ sir.”

“ Will you let her know that Mr. Darwin wishes to see her ?”

The servant retired ; and in a few minutes he returned with a message, desiring Edmund to walk up. Edmund waited no longer, but ran up stairs, and was soon admitted to a private audience ; but the business which was transacted was not divulged by either sister : and, on quitting their chamber, he descended to the drawing-room, which still contained none but James. The two gentlemen entered by degrees into conversation.

“ Have you long known the Misses Montgomery ?” inquired Hamilton.

“ Yes ; I have known them some years.”

“ You seem a very intimate friend. I doubt

if they would have admitted me into their boudoir."

"Oh!" said Edmund, smiling, "perhaps you never tried. I have known them these ten years. Their brother was my greatest friend, and many days have I passed in the society of Isabel Montgomery."

"Did not her sister, then, share your friendship?"

"Yes; to a degree. I love them both as my sisters; but Isabel's high spirit and lively manners were a greater charm to me than her sister's modest good-nature; and, besides, since her return from abroad, Isabel has shown me great kindness."

"Indeed, Mr. Darwin, you seem a happy man. The love of such a beautiful creature as Isabel must make you so. I shall certainly soon expect to hear of your union."

“Of that, sir, you never will hear. Had I not been previously engaged, I might have loved Miss Montgomery; but, even then, Isabel deserves a better fortune—a higher match than me. I shall sooner hear of your union than mine, I imagine.”

“And from what reasons?”

“From a slight discovery I made, that Isabel’s heart was no more her own. So I imagined, that with a handsome, young, and fashionable gentleman in the house, it might be gone his way. So now, sir, do not imagine me a rival, but rather a friend to both parties, who would rejoice in your union.”

“Indeed, Mr. Darwin, your thoughts run very fast; I can hardly understand them.”

“So I thought;—but really, Mr. Hamilton, I beg you pardon for speaking so freely. I remember I am a stranger to you; I had forgotten

that;" and, so saying, Edmund took up a book, and wandered into the garden.

"What a strange youth that is!" thought James. "Quite an original! Well, I will be friends with him for the sake of Isabel—that beautiful creature, as he calls her. Aye, so she is,—lovely, accomplished, and an Irish girl. Is anything wanting to her perfection? No; and surely such a girl is worthy of being the wife of James Hamilton! Beloved by every one that knows her perfections—admired by all the world—can she love me? Do I return her love? Ah! could she do so, dare I even then offer her my hand, with that fatal instance of Irish inconstancy which I have experienced? But why not? May not she be untainted with the failing of her countrywomen? Yes, oh yes; Isabel must have a heart; and, could I gain it—and why should not I? Young, handsome, rich,

well-born, what more could she demand? Come what will, I will try my luck once more with women. I will propose before I leave this house." Such was the soliloquy of Hamilton, Fortune's spoiled child, who now, for the first time in his life, began to feel what it was to love. Tired of being alone, he arose, and wandered into the garden, where he was soon joined by Isabel.

"Do you love flowers?" said she, as she gathered a rosebud.

"Yes: I am very fond of them, particularly moss-roses."

"Will you accept this," said she, "or choose one out of this basket?" and she presented him with a basket full, which she had just gathered.

"That from your hand must be sweetest," said he, as he took the one she gave him; "but I must also present you with one." He

selected the prettiest he could see, and gave it her; then continued, "This bud will I wear all my life, as the gift of the most beautiful and sweetest of roses, and of one whose memory will never fade from my mind."

Isabel blushed in confusion at this compliment, and her hand trembled as she took the rose.

"These are signs," thought he, "of love," and the idea encouraged him.

"Do you like flowers in a room?" enquired Isabel, after a short pause.

"Exceedingly: they give an appearance of cheerfulness to the room."

"Do you like roses or carnations best?"

"I can hardly tell; I admire all flowers, especially those that are sweet-smelling."

"When we lived in Dorsetshire," said Isabel,

and a sigh escaped at the name, "we had such beautiful flowers of all sorts,—lovely cactuses; but what I most loved, was the myrtle that bloomed in the open air."

"Of all the works of Creation, I think flowers the most beautiful."

"Indeed, I do not *quite* think that; much as I love flowers, I think God's noblest work is best,—our fellow-creatures."

"I would certainly have made that exception, were they all half so charming as Miss Montgomery."

"I was not seeking for compliments," said Isabel, with some 'hauteur.'

"Pardon me, dear Isabel," was on James's lips, but he changed it to "Miss Montgomery."

A pause ensued, at last Isabel enquired, "Have you seen Edmund Darwin?"

“ Yes ; but I suppose he did not like my company, for he went out into the garden.”

“ Perhaps you did not try to please him ?”

“ Perhaps not ; but is he not a very singular young man ? he seems to be both free and bashful at once.”

“ I can only say, that I have known him ten years, and that I have never met a kinder, better-hearted young man ; and as a child, the hours which I spent with him were always the happiest of my life.”

“ Is he not going to be married soon ? From something he let fall in conversation, I imagined it.”

“ He, poor fellow ! no. I believe he finds ‘ the course of true love never did run smooth.’ He is attached to a very pretty girl ; but her friends will not hear of such a thing, as he has not the slightest prospect of a living. But I

must not talk so much on his affairs : he would not like it."

" You may depend upon it, that I will never mention anything you say. But do you think her friends would consent, if he had a living ?"

" I do not know ; but I think they would."

" And would you like to see him married ?"

" Nothing could give me greater pleasure ;—but why do you ask ?"

" Because I have always imagined that ladies were not sincere friends, or that they could not forgive gentlemen who chanced to prefer other ladies to themselves."

" Oh, but that is false ! What a bad opinion you must have of we ladies !"

" Perhaps they have not given me reason to think better of them."

" Oh, what blasphemy ! But I cannot stay to reason with you : I must go to my darling

Georgy ; this, our last day we must spend together. So I leave you to make acquaintance with Edmund, whom I see 'là-bas.' 'Au revoir, mon ami.' "

The next morning our party attended the bride to the altar ; nor was it till the ceremony was ended, and Georgina found herself about to be separated from her sister, that her feelings overcame her in a flood of tears, as she threw herself into Isabel's arms, and gave her a farewell embrace. At last they separated, and Isabel returned to her home.

Through the breakfast she supported herself ; but on ascending to that room she had shared with her sister, unbidden tears forced themselves down her cheeks. Gradually they ceased, as she thought of the happiness of that sister, and how shortly they would meet. In the midst of her reverie, she was disturbed by a knock at her

door : the next moment it opened, and Hamilton entered.

“ Ha !” exclaimed Isabel ; “ how did you find your way here uninvited ?”

“ I beg your pardon, cousin Isabel,” said he, “ (you know I may call you cousin now, as my cousin has married your sister) ; but, in answer to your question, it was Mr. Darwin, who told me yesterday the way up here. What a nice room this is !”

“ And did Mr. Darwin send you ?” said Isabel, proudly. “ I never gave him leave to invite people up here.”

“ No, but I envied him the liberty of coming here ; and he said, perhaps if I tried for it I might obtain it. Now, do not frown at me.”

“ I think I have good reason to be angry,” exclaimed Isabel, whose excited feelings made her really feel angry.

“Oh, Miss Montgomery, pardon me ; I really did not mean to offend you. If you knew,” he continued, taking her hand, and pressing it with fervour to her heart ; “if you knew how dear you were to me, you would not be offended ; but whilst you frown at me, how can I tell you what I feel ? Ah, now you smile again ! now you are once more yourself. Will you not let me tell you how I love you ?”

“Fools must talk,” said Isabel ; motioning him, however, to place himself beside her.

“Oh, Isabel, this is coquetry ; but I cannot think my suit is disagreeable to you. I love you, I adore you. You have not known me long ;—yet, only give me some encouragement, and see whether I shall not merit you. You are silent ; what am I to think ?”

“Did you wish me to speak ?”

“Yes, let me know my doom. You have not

known me long, perhaps not long enough to feel love; but at least promise to let me seek this hand. What is your answer?"

"That if you think you deserve it, you may obtain my heart in time."

"That is all I ask. Give me but a few months to shew my love, and my sense of your kindness. I may then consider you as mine. Is it not so, my beloved?"

"Even so. And do you learn from me to use your power as well as I have done."

"And, till I have deserved you, will you not grant me a free entrance here?"

"With pleasure, on one condition. That nothing seen or said here is to be reported; not even what has passed this morning, on any account. You must be silent till you have deserved me."

"Ah, my own Isabel, that is hard; to love you as I do, and yet appear as usual."

"Never mind, you must submit. But is it not time for us to join our friends?"

"And can you wish me to leave you so soon."

"Wish it! oh no! But they might suspect something, and, for the present, I wish to avoid that."

"But you will let me be alone with you, sometimes."

"Oh, yes, sometimes, but not always; to-morrow, perhaps. But now, pray leave me for a few minutes, and then I will rejoin you in the garden."

"Adieu, then, my best beloved, for the present!" Hamilton pressed Isabel's hand to his lips, and left the room.

Isabel threw herself into her 'bergère,' and pressed her hand to her forehead. "How foolish he must think me!" she exclaimed:

“how could I be so silly in such a moment? I know not. But that is past. His heart is mine, and I am his,—yes, his for ever! Now will I try him, if he deserves me. I think he understands me. It is active, not passive worth, that must win me.”

Isabel remained a few more moments; then, quitting her room, was soon mixing with her friends, the admired of every one.

Isabel was still at her toilet, when some of the party arrived. Amongst them was one of her greatest friends, Mrs. V——: with her she brought a young man, who was introduced to Fanny; and then, perceiving Hamilton, directly walked up to him, whilst “What! you here?” and “I never expected to see you!” escaped from their lips.

“I came down to-day on a visit to V——,” continued the young stranger.

“ And I,” replied Hamilton, “ have been staying for my cousin’s wedding.”

“ Ah,—yes, I heard this was a wedding ball. How long do you stay ?”

“ I do not know,—a week or a fortnight.”

“ So long as that ? And who is your attraction ? I do not see any one here particularly pretty.”

“ No, not at present ; but I will show you a beauty presently.”

At this instant Isabel entered the room, looking the model of female beauty and perfection.

“ There !” continued Hamilton ; “ there is my attraction. Is she not lovely ?”

“ Hem !” said the stranger ; “ it strikes me I have seen that face before. What is the name ? One never hears the name in an introduction.”

“ She is Miss Montgomery, cousin to Mr. Mervyn.”

“Montgomery ! Ah, now I remember,—I saw them in Dorsetshire. I thought I recognized the face. But this is the younger,—deucedly improved to be sure. But where is the eldest ?”

“It is her that my cousin has married. But did you know them ?”

“Know them ? No,—yes,—that is, by sight. Two years ago we spent the summer in Dorsetshire, and I saw them there ; uncommon wild girls they were !”

“Wild, were they ? How so ?”

“Oh, I do not know. They rode and drove, and swam, and leaped a horse, and rowed a boat, as well as any man ; and they were as fond of admiration as—as yourself ; but they were fine girls !”

“I was not at all aware that they possessed such numerous accomplishments,” said Hamilton,

with a smile ; “ but I assure you, that, at present, you could not find a more lady-like girl.”

“ Oh, very likely ; ‘ wild colts—’ You know the proverb.”

He stopped short, for Isabel, who had now made the round of the room, glanced her dark laughing eye towards Hamilton ; her glance met his, and the blood rushed to her cheeks, as, in the stranger, she recognized Mordaunt.

Dancing commenced, and Hamilton came to claim her hand, and gay and happy they went down the country-dance ; a quadrille succeeded, still Hamilton was her partner ; the first waltz, still it was Hamilton. But, before the second waltz, Mrs. V—— and Mordaunt approached. Mordaunt was introduced and engaged for that dance, for Mordaunt could only dance a French waltz, and Mrs. V—— had told him that Isabel could dance it also. Mordaunt was determined

not to lose time, so, at the first pause, he dashed into conversation, of Spring Vale, and thence into Dorsetshire. Isabel was delighted to recall those times, and they laughed heartily over the vulgarity of the inhabitants. The third waltz still found Mordaunt engaged to Isabel. Hamilton approached, and asked her to waltz with him.

“ Oh,” exclaimed Isabel, “ do you think I will dance with you, now that I have such a delightful French waltzer?” This was said with gaiety, but it hurt Hamilton; and, turning away, he went into the next room. The next instant Isabel was sorry for having vexed him,—she wished to decline dancing, but she could not,—she danced, but her gaiety was gone; and when the dance was over, she returned silently to her seat. Mordaunt was engaged for the next, and soon she was joined by Mrs. V——.

“ You look fatigued, my dear girl,” said she, kindly ; “ and this room is hot ; come with me into the next.” Isabel took her arm, and they went into the card-room. “ I do not wonder at your being tired, you must have had so much to do to-day,” continued Mrs. V——. “ But you must soon become one of us, and then you will not feel the loss of your sister so greatly. I am sure you miss her.”

“ Poor Georgina ! yes, indeed, I do miss her ! A hundred times to-night have I caught myself looking for her.”

“ Ah, yes ! more reason for your marrying : but who, of all the people here, do you prefer ?— Mr. Mordaunt, Mr. G——, Mr. N—— ? what ! that saucy negative shake-of-the-head to all ? Well, then, Mr. Hamilton ?” (this brought a blush). “ Ah, I see you understand the ‘ magic of a name.’ ”

“ Indeed, it is a name I have no particular reason to like.”

“ Oh! for shame! Mr. Hamilton, I want to persuade Isabel that she ought to marry, but she says she never will.”

“ Ladies seldom know their own minds,” was the quiet and sarcastic reply.

“ Oh,” returned Isabel, “ you would not have me quit the

‘ Free innocence of life,
For the dull glory of a virtuous wife.’ ”

“ Oh, if you quote Pope, I am no match for you, as I seldom read him; but Mr. Hamilton, I dare say, can *answer you*.”

“ Oh, you would convert me into a charming wife, ‘ sans doute’—like yourself, one you know,

‘ Who ne’er answers till her husband cools,
Or if she rules him, never shows she rules;
Charms by accepting, by submitting sways,
Yet has her humour most when she obeys.’ ”

“ You saucy girl! Mr. Hamilton, will you

not defend us married ladies ? I am sure Isabel did not always think thus !”

“ Indeed, madam, I had rather not interfere in the case ; but you know what Miss Montgomery’s favourite author, Pope, says—

‘ There are, ’tis true, who tell another tale,
That single ladies envy *while they rail.*’ ”

Hamilton now moved off to the card-table ; but not before he saw a tear start to the eyes of Isabel ; and her heightened colour, as she turned away, showed that his remarks, at least, hurt as much as her own.

Isabel rejoined the dancers, but her heart was no longer light ; she felt that something had vexed Hamilton—she feared that it was herself, and it was with pleasure that she saw the guests depart ; but not before she had promised to visit Mrs. V——. Previous to Mordaunt’s departure, Isabel retired to her room ; and, pondering on the events of the day, she fell asleep.

Isabel descended next morning to a late breakfast; Hamilton was there. She was prepared to meet him with her joyous smile, but his cold air cut her to the heart, as he said, "Good morning, Miss Montgomery." Isabel could have wept, but she commanded her feelings. "Perhaps," thought she, "he has repented of what he said yesterday. Perhaps Mordaunt has prejudiced him; or else, why should he be so cold? 'N'importe;' if he is 'frondeur,' I will be 'hauteur.'"

Such were Isabel's cogitations, which were disturbed by Fanny's asking her how she meant to spend the day.

"Why, if you do not want the carriage, I intended to call on Miss Napier."

"Oh, certainly you may: I have a slight headache, and shall remain at home." As William was already gone out, Isabel hoped that Hamil-

ton would accompany her. But, to her disappointment, when the carriage came round, his splendid horse was also brought to the door. He handed her into the carriage, however, with a slight apology for not accompanying her, on account of his engagement to see his friend Mordaunt.

Isabel's drive was a dull one; but she persuaded Miss Napier to spend a few days with her. Darwin was gone to college, and Louisa was delighted to pass some time with a friend he valued so highly. Louisa was an affectionate, good-tempered, retiring girl, but she was not a companion for Isabel; and the latter, therefore, rejoiced when she heard from Hamilton that Mordaunt had left the neighbourhood. Hamilton never sought her society, he rather avoided her, and still maintained an air of marked coldness. Isabel maintained an air of 'hauteur;' but in her

heart, she could have knelt to ask his pardon : so prompted her Irish heart, but her English pride forbade it.

Isabel announced her intention of conducting Miss Napier home, and then going on to Mrs. V——'s for a short stay. To her surprise, Hamilton declared, that, as business called him away, he must also leave his kind hosts on that same day. Isabel took leave of him with unfeigned regret, and thought that his manners had more of their former kindness.

As her carriage drove away, Hamilton threw himself into his own.

“ Farewell, Isabel !” thought he ; “ best, loveliest of thy sex, farewell for ever !”

Then came a torrent of reflections. “ Why did she ever listen to me, why afterwards cut me ? Ah, Isabel ! thou, too, art like the rest of thy countrywomen—changeable, inconstant. Fool that

I was, to hope to find love in an Irish heart !
And can that modesty be all put on? Can she
be, what Mordaunt says, wild at the heart?
Ah, woman, thou art a problem ! henceforward
I have done with thee."

Isabel's reflections were not of a more pleasant nature. But, for the first part of their drive, Louisa and she had enough to say. Louisa had that day received a letter from her Edmund, overflowing, as all lovers' letters are, with expressions of love and tenderness, and Isabel now held in her hand an answer to it from the timid girl. But Isabel did wrong in encouraging an underhand correspondence. The warmth of her heart had prompted her to oblige her earliest friend ; but, on cooler reflection, she saw it was wrong, and determined that these first letters should be the last. Isabel found herself gladly welcomed by her friend Mrs. V——, and, during

the fortnight she spent with her, she contrived to pass her time pleasantly ; but it was on her return home that she missed Hamilton. Wherever she went, something recalled him to her mind. She thought of his professed love—his coldness. The thought was painful, yet she loved it. Her cousins were going to Leamington for a change, and Isabel accompanied them. She was delighted with the place. The month of November set-in cold and foggy ; but the gaieties commenced, and Isabel thought, " If Hamilton were here, how happy I should be ! " and, as if to oblige her, Hamilton did come. By chance he called—they were from home ; but in one of their morning drives they met ; again his bow, and cold " Good morning, Miss Montgomery ! " struck like ice on Isabel's warm heart ; but she felt that it was partially her own fault, therefore she resolved to think of it no more.

They met at a ball. He never asked her to dance—never spoke to her. “Alas !” thought she, next morning, “why was I so much of a coquette? I might have been his ; but now all is over. Isabel and Hamilton must be no more to each other !”

¶ In the midst of these reflections a servant brought her two letters ; one was from Georgina — the other from Kennedy. Georgina was in Dublin ; but, after Christmas, her husband meant to take a house in London, and then they hoped to see their dear Isabel again.

“I have discovered,” continued Georgina, “James’s little ‘amourette’ here. You know it was Charles first hinted something of it. He was very much attached to Miss D——, a pretty girl, the daughter of a clergyman. She received his attentions, and encouraged him, but at the same time was receiving attentions from another

gentleman, of larger fortune. At last James proposed, and she required time to consider of it. Now, it came to pass, that the next day the other suitor proposed. She accepted him directly, and of course cut James; so he came flying to England, like a mad dog. However, you see that it was only a 'fantaisie.'"

"Yes, dear Georgy," exclaimed Isabel, "we will soon part no more,—now I have your house for a home I will never marry; but I must carry Arthur's letter to the Shiels, for I promised to show them the next."

Miss Mary and Miss Becky Shiel were distant relations of Arthur's father. Isabel equipped herself, and set out. She arrived at the door, and was ushered into the drawing-room; whilst ascending, she was told by the servant, that Mr. Harry, and his lady, and little girl, were also there. Isabel entered the room, and seeing a gentleman looking out of the window, little

doubted that it was him, and therefore exclaimed, " Ah, cousin Harry, are you come at last ?" The blood rushed to her cheeks, and she stood in the utmost confusion, for on turning round at her step, the gentleman presented not the features of her cousin, but those of Hamilton. " Miss Montgomery !"—" Mr. Hamilton !" they mutually exclaimed.

Hamilton looked embarrassed, so did Isabel. She felt choking, but she stifled her emotions, and took the chair he offered her. A momentary silence ensued, when Hamilton made an effort to say something about the gaieties; Isabel replied, and again they were silent. In a few minutes Major Shiel entered the room; it was with difficulty Isabel recognized, in the sun-burnt person before her, he who had twelve years before quitted England in the prime of life ; though scarcely eight-and-twenty, Major

Sheil's once jet-black locks were tinged with grey.

"Is it possible," said he to Isabel, "that you can be my little favourite Isabel? Why, it seems but yesterday, that I used to dance you on my knee,—a child of three years old! how time does pass! What an old man I must be growing, Isabel, hey?"

Before Isabel could reply, Miss Becky and Mary entered, exclaiming, "Ah! Mr. Hamilton,—Miss Montgomery:—well, I declare I am sorry to have kept you waiting,—very sorry. Oh, Isabel, you have a letter from Arthur, I suppose; how is our dear boy?—well, I am sure, by your look."

"Yes, thank Heaven! he is well; and I hope he will join us soon. He has arrived at Plymouth, and he is so happy,—he has been promoted. He says some person must have exerted

their influence very much for him, but who it is he cannot imagine, nor can I." But Isabel gave a glance towards Hamilton, that very much belied her tongue.

"So, Georgina is married!" said the Major.
"Is she happy?"

"Happy? Oh, yes. How could she be otherwise? I had a letter from her this morning, full of nothing else:—'Charles does this, and Charles does that.'"

"I had the pleasure of seeing your sister when I was in Dublin," observed Hamilton:
"I never saw any one look so happy as my cousin."

"'Comme de raison,'" replied the Major;
"they have not been married long enough to have any disagreements. Do you not miss your sister?"

"Oh, yes, intleed I do, every hour of the day.

I assure you I often do wrong only from want of her counsel. I do not know how it is, but I feel so unsupported."

"Ah, well, you must follow her example, Isabel."

"Not I," said Isabel, turning scarlet.

"Ah, yes, you must; must she not, Mr. Hamilton?"

"Indeed it will be Miss Montgomery's fault, I should imagine, if she does not."

"Cruel Hamilton!" thought Isabel.

"Isabel, dear!" said Miss Becky, "Henry has not heard you sing. We have got a new piano; do, therefore, favour us. Take off your bonnet, dear!"

"That is right," said Harry, with a sigh, as she took off her bonnet. "How like you are to your mother, Isabel!"

A tear started to Isabel's eye; and again the

Major sighed, for in his boyish days he had been the ardent lover of the young widow.

“What shall I sing?”

“Oh, those pretty words you sang yesterday.”

Isabel then sang simply, but with great feeling—

“And canst thou bid my heart forget, what once it loved so well?”

Isabel felt it. As she sung, every word seemed to come from her heart. When it was finished, she started from the piano, and, tying on her bonnet, took leave.

Hamilton also rose; and before she was half-way down the street, he joined her.

“Miss Montgomery, your sister entrusted me with a small packet for you: I promised to deliver it myself, therefore I did not leave it, when I heard you were not at home.”

“Oh, thank you. I am sorry you should have troubled yourself.”

“ No trouble at all. Surely Miss Montgomery knows that, for her sake, I would not think anything trouble.”

Isabel's eyes were on the ground, for she felt his ardent gaze ; and they proceeded silently, till they reached Isabel's home.

“ Will you not come in ?” enquired she.

“ Yes, I think I will, to see your cousins. But can I do anything for you ? I leave this to-morrow.”

“ Nothing, I thank you. Tell your mistress that Mr. Hamilton is here,” added she to the servant.

“ Here is your sister's parcel. But you are sure you have no message to any friend ;—Mr. Darwin, or Mr. Mordaunt ?”

“ None at all, I thank you,” said Isabel, half offended. “ But, as I hear Fanny, you will

permit me to withdraw, to look at my sister's packet."

Hamilton returned her bow in silence.

"What does he mean?" was Isabel's thought, as she locked the bed-room door, and threw herself on the bed. "Now for dear Georgy's packet!—let us see." The packet was opened, and out came a letter; next, several little articles of jewellery. "'Quoi de plus?'" said Isabel, as she unfolded another case. "Ha! Georgy's miniature!—and very like dear Georgy! And this I suppose is Charles;—but no! heavens! what does Georgy mean?—it is Hamilton's! Ah! I suppose, as I never told her of our 'fracas,' she supposes everything right;—but how kind this is of her!"

Isabel had, indeed, never told her sister of her 'fracas':—she knew that it would make Georgy unhappy. If things came round again,

she thought it would give her pleasure to hear it; and if not, it was better she should be ignorant that they had ever gone so far. "Make haste and marry, dear Isabel," said the latter; "you cannot think how happy we married women are!"

"Another letter!" exclaimed Isabel, as she sat alone in the drawing-room;—"who is this from? A double letter:—what! from Darwin?" It ran as follows:—

"Dear Isabel,—I know your goodness too well, to make any excuses for this liberty. The enclosure I send you is from your former friend, Maria. Medwyn is married, and has forsaken her. She seems truly repentant of her folly. Poor girl! I pity her. She is destitute of everything, and her father is on his death-bed. I am in haste; therefore, adieu."

Maria's letter was as follows:—

“ Oh, Isabel ! if such a wretch as I dare to address you as her friend, I would tell you all my misfortunes. Alas ! too late I see my wretchedness ! It is not the loss of him I loved, that I lament ;—it is that of my friends, my father, my brother ! My father is ill ;—I would fly to him : but, alas ! I have not the means ! On my knees I implore you to give me something. God will repay you. I can but bless you.”

“ Such is the consequence of guilt !” sighed Isabel. “ Poor Maria ! I have not much to give her ; yet what I have, she shall have directly.” Isabel opened her desk, and took out a ten-pound bank note. “ This she shall have !” And she sate down, and answered the letters. Tears fell from her eyes, as she begged Maria to accept of the trifle she offered her. Just as she had enclosed this letter in the one

to Edmund, and sealed it, the door opened, and Mr. Hamilton was announced. Isabel started with surprise, as he entered the room.

"Do I disturb you?" said he; "I hope not."

"Not at all, I assure you."

"I could not help stopping to see if you had any commands to-day."

"I think I told you I had none."

"Yes, but still I thought I would call. You have a letter, I see; do let me deliver it; I should be so happy. Pray, Miss Montgomery, let me take it."

"Certainly, if it would give you so much pleasure. It is to Mr. Darwin," said Isabel, blushing; "it is on business."

"Thank you for giving it to me. I am so happy to be of service to you; and, though so willing, it is but little I can do. I cannot now stay; but when we next meet, I hope we shall

see more of each other, and know each other better than we seem to do now. Adieu."

Isabel faintly wished him a good journey.

He took her offered hand, and, pressing it to his lips, withdrew.

Christmas was soon approaching, and Isabel and her cousins returned to Spring Vale. Darwin had also returned from college, and came over to spend a day with his only friend.

"Have you heard since of Maria Eastcourt?" said Isabel, as they walked.

"Only that she got safe to her father's."

"And was he expected to live?"

"I fear not. Poor Maria! I never saw any one more heartily repentant. That villain Medwyn misled her terribly.—Let us go this way, Isabel, through the church-yard. It is nearest, —unless you are afraid of ghosts."

"I afraid! But did you ever see one?"

"No, I cannot say I did. Have you?"

"No; but I used to think I saw fairies, as a child, when I used to look out of the window at night. I used to fancy the tops of the trees were fairies, and I could distinguish whole regiments of foot and horse. But, bless me, Edmund, who has done this?" and Isabel pointed to young Eastcourt's grave, on which was placed a marble urn, surrounded by a railing. "I do not know," was the reply; "but let us go and look at it,—let us read the inscription:—'Sacred to the memory of Evelyn Eastcourt; whose exemplary piety, and many virtues, caused him to be loved during his life, and deeply regretted at his death.'"

"Who can have done this?" said Isabel, after a few minutes passed in silence. "I cannot

think, unless his father ; but no, it could not be him—he is too poor.”

“ Poor Evelyn ! he at least rests in peace, and his remains are honoured.”

“ Yes, and he deserves it ; for great was the good he did. Everything he had, he gave to the poor ; he is greatly missed. How different is his sister ! volatile and unprincipled. It was she who caused his death.”

“ Yes ; but let us forget that. Her present contrition, shows that her heart was not radically bad ; nor was her conduct other than could be expected from one in whom no religious principles were engrafted. Neglected by her father, and left in the company of a designing man of the world, what could be looked for ? Let us, who have enjoyed a religious education, be ready to pardon the faults of others, and to remember that divine precept,—‘ Judge not, that ye be not

judged.' But I think I have sermonized a little too long. I am becoming the parson, too soon ; so let us go home, Isabel."

"If I had a living you should have it, for your good sermon."

Isabel returned home, deeply musing on who it could be that had erected the monument to young Eastcourt,—and half suspecting Darwin of it, though he had denied all knowledge of the fact.

Mordaunt was again staying with the V——'s; and as William often met him out hunting, and invited him home to a family dinner, Isabel saw a great deal of him. But he was not one of those who improve on acquaintance. He was just the same the first half-hour he was ever after,—an incessant talker about nothing; his delight was to hunt all day, and dance all night; and as Isabel was the only young lady in the

neighbourhood, whom he thought worthy his notice, his attentions were most marked, and soon gave rise to whispers. Did she dance,—he was her partner,—did she sit still,—he lounged beside her chair : if at the piano, he turned over the leaves of her music ; at the tea-table he was ready to give her everything ; in fact every attention in his power, marked or trifling, was paid to Isabel. All this our readers will think tended to something,—so it did ; and many weeks had not elapsed, when Mordaunt declared his wish of making Isabel, Mrs. Mordaunt. But the impression which Hamilton had made on Isabel's heart, required a longer space to be effaced, and Mordaunt was refused. He would hardly believe his senses. That any woman could ever refuse him, had never entered his head ; and that Isabel could refuse to become Lady

Mordaunt at a future period was far beyond his conception.

At last the time came for Isabel to join her sister, and Charles came to conduct her to London.

“Dearest Isabel,” exclaimed Georgina, when they met, “how happy I am to see you! how well you look! I must show you to your room. I have such a charming boudoir fitted up for you! Will you come and see it? But, no, dinner is ready now, and, after dinner, we shall have plenty of time, and I have so much to say!”

“And you are happy, dearest Georgy?” said Isabel, the day after her arrival, as she and her sister lounged on their bergères, on each side of the fire of Mrs. Charles Hamilton’s boudoir.

“Happy! yes, the happiest of the happy! no one can imagine my happiness. At first, you

know I did not love Charles, but he is so uniformly kind, that now I cannot help loving him. Oh, how kind he is! he is always thinking of my comforts; always fearing he does not make me happy enough,—so attentive, so ‘*prévenant*!’”

“Dearest Georgina, I am so glad you are happy!”

“Yes, but let us talk of your affairs. I thought you and Hamilton would have been a match; but you never mention him in your letters. I almost think there has been some misunderstanding between you; and yet you tell me you have refused Mordaunt. I do not understand all this. I am sure you have concealed something from me. Surely Isabel, I did not deserve that?”

“You are right, Georgina. I believe there is something. We had come to a very good understanding; but in one of my foolish fits, I said

something which hurt his pride. He retaliated, and I was offended ; since that, there has been a slight coldness on both sides."

" And yet your refusing Mordaunt, must have shown him that you were not indifferent to him."

" No ! even if he knew it, which most likely he did not, it would only show that I did not like Mordaunt ; but I cannot help it ; it is my own fault, and I must take the consequences ; only do not mention it to your husband."

" Certainly not. But, then, as James is in town, and he and Charles are so intimate, we must have him sometimes to dinner, and that will be so awkward for you ; but ' n'importe,' in London, you will soon find ' un plus brillant parti', to console you. Now, do not speak ; I see by your looks you are going to swear eternal love to him, and that you will never love another.

But look at me,—I did not love, yet I am happy. Follow my example.”

“ Yes, my dear sister, but you never loved another.”

“ Never mind that; this I dare say is no more, ‘ *qu’une fontaine*,’ it has not hurt your health. Gracious heaven! I hear Charles’s voice, and there is James also.”

“ Goodness, what must we do ?”

“ Do come and see him ; I dare say, after all, I shall be able to make up this little fracas.”

“ Oh, no ! promise never to mention it.”

“ Very well ; but come down now.”

* * * *

“ Who is your letter from, Isabel ?” said Georgina, about a fortnight after Isabel had been with her.

“ From a lover, to be sure,” said Charles.

“ Cannot you tell it is a gentleman’s hand ?”

"Be quiet, Charles, will you!"

"Read it," said Isabel, giving it to her sister.

"Give it me," said Charles, pretending to snatch it.

"Be quiet, Charles, and do leave the room."

"Do you wish it?"

"Yes, really, I should like it for a little."

Charles left the room, like a kind creature as he was; and Georgina said, again—

"Who are these letters from?"

"The one I gave you, is from Darwin; and the other, from poor Maria Eastcourt. Wait till I read you them, for they both puzzle me."

Isabel then read as follows, beginning with that from Darwin:—

"DEAREST ISABEL,—You will be happy to hear that I have obtained the situation of tutor

to the little Marquis of W——; which you know is an excellent thing at present for one so young as myself, besides being a sure road to preferment. Whose influence has been exerted to obtain this for me, I think I need not tell you, as I believe you are already acquainted with this circumstance. As I am going immediately to join my little pupil in the North, I am afraid we shall not meet again for some months. I have heard from Maria Eastcourt: her father is dead, and she means to retire to the continent, and there pass the rest of her life. Medwyn and his lady are said not to agree very well; but I cannot answer for the truth of this report; though, as he married for money, I think it at least very possible. Is your sister quite well? When does Arthur expect leave of absence? I should like in summer to leave my little pupil for a few days, to see you all; perhaps I may. You see

with my large hand I have nearly filled all my paper; therefore excuse my writing more, and believe me your sincere friend,

“DARWIN.”

“He seems to think you know of this appointment.”

“Yes,—and it is that which puzzles me. How should I know? But here is the letter from Maria, which is still more puzzling: just listen to it.”

“DEAREST ISABEL,—According to the wish which you expressed, I am about to leave England. Pardon my disobeying your injunction of not thanking you. This last act of kindness has overwhelmed me. On my knees will I pray, every day, to that God who hears the prayers of the penitent, to bless you and Mr. Darwin, your

kind agent in this affair. Oh, what do I not owe him, for having pointed out to me the way to repentance,—for showing me, that, sinner as I was, I need not despair, but that Christ would not reject a penitent sinner. But I will not any longer waste your time. Once more, my friend, forgive me, your poor Maria, and may God bless you ! Adieu.”

“ There is certainly something very singular in this !”

“ Yes. I will tell you what I will do,—I will write to Darwin, and enclose this letter, requesting him to explain it.”

“ Yes ; I think you cannot do better.”

“ Well, I will go, and write directly.”

“ Stop just to tell me this :—Has a certain person said anything ?”

“Not a word; but I sometimes think that he looks.”

“Looks! looks how?”

“Nay, I will not tell you what I mean. Good bye! I am in a hurry to write this letter.”

“I declare I think you will marry this Edmund at last.”

“Well, I do not know. I might go farther, and fare worse; hey?”

“I wish you would do something, so get off to your room directly.”

“Well, now I do not feel inclined to go. I was just going to say that little Louisa Napier is a nice little girl, but not the sort to please me. She knows nothing of the world, she loves every one, and thinks Edmund perfection.”

“So much the better, if she marry him.”

“Yes. Apropos, this is a good thing for

him ; but I hear Charles whistling, 'for want of thought,' outside, so I will take myself off. 'Addio, mia cara sorella.'"

Isabel anxiously awaited the day on which she could receive Darwin's answer. At last it arrived. Georgina had gone to drive with her husband ; but Isabel, whose curiosity was greatly excited, sat awaiting it in her own boudoir. Some person knocked at her door—it was her maid—who delivered the long-expected letter. It was hastily opened, and still more hastily read.

"What !" exclaimed she, as she finished ; "is it possible that I could not have known Hamilton ! is it possible that I can have forfeited the love of this man ! It is Hamilton who obtained Arthur's promotion ; Hamilton who raised the monument to Evelyn ; Hamilton who has given Maria a pension ; Hamilton who obtained the

situation for Darwin ; and for what has he done all this ? To please me, Darwin seems to insinuate. No ! that cannot be ; and yet I think he did. Oh, what a fool was I ! But Darwin says that he knows all,—he knows the cause of our misunderstanding. He knows that he loves me, and that it remains with me to make it up. But how ? by an apology ? No ! never can I ask pardon for that foolish word ; it was folly—coquetry—nonsense. But never can I stoop to make the first advances ; pride forbid it ! What must I do then ? Seeing him every day, knowing his worth, as I now do, how can I drive his image from my heart ? And yet it must be done ; for never shall it be said that I idly threw away his love, and then stooped to seek it again. No, never !”

Hours had passed unheeded by Isabel, whilst

these tumultuous thoughts racked her brain. The clock struck six ; she started as a knock came to the door, and dinner was announced. She knew that there was a small party to dinner that day, so she told the servant to say, that she was sorry her head ached too much to allow her to appear ; and then, returning into her room, established herself by the fire.

“ Where is your sister, my love ? ” said Charles to his lady.

“ She has just sent to say that she was not quite well.”

“ Is not Miss Montgomery well ? ” inquired Hamilton ; “ I hope she has not been sitting up too late.”

“ Oh, I do not think it is much. Isabel has been reading and writing letters all day. I dare say, by the time you gentlemen have done

your wine, she will join us ;—particularly if you, Mr. Hamilton, send to ask for a little music.”

“ Indeed, Georgina,” said her husband, “ music would most likely increase a head-ache.”

“ So I think ; and I would not wish to distress Miss Montgomery on any account. So I will not ask for music now, but wait till some other day.”

“ ‘ Oh, comme vous voulez ! ’ but let us not keep the dinner waiting any longer, since Isabel will not come.”

Georgina quitted her party for a few minutes, to see her sister, before going to the Opera.

“ Dear Isabel, you are not well,” said she ; “ how feverish your hand is ! I wish I could stay with you. I read the letter you sent me, and I know what you must feel ; but I can also assure you that Hamilton loves you. I saw it

plainly to-day at dinner ; he was quite melancholy. My darling Isabel ! how well you look with your hair ‘ à la Madonne.’ ” Whilst Georgina spoke, she had been amusing herself with twisting her sister’s hair into a thousand shapes, and had at last fixed it ‘ à la Madonne.’ “ But I must leave you, dear Isabel ! I will order my own maid to bring up your supper, and you may be quite comfortable in your ‘ bergère,’ with a fine fire, and the last publication in the way of a romance ;—and that, I recollect, was what you and I always considered the height of happiness at Spring Vale.”

When Georgina left the room, Isabel did indeed wheel her sofa, or lounge, or whatever may be the fashionable word for it, to the fire, and take the romance, which professed to be “ a tale of deep interest,” in her hand : but gradually her thoughts wandered back to Hamil-

ton ; and if she sighed, it was for herself, and not for the heroine. A knock came at the door : “ Come in,” said she, thinking it was the servant. The door opened gently, and shut behind the person who entered. Her back was to the door, and she did not turn till she felt her hand touched by another. She started ; and raising her eyes, met those of Hamilton. In an instant she was on her feet, and exclaimed,

“ Hamilton, is this right?—is this kind ?”

“ It is ! it is !” said Hamilton. “ Listen to me, Isabel. Why should we remain any longer in ignorance of each other’s sentiments ? Why are we any more to behave with this coolness ? Let us come to an understanding. You know how I adore you : only tell me, do I not deserve you ? I may have been hasty ;—I was so, in taking offence where none was meant. I believed you to be playing with my feelings, whilst

you loved another, and I wished not to stand in your way. But I adored you, and I tried to drive your image from my thoughts; but it haunted me; and when we met at Leamington, one word, one look of encouragement, would have brought me to your feet. Isabel, do you recollect you told me to deserve you? I may not do so,—but I have tried. Tell me if I have succeeded?”

“Oh yes, oh yes, Hamilton! I know all your goodness, and my own folly! It is I who do not deserve you!” exclaimed Isabel, burying her face in her hands.

“Say not so, my own Isabel!” said James, seizing her hand, and pressing it to his lips. “You must not distress yourself. We are both to blame in this affair—I in particular; but I have your forgiveness, and all will be well.

Look at me, and give me one of your own sweet smiles, my dearest Isabel ! and we shall be so happy !" and, encircling her waist with his arm, Hamilton impressed a kiss upon her ruby lips.

" Were you not at the Opera ?" asked Isabel, after a few minutes had elapsed in silence.

" No. When I heard you would not be of the party, I professed my intention of going to the study to write business letters. I think your sister understood my meaning, she looked at me so archly. Oh, Isabel, I will make you happier even than she is !" .

" And who was your letter to ?"

" To Darwin. Dearest Isabel, what a sincere friend he is ! Had it not been for him, you would never have been mine—I should never have known you."

" He is the best man in the world !" exclaimed the happy Isabel.

"He is. But remember, repeating that too often may make me jealous."

"Can you be jealous?"

"Is there a man who could bear to share the love of one like you with another?"

"Yes; I know one who can, and one who must."

"Who is he?"

"Yourself; for you would be the very first to upbraid me with ingratitude, if I did not love my earliest friend."

"I should, perhaps. But how is your head now, Isabel?"

"Well—quite well."

"Confess, then, that it was never otherwise, and that it was only to avoid my hated company you feigned it."

"You are partly right, I believe."

"I knew so. Yes, Isabel, from the moment I

heard it, I divined the cause, and determined on speaking to you, which, thanks to the connivance of your sister and Mlle. Agatha, I effected. And now let me repeat your own question—‘ Is it kind—is it right ? ’ ”

“ Yes, I reply, it is; for now we are come to an understanding, and now my heart is happy.”

“ Then, farewell for the present, dearest Isabel ! The party will soon be returned, and my letter is still unwritten.”

* * * *

Arthur Kennedy soon arrived, to assist at the nuptials of his sister. Isabel was married in the presence of a few chosen friends ; and, it is said, that on being rallied by Mrs. V——, on her change of sentiments, and twitted with the following extract from Pope,—

“ Oh, quit not the free innocence of life,
For the dull glory of a virtuous wife ! ”—

she replied by another quotation,—

“Honour and shame from no condition rise;
Act well your part,—there all the honour lies!”

But to return to our tale (which, by the bye, is now near a conclusion), Isabel and Hamilton lived happily together; and if Isabel was not happier than her sister, she was quite as happy. Edmund Darwin obtained a valuable living, and married his dear Louisa, who eloped with him to Gretna Green, for fear of experiencing a refusal from his friends. We cannot attempt to excuse this unclergyman-like and unlady-like act; but certain it is, that she did not make a worse wife, or he a worse husband, for it.

Captain Medwyn had not been married six months when his lady left him, and he himself fell in a duel with the favoured lover; whilst Maria Eastcourt, his unfortunate victim, soon

followed him to the grave, her constitution having given way to her remorse.

We have now brought our tale to a close, and must beg to take leave of our readers.

THE END.

