

THE  
CURATE  
AND HIS  
DAUGHTER;  
*A CORNISH TALE.*

BY  
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EXCURSION—THE NOBILITY OF THE HEART—  
THE WEDDING DAY, &c. &c.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

..... No mother's care  
Shielded my infant innocence with prayer;  
No father's guardian hand my youth maintained,  
Called forth my virtues, and from vice restrained.

\* \* \* \* \*

Alone from strangers every comfort flowed.

SAVAGE.

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CHAP. I.

IN a remote village in Cornwall, called Boss Castle, stood the parsonage. It was inhabited by an elderly clergyman, whose whole household consisted of a little girl, and one female domestic. The dwelling was so old and out of repair, that it was by the neighbouring peasantry often compared to its owner, who had the reputation among them of being somewhat crazed; although it was admitted that he strictly fulfilled his parochial duties, gave much in charity (slender as were his own means of support, from the smallness of the curacy), listened to and relieved every just tale of distress, in the most benevolent manner—yet he associated with none of the gentry, who had invited him till they were weary, and for some years had desisted from it: neither did he receive any visitors at home. His time was devoted to religious duties, and often to intense reading; but he was subject to long fits of melancholy, when he shut himself up in his apartments, and the only thing that raised him from his torpor, was the society of this little girl, on whom he doated. Yet there were periods when her presence threw him into such despondence, that he was compelled to dismiss her; on these occasions he took long and solitary walks in the most retired parts of the country.

Various were the surmises whom this child might be, and what was her relationship to him; but not even the domestic could discover, for he never permitted any questions to be asked, and she was known by no other name than that of Matilda.

It was at the period when she had entered her eighth year, that Mr. Trevanion lingered, during the winter, through a violent nervous fever, which rendered him so languid and debilitated, that it was thought, by the medical man who attended him, he could not live a week. Mr. Trevanion, as a pious christian, had long been resigned to die; but, on account of this little girl, in whom all his joy and grief appeared to centre, he would cheerfully have lived, had it been permitted him, a few years longer.

Matilda, had never known any other parent or friend except Mr. Trevanion; to him she imparted all her chat, and all her wishes. He had not allowed her to associate with any of the children in the village, nor to go beyond the limits of the parsonage garden and orchard. Her sports were less infantile than most children of her age; for his affection made her more attentive to the words of instruction, with which his conversation was always blended: and her early habits were founded on the strictest principles of benevolence and integrity.

Margaret, the domestic, who saw her master's end rapidly approaching, was extremely anxious to know what was to become of the child. She found him tenderly caressing her, and Matilda putting up her little hands, stroking his cheek and then kissing it, while she pathetically said, "I shall have no one to love me if you send me away;" for Mr. Trevanion had told her they must part, but she understood not that he meant he was going to die.

"My fortitude," cried he, "will desert me, if you do not take this child away. Poor thing!—that look—that voice unmans me. Oh! resemble not, sweet blossom, thy unfortunate parent, even in the artlessness of thy disposition, for that was her destruction.—Too innocent to be acquainted with guile, she sunk into the destructive snare spread for her! Such was———" He fell back in a fainting fit, and left the sentence unfinished.

After Margaret had administered different cordials, Mr. Trevanion once more feebly revived. When he was able to speak, he desired to have pen, ink, and paper, and, with much difficulty, addressed a few lines to an elderly widow lady, who lived a short distance from the parsonage. He was greatly agitated while writing; but having finished his letter, he ordered it to be taken with all speed to the Countess Dowager Seyntaubyne, at Pengwilly Hall.

Margaret stood suspended in surprise, and did not offer to move. Her surprise was natural. The Curate never allowed any person even to mention the name of the lady to whom his letter was addressed; it was the only subject, if he chanced to hear her spoken of, which put him out of humour; and, although possessing an unusual share of christian charity, it was parsimoniously extended towards her ladyship. That he should write to this person in his dying moments, appeared a step so extraordinary, Margaret began to give credit to the reports of the neighbourhood, that her master was sometimes out of his senses.—"Do you mean this letter to go, sir?" said she, holding it in her hand and reading the direction.

"For what purpose else was it written? It must go with all dispatch," continued he, in evident agitation: "neighbour James will take it." Margaret lifted up her hands and departed. In less than two hours, a violent ringing at the gate announced Lady Seyntaubyne, who, with hurried steps, entered the poor Curate's chamber.

Margaret, all curiosity, stood at a little distance from the door, but she was desired to leave the room.

The countess and Mr. Trevanion were several hours together before the bell rung; when it did, Margaret was desired to bring in Matilda. The child was led in by Margaret, who scarcely waited the bidding, and was ordered to remain.

"You are a witness," said Mr. Trevanion, in faltering accents to Margaret, "when I am no more, that I now resign this child to the Countess of Seyntaubyne's care for ever."—"You accept, madam," addressing her, "this precious relic?"

"I do," she replied.

"Sweet innocent!" exclaimed Mr. Trevanion, (Matilda gazed wistfully in his face), "look not so piteously."

"Will you, madam, cherish her with kindness? Will you promise to love her?—You will find her, young as she is, worthy of your love.—She has been the ministering angel to my woes; and, while she has awakened

‘The nerve where agony was born,’

she has poured the balm of peace into a mind touched by incurable sorrow.”

Matilda shrunk from the extended hand of the countess.

“It were as well,” said her ladyship, “the child went home with me now;—if to-morrow you are better, I will bring her to see you.”

“To-morrow!” exclaimed the Curate, mournfully, “I shall not see to-morrow. The world is fast closing upon me, and I would have no temporary concerns break in upon my thoughts at so awful a moment. On your promises, madam,” continued he, “I rely for a permanent home to Matilda. The gaiety of childhood will soon dispel her sorrow.—She will regret me for a time; I would wish her to regret me; and, young as she is, perhaps, in after years, remembrance will picture to her imagination one who cherished her infant years, and who doated on her as he once doated ——— Distracting thought!—but, no more; for I am unequal to the touching subject. Name me sometimes to Matilda; and, if she enquires—if she weeps my absence, tell her I am gone to be happy.—Sooth, with tenderness, her regrets: and assure her we shall meet again in the regions of the blessed!”

“If,” added he, “she lives to womanhood, present her with this miniature (which he gave into Lady Seyntaubyne’s hand);—this packet give her at the same time. It is proper she should know to whom she belongs; but, till then, spare her, and spare yourself, madam, the painful subject. To divulge it, would answer no good purpose: to deceive, would but lead her into error. She has never with me been known by any other name than that of Matilda, but you may call her *Trevanion*; and though with me she would have bloomed unseen, unknown, nor ever been transplanted from her native soil, her days would have proved as innocent as happy. Portionless, yet contented; gay as the lark which carols in the morning,—her spotless life ending, as it began, in obscurity;—all the honours she would have received at her death, would have been the simple flowers of the village maidens, scattered over her grave, bedewed with tears of sorrow.”

“With your ladyship, riches, temptations, flattery, admiration, will await her; O may she have sense and discretion to resist their baneful influence. Instruct her of the danger attendant in such allurements; how inimical they are to happiness, and that religion and virtue are the only passports to heaven.”

Lady Seyntaubyne heard Mr. Trevanion with a look of impatient uneasiness; the very reason which made him enforce the importance of his argument. Again he made her promise solemnly, never to resign Matilda to any who might demand her, except by marriage, nor to renounce the protection she was henceforth to give her. Her ladyship assured Mr. Trevanion she would not forfeit the promise she had given. He was prejudiced against her ladyship; therefore, it appeared strangely inconsistent, his consigning this darling little girl to her care; but there are often contradictions in human nature, not only beyond the power of human reason to explain, but also human ingenuity to imagine; this was one of them.

“You will go home, my child,” said Mr. Trevanion, feebly folding Matilda in his arms, “with this lady; I am ill, my dear, and she will love you.”

The countess saluted Matilda, with large promises to make her happy; and she reluctantly departed with her to Pengwilly Hall, never more to return to her early and peaceful home.

## CHAP. II.

THE following morning, tidings were brought that Mr. Trevanion had expired during the night.

The affliction of children is violent, but, happily for them, it is transient. The painful impressions of the past gradually faded away; and the diversity of amusement Mrs. Grey, the housekeeper, an excellent and tender-hearted woman, contrived for Matilda, had the desired effect of curing her sorrow.

Lady Seyntaubyne was ill calculated to educate this lovely child, having, for the last twenty years of her life, lived wholly secluded from the world; its manners and habits had undergone, during that period, such a total revolution, she was a perfect novice in the customs of the present day. Her fortune was ample; and her family, of elevated rank, was one of the most ancient of the English nobility. Her only son had succeeded to the title and estate of his father, situated not more than six miles from her ladyship's present residence. By birth, she was Cornish; and had been an heiress, as well as a beauty. Her son, the present Earl of Seyntaubyne, had disappointed her expectations and wishes, in marrying, a few years since, against her consent, the daughter of an Irish peer, of very small fortune. She died at the end of a twelvemonth, after giving birth to a girl. His mother, still ambitious that he should form a splendid alliance, was afterwards offended with him, beyond forgiveness, on his entering into another engagement, which she considered of so derogatory a nature, that all intercourse and friendship had entirely ceased between them; thus disappointed and grieved, she renounced society altogether.

The Dowager Countess of Seyntaubyne, was a woman of a vigorous, strong mind, a mature understanding, and a persevering temper; with a heart, sincere, open, and liberal. Though she was superior to the little sensitive tenderness which displays itself in tears, the native benevolence of her disposition shone forth whenever her feelings were awakened; and no call of charity was unanswered, if the objects were deserving her bounty.—She gave without ostentation, and was never more pleased than when dispensing good around her. She had out-lived most of her early friendships,—new ones, she had no inclination to make; and, perhaps, she had formed no very erroneous idea in thinking, that the general class of people sought her acquaintance more from motives of vanity than real kindness. Benevolently disposed, she liked to confer favours only on those who were dependent on her, but she would receive none. Indeed, she required nothing from the world, as her fortune was large, and the establishment of her house munificent; her table was spread, not for herself alone, but for the industrious poor, to whom she daily devoted its superfluities.

Like all persons who live much to themselves, particularly in the decline of life, she was impatient of contradiction, and her word was made a law with her domestics; to them she was so generous and indulgent, that they had all become old in her service.

Lady Seyntaubyne had been educated in the old school; her manners, therefore, partook of the fixed formality of that day.—She knew those of the present, merely from the descriptions contained in modern publications; which gave her a decided prejudice against all changes or improvement.

A certain ostentation, formerly preserved in the establishment of persons of elevated condition, she considered so essential to their consequence, that she piqued

herself on being the only remains of an ancient family, who knew properly how to respect themselves.

It was not the fashion in her time to teach young ladies Latin, Greek, or Hebrew, nor to make them vie with the professors in their several arts. No; all was feminine, which constituted female charms, in her happy days; and fortitude only in pain and disappointment, was the strength allowed to woman, except where they were born to govern a kingdom. But she had herself received a superior education to the times in which she lived. Her ladyship could write and spell correctly; was an excellent grammarian, read French and Italian fluently, was well acquainted with the most distinguished authors, and much of her time had been devoted to them.

Her ladyship had not any knowledge of music, for it was not the custom, when she was educated, to teach it to those without a musical talent, merely because all learn it, whether they have a taste or not. She was skilled in the best modes of œconomy, and practised it without meanness; and, from never being defrauded (for she allowed no waste), she had always a liberal purse for the necessities of the industrious poor.

A few months reconciled Matilda to her new home. Lady Seyntaubyne had found an object to whom she was attached, and in whom she was interested. The winning manners of this lovely little child so insensibly stole into her heart, she could scarcely bear her out of her sight; but, unfortunately, what small portion of knowledge she had attained in her infantile years, was not improved; for the countess could not be at the trouble of instructing her, though she liked very well to amuse her by shewing her pictures, relating their history, making her fill the china jars with flowers, and devising a thousand other little amusements for her. There was one point, however, on which they could not agree: Matilda, at the parsonage, had been suffered to range the garden and field uncontrolled in all seasons.—Lady Seyntaubyne was a great admirer of beauty, and Matilda was so fair, she would seldom allow her to walk abroad if there was the least wind or sun, and then only shaded by a large bonnet, for fear of injuring her complexion. As the weather became colder, Matilda hoped to be at liberty, but the fear of inducing any chilblains was an excuse to detain her in the house; and the only freedom she could obtain, was to play at ball alone in the long gallery.

More than a year passed before Lady Seyntaubyne perceived the necessity of seriously adopting some mode for Matilda's education.—A governess was sent for from London.—When she arrived, a thousand drawbacks arose in the education of this new spoiled child. The governess required the uncontrolled guidance of Miss Trevanion, to which the countess objected, always finding fault, or pointing out some different mode for her instruction, and prevented any governess from remaining long in her appointment; hence the child, instead of acquiring knowledge, seemed to have her senses bewildered.

Matilda had naturally a quick perception, and an excellent understanding; but what was taught one month, was untaught the next; and some new system, introduced by a variety of teachers, which rendered her, at twelve years of age, more ignorant than children at that period usually are.

Lady Seyntaubyne, disappointed and mortified, was at a loss what method next to adopt; she was ambitious of rendering Matilda highly accomplished and well-informed. Completely disgusted with the superficial acquirements which she too often found in the women who undertook the important charge of education, and how incompetent they were to such an office, from the specimen given her of modern governesses, and having

even a worse opinion of fashionable boarding-schools, she determined to give up both these plans in the future instruction of Matilda, and endeavour to fall upon some other, more likely to tend to her advantage and real improvement.

### CHAP. III.

LADY Seyntaubyne had seldom, through life, submitted to any thing contrary to her inclination; neither had any sacrifices of her own ease been necessary for the benefit of others.—She would have made many for her son, had he considered his own happiness less, and her's more; but his conduct, she imagined, should eradicate her affection, and casual objects excited no interest or esteem. But when she beheld this darling little girl,

“Wasting her sweetness on the desert air,”

for her sake she determined to relinquish her present situation, and take a house in London.

Rapid in devising plans, which, when formed, she had no doubt of realizing, her ladyship sat down and addressed the following letter to the Reverend Doctor Arundel, the oldest, indeed almost the only person, whom she professed to call by the name of friend.

*To the Reverend Doctor Arundel.*

Pengwilly Hall.

“Dear and Rev. Sir,

“IT is only an extraordinary cause could draw a letter from me. You know I never write any except when excited by an interested motive. For these last twenty years I have retired from the world, indifferent to its objects, its pursuits, and what, in the amusements it affords, are called its pleasures. By my neighbours I am considered a female misanthrope, because I have closed my doors against a set of triflers, whose visits are *‘fit only for those, who if they did not that, would do nothing.’* \*

“An event has lately occurred in my domestic arrangement, which has excited their curiosity and wonder, as it has given a new interest to my life, when I thought it impossible that any thing in this world could happen to rouse again my natural energy of character.

“You remember the Reverend Francis Trevanion, the poor but benevolent curate, who lived at the parsonage in the small village of Boss Castle, not very far removed either from Penrose Castle, or Pengwilly Hall, and the melancholy history annexed to a part of his family, whose fate was so involved with a member of mine, as to have occasioned me much domestic misery, while I verily believe it broke old Trevanion's heart.

“In his dying hours he sent for me, and consigning into my hands a beautiful child, with such earnestness requested I would adopt her, that when I beheld her loveliness I could not withstand this interesting petitioner, who otherwise would have become an outcast on the world.

“I have a decided aversion to being asked favours, and make a point of always refusing, if they do not come spontaneously from myself; but on *this* occasion the request was irresistible; and I find this engaging little girl has obtained an interest in my old

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\* Cowper.

heart, which is surprising. It is very odd the love which this creature has excited, and the happiness and anxiety she alternately creates in my bosom.

“Matilda is at present a child of nature, I wish her to remain so; not to be spoiled by those female puppets who set themselves up as teachers to young people. If, my dear doctor, you had seen as much as I have lately, of the pretensions they make, you would have smiled at the arrogance of the attempt. The consequence is, Matilda is more ignorant than the first hour she came to me.

“To boarding-schools I have a particular aversion. My prejudice may be ill founded; but children are better without a mixture of companions. The bad habits of one tend to corrupt the whole flock: they form their little cabals together, and if one child has the misfortune to labour under any bodily deformity, she is made a subject of ridicule by her companions. If her parents are not affluent, and she is not on an equality with them in birth, she is cruelly taunted with it; whence arises a spirit of discontent, or feeling of envy in the happier lot of her playmate, who is filled with pride and arrogance. The early habits of religion, it is true, are instilled by rule, but the Scriptures are not explained, nor their actions founded on the principles which they inculcate.

“But, in truth, I could present such manifold defects, that I have no inclination this child should be subject to fall into them.

“I am too old and too indolent to attempt instructing her myself. I have never been accustomed to take any trouble for others, and now it is far too late in life to begin the task; besides, I should make a sad hand of the business.

“It is to *you*, my good Doctor Arundel, I would commit the education of this darling child. You must not refuse me. My whole soul is bent on it, and I cannot submit to contradiction. Indeed it is the greatest proof I can show of the respect and esteem I entertain for your profound sense, learning, and genuine piety, my consigning this precious gem to your and Mrs. Arundel’s care. If Matilda is so happy to merit her affection, she has so much of the milk of human kindness in her nature, that while she will not spoil her by a mistaken indulgence she will feel for her all the interest of a mother in what concerns her future importance and happiness through life.

“Request Mrs. Arundel to do me the favour to hire a house for me in London. As Matilda will chiefly reside with you at Richmond (where she will have the benefit of the good air), I should prefer it in some of the streets or squares which it was the fashion to live in when I was young; such as Soho Square, Argyle Street, or Pall-mall, for the modern mansions are all shew, with no comfort or warmth in them.

“Your reply, my good friend, will be a great favour, and remember, I will not take a refusal. I remain, with true esteem,

“Dear Sir,

“Your obliged and

“Obedient servant,

“DOROTHEA SEYN TAUBYNE.

“P.S. I shall give Matilda a handsome fortune.”

The contents of Lady Seyntaubyne’s letter much surprised Doctor Arundel. The request it contained required deliberate consideration ere he could determine whether or not he ought to comply with it. His health had obliged him sometime since to withdraw from his church, and rendered him incapable of fulfilling those active duties of life his

holy function led him to perform, with a zeal not the effect of ostentation, but flowing from the firm principles of piety and benevolence of heart. He was not content to preach the way which led to heaven; he showed his flock by his own example that it was not by *faith* alone, but by *works* also they could obtain admittance into the regions of the blessed. He despised not those who differed from him in their religious opinions; he regretted their errors; he would have rejoiced had he been able to persuade them they were wrong, but he wished not they were changed except from conviction; for he was assured that all true christians would be received into the bosom of the Father, if they acted up to the tenets they professed. He was certain the too general laxity and indolence of the clergy of the established church had been the cause of such numbers dissenting from it. He with concern witnessed the sectaries daily springing up, but he never beheld those schisms where the minister of the parish was active and vigilant in his duty. Dr. Arundel was not satisfied with going through the service of the day and then considering its business ended. He every Sunday evening opened his house to the poor of his parish, to whom he read and expounded the Scriptures: he expected their attendance; and the genuine piety of his manner was such, that while it deeply impressed his auditors his instruction was at once so clear and easy, his hall was overflowing with the crowds who never were dismissed without being amended.

The Reverend Doctor had travelled as preceptor to the Duke of N—— over Europe. His learning, his manners, and above all, his principles, had entitled him to universal respect. He married a lady of the highest degree of worth and accomplishments, but on the death of an only daughter, withdrew from the large circle they had been accustomed to mix in, and though grief had subsided into resignation, they had no longer any taste for the society of which they were the ornament and pride. They had been induced to fix their residence at Richmond, to enjoy the soothing friendship of Lady Sophia Clairville, who had been the favourite associate of Mrs. Arundel, on the death of her beloved daughter, who was snatched away in the bloom of youth and beauty. She had been educated by her parents, and was so superior in genius and temper, that her loss was remembered with respect by all who had seen and known her. The Countess Seyntaubyne had particularly distinguished her, and she wished her adopted protégée to be such a one.

Dr. Arundel having meditated for some days on her ladyship's letter, gave her the following reply.

*To Countess Dowager Seyntaubyne.*

Richmond, April 30.

“Dear Madam,

“To refuse a request made in so earnest a manner is extremely painful to me. I have maturely considered the nature of it, and the more I weigh the subject, the more numerous are the difficulties arising by a compliance.

“Many people would unhesitatingly accept your protégée without reflecting on the important duties which they have to fulfill. The information that your ladyship will give the young lady a handsome fortune is one very principal objection; for many indulgencies and luxuries are the accompaniments of large expectations. Our establishment is very circumscribed: we live with gentility but economy. My health has

obliged me to withdraw from my public function, and I have taken a small but neat house on the banks of the Thames. Another objection to my receiving your protégée is, my incapacity to attend so closely to her studies, as I deem it conscientious in every person who acts in the character of a preceptor, to do. Mrs. Arundel's health and spirits, alas! broken down by affliction, are unequal to the smallest exertion. Few people once were so capable of performing the task you would assign her; but we are fast retiring from the world, and wholly unsuited to so serious a charge. In short, my dear respected lady, I must decline a proposal your too high opinion of me has induced you to make. Come to London, however, where we will converse the matter over.

“Mrs. Arundel has seen a handsome house in Soho Square, which she thinks will suit you. She unites in regards to your ladyship, and I have the honour to remain,

“Dear Madam,

“Your much obliged

And obedient servant,

“MARTIN ARUNDEL.”

Disappointed as Lady Seyntaubyne felt at the non-compliance of the reverend doctor she still resolved to persevere in her application, and therefore at once desired Mrs. Arundel to take the house she had seen in Soho Square for a twelvemonth.

#### CHAP. IV.

THE countess prepared without delay for her journey, and at the expiration of a fortnight found herself set down at her mansion in London, after an absence from that metropolis of twenty years.

The day following she ordered her coach to take her to Richmond, and was most respectfully welcomed by Doctor and Mrs. Arundel.

When once Lady Seyntaubyne formed any plan, and set her heart on its accomplishment, she left no argument unpleaded to carry her point. She told the doctor she positively would not quit his house until he yielded to her request. At length the extreme benevolence and excellence of his heart led him to give a reluctant assent on certain terms, which he laid down.

One chief cause which induced him to forego his own inclination in the affair, was the conviction how unfit the countess was to educate this lovely and engaging child, who already had entirely won over Mrs. Arundel in her cause, while her husband was conversing with Lady Seyntaubyne. This excellent couple soon perceived that a mistaken fondness would spoil her by the most improper indulgence. It was therefore, in consideration to the future formation of her mind and disposition, they acceded to taking on themselves so important a charge. Lady Seyntaubyne, elated at having gained her point, took leave of her friends in high spirits; and it was agreed they were to receive Matilda in the course of a few days.

When the morning arrived that was actually to separate the countess from this idolized protégée her resolution almost deserted her. Ashamed to shew uneasiness, she kept in her dressing-room, and would not see her till it was the time to depart.

Had the child been going a voyage to India a larger wardrobe would not have been necessary, to which was added toys, trinkets, and *bonbons*, innumerable.

If Matilda had not been blessed with a most docile and sweet disposition, it must have been spoiled. She was nearly broken-hearted at the idea of parting from Lady Seyntaubyne, and retraced in her memory the imperfect recollection she had of her early benefactor and friend, shedding additional tears over his memory, which she cherished with peculiar fondness.

When the countess and her protégée were ushered into Mrs. Arundel's drawing-room, Matilda shrunk back, and seemed afraid to advance. The doctor approached her with a countenance full of benignity. He took her hand with kindness, and said, "I trust, my dear young lady, when we are better acquainted, you will consider me rather as a tender friend than a severe preceptor; Mrs. Arundel will cherish you with the affection of a daughter, and she will not feel satisfied if you do not love her."

Mrs. Arundel approached and saluted the pale and weeping Matilda, while she said with pensive tenderness, "I have no daughter now, may I hope that Miss Trevanion will endeavour to supply to me the one I have lost."

This was an appeal to Matilda's feelings she could not withstand. She flung her arms gracefully round Mrs. Arundel's neck, and sobbing on her bosom, replied, "Might I be worthy to be called your child, I shall be happy."

"This child," interrupted the countess, "has been used to much indulgence. You must, my good doctor, be very kind to her. And though, madam, I chide her, you must

not severely; but she sometimes tires me to death with her carelessness and want of application. When she is older she will improve.

It was not Matilda's fault that she wanted application, for she was seldom engaged in any pursuit without being called away on some frivolous excuse; and her carelessness might be ascribed to the little value which she was taught to place on every thing in her possession. This was the fault of the countess; for any trinket when broken or lost was always replaced by a new one; and happy was it for Matilda that the precepts of Dr. and Mrs. Arundel counteracted in her maturer years her disposition to waste and carelessness during her childhood.

The reverend doctor replied to Lady Seyntaubyne by saying, "that in consigning Miss Trevanion to their care, he understood they were to have the uncontrolled management of her. If," added he, "I am mistaken, ere I commence a charge so arduous and important I must decline it; for only on the terms proposed will I be induced to receive your protégée."

"What, doctor, would you deprive Matilda of the indulgences to which she has been used?" naming several.

"Yes, my good lady, if those indulgences are by me considered unnecessary and improper luxuries, she must be denied them. Whatever is requisite to health and comfort Miss Trevanion shall not want: here she will be treated with kindness, not mistaken tenderness."

"Well, Sir," returned the countess, "I perceive you are a very positive man; but I have resolved to part with the child, and you must have your own way. You will, however, allow her to spend a few days with me now and then."

"It gives me concern, I cannot even in that comply with your ladyship's wishes. If I am to do justice to Miss Trevanion you must see her only for a few hours, and very seldom. When the attention is called off, and the interest awakened by unceasing and pleasing objects, the dull and arduous pursuits of life, if they are not forgotten, are at least merely thought of as a hardship. Young minds in particular seek pleasure with avidity; they rarely have application; but the constant habit of employment will bring on application. Habit becomes second nature; we begin to delight in what we are accustomed to; hence arises the necessity of constantly keeping alive the attention of children, as by varying their pursuits they do not tire by instruction."

"Like all irascible people," answered her ladyship, "I find you are determined not to be subdued; therefore I must consign my treasure to you 'for better and for worse,' and be assured I have not another on earth I prize so greatly."

"I will madam," returned the doctor, "estimate the value by endeavouring to render Miss Trevanion more than accomplished,—an excellent young lady."

"That is all right, but Matilda must excel other young women in knowledge and attainments to satisfy me. Italian, French, Spanish, and German, she must understand, and read with fluency. The dead languages women have no business with. She must be a correct historian, have some acquaintance with astronomy, natural history, botany, and mineralogy. She must understand every thing she undertakes. I would wish her to be an Angelica Kauffman in painting, a Saint Cecilia in music, a Sevigné in letter-writing, a Montague in wit, a Hebe in beauty, and one of the graces in dancing."

"Rather, madam" replied Doctor Arundel, smiling at Lady Seyntaubyne's enthusiasm, "if she is to be wise, let her be a Lady Jane Grey; if she possesses learning, to

possess also with it her piety and humility of mind; with equal virtue and fortitude to resist temptation, however splendid its allurements, if inconsistent with her sphere in life. Wit is a dangerous weapon in the hands of a woman; I know but one who has judgment to play with it gracefully, and not wound her friends. If she possess beauty, O may her mind be far more radiant than her person.”

“Well, well, my dear Sir, take your own way, for in such hands Matilda has every opportunity of becoming what I wish her; and to good Mrs. Arundel I commit her for all those feminine and graceful accomplishments for which she is so eminently distinguished. I will not interfere with your plans; choose your own masters for her, and I shall send them daily from town. Allow me to see her as often as possible, for without that pleasure I cannot exist.”

Doctor and Mrs. Arundel assured Lady Seyntaubyne they would adhere to her wishes in every thing that was proper; and with these assurances she took leave.

## CHAP. V.

HAPPILY for Matilda the different modes of life which she experienced in her infantile days prevented the luxuries to which she had latterly been accustomed from becoming almost indispensable; for as many and great were the deprivations she was destined to endure.

The countess never permitted

The air of heaven  
To visit her face too roughly,

nor allowed her to go abroad, except in a carriage. To walk in the sun would spoil her complexion, and the morning dews would give her cold; consequently she was weak, pale, and so delicate, that although she lived in a healthful open country she was a stranger to all its charms.

At night Mrs. Arundel conducted Matilda to a neat airy chamber, and informed her that all the family assembled to prayers at eight o'clock every morning, in the doctor's library, where she also was expected to attend.

Matilda retired to bed, but not to rest. Her thoughts wandered to her beloved Lady Seyntaubyne—to her late happy home—and the indulgence it afforded her. She felt disposed to like Doctor and Mrs. Arundel, but as yet they were strangers to her.

Matilda had not been taught to meditate seriously; yet, young as she was, she was by nature prone to reflect. Often and often she endeavoured to discover what were the claims she had on the countess's bounty and affectionate indulgence: but it was a subject too much involved in mystery for her to develope; and the desire to obtain any knowledge of her parents only added to the anxiety which she felt, without even enabling to form the smallest conjecture; so complete was the silence maintained by those with whom she was connected.

Little inclined to sleep, she was awakened at an early hour, by a concert of birds, to which she listened with a sensation as new as it was pleasant. The air was scented with the perfume of flowers; the tender green of the lawn was spangled with the dew of morning; the sun burst in streaks of orient gold athwart the firmament; and the magnificent Thames presented a busy scene of barges and boats perpetually gliding along its broad clear surface. The opposite shores were luxuriantly scattered with trees, amidst which were indistinctly seen innumerable elegant villas, studding the mazy borders.

Matilda stood lost in wonder and delight. She possessed a natural energy of soul, and was, from her earliest years, susceptible of the enjoyment derived from the charms of nature.

She dressed herself, and lightly tripping from her chamber, was pleased to find it was not yet seven o'clock. She entered the breakfast room, which opened on the lawn. Its borders were enamelled with a profusion of roses in full bloom, emitting the most delicious fragrance; the little birds were tamely hopping amongst their branches; and as she proceeded by a path to the river, which flowed past the side of the garden wall, she discovered a pretty alcove, shaded by a luxuriant accasia, which expanded its elegant branches in a green canopy over it. To this spot she determined in her hours of recreation

to repair with her books. She was conscious of her extreme ignorance, and resolved to lose no opportunity of making up for the time hitherto diverted from her mental improvement.

After the first week of her residence at Richmond, Matilda found the mode of instruction Doctor Arundel laid down for her so easy and clear, that she was not less astonished than delighted with the progress she made. The best masters came daily from London, to instruct her in music, painting, and dancing. All the other branches of her education Doctor and Mrs. Arundel took upon themselves, and their capability to execute this important task was soon manifested in the rapid improvement of their pupil.

The regularity of her hours, the cheerful, yet tranquil, habits of her life, made an equal improvement in her personal appearances. The rose of health bloomed on her cheek, the vivacity of youthful hilarity sparkled in her eyes, and smiles of contentment quavered on her lips. Her regard for Doctor and Mrs. Arundel bordered on filial affection. She felt grateful for their forming her mind in the purest moral sentiments, in the virtuous principles of integrity and honour; and she loved and respected them for the eminent goodness they possessed.

Lady Seyntaubyne, some days after Matilda's removal to Richmond, came to visit her, and she was sensibly struck, even in so short a period, at the look of improved health and beauty she had acquired.

## CHAP. VI.

DOCTOR Arundel knew too well the value of time to throw it away either in paying or receiving idle visits; yet the company of the enlightened he sought and cultivated; and those persons who frequented his house, consisted only of a superior class in talents, accomplishments, and manners. He was an enemy to seclusion, and had experienced that much of the joys of life consisted in social intercourse, unalloyed by idle ceremony, with a select circle of friends. Mrs. Arundel, since the death of her daughter, had wished to seclude herself from the world; but her husband, convinced that solitude nourished grief, used all his efforts to persuade her occasionally to mix with society; and got her friend Lady Sophia Clairville to draw her into those circles which are entertaining, without being either frivolous or extravagant.

Lady Sophia and Mrs. Arundel had been educated in the same convent abroad, where they formed a friendship, strengthened not only by time, but by a maturer judgment of each other's character; and in the anguish of mind which Mrs. Arundel experienced from the loss of her only child, she had derived, in coming to reside near her ladyship, the first consolation since her heavy affliction.

Lady Sophia Clairville, in early youth, had been extremely beautiful. That beauty was now rather blighted by the chilling hand of grief than the withering impress of time; but her eyes were not robbed of their lustre, nor her countenance of that exquisite sensibility which beamed with the most irresistible sweetness in every feature. She was by nature more the daughter of Thalia than Melpomene, yet her chequered journey through life had given her an air of affinity with the latter; so pensive and melancholy of late years had been her demeanour. Sometimes, however, the native gaiety of her disposition appeared when she was thrown into the society of loved and partial friends; and the charms of her conversation, in a temporary forgetfulness, were unfolded by the most fascinating wit, and sportive vivacity.

Few persons had so great, so capacious a mind; and, though tremblingly alive to the slightest touches of human woe, it was firm, collected, and pious, in adversity. Her strong sense was pourtrayed in every action of her life, and in every word she uttered. She despised the affectation of learning, yet few women had so much wisdom and knowledge. She was proud, but it was the pride of dignified greatness, which would not descend to familiarity with common-place people, or every-day acquaintance. She was cautious in bestowing her friendship, but when it was conferred, her heart glowed with all its finer sentiments.

Lady Sophia had been blessed far above the generality of the world, in parents, sisters, husband, and children; but she had experienced the social calamity, that they

“Who have most to love have most to lose.”

and had been no less happy in her union, than she was now disconsolate in her widowhood.

She had been the mother of several children, but one son alone remained, and his impetuous and aspiring spirit, in the choice of a sea-faring life, had proved to be a source

of incalculable anxiety: she preferred, had he yielded to her wishes, some more tranquil and domestic profession.

Her ladyship's elder sister, Lady Julia O'Brien, had married an English peer, against the wishes of her family, and, after giving birth to a daughter, expired. The young Lady Julia, her niece, she sometimes had the gratification of having for a guest. She was a year older than Matilda, who, since she became one of Doctor Arundel's family, had excited a lively interest in the transitive breast of Lady Sophia Clairville, from the artless sweetness of her manner, the solidity of her understanding, and the excellence of her disposition, at once ingenuous and amiable.

Her ladyship encouraged the intimacy of her niece with Matilda, shortly after an introduction to her; but when she heard that she was a protégée of the Countess Seyntaubyne, she became shy and reserved, and seemed disinclined to any further acquaintance with her. This prejudice, however, Matilda, by her engaging manners and irresistible sweetness, soon had the happiness to overcome; for her ladyship, conscious how unjust it was, merely because she did not like the countess, to extend her disesteem to such an innocent, so interesting and attractive a young person, who, ere she knew her six months, had entirely gained her friendship. She sometimes fancied that she perceived a strong personal likeness between Julia and Matilda; and though their features were not the same, they certainly bore a sort of fleeting resemblance, which, though lost when they were together, was often very apparent at a distance. Her ladyship had more than once remarked it to her reverend friend, who had been greatly struck with it himself, but always wished to evade the subject; and when Lady Sophia questioned him closely respecting Miss Trevanion's family, who were her connections, and particularly if the Countess Seyntaubyne acknowledged her in any other manner, than as her protégée, he gave her an indirect reply.

Lady Seyntaubyne often chid Matilda for expressing so much regard for Lady Sophia and her niece. She seemed to have so great an antipathy to them, that could she, without offending Mrs. Arundel, have withdrawn Matilda, on any pretence, from their company, she would most willingly have done it; but finding it impossible, she always cautioned Matilda, on pain of incurring her displeasure, against any intimacy with them.

When Matilda thus discovered how unpleasant even their names were to the countess, she wholly ceased mentioning them, although the highest pleasure which she experienced was in their society. Yet while she greatly lamented the deep-rooted and determined prejudice which subsisted between those she most loved and valued, she could not help thinking, that if the countess and Lady Sophia could only meet under more agreeable impressions, all unpleasantness would die away.

There was a peaceful happiness in the domestic circle at Dr. Arundel's, which no passing event interrupted. If sorrow visited them it was chased away by piety and resignation. The doctor had taught Matilda, from her earliest residence with him, to practise self-denial, and never to diminish happiness by useless repinings at trifles; by these means she acquired a serenity of disposition, although her temper was naturally petulant and impatient. On her first manifesting these defects, they were soon effectively cured, by the forbearance which he made her practise.

Her knowledge on all subjects became in time as profound as it was universal. Accustomed to employ every hour of her time, instead of the late habits of idleness, she had acquired such a desire for application, that she was never happy except when

studying some useful attainment; and she soon verified what Doctor Arundel had said, that “the constant habit of employment will beget the powers of application.” It was her ambition to excel,—hence Matilda did excel. In Lady Julia Penrose she had a powerful excitement; for, by nature, her ladyship’s mental endowments were more acute, her perceptions quicker, and her understanding, like her aunt’s, sound and capacious. Sometimes it was necessary to restrain the playful gaiety of her disposition from a dangerous tendency to poignant wit, which her vivacity rendered it difficult, but wise, to temper; for though her remarks were never malevolent, they were sometimes apt to border on humorous ridicule. Mrs. Arundel, who observed Matilda could not help laughing and being amused by it, pointed out so seriously the injurious consequences of making enemies by so dangerous an indulgence of even sportive ridicule; and that when Lady Julia was in the vein, not even her friend would be spared, Matilda ceased to be diverted by it, and seriously entreated her to desist.

## CHAP. VII.

FOUR years passed rapidly away under the fatherly tuition of the Reverend Doctor Arundel, who always blended kindness with his wise instruction and advice. Matilda had long been alive to the essential benefit she had derived from him. But the period of her separation from these inestimable friends was just approaching; she had entered her seventeenth year, and in the ensuing spring it was Lady Seyntaubyne's intention to bring her home, that she might introduce her into the world of gaiety and fashion.

Lady Sophia Clairville always joined Mrs. Arundel's domestic circle, for a few days, at Christmas: they were anticipating the pleasure of her arrival, when a messenger brought the intelligence that his lady was very ill, and requested to see Mrs. Arundel immediately. Lady Sophia had read the dreadful account in the public prints, which the doctor had likewise seen, but was too prudent to speak of, without its being fully authenticated. The frigate in which Albert Clairville was lieutenant, had been taken, after a desperate engagement, by a French vessel of superior force. After their becoming prisoners, a violent storm arose, by which they were driven on the English coast, where they were shipwrecked, and it was supposed that every soul had perished.

Mrs. Arundel, without delay, hastened to her suffering friend. The situation in which she found her was truly alarming, for the shock she had sustained seemed to have overwhelmed every superior faculty; she appeared the very statue of despair; she neither moved, spoke, nor wept; and that sensibility which was ever alive to the afflictions of others was smothered to stupifaction in her gentle bosom.

Various were the efforts Mrs. Arundel used to raise her friend from this frightful suspension of sensation; and after some hours, she had the pleasure to see her imprisoned faculties yield to native sensibility, and a shower of tears relieved the oppression of her heart. When Lady Sophia was restored to a sense of suffering, from the idea of being thus deprived of her only son, the fortitude of a mind as firm as it was resigned, prevented her from giving way to such repinings; and at the end of a few days she requested Mrs. Arundel would allow Matilda to spend a short time along with her, as her niece, Lady Julia Penrose, always passed the Christmas with her father; and she thought the society of any amiable young person would cheer her. Mrs. Arundel therefore returned home, and Matilda supplied her place at Lady Sophia's.

The amusements Matilda devised to divert her ladyship's attention had a very beneficial effect; and she had the gratification, during her short stay, to perceive her daily amend in health and spirits, and she found when the endearing ties of reciprocal regard and flattering testimonies of approved friendship were united and blended with enlightened conversation, the hours fled ere she seemed sensible of their movement, and she heard announced with regret, that the carriage was ready to take her from her ladyship's captivating society. Descending the steps of the house to reach the coach, Matilda's attention was arrested by a figure leaning over the railing. From the reflection of the moon, which cast her beams on it, she discovered an interesting face, overspread by melancholy, tintured with a look of despondence, which made her pause, to observe further the person. He was a young man, who, beneath the most homely garb, preserved

an air at once noble and engaging; beside him stood a youth of an equally dignified appearance.

At sight of Matilda the young man started from his position; he uttered a deep sigh, struck his hand to his forehead, and half retreated, as she advanced towards the carriage.

She had reached the door, when the stranger, with a hurried step, and in evident agitation, touched her garment.

“Pardon, madam, the enquiry,” said he, in a tremulous accent, “but allow me to ask if you are the lady of this mansion?”

“I am not,” replied Matilda, in a dulcet accent; “of whom are you in search?”

“One, young lady, I now, alas! despair to find. If the person I hoped to meet is not here, the transporting interview I had anticipated is lost to me for ever. Come then, my brave comrade,” continued he, in a disappointed tone, “for the bosom which would have fostered us is surely dead to every sense either of suffering or of joy.

“Yet methinks, madam,” exclaimed he to Matilda, “you are not a stranger to me, for you greatly resemble Lady Julia Penrose, and though we have not met since childhood, she was too interesting and lovely to be forgotten.”

“You had better, young man,” interrupted the footman, “go away. There is no one here to assist you, and you detain the lady.”

Matilda, though she knew the heart of Lady Sophia was alive to the most generous benevolence, yet thought it would be imprudent to disclose her name to the young man; but he had interested her so much, from saying that she resembled Lady Julia (which both Lady Sophia and Doctor Arundel had frequently remarked) she had not resolution to quit him without adding, “from whence come you, Sir, at this unseasonable hour? for you appear a stranger and a fugitive.”

“A stranger, madam, I am, it is true, but England is my country, this very house was once my home, though now you behold me a wanderer indeed!”

“Your appearance, Sir,” replied Matilda, “is above your forlorn condition, and as these doors are never closed against the unfortunate, I will endeavour to procure you some refreshment, and a resting-place for the night, in the neighbourhood, for yourself and friend-“

“Sweet excellence,” exclaimed he, “to reject your kindness would be to refuse you the joy of administering to the unhappy and distressed.”

Matilda desired the footman to shew the strangers into the parlour, and to remain with them, while she went to Lady Sophia, to whom she related the circumstance which had occurred, requesting her to accompany her below, to which she readily consented, as, from the interesting detail Matilda had given her, she was anxious to see the strangers.

The young man who had addressed Matilda was sitting with one hand folded over his bosom, and with his other he was endeavouring to brush away a tear, which started in his eye, while beside him, in mournful silence, stood his companion.

When her ladyship and Matilda entered, he raised his head, and discovered a face pale and worn with fatigue and anguish.

Lady Sophia Clairville stood for a moment gazing ardently on the persons she beheld, and then uttering a wild and piercing shriek, sprang towards the young man who had addressed Matilda, folding him in an agonizing transport to her bosom. She spoke not—she moved not—the sudden joy and surprise had overcome her; again she relapsed

into insensibility, and she was lost to all sensations of either joy or sorrow. Her son (for it was her shipwrecked Albert) assisted Matilda to lead his mother to a sofa. He knelt beside her—he pressed her hands to his lips, as he vehemently exclaimed, “Oh my mother!—Your lost Albert intreats your benediction—speak but one little word to sooth him with your maternal tenderness.”

It was long before her ladyship opened her eyes. Insensible to the surrounding group who in anxious solicitude hung over her; it appeared as if she never would awaken to bless her son with her smiles; so much time elapsed in this dreadful suspense. At length she appeared to breathe, and heaving a deep sigh, as though her heart was breaking from its imprisonment, she started, and looking wildly around her (Matilda had requested Clairville to retire out of sight) she exclaimed, in a tone of disappointment, “It was then only a vision of my Albert I beheld, and, oh! what a woeful figure did it exhibit of my precious boy; a spectre, indeed, of his former self. Yet I knew, or thought I knew him, even with his palid and emaciated countenance, and in his homely garb. I folded the precious vision in my arms, I heard his melodious voice utter the transporting name of mother—I felt his cheek wet with the tears of filial tenderness—I saw ineffable sweetness beam from his fine eyes upon his parent.—Alas! alas! long has my dream of happiness been over, and I return to life only to mourn his destruction.” “Awaken no more to sorrow, my beloved mother,” cried Clairville, approaching and throwing himself on his knees before her; “if again to behold me is indeed a source of joy, what, though late a prisoner and a fugitive, shipwrecked and expiring, a shadow of my former self, yet will you find me unchanged in filial duty, unbounded in tenderness to a mother who is a model of all that is excellent in woman. To know that I merit your affection is a proud and ambitious feeling.”

“Dearest Albert!” exclaimed Lady Sophia, letting fall the most grateful tears she had ever shed, while she embraced him, “you alone could have awakened me to a sense of tenderness and joy. I see you beside me—I press you to my anxious bosom—and in this mighty bliss I behold the merciful goodness of a gracious Providence guiding you amidst such perilous scenes with his protecting shield, and conducting you in safety from bondage and from death, to the attentive and fostering care of a mother who had deplored the loss of her darling son.

“Raise your soul, my child,” continued she, “in gratitude with mine, for the mercies you have experienced. Who,” enquired her ladyship, casting her eyes on his young companion, “is that youth?”

“What, my brave companion, who saved me when I was sinking.—Mother, you have found one son, but you must receive another. I cannot part with my noble friend—I told him my mother had a heart that would administer to the sufferer—and I am sure I told him true, for Lady Sophia Clairville never turned the stranger, nor the afflicted from her board.”

“Nor ever will,” interrupted she, warmly. “Come then, my son, and let that board be spread, and with joyful welcome partake of it. O my sweet Matilda,” (now addressing Miss Trevanion, who in silent admiration and emotion, had witnessed the scene) “it is only by being a parent you could enter into my present sensations, or guess the overwhelming happiness I experience.

“Clairville,” added her ladyship, “you must become acquainted with this interesting young friend of mine. You had a warm advocate in her.”

“In truth I thought we were acquainted, she is so like my cousin Julia. They are sisters, at least, in loveliness, and in minds resemble one another, for this young lady was the benignant angel who conducted me to your arms.”

Matilda had never spoken during this affecting interview, but her glistening eyes bore testimony of what had been her sensations.

“You must not go back to night,” said Lady Sophia; “Mrs. Arundel will excuse you, and we will write the doctor and my friend to breakfast with us to-morrow morning. Miss Trevanion,” added she, “has been brought up under their tuition.”

“Then, madam,” cried Clairville, “you have had the pattern of every excellence before you; and seem to have fully profited by it.”

It was not until a late hour the happy party separated for the night.

## CHAP. VIII.

THE influence of sudden joy is often as serious in its effects as violent grief, on a delicate frame, and a heart full of sensibility. Lady Sophia was seized with a nervous fever, which nearly terminated her life.

Short as was now to be the period of Matilda's stay at Richmond, she would not quit her ladyship, and watched over her with the most tender and unremitting attention.

To a young person, whose days have passed on in an even tenor of uninterrupted happiness, whose mind has felt no depression from affliction, and who is insensible of its existence, except by name, there is, perhaps, no lesson so beneficial, on first being ushered into life, when full of hope, joy, and expectation, as the awful contemplation of the sick bed of a pious Christian. Such was the picture now presented to the youthful Matilda as she attended her suffering friend. It was a beautiful and affecting lesson; for while she learned the fallacy of all earthly enjoyments, and the uncertainty of long retaining the most valuable, she was instructed to extend her prospects beyond what this world can bestow, in the example of the exalted Lady Sophia. Her ladyship, full of piety and resignation, was prepared with firmness to quit this sublunary scene; she cheered instead of depressing those around her, taught them almost to blame themselves, in wishing to detain her, for she beheld death stripped of all his terrors. There was no gloomy horror in her countenance; it was serene, resigned, and lovely; it bespoke a soul full of hope, springing with transport to the bosom of her Creator.

But it was the will of heaven to restore a life so valuable. Matilda had the felicity of seeing Lady Sophia gradually recover. Her amiable conduct, and the little consideration for herself during the fatigue and exertion she underwent, created an attachment for her in the heart of young Clairville, which he was scarcely aware of till her return to Doctor Arundel's was mentioned.

Thus were two young persons accidentally thrown together, first by a sudden and joyful event, which as quickly changed into one of the most mournful. These circumstances had established an intimacy which rendered the approaching separation most fatal to his peace. Clairville's whole soul was devoted to Matilda. It was not the idle start of a romantic passion which had fixed his regard, he had seen her in a character which raised her every hour in his highest estimation, attending the sick-bed of a mother he adored with a tenderness and interest that declared the goodness of her heart. He was sure that his cousin Julia would have performed the same office, but she was absent, and Matilda's resemblance to her, which had at first enchanted him, now began to strike him with remorse, and painful consciousness that Matilda had superseded her in his affections, he would fain have dismissed.

From childhood Lady Julia Penrose had always been called his *little wife*, a title which he proudly acknowledged, having felt peculiar affection for her. Was it then generous to take advantage of Julia's absence, and to place his affections on another? His mother's highest ambition, he knew, was the alliance—and could he disappoint her hopes? No: he would sooner die; and he determined when Matilda departed never to see her more, if it was with any other sentiment than that of friendship.

Matilda was counting the few remaining days of enjoyment she was still to experience in the society of Lady Sophia, who was now able to set up and converse,

when the following letter was put into her hand. On perceiving it was Lady Seyntaubyne's writing she broke the seal with anxiety, and read with surprise and consternation to this effect:

*To Miss Trevanion.*

“DEAR MATILDA,

“You have displeased me very much; I have repeatedly expressed my disapprobation of your intimacy with Lady Sophia Clairville; and on my coming to Dr. Arundel's yesterday I was surprised to find you were staying at her house. I desire you will leave her ladyship immediately, and be ready to come home with me, to remain, next Monday.

“Remember, I expect from you obedience and *self-denial* in every thing I require. I shall not be unreasonable in my demands upon you; but I have a particular cause for interdicting all future intercourse, either with Lady Sophia or her niece, Lady Julia Penrose. I have very substantial motives for so doing, which it is not expedient to disclose to you.

“I remain,

“Dear Matilda,

“Your sincere friend,

“DOROTHEA SEYN TAUBYNE.”

Soho Square, March 2.

As Matilda closed her letter, Lady Sophia perceived a crimson glow overspread the cheek of her young friend, whose confusion was so evident, her ladyship said, “I would not be impertinent in my enquiries, but I am afraid your letter is of no pleasant import.”

“It is a summons,” replied she, frankly, “from Lady Seyntaubyne, to be ready to attend her on Monday. I should be wanting in affection and gratitude not to obey it cheerfully; yet,” added she, with a heavy sigh, “to leave friends to whom I am so warmly attached, and whom I may meet no more, requires some philosophy not deeply to lament. There is no feeling in nature so painful as bidding farewell to those whose society has constituted all the joy of life. Such has been my happy lot; great, therefore, must be the deprivation I am going to endure.”

“My friendships, Matilda,” cried her ladyship, “have been very circumscribed through life. I have found few who have possessed that liberal spirit, worthy in my estimation, to be admitted a partnership in the heart. What is called general society, I have found constituted a set of individuals, who associated with each other not from the endearing union of kindred minds, and the tender reciprocation of friendship, but merely for the purpose of dissipating time, without affording any pleasing retrospection. It is living in a crowd without tasting, the delight of society; for such people meet without joy, and separate without regret.

“It is true, a heart of sensibility is spared an infinity of pain, but its emotions are joyless, and it is a stranger to the transports arising from the sober domestic circle of endearing friends, where ‘thought meets thought,’ and every wish is anticipated to constitute the felicity of participating a mutual regard. Oh! to a mind of feeling, without such soothing balm, what a blank is existence, when none are worthy of being beloved!

“If,” continued she, “you are young and beautiful, *ton* may give you importance in the world of fashion, and for a time you will be run after, courted, and admired: but the reign is transient, and on resigning the empire to some new favourite, you will return neglected and forgotten. But even youth and beauty are of little avail without fortune; for, in these days, there are few faults greater than that of poverty. *Self* is the leading principle in all characters bred to opulence; the distinction of high birth is no longer regarded, or even respected; and when the wives and daughters of mercantile men are to be allowed on a level with peeresses, is it to be wondered at, that all difference is forgotten?”

“The low-born and uneducated,” added her ladyship, “I never could assimilate with. There is a self-importance—a coarseness of mind—which a refined taste cannot tolerate; and the heart sickens and pants for something better. Thus, then, my sweet young friend, quarrelling with half the world, I must have society new modelled, with very few exceptions, before it can repay me for the trouble of spending my time in it. A scene of dissipation fills me with sadness; when I behold such a giddy multitude, all born rational beings, divested of reflection, and panting after folly in such a varied succession.

“But with you, dearest Matilda,” cried her ladyship, “I have found a sweet associate,—a second daughter! You have been the soother—the restorer of my life! and, to my son, you have conferred the joy (under Providence) of giving him back his mother. What, then, do we not owe you? and how can we ever sufficiently estimate your value?”

“How, indeed!” exclaimed Clairville, with energy; “unremitting have been the tenderness and solicitude with which Miss Trevanion watched you; and the remembrance of such goodness will be ever cherished with sentiments of more than gratitude;—she has been the benignant angel, as I once called her, who hovered over us both.

“Sweetest Miss Trevanion!” continued he, with emotion, “when you see us no more, believe, at least, that we never can forget you. Oh! that it were possible——” He became embarrassed, stammered, and left the sentence unfinished. “What were possible?” hastily interrupted his mother.

“No matter;” replied Clairville, colouring, “it cannot be. It were unjust to Julia; neither could I presume to hope that Miss Trevanion—Forgive me; I know not what I would say,—but this I know, that Matilda—Miss Trevanion I mean, is entitled to my warmest gratitude, and possesses my highest admiration. Every virtue dwells in her bosom;—she is full of sensibility, with a dignity, a firmness of mind, which I have never seen equalled. To her friendship I may aspire,—but to her love I would not.”

“You may to both,” exclaimed Lady Sophia; “love Miss Trevanion as a sister, and ever cherish her remembrance with the tenderest friendship, for to it she is justly entitled.”

“Your kindness, madam,” said Matilda, in a faltering accent, “overwhelms me. What have I done to deserve such praise? no more than humanity prompted; and the pleasure resulting from your ladyship’s society, whatever distance may divide us, and though we should meet no more, will be one of my fondest recollections.”

She dared not trust herself to give any reply to Clairville. He attended her to the carriage, and as she stepped into it, he pressed her hand to his lips, whilst she faintly articulated, “May all felicity attend you!”

A few days after Matilda’s departure, Lady Sophia sat down and wrote to her niece as follows:

*To Lady Julia Penrose.*

“COME, dearest Julia, come and participate in the felicity which awaits you; for I have actually folded my beloved, my long lost son in my arms. Oh! the joy was almost too much, and had nearly destroyed me; but, like most violent emotions, it has not exhausted itself, and I think it is impossible to ever more return to my former state of depression. For I now most forcibly feel a truth,—a truth to which my heart has long coldly assented, acknowledging, that after the most bitter and heavy affliction, the bosom may again expand to joy. But it is not a trifle that can reanimate the stupified palsied faculties; (mine once were suspended from all sense, either of sorrow or of joy) and nothing less than the return of my precious child could have raised me to a conviction that it was possible ever again to experience more than a temporary absence of the most painful emotions, which for the last few years of my life chased away the natural gaiety of my disposition, to introduce sorrow, solicitude, and apprehension.

“I glory in the bravery, the intrepidity of my boy, whilst I tremble at the perils he encountered. He yielded not in a most sanguinary engagement with the enemy: covered with wounds, he and his brave comrades were forcibly taken prisoners, and as they were sailing for France, next contending with the warring element which overwhelmed them, the vessel was driven on our English coast, where it was split in pieces. My Albert, and one of his companions, on a plank, floated ashore, the rest of the unhappy crew perished.

“Almost without clothes, and without money; sometimes taken for vagrants or impostors, starving and exhausted, they on foot arrived in this forlorn condition, piteously pleading for admittance into that house which my poor Albert imagined was never more to shelter him.

“Such, Julia, is the dangers which your lover has encountered. Oh, hasten to us, and bless him with your hand; then you may prevail upon him to exchange the tumults of war, the perils of the ocean, for the sober scenes of domestic life, and leave this dire and unequal contest, to those who must engage in it, for my heart sickens at the very name of war, at the mournful desolation it has occasioned. The cities it has depopulated and laid waste; the thousands it has sacrificed, and the bleeding hearts it has occasioned. Can even the laurels so dearly purchased, steeped as they are in blood, restore the suffering victims of this sanguinary strife.—Can it heal the agonized heart of a wife—a parent—a sister?

“The picture is so hideous, that I turn from it, Julia, with trembling, for I had nearly been grouped in the same scene of its woe.

“Clairville is anxious, impatient, and abstracted; he appears to experience some strong emotions which he does not explain, and I have no means to discover. Come to us without delay. I remain,

“Yours most affectionately,  
“SOPHIA CLAIRVILLE.”

## CHAP. IX.

A FEW days after the receipt of this letter Lady Julia joined her aunt and cousin.

The abstraction of Clairville's mind, which his mother complained of, was occasioned by the distressing situation in which he was placed. As a British officer, whose honour was no less unblemished than his bravery and patriotism were conspicuous, he could ill brook the necessity of being obliged to surrender his sword to the enemy. And though the accident of his shipwreck liberated him as a prisoner, yet as a matter of etiquette, he could not fight against the enemy, and to remain inactive at such a time, depressed his aspiring spirit. Sometimes he thought of surrendering himself immediately a prisoner; so romantic were his ideas of honour; but the misery such a step would occasion to his mother, checked so wild a fancy, and he, for the present reluctantly submitted to his fate.

Matilda in the meantime was preparing to leave Richmond. Doctor Arundel's concern in parting with his pupil was mingled with much anxiety and apprehension, that the religious and moral principles which he had inculcated would gradually decline, and at length cease to exist, after she had been sometime initiated in fashionable life. Her future destiny dwelt much in his thoughts. He was unusually grave the evening previous to her departure, and wore such a look of tender solicitude, whenever he looked on her, as penetrated Matilda's heart. She rose, and approaching the great chair he always sat in, took his hand, and while she respectfully pressed it to her lips, a tear glistening in her eye, she said, "I hope, dear Sir, though I am so soon to leave you, that my maternal Mrs. Arundel will allow me sometimes to become your inmate, to profit by your councils, which I shall always endeavour to make the guide of my life."

"What I have taught you, my dear child," replied the reverend doctor, "was founded on those principles which instruct you how to live here, so as to live in felicity hereafter. Let not dissipation allure you into its seductive path; it will appear strewn with roses, but, alas! how pungent will you find its thorns. When languor succeeds to health, when the sunshine of the mind is clouded by the dark retrospection of hours mis-spent, how unsatisfactory will be your feelings. Think, Matilda, when at first, perhaps, you are unwillingly drawn into the vortex of folly, of the contrast of your present with your former life. Compare them, and when we meet, tell me candidly which of the two leads to the most permanent content, not to say happiness."

"Were I, Sir," interrupted Matilda, "ever to forget the lessons you have taught me, I should be unworthy the pains you have bestowed."

"Where," observed he, "the heart and the principles are good, I think none of us can greatly err. We cannot step at once from excellent habits to vicious ones; but even those customs and manners which at first we naturally shrink from, time and habit may reconcile us to:

"Vice is a monster of so frightful mien,  
Which to be hated needs but to be seen;  
But if seen too often, familiar with her face,  
We first endure, then pity, then embrace."

“So weak is human nature, that if we do not by the firmness of principle oppose those encroachments which fashion sanctions, we shall at length become converts to mean vices, which reason condemns.”

The morning arrived when Matilda was to leave her respected friends; and Lady Seyntaubyne appeared in her coach, to take her home. She felt displeased to find her spiritless, pale, and weeping; and rather hurt, she exclaimed, “Is this like the salutation of joy I expected to welcome me; is this the pleasure, Matilda, that you promised me on your return home?”

“Doctor and Mrs. Arundel have, madam,” returned she, mildly, “been to me in the character of parents; to leave them with indifference is impossible; though, to betray so much regret, I acknowledge to be not merely unpardonable weakness, but an undue return for the tender concern your ladyship takes in me. You must pardon it, as due to those who have inculcated every warm and grateful feeling.”

While Matilda went to direct the packing of her clothes, Doctor Arundel said to the countess, with much energy, “I present Miss Trevanion to your ladyship a most excellent young woman. I resign my precious charge with the deepest regret. I deliver her with a mind all purity—unskilled in guile, unsophisticated in fashion. Innocent, as amiable, gentle, docile, and engaging you will find her. Oh, with care preserve and guard so amiable a young creature; consider how difficult a task it is to guide a beautiful girl free from blame through the wily paths of the world of fashion, into which, alas! she is so soon to be ushered. Keep her as you would heaven’s best gift, and lead her only into those paths which may enable her hereafter to reflect with satisfaction on the life she has spent. Embitter it not, madam, with the remembrance of unavailing remorse. Sadden not her days with any painful retrospection. Oh, may the innocent gaiety of youthful enjoyment in maturer years be gilded with the sober but lasting glow of a tranquil sunshine, which no cloud will have power to overshadow, and may she gently retire, when full of years, into those blissful regions, of which she has rendered herself worthy to become a sharer.

“Forgive, madam,” added the reverend doctor, “the freedom of an old man’s advice and benediction. Had I valued Miss Trevanion less, you would have been spared them.”

“If, my good Sir,” replied her ladyship, with a smile, “Mrs. Arundel has bestowed as much pains on forming Matilda’s manners, as you have done on her education and morals, she will do you some credit. Your advice, I admit, is all admirable and proper; but if we are to live in the world, we must become something like it, or withdraw from it altogether.”

Many kind regrets and tender advices were expressed at parting; and Matilda left Richmond with an anguish of mind she felt ashamed to confess even to herself: but she endeavoured to rouse her thoughts, and to enter into something like cheerful conversation with her benefactress.

## CHAP. X.

IT was not the intention of Lady Seyntaubyne, in bringing Matilda home, that she should make either a permanent or long residence with her, having formed very ambitious views for her future establishment in life; and neither pains nor expence had been spared in educating her highly. The accomplishments she possessed, united with her personal beauty, graceful deportment, and engaging manners, she felt confident would render her a desirable alliance for any man of elevated condition. Her ladyship despised the romantic idea of marrying from affection. She was a perfect stranger to those endearing attachments which spring from similarity of taste and sentiment, excited by mutual interest and regard. She was married by her parents at a very early age, for the mercenary convenience of uniting two estates. She soon became a widow, and, unfortunately, never had experienced the delight derived from a domestic circle, where reciprocal tenderness prompts those endearing attentions, which, unguided by interest, are of the most delicate and binding nature. As convenience had directed her union, so Lady Seyntaubyne would have directed her son's; but he determined to fix his own choice; and by marrying the younger sister of Lady Sophia Clairville, who was the daughter of a poor Irish peer, had caused a breach between himself and his mother no time could restore, and which, from some events that shortly followed, had degenerated into the most determined dislike and separation on both sides.

Thus alienated from her son, and disappointed in those plans which she had formed, she had for some years retired to the country, where she had renounced society, and forsworn all friendships. In bringing Matilda home, the countess had made no acquaintances but what she considered of utility to her; and though she now again entered into a numerous circle, it was much against her taste and inclination; but it was necessary, she thought, to do so, that she might be able, more effectually, to convict her son of his matrimonial errors, and to realise the plans which she was perpetually forming for Matilda's introduction and future establishment.

She had never seen her beautiful grand-daughter, Lady Julia Penrose; and the tender affection she entertained for Matilda, had excited a sensation of jealousy in her bosom, when she imagined that Lady Sophia Clairville and Mrs. Arundel were by her more regarded.

Lady Seyntaubyne was an idolizer of personal attractions. It was the infantile loveliness of Matilda which first engaged her attention; and when she advanced to womanhood she was somewhat disappointed that the expectations of her becoming a perfect beauty were not fully realised. Many faces were more beautiful than that of Matilda; and it was rather the expression of native innocence, than the regularity and isolated beauty of her features, which characterised her, produced the fascination that she excited whenever she appeared, possessed an electric charm, and drew forth so much admiration.

Matilda's countenance, open and ingenuous, beamed with the most engaging sweetness of expression. Hitherto a stranger to sorrow; indulged and beloved by the friends who had educated her, she was gay, cheerful, and easy. Free from guile, a stranger to the arts and habits of the world, she conversed with freedom, chastened by diffidence, and modified by good sense. What her manners wanted in dignity, were supplied by a

graceful artlessness, with which she alone seemed to be gifted. No study could have attained it, for it was as natural to her as the unerring truth which guided all her actions. She was the child of nature, and that in its loveliest form: her movements were so elegant, her step so light, she seemed rather a being of another world, who had descended in the form of a sylph, so ethereal was her general appearance; her voice was full of melody, and there was something so touchingly soft in its tones, as to excite a tender interest in every one who listened to her persuasive accents.

Such was Matilda Trevanion at the period when she left the Reverend Doctor Arundel's.

## CHAP. XI.

THE sphere in which Matilda now moved seemed to have transplanted her into a new world: she might truly be said to live in constant society, without any participation of enjoyment. Those persons with whom she associated were as numerous as they were uninteresting, frivolous, and dissimilar to her taste.

The peaceful days of domestic bliss which she had enjoyed at Richmond appeared for ever fled, and were succeeded by an unsettled routine of idleness and folly. The rational society of Lady Sophia Clairville—the pleasing friendship of the interesting Julia—the tender attentions of young Clairville—the benevolent countenances of Doctor and Mrs. Arundel, were all remembered with a sigh, and rendered her present life not merely irksome, but almost unhappy. She had, it was true, looked forward with agreeable anticipation to the period when she was to come home to her benefactress, for whom she entertained a tender regard. But on her return the ideal bliss died away, and she scarcely dared trust herself with the comparison which was continually present to her imagination. She chid herself for being discontented and ungrateful, but she missed the fond maternal manners of Mrs. Arundel. She found a fearful void in her heart; for Lady Seyntaubyne was a stranger to its soft and fine emotions; and without chiding Matilda for doing wrong, seldom praised her for doing well.

The hour of breakfast at Richmond was always filled up with a cheerful and animating conversation. In Soho Square, it proved a solitary meal; and the time Matilda would have devoted to study, was broken in upon by frivolous company, or paying idle visits till dinner time. In the evening she was conducted to some party, or some ball, by any woman of fashion who would take charge of her; for the countess had been very vigilant in forming a numerous acquaintance previous to her coming home.

It was understood, that the countess would give Matilda a splendid fortune. No cost was spared to render her dress and appearance fashionable. She possessed a native grace, which, united with her liveliness, drew round her a crowd of admirers whenever she was seen.

Lady Seyntaubyne sometimes attended her into public, for the pleasure of observing the notice she engaged; but her antiquated dress rendered her so conspicuous, as often to distress Matilda; who, though a novice in the late adopted mode of quizzing, evidently perceived she was the subject of ridicule.

One of the ladies to whom she was introduced, was the young Marchioness of Etherington. Matilda had been at one or two of her concerts and parties, and she had been accompanied by her to a ball. But it required little penetration to find out that she paid no regard to the females who were of her party, and that her whole aim was to secure admirers for herself. Her ladyship danced well, played high, laughed, quizzed, flirted, and was so full of levity, that Matilda, not merely disgusted, but shocked at such a display of folly, requested that Lady Seyntaubyne would find her a more proper "*chaperon*," for it was quite disagreeable to appear with her in public.

The men who joined them, Matilda thought bold, impertinent, and self-sufficient. They talked to her with a familiarity to which she had been wholly unused; at the same time, that there was an affectation of absence in their manners, that had none of the polite gallantry which she expected to meet with in high life.

But if she was sensible of these deficiencies in the men, she daily saw she was as much tormented with the high-flown compliments which were paid her by the old Duke of Elmwood. He followed her like a shadow; and she would have smiled at the absurdity of his conduct, if she had not perceived that his daughters, not very young women, had watched her with an eye of jealousy, and behaved with a constrained civility, which gave her pain.

Matilda had likewise become acquainted with a rich West-Indian merchant's family. It was in vain that she urged to the countess their insipidity and dulness. But they gave splendid entertainments and great dinners, therefore Lady Seyntaubyne was desirous their acquaintance should be cultivated.

"I tell you, child," said she, "you know nothing of the world. What does it signify whether people are agreeable or not, if they are but in fashion. The Butlers give the finest dinners of any family in town. Young men think it worth while to go to a good dinner, and that is the way mothers get their daughters married, by inviting them; and it is at such parties you have the best chance of becoming acquainted. The Butlers' evening concerts, I am told, are distinguished for having the best chosen performers, because they permit their rooms to be hired by them for the night. The hostess is now a mere passive machine, and remains nugatory. It is an admirable plan, for it saves much trouble and expense.

"It was quite different," added her ladyship, "in my youthful days; I remember so much state and ceremony were preserved, so much court and respect paid me, I was like a queen in my own dominions. In the present day it is quite reversed, for the hostess does not, it is probable, personally know even one third of the people who frequent her house, and she takes no part in the trouble of entertaining them."

"And can any pleasure, madam," replied Matilda, "be derived from such a mode of entertainment. If you wish to hear music there is the opera, and several concert rooms, without converting one's house into a public hotel, where no choice nor selection can be made of proper company."

"Lady Sophia Clairville has taught you so many dull old-fashioned notions, to cure them will take half a century. Pray, Matilda, what is your objection to Mrs. Butler and her daughters?"

"She is destitute of all the powers of conversation; and when you send me to spend the day with them, if there is no other company, I am always inclined to fall asleep. The pride of Mrs. Butler is insufferable, united with all the insolence, and all the indolence, of those who are elevated by fortune rather than by birth. Her air is stiff, without dignity, and her address so cold, formal, and supercilious, it is difficult not to take her for a prim old maiden of the last century. When Mrs. Butler does speak, it appears as if she were doing violence to her inclination, to perform those civilities due to her guests; and a few monosyllables is all that is ever heard from her.

"Her daughters," continued Matilda, "are mere automotons, and as pretty pieces of stale life as I ever beheld. They can only drawl out an affected whisper of yes, or with a languishing air, except when they are surrounded by beaux, or one or two young women of their own coterie, when they get into a corner, and by jeers and sarcastic smiles, think that they have turned all the company into ridicule. The Miss Butlers are also unfeeling, as well as ill-bred. One evening at their house, in a very crowded party, when there were not seats for half the company, I was rising to offer a poor lame lady, who must have stood with pain, my chair, when Miss Butler, who chanced to be close by,

pulled me by the arm, and asked me how I could be so silly. Such, madam, may be *haut ton*, but in my opinion, it is *mauvais ton*, and inspires me with disgust.”

“That speech,” again interrupted the countess, “is so like one of Lady Sophia’s sentimental ones, I should have thought that she had taught you it. But see what she has made of her romantic notions of love and friendship. She possesses a title, and little fortune to support it.

“Pray, Matilda,” added she, “what is become of that young Scotchman, who talked in such a droning and barbarous accent?”

“He is returned to Scotland, with his father and mother.”

“I wish he did not speak in such an unintelligible language, for he is a sensible young man. He is an only son, and will be heir to a large fortune. I desire, Matilda, the next time the Duke of Elmwood comes here, you will behave to him with more civility. I do think he has taken a serious fancy to you, and you know he is worth fifty thousand a year. What does it signify he’s having daughters older than yourself, they cannot interfere with you; and I am persuaded, with a little finesse and management, you might have him at your feet to-morrow. But you are a mere baby in the ways of the world. Indeed I have always observed persons who are reckoned to possess the most sense are so; but there is no teaching you to act like other people.”

“Mercy on me, madam, marry me to the old gouty Duke of Elmwood. Matilda Trevanion is indeed to be pitied if it is come to this.”

“Never,” cried Lady Seyntaubyne, angrily, “was a girl so void of ambition. What does it signify, as I said before, the difference of age between you. Don’t you see young women every day marry men, for the sake of a handsome settlement, old enough to be their fathers?”

“And grandfathers, sometimes,” interrupted Matilda, sarcastically.

“I hope,” cried her ladyship, turning a penetrating look towards her, “I hope, Matilda, that young man, you know whom I mean, is gone to sea again?”

Matilda blushed deeply, and began pulling to pieces a rose she had been copying.

“Why don’t you answer me. Where has Lady Sophia sent the boy?”

“I—I really”—

A servant opportunely brought a letter for the countess, and Matilda, in confusion, was glad to escape out of the room.

## CHAP. XII.

MATILDA withdrew to her *boudoir*, where she was pensively sitting, with one arm on the table, thinking most probably of the very young man the countess had just told her to forget, when she entered, accompanied by a shewy fashionable looking woman, whom she had never seen before. Hastily rising, she endeavoured to dispel the tears that filled her eyes.

“Mrs. Aldersley, Matilda,” said Lady Seyntaubyne, “who not only kindly returns your visit immediately, but begged to be admitted to your *boudoir*, that she might be introduced on the familiar footing of a friend.”

Matilda curtsied, and said something of the honour intended, in a low voice, for she had no desire to cultivate Mrs. Aldersey’s acquaintance, notwithstanding her society was in much request in a particular quarter. For to be of Mrs. Aldersey’s parties, conversations, and her concerts, many persons were vainly solicitous, as she was considered one of the *cognoscentè*. Matilda had often seen long paragraphs in the papers about her parties; but she had heard Lady Sophia Clairville speak of her as one whose society was rather alluring than estimable, and Matilda entertained a high opinion of her friend’s judgment in her discernment of characters.

Lady Seyntaubyne courted notoriety for Matilda, and wished for nothing so much as that she might be brought forward by some lady of taste and talents. How far Mrs. Aldersey was entitled to that distinction was doubted by good judges. She, however, formed high pretensions to be ranked as such, and by superficial observers was classed amongst the *litterati*.

“I should guess,” exclaimed Mrs. Aldersey, looking earnestly at Matilda, “my young friend, by her pensive look and tearful eye had been studying the character of Melpomene for the next masquerade. Am I right?”

This speech made the countess observe her, and perceive she had been weeping. “Matilda is a singular girl,” cried her ladyship, “with all the trouble I take to introduce and amuse her, she always prefers being at home, and has no ambition, like other young women, to be admired. If she had, she would know that there is nothing so unbecoming as tears.”

“Commit Miss Trevanion to my care,” replied Mrs. Aldersey, “for the rest of the season, and rely on it, my dear madam, she will soon repent her taste for solitude.” Mrs. Aldersey could not have made a proposal more agreeable to Lady Seyntaubyne, who not only availed herself of it with avidity, but closed an agreement, before she departed, to take a share of a box with her at the opera, for Matilda’s use, during the season, to commence on the following Saturday.

After Mrs. Aldersey took leave, her ladyship said, “you objected to the young Marchioness of Ethrington, as being too gay and full of levity, therefore this is a fortunate acquaintance, for at Mrs. Aldersey’s house you will meet people, at last, suited to your taste. She will kindly too take all trouble off my hands. I could not have found a more proper *chaperon*; and your taste for music will be constantly indulged in going to the opera.”

True, Matilda was passionately fond of music, particularly the Italian, in which she excelled; but she would rather not have attended the opera at all than attend it with Mrs. Aldersey.

It might be the effect of prejudice, for how apt are we to imbibe the opinions of those whose judgment we think well of; but yet Matilda was not satisfied with the general appearance of her new acquaintance. There was too much self-confidence in her manner, and a bold expression in her full dark eyes, which were brilliant softness; and her dress was too gaudy for a woman past forty.

Mrs. Aldersey was the daughter of an officer, and had married splendidly. She was early left a widow, and without the encumbrance of any family or connections, had a large fortune at her entire disposal. She was ambitious of popularity, and opened her doors with munificence to all classes of society. She did not confine her circle alone to the gay, but made her house a sort of rendezvous for the most eminent geniuses of the age, in all the various branches of human knowledge; giving the most liberal support and encouragement to those who rose only by their talents.

Matilda, almost dissatisfied with herself for the ungracious return she was making the countess, in her reluctance to form an acquaintance with Mrs. Aldersey, which, from continual intercourse, must become a sort of friendship, retired to dress for the opera, and at nine o'clock was set down at Mrs. Aldersey's house in Portman Square.

On being shewn into the drawing-room, she found her stretched on an ottoman, and a foreigner seated beside her, reading aloud in Italian; she nodded to her, waving her hand at the same time for the signor to go on, and whispered to Matilda, "We will just hear out the sixth book, and begone. Dantè is such a divine poet, so full of brilliant descriptions; his characters are so interesting, and so little inferior to Virgil, I wonder every woman does not learn Italian on purpose to read Dantè's *L'Enferno*. Many passages are sublime: his picture of the infernal regions is perfectly Miltonic, and his *Paradiso* surpasses even the enchanting display of Elysium in the *Æneid*."

Matilda, not inclined to argue with her new acquaintance, gave a silent assent to her remarks, and shortly after they arose to depart.

As she surveyed Mrs. Aldersey, she was not quite satisfied with her mode of dress. The rouge and pearl-powder, she thought, rather spoiled than improved her looks; and the lightness of her clothing, with the exposure of her person, was displeasing.

The first act of the opera was over when they arrived; and when the ballet commenced, several gentlemen, in succession, came into the box. It was known amongst her acquaintance, that, contrary to the usual mode, she was so unfashionable as to attend to the music. Mrs. Aldersey piqued herself on being an amateur; and, therefore, never suffered any person to interrupt her during the performance. This was a circumstance most agreeable to Matilda, who was spell-bound by the enchanting note of Catalani and Tremazzani: and was so entirely absorbed in Semiramis, as to forget Mrs. Aldersey, or the knowledge that there were one or two in the box beside her.

"The fable of this opera," said Mrs. Aldersey to Sir Charles Dashwood, (who had come into the box at the close of the act,) "is extremely interesting. The disciples of John Bull consider it burlesque tragedy to utter all the dialogue in recitative and song; yet, could even Mrs. Siddons, all eloquent as she is, throw more interest into the scene than Catalani; who, as well as being a fine tragedian, gives to all the airs such a tenderness and enchanting melody, as touches the very soul. Tremazzani has been said to sing to the

passions. Taken in a literal sense, the meaning is bad. But who ever wrote poetry without pathos? Who, that ever attempted it, did not wish to give a richness to the numbers—a force of expression, mere prose can never reach, without becoming rodomantade? Shakespear goes so far as to say, no man ever knew how to write poetry until he had been in love. Let me see—the lines run thus:—

‘Never durst poet touch a pen to write,  
Until the ink were temper’d with love’s sighs.’

“Italy is the land of music; and their song is all romance, formed on passion. Hence, the tenderness they display, is found to inspire enthusiasm, and is the reason why the Italian operas so far excel our heavy English ones; and if the fable be sometimes absurd, it partakes not of that mass of dulness, or of silly pantomime, which always inclines me to fall asleep.”

“After so eloquent a disquisition,” replied Sir Charles, “I am almost afraid, madam, to confess, I should not be sorry to see the opera put down altogether; though I acknowledge, with you, the music is highly grateful to every person of taste. Yet even taste may become vitiated from the prevalence of fashion. The luxury and extravagance of the age are now carried to such excess, we lavishly confer thousands on foreigners and spies, (the hirelings of a most ruthless enemy) whilst our honest men and women are sinking under indigence with fine talents, which rather prove their misfortune for want of adequate encouragement, than, as was intended, their means of support.

“Is it necessary,” continued he, “allow me to ask, to instruct young women of fashion in the accomplishment of music, as if they were to become public performers? Those, of an inferior class, might apply their time to more advantage. I am at this moment acquainted with some girls, whose parents are far from rich, that pay Tremazzani a guinea for only three quarters of an hour, to instruct them to sing, with very ordinary voices; and more than six hours of a day is lavished to the practice of music. What sort of wives do you imagine these women are to make men of moderate fortunes? for, as they are very plain, it cannot be an attraction to any coxcomb of fashion.”

“You are straying, Sir Charles, wide from my topic,” cried Mrs. Aldersey, “I will give you no opinion, if it is your idea that the opera should be abolished. I quite give you up as a bad subject. What induced you, may I ask, to come to night? Curiosity, to hear Tremazzani—who certainly must be allowed to be a beautiful singer, and one of infinite taste.

“I suppose you object to the dancing?”

“Not altogether; but, like many other modern amusements, it wants to be reformed. Dancing is a long established custom; not only amongst the ancients, but even the savage Indians throw great expression into their attitudes and movements. This is an age where such free scope is given to the encouragement of taste, whether real or perverted, it ought to be as pure as it has become refined. One mode of dancing, I hope, Mrs. Aldersey, you will not allow in your house,—the German Waltz.”

“It is become so fashionable, I am sure I shall have no quarter from my young friends if I do not. The curtain is rising,” she added, “we will discuss the subject another time.”

Sir Charles seated himself by Mrs. Aldersey, and with no small interest contemplated the youthful innocence and beauty of Matilda, to whom he had not been introduced. The earnestness with which he regarded her, made her blush. It was not a look of impertinent curiosity he wore, but rather one of mingled pity and concern; for, though she was unknown to him, he was sorry to see her alone with Mrs. Aldersey, who was not respected, except in her own class.

Sir Charles Dashwood was a single man, and his society was in much request, for the grace of his manners, the pleasantness of his conversations, and his extensive knowledge. He had travelled much in early life, and acquired a taste for every elegant science, of which he was considered a perfect judge. He had been attracted to Mrs. Aldersey's house, from a certainty of there meeting with persons of almost every nation, whose knowledge and conversation would amuse him.

When the opera was ended, Sir Charles told Mrs. Aldersey he would attend her to her carriage, if she would wait till he had spoken to two ladies in the next box, and disappeared in a moment. She was very curious to know who they were, and desired Matilda, as she was stationed next them, to lean over and observe.

She did so, and beheld with surprise Lady Sophia Clairville and her niece, Lady Julia.—Ardently did she wish to speak to them; but the wish, after the first impulse, was momentary, and sunk into a *sentiment* of mortification, for fear her ladyship should observe it was Mrs. Aldersey who was her *chaperon*. It might lower her in her estimation; and she was sure it would displease Doctor Arundel. Yet, to be so near her beloved friend and amiable Julia, and pass them in silence, hurt her extremely. But where was Clairville? Anxiously she strained her eyes in hopes of discovering him, yet she saw him not.

Forgetful of Mrs. Aldersey's request, Matilda, lost in reflection, started from her reverie on a tap from her fan. "A silver penny, fair lady, for your contemplations. I am sure they are worth knowing, they have so suddenly recalled the deserted roses to your cheeks."

Fortunately, Matilda had not time to reply, before Sir Charles returned, on whom she cast such a look of anxious enquiry, Mrs. Aldersey exclaimed, "In pity to Miss Trevanion's anxiety, tell me to whom you were talking,—and say, was not some Adonis behind the curtain; for Miss Trevanion took such a tender interest in the scene, I might have as well called upon the winds to answer me."

He turned with a degree of curious solicitude towards Matilda, who blushed more deeply than ever.

"First, madam," replied he, "introduce me to your lovely young friend, before I presume to address her."

"True, that is very proper; and I think this lovely young friend, Miss Trevanion, ought to feel a little piqued, at the request not being made before. Now tell me to whom you were talking."

"To Lady Sophia Clairville; she is rarely seen in public; but in the circle of her friends she ever diffuses pleasure. Few women possess her sense, her wit, and her excellence. Her niece, lady Julia Penrose, who was with her, is the most beautiful creature that has appeared for an age in the circle of fashion."

"Introduce me to them, Sir Charles. I positively must know them. I shall rejoice to find a woman out of the common run."

“Lady Sophia is difficult of access. The very notoriety which you court, is the very circumstance which would make her decline your acquaintance. But do tell me,” added he, in a whisper, loud enough for Matilda to hear, “who is that angelic young woman you have along with you? I have once or twice seen her before in public. Whence comes she? and to what family does she belong?”

“That,” replied she, with a sarcastic smile, “is more than I can tell.”

“Not tell?” repeated he, in amazement.

“True, upon my honour. The old Countess Seyntaubyne picked up the girl in some of the mines in Cornwall.”

“They have brought forth precious ore,” replied he.

Matilda, who had hold of Sir Charles’s arm, let it drop.—She trembled, and grew sick with the contending emotions, which overwhelmed her, and would have been lost in the crowd if he had not seized hold of her, and with peculiar tenderness and respect said, “Be not afraid. I perceive you are unused to these places; but, however painful to yourself such timidity, rather, Miss Trevanion, glory in the possession, than wish to be deprived of what must ever prove one of your leading attractions.”

Sir Charles was persuaded by Matilda’s emotion, she had overheard a conversation carried on in a half whisper, and Mrs. Aldersey’s ill-natured and ill-judged reply. Whether what she uttered was true or false, he felt indignant at the want of delicacy and feeling she had displayed. If Miss Trevanion was really *nobody*, it was the less pardonable, while she was under her care, to speak so equivocally of her to an unmarried man. He would not, but there were many others he knew in the world who would, have taken advantage of Mrs. Aldersey’s remarks, to have treated her with indignity and freedom.

So poignant were Matilda’s feelings, she spoke no more until she was set down at home; and then coldly wishing Mrs. Aldersey good night, she withdrew to her chamber. Lady Seyntaubyne had retired sometime.

## CHAP. XIII.

MATILDA was lost in the most painful retrospection, of what faint remembrance she retained of her infantile years. Uncertain as to the future, involved in mystery with respect to her family and connections, ignorant of what nature her claims were on her benefactress, she sat musing till the daylight reminded her it was time to go to bed. She bore the name which best she loved,—that of Trevanion. A name she had been taught to lisp in her infant days. She recalled the tenderness of him to whom it belonged; but to it she never had attached that of father. No parents' smile had blessed her;—no mother had watched over her with maternal fondness. Even of her origin she was ignorant.—Was she then ignobly born? Her soul shuddered at the terrible suspicion.—Was the name of her parents disgraceful, that she must not hear it? Perhaps they were lowly, but virtuous; and, as Mrs. Aldersey had said, she was taken from the habitation of some of the poor miners. “Oh!” cried she, in a transport of grief, “unhappy parents of your unhappy child, if ye but live, take me to your dwelling, however humble;—to virtuous poverty let me return, rather than be pampered in splendid misery, and tormented by the unfeeling world, with my humble origin. And if, O God! ye are not virtuous, in some lorn wilderness let me hide myself, unseen, unknown, that I may breathe out the remainder of my little life, (for short will it prove) in prayers and tears for your conversion.”

Matilda, exhausted with anguish and weeping, rose in the morning so pale and sorrowful, that the moment the countess beheld her, enquired with the utmost anxiety if any calamity had befallen her.

Matilda wept, and could not reply.

“Why are you silent,” said Lady Seyntaubyne, “if any thing has made you uneasy, and I can remove it, tell me; have you not always found me a steady friend?”

Matilda simply related Mrs. Aldersey's conversation, which she had overheard with Sir Charles Dashwood.

The countess paused a few minutes, and seemed to be considering how she ought to reply.

“It is, then,” exclaimed Matilda, “as I guessed!—It is to you, madam, I owe the advantages I have received!—Thus let me express my gratitude,” falling on her knees, and kissing her hand. “But, Oh! tell me to whom I belong? Who was the mother that gave me birth?—what the name of a father I have never known?—and the claims I had on the venerable man who cherished my infant years?”

The earnest and distressful manner of Matilda, made her ladyship again pause before she answered. At length she said: “Your mother has ceased to exist; and, though your father lives, it is not for you—The venerable Mr. Trevanion guarded your tender years; and, while deserving my affection, you shall never be sensible of the deprivation you have suffered, having excited the interest of a parent in my bosom.”

The heart-piercing words, “*though your father lives, it is not for you,*”—thrilled every nerve of Matilda. She sunk, pale, weeping, and horror-struck, at the feet of Lady Seyntaubyne.

To have, indeed, a father breathing, yet dead to her, whose tender affection was never to smile upon her, whose presence was never to shield her, seemed a sorrow too

mighty to be borne. For sometime she remained overwhelmed by the shock she had sustained, unable to speak or to move.

“Endeavour to recollect and compose yourself,” interrupted the countess, who was likewise much agitated, “at a proper opportunity Mr. Trevanion’s papers shall be given for your inspection; in the meantime,” added she, (taking from her cabinet a small case) “if it will prove any consolation to possess the picture of your mother, here it is.”

With a trembling hand Matilda took the miniature; and, pressing it to her lips as she let a tear fall on it, “Precious relic of a mother! who, even in this inanimate portrait, seems to smile upon her child. Never more will I part with all that now remains of her to bless me.”

The miniature presented a young woman in the bloom of youth and beauty. The countenance beamed with intelligence; and was lighted up with the gaiety of innocence and vivacity. The expression of the eyes was eminently beautiful, and an arch smile played around the mouth, which Matilda had stolen from her. The drapery was simple white, divested of all ornament, and pale auburn hair fell in careless ringlets over her snowy neck and forehead. Matilda eagerly examined the miniature, in hopes of discovering a name attached to it, and was greatly disappointed to find none; and the miniature was contained in a plain case.

The treasure she now possessed, mitigated the sufferings she had experienced; and hoped, in the papers she was promised a sight of, to have the painful mystery attached to her life fully elucidated. To be folded at some future period to the heart of a father, whom she could only picture as worthy of her filial tenderness, was one of the gayest dreams of her youthful imagination.

## CHAP. XIV.

MATILDA had excited in the bosom of Sir Charles Dashwood an interest such as it was not usual for him to experience. He would not admit that it was any thing bordering on a tender sentiment he felt for Matilda, but merely a benevolent interest for her reputation: a desire to know who were here relations, that he might refute to them all the ill-natured calumny Mrs. Aldersey appeared disposed to raise against her.

The morning after the opera he drove to Mrs. Aldersey's house, to gain all the information he could collect in regard to her; and hereafter, if he should ever become better acquainted with Matilda, to guard her against too great an intimacy with so dangerous a woman.

"You were surely, madam," said Sir Charles to Mrs. Aldersey (after the first compliments had passed) *en badinage*, when last night you gave me such an equivocal account of Miss Trevanion; for her air, her manner, her address, little as she spoke, seem to contradict your assertion. In point of beauty, except Lady Julia Penrose, she is the brightest star that has illuminated the hemisphere of fashion for these several winters. With whom does she reside?"

"She resides," answered Mrs. Aldersey, "with the old antiquated Dowager Countess of Seyntaubyne, who is at least an hundred years old, and who has so many *outré* ideas, as if she had just come out of Noah's ark. I was serious when I told you that she brought her out of Cornwall four years ago, and placed her where you will never guess, with the quizzical Doctor Arundel, a puritanical old parson, who had educated this pretty doll, and has put into her wise little head such a farrago of nonsense, under the semblance of vast learning, I expect before it is long to hear that she has become a member of the *bas bleu*."

"Whatever learning Miss Trevanion possesses," interrupted Sir Charles, "is veiled, you surely will admit, by a diffident and engaging timidity, which is most rare."

"*Mauvaise honte*, you mean, Sir Charles. If she were to be submitted to my tuition, it would take me half a century to undo what old squaretoes and his prim wife have been prosing into her, to give her a fashionable manner, or becoming *nonchalance*."

"Positively," added she, "the little rustic made me blush at her ignorance the other morning. She rises when any person comes into the room, and the same when they depart, with a thousand old-fashioned formalities. She never stares at you through a glass, as if she did not know you, nor looks straight forward when she will not recognize you, and chooses to give you the go-by. She would, I am sure, consider it a heinous sin to turn any person into ridicule, which is simply quizzing; but says a thousand civil and obliging things, which she positively means, and now-a-days are only understood as mere words of course, as void of truth as of sincerity."

"Now this antiquated dowager," continued Mrs. Aldersey, "wishes me to introduce Matilda Trevanion in every place where I visit. How is it possible, without I knew who she really is. Some people say that she is her grand-daughter, but she had no other child than the present earl; he married the daughter of an Irish peer, and the Lady Julia you spoke to is his daughter. Penrose, not Trevanion, is the family name. I have, however, thought the girl was something like her ladyship, if one can trace any resemblance between youth and age."

Sir Charles made no remark on all Mrs. Aldersey had said, and she was too full of her subject not to go on.

“Then people of ton would just as soon visit you in Houndsditch as Soho Square. O what a barbarous sound to a fashionable ear! It is true these visits are usually paid by a footman; yet a card lying on your table with Russel, Bedford, or, in short, any of those out-of-the-way squares, which are not considered genteel, would mar your reputation, at once, as a woman of fashion. For my part, I laugh at these absurdities; because, for amusement, I make a point of visiting people of genius wherever they may chance to live,—whether they have taken flight to the attic, or are to be found within the precincts of the King’s Bench. I know many persons who have found it very convenient to visit such and such people in the country, because they gave good dinners, and because no better offered, were thought good neighbours, were dropt on their coming to town, because not in the circle of fashionable persons. I must persuade the dowager to move her quarters, if she wishes to marry Miss Trevanion highly; and I think she is likely to succeed if she gives her a splendid fortune, the age is grown wiser, than now to think of family; and the offspring of an illicit connection, in our times, seems to be born under a lucky planet.”

“To the disgrace of the age we live in,” exclaimed Sir Charles, emphatically. “Is no line to be drawn between virtue and vice? I would have the unfortunate offspring of such amours taken care of. I would have them educated in safe obscurity, suited to their origin; not superceding in society young women of noble birth, and of ancient and respectable families. Ladies of fashion, by your account, madam, consider it derogatory to their consequence to visit persons residing in such and such squares and streets, and yet they are proud to entertain at their houses actors and actresses, and make hirelings on a footing with themselves. I would, by all means, have talents encouraged; but it is a bad plan to take people out of their sphere.”

“Now suppose, Sir Charles, after all you have been advancing, if Miss Trevanion should be one of those whom you have been describing, what will you say, then?”

“The same thing. Those who see Miss Trevanion, whatever may be her origin, must admire her extreme loveliness, and the innocence which adorns her appearance, with a retiring modesty I have never seen equalled. But if it should prove that she possessed not a correct mother, depend upon it, to the men who would be the most likely to render her happy in the married state, it will be an unsuperable objection. For, without inheriting the vicious properties of her parents, she will have the credit of doing so. To some dissipated young man of fashion, who estimates her beauty and fortune, rather than her excellence, she will perhaps become a prey, unless she has discremination to judge for herself, and to choose wisely. I am much interested in the fate of this charming young woman, and request you will introduce me to Lady Seyntaubyne.”

The entrance of company put an end to further conversation.

Mrs. Aldersey, sarcastically ill-natured, when she took a dislike, had been thus severe in her opinion of Matilda, from pique. She perceived, on their first interview, that she was, by no means, a favourite; and, therefore, instead of giving her the support she had felt inclined, if she had courted and flattered her, she now determined to do all in her power to injure and depress her in society.

## CHAP. XV.

A SHORT time after the foregoing conversation, Sir Charles Dashwood renewed his request, that Mrs. Aldersey would introduce him to the Countess Seyntaubyne. "My sister is coming to town," added he, "to spend some time with me, and I should like her to be known to Miss Trevanion."

Mrs. Aldersey, who regarded Sir Charles with some partiality, assented, and took him in her carriage to Soho Square.

When they were shewn into the drawing-room, they found Matilda seated at her harp, and the strings reverberated to her voice the air "*O dolce concerto*," &c.

"Oh!" cried Sir Charles, as he approached, "Away with Melancholy, never may it dwell in that fair bosom."

"You are right," interrupted Mrs. Aldersey, "to sing it away, for it seems to be rather a favourite inmate of yours. The first time I saw Miss Trevanion, I thought she had been studying the character of the tragic muse, she looked so woe-begone. O now I have it, (pondering a moment) I verily think you are in love, the symptoms are so suspicious."

The countess entered, and with much cold formality, was going to address Mrs. Aldersey, who heeding it not, exclaimed, "Sir Charles Dashwood wishes to be introduced to your ladyship; he admires Miss Trevanion exceedingly."

Her eyes brightened, and she smiled. Nor did she avert to the reflections she had thrown out against Matilda, she was so much pleased with the introduction to the baronet. She liked his appearance, and therefore gave him a gracious reception. "To enter into my good graces," said she, "you must like Matilda, she deserves the esteem of the amiable."

"Her countenance," replied Sir Charles, "is the herald of intelligence, and proclaims a mind all excellence."

The countess drew Mrs. Aldersey to the window, and said, "Sir Charles Dashwood is a personable and elegant man, and possesses discernment in his admiration of Matilda. What is his fortune; for I should not object to him, if it is splendid?"

"If," returned she, "Miss Trevanion has power to make a benedict of him, who has forsworn matrimony, she will have achieved what half the young ladies of fashion, for these last ten years, have in vain essayed to do."

"Then I shall triumph in her influence. Has he a handsome income?"

"His fortune is magnificent. But what of that, he will not confer it on any of the love-lorn maidens, who have without number been dying for him."

"Don't be too sure that he will not. The women do not manoeuvre with ingenuity; it is their own faults if they do not obtain any man they choose to fix on."

During this aside conversation, Sir Charles was hanging over Matilda's harp enraptured. He had requested her to go on. She changed the air which she had been singing to a pathetic English canzonet, composed by Mrs. Cumberland: the words were—

"Go, you may call it madness, folly,  
You shall not chace my grief away;  
There's such a joy in melancholy,  
I would not, if I could, be gay.

Oh, if you knew the pensive pleasure,  
Which fills my bosom when I sigh,  
You would not rob me of a treasure  
Monarchs are too poor to buy.”

She gave the words all the touching expression the composition was formed to inspire.

“If grief,” cried Sir Charles, with emotion, “is so happily depicted, not for worlds would I exchange it for sportive gaiety.”

“I hope, Miss Trevanion,” said Mrs. Aldersey, “you mean to go to Lady Maltrevers’ ball this evening?”

“Her ladyship has sent me a ticket, but as I do not dance waltzes, and I hear there is to be nothing else, I shall not go.”

“You will soon learn them. The Count Haldermere, who is lately come from Germany, will be happy to teach you. He dances elegantly, and understands all the attitudes. I left him just now practising with Lady Maltrevers and her daughter, Mrs. Saville. Her ladyship, who is not young, is a very apt scholar.”

“Does an old woman, between fifty and sixty,” asked Matilda, “dance waltzes with a man almost young enough to be her grandson?”

“True, upon my honour.”

“You object, Sir Charles, I know,” interrupted Mrs. Aldersey, “to waltz-dancing, give your reasons.”

“Did your ladyship ever see waltzes danced,” said the baronet.

“Never,” returned she. “Minuets and Sir Roger de Coverley were the most fashionable when I was young; and, to tell you the truth, I am not very fond of your figurants at the opera. Both the singing and dancing, I think out of nature. I went once to the opera, for the sake of Matilda; it was a comic one, and I never was so weary of any thing in my life. A good old play has something sensible and rational in it. Mr. Garrick performed when I used to frequent the theatres. People then went to see fine acting, not a mere puppet-shew.”

“Do, Sir Charles,” added her ladyship, “describe the waltz. Perhaps you will shew it us, with Matilda for your partner. Mrs. Aldersey, play a waltz.”

“Excuse me, madam,” returned he. “I would not take advantage of Miss Trevanion’s delicacy, by permitting her to throw herself into my arms. The waltz is literally nothing less. My arm encircles the lady’s waist, her arm mine; my other one she supports on her shoulder, while mine rests on her’s; thus united, a rapid motion succeeds to the music, till it excites a giddy sensation which ends by the gentleman catching his partner in his embrace, to prevent her falling. It is said that by fixing your eyes steadily on each other’s countenance the giddiness subsides, but that is a mere puerile error.”

Such was the effect the waltz produced on unenlightened minds. Morier, in his travels through Persia, relates the following anecdote:

“When the hour of dancing arrived, the Mirza entered the ball-room, escorted by all his servants. Then his people were more than ever in amaze, particularly when the whole assembly was in motion. Of all the dances the waltz excited the most wonder, and perhaps apprehension; for one of them quietly asked my servant, in Turkish, ‘Pray does ever any thing happen after all this?’”

“Shocking,” interrupted the countess; “I desire, Matilda, you will never waltz. Your anecdote, Sir Charles, is very much in point after your description. I am obliged to you for both.”

If Miss Trevanion is not to waltz,” cried Mrs. Aldersey, “her elegant dancing will be all lost. Depend upon it, we shall have nothing but waltzes all the spring; at least, she may be permitted to look on.

“Are you serious,” addressing Matilda, “in not going to Lady Maltrevers’ night? All the world will be there; and you will see a greater mixture of character in a few hours, than in all the years you lived with that prosy old doctor.”

“You shall go, Matilda,” said the countess.

“I had rather be excused.”

“Lady Maltrevers,” cried Sir Charles, “is the gayest of the gay. For once, it can do Miss Trevanion no injury to be seen at her ball, when there will be such a multitude; but she might sustain an injury in being often seen in her private parties.”

“How so?” enquired her ladyship, eagerly.

“The reputation of a female,” replied the baronet seriously, “is a nice point to talk of. Though, were we to judge according to Lady Maltrevers’ standard, I am afraid we should agree with Pope, that

‘Every woman is at heart a rake.’

“In the true acceptance of the word, she is a virtuous woman. But when a wife preferred dissipation to conjugal duties,—deserted a sick husband, even when he was on his death-bed, and gave parties and balls in her house at so melancholy a period, is such a person proper society for Miss Trevanion?—She dragged her daughters about from one scene of folly to another.—Every morning they were to be seen in the park or Bond Street,—every evening at a party, when it was not the night of the opera, till she took in some weak young men of fashion to marry her girls. Mrs. Saville, the eldest, is separated from her husband, and already returned upon her mother’s hands. The younger, under better management and example, might have proved an ornament to society; but, neglected by a husband who is a gamester, she is dying of a broken heart. The Sunday evenings, Lady Maltrevers and Mrs. Saville spend either at the card-table, or dancing waltzes.

“An irresistible desire,” continued he, with much warmth, “to caution Miss Trevanion from an intimacy in such a house, must plead my excuse. Nothing could be more agreeable to her ladyship, than to have Miss Trevanion of her coterie. But she is new to the world, and it would be a pity the world of fashion should spoil her.—It is a contagious atmosphere to live in.—Let me not, however, frighten Miss Trevanion from this evening’s engagement.” It was agreed, that Mrs. Aldersey should call for Matilda at twelve o’clock, and Sir Charles promised to join them at Lady Maltrevers.’

Lady Seyntaubyne appeared so desirous for Matilda to go, she once more very reluctantly put herself under Mrs. Aldersey’s escort.

Her reception of her was cold and reserved, viewing her with a sort of dignified contempt. But, since she had left Dr. Arundel’s, she had seen no person she was so much disposed to like as Sir Charles Dashwood;—every one else had appeared cold, indifferent, and uninteresting. His manners seemed to partake of the benevolence of her

heart;—they were easy, without familiarity, and polished by sense and good breeding. His just remarks, displayed a nice discrimination and sound judgment. He had taken no improper advantage of Mrs. Aldersey's ill-natured suggestions: on the contrary, he had shewn, from that moment, a warmer interest in her welfare, and the propriety of her appearance, which could not fail to prove most flattering.

Matilda felt grateful for his friendly concern; and if she had been engaged with any other lady than Mrs. Aldersey, to Lady Maltrevers she would have been pleased, as she expected to derive much amusement and instruction from the baronet's observations.

Sir Charles was gratified by his visit in Soho Square. There was an originality and frankness in Lady Seyntaubyne which he liked, with a fond affection for Matilda,—a zealous warmth in all that related to her, which discovered the excellence of her heart. In her person, she reminded him somewhat of the portraits which decorated the gallery of his mansion in Staffordshire. Her air was imperious, yet dignified, and proclaimed her to be a woman of quality. Her manners were ceremonious, without being formal. She resembled a beautiful ruin; for her features were lovely, even in decay. Though her eyes were robbed of some of their lustre, they emitted a spark of no small animation in speaking of Matilda. Her complexion, though pale and wan, was fair as alabaster. The fine aquiline nose indicated her strong sense, and was in symmetry with her other features; and her mouth retained a pleasing smile when she spoke. Her dress was suited to her years; its peculiarity excited respect, except from fools.

Sir Charles was sure he never before had seen an elderly lady so entirely interesting and beautiful.

## CHAP. XVI.

THE house of Lady Maltrevers was decorated for the evening in the most fanciful and elegant taste. The profusion of rare flowers which filled the hall, the wreathes of roses which artfully concealed the balustrades, hanging in careless beauty, sent forth the delicious perfumes of Arabia, and Matilda could almost have fancied herself in fairy-land. When she entered the suite of apartments she was struck with the graceful lightness of the drapery, the splendour of the mirrors, reflecting the moving multitude. The festoons of flowers which decorated the apartments, lit up with a brilliancy at once dazzling yet becoming; and the elegant groups of figures so happily executed, as to appear already sporting on the floor, with the mixed assemblage of persons, young and old, beautiful and plain, presented a striking contrast; yet all seemed so much pleased and satisfied, Matilda's spirits partook of the universal gaiety which prevailed.

Sir Charles Dashwood, who had stationed himself next the door, advanced to meet them. "You will admit, I hope, Miss Trevanion," said he, "that the *coup d'oeil* of this gay region is very alluring, and would almost invite the serious to partake of a festivity which wears such enchanting a form."

"It is, in truth," replied Matilda, "the palace of pleasure, and its goddess seems to understand the art of drawing her votaries hither with success."

The dancing soon commenced, not with waltzes, but with "*Miss Platoff's Fancy*," which Lady Maltrevers began with the Marquis of ———; Matilda had the offer of several young men of fashion, but she preferred Sir Charles, who half-sportively had offered himself, if she could do no better, and she stood up with him. Mrs. Aldersey took the opportunity to withdraw to the card-room.

When the dance was ended, Matilda took her seat beside two ladies, who, while they were in conversation with a young man, appeared to her to be turning him into ridicule, by the significant looks and smiles she observed passing between them. "You are surprised, Miss Trevanion," said Sir Charles, "at the conduct of your neighbours. They are quizzing the poor fellow at a most unmerciful rate; and he is so stupid as to be completely duped by them. That is also one of the fashionable accomplishments of the present day."

Matilda was much shocked that any person could thus wantonly sport with another, and be amused by it. During the few years she had resided with Mrs. Arundel she had never met with any thing of the sort, and ventured to enquire whence it originated.

"The English women formerly," replied Sir Charles, "were not merely reserved, but silent in company; but since diffidence had been banished, and they have substituted ridicule for wit, in all parties you will now find large coteries of young ladies engaged in quizzing."

"By quizzing," continued he, "is meant a species of contemptuous ridicule, which though divested of the attic poignancy of wit, is envenomed with such malice, as never fails to wound those who come within reach of its shafts, levelled without distinction even at your most intimate friends while discoursing (as in the present instance) with approving smiles; and it is only by noticing a sarcastic glance that one discovers one's self to be the subject of ridicule. Another species of quizzing is magnifying the most

trifling defect into an absolute fault. Nothing is considered a fairer subject than old age. Instead of hearing a young woman speak of her venerable parents with the tender appellation of father or mother, he is denominated *the old gentleman*, she the *old lady*, and by indifferent persons, the *old quiz*. If a woman is handsome, she excites envy; if otherwise, she is odious—too tall or too short, and a thousand other defects which a candid mind would never perceive in her. Mrs. Rowe justly observes, ‘*You would think mankind born in a state of hostility with one another; and that the end of public assemblies was to pry into the faults, and expose the defects of their own species.*’ Quizzing has only become universal since the union with Ireland. We aim at a talent which we do not possess; for wit is innate, and results only from a brilliant and vivacious imagination, untinged with malice. While quizzing originates solely from a depraved and vicious mind. Your’s, Miss Trevanion, will never, I am sure, for a moment nourish such propensities.”

They were joined by Mrs. Aldersey, who nodded and spoke to a young lady next Matilda.

“I perceive,” said she, to her, “Miss Deacon has not got a partner. She is on a visit to Lady Warner, who, though she has been a wife above sixteen years, is so passionately fond of dancing, she never thinks of the young people who chance to be her guests, whilst she is unprovided. They, no doubt, are as fond of the amusement as herself; but Warner is wiser than to relinquish her own gratification for the sake of another. I have often remarked, she has a succession of partners all the evening, when her young friend has the mortification of sitting still. Oh! here comes that old quiz the Duchess of Drinkwater; did you ever behold such an absurd dress for an old woman verging on fourscore.”

She was attired in a robe of silver tissue; and the venerable grey hairs which formerly added respect to age, were shorn away, and supplied by a flaxen coloured wig, ornamented with a profusion of diamonds. Rouge gave a fierce colour to her wan cheeks, and white paint filled up all wrinkles, while eyebrows were supplied by art.

Few young women had apparently more vivacity than her grace; she talked and laughed incessantly. She went to half a dozen parties most nights, and remained abroad till morning sun lighted her to bed, from whence she rose in the afternoon, gay and as much refreshed by laudanum as the former day; and thus successive years passed on as though she had been emerging into life, not fading from it; nor thought she that she was fast approaching towards that “*bourne whence no traveller returns.*”

Her daughter, Lady Arabella Hayward, (who came up and spoke to Mrs. Aldersey) though she was the mother of several children, had all the thoughtless levity of fifteen. She had eloped with a young ensign to Gretna; notwithstanding he was supposed to be on the eve of a desperate engagement abroad, it proved no restraint to the heedlessness of her conduct. She coquetted with every young man who came in her way; and unfortunately not the single, but married men, she warily ensnared, and by her insinuating address had admitted them into her society so as to make many an amiable wife’s heart ache. The very name of one, which ought to have been an invulnerable shield to guard her from folly, was the pretended sanction to err with impunity. She danced all night, rode or walked all the morning without any female associates, for she considered them only a restraint.

The mother, like many other silly mothers of the age, sanctioned what she ought to have reprobated. But what could be expected from a parent who in youth had acted the

same part, and initiated her children in follies and vices as multitudinous as the waves of the sea.

At three o'clock the supper rooms were thrown open, and the company sat down to a magnificent repast.

On their return to the ball-room Matilda perceived Lady Julia Penrose, and the next moment she advanced from her party to address her, exclaiming with a look of surprise, "Where, dear Matilda, have you hid yourself all this time? You are as inaccessible as if you were immured within the walls of a convent. In changing your abode, you surely have also changed your nature, by relinquishing your old friends altogether."

"I know not," replied she, "to what you allude; but to forget Lady Sophia Clairville, or my friend Julia, were indeed to render myself deserving your reproaches."

"Women's tastes," replied Lady Julia, "we are told, vary with every wind; some of our poets compare us to weathercocks. The term is apt; for as uncertain has been Miss Trevanion's friendship."

"For Heaven's sake," returned Matilda, with surprise and emotion, "to what do you allude? Retire with me to this seat, and be more explicit."

"I cannot detain my father, he looks impatient to be gone. I should like to have introduced you to him, had you not renounced the friendship of all the family."

"Cruel Lady Julia; is it possible you can be so unjust, so ungenerous?"

"I am neither, it is proof alone that could have convinced me. Adieu; when next we meet may it be under happier auspices; not in war, but in peace. Forgive me if I have hurt you; but from Matilda Trevanion my aunt, of all people, least expected to find instability of character."

Dismayed and perplexed she was going to urge an explanation, when the gentleman and lady whom Julia accompanied joined the group; and though Matilda was certain that she had never seen the former, his face seemed perfectly well known. He gazed at her with an eager curiosity which made her blush, and as with extreme earnestness he fixed his eyes upon her, he turned ghastly pale, gave a sudden exclamation, and seizing hold of the arm of his daughter, faintly said—"The room is very close let us go into the air."

Julia who perceived her father's colour fade, immediately drew him away; but whatever cause had excited such extraordinary emotion, he did not explain, remaining lost in thought and abstraction.

Matilda felt a sickness come over her, and the mysterious severity of Lady Julia's speeches, so unlike her usual sweetness of character, made her ready to weep. The singular emotions of the stranger she could not dismiss from her thoughts; she enquired whether Sir Charles knew him, but he had never seen the father of Lady Julia; and her discourse with Matilda had been aside. He however observed that whatever had passed between them had strongly agitated and affected Matilda, and his curiosity to learn what it might be was alone restrained by her extreme depression.

Matilda would have given worlds to have returned home, but Mrs. Aldersey had determined to remain to breakfast; and she knew, if she proposed it, Sir Charles would insist upon attending her, which she wished to decline. In vain he endeavoured to amuse her by his conversation, and irksome were the hours which passed until eight o'clock, when in a lovely morning, the end of May, she returned home from her night's revel.

She started as she beheld her figure in passing one of the large mirrors in the drawing-room, when she beheld her pale and languid appearance, so complete a contrast to her gay attire. She was shocked at converting night into day, and that now only she was going to repose. She thought of the peaceful and beautiful scene so fine a morning had a thousand times presented her at Richmond, and could not help shedding tears at the recollection, contrasted with her present life, wearing merely the semblance of pleasure; for it was only delusion, and gave no permanent enjoyment even to its greatest votaries.

## CHAP. XVII.

THE increasing paleness and languor of Matilda's appearance, the effect of late hours, vexed Lady Seyntaubyne. Her lovely bloom was all fled, her vivacity was succeeded by depression, and she observed so great an alteration in her, that again she would have sent her to Richmond for change of air, if Lady Sophia and her son had not lived in its vicinity.

Matilda, alike dissatisfied with herself, listless and depressed, scarcely dared enquire whence the alteration sprung; why she had not more fortitude than to give way to discontent, so little self-command as not to profit more from Doctor Arundel's admirable lessons, who she was sure would be both displeased and grieved could he now behold her. She would have requested permission to have spent a week with her maternal Mrs. Arundel, in the hope of again being restored to health and peace; but was not Albert Clairville at West Grove? Had not the family of late shunned her, notwithstanding there was a mystery attached to Julia's speeches which she could not develope; and she begun to fear some means had been used by the countess to prevent any intercourse between them. The effort to appear cheerful in her presence was most irksome; yet she did rally her spirits and relate to her at dinner how much Sir Charles's remarks at the ball had tended to amuse her.

When Lady Seyntaubyne found that Matilda preferred him for a partner to any of the elegant young men who were present, she set it down as certain, her approval of him as a lover. Hitherto she had seen no man she liked so well for Matilda, and determined henceforth to take an active part in promoting the union. Most graciously therefore was her ladyship pleased to receive his maiden sister, now denominated Mrs. Dashwood; with whom Matilda was to dine on the following day. Mrs. Aldersey was engaged, and the countess excused herself until the evening.

Mrs. Dashwood, at five o'clock, fetched Matilda in her carriage to Wimpole Street.

Matilda, who had not the least idea of the countess's surmises and plans, nor how unmercifully Mrs. Aldersey rallied Sir Charles on her account, had accepted with pleasure his sister's invitation; for she was a woman of polished manners, with much benevolence of character; sensible, well-informed, liberal in her sentiments, and possessing a thorough knowledge of the world. She had none of the asperity which usually belong to single women. When she could not commend she was charitably silent; she knew the foible of her sex, and the absent always found an advocate in her bosom.

"We do not expect any company," said Mrs. Dashwood, when Matilda was seated in her carriage, "except Lady Sophia Clairville, her son, and Lady Julia."

Matilda changed colour at this intelligence. Her heart beat high with expectation. She wished, yet dreaded, to meet them, and her thoughts became so much engrossed by the subject, she with difficulty supported any conversation during the drive to Wimpole Street.

Sir Charles received them with easy politeness. "You will only meet," said he, "a few of our friends. My sister has an aversion to formal dinner parties."

Matilda faintly replied, "she was happy to meet any friends of their's."

“Mr. Clairville,” exclaimed he, “is a very elegant young man; and I must caution you to guard your heart against the fascination of his manners, for he is engaged to his cousin Lady Julia Penrose.”

Though she before knew of his engagement, she turned sick when assured of its certainty; and when the party were announced, she trembled so violently as to be scarcely able to stand.

Lady Sophia looked much surprised when she saw her, with an expression of pleasure scarcely to be concealed beneath the cold formality with which she curtsied, and hoped she was well.

Matilda, who with delight had advanced towards her ladyship, and held out a rejected hand, petrified at her reception, shrunk back on her seat, and Lady Julia as distantly addressed her. But Clairville, insensible to the behaviour of his mother and cousin, eagerly sprang forward, and with an unrestrained emotion of joy, cried with warmth, “Is it possible I again see Miss Trevanion!” he was proceeding, but suddenly checking his impetuosity, added, in a far different tone, “I hope, madam, you are well;” and then retreating to a vacant seat, placed himself beside his cousin.

Matilda, possessed of the keenest sensibility, would have been overcome by the variety of emotions which oppressed her, had a consciousness that she was treated unjustly not supported her; and she made an effort to be as reserved as the rest of the party. Something like conversation was attempted, but the effort to support it was so feeble, it proved an agreeable interruption when they were summoned to dinner.

If Matilda had not known the intended alliance between Lady Julia and Clairville was a settled thing, she would have viewed it as an event to take place rather from a point of honour, than mutual inclination and assent. There was a marked indifference in the conduct of Julia which excited her surprise. “Ah!” thought she, “with the prospect of spending my life with such a husband, friend, and companion, how blissful would every moment prove, that was to lead to such an event. How cold—how insensible is Julia to the felicity which awaits her. When so rare a union of excellence is combined in one character, to awaken that happy confidence which can alone exist where thought meets thought, and every wish is prevented by the anticipation of its fulfilment.”

She next directed her eyes towards Clairville. There was no expression of joy in his countenance—he looked pensive, thoughtful, and absent. He tried to smile when he addressed his cousin, but the attempt was vain; and his attention appeared to be rather directed towards herself than his intended bride.

When a general restraint prevails, all effort to support conversation is ineffectual. Sir Charles Dashwood was lively and agreeable, his sister courteous and kind; but in vain they essayed to amuse their friends. They saw something was wrong, but to rectify it was beyond their ability.

On the ladies returning to the drawing-room Matilda retired to the window, Lady Sophia followed, and cast on her a look of such beaming sweetness, all sense of her former coldness fled; and, unable longer to restrain her emotion, she exclaimed, “Often have I wished for this meeting!—Often anticipated it as abounding with joy!—but I find it productive only of grief and mortification.”

“Rather,” replied her ladyship, with dignity and returning frigidity, “it is me who ought to be mortified, who ought to be filled with regret, in finding that where I placed most confidence, I have been deceived—where I expected stability, I find caprice—and

though I have to lament the fallacy of my judgment, I have been able to extract from it an admirable lesson.”

“Dear Lady Sophia,” interrupted Matilda, earnestly, at the same time taking her half-withdrawn hand, “if you knew but half the regard and respect I entertain for you, how I venerate and admire your virtues, you would not utter reproaches so full of asperity. Though they are unmerited, I perceive at least that I have been so unhappy as to incur them.”

“If really you do not merit them, you will then have candour to forgive them, and allow something for the mortified feelings of being discarded and forgotten, for new friends and new favourites.”

“How discarded?—Pray explain?”

“Repeatedly I have called at your door. Sometimes you were not at home; at others engaged, and could see no person. A week ago, after my niece met you at Lady Maltrevers’ ball, I wrote to you, and to add to the indignity, my letter, though returned in a cover, had been opened.”

Matilda greatly hurt and surprised, said, “these, madam, are circumstances which might indeed fully justify your severity, and of which I was totally ignorant. I perceived I had lost your friendship, though in losing it, could not guess the cause. To have known Lady Sophia Clairville and not to lament the privation of all future intercourse, is impossible; and I shall consider it one of the heaviest misfortunes which could befall me; for I must resign the valuable possession, since my benefactress wishes it: and severe is the law she dictates; by it I will implicitly be guided.”

“Noble Matilda,” exclaimed Lady Sophia, much penetrated, “you speak as becomes the pupil of Doctor Arundel. His excellent maxims have not been thrown away. Go on thus through life, and you cannot err. If you are not happy, conscious rectitude will give you peace of mind—it will gild your days. Let no selfish gratification or secret enjoyment prevent your dutiful compliance. If you should see me no more, remember, if it can soothe your feelings, there are few I estimate so truly. Our friendship was formed under the influence of deep-rooted family prejudice, which your engaging manners and sweetness of disposition not merely dissipated but overcame. Should our friendship ever be revealed, then will you find how much your interest and Julia’s clashed together, and that in Matilda Trevanion she possessed a formidable rival.”

Matilda’s countenance expressed an anxious curiosity to know how that could be; but her ladyship waved the subject, and joined the party in the other drawing-room.

Lady Seyntaubyne was announced before the gentlemen had left the dinner-table. She frowned, and looked greatly displeased when Lady Sophia Clairville was introduced to her; but on Lady Julia’s being likewise named, she turned pale, then red, hastily seated herself, as hastily rose again, and going up to her, said, in an abrupt manner, “Is your father in town?”

Julia never before had seen the dowager countess, but she well knew who she was; and though little disposed to answer her question, she replied to it with dignity, by saying, “neither my father’s nor my being in town can surely be a matter of interest to your ladyship, who takes no concern in the event.”

Matilda was in astonishment on seeing Lady Seyntaubyne address Julia, and more so, when she heard the question she asked.

“I knew,” returned her ladyship, with increased displeasure, “that he would not teach you either duty or respect towards me; and no doubt, has represented me as a cross implacable old woman. I do not desire to see your father; I do not wish ever to speak to him again: he has long alienated himself from my affection as he has done mine from his child’s; yet, Julia, I could have loved you if he would have allowed me.”

“Though my father,” returned Julia, “would not force me into your presence, never, madam, has he spoken to me disrespectfully of you.”

“I am glad of it: but say no more; for there is something so pleasing and interesting about you, that were I to listen to you, would take my affection by surprise, and I am determined that shall not be.”

The singular conversation, and events which had occurred, during the whole of the visit at Sir Charles’s, was more suited to a domestic party than the one assembled. But the situation of each individual had been so extraordinary, as by waving all ceremony to call for discussions which appeared at once strange and unaccountable.

Sir Charles and Clairville entered the drawing-room. There was a vacant chair next to Matilda, and the latter threw himself on it. Matilda blushed deeply; she made an effort to rise and go to another part of the room, but he looked at her so mournfully, she reseated herself, as he said in a half reproachful tone, “Is it not mortification sufficient to be denied admittance at your door, but when chance favors my seeing you again, you fly as though my presence were become hateful. O Miss Trevanion, how have I offended, thus to incur such marked displeasure?—If you knew but how precious——”

“Rather, Sir,” interrupted Matilda, with offended pride, “talk thus to Lady Julia Penrose. Every attention conferred on me, whether she is present or absent, is an insult offered to both.”

“Cruel, unjust Miss Trevanion, see you not that Julia is alike indifferent as yourself. Ah! that I could take example from each, then how easily would peace of mind be obtained; and how callous should I prove to your determined coldness.”

Matilda was going to reply, when the penetrating eyes of the countess steadily fixed on her, covered her with blushes; and she rose in hasty confusion and placed herself on a sofa at another end of the room.

Sir Charles Dashwood, who had been endeavouring to support something like conversation with his guests, had not been an indifferent spectator of the passing scene; and perceiving there was more in it “than met the ear,” to remove, if possible, the distressing situation of the party, he requested Lady Julia would favour them with some music.

The countess eager to hear her perform, warmly seconded the proposal, and Julia seating herself at the piano, accompanied herself in an elegant air of Tramezzani’s, *Tendendo*, &c. which she executed in a beautiful manner.

When she had finished, Lady Seyntaubyne desired Matilda to go to the harp. She did so; and while her fingers trembled on the strings, she sang in a faltering accent—

“Hope told a flattering tale  
That love would soon return,” &c.

Clairville, who stood by her, when she had finished, said, in a low accent, “*Hope*, did indeed, *tell a flattering tale*; and the accents which proclaim it proclaim my misery.”

“Clairville,” said Lady Julia, sportively, as she advanced, “you look so rueful with that melancholy countenance, I positively will know whether it is love or treason you are uttering. If I guess right a little of both; love towards Miss Trevanion, and treason towards me; is it not, Matilda? If so I cast you off as a faithless knight. I will have none of you. No one shall wear my chains on whom they sit heavily; for remember, those of love should be so silken, that while they bind closely, their shackles should not be even felt.”

Clairville looked so confused that Julia continued—“Guilty on my honour;” and was proceeding with her speech when Lady Seyntaubyne joined them, and taking Matilda’s arm, said—“My carriage is ready, I wish to go home;” forcibly dragging her away without permitting her to take leave of Lady Sophia, or any of the party, though Julia did whisper—“Think nothing of my *badinage*, Matilda, I like to teaze Clairville, but not for worlds would cause you a moment’s pain.”

Thus ended a visit fraught with some pleasure, but infinitely greater perplexity and distress than the temporary gratification of having once more seen Lady Sophia and Clairville.

## CHAP. XVIII.

MATILDA had scarcely stepped into the carriage, when she was roused from the reverie she had fallen into, by Lady Seyntaubyne exclaiming—"I should not have gone to Sir Charles Dashwood's, nor permitted you, if I had known that he had invited Lady Sophia and her niece. Julia has something vastly captivating about her," continued she; and after a long pause, added, "I have never seen any one so radiant in beauty; her air is fashionable and elegant; she is dignified without pride, and graceful without affectation. Then the transparent fairness of her complexion is happily tinged with the rose of health, which, diffusing itself over her cheek, gives additional lustre to the brilliance of her eyes, so eminently beautiful, and fringed with long silken eye-lashes. The whole expression of her countenance is full of intelligence and animation. Her mouth, when drest in smiles, is expressive of the playful vivacity of her temper.

"The style of her dress is simple and becoming, she seems to know that 'loveliness needs not the foreign aid of ornament,' for her head was divested of all decoration, except the redundance of her pale chestnut hair, which partially confined by a comb, shaded in graceful ringlets her snowy forehead.

"Her manners," continued her ladyship, "devoid of the bold assurance and self-importance so many of the young women of the present day possess, have all those winning and pleasing attractions, which, without mean servility, result alone from a good heart and an excellent understanding. There is a captive air in them which insensibly steals into the affections.

"Her conversation I listened to attentively; it has all the gaiety natural to youth, sparkling with a playful wit, which tends to illumine rather than to shade her fine sense, and gives a peculiar charm to her intellectual endowments. Indeed, Matilda, she has much the advantage of you, and I hope will not prove a formidable rival."

"How?" exclaimed Matilda, with the most eager enquiry, somewhat hurt and surprised, by the very warm description her ladyship had just given.

The countess, entirely off her guard, replied, "How? Because you know Julia Penrose is my grand-daughter."

"Heavens!" interrupted Matilda, with emotion, "is it possible. Then, madam, I am usurping her rights—I am possessing those kindnesses which should be conferred on her."

How delicate, thought Matilda, how amiable the conduct of Julia, in every instance her rival; how sweetly, how patiently has she conducted herself towards me.

"What is the name," cried the countess, "of the young man with whom Julia and you were conversing? There is something extremely prepossessing in his appearance. I like his countenance. The present fashion of not introducing people is a very stupid one, for you are left in utter ignorance who or what may be the persons with whom you mingle. In my day nothing would have been considered so ill-bred and affronting. The person not being named would have been looked upon as by no means proper or respectable. But the world is absolutely turned topsy-turvy, and the ruder inferior people behave the higher they are ranked in ton."

Matilda passed over this harangue, to avoid replying to Lady Seyntaubyne's question; and found in this instance how often we are ignorantly guided by prejudice, not merely in our actions but opinions."

"The young man," added her ladyship, "appeared to distinguish you by his attentions, of which my grand-daughter seemed to be rather jealous. You have not told me his name."

"Mr.—Mr.—Clair—Clairville," returned she, stammering violently.

"Lady Sophia's son?"

"The same."

"I wish he was not her son. For then if his fortune proved ample, I should have no objection to listen to his proposals for you. He and his mother have called repeatedly at my door, but I gave orders they were never to be admitted. When my son, Lord Seyntaubyne, married Lady Julia O'Brian, Lady Sophia took a very officious part in promoting the alliance, for which I have not forgiven her."

"If you only knew, madam, how far her ladyship surpasses the generality of women, not merely in sense, but in the most exalted virtues, you could not fail of admiring her."

"What are her son's views in life? Report has given him to Julia Penrose, but I think the ambition of her father, little as he possessed in his own alliances, with her beauty, would look higher for his daughter than a poor naval lieutenant."

"Report," said Matilda, in an accent so low as scarcely to be heard, "does, I fancy, say true, and Lady Julia will marry her cousin."

"I know you love him, Matilda, by your blushes and confusion. Now be sincere, and tell me whether an alliance so averse to your wishes will not destroy your peace of mind."

Matilda, with dignified pride, replied, "My ardent wishes for Mr. Clairville's happiness are so sincere, that I have never for a moment suffered my inclinations to interfere with an engagement I knew was to take place, though, had it been otherwise, I might have chosen Albert Clairville in preference to any person I have hitherto known, as likely to render me happy."

"Your just sentiments, Matilda, on the subject," observed Lady Seyntaubyne, "are not lost upon me. From henceforth I will rather consult your happiness than my own ambition, provided you make a wise and judicious selection. If Mr. Clairville had not been engaged to my grand-daughter you should have married him."

Ah, thought Matilda, of what avail is such a sanction to my choice, when reason, duty, honour, all oppose it.

Lady Seyntaubyne had been surprized into an interview with the very people she wished to avoid. Her grand-daughter, however, she could not dismiss from her thoughts; her extreme loveliness had dazzled and surprized her, and her very spirited, yet not unbecoming reply to her address, had gained her esteem and admiration. The Earl of Seyntaubyne possessed much of her ladyship's disposition—a temper too implacable to conciliate, and too proud for concession. Irritated and displeased at his incorrigible obstinacy, Lady Seyntaubyne had resolved neither to see nor notice his daughter. But when she beheld her beauty and captivating manners, she no longer wondered at Matilda's attachment and friendship.

In Lady Sophia Clairville she found all the dignity of high birth, with a softness the most attractive; and though she was unwilling to own it, was persuaded, that Matilda, in the advantages derived from her society, had acquired an easy elegance, that even Mrs. Arundel could not alone have taught her.

Albert Clairville she found no less graceful than he was pleasing. A manly deportment, at once commanding and dignified, gave him the air of a naval officer, whose courage and bravery seemed to be characterised in his open and ingenuous countenance, which was full of intelligence, beaming with sensibility and goodness. He was just the person, the countess was persuaded, most likely to gain an easy ascendancy in the heart of Matilda, who was alive to all the tenderness which appeared to have impressed her in his favour, notwithstanding the engagement which was currently reported to subsist between him and Julia.

Lady Seyntaubyne, usually regulated in her actions by the impetuous inclination of the moment, which was no sooner formed than, if possible, realized, and often rather excited by whim than sound judgment, was herself so much charmed with Clairville, that if any other rival except her grand-daughter had interfered with Matilda's attachment, she immediately would have made the proposal to Lady Sophia to unite the young people, and have given down with Matilda a handsome fortune. Indulging the plan she had formed, she felt internally vexed and mortified it was impossible to fulfil so extraordinary an idea; but from her close affinity with Julia she felt it impossible to attempt breaking off an alliance she had reason to suppose would soon take place.

## CHAP. XIX.

WHEN Julia returned home from Sir Charles Dashwood's, she related to her father, having met the countess, his mother, and the salutation which had passed between them.

"Your reply, my Julia," observed he, "was dignified and respectful; it became what I might expect from you. I am told," continued he, "that my mother brought some girl with her out of Cornwall, whom she has adopted, and means to amply provide for. The daughter, probably, of one of her tenants. What is she like?—a pretty little rustic, I suppose."

"She is thought very like me: several persons have been struck with the resemblance"

"That is a strange fancy; tell me her name; I am anxious to hear it?"

"Trevanion."

"Trevanion!" exclaimed the earl, violently agitated, and changing colour. "Oh!" continued he, with a sigh, not heeding his daughter's presence, and as if awakened by some powerful and sudden recollection, "that was a name once fondly cherished. Source of all my joy, and of pangs which at this moment sting me with agonizing remembrance. That name revives a thousand tender images which tortures me almost to madness."

Julia gazed with anxious and earnest surprise on Lord Seyntaubyne, who somewhat regaining his presence of mind from her watchful attention, said, "Leave me, my dear child; I am not well; I know not what I utter. Think nothing of my incoherence. Some events, long long passed away, and connected with the name of Trevanion, excited this sudden emotion. I shall recover my composure when I am alone."

"Julia pressed the hand of her father respectfully to her lips, and departed; but she left him not to tranquillity. She insensibly had opened a wound which no time had healed, and now bled with renewed anguish.

The Earl of Seyntaubyne was the only child of his widowed mother. By nature he was wilful, impetuous, and overbearing. Unused to controul or contradiction, these evil passions encreased by a mistaken indulgence, yet his heart was generous, noble, and humane. He was endowed with an excellent understanding; and had his actions been under proper restriction, he would have proved an ornament to society; for he was eminently gifted with reason, and every quality to adorn it.

The blind partiality of his mother, when he arrived at years of maturity he ill requited, by forming an alliance entirely contrary to her wishes. The countess had selected for him the daughter of the Duke of R——, whose splendid fortune exceeded her most sanguine expectations; but the young earl, in passing through London, after having visited those parts of Europe, not shut out by civil contention, was introduced to the youngest daughter of an Irish peer, with whom he became captivated, but whose beauty was her principal dowry.

On his arrival in Cornwall he opened his heart to the countess, who persevered in refusing her consent. The earl, unaccustomed to sacrifice his own inclinations, and never taught from his infancy to do so, hurried back to London, and rested not, till through the persuasion of Lady Sophia Clairville, he obtained her sister Lady Julia O'Brian; and an immediate union took place in defiance of Lady Seyntaubyne's opposition. From the church he carried his bride down to Penrose Castle, accompanied by her sister.

Fleeting proved his lordship's bliss with his lovely and excellent lady. At the end of a twelvemonth, after giving birth to their daughter Julia, she expired in Lady Sophia's arms, leaving her disconsolate husband in a state of mind bordering on distraction. With acute feelings, and violent passions, which he never knew how to restrain, his grief became that of a madman. No soothing could mitigate it; no reason could convince him of the impiety of such extravagance.

In this mournful situation the admirable foresight of Lady Sophia introduced the respectable curate of the parish, from whose society he insensibly acquired more composure of mind; for his piety, which was not austere, but unaffected and meek, excited his lordship's veneration and respect. His manners partook of the simplicity of his life; they were benevolent and mild. Though poor, he was not servile, and the sanctity of his appearance gave a dignity to his demeanor, which ensured respect. From the soothing cheerfulness of his conversation Lord Seyntaubyne experienced much consolation. He sympathized in his grief, for he had also lost the wife of his tenderest affection; and though philosophy had taught him to subdue his sorrow, he considered the nature of Lord Seyntaubyne's too sacred to be interrupted. His own calamity had taught him to commiserate the distresses of mankind.

Such was the society in which Lady Sophia left her brother-in-law. Soon the violence of his grief abated, and by way of varying the scene the venerable curate ventured to invite his lordship to accompany him for a day or two to his peaceful and sequestered dwelling, about four miles distant from the castle.

"I live," cried his reverend conductor, "in the bosom of my family; it is very circumscribed, yet to me it comprises a world. In this little secluded spot all my joy, all the treasure I possess, is centered. You will not, my lord, find us destitute of comforts; luxuries we know not, and we are contented and happy. In being removed from the world we are strangers to its vices, and possessing the primitive simplicity of our ancestors, we possess, also, I hope, a portion of their hospitality."

The earl had scarcely time to reply, when they arrived at the romantic little village where the curate lived. He was ushered through a gothic old fashioned sort of hall into an antique apartment, which served as a library and parlour. At a table was seated a young woman, who appeared to be instructing the child of a peasant to read. She rose in hasty disorder, and a blush suffused her cheek; but when her father said, "My Lord Seyntaubyne," she coloured more deeply than before; it became her, for it displayed the modest timidity of her character.

The earl made an awkward apology for interrupting her. In truth, he scarcely knew what he uttered; he had been thrown into so much astonishment and surprise. The sylph-like air of the young creature he beheld; the delicate fairness of her complexion—the mild radiance of her full blue eyes, of the most melting expression—the careless ringlets of her pale auburn hair, half shading her snowy forehead—the perfect simplicity of her dress, but above all, the bewitching smile that played round her mouth, when she addressed her father, seemed at once to transport him into a terrestrial paradise. "This place, Sir," said his lordship, in extacy, "seems to be, as you described it, the region of bliss."

"Thank God," replied his host, "in this world I have nothing to wish for but what is contained here; while my Anna is spared to me: for no other treasure have I here. Go, my dear," addressing his daughter, "and bring us a basket of your fruit. We always, my

lord, contrive to have something of the sort from our garden to present to the stranger who may chance to visit us.”

Anna left the room to obey her father.

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