

HONORIA SOMMERVILLE:

A

NOVEL.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

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The hues of bliss more brightly glow  
Chasten'd by sabler tints of woe,  
And blended form with artful strife  
The strength and harmony of life.

GRAY.

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HONORIA SOMMERVILLE:

A

NOVEL.

CHAP. XXII.

IT was now only the middle of September, and the weather continued too warm to think of removing to Bath; and though Honoria had entirely lost her fever, she was still so weak and languid, that Lady Clarendon, who tenderly loved her, began to be seriously alarmed. When first this journey was talked of, she intended sending for her daughter to accompany them, but now altered her plan; and from the idea that change of air and scene would be of service to our heroine, determined to set out directly for Northampton, stay the races, and go from thence to Bath through Oxford, and remain there a few days to see the University, visit Bleinheim, Nuneham, and every thing else in the city or neighbourhood worthy their observation.

Lady Clarendon persuaded Mrs. Ashbourn to give them the meeting at Bath, which she readily promised; and at her request also permitted Emily to accompany them in their intended excursion. Miss Onslow was delighted at this for various reasons; always happy in the society of this amiable family, she had now the additional pleasure of expecting amusement and variety. She had often wished to see Oxford; that wish was now soon to be gratified, and in a way the most pleasing to her. Honoria, conscious that this scheme was fixed on principally on her account, would not mortify Lady Clarendon by expressing the indifference she felt; for though sensible her mind had wholly lost that spring so necessary for the enjoyment of life, yet she appeared pleased, and even anxious for it to take place. Sir William was little less interested in her recovery than his mother; for the esteem he at first felt for her, daily encreased with the knowledge of her heart and disposition, and he loved her for the affection with which she regarded Miss Onslow.

That young lady one morning as they were preparing for their journey, exprest the satisfaction she felt at the near prospect of the accomplishment of a wish she had so long formed; when Lady Clarendon, who often endeavoured to check her boundless vivacity, said, “you should not, my dear Emily, ever suffer your mind to be fixed wholly on one object, for in proportion to the ardour of our wishes, will be the severity of our disappointment: indeed heaven often permits us to be punished by the accomplishments of our most earnest hopes.”

“How is that possible, madam?” “Indeed, my dear, it is possible, for I have myself fatally experienced it. I formed one ardent wish for many years of my life;—Heaven

granted it, but was pleased to ordain it should be my bitterest punishment, and sadly convinced me of the truth of that assertion;

*“Fate wings with every wish th’  
afflictive dart.”*

“But, dear madam, how inanimate would that life be, unenlivened by hope?” “I do not forbid hope, Emily, it is the sole support of our existence; I only mean to express my disapprobation of those ungovernable and restless wishes, which we are all too apt to form, and if disappointed, accuse providence of injustice. Remember those inimitable lines of Dr. Johnson.

*Still raise for good the supplicating voice,  
But leave to heaven the measure and the choice;  
Implore his aid, in his decisions rest,  
Secure whate’er he gives, he gives the best.*

Miss Onslow confessed the propriety of Lady Clarendon’s sentiments, and promised in future to regulate her conduct by them. Honoria deeply felt their truth; she had formed many a wish, and had been many times disappointed in its accomplishment, and silently resolved to give way no more to those restless tormentors of the imagination.

A day or two after this conversation, Honoria being well enough to travel, they left Richmond, slept one night on the road, and arrived at Northampton the next morning: as Mrs. Wheeler, the lady with whom Lady Clarendon boarded, though in the first line of company, had not a large fortune, and but a small house, Lady Clarendon chose to be in lodgings for the time they should stay. Mrs. Wheeler had engaged them for her, and was with Miss Clarendon waiting her arrival. Our heroine had for some time anxiously wished to see Louisa, to judge of the Colonel’s taste, and thought in her beauty and elegance to justify his inconstancy: but she was surprized to observe nothing striking in her in any way: she was tall, but neither delicately made nor well proportioned; had a fine complexion, but too much colour: her eyes were black and sparkling, but expressed nothing but the most undaunted assurance; and her features, though regular, were large and masculine. She received her mother with much indifference, Emily with more complacency, from a hint she had heard of the connection which was likely to take place: her brother with a marked dislike; and to Honoria she behaved with a haughtiness bordering on contempt.

The time during their stay at Northampton passed so very unpleasantly, that Lady Clarendon wished to shorten it; but she had promised her daughter and Emily to be at the races, and knew not how to recede. The former was evidently jealous of her attentions to Honoria, but it was not in her power to lessen them; the amiable qualities Lady Clarendon loved in her, she saw with pain were not possessed by Louisa; but instead of noticing the latter’s rude and ill natured manner, she strove by every gentle and possible method to make her follow so bright an example. Miss Onslow, who from the first moment that she was introduced, with the violence natural to her character, conceived an insuperable

aversion to her, and which her behaviour to her mother, brother, and Honoria rendered more justifiable, declared she would not go to the balls, unless the latter would accompany her, and to this she unwillingly consented, not from expecting to receive any amusement, but merely to prevent her from staying at home.

The first evening when the country dances began, Emily stood up with Sir William, and Miss Clarendon with an Officer. Honoria was sitting quietly by Lady Clarendon and Mrs. Wheeler, when a gentleman approaching the latter, begged in a whisper she would introduce him to the lovely stranger as a partner; she immediately complied, but Honoria refusing, he sat down by her and directly entered into conversation, finding she declined dancing merely from ill-health; and being well acquainted with Mrs. Wheeler, he joined their party for the whole evening, would not dance, though gentlemen were very much wanted, but remained with her till they went into the supper room; he then followed, and continued to pay her such strict and visible attention, that the ladies all declared she had made a conquest, and the gentlemen envied him his fortunate situation, as she was without dispute universally allowed to be the most beautiful woman in the room.

The next morning at breakfast, Emily rallied her on the assiduities of her beau; and Mrs. Wheeler said he was no despicable captive, for he had by far the best estate in the county, and was a man of excellent understanding and of good character. "Ay," replied Miss Onslow, "and what is better than all, you were the universal object of envy; the ladies wished to take your place, and the gentlemen his, for every creature allowed you, Miss Wentworth, to be the brightest star that ever darted its beams on this northern hemisphere." Honoria smiled, but felt very little pleasure at these encomiums. Miss Onslow repeated them to pique Louisa, and it lost none of the intended effect; she replied spitefully, "where there were so many pretty women, it would be hard to decide who was the most beautiful." "Oh by no means," retorted Emily "it was given in her favour without dispute."

Honoria, who was fatigued from the last night's amusement, would not go upon the course that morning. Mr. Manwaring was there, and enquired particularly for her, and seemed much disappointed at her absence, as Emily told her at dinner. In the evening at the ball he again address her, and finding her persist in her resolutions not to dance, again gave up his favourite amusement for the superior pleasure of conversing with her. But his attentions were thrown away upon her; once severely disappointed, she determined her heart should never know a second favourite, and hoped for nothing but to regain that happy tranquillity and universal indifference she once possessed.

After one day's rest they left Northampton; Louisa taking Sir William's place in the coach, who followed them on horseback, and arrived at Oxford. None of the ladies but Lady Clarendon, had ever before seen this wonderful place, and in the surprize and pleasure it excited, even Honoria for a time forgot her affliction. They drove directly to the Star, where Sir William, who at this University received his education, left them, and flew to Merton College to revisit his friends, and collect a party for the following day to accompany them in their walks. Accordingly the next morning at breakfast, the ladies

were attended by three gentlemen of Sir William's particular acquaintance, and, when it was over, immediately began their rambles. After viewing what their Ciceroni thought most worthy their observation, returning to their inn, the gentlemen led them through Christ-church College, when in crossing Peckwater, a gownsman who had been for some moments attentively viewing the party, flew from the opposite side and address our heroine and Emily, neither of whom at first, from the alteration in his dress, recollected their old acquaintance, Mr. Audley; but his voice and manner soon recalled him to their remembrance. He express the most unaffected joy at this meeting, and desiring to be introduced to Sir William and Lady Clarendon, became one of their party; and was no little addition to it from the vivacity of his conversation, and the drollery of his remarks. Sir William invited him to dinner, and he complied without hesitation. The conversation then turned on their friends at C——, and the events which had lately occurred there: he informed them that Mrs. Campbell had been married two or three months to Mr. Hunter, and on Miss Onslow's enquiring for his friend, Miss Winterton, he replied "Alas, madam, I have not had the felicity of beholding the fair Helen's destructive charms; but I hear that still "withering on the Virgin thorn, she lives and grows in single blessedness." "And so I believe she will die," (added Miss Onslow) "But do you know, (continued Mr. Audley) what the report of the city was upon your leaving Mrs. Campbell's?" "No, really," returned Honoria. "Why when I was at home during the long vacation, I took it into my head to go and enquire how every body went on there, for since that fatal affair, Charlotte has had no correspondence with Miss Winterton; so not daring to shew my head at the old Doctor's, nor indeed at Mrs. Campbell's, as the bosom friend of Helena, I called at Mrs. Walton's and asked, if you were still with Mrs. Campbell? Miss Walton said no, you had left her several months; but on my enquiring where you were at present? Mary Walton replied, "I should rather ask you that question, Mr. Audley, for it is well known you and Miss Wentworth went away together." In short, madam, I found such a report had prevailed, and did my utmost to contradict it: but that I may do it more effectually when I go there next, which will be soon, be so good as to tell me why you left Mrs. Campbell, and with whom you went." Honoria, extremely shocked at this account, replied, "Though for some reasons it is not in my power to acquaint you with the event that obliged me to leave C——, this Lady," turning to Emily, "can assure you I was in very respectable company, for I had the pleasure of attending her and Mrs. Markham to London, two days after your departure; though from a trifling disagreement, I quitted Mrs. Campbell's house a few hours after you took leave; and as the town is, I believe, ignorant of the real reason of our parting, from this circumstance, I imagine, arose the report that we went away together."

"Well, my dear, (said Emily Onslow,) if from a point, you allow me to say of false honor, you will not tell, I will. I heard it publicly, and with this gentleman's assistance will make it publicly known all over the city, for I have no idea that your reputation should suffer in compliment to a woman, who deserves not such a sacrifice: besides now she has gained Mr. Hunter, it will not spoil her fortune." She then related every particular to Mr. Audley, who clapped his hands and received it with unbounded pleasure, vowing another day should not pass before he would write an account of this ridiculous circumstance to a friend he had now at C——, who should send it all over the city, and in less than three days it should be known at every tea and card-table in the

place; and he hoped to hear Mrs. Hunter was become an universal object of derision and ridicule.

Honoria in vain attempted to reason him into a less violent method of proceeding, but as her fame was at stake, she could not absolutely disapprove of his plan; and Emily declared she would write to Anne Walton, whose manners were gentle and good-humoured, and wholly different from her sister's, relating the whole to her, but desiring Mary might take Mrs. Hunter's part of the story, and that she herself would justify Miss Wentworth: "for," added she, "a little piece of fresh scandal, though of one of her dearest friends, is the most acceptable present any one can make to Mary Walton."

The afternoon and evening were spent in comments upon this, and remarks on what they had seen in the morning; and, at parting, Mr. Audley, who was a student of Christ-church, and as all the Oxonians are particularly partial to his own college, desired he might have the pleasure the next day of conducting them over it, and assuring them, upon the whole, they would find it more worthy their attention, than any other in the University. They promised to attend him; but Honoria, who, fatigued with the hurry of the day, and agitated by the intelligence she had heard, passed a sleepless night, was so languid, that nothing but the fear of keeping some of them at home, could have induced her to accompany them.

Lady Clarendon, who attentively watched every look of Honoria, was so alarmed by the alteration in her countenance, that after dinner she declared her resolution of setting off for Bath the next day, and give up for the present her intention of going to Blenheim, &c. as the weather was now colder, and she thought every moment's delay might be prejudicial to Honoria, and, as her own state of health was also very unequal to such repeated fatigues. Mr. Audley, though he expressed great concern at their early departure, confessed the reason to be so good, that he dared not make an objection. Emily was not selfish enough to be hurt, when the health of her friend depended on their removal. But Louisa said, she thought it very unjust indeed, for a whole party to go for the sake of one, but her mother was so partial to Miss Wentworth, that she could lead her as she pleased. Lady Clarendon only reproved her by a severe look. Honoria was not present at this conversation, she was gone to lie down on the bed, and when on her joining them at tea, she was acquainted with the change of their plan, the real reason was not assigned.

When the gentlemen and Mr. Audley took leave, the latter said, he hoped if they ever visited Oxford again, they would do him the honor of letting him know of their arrival, and this both Lady Clarendon and Sir William, who were highly pleased with his spirited conduct respecting their favorite, readily promised.

## CHAP. XXIII.

LADY Clarendon had secured a house in Gay-street, to which they went immediately on their arrival at Bath, where the Ashbourns, according to their promise, soon joined them. Emily quitted her friend with great regret, but could not avoid returning to Mrs. Ashbourn, to whom she confest herself under great obligations; and as they lodged only in Edgar-buildings, and the families met every day, their separation was of less consequence.

The place, though seldom at this season crowded, began to fill faster than usual, and they met among the strangers many with whom they had been long acquainted; a circumstance particularly pleasing to Lady Clarendon and Mrs. Ashbourn; as they consigned the young people to the care of their friends, since the former, from inclination, avoided all public places, and the latter, in her present situation, could not with propriety attend them. Louisa, Emily, and the Miss Ashbourns, escorted by their brother and Sir William, entered into all the amusements with spirit and vivacity. Honoria's ill health was the given reason for her recluse life, but her mind was not yet strong enough to bear the confusion of constantly attending Balls, Plays, and Concerts; though Lady Clarendon's anxious solicitude for her recovery, by giving her an additional wish for life, made her carefully pursue the methods prescribed, and she never failed going to the Pump-room at the proper hours.

Among the variety of objects which there met her eyes, she was particularly struck with a beautiful girl about seventeen years old, who came as regularly as herself, supporting a genteel old lady, who appeared infirm and emaciated; they were both drest in a style which, though far from vulgar, was yet by no means upon an equality with the rest of the gay world; and there was something in the old lady's manner which proved she had seen better days. When she had drank her glass of water, she used to sit down with her young companion, and they sometimes talked to each other; but Honoria never saw them speak to any one as an acquaintance, and often wished herself to have an opportunity of entering into conversation with them, as she was really interested on their account, and pitied the solitary life they seemed to lead, in the midst of so much variety and dissipation.

What contrivance could not, chance at last effected: as she was yet too weak to walk far, she went an airing every day, and either Lady Clarendon, or Emily, generally accompanied her; but one morning it happened they were both prevented. As the chariot was going slowly up the ascent leading to Lansdown, she observed, just above the Belvidere, the same beautiful young creature who had so often attracted her notice, walking by the side of a chair. She had ordered the coachman to drive to the Monument, but a violent shower of rain falling, though it was very clear when she sat out, she desired him to turn at the end of three miles. On her return, whilst waiting for the turnpike-gate to be opened, she saw the same young woman come out of the house, and look anxiously at the weather, but though the rain was lessened, it was by no means over, and Honoria guessing at her distress, immediately offered her the vacant place in the chariot, and

begged she might set her down. "I am much obliged to you, madam," she answered, "I do not regard myself, but I am afraid my grandmother will catch cold if she attempts to walk, and I wait till the shower is over, that I may go home and send her a chair." "What, is your grandmother here?" (said Honoria). "Yes Madam," replied the girl, "she took refuge here from the storm." "Was she not in a chair as I drove up, (said Honoria?)" "Yes, Madam," answered the young beauty, "but I could not persuade her to keep the chair the whole time, as she intended to walk here slowly a little while for the benefit of the air, and then go as far as Belmont, which, as it is all down hill, she thought she could do very well, and take a chair from thence home." "But," interrupted Honoria, "if you and your grandmother will both come into the chariot, there will be sufficient room, and I shall have great pleasure in setting you down." "You are very good indeed, Madam," said the girl, "but I cannot think of troubling you so much; and if you are so kind as to take my grandmother, I can walk very well." Honoria was however positive, and at length prevailed; the girl ran into the house to acquaint her grandmother, who with many apologies got into the carriage, and was followed by the young woman. According to their directions, Honoria ordered the coachman to stop at a Shoemaker's in Westgate-street, where they said they lodged.

During their ride, the elegant manner of the old lady, and the lively expressions of gratitude in the young, considerably increased the favorable impression she had received; but she could only learn that their names were Lambert. When they arrived at their lodgings, they thanked Miss Wentworth in very polite terms for her condescension and kindness, but said nothing that left her an opening to offer to continue the acquaintance; this however she justly imputed to timidity, as their appearance was so totally different from her own.

The next morning she went to the Pump-room earlier than usual, with the hope of having some conversation with her new friends; but to her great surprise saw nothing of them. Another and another day elapsed, and still they were not there; this determined her to make some personal enquiry, and, going to their lodgings, was told by the maid of the house, that Mrs. Lambert was ill, and Miss not at home; the maid begged her to walk up stairs, but this she would not do without sending up her name, and requesting to know how Mrs. Lambert was. The old lady answered the message by entreating to see her. This Honoria directly complied with, and entered a small dining room, neatly, but poorly furnished, which together with its situation, convinced our heroine that her idea of the narrowness of their circumstances was not an erroneous one. Mrs. Lambert, who was sitting in an easy chair very much wrapt up, thanked Honoria for the honor of her visit; an honor which she said she had earnestly wished for, but knew not how to request. Honoria assured her, that anxious as she was to see her again, she should not probably have intruded, had not her absence from the Pump-room for three days, not only made her desire to hear of her health, but afforded her an excuse for calling, which she gladly availed herself of. Mrs. Lambert thanked her, and said, ill as she then was, but for her kindness, she should probably have been much worse, for that the few minutes she was exposed to the rain, and the dampness of the floor of the room where she waited for its abatement, had brought on a return of the rheumatic complaint, for which she was sent to Bath. Honoria expressed her concern, and asked if she had any advice. Yes, she said, an

apothecary attended her. “But dear Madam, why not send for a physician?” Mrs. Lambert smiled, and hesitatingly replied, “to confess the truth, Madam, though if I were to grow worse, I should think it right to have farther advice, as what I have already taken has been of great service to me, it is an expence I would if possible avoid; for there are here many necessary ones, and my circumstances will not allow me to exceed the plan I have laid down.”

Honorina at this speech earnestly wished to offer her assistance, and in a manner that would be least likely to offend, but knew not how to begin; at last gathering courage, she said,—“I have, Madam, been very unfortunate myself, but Heaven has raised me friends, whose bounty enables me to request you to accept this, (laying her purse on her lap) and believe me, you will infinitely oblige me by not refusing me the satisfaction of having in some measure contributed to your comfort.” She then hastily arose and would have quitted the room, but Mrs. Lambert seizing her gown, detained her, and replied, “Grateful as I am, madam, for your kind and benevolent offer, yet you must permit me to decline it. I thank God, I have never been in want of the necessaries of life, and I have lately met with an unexpected friend, who has given me the means of obtaining its comforts. Permit me, madam, to tell you the circumstance; it will convince you I speak the truth, and it would be the height of ingratitude not to take every opportunity of declaring the disinterested generosity of the noblest of men, who must be your kindred soul, for sure there is not such another upon earth.” Honorina sighed, ah! thought she, I once fancied I had met with my kindred soul, but fate proved it cruelly the reverse. She then begged Mrs. Lambert to proceed, a request which she instantly complied with.

“I am, Madam, the widow of an officer, and lived on the small pension government allowed me, and a trifle that was my own property, with ease and comfort in a little village in Hertfordshire, my native country; when my only son, who had married a young woman, without any fortune, died in Gibraltar, and his widow, who was left with five children, embarked for England, and came with her little family whom she was utterly unable to support without my assistance, to live with me. Our joint incomes for some time afforded us a decent subsistence, but the death of her youngest child was soon followed by her own, and this reduced us to greater necessities, as of course her pension ceased, and the little which was only sufficient to enable me to live comfortably when alone, was very incompetent when four grand-children were added to my family; but I could not forsake them, as to my knowledge, they had not other relation in the world to whom they could apply; their mother had indeed a brother in the army, but from the wandering life they had both led for many years, it was long since she had heard any thing of him, and at the time of her return to England, knew not in what part of the world he was.

“Thus circumstanced, my only wish was to live long enough to place these poor infants in some situation, where they might in time gain their own livelihood; and to effect this, I debarred myself of every accustomed indulgence, and used the strictest œconomy to give them some education. I sent the two boys to a cheap day school, where, however, they could learn writing and arithmetic; and the girls, who were much older, and had been very well instructed by their mother, I kept at home with me till I could

save money enough to place them with a mantua-maker: but long before I had laid by half the sum necessary for my purpose, the alteration in my way of living had reduced me so much, that my constitution could make no resistance against a rheumatic fever, which entirely deprived me of the use of my limbs; and the expences it brought on, consumed the little sum I had intended for another purpose. Ellen, the girl you have seen, was, during this illness, my constant attendant; but fearing so strict a confinement would injure her health, I sometimes sent her out to walk in the fields, and kept Lucy with me. One day she returned earlier than usual, and so fluttered, that the moment she sat down, she burst into tears. Upon my asking her the reason of her agitation, she told me, she had been followed by a young Officer, who at last joined her, and insisted upon attending her home; she walked very fast to avoid him, and would not answer him, but he still persisted, and coming up a rather lonely lane, leading to the part of the village where I live, he put his arm round her neck, and attempted to kiss her, but she escaped, and, terrified to death, ran home. This account made me confine her to the house, except when I could spare her sister to go with her, and this I sometimes did, as I grew better, though still unable to walk; and the surgeon who attended me, assured me, nothing but the Bath waters would wholly restore me.

About a fortnight after poor Ellen had been so frightened by the Officer, I was informed a gentleman desired to see me, and on his entrance, observing the cockade in his hat, directly concluded it was the same. This opinion was confirmed by his speech: upon my requiring his business, with an hesitation, which I imagined was the effect of guilt, he said, after an apology, he had been told I was not so fortunate as I deserved to be, from the care I took of a family who had no other friend; that if I would permit, he would gladly undertake to provide wholly for one of them, whom he had seen, and in whose favor he was prejudiced; and in the mean time, begged me to peruse a paper he then gave into my hands. This speech was, you may believe, ill calculated to remove my suspicions, but how was my astonishment and indignation encreased, when on opening the paper, I found it contained not only a bank note of fifty pounds, but a draught on a Banker in London, empowering me to receive the same annually! Folding it up, I returned it to him saying, with a violence that my ideas justified, I wondered what he had heard of my character to induce him to suppose I could listen to so infamous a proposal, and meanly barter the virtue of my child for any advantage his offered gold could bestow. I cannot pretend to describe the surprise that appeared in his countenance, and I know not when we should have come to an explanation, had not Mr. Williams, who attended me, fortunately entered, and ended my resentment and Colonel Effingham's astonishment." "Just heaven, (exclaimed Honoria,) Colonel Effingham! could he endeavour to seduce your grand-daughter, and hope to gain your consent!" "No, my dear madam, (replied Mrs. Lambert) alarmed at her vehemence, you are in the same error that I was; but let me hasten to declare, for I see you are interested in it, that Colonel Effingham is the noblest, the most disinterested of men, and, exclusive of his benevolence to me, I have heard those who have long known him, say he possesses every virtue that ever adorned the human heart." Except constancy, sighed Honoria to herself; who, though she felt delighted at these praises, which seemed in some measure to justify the regard she often blushed at not having wholly conquered, yet unwilling to indulge so dangerous a pleasure, begged Mrs. Lambert to go on with her narrative, assuring her she was

mistaken; for though she had formerly known the Colonel, and often heard of him, she was quite uninterested in his conduct, and only expressed her surprise from the idea it was impossible he could be changed, as to be guilty of an action so deliberately base and unprincipled. Mrs. Lambert then pursued her story.

“From Mr. Williams I learned, that pitying my deplorable situation, he had mentioned it to the Colonel, whose universal liberality gave him hopes he would not be inattentive to misfortunes like mine, whose illness was almost incurable without the assistance of the Bath waters, a remedy, which he knew my little income would not allow me to try; and conscious of the fate of my poor children if I died, he let him understand a donation trifling to himself, which would enable me to undertake this journey, might be the means of saving a whole family from destruction. The Colonel promised to call on me, and Mr. Williams exulted in his success, but knew not how far this generous man had extended his liberality, till I informed him.

“I then found, so far from being the officer who insulted Ellen, he had never seen any of my grandchildren, but Edward at school, and it was him whom he offered to provide for. Penetrated with the deepest gratitude, I told him of my mistake, and entreated him to pardon the violence which arose merely from that error. He was pleased to say he honored and commended my spirited conduct, and that it convinced him I was worthy of every exertion it was in his power to make, and that he hoped now I was convinced he had no improper motives, I would not mortify him by refusing the little annuity he had before offered; and that it was to be due from that very day, as the bank note was only meant to defray the expences of my journey to Bath, which he desired I would not defer. I endeavoured to express what I felt, but he would not hear me; he left the house immediately, but in a few days sent for Edward, and placed him at an academy; he also pays for James’s board at the same school, where they had both been day scholars. Since that time I have never seen him, but often by Mr. Williams’s means, have sent my grateful acknowledgments. I placed Lucy to board with a person on whom I can depend, and came to Bath about a month since; and have received great benefit, but this cold has thrown me a little back: however I do not repine, but rejoice in the health I have gained, and hope in a few days again to pursue the waters, which I doubt not will complete my recovery. Thus, madam, you see I am far from being in want, yet at the same time I must use œconomy, or I should be unworthy of the benevolence I have met with.”

Honorina thanked Mrs. Lambert for her history, and begged to know if the Mr. Williams she so often mentioned, was the surgeon who lived at S——, and being answered in the affirmative, joined her encomiums on his humanity and tenderness, which she said she had herself experienced. After sitting a little while longer, and listening with a painful satisfaction to the praises so liberally bestowed on her faithless lover, she took leave, convinced of the impropriety of her stay, as she was but too ready to join in the expressions of admiration, which the grateful heart of Mrs. Lambert could not restrain.

On her return home, she had an immediate opportunity of executing the plan which she had formed, upon Mrs. Lambert's refusing her offered assistance, by finding Dr. S—r, who attended her, sitting with Lady Clarendon. She mentioned to him her illness and misfortunes, and begged he would visit her, but receive from herself the recompence his attendance would demand: he assured he would call that very day, but with that benevolence which ever so peculiarly marked his character, intreated she would not think so meanly of him, as to suppose he could wish for, or would even accept, a pecuniary reward for the advice which he was happy in bestowing freely on those of his fellow creatures, who were not in a situation to repay him. He then took leave, and with a good-humoured smile, bade Honoria remember she must never mention the subject again.

## CHAP. XXIV.

THE first time Honoria was alone, she could not help reflecting on the peculiar circumstances which had so often brought Colonel Effingham to her mind, when she had so resolutely determined to forget him. His conduct to the Lamberts placed him in a light so particularly amiable, that she felt an additional regret at his behaviour with respect to herself; but convinced of the impropriety of frequently visiting them, from the certainty that he would be their usual topic of conversation, she resolved the next time she called, to beg Emily to accompany her, whose presence as a stranger, would probably prevent them from entering on the subject.

Whilst thus deeply engaged in thought, Miss Onslow entered the room, and told her they were all going that evening to the Play, and hoped, as she was undoubtedly much better, she would not refuse to join them, as Lady Clarendon had promised them her company, if they could prevail on Miss Wentworth. Honoria directly consented, assuring her, that motive alone would be sufficiently strong; but she had another; she flattered herself variety and amusement might dissipate her ideas, which were too constantly fixed on one object. Emily pleased at having gained her point, left her to dress, and when that task was finished, she was summoned to the dining parlour, where, to her great surprize, she found Mr. Manwaring, who had been introduced by a letter from Mrs. Wheeler, and Lady Clarendon had desired him to stay. She was not a little shocked by an idea that took possession of her mind, the instant she saw him, and which the evident and particular attention he paid her, contributed greatly to increase: but as he had yet given her no opening to express her disapprobation of his addresses, she could only behave to him with a cool civility, which she thought might discourage his hopes, and prevent him from avowing them.

He attended them to the Play, and sat next to her the whole evening, endeavouring to engage her in conversation whenever it was possible. At the end of the third act, Miss Onslow, who was just behind, addrest her in a low voice, yet loud enough to be heard by most of the party, "Pray my dear, can you tell which of us all it is, who has had the honour of turning that gentleman opposite into stone? for I am very positive he has neither moved nor taken his eyes from this box since he entered, which was in the first scene." This speech immediately drew the attention of all who heard her upon the object that gave rise to it, and Honoria was extremely surprized to see it was really Colonel Effingham, who was leaning against the back of a box in a pensive attitude, and his eyes fixed upon her; but noticing the general observation he had excited, he started, and began looking upon the stage, with the air of one disturbed from a deep reverie. Honoria coloured violently, which not escaping Louisa Clarendon, she said in a sarcastic manner, "she believed Miss Wentworth took the honour upon herself:" the malice of this by awakening Honoria's resentment, suppress her other feelings, and she replied with spirit; "It would be strange if she did, knowing her power over that gentleman." At the moment she supposed he was looking at her, she had totally forgot Louisa was next to her, and this accounting for his embarrassment, her mistake inspired her with a resolution to behave with more firmness, than she had shewn when they last met; and summoning

every spark of female pride to her aid, she began conversing with Mr. Manwaring with an apparent vivacity and satisfaction, he had never before seen on her countenance: and he was so highly flattered by this change in her behaviour, which he regarded as an omen of success, that he could scarcely avoid acquainting her with his sentiments that evening: she listened to all his remarks with strict attention, nor even dared to glance her eyes on the opposite side of the house till just as the farce began, Miss Onslow, whose heart was sufficiently at ease to permit her to amuse herself with the objects around her, exclaimed, "Alas, poor man, he is gone at last. Well, I really thought it had been a puppet, who only moved his head by clock work; nor am I indeed now quite positive whether he went off by himself or was carried by his master." "I am sure (cried Fanny Ashbourn) he is very unfit for a puppet shew, unless you make him a foil to Punch, for never was a countenance so lamentably serious and dismally sad." "Perhaps, Miss Ashbourn, (returned Honoria, who was piqued at this remark) Punch is your favourite hero, and if so, I am not at all surprized that you do not admire his contrast." She spoke this with a half smile, and Fanny Ashbourn making some answer not worth repeating, the subject dropped.

The heat of the house gave Honoria a violent head ach, which served her as an excuse for retiring the moment they arrived at home: she could not help accusing fate for thus perpetually counteracting her determinations, and rendering every effort she made to forget Colonel Effingham, only contribute to fix his image more firmly on her heart. She however applauded her own conduct, and imagined it a proof of having acquired a little strength of mind.

Supported by this idea, she retired to rest with some composure; but the next morning she was again agitated, by Lady Clarendon's desiring her to come into her apartment; and then acquainted her with the generous proposals Mr. Manwaring had that day begged she would communicate to her: "now, my dear," continued she, "you best know your own heart; if you can approve, I will say love Mr. Manwaring, you cannot but be sensible of the advantages you must derive from an union with him: he is a man of excellent character, good understanding, and amiable disposition; his fortune is large, and I need not repeat you will not then be dependant on that friend whose return you have so much wished for; and though I do not doubt her tenderness, yet, my dear, she is married, may have a large family, and her heart thus divided, may have less to bestow on you, than your generous and disinterested mind can imagine."

Lady Clarendon was thus enumerating the reasons which she hoped would induce her to attend to Mr. Manwaring, when looking at her she saw she was as pale as death, and her face bathed in tears: alarmed and surprized at her emotion, she took her hand and tenderly asked if she had said any thing to hurt or offend her? "Oh no, madam, (returned Honoria with a voice scarcely audible) you have only convinced me of the error I have been in by supposing I might be happy without a sacrifice which I feel I never can consent to. You have taught me the dependance I place on distant friends may fail, but you cannot prevent me from hoping that the laudable exertions of industry may support me, without resigning my hand where I can never give my heart, and thus make myself miserable without ensuring the happiness of another.

Lady Clarendon was shocked at this construction of her words, and affectionately embracing Honoria, intreated her not to imagine she had any motive for what she said but her advantage; and assured her, that had she entertained any idea of her dislike to the proposal, she would never have mentioned it; and was so far from wishing her to accept it, but on her own account, that it would have been with the truest regret she should have parted with her, even to so worthy a man. Honoria thanked her, and a little recovered from her agitation, said, that poor and destitute as her situation was, Mr. Manwaring was too indifferent to her, though she allowed his merit, to permit her to accept his proposals without a violation of truth and sincerity; “for how, madam, added she, can I vow at the altar to love and honour one, who though he may deserve, can never obtain more than my esteem and gratitude?”

“Compose yourself, my love,” returned her Ladyship, “you shall hear nothing farther on the subject. I will myself from you give Mr. Manwaring a final answer; but do not, my dear, hurt me so much as ever again to mention supporting yourself by industry; surely you cannot doubt my affection, and believe me, I will never whilst you chuse to remain with me, part with you even to that friend, whose regard though it may equal cannot exceed mine, and whose claim to yours may be founded on a longer acquaintance, but not on a warmer or sincerer friendship.” Honoria, whose tears now flowed, not from grief, but sensations of tenderness she could not suppress, threw her arms round Lady Clarendon, and vainly endeavoured to speak her gratitude; but to a heart like hers, these silent expressions proved more forcible than words, the innate feelings of her mind.

When she grew more composed, Lady Clarendon entreated her not to give way to the dejection that opprest her, but for her sake exert her spirits and try to be chearful. Honoria promised to comply as far as it was in her power, and she then left her to acquaint Mr. Manwaring with the conversation which had just passed between them, and she assured him there was no probability that Honoria would ever alter her sentiments. So positive and so unexpected a refusal shocked and surprized him; he begged at least to be allowed to make an interest in her favour, but she replied it would, she was certain, be unsuccessful, and desired he would not mention the subject, as she had promised Miss Wentworth to give him her final determination, and that she should be teized with no more fruitless solicitations. At last, finding his hopes and entreaties were vain, he took leave, resolving to quit Bath and return to Northampton immediately.

When first our heroine came to Lady Clarendon, she informed her of those circumstances of her life which she had related to Mrs. Markham; but growing every hour more attached to her, she often wished she had told her every particular of her birth and misfortunes; yet felt unwilling to begin the subject, from a groundless fear, that the knowledge of the way in which she was found, her leaving the protection of Mr. Fortescue, and coming to England in so friendless a situation, might to one of her delicate and strict principles of virtue, shew her in a light unworthy her friendship and approbation; or at least lessen the confidence she at present had in her integrity. This apprehension still kept her silent. Miss Melmoth was the only person to whom she had entrusted the fatal mystery of her birth, her unfortunate attachment to Colonel Effingham,

and her well founded ideas of his infidelity; whose romantic and enthusiastic imagination applauded her constancy, pitied his infatuation, and obscure and mean as her origin apparently was, it lessened her not in her esteem; but she often said, her soul and mind were too noble and elevated, to spring from vulgar parents. This idea, though wild and illusive, were too consonant to Honoria's wishes not to excite her satisfaction, and she loved the kind and fanciful heart where it was first formed, the more warmly for this visionary hope.

Her attachment to Lady Clarendon, though, if possible, stronger, was mixed with a respect for her virtues, almost a reverence, that whilst it rendered her solicitous to preserve her affection, and merit her esteem, made her fearful of being thought unworthy of it; and from this consideration, she deeply regretted Mr. Manwaring's offer, lest her rejection of him should be thought ungrateful, and imprudent: however, from his leaving Bath directly, and the subject not being again entered upon by any of the family, she regained her usual tranquillity. When in a few days, her sensibility was again alarmed on the account of her friend, by an event which had its proper effect upon her mind, by convincing her, that however unfortunate she thought herself, the evils of this life are distributed with a more impartial hand, than short-sighted and erring mortals usually imagine.

As her health was now tolerably established, she could not refuse accompanying her friends to the Master of the Ceremonies Ball: she observed Louisa Clarendon had been for some days particularly attentive to the dress she was to wear on that evening, by consulting milliners and mantua-makers, whilst Emily and herself had very little concern upon the subject, and amused themselves with wondering who it was she hoped to charm. Lady Clarendon would not go herself, as she feared there would be a great croud, but committed them to the care of a chaperon. They entered the room at the usual time, but found it already so full, it was with some difficulty they could procure places, and at last, were obliged to divide. Honoria and Emily endeavoured to sit together, but were separated by two ladies belonging to their party. Louisa was with the Ashbourns, on the opposite side of the room, and the gentlemen walked about. Just as the last minuet was begun, Honoria observed a gentleman in regimentals, who had been for some time talking to Miss Clarendon, turn suddenly round, and the instant it was concluded, he crost the room and went to Miss Onslow. Their party at that instant rising, Honoria was surrounded by two or three of her acquaintance, who chatted to her some time, and prevented her from moving, but the moment they left her, she looked round for Emily, and saw her in earnest conversation with this Officer, changing colour, and apparently in great agitation. Sir William soon came up, and Honoria taking her arm, to walk up and down, the conversation ceased, and she grew more composed. In a few minutes the country dances began, and Miss Clarendon summoning her partner, and Sir William taking Emily's hand, and leading her to the set, Honoria had no opportunity of asking an explanation. The Master of the Ceremonies in vain solicited her to join the dancers, assuring her he had many commissions to request her hand, but she resolutely refused; nor had the various compliments he paid her the least effect, for she could not join in an amusement which required animation and spirit, whilst her heart was so ill at ease.

When they all met at tea, she observed with pain, an universal embarrassment seemed to reign among them. Miss Clarendon was angry and mortified, that her partner, Captain Harcourt, neglected her, and paid the most visible attention to Miss Onslow; who, however, treated him with a coldness almost bordering on contempt, yet appeared languid and dispirited: this behavior, so different from her usual vivacity, surprized and hurt Sir William, who knew not how to account for it; and though evidently displeased at Captain Harcourt's assiduity, yet her conduct left him no plea to resent it. In this disposition they continued the whole evening, and Emily, contrary to her usual practice, was the first who proposed returning; and to this the Miss Ashbourns, one of whom had a very insipid, the other no partner, readily consented.

After their departure, Captain Harcourt continuing his careless behavior, Louisa, who felt herself highly piqued at it, desired her brother to enquire for the carriage; as he had no farther wish to stay, and Honoria was extremely weary, they were all well agreed, and the coach being arrived, they went home immediately. During their little ride, not a word was spoken, but at supper, Lady Clarendon surprized to see them all so grave, enquired the reason, and said, "She feared something unpleasant must have happened." Sir William, who scarcely knew why he was uneasy, replied, "No, he was only fatigued." Louisa then added, "I believe I can explain it, madam. The gentleman I danced with, was so very particular to Miss Onslow, that I fancy my brother is jealous." "No, really Louisa, (returned he,) that I cannot possibly be, for Miss Onslow's behavior to him was so pointedly cool, he had very little cause for exultation." "That I allow, (said Miss Clarendon,) but it is my opinion they had once a better understanding with each other, and that her present reserve was only put on to conceal it from you." Sir William felt all the force of this ill-natured speech, though he would not confess it; for, from the first moment he had observed them, it struck him that they had formerly been acquainted, and that unexpectedly meeting him there, had occasioned the embarrassment and uneasiness so visible in her countenance the whole evening. "Fie, Louisa, (said Lady Clarendon,) how can you give way to such unjust suspicions? I should rather guess from them, you were uneasy yourself, at your partner's preference of another. Pray who was he?"—"Captain Harcourt, madam."—"Did Mr. Tyson introduce him to you?"—"No, madam, I have known him for some time."—"Where did you first see him, Louisa?"—"At Northampton." Lady Clarendon said no more at this time, but justly imagined, from the glow on her daughter's cheek, that her idea was not ill-founded, and that Captain Harcourt was not wholly indifferent to her.

When they retired, as Honoria was meditating on the events of the evening, she recollected the enquiry Mrs. Bridges made to Emily, whether she had ever seen Captain Harcourt at C——, and the anger and confusion that question had raised in her countenance; and which, intimate as they were even then, she had never explained the cause of, but evidently avoided the subject. The peculiarity of the circumstance imprest it on her memory, though as it was so long since, she would probably have forgotten the name, had it not struck her at the time, as being the same as that of a Clergyman with whom she was well acquainted in Ireland. She feared there was some reason for Sir William's uneasiness, though she knew not what, and determined the next time she was

alone with Emily, to endeavor to learn the cause of her embarrassment; a liberty she thought their friendship would now justify.

## CHAP. XXV.

WHOLLY engaged in reflecting on the occurrences of the evening, Honoria did not close her eyes for several hours, and consequently slept more heavily in the morning; and when she was drest, found it much later than usual, and that Sir William and Louisa had been both gone to the Pump-room some time: she immediately followed them, and turning into Bond-street, perceived the former at a little distance; she waited for him, and when he joined her, was shocked to see the most visible traces of uneasiness on his countenance: he prevented her enquiries, by saying, "Oh Miss Wentworth, you know not what a miserable night I have past, nor how much this morning has encreased my apprehensions: you heard Louisa's suspicions; to you I will confess, though I would not to her, that they agree too well with my own: you may suppose they prevented me from sleeping, and I rose early, but knowing I could then learn nothing to satisfy me, I took a solitary walk towards Weston, meditating whether I had better let it pass over in silence, as I had no reasonable plea for anger, or question Emily on the subject? At last I determined to beg you to speak to her; the strength of her regard for you is such, that I was certain, if there was any mystery, she would reveal it to you; and if not, I knew your decision would make me easy. I then returned hastily home, but found you had not yet left your chamber, and, too restless to wait for you, I went to the Pump-room. Miss Onslow was not there; I again came back, and calling at Mrs. Ashbourn's, learned she had been gone about five minutes: supposing I had missed her, I resolved to seek her there again; but crossing to Milsom-street, was stopped, by seeing Captain Harcourt rap at the door I had just quitted; impatient to know whether he was admitted, I waited at Marshall's Library, till I had the satisfaction to find he was also refused; he immediately came over, and passed me with a slight bow, and I was just going to follow him, when a gentleman, who had been sitting in the shop, absolutely by force detained me, till I would give my opinion on a political pamphlet he held in his hand: to avoid this I said, which was true, I had not read it; but this only involved me farther, for though I pleaded business, he would not let me go till he had read several pages aloud, not one syllable of which I heard, but I hastily declared my sentiments were exactly the same as his, though without knowing any thing of the matter, and then left him; and was going as fast as possible to the pump when I met you."

Honoria endeavoured to reason him out of his apprehensions, which she said were fallacious, and attempted to prove the folly of jealousy, arising merely from a combination of accidental circumstances; but on entering the room, Sir William's fears revived, and even her's were raised, by observing Captain Harcourt sitting by Miss Onslow, and earnestly engaged in conversation; the deep glow on her cheeks convinced them it was not an indifferent one, and the instant she looked up and beheld Sir William, she caught eagerly hold of the Captain who was rising, gave a loud scream, and fainted away.

Every body was alarmed, and Honoria ran to the assistance of her friend, who was soon surrounded by the company, but the crowd, instead of contributing to, retarded her recovery. She was still senseless, and the drops not having any effect, she was lifted into a carriage that waited in Stall-street, which a lady observing their distress, and that it was

impossible she could go in a chair, humanely offered, and accompanied by Honoria and Fanny Ashbourn, was carried home, and a surgeon sent for immediately.

In the mean time Sir William, tho' not unmoved at her illness, yet seeing she was in proper hands, went up directly to Captain Harcourt, informing him he wished to speak with him: he replied, he was ready to attend him, and they both left the pump room whilst their party were too busily employed in endeavouring to recover Miss Onslow, to regard their absence or even guess at the cause. Sir William led the way to the North Parade; Captain Harcourt followed; and when they arrived at the farther end, the former, who would not trust himself to speak till out of the hearing of the few people who were scattered there, hastily demanded the cause of Miss Onslow's illness, the subject of their conversation, and the reason why he so impertinently followed her, when he could not but discern his assiduities were not merely troublesome but disagreeable? "Before I answer your questions, Sir William, (returned the captain) I shall beg to know by what authority you think proper to ask them?" "By the authority of a lover, a favoured lover, who only waits till she is at her own disposal, to ratify the solemn engagements he is under, and by the most sacred ties bind himself her's for ever." "Then, Sir, behold in me the man who dares dispute your claim; and on the assurance of the grounds on which he builds his hopes of success, deigns to reply to your questions. The lady's illness arose from an apprehension, that if we met it might cost one of us our lives, and who could tell which should fall? The subject of our conversation, past events and hopes of future happiness; and this will sufficiently answer. The third; I followed her to explain some apparent mystery in my conduct, and her embarrassment was owing to her having encouraged your addresses when sensible of my prior claims." "From herself only," returned the Baronet haughtily, "will I believe this story." "As you please," replied the Captain with a contemptuous coldness, "I know she will not deny it; but your doubts, Sir William, must unavoidably render this meeting only a prelude to a future one; name your time and place." "There is no time like the present (said Sir William) the place is indifferent to me." They then walked back with a quick pace, and stopping at the house where he lodged, the Captain called his servant, and bade him in a whisper bring his pistols to him on the old bridge, and then followed Sir William, who had been silently meditating on the possible consequences of the rash action he was now engaged in: his mother and his beloved Emily, rushed upon his mind, and made him half a coward; but resolutely banishing them from his thoughts, he turned to the Captain, and with tolerable tranquillity asked if he had fixed on a proper spot? he replied in the affirmative, and said, he would lead the way.

Again they walked on in silence, and just as they crossed the bridge, the servant arrived with the pistols: he ordered him to follow at a distance, and going up Holloway, turned to the left, into a very retired field, and told the man to lay them down, and go home immediately. He then gave Sir William his choice, but before he fired, said, "Now we fight for the Lady, the conqueror shall have her."—"No," returned Sir William, resentfully, "if I thought Miss Onslow would hesitate in her decision, she would not be worth my regard. I have no doubt of her truth and honor, and fight, Sir, because *you* call them in question. If you take my life, and after that, her choice falls upon you, there would have been so little worth living for in this world, that even in another state, I

should bless the hand, which by depriving me of existence, kindly prevented me from lingering out a number of wretched years, a prey to anguish and disappointment; but, by Heaven, I do not think so meanly of her." "Well, Sir," (replied the Captain,) with an insolent smile, "if you are not blind to conviction, this paper will probably stagger your incredulity;" he then opened his pocketbook, and gave him a note. With a trembling hand, he unfolded it, and read the following words:

To Captain HARCOURT.

"Though so entirely against my own ideas of delicacy and propriety, yet the cruelty of my situation is such, it compels me to inform you I have at last consented to your request.—Be ready at the end of the garden wall at eight o'clock this evening with a post-chaise. D.T. who conveys this to you, will contrive to get the key of the gate, where you will receive

EMILY ONSLOW."

The horror, confusion, and astonishment of Sir William, at the sight of this, may be more easily conceived than described; he at first refused his belief, but Captain Harcourt insisted on his putting the letter into his pocket, and shewing it to Miss Onslow, who, he said, would not dare deny it. This confirmed his suspicions, and with a low, tremulous voice, he entreated him to say what followed. "I went," continued the Captain, "at the appointed time, and we were above an hundred miles on our way to Scotland, when a cursed accident intervened, or I should, at this moment, have been master of her person and fortune." Sir William had already heard too much; this idea transported him with resentment, and he called to the Captain to be in readiness, and then fired, but the agitation of his soul communicated itself to his hand, which was so unsteady, that he entirely missed his antagonist. Captain Harcourt took a better aim; the ball entered Sir William's side, and he fell instantly to the ground.

Whilst all this was passing, the unhappy cause of their duel recovered her senses by the assistance of the surgeon, and the moment she acquired a perfect recollection of what had passed, asked Honoria, where Sir William was? She replied, she did not know. "What!" exclaimed Emily, in an agony, "has he not been here? has he not enquired for me?" The silence of those around her confirmed her fears, and extended them beyond the truth: she looked at them, and saw an embarrassment she could only in one way account for. "Oh!" cried she, "he is dead, you know he is, though you will not tell me: Captain Harcourt has killed him." They endeavoured to convince her they were wholly ignorant of what had passed, but she would not be convinced: at last, falling on her knees to Mrs. Ashbourn, she said, nothing would satisfy her but seeking him herself, and entreated she might have the carriage. Mrs. Ashbourn, supposing, that her mind, whilst in action, might be amused, and that before her return, they would probably hear of Sir William, consented; and whilst it was getting ready, sent for her son, to desire him to make some enquiries, for, from what she had seen, she concluded, if the gentlemen met, there must undoubtedly be a rencontre.

Just before they set off, Louisa Clarendon, who paid no regard to the feelings of another, entered, followed by Harry and Miss Ashbourn, and immediately fell into an hysteric fit: they rang for the servants to bring drops, and crowded themselves round Harry, whose pale countenance prepared them for some dreadful intelligence: he however could only inform them, that his sister Dorothea and Miss Clarendon, who said they had been searching for him some time, at last came to Bull's, where he was reading the Papers, and entreated him to go after Sir William and Captain Harcourt, who had left the Pump-room together, and they feared, with some terrible design: that leaving them in the shop, he flew to the Captain's lodgings, on the North Parade, and found neither himself nor his servant were at home, and the people of the house could give him no information; but going out, he met a little errand-boy, who told him, that some time before, he saw the Captain's servant come down stairs with two pistols, and run very fast towards the Abbey-green. Alarmed at this account, but not knowing where to follow them, he returned to the library, and Miss Clarendon, extremely agitated, insisted on his going home directly, to consult his mother what was best to be done.

Miss Onslow, though before scarcely able to stand, now rose, her increasing terror giving her strength, and the carriage being at the door, she insisted upon going directly.—“Going where, dear Emily?” said Harry. “No matter, I will go,” (returned she,) and springing into the carriage, was followed by Honoria, who, though unequal to the task of consolation, yet would not forsake her friend, in this moment of affliction. Fanny, who intended to accompany them, was pushed aside by her brother, who thought he might be a more useful attendant. They were all seated, and the door shut, when the coachman asked where he was to drive? and this question embarrassing them not a little, they were for some moments unable to decide; till Harry, who at this time had the most recollection of the party, guessing from the boy's intelligence, the combatants were gone some where beyond the old bridge, ordered him to stop at the other side, hoping to gain there farther information; and he was right: an old woman who was selling apples, told him, in answer to his enquiry, that she had seen two gentlemen, one in red, and the other in blue, pass her some time before, and she believed they went up Holloway. According to her direction, they drove up, and were just at the top of the hill, when they perceived a crowd of people at a stile. Harry jumped out, guessing at the cause, and in an instant his fears were confirmed, by seeing, as he thought, the breathless body of his friend, supported by several men, who were slowly moving to a cottage just by. He endeavoured, but in vain, to keep this mournful sight from Emily; he ran back to the carriage, but it was too late; half frantic with horror and despair, she had broke the glasses in attempting to get out, and Honoria's strength was too insufficient to detain her: pretending to give way to her inclinations, he lifted her down, but opposed her going towards the field, and carried her by force to the cottage; here the violence of her agitation soon exhausted itself, and she sunk once more into that happy insensibility from which she had so lately recovered. Honoria followed her, and Harry flew to Sir William, and hearing he was not absolutely dead, but had only fainted from loss of blood, and seeing that his wound was properly bound up for the present, placed him in the carriage, got in himself, and ordered it to drive slowly to New King-street, where a gentleman, who had been his tutor, lodged, who he was sure would readily give up his apartments to Sir William, as it was utterly improper in the state he was then in, to carry him to Lady Clarendon's, or Mrs.

Ashbourn's, where his sister in all probability still was. There they soon arrived, and fortunately finding Mr. Heywood at home, he sent him back in the chariot to Miss Onslow and Honoria, begging he would tell them Sir William had only fainted, and was not as they apprehended, dead.

This intelligence he gave Honoria, who was rejoiced at it, but her unhappy friend was still incapable of hearing what would have given her such satisfaction. She was lifted into the carriage, and taken to Edgar buildings, where the family were all in the utmost terror, not having heard any thing since their departure. Mrs. Ashbourn seeing Emily brought in totally insensible, and not followed by her son, who had attended her, was on his account inexpressibly alarmed, till Mr. Heywood explained the circumstance, and then flew to his own lodging to assist his friend. Mrs. Ashbourn sent for the best physical assistance, and Honoria left Miss Onslow to their care, and went herself to Lady Clarendon, who had been surprized at the absence of her family, but accounted for it by Emily's illness, of which she had been told, but not the cause. Honoria's appearance, however, terrified her, from the extreme agitation in her countenance, who after properly preparing her for the melancholy intelligence she had to communicate, informed her of the duel and its consequences. Lady Clarendon, dreadfully shocked, and fearing the worst, would not remain in suspense, but ordering a chair, desired Honoria to accompany her immediately to new King-street. Arriving at Mr. Heywood's lodgings, they met Harry Ashbourn coming out, who gave them a better account than they expected: he said the surgeons had extracted the ball and dressed the wound, which of itself was not dangerous; all they had to apprehend was from a fever, and that Sir William's recovery depended greatly on being kept quiet and free from agitation, and that to remove his apprehensions for his Miss Onslow, he was going home to enquire for her.

Lady Clarendon, a little relieved, went up stairs to him, and Honoria left her to look for Louisa, who when she recovered from her hysteric fit, quitted Mrs. Ashbourn and was gone she knew not where. Calling at several houses where she was intimate and not finding her, she went to Edgar buildings: the family here were still in the utmost confusion; Emily was restored to life, but not to her senses; she awoke only to a strong delirium, and was in a high fever, and both the physician and surgeon who attended her, declared she was in great danger: the latter, who had seen her in the morning, blamed Mrs. Ashbourn for suffering her to go out in such a state of mind, and Harry more, for not seeking Sir William himself, and letting her take some other road by which means she would have escaped a sight, that had made so deep, so fatal an impression on her mind; yet they both thought if they could procure one interval of reason, to make her sensible Sir William still lived, it would have an happy effect: but this there was at present no prospect of from the violence of her disorder.

Whilst Honoria was listening to this account with tears, Miss Ashbourn entered the room, and informed her she had just left Louisa in Gay-street: and upon her desiring to know how she bore the news of her brother's danger, replied, "Oh! Miss Wentworth, she is, I believe, totally lost to all feeling, but for herself. When you drove off with Emily and my brother, you know she was in strong hysterics, but she soon recovered, and attempting to leave us, we entreated her not to go home, for fear of alarming Lady

Clarendon, and this she promised, but said she would call on Mrs. Betterton. When from your return, we knew the event of the duel, fearing she might hear it suddenly, I went to her myself, but how was I shocked to find her uneasiness arose more from apprehensions for Captain Harcourt, than her brother! I could scarcely restrain my indignation, when she exclaimed, "Oh! tell me, is Harcourt safe?" I replied, he was unhurt, but if Sir William died, his life would be endangered, if it was possible to secure him, but that at present he had escaped." The grief that appeared in her countenance, my information entirely dissipated: "then (said she) I am satisfied; my entreaties will, I doubt not, prevail on my mother not to prosecute him: did they not meet on an equal footing, and was it not an equal chance who fell? why then seek to deprive another of life, because he unfortunately and accidentally took too sure an aim?" then redoubling her tears, she added, "her mother could not be so unjust and cruel." Mrs. Betterton could with difficulty avoid expressing her resentment at her unnatural insensibility, but checking herself, she only replied, "I hope Sir William will recover, and then, Miss Clarendon, your favourite will escape punishment, though, in my opinion, he will not the less deserve it." Louisa was extremely angry at this speech, and rising, asked me to go home with her; when I left her in Gay-street, I found you had informed Lady Clarendon of this terrible event, and that she was gone to her son. If he should die, how much will that excellent Lady suffer, and how little consolation can she receive from the society of such a daughter!" Honoria joined with her in lamenting her unfeeling disposition, and then went up stairs to see the poor Emily, who was, however, wholly insensible of her presence, and raving in the wildest manner. A sight so dreadful, hurt Honoria extremely, and, unable to be of any service, she soon left her to attend Lady Clarendon, whose grief, though excessive, was reasonable, and refused not the kind efforts of friendship, for her consolation and relief.

## CHAP. XXVI.

AT the moment Sir William fell, the report of the pistol having reached the ears of Harcourt's servant, who contrary to his master's command had only gone into the road, he directly came up, and the captain, who thought he had killed his adversary, solicitous for his own safety, told Joseph he must escape to avoid falling into the hands of justice, but ordered him immediately to procure some assistance, and convey the body of Sir William to his friends: this command he directly executed, alarmed the neighbourhood, and was assisting to lift it to the next cottage, perceiving some signs of life, when they were met by Mr. Ashbourn. In the mean time Captain Harcourt had gained the Bristol road, and overtaking the stage coach got into it, and arrived at that city, where thinking there might exist a possibility of Sir William's life, and knowing he could hear every day from Bath, he determined to take a lodging in some obscure place, change his name, and wait till the certainty of his death should make his embarkation necessary.

For ten days the event was doubtful: a fever brought on by the agitation of his mind, from the apprehension of Emily's inconstancy, reduced him to the brink of the grave; and it was increased by the knowledge of her danger, which they were obliged to tell him as an excuse for her not appearing, as in the beginning of his illness he was constantly enquiring for her, and entreating that she would see him, if only for half an hour. Emily, in this time, was grown calmer, but had not had one moment's interval of reason. Honoria divided her days between a constant attendance in the chamber of her sick friend, and her endeavours to console the afflicted mother, whose grief had no little addition from observing the sullen behaviour of Louisa; who, instead of softening the universal distress, by her indifference and ill nature, increased the distaste every one of the party had for some time conceived to her.

The Ashbourns were as indefatigable in their attentions to Emily, as Harry and Mr. Heywood were to Sir William, and in a fortnight their cares began to be rewarded by an unexpected change in the former; she had been for some days more composed, and at last began to know those around her, but the first signs of recollection were attended with violent expressions of grief; but these soon subsided from their intelligence that Sir William was not only alive, but would probably recover, as he was in more danger from his apprehensions on her account, than from the consequences of his wound, and that the knowledge of her amendment would greatly contribute to his. In fact, it had even a better effect than they dared hope for: the suspicions which had tormented his soul from Captain Harcourt's relation, were entirely banished, by the certainty that her illness arose merely from her solicitude for him, and was so violently increased by seeing him, as she imagined, breathless and insensible; and now the hope of her recovery, by lessening the torments he had for some days experienced, daily added to his strength, and his constitution being naturally good, in less than a week he was pronounced out of danger; and this repeated to Miss Onslow, had an equally happy effect upon her, though she mended more slowly.

In a short time, however, comfort and peace once more dawned on this little party. Sir William was well enough to be removed to Gay-street, and finding no bad consequences from the motion of the chair, he insisted the following day upon being carried to see Emily, who had not yet left her chamber; he was so earnest in this request, that Lady Clarendon knew not how to deny it, but desired Honoria to ask Miss Onslow if she would consent. Emily, who had always enjoyed an excellent state of health, from the weakness, which is common when recovering from a violent fever, but which having never felt before, she thought was something extraordinary, had an idea that she should not live, was delighted at the prospect of seeing him. She told Honoria she had but one wish, that was to justify herself to him, and then she should die contented. Honoria attempted to rally her in a gentle manner out of this apprehension, but could not succeed. "Tell Sir William, (said she) if he comes, he must not refuse to hear me, for if he does, I shall never live to see him again." This, however, Honoria, on her return, did not repeat; she only said, Miss Onslow would be particularly happy to receive him, as she ardently wished for an opportunity to relate the circumstances which had probably misled him, and begged he would not refuse to hear her. This he promised, and was the next afternoon carried to Mrs. Ashbourn's, and admitted to Emily's apartment.

The sight of each other, pale, weak, and emaciated, had for some moments a violent effect on both, each accusing themselves as the cause of the other's illness; these emotions at last subsided, and they felt the truest satisfaction in again enjoying a happiness, they had a few days before imagined themselves deprived of for ever. Emily, at length, having acquired some degree of composure, desired Honoria to sit by and support her, and calling on Mrs. and Miss Ashbourn to attest the truth of what she said, began in the following manner.

"Surely, Sir William, the errors of my youth must have been expiated by the horror and distraction of mind I have suffered for some time past; the apprehensions I felt for your safety, were succeeded by the certainty of your death, and that aggravated by the heart-rending reflection that it was owing to my own folly and imprudence, and that I should not be the only sufferer, but your dear excellent mother be included in the distress and agony, of which I had been the sole cause. What Captain Harcourt said to you of me I am yet ignorant, and beg to remain so till you are made acquainted with the events of my past life, (not one of which I shall conceal or alter) lest you should think I meant to palliate my faults, and frame my story according to his accusations. That my errors were owing in great measure to the instructions I received, and the consequences of a wrong education, you will not I hope deny; yet do not think I mean to exculpate myself at the expence of those to whose care I was entrusted, for though they did not execute the charge with strict propriety, yet I am convinced it was an honest, though mistaken zeal for my welfare, which induced them to act in the manner they did—all but one, whose name I can never recollect without detestation and horror."

Two or three times in the course of this speech, Sir William attempted to interrupt her, but she prevented him: when she paused here a moment, he entreated her not to go on till she was better, and more capable of the exertion; assuring her he was satisfied, and wished for no justification of a conduct, the propriety of which he could not doubt.

“Hush, Sir William,” (said she) with a faint smile, “I fear you will alter your opinion before I have concluded my relation; yet even that apprehension shall not prevent me from informing you of every circumstance with the strictest veracity. You know I forfeit my estate if I marry without my guardian’s consent before I am of age, but you know not the reason of that restriction; a fortunate one however, it has been to me, for probably but for that, I had now been—no matter, my narrative will tell you what. To account for this, I must inform you, that my maternal grandfather possess an estate of above four thousand a year; he had only two children, both girls, to whom at his death, which happened when the eldest was nineteen years old, the other only sixteen, he left it equally divided. Emilia was amiable but serious: Caroline, the youngest, who was my mother, had a more volatile turn, and it often required the strictest care of her sister to prevent her from falling into those little errors incidental to youth and independence, and to which her giddy and thoughtless disposition made her more frequently liable.

“Their mother had been dead many years, and they both resided with a distant relation, when Mr. Onslow, who from being the younger branch of his family had a fortune very inadequate to his birth, saw Caroline, and too soon persuaded her to listen to his addresses; without consulting her sister, or indeed any one else, she consented to elope with him, and they were married in Scotland. Ah, Sir William, how do I blush at relating this, lest you should imagine imprudence was hereditary. They lived several years in a high, not to say an extravagant style, and the manner in which my father squandered her fortune, gave my poor mother but too much reason to believe, it was his principal if not his sole motive for chusing her. They had several children, none of whom lived a twelvemonth, and my mother was very near lying-in, when their creditors, no longer to be appeased by promises, seized upon every thing; my father went abroad, where he soon after died, and my kind aunt, whose memory I must ever revere, took her unfortunate sister under her protection, and gave her an asylum in her own house, where I was born; but my unhappy mother, opprest by calamities which were wholly unexpected, lived but a few weeks after my birth, and dying, recommended me to the care of her sister, after whom I had been named; who faithfully promised to provide for and never forsake me, and this promise she strictly fulfilled. When the estates were sold they were found almost insufficient to pay the creditors, but though nothing remained for me, my aunt, so far from lessening her affection to me, only strove more exactly to adhere to the assurance she had given her dying sister. She had no children, but had been married several years to Mr. Bridges, a most worthy and amiable man, who inherited a small paternal estate in Worcestershire, and who was nephew to Mr. Bridges who is now my guardian.

“My uncle lived only three years after my residence with them, and my aunt was so deeply afflicted at his death, that she secretly determined never to enter into a second marriage, but devote her whole time to me, who she loved as a daughter, and make my education and accomplishments her principal study. And to this end, having a natural aversion to boarding schools, and resolving herself to form my mind and manners after her own excellent model, when I was five years old sought for some person well skilled in the French and Italian languages, to assist her in the ornamental parts of my education;

and was recommended to Madam De Tournay as a very proper governess in every respect, and she accordingly entered on her new employment.

This woman really was not like many in her station, of low birth and manners: she was the widow of a French Officer, and reduced at his death to seek a livelihood in England; educated in a convent, she had none of that pert familiarity which so often disgust us in her countrywomen; she understood not only her own, but the Italian language grammatically, and was mistress of every kind of fine needle work. Her conversation was sensible, her manners were gentle and placid; my poor aunt therefore was rejoiced that she had not only met with in her a governess for me, but a companion for herself. In every other branch of education, I had the best masters the country afforded, and by the time I was seven years old, had made a rapid progress in all I applied to. But just at this period, my kind, my benevolent relation, was seized with a disorder which, from its first attack, left her no hope of recovery: how did the insidious, the artful De Tournay, avail herself of this illness, to make a still greater interest in her esteem! and she succeeded; but under the veil of benevolence and sincerity, which deceived my unsuspecting aunt, she concealed the vilest, the most interested of hearts.

“My kind and considerate friend, foreseeing the deserted state in which I should be left, and fearing I might fall a prey to some needy adventurer, to whom my fortune might be a temptation, resolved to secure me from this if possible, and yet leave me the liberty of choice: and knowing by experience that a mind well principled and well regulated, is generally at twenty-one, capable of making a proper decision, left me all her estate, when I arrived at that age if single, or if married with my guardian’s consent; but if married without it, the estate was to go to a distant branch of her own family, and I was only to possess an annuity of an hundred a year; a sum which at all events would keep me from want. Thus kindly receiving me from the unhappiness my mother had experienced from a too early independence, and yet not leaving it wholly in my guardian’s power to make me miserable for ever, by refusing his consent, when my heart might be properly attached. Soon after she had settled this in her mind, and made her will accordingly, thinking she could not exist many days longer, she sent for Mr. Bridges, who she begged would undertake the office of my guardian, and continue De Tournay as my governess, of whom she had the highest opinion, till my education was compleated. This he promised, and a very short time put a period to the existence of my beloved and maternal friend.

“Though not old enough to be sensible what an inseparable loss I had sustained, I yet felt it deeply; and can well remember the tears I shed when I accompanied Mr. Bridges into Devonshire. He had been a merchant in London, but having acquired a very good fortune, had quitted the business in favour of his son, and had been some years retired, and lived near a small town in that county. He is undoubtedly a most worthy character, as far as honesty and integrity can contribute to render a man so, who is narrow-minded, illiberal, and proud. Vain of their fortune, neither himself nor his wife would associate with any of the inhabitants of D——, except Mrs. Stapleton, Lady Egerton’s aunt, with whom Maria, then Miss Hallifax, resided; and few of the

gentlemen's families round the country visited them, so that we lived almost in entire solitude.

“Miss Hallifax was several years older than myself, but even at that early period of my life, she considered me as her companion; the gratitude I at first felt for this condescension, soon improved into a sincere and lasting friendship, for an obligation in childhood can never be forgotten. Maria was the only young person with whom I was permitted to associate, lest, as Mrs. Bridges used to tell me, I should learn vulgar manners; and as I grew older the pleasure of visiting her was denied me, from the fear of my there meeting any of the officers, who sometimes came with her father, sometimes with messages from him, and perhaps four or five times a year there might have been a possibility of my seeing them.

“My mind, naturally generous, and animated from the constraint in which I was kept, soon began to entertain a sincere dislike to my goalers, and this in time was heightened by the meanness of their principles, and the illiberality of their sentiments. How often have they told me I was greatly above all the paltry inhabitants of that place, and that I ought to look down on them with contempt, instead of wishing for their society? and when I express a different opinion, would lament that they could not make me set a just value on myself. Indeed if I did not, they were perfectly free from blame, as they exerted all their powers to teach me vanity and pride.

“When I was about fourteen, we had a visit from Mr. Digby, a first cousin of my mother and of the same name, to whom the estate would go if I were so imprudent as to marry before I came of age. He was at this time seven and thirty, most frightfully ugly, and extremely disagreeable in every other respect; but my good guardian, who thought it a pity the estate should go out of the family, and knowing he had a fancy to become master of Castle Digby, persuaded him to come into Devonshire and try his influence upon my heart; and a few days after his arrival, Mr. Bridges told me to look upon him as my future husband. This with the spirit natural to me I instantly refused, and replied “that I was by no means ignorant of the clause in my aunt's will, which impowered him to refuse his consent to my marrying till I was of age, but did not oblige me to marry any one whom he chose to propose to me, and that Mr. Digby might be certain I should never fix on him.” Mr. Bridges was surprized at the resolution with which I spoke, and in vain attempted to alter my determination: I was positive, and he at last gave up the point, too sensible of the truth of my assertion, and hoping that in time I might regard my cousin with more favour. But Mr. Digby himself, convinced by my behaviour, of the aversion which I really felt, entertained no hopes of a change in my sentiments; resolving therefore if possible to possess my fortune, which was in his eyes of infinitely the most consequence, he employed a stratagem so base, that had I not the most positive proofs of his artifice, I could never have believed it. Though it was long after this that it came to my knowledge, I had better mention it here, as my story will be clearer and more connected.

“Mr. Digby was a man of the world, and of course from frequently meeting with bad characters, he could more easily discern the specious veil which covers a deceitful

and interested heart: he had not been three weeks in the house, before he discovered, that gold was the idol of De Tournay's worship, and made no scruple of disclosing his scheme to her, and asking her assistance, which she readily promised for the sake of the reward he offered, which was considerable, and not merely sufficient to secure her an independence, but support her in her own country with ease and elegance. He saw the restraint in which I lived, and how little it was suited to the natural vivacity of my disposition: he saw how ardently my heart panted for liberty, and that it had yet seven long years of bondage to endure. Founding his hopes on all this, he required of De Tournay to endeavour to move my heart in his favour, but if this was unsuccessful, which he feared it would be, then she was to make my confinement even stricter than it then was, and taking advantage of my discontent, introduce some person to me as a lover, to whom my fortune might be an attraction, and who was ignorant of the terms on which I was to possess it. She was to favour my elopement with this lover, which it was easily in her power to contrive, without appearing to have any share in the scheme.

“Having given her these instructions, he left her to execute them and returned to London. But how can a person place any confidence in those, who can betray that already reposed in them? this artful woman, sensible that she might make a double advantage of me, ceased not to inform me of the ill qualities and bad disposition of the man proposed me by my guardian. I gave implicit belief to all she said, and for once, she certainly spoke truth; perhaps from well knowing that if she kept me from marrying him, and could sell me to another, she insured a double reward. But every other part of Mr. Digby's instructions she so faithfully fulfilled, that for a twelvemonth I past the most wretched life imaginable; debarred of my usual visits to Miss Hallifax, who was now eighteen, her unfortunate lover, Mr. Lisburne, being frequently with her, and sometimes accompanied by his brother officers, as the regiment was quartered not many miles distant, and Mr. Bridges thought there was contagion in a red coat; I seldom went out at all, but was then far from guessing the real reason of this additional restraint. My governess used to make frequent complaints to my guardian of the levity of my disposition, and beg I might not have so much liberty; then when we were alone, would weep over me like a crocodile at the unhappy life I led, and wish it was in her power to assist me. Thus situated, can you wonder that I erred, or that when liberty, and, as I thought, happiness was offered me, by one who had been the friend, and was to have been the guide of my youth, I refused not to accept it? But I am now coming to that part of my history which it is most painful to me to relate, and am already so much fatigued, it is not in my power to go on.

Sir William kissing her still burning hand, begged her not to think of proceeding at any time, for that what she had said was sufficient to convince him she had been unfortunate, but not guilty. “Ah,” cried she, “you have yet seen me in the best light, may you continue in the same opinion when you have heard all, and I shall be happy!” Mrs. Ashbourn then observing that she was extremely languid, desired Sir William to take his leave, and persuaded her to lie down, to which she consented.

The next morning early Lady Clarendon sent to enquire for her, and heard the agitation of her mind had prevented her from sleeping, but that she entreated Sir William would not fail of coming at the appointed hour, as she should have no peace till she had

concluded her story. With this request he complied, though unwillingly, from the fear of hurting her; and accompanied by Honoria, again attended the fair penitent, as Mrs. Ashbourn humorously called her.

## CHAP. XXVII.

ON Sir William's entering the chamber, Miss Onslow begged to know if he still remained unprejudiced against her, and whether a night's mediation had not made her appear in a more unfavourable light than when they parted. He assured her it was quite the reverse, and this declaration giving her spirits, she continued.

"I was just turned of fifteen, when the —— regiment came into the town; and without any other idea than that of receiving amusement from the sight of the soldiers, when they marched by in form to go to exercise, and from hearing the drums and music, I always ran eagerly to the window; this was censured by my rigid guardians, who immediately removed me into a parlour that looked only into the garden, and determined to sit constantly there till the regiment left D——. Such ridiculous and strange precautions excited in me more resentment than regret, as though not particularly grieved at this circumstance, yet looking upon it as a forerunner of great acts of tyranny, it increased my dislike and aversion.

"I complained to De Tournay, who promised to make me amends by giving me more secret liberty. As Mrs. Bridges, from her constantly taking their side of the question, placed the most entire dependance on her, she easily persuaded them to let me walk sometimes beyond the limits of the garden which had lately been my bounds. They consented, not having an idea that she could deceive them. The first time we took the benefit of this indulgence, we passed several of the officers, all of whom regarded us in a very particular manner. De Tournay, I then thought accidentally, dropped her handkerchief; Captain Harcourt, who was looking after us, ran back to pick it up and restore it to her; this of course introduced some conversation: he joined us, and walked a little way, was extremely polite to her, and gallant to me: he paid me a thousand compliments, which I scarcely understood; I knew however he tried to please me, and was conscious his design was not unsuccessful. We were then returning home, and the sight of the house filled me with alarm I could not conceal. "O! Sir, (cried I) you must leave us, indeed you must, or we shall be both locked up." "What do you mean, my charming young lady?" (replied he). "Why (interrupted my governess) this poor child is kept like a prisoner in the Bastile by her guardian, who is afraid, as she has a vast fortune, that somebody will attempt her release." "Ah! (exclaimed he) was that happy enterprize but reserved for me!" "You must not now stay with us any longer (added she), but if you wish to know more, at seven o'clock this evening I shall be at the stationer's, but do not, I beseech you, mention to any one that you have met us;" he promised, and departed.

"We arrived at home. I had never seen before so handsome, so polite, so elegant a man as this young officer; these were my sentiments at least then—the sentiments of fifteen. To confess the truth he was constantly in my thoughts, and this De Tournay easily perceived, for I was a novice in deceit. We walked frequently, and generally met him; I fancied myself attached to him, and he undoubtedly appeared so to me. My governess had informed him of the peculiarity of my situation, mentioned her grief at the total seclusion in which I lived, but said not a word of the clause in my aunt's will. This

encouraged him to declare a passion for me, which he solicited her to interest herself in; she promised to favour his pretences if he would strictly conceal them from all his friends, fearing, as she said, a discovery which would inevitably ruin her: she did fear a discovery, but it was that he would hear on what terms only I inherited my estate. In short, for let me not dwell on a subject so peculiarly painful to me; in a few weeks De Tournay, by working on my mind in the most artful manner, by alternately painting the pleasures I should find in the world, and assuring me if I did not contrive some way to avoid it, I should certainly be sacrificed to Mr. Digby, who she declared was coming shortly to D—— for that purpose, persuaded me to elope with Captain Harcourt. More terrified at her information, than induced by the expectation of receiving any pleasure from an intercourse with the world, I at last gave an unwilling consent, hoping at least for liberty, and fancying in that every happiness was included; at the same time prepossessed in the favor of the man to whom I was on the point of resigning myself, yet, shocked at the step I was going to take, I hesitated several hours, till De Tournay, telling me I must decide immediately, I hastily seized a pen, and wrote a few lines to say “I would be ready at the appointed hour.” When this was dispatched, she allowed me no time for reflection, but hastened me to pack up the few things necessary for me to take; but to avoid herself incurring any suspicion of being an accomplice, she pretended at dinner to have a violent head-ach and cold chills, and immediately went to bed. As soon as it grew dark, according to the proposed plan, I begged leave to go and sit with her, till I went to bed myself; this was directly granted, and as I said, that she might be no more disturbed, I desired I might take up her whey. When I entered her chamber, I trembled so violently, that she feared I should not have spirit to execute the plan; however she did all in her power to encourage me, and as my flight would not be known till the morning, she ensured me from being overtaken, even if a pursuit was begun: I must here observe, I slept alone in a room within her’s, so that it was easy for her to say the next day, “that when I brought up the whey, I told her I could not be spared immediately, but that I would come to bed very softly for fear of disturbing her, and that not awaking herself till the middle of the night, she concluded I was safe in my chamber.” Taking an affectionate leave of this vile woman, I stole down stairs, and opening the door to the garden, ran breathless with terror down the gravel walk, leading to the gate, which Captain Harcourt had opened, and was waiting with a post chaise and four, into which he lifted me, and we drove off with the utmost expedition. He saw the agitation of my mind, and soothed it with tenderness; at length my terror subsided, and the joy I felt at my escape, overcame every other sensation.

We travelled many hours without stopping to change horses, when thinking we were in no danger of a pursuit, I consented to stay at the inn at —— to breakfast. Whilst I was pouring out the tea, I saw a man on horseback ride furiously into the inn-yard and enquire for Captain Harcourt: dreadfully frightened, I had scarcely strength to desire him to let me know the meaning of this message directly: he left the room, and when he returned, vexation and embarrassment were so visible in his countenance, that my heart again sunk with apprehension; but with a forced smile he assured me it was nothing but an express from one of his brother officers respecting regimental business, and to convince me of this, folded it down, and shewed me the name, Edward Johnston, and then went to order, as he said, the carriage that moment.

“I sat some time very quietly; at last wondering I had no summons to attend him, I rang the bell, and asked if the chaise was ready, and where the gentleman was? the waiter promised to enquire, but not returning, I grew seriously uneasy, and went out myself to demand the reason, when I met the landlady entering. Upon my repeating the question, she replied with extreme surprize, that the gentleman was gone, and she thought I knew it. “Gone! where?” cried I in an agony. “Indeed, Miss, (said she) I do not know: he ordered the chaise to drive a little way from the house, and then following, stepped in, after paying the bill, and I supposed you were going another way.” I scarcely heard the latter part of this speech, but burst into tears, and said, if they would tell me which way he was gone, I would pursue him; and actually ran out of the parlour: but the landlady catching hold of my gown, prevented me from executing this mad scheme. At this moment the ostler came up with a letter in his hand, which he gave his mistress, and said, it was dropped by the gentleman when he ordered the chaise. Instantly knowing it to be the same he had shewn me the signature of, I snatched it from her, hoping it would develop the reason of his leaving me in this barbarous and unaccountable manner. It did give me reason indeed, but how was my agony and horror encreased, by knowing the truth!” Emily then took out a copy of this letter and read,

“To Captain HARCOURT.

“HAD you sooner informed me of your intentions, I might have saved you a useless and expensive journey. I received your letter but this moment. I am just returned from Mrs. Stapleton’s, where I was assured, and you may believe from the best authority, that Miss Onslow will not have a single shilling of her fortune if she marries without her guardian’s consent, and that you can never hope to obtain, as it is promised to Mr. Digby. You have been deceived and betrayed, and must therefore deceive in your turn. I cannot suppose you feel any thing like a passion for such a mere silly child, and therefore can have no regret at leaving her. If this reaches you before it is too late, take the first opportunity of convincing her and all the world, that you are a man of too much sense to be the dupe of such a specious artifice.

“EDWARD JOHNSTON.”

“When I had finished reading it, rage, mortification, shame and disappointment, choaked my utterance and suspended my tears. I fell breathless into the good woman’s arms, who pitied my agitation, though insensible of the cause. When speech and recollection were again lent me, I told her the situation I was left in, and my reasons for quitting my home; and she persuaded me either to pursue the vile wretch who had thus inhumanly abandoned me, or return to my friends. The latter step would undoubtedly have been the properest, but my shame prevented me from following it, and against the other, my pride revolted. I could resolve on nothing, though to induce me she promised I should have a post chaise of her’s to convey me entirely to D——, and might pay for it another time, or just when it suited me. This offer, kind as it was, I could not accept, and felt at that moment as if I would rather die than go back into Devonshire, where, if I had experienced unkind treatment when I did not deserve it, what could I expect when my

conduct had proved the restraint they imposed was necessary, though it had been ineffectual?

“Whilst wavering in this manner, a coach and four with three ladies and a gentleman in it, drove into the inn yard, and the landlady left me to attend them. In a few minutes she re-entered the room followed by Mrs. Ashbourn, for it was her, to whom on her alighting she had repeated my sad story, and begged she would add her advice to strengthen that which she had already given me. I was sitting with my head on my folded arms on a table drowned in tears, when the noise of opening the door made me look up: the benevolence of Mrs. Ashbourn’s countenance, [pardon me, madam, for reciting your praises in your presence, but without them my narrative would be incomplete] immediately engaged my attention, and I looked up to her as the guardian angel who was to save me from the deep distress into which my imprudence had plunged me, and point out a way for my escape from the evils which surrounded me. She approached me, and taking my hand, tenderly begged me not to afflict myself thus deeply, but rather rejoice at the fortunate accident, which by shewing me the real character of the man I had chosen, should convince me of the happiness of being released from him. I made no answer, my heart was too much oppressed to suffer me to speak, but I held out the letter which had informed me of the truth. She read it, and when she had concluded, exclaimed, “Miss Onslow, why, are you Emily Onslow, the little girl I have so often seen at Castle Digby?” I looked up, but could not after so long an absence have the slightest recollection of her person, but convinced by her manner she had known me, I instantly assured her I was Mrs. Bridges’ niece, and had been, till seven years old, an inhabitant of the place she mentioned. When she told me her name it seemed familiar to me, and when she introduced her daughters as my former companions and playfellows, I would have flown to embrace them, but was restrained by a consciousness that I was wholly unworthy of their notice.

“To dwell no longer on this conversation, and shorten my narrative as much as possible, I will only inform you, that my dear Mrs. Ashbourn, after offering to take me back to my guardian herself, but finding me extremely averse, desired I would accompany her to London, from whence Mr. Ashbourn should write to Mr. Bridges and let him know the particulars of my elopement, and intercede with him for his pardon of a step, which his severities and De Tournay’s persuasions, had rendered more excusable. To this I joyfully consented; and on our arrival in town Mr. Ashbourn wrote to the above purpose, and added, at Mrs. Ashbourn’s request, that as it was my earnest desire not to return into Devonshire if he would permit me to remain with them during my minority, they would take every care of my education and morals, that Mr. Bridges could wish. In answer to this, my guardian thanked Mr. Ashbourn for his kind offer, which he gladly accepted, saying it would release him from a troublesome and disagreeable charge; he added that suspecting from his letter some duplicity in De Tournay’s conduct, he had charged her with it, and that after hesitating some time she at last, terrified at his threats, confessed what I before mentioned respecting Mr. Digby; and that Captain Harcourt had already given her two hundred pounds, and had promised her a farther recompence, but hearing that her schemes had proved ineffectual, and fearing he would return and demand his money, she, unknown to the family, departed early in the morning, a day or two after

she had received this intelligence; leaving a letter behind to explain her reasons. Mr. Bridges acknowledged that her conduct lessened the atrocity of mine, but that nothing could wholly excuse it; and concluded with hoping that I should not repay Mrs. Ashbourn's attention, as I had done theirs.

"Mrs. Ashbourn's behaviour was indeed so different from what I had experienced since the death of my aunt, that my heart and mind seemed wholly altered. Indulgent to my foibles, I never wished to conceal them from her, nor had I an idea that I would not freely have exposed to her, during the time I have been her grateful ward. If I have any merit, to her precepts and example I am indebted; she has fixed my principles, formed my mind, and every good sentiment I possess is owing to her". "Hush, my dear girl, (cried Mrs. Ashbourn) or I must leave the room." "Pardon, dear madam, (continued Emily) the involuntary effusions of my heart, but I will take care. Indeed I have now almost concluded; I must however add, Sir William, that I have often thought of mentioning this to you, but considering the period which would make it necessary, yet at a great distance, I always put off the evil day, little thinking how dearly I should repent my concealment. Since my leaving Devonshire I have never revisited it, but have frequently seen my guardian in London. You, my dear Miss Wentworth, was present at one of our interviews, and heard Mrs. Bridges question me respecting the Captain. I have often regretted that I did not then confess to you every particular, but I was fearful of losing your good opinion. I answered her truly that I had not seen him since, nor did I ever till we met at the ball. What passed then between us, is all I have now to recite.

"When he first saw me from the opposite side of the room, he directly crossed over, and addressed me with evident marks of surprize, but with an undaunted assurance expressed his happiness at again meeting me, after so long a separation. I was, as you may believe, extremely confused, and almost struck dumb at his confidence in daring to speak to me after what had passed; but endeavouring to recollect myself, I replied with the most frigid coldness, and attempted to leave him; but he seized my hand, and in the universal confusion the room was then in, he could, without being observed, endeavour to apologize for his former behaviour: he made some of the most ridiculous excuses possible, framed only at the moment, for I believe he had not the least idea I was at Bath; said he was sent for express to a dying relation, and on his returning to inform me of it, was taken by some bailiffs who lay in wait for him; that when he was released, he found I had wholly left Devonshire, and knew not where to enquire for me; that his regiment was then ordered abroad, and he had not been now in England above two months, all which time he had spent in seeking me. "I am so far, Captain Harcourt, (I replied), from requiring an apology for your conduct, that I think myself highly obliged to you for preserving me from misery and ruin; both which must have been the consequence of our marriage." At that moment, Sir William, you came up with Miss Wentworth, and prevented my saying more, and during the remainder of the evening he only found an opportunity to tell me, he should wait on me the next day to give me a farther explanation, and I begged he would not take the trouble, as he most certainly would not be admitted. I was uneasy and restless the whole evening, though I scarcely knew why, for I did not then imagine he would persecute me again. I told Mrs. Ashbourn on our return: she promised me if he dared call, to see him herself; but this I fancy he was afraid

of, for the next morning when he rapped at the door, he refused to walk in, hearing I was not at home. He then followed me to the pump room, and seating himself by my side, began the same subject, till I informed him I had possession of Mr. Johnston's letter, and was not unacquainted with his treaty with De Tournay. This intelligence at first disconcerted him, but recovering himself, he told me with the utmost insolence, if I did not listen to his proposals, he would apply to Sir William, whose attachment to me he was not ignorant of, and make him sensible of the priority of his claim, and that he would maintain his cause with his last breath. Dreadfully terrified at this menace, and being certain if he met you, a duel must ensue, I was endeavouring to reply in such a manner, as to put him for some time into a better humour, yet without encouraging hopes I never meant to fulfil; this was so difficult that I was still silent when you entered, and he rose directly to put, as I thought, his purpose in execution. The idea deprived me at once of reason, and as Fanny has since told me, I seized his arm: what followed you know. If, Sir William, your suspicions are not yet lessened, I forgive you; undoubtedly appearances were strongly against me; yet believe me the idea of dying unjustified in your opinion, will add many pangs to those I shall perhaps shortly suffer. But if by this full confession of all my faults, follies and misfortunes, your doubts are removed; conscious of the rectitude of my heart, glorying in its attachment to you, and satisfied with your approbation, I shall die in peace."

The length of her narrative, but particularly the energy with which she spoke her last address, had so exhausted her, that she leaned back in her chair and almost fainted: but long before she had concluded, Sir William threw himself at her feet, and with all his rhetoric endeavoured to convince her he was perfectly satisfied, and had not a wish left but for the perfect restoration of her health. When she recovered, this repeated assertion appeared to give her uncommon pleasure, but Mrs. Ashbourn, perceiving that she was faint and languid, would not permit her to speak, but declared the first word she uttered, Sir William should leave her. This resolution she heard with a smile, and put her hand on her mouth in token of obedience, nor did she once break through the restraint imposed on her. He sat about half an hour conversing with the rest of the party on the subject which had so long engrossed their attention, and often, though hopeless of an answer, addressed her; till Honoria, whose prudence was not lost in her affection, told him it was time to retire: he took the hint, tho' very unwillingly, left Emily, and returned to his mother, who was extremely anxious to hear the conclusion of the story, actuated not merely by curiosity, but by an earnest desire to know how far Captain Harcourt's report had its foundation in truth, well knowing her son's future happiness depended on Emily's justification. She was perfectly satisfied with the recital, convinced her errors proceeded more from the conduct of those around her, than from any fault in her own disposition: and thinking it in fact a fortunate circumstance, from its throwing her on the protection of so amiable a woman as Mrs. Ashbourn, from whom she had undoubtedly acquired those excellent qualities, which notwithstanding the natural goodness of her heart, might have never appeared under the tuition of a woman like De Tournay, and the inspection of minds so illiberal as Mr. and Mrs. Bridges evidently possessed.

## CHAP. XXVIII.

FROM this time both Sir William and Miss Onslow daily regained strength, and Emily could no longer fancy herself in a decline, an idea which had for some time taken possession of her mind, but which the alteration in her countenance had now rendered ridiculous.

During their illness, Honoria, though her time had been fully engrossed, had not forgotten the Lamberts, for though not in her power to visit, she had often sent to enquire for them, and received the most satisfactory answers: but the first morning she had leisure, she called in Westgate-street, and found they were to leave Bath in a few days. Mrs. Lambert was entirely recovered, and returned her the most grateful thanks for her kind attentions. Honoria was sorry that it was not in her power to do more for them, but determined to write by them to Miss Melmoth, whose liberal heart and large fortune enabled her to assist them. Full of her purpose, she returned home, and directly began her letter, giving her friend an account of all that had passed respecting Miss Onslow, and mentioning the Lamberts with peculiar regard, informing her of the part Colonel Effingham had in their history, but dwelling as slightly as possible on his liberality; and added that she had herself once seen him at a distance. This letter, with a very polite and affectionate note she sent to Mrs. Lambert, requesting she would if possible let one of her grand-daughters deliver into Miss Melmoth's own hands, which the old lady faithfully promised.

Honoria's mind now relieved from the anxieties which had lately wholly taken it up, had leisure to think of herself, and began to grow extremely uneasy at not hearing from Lady Eustace; as several months had by this time elapsed since there had been a possibility of receiving letters. Tormented by a thousand reflections, which embittered the happiness she would otherwise have experienced from the friendship and attention of those around her, she sometimes imagined Lady Eustace was dead, at others, ill and incapable of writing, and once, but only once, that surrounded by the pleasures and magnificence of the East, she had forgotten her humble but sincere friend in England; when her thoughts were again called from her own situation, by a new and unexpected misfortune that befell her kind protectress, Lady Clarendon, and involved her in the deepest affliction.

One morning when Honoria was going to the Pump room earlier than usual, she was surprized on passing by Miss Clarendon's chamber, to see the door open, as Louisa was seldom drest at that hour. Finding that she was not at home, she expected to meet her, but was disappointed: she appeared not at breakfast, and when it was over, at Lady Clarendon's desire Honoria enquired for her at Mrs. Ashbourn's, Mrs. Betterton's, and at several other houses where she was intimate, but could hear nothing of her. The whole day passed without any news, and they then could not but imagine she was eloped with some person, but *who* they could form no idea, as they had not observed any gentleman pay her attention enough, to authorize them to suppose he was the companion of her flight. To send after her was vain, as they could not even guess which way she was gone.

Her drawers were strictly searched, but no letter or memorandum was found to throw any light upon this strange affair; when the following afternoon the mystery was at once developed by the mistress of the house where Mrs. Ashbourn lodged. She had been two or three days at Bristol, having been sent for by a sister who was ill: on her return, after apologizing to Mrs. Ashbourn for the liberty, she begged to know if Miss Clarendon was still at Bath. The affair was then so well known, that Mrs. Ashbourn scrupled not saying she left Bath the morning before, but that no one knew or could guess where or with whom she was gone. Mrs. Woodward then replied she was sorry to be able to give her that information, which she was sure it would concern all the family to hear. Mrs. Ashbourn alarmed, begged her to be explicit, and she continued.

“My brother-in-law, madam, lives in a narrow and rather retired street in Bristol, where he sometimes lets lodgings. A few weeks ago a gentleman came to take them, who appeared to be afraid of something, but they could not tell what; he had a servant with him who was very close indeed, and so they thought at first he was afraid of the bailiffs, as he never went out at all for a fortnight, and afterwards only when ’twas dark; but then they thought if that had been the case, he would not have kept so snug on Sundays: however, as he paid them well, to be sure ’twas none of their business who or what he was. So when I went over, and my sister tells me this; thinks I, I will have a peep at him; so I watched him out, and when I saw him I thought, though I could not be certain, that it was that very gentleman who came here one morning after Miss Onslow, and afterwards fought with Sir William; and upon talking to my sister I was more sure, for I found he began to go abroad about the time Sir William was declared out of danger.”

Mrs. Ashbourn had hitherto waited the end of this long harangue with a great deal of patience, well knowing an attempt to hasten her to the point, would only lengthen it, but hearing that Captain Harcourt was the person she was speaking of, her astonishment compelled her to break silence, and she exclaimed, “Surely it is impossible! that abandoned girl could not go off with a man who had so nearly taken her brother’s life?” “I’ll tell you all I know, madam, (returned Mrs. Woodward) Yesterday morning as I was getting up, I saw a chaise stand at the door, and calling one of my nieces, a girl about fourteen, I asked her who it was waiting for, and she told me, Mr. Harding, for that was the name the gentleman went by, who was going away. Why (says I) I never heard he was going last night.” “No, (says she) aunt, ’tis all a sudden thing, but there’s a fine young lady come to fetch him, so he is paying my father as fast as he can, for he did not expect her so soon.” “So, ma’am, upon this, you must needs think my curiosity was raised, and I went down into the shop, and looking through the window into the chaise, I could almost have sworn it was Miss Clarendon, though I did not see her face, because she had a crape veil over her hat; but she had on a dark blue great coat, and a white beaver hat, with purple ribbons, and a canary muff; and that you know, madam, was just as she used to dress in the morning at the Pump room. I did not say any thing to my sister that I knew the lady, and presently Captain Harcourt got in, and they drove off as fast as possible.”

This intelligence extremely afflicted Mrs. Ashbourn, as she knew it would deeply wound Lady Clarendon to hear that her daughter was gone off with one, who might almost have been considered as her brother's murderer. Neither Dorothea or Fanny were surprized, and only grieved on her ladyship's account, as they had long seen and detested Louisa's character, and doubted not but her union with Captain Harcourt would in time be her punishment. His motive was evident; she had thirty thousands pounds independent of her mother, a fortune that was left her by an uncle; and disappointed in his designs upon Emily, whose two thousand a year would have still better pleased him, it was not to be wondered at, that he renewed those addresses to Miss Clarendon, which commenced at Northampton. They immediately sent to Sir William, and informed him, begged he would break it to Lady Clarendon, but his rage was so violent, that he was wholly unfit for the task, which at last Honoria undertook.

Lady Clarendon received this account with an agony of tears, at this additional instance of the depravity of her child; she fell on Honoria's neck, and fondly embracing her, intreated her to supply the place of her lost and undone Louisa, whom she ardently hoped never again to see: this wish, though exprest in the first bitterness of grief and resentment, struck Honoria as inconsistent with the general mildness of her character; but truly sympathizing in her grief, she dropped on her knees, and in the most affectionate manner declared whilst her Ladyship would afford her protection, she would never quit her. Lady Clarendon, soothed by her attentions, at length grew calm, and when Sir William entered the room, charged him by his duty and affection to her, never to seek revenge on the man who had so much injured them. "You have once met him, (added she) though on a different occasion; your life had nearly been the sacrifice; risque it not again, I beseech you; the unworthy girl deserves not your attention, and believe me, the moment you attempt to meet him, will be the last of my existence, for I could not survive even the apprehension of your danger." Sir William, greatly affected at this solemn adjuration, promised faithfully his compliance with every thing she requested, and said he would endeavour to forget his lost and unhappy sister.

This affair and its being extremely canvassed at all the public and private parties, determined them to leave Bath as soon as Emily's health would permit her to undertake the journey; and in less than a fortnight from Miss Clarendon's elopement, the whole party arrived in London; Lady Clarendon and her family in Harley-street, and Mrs. Ashbourn in Portman Square.

The morning after their arrival, Miss Onslow came to Honoria to communicate to her the contents of two letters which she found had been some time laying for her. The first which claimed her attention was a foreign one, the direction in Lady Egerton's hand, and the seal black: it informed her of the death of Sir William, which was caused by the following circumstance. On their first coming to Paris, whilst Sir William waited there some time on business, before he put his scheme in execution of placing his Lady in a convent, he was introduced to a French Officer of distinction, who with the gallantry peculiar to his nation, paid Lady Egerton a thousand compliments, which in the state Sir William's mind was then in, gave him unusual pain, and he hastened the time of their departure as much as possible, not chusing by confining her more strictly during their

stay, to give any suspicion of the natural turn of his disposition. He took her to a convent in one of the southern provinces, where he left her, and taking a short tour, returned to see her once more before he quitted the kingdom. Going towards the place of her retreat, he was alarmed and surprized to meet the Officer whose assiduities had so tormented him, just coming from it, and with his usual insolence of manner asked him whom he had been visiting there? The Officer told him it was a question he had no right to make, and to which he certainly should not reply; but irritated at his impertinence, demanded instant satisfaction. They were both armed, and they fought immediately, and Sir William was deeply, though not dangerously, wounded. He was removed to a private house, where Lady Egerton, whom he sent for out of the convent, attended him. The wound would quickly have been healed but for the agitation of his mind, which threw him into a fever. He had however the satisfaction of knowing his suspicions were wholly without foundation. The Officer who was entirely ignorant where Lady Egerton was, had been to visit a sister, the irregularity of whose conduct had induced her parents to confine her, her brother sometimes came to see her, and pay the Lady Abbess for her board. It was returning from her, he unfortunately met Sir William, and supposing his question to arise from having heard the history of his sister, was more easily offended, and resented it with a warmth inconsistent with his general character. But when he learned it was jealousy; to clear the lady's honor from the slightest imputation, he generously declared the whole circumstance, chusing rather to expose the misfortunes of his family, than suffer an innocent woman to lie under condemnation.

The consequence of this was, that Sir William, weakened by his fever, and tormented by the recollection that from the natural impetuosity of his temper he had drawn every evil of his past life upon himself, grew daily worse, and after languishing some time, expired in Lady Egerton's arms, who, though she still lamented, had long truly forgiven the death of her unfortunate lover. He died a sincere penitent, and made her every atonement in his power, by leaving her in addition to her jointure, which was considerable, all the ready money he possess; the estate, as he had no children, being entailed upon a distant branch of his family.

Of all these circumstances Lady Egerton informed her friend, and added it was her intention to quit France as soon as possible, and spend the first year of her widowhood with her aunt Stapleton, in Devonshire; after which she would fix her residence near whatever spot Emily was settled on; for no stranger to her engagement to Sir William, she imagined by that time it would be concluded. She also mentioned an event which happened on her return from ——. Being detained by an accident which the carriage met with at a small town about thirty leagues from Paris, she was obliged to wait at a little inn till it could be repaired: The mistress was ill and confined to her room, with a disorder which it was thought would shortly put a period to her existence; but seeing Lady Egerton alight, she sent her a message to beg to have the honor of speaking with her, a request she humanely complied with. The woman's face and body were so swoln with the dropsy, that even if so many years had not elapsed since they met, she could not have recollected her; but how was she astonished when she said her name had been De Tournay! and that conscious of Lady Egerton's benevolent disposition, she wished to see her, anxious to hear of Miss Onslow; as to know if she was well and happy, would give

her some comfort in her last moments: she confessed the guilt of her past conduct, but hoped the sufferings she had since experienced would in some degree atone for it. She appeared so near her end, and so sensible of her errors, that Lady Egerton would not add to her remorse by reproaches; but by giving her an account of Miss Onslow's situation, she removed some of the weight which lay so heavy on her heart. She then asked how she came in that miserable situation? to which the poor wretch replied, that when she left England with Captain Harcourt's two hundred pounds, she unfortunately fell into company with a man, who discovering what she possessed, and assuming the character of a gentleman, persuaded her to marry him; and soon spent not only that money, but all that she had saved during her residence in England in the quality of governess: that after this was gone, they met with innumerable distresses, and at last her husband settled in that place; they had lived there two years, and for almost the whole time her health had been declining. She added, that "she hoped Heaven would accept her unfeigned repentance, and that she looked upon every calamity she had since suffered, as a judgment for her unprincipled behaviour to Miss Onslow." Lady Egerton finding she was in no pecuniary distress, could only console her with an assurance that Miss Onslow would freely pardon her, and wishing her better health, she left the room, as her carriage at that moment drove to the door.—When she had finished this little story, she concluded her letter with earnestly hoping they should soon meet, and requesting to know where Miss Wentworth was, for whom she said she had a sincere affection, and would endeavour to make her every reparation in her power for the unjust aspersions Sir William had thrown on her character.

Honorina was pleasingly affected at Lady Egerton's kind remembrance, and joined with Miss Onslow in rejoicing at her release, and the consideration Sir William had shewn in the disposal of his effects. De Tournay's repentance also gave great satisfaction to Emily, and afforded her an ample subject for meditation upon the justice of Providence, in decreeing that the money which had been the price of her integrity, should be the means of her punishment.

The other letter was from Miss Walton; it informed her that she had strictly fulfilled her injunctions in vindicating Miss Wentworth's character every where; that the story gained universal credit, and excited universal mirth; that at first Mrs. Hunter was extremely angry, and accused Miss Wentworth of a breach of confidence, but that she went herself, and cleared her from the imputation, by telling her the story came from Mr. Dixon and Counsellor Milford. This intelligence raised a violent quarrel between Mr. Hunter and his lady, the result of which was, that the gentleman, who ruled with an absolute sway, insisted upon it that she should never more make herself ridiculous by writing, and from that time debarred her the use of pen and ink, locked up the library, and insisted upon her looking into her family, learning whist, and attending him to card parties. The poor lady having given up every thing to him, was compelled to obey, though she did it at first with a very ill grace; but that Mr. Hunter persisting in his resolution, she tried to accommodate herself to his will, and was at present much altered for the better, but that Miss Wentworth's vindication had made an irreparable breach between Miss Winterton and her friend, the former declaring it was an unparalleled instance of barbarity to suffer her to languish for so many months under the idea of her

lover's inconstancy, when by confessing the truth, she had it in her power to restore peace to her afflicted bosom. Miss Walton added, it gave her sincere pleasure to have had it in her power to be of any service to Miss Wentworth, for whom she had a high respect and esteem; and concluded with begging both her and Miss Onslow would accept her compliments and best wishes.

Lady Clarendon was rejoiced this explanation had taken place, as she could not endure the idea of her innocent and beloved young friend lying under any imputation of so much consequence to her character; and sincerely joined her in thanking Emily for her spirited interference.

A few days after this, Honoria received a most affectionate letter from Miss Melmoth, requesting her to come to Southern Lodge, if only for a few days, and promising to send her carriage. Honoria, from knowing the uneasiness which still preyed on Lady Clarendon's mind on her daughter's account, would have declined this invitation for the present, but her Ladyship insisted on her going, and at length she unwillingly complied.

Miss Melmoth received her with that warmth and enthusiasm of friendship which ever marked her character, and rejoiced in the amendment of her health, which was, as she said, visible in her countenance. Honoria then gave her a minute relation of every occurrence she had met with since they parted, which it was impossible to do wholly by letter, only softening Lady Pelham's behaviour. Miss Melmoth listened with an attention that proved how deeply she interested herself in the recital. She sympathised in Honoria's joy at meeting Emily Onslow, and though personally unknown, adored Lady Clarendon for her attachment to her. Our heroine then enquired for the Fairfaxes and Lamberts; the former, Miss Melmoth said, had yet been very little at Ashbury, but that when they were settled, she hoped they would be good neighbours, as she thought Mrs. Fairfax a most pleasing and amiable woman. The Lamberts, she added, were gone to London with a very happy prospect. Mrs. Lambert seeing in the papers the death of a distant relation of her daughter in law, who left no children, wrote through a friend, to make some enquiry into the right her grand-children might have from their mother to claim some share in the estate; and that in consequence of this she had discovered their uncle, Major Southmore, who had long been endeavouring, though without success, to find his sister and her children. He happened to be at the chambers of the lawyer, who had the management of the estate which now devolved to him, when Mrs. Lambert's friend mentioned the childrens' claim: the name instantly struck him, and finding he was not mistaken, he took a post-chaise and went immediately into Hertfordshire, from whence he brought the whole family to his house in London; expressing the most grateful thanks to the old lady for the care she had taken of his nephews and nieces, but lamenting the death of his sister, which was before unknown to him. Miss Melmoth added, that before their departure Lucy came to her to give her this account, which she received with great pleasure. Honoria was delighted to find they were related to her old friend Major Southmore, and taking the direction which Lucy had given Miss Melmoth, determined to take the first opportunity of calling on them, when she returned to London.

Happy in the society of her beloved friend, a week passed rapidly away, and Honoria having resolved not to exceed that time, on the eighth morning left Southern Lodge with Miss Melmoth, who accompanied her to Cheshunt, where they parted; and Lady Clarendon's chariot meeting her, she arrived to dinner in Harley street.

## CHAP. XXIX.

LADY Clarendon received Honoria with the most visible satisfaction; this little absence had endeared her to her heart, and the *ennui* and languor which had the whole possession of her mind, whilst deprived of her lively and animated conversation, convinced her how essential her presence was to her happiness. Grateful for her reception, and affected by its kindness, Honoria determined to put off for some days her intended visit to the Lamberts, and devote her whole time to her amiable and respected friend.

One day Lady Clarendon was sitting in her dressing room, and Honoria reading to her, when she was called down stairs to some person on business. During her absence, she sent up her keys to Honoria, and begged she would open a large closet in the room where she was, and send her a bundle of papers she would find there. Honoria obeyed her, gave the parcel to the servant, and was going to shut the door, when she was startled at seeing a trunk that very much resembled the one she had so long lost, and supposed had been burnt: she immediately examined it more closely, and found it was absolutely the same. Struck with an inconceivable surprize at discovering the treasure she had so often lamented, in Lady Clarendon's possession, and locked so carefully in a closet where she knew nothing was kept but writings and things of value, she remained motionless with astonishment; ten thousand vague and wild ideas rushing on her mind, when the door opening recalled her attention. She turned round, but the feelings of her heart were so strongly painted in her countenance, that Lady Clarendon who was entering, begged if any thing had alarmed her? "No, madam, (she replied with tolerable composure) I am only surprized at seeing a trunk which once belonged to me, and which I fancied was long since consumed, in your Ladyship's closet." "What trunk?" (cried Lady Clarendon with emotion) "that with the letters H F on the lid," (returned Honoria). "Prove then your right to it," exclaimed Lady Clarendon, "and relieve me from the agonizing suspense I am in." She spoke with an extreme agitation, that terrified Honoria, who ignorant of the real cause, thought it arose from anger. "I know not how to prove my right, madam, (but perhaps it is of little consequence) as undoubtedly its contents have been often changed before it came to your Ladyship." "What were the contents when you lost it?" (interrupted Lady Clarendon with an assumed calmness). "They were (said Honoria, colouring) of no intrinsic worth, but to me inestimable, as proofs of my birth, which, if ever I am so happy as to discover the authors of my being, could only authenticate my person; but as of that, I have long since lost all hopes, they can be of little value to me." "You have not yet told me what they were, (replied Lady Clarendon) perhaps I can restore them." Honoria astonished at the eagerness with which she spoke, said, "a bundle of coarse cloaths, a silver cross, a seal, and a crown piece were all the tokens by which I might arrive at the knowledge of my parents; but there was also a paper ascertaining the day, and describing the manner in which I was found, drawn up by my earliest and ever lamented friend, and signed by herself and the clergyman who baptized me Honoria Sommerville." She was going on, but the instant she had pronounced these words, Lady Clarendon screamed and fell back in her chair, apparently senseless. Honoria ran to her assistance, though wholly unable to guess the reason of her illness, and attempted to ring the bell, but she prevented her; a violent burst of tears came

to her relief, and lessened the oppression of her heart. Honoria had sunk at her feet, and Lady Clarendon had thrown her arms round her neck, embracing her in the tenderest manner, and the instant it was in her power to articulate, reduced Honoria to the same condition as herself, by exclaiming "Oh! if you are really Honoria Sommerville, you are my much loved, my long lost child; but do not let me be again deceived, convince me of the truth of your assertion; yet surely I can want no other proof than that my heart now gives; every tender, every maternal emotion, assures me you are my own Honoria." The sudden impression of delight this speech gave our heroine, was too violent for her to support, and she fell totally insensible into her mother's arms. Lady Clarendon, terrified at the effect of this discovery, severely reproached herself for not in some degree restraining her feelings, and informing her of it with some precaution. She hastily rang for assistance, and in a few minutes Honoria regained her sense and recollection. "Merciful Heaven! (exclaimed Lady Clarendon) thus on my knees I humbly thank thee for restoring her to my prayers: for restoring her blest with every virtue, and worthy of my fondest affection." "Did I dream, (cried Honoria the moment she could speak) or did your Ladyship bestow on me a title I never before had a right to? did you not call me your child? or was it only the illusion of a fanciful mind, too ready to believe what it so ardently desires?" "No, (replied Lady Clarendon) it is a blest truth; you are indeed my beloved daughter, and your place has been too long usurped by one who disgraced the title. How often and how severely have I reproached my heart for its coldness towards her? a coldness however that her conduct in some measure justified; but from the first moment I was told she was my child, that heart refused to acknowledge her, whilst to you it sprang with all the ardor of maternal fondness at our first interview; that affection so well placed and now so truly accounted for, has since been daily encreasing, and you have daily proved yourself more worthy of it." "My beloved, my adored mother, (returned Honoria) with what transport do I repeat a word to which my lips have hitherto been a stranger! surely it was the irresistible impulse of nature which drew me so strongly towards you, and the earnest desire I even then felt to obtain your notice, made me so bitterly regret the cruel restraint I was under before Lady Pelham; but your attention gratified my wishes, and the gratitude it inspired seemed even to myself incomprehensible; alas, I then little guessed it was prompted by filial affection." "But why, dear Honoria, (interrupted Lady Clarendon,) did you never reveal to me your situation? the knowledge of your name would have hastened the present discovery, and saved us both many hours of uneasiness and sorrow." "It was shame," said Honoria, "though I own a false one, of confessing to you my ignorance of my parents, but Lady Pelham's harsh censure of that unhappy class of beings to which I belonged, frightened me, nor could even your defence, generous as it was, entirely conquer my apprehensions that if you knew the sad circumstances of my earliest years, it might perhaps lessen your esteem." "How little you knew my heart! (said Lady Clarendon) it never refused its approbation to merit in any form or under any misfortune. But now, my dear Honoria, let me open the trunk; let me shew you the invaluable proofs by which I know you to be my child; and let us together weep over the memory of that kind friend, who by preserving you from the unhappy fate which awaited you, by educating you in those strict principles of virtue which have regulated your life, and by sowing the seed of those pure sentiments of religion and morality, your own excellent heart has since so well cultivated, has left me a support for my declining age, a reward for every past affliction of my life.

Honorina was already weeping, her tears flowed silently, but constantly, but they were the tears of mingled pleasure and regret; of softened regret for the loss of her earliest friend, who had been the first cause of the happiness she now felt, and which, but for this relief, would have oppressed her sensible and grateful heart too severely. She had the key of the trunk still in her pocket, but it would not then open it; the lock had been changed, but the original one had been preserved by accident, and Honorina's key fitting it, would have been an additional proof of the truth of her assertion, but Lady Clarendon required no other. Every thing was in her trunk in the state she left it, except the volume of *Metastasio*, and a copy of her letter to Lady Eustace, written whilst in the service of Miss Mortimer, and containing a short account of every circumstance that had happened since her embarkation for the East Indies. The former she would not enquire for, the latter Lady Clarendon had never seen, and supposed the vile impostor who had so long passed for her daughter, had concealed it for some purpose of her own.

Impatient as Honorina was to learn by what miraculous event the box was preserved, and the discovery made, yet she yielded to Lady Clarendon's desire to hear her own history, and related every circumstance of her past life in the fullest manner. The former part of it was so exactly consonant to what Louisa had told her, that she might have been puzzled, had she not accounted for it by the loss of the copy of Honorina's letter, which for very obvious reasons she had suppressed. Not a circumstance in this relation was omitted, except what concerned her attachment, and this she determined to conceal, till she knew whether a ray of hope, which dawned upon her soul, had the least probability of being realized; as if only a phantom of the imagination, she would not by revealing it damp Lady Clarendon's present enjoyment, and she was certain even a suspicion that she was not entirely happy, would have that effect: besides, should her fears, and not her hopes, prove true, she resolved wholly to forget him, and had indeed already, in some degree, conquered a passion, that had so long embittered her life.

Lady Clarendon listened with the utmost attention to her history, and sympathized in all her afflictions; she was before acquainted with all that had past, since her leaving Miss Mortimer; had smiled at Mrs. Campbell's foibles, and pitied Lady Egerton's distress: but the first part of her narrative particularly interested her; she wished to know the man who even in her disgrace and misfortunes had offered her his hand; she adored Major Southmore for his excellent advice and friendly offer, and approved of Honorina's determination to visit him, and the rest of his amiable family. It was not till the conclusion of her story, so deeply was she engaged by the various events, that Lady Clarendon recollected she ought to inform her, that Sir James Eustace was her own nephew. Honorina received the intelligence with transport, particularly as it was accompanied with an account of her friend's health. Lady Clarendon had a very few months before heard from Sir James, who said his lady was well, and that they hoped to embark very soon. Honorina could in no way account for her silence, but flattered herself her return to England would explain it, and in a satisfactory manner. The whole day was thus happily spent in mutual enquiries, but Lady Clarendon declared her mind was yet too unsettled, to give her all the particulars of the sad event by which she first lost her; she promised, however, that she would amply satisfy her curiosity the following morning.

In the evening Sir William returned, and their pleasure was again revived by a minute recital of the wonderful and happy discovery the day had produced: he embraced Honoria with the most affectionate ardour, congratulating his mother on the charming exchange, and declaring, she would not find him so averse to acknowledge her, as he had been when Louisa was introduced as his sister, whose illiberal mind and uncongenial soul, excited in him a disgust he had vainly attempted to conquer.

He flew the next morning early to Portman-square with the delightful news; it was received as he expected; he brought the whole family back with him to breakfast, and they all express the most real satisfaction. Emily's joy was at first unbounded, but when it was a little tranquillized, she said to Honoria, "I hope, my dear, you will not think it more than a secondary cause of my present happiness, if I confess that I am delighted with the idea of Harcourt's being punished as he deserves; when he finds, instead of having married a woman of family and fortune, his wife is no one can tell who, and has not a shilling in the world." They all smiled at her remark; and Lady Clarendon then consulted her friends, what step was the most proper to be taken in this affair; it was at last agreed, that the whole discovery should be kept a profound secret, till Captain Harcourt (which they doubted not would be soon) came to demand his lady's fortune; that Lady Clarendon should desire he would bring her to her house, and when there, oblige her to confess what means she used to impose on them all, and how she became possess of the trunks, certificate, &c. If she should positively refuse, and the Captain insist upon proving the identity by law, it only remained for them both to go to Ireland, and have it determined by Mr. Fortescue, Mr. Richardson, and the rest of Honoria's friends there; a measure they thought Mrs. Harcourt would scarcely chuse should be taken, whilst the real Miss Clarendon, with all the readiness of conscious innocence, gladly consented to it. If, on the contrary, Mrs. Harcourt would confess at once, and save them all the trouble of such a journey and voyage, Lady Clarendon resolved to pardon her; but, if she persisted in her imposture, to prosecute her with the utmost rigour.

When this was settled, Emily said, "Dear madam, let me be present at the lady's cross-examination, I shall enjoy it of all things." "No, my dear Emily, (replied Lady Clarendon,) your presence would confuse her, and perhaps prevent us from hearing the truth; besides, the Captain would scarcely admit you as an evidence; our triumph would be his mortification, and it might enrage him almost to madness, for you to be a spectator of it. We must, however, take care to have proper witnesses:—You, Mr. Ashbourn, I shall depend on as one, and any part of your family, except Emily." The ladies, with one voice, declared, how much they should like to be present, as both the Captain and his wife had behaved so ill, they should not feel the least degree of pity at their shame. Honoria was for some days longer to be called as usual, Miss Wentworth; she, however, obtained permission to write Miss Melmoth some little account of what had passed; but lest the letter should miscarry, only mentioned, that she had at last been so happy as to discover her only surviving parent, but that from some particular circumstances, as yet she was not yet at liberty to reveal more, than that she had a claim to another name, besides that of Honoria Sommerville.

## CHAP. XXX.

SIR William, at Lady Clarendon's desire, accompanied the Ashbourns home, and staid with them the remainder of the day, as Lady Clarendon wished to be alone with Honoria to fulfil her promise; the instant dinner was over, they went into the dressing-room, and having ordered themselves to be denied, Lady Clarendon began as follows:

“I must, dear Honoria, to account for the strange events I am going to relate, begin at a very early period, and inform you, that my father, Sir Edmund Bellenden, was of a very ancient Roman Catholic family in Cheshire; he married a Protestant heiress, and, as usual in such cases, by the articles of marriage, it was agreed, that the boys were to be educated in my father's religion, the girls in my mother's. Lady Bellenden was a woman of strict piety, and Sir Edmund, not willing to have the whole charge of my brother upon himself, and fearing that she might endeavour to influence his mind, in favour of her own principles, sent him abroad, at a very early age, to reside with a family in France, of his own persuasion, and be under the care of an Abbe of his acquaintance. Edmund was the eldest by some years, and consequently Jemima and myself, who only survived several other children my mother had, were too young to feel any regret at the separation.

“We had the misfortune to lose this most excellent parent when I was only seventeen, and my sister nineteen; our mother had taken the most indefatigable pains to fix our principles, and, on her death-bed, earnestly conjured us, never to let threats or intreaties induce us to alter our tenets, or deviate from the path she had pointed out for our eternal happiness; this we faithfully promised, and as faithfully fulfilled. Indeed, from my father we had nothing on this point to dread; he was no bigot, and satisfied that we acted up to what we profest he required no farther. In three months after this sad event, Jemima became acquainted with Sir Thomas Eustace, father to Sir James; he paid her his addresses immediately, and they were married as soon as the term for our mourning was expired. I must here observe, Edmund had been frequently in England for a few weeks, but as at the time of my mother's death he was on his travels, he was not then recalled.

“I was staying with Sir Thomas and Lady Eustace in London, when I first saw Sir William Clarendon; he accompanied us on our return to Bellenden Castle, and, with my consent, made proposals to my father, which were instantly, and with pleasure, accepted; but, in the mean time, whilst he was gone to inspect some alterations he designed at Clarendon Place, in Buckinghamshire, my brother returned to us. When we had seen him last, he was a mere lad; his principles scarcely fixed, and his education incomplete; but five years had so totally altered him, that we could scarcely believe it was the same good humoured and lively Edmund we had before known. The tutor who attended him on his travels, was a crafty papist, who hoping to derive an advantage from it, had inspired him with the most bigoted principles, and the strongest aversion to the protestant faith. In consequence of these ideas, he came hastily back to England, on hearing of my sister's marriage with a man of her own religion, in hopes, he said, to save one of us from perdition. In the most violent terms as he reproached my father for giving his permission, till Sir Edmund was actually alarmed at having acted as he thought so inconsistently with

his duty, and immediately forbad my thinking any more of Sir William Clarendon. Irritated at my brother's conduct, and hurt at my father's commands, it cannot be supposed that I felt any degree of fraternal affection, and we behaved to each other with great coldness, and, indeed, seldom spoke, except when my brother endeavoured to convert me; this he did with an earnestness which, though it failed to convince, yet often made me uneasy. At last, to avoid it, I determined to follow my sister's advice, which, added to Sir William's persuasions, induced me to leave Bellenden Castle, and marry him; being assured, that my father's refusal proceeded merely from Edmund's bigotry.

“In this I was right; I wrote immediately after my marriage, informing him of my reasons, and that I was the more fixed on it, as I had positively determined never to change my religion, and that I thought the best way to secure it, was to unite myself with one of my own persuasion. A letter I soon received in answer, convinced me my ideas were just. Sir Edmund assured me of his forgiveness, and hoped I should be happy; but said, his son was so extremely violent, that he could not then desire us to come to Bellenden Castle; if my brother returned to France, he should intreat to see us. This gave us both the highest pleasure, and was far beyond our most sanguine expectations; but, alas! the hopes it gave rise to were never fulfilled; Edmund was so enraged at my father's mildness, that he determined not to leave him, as he doubted not, in his absence, we should regain our wonted influence.

“Uneasy at the divisions which this unhappy enthusiasm of his had made in several branches of our family, we determined to quit England, and reside a few years in the South of France, thinking, that probably, on our return, the resentment he felt would be lessened. In pursuance of this plan we set out for Avignon, where your brother was born. When he was about two years old, I was extremely afflicted at the account of my sister's death, in consequence of which Sir Thomas came over to us, intending to make the tour of Europe, in the hope of dissipating his grief. A very few months after he left us my father died; in defiance of all Edmund's artifices, his will was made with the most exact justice; the family estate of course came to him, but James Eustace and myself equally shared the remainder of his fortune. To my infinite surprize, the letter which informed us of this event, was followed by another from Edmund, expressing the deepest regret at his past conduct, and entreating us to forgive him, and prove that forgiveness by returning to England, and spending the remainder of the winter and spring with him in Cheshire. With this request I was extremely unwilling to comply, but on Sir William's urging the propriety of accepting an invitation made apparently with the best motives, and the hope of an entire reconciliation, induced me at last to consent. My principal reason for objecting to it, was the impossibility of taking our little William with us, as he was a very delicate child, and I feared the sudden change from so mild a climate at such an unfavourable season of the year, would be fatal to him. Indeed I could not have left him, had I not been certain of the care of the person to whom I entrusted him; but satisfied of her attention, though bitterly regretting the separation, we quitted Avignon, and arrived safe at Bellenden Castle.

“My first entrance was marked with many tears, which flowed from unfeigned sorrow and melancholy recollection; but the very kind reception we met with from my

brother, then Sir Edmund, contributed greatly to sooth my mind and soften my afflictions; perhaps I was the more sensible of his attachment, from the contrast it afforded to his former behaviour. I had however reason to believe the rigour of his principles was not abated, and that he was not less ardently attached to his own religion than before, as I found he had offered to take the charge of Sir James Eustace during his father's absence, an offer that Sir Thomas had properly refused, and in consequence of it had placed the child at a school a great distance from Cheshire, no one knew where. This had deeply excited Sir Edmund's resentment, and he could not speak of it with calmness. To me, however, he behaved with an unvaried kindness, and even insisted, as I was then very near my time, that I should stay and lay in at Bellenden Castle. Alas! how far was I then from guessing his barbarous motive? I consented, and in a few weeks, you, my beloved Honoria, were born. Though a very healthy infant, I was anxious to have you baptized by my own name, Louisa, and for that purpose, sent for the clergyman of the adjoining village, but he was then absent, and of course the ceremony was deferred till the following day; but in the evening I grew so ill, that the whole attention of the people was bestowed on me; and a physician was called in, who declared me in imminent danger. I lay above a fortnight, whilst my life was despaired of, and Sir William was almost distracted with the fear of losing me; often, when unable to speak to him, I have seen him at the bed-side in tears, of which, I then believed myself the sole cause. When my fever so far lessened as to leave me the powers of recollection, maternal anxiety prevailed, and I enquired for my child; the attendants told me, that as my fever was of an infectious kind, it was not thought safe for her to remain in the house, and she had been put to nurse in the village, and for the same reason it was not yet proper I should see her. I submitted patiently to these reasons, which were too just to be controverted, though I ardently longed to clasp her in my arms. As my health returned, this wish strengthened, and when I was able to sit up, as the weather was fine, and the spring mild, I asked if her nurse could not walk with her in the garden, that I might only look at her through the windows. I observed, that Sir William, to whom I made this request, hesitated; at last, he said he would walk down the next day to the village, and mention my proposal. The next day, however, it rained, and the following; this put a stop to my scheme, but I was so miserable, at being thus kept from my infant, that the first fine morning, I said I was quite well, and would go out in the carriage, and stop at the house where they told me you were. Sir William was alarmed at the resolute manner in which I spoke, and laying his hand on my arm, as if to detain me, he said, 'you must not, dear Louisa, indeed, you must not:' the peculiar solemnity, of his voice and looks, terrified me, and a dreadful idea rushing on my mind, I exclaimed, "Then the dear infant is dead, I know she is, or you would not prevent my seeing her." He endeavoured to calm my mind by assurances, that we had still a chance of recovering our lost treasure, and by degrees informed me that she had been taken from the cradle at the cottage where she was placed for the time of my illness, and though the strictest search had been made through the neighbourhood, no satisfactory intelligence had yet been received. The possibility of her being restored to me, at first soothed my distress, as her loss, though deeply afflicting, was yet a less irretrievable evil than her death. As my horror at the impression Sir William's first speech had made, lessened, my hopes encreased, and I instantly begged he would himself go in search of her; send advertisements to every news-paper in the kingdom, and offer the highest rewards: this he promised to comply with, and added, nothing but my extreme

danger had kept him so long at Bellenden Castle. He set out that very day, and left me to the care of my brother, who with the utmost apparent tenderness sympathized in my affliction. The hope which I still felt, in some degree kept up my spirits, and prevented them from wholly sinking under so heavy a misfortune, but when continual letters from Sir William assured me, how ineffectual all his endeavours had been, I again relapsed into the most bitter agonies of grief, and losing the hope which had hitherto supported me, I only thought of the sufferings she might experience, and most earnestly wished I could hear of her death, thinking it of the two a less dreadful calamity, than that she should in infancy be not only inured to hardships, but familiar with vices, that education would teach her were customary, and which she might in maturity practise, from ignorance of a better way, and the depravity and example of those, with whom she was condemned to associate: for I had not a doubt but that she was taken away by some of those wretched creatures who travel the country, and make so many parents miserable, by depriving them of their children. How erroneous my judgment was, you will presently discover. Sir Edmund was really shocked at my sufferings, and absolutely fearing that my life would at last be a sacrifice, determined, though at the risque, of for ever forfeiting my good opinion, to confess his villainy, for what else can I term it? He told me one day, to restrain my grief, and he would restore my child. I asked him what he meant, with an air of incredulity, intended rather as a reproach, for thus, as I thought, trifling with my feelings; but he assured me he was in earnest, and said, if I would promise to forgive him, he would not only inform me where she was, but that Sir William on his return should actually bring her to me. I instantly promised all he required, and declared, I would not even make him one reproach: he then confessed, that instigated by the hope of training her up in his own religion, and persuaded, that such an act would atone for a thousand transgressions, he had caused her to be secretly taken from her nurse, who was entirely innocent, and given in charge to a woman on whom he could depend, whose husband lived on an estate of his in Ireland, to which place she was conveyed, and there he intended she should remain till old enough to be sent to France, where he meant she should be under the care of a lady he was well acquainted with, who was Abbess of a convent in Normandy, whose kindness and indulgence he did not doubt, but who would see her brought up faithfully in the religion he was so seriously persuaded was the only right and proper one. My astonishment at this declaration may be more easily conceived than described; I knew bigotry had carried people very great lengths, but I had no idea, it could induce a brother thus to sacrifice the health, and almost the life of a sister, to whom also he pretended to be attached.

“I punctually kept my word in making him no reproaches, for my anger and indignation would not suffer me to speak. I instantly quitted the room, and wrote a few lines to Sir William, requesting he would return directly, but without assigning the reason; this I sent off by an express, and remained the whole day in my apartment, for I could not sufficiently command myself, to sit down to table with my brother, and assume a serenity I was so far from feeling. My mind, it is true, relieved from the apprehensions which had so heavily oppressed it, grew calm, and by degrees chearful. I anticipated the pleasure of again embracing my little darling, and this idea, which I indulged all the night, and which deprived me of sleep, at length softened my resentment, and I met Sir

Edmund the next day with tolerable composure: he entreated me to forgive him, and I consented.

“The very moment Sir William returned, in consequence of my letter, I informed him of the whole affair, and urged him to set off instantly for Ireland. Though fatigued with the haste in which he had executed his journey from London, he hesitated not to comply, and taking the direction from me, without seeing my brother, went immediately to Parkgate, and the wind being fair, and the packet ready to sail, he embarked directly. I desired he would not stay in Ireland long enough to write, but return with the child as soon as possible; and certain he would not deceive me, I anxiously watched the wind when he had been gone a few days, and saw it was favourable to my wishes; how earnestly did I hope it would yet for some time continue in the west, little expecting it would bring me only disappointment and sorrow! I walked every day in the turnpike road leading to Parkgate, and whenever I saw a chaise, how did my heart bound with hope and anxiety! One morning, I observed a man on horseback at a distance, and though I knew not why, my mind sickened with apprehension; but how was that increased, when, on a nearer approach, I perceived it was Joseph who accompanied Sir William to Ireland! The instant he saw me he alighted, and whilst I was leaning on the arm of my maid, wholly unable to enquire for his master, he gave me a slip of paper, on which, in Sir William’s hand, were written these words.

“Do not, my love, be too much alarmed, if you see me return alone.”

“I no longer doubted the fate of my poor child: I saw in an instant, this was meant to prepare me for some terrible intelligence. Joseph, who saw the effect it had on me, rode back to his master, who only waited at the end of the village till he had delivered the note, and the carriage instantly drove up. Sir William alighted, and lifted me in, and we soon arrived at the Castle, where he informed me, for I wanted no farther preparation, that the child was actually dead. He said, that arriving at the cabin, he found the woman in great trouble; she told him, the infant had been about a week before seized with convulsions, one of which had in a few minutes put a period to its existence. On his asking if any methods had been taken for its recovery, she replied, an old woman had put on a blister, which, however, had been of no service: he added, that at first doubting the truth of the story, he insisted on seeing where it was buried, and they shewed him the spot. In despair at this unfortunate event, and fearing the effect it would have on me, he scarcely knew what to resolve on, except his immediate return; and at last thought of sending me that note, hoping it would lessen the shock.

“In spite of my declaration some time before, that if I knew it was dead I should be comparatively happy, I felt more severely the disappointment, from having indulged the hope of regaining my little darling; but as soon as the first emotions of grief were over, I intreated Sir William to let us quit the Castle, as I could no longer bear the sight of one whom I could not consider in future as a brother, but as the author of all my misfortunes; as there was every reason to imagine if the dear child had had proper assistance, she might have recovered. Full of indignation we quitted Cheshire, without my having seen Sir Edmund since I had received the afflicting intelligence. On our

journey my mind turning wholly on one subject, I asked Sir William by what name the dear infant had been baptized? he answered with some hesitation, "that he did not know." "What," said I, "did you not enquire?" His silence then informed me of a terrible truth, that she had not been baptized at all; he confessed that my danger had so totally engrossed his attention, he could think of nothing else, till the loss of her had put it out of his power; and that when he questioned the woman on this head, she said her husband had mislaid the letter which had given orders for it, and they had forgot the name, and were waiting in expectation of another from Sir Edmund, when the child died. I was inexpressibly shocked at this, the consequences of my brother's mistaken piety, and again most bitterly lamented the sad event and the unshaken bigotry of his principles; for before our departure he told Sir William with a cold indifference, "that though he lamented, he did not accuse himself as the cause of the child's death; that he was actuated by a noble motive, which he doubted not Heaven would reward."

"My husband perceiving my health and spirits both declining from the anxiety and uneasiness I had suffered, proposed our returning to Avignon, where the company of our little William would no less contribute to the recovery of the one, than the air would to the other. To this I joyfully consented; we arrived there safely, and had the satisfaction of finding our dear boy in perfect health.

## CHAP. XXXI.

“WE remained at Avignon eight years, and lived tranquilly and happily; hearing no intelligence from my brother, but accidentally learning that he was married, and to a very amiable woman. By degrees the regret I had felt for my lost child wore away, and left only a slight impression of grief, which was often checked by the reflection that she was taken to a better world, from the miseries she might have experienced in this. Sir Thomas Eustace had brought his son from England and left him with us; he was a fine amiable lad, and the exact resemblance of my sister, both in person and mind. His company added the more to my satisfaction, as there was soon a perfect affection between him and William; they were nearly of the same age, pursued the same studies, followed the same amusements, and this regard begun in infancy, manhood has heightened into the truest friendship. At the end of this period a letter arrived from England which destroyed my happiness by renewing my anxiety; it was from Sir Edmund. I took it this morning from my bureau, and you shall, my dear Honoria, read it yourself. Lady Clarendon then gave her the letter; it was as follows:

To Lady Clarendon.

“Torn with the deepest remorse a guilty bosom can feel, wholly unable to conceal my crimes, yet dreading to confess them, from the fear of again tearing open those wounds time must now have long healed; how my injured Louisa, how shall your wretched brother dare address you? yet conscious as I am that I cannot hope for your pardon, I must inform you of every transaction that now hangs so heavy on my mind. Can I expect the forgiveness of heaven, if I die with such a load of guilt, unconfest and unrepented of? Yet that heaven is my witness, however ill-judged the action, it was well meant; and I have now laboured above seven years under the heaviest oppression from the fatal consequences of my mistaken zeal, undetermined whether it would be best to reveal it to you or not. I am at length resolved, and entreat by that mercy we are all taught to expect, that you will not refuse me the pardon I so earnestly solicit. At present I will no longer detain you from the events I am about to relate.—Just before my father’s death, the Abbe, to whom I owe my education and the strictness of those tenets that you call rigour, and which I fear you will now more than ever execrate, wrote me word that he had seen you at Avignon, and mentioned your little William in terms of pity, as being with parents who, from erroneous principles, would educate him in heresy, and lead him onward in the path to destruction. This first gave me the hint of what I afterwards fully resolved to execute. My father’s death for a while prevented this, but when I wrote to you to come to Ballenden-Castle, it was solely with the hope of getting him in my power: your leaving him in France, frustrated my plan in part, but the situation you were then in, gave me a new object for my thoughts and wishes. Your fever and its infectious tendency, by causing your child to be removed, left me an opportunity of practising the scheme I had so long formed. What then followed you know, but you know no more; and I shudder to think how you must, upon fuller information, detest me. Yet I will go on. — The instant I had confessed the truth to you, my heart reproached me, and I secretly determined to counteract your messenger. I was prompted the more strongly to this, by

having heard you say that if the child were dead you would be comparatively happy, as your greatest dread was the chance of its falling into the hands of improper persons. Taking this speech as a screen for my villainy, for even then I wanted an excuse to myself, I wrote to a person of opulence at Belfast with whom I had some connection respecting my estate in Ireland, desiring if a woman and child applied to him, that he would see they were properly lodged, and give them sufficient money for necessaries, and place it to my account till he heard from me again; but added, as I knew not for a certainty when they would arrive, to prevent him from having any suspicions of an imposition, the woman should have a seal, with which before I sent it to her, I would make the impression on the wax that closed my letter, so that he might know it. I did this, because I did not chuse to let the woman have any paper written by me, lest if she should be met with, I might be suspected to be the contriver of this base plan; and I could think of no other method to convince my correspondent, yet secure myself against the apparent possibility of detection. When I had finished and sent this by the post, I entrusted a man in whom I had the strictest confidence, to go over to Ireland, and deliver to Mrs. O'Neale, the woman to whose care the child was entrusted, the seal I had mentioned to Mr. Kelly, a direction to him, and orders for her to go immediately to Belfast, and take the child with her, and that he would provide her all necessaries till she heard again from me. Above all things, I charged the man to bid her to leave word with whomever of her family staid in the cabin, that if any enquiry was made for the infant, they should say that she died a week before in convulsions. All this was too punctually executed; my agent returned several days before Sir William, and assured me they would instantly obey my orders, and that he doubted not they were already far on the way to the North. From my certainty of her life, arose that indifference of manner which apparently so highly disgusted Sir William when you departed from the Castle. Though I rejoiced at your removal to France, from the idea that it would leave me more at liberty to act as I wished and thought proper, yet I would not for some time take any steps, lest you should have left spies on my conduct in the neighbourhood, which I imagined not impossible, my conscience telling me that I deserved suspicion. But when some months were elapsed, I ventured to write to Mr. Kelly to enquire for my niece; but how great was my astonishment, when in answer he informed me he had seen neither the woman nor child, and supposed, as he had not again heard from me, they had not yet left their home! I staid not a moment in England after this intelligence, but hastening to Ireland flew to the cabin, and asked with the utmost eagerness where the child was, and why O'Neale had not, as I ordered, taken her to Belfast? The woman, who was sitting at the door with her husband, terrified at the violence of my manner, replied, indeed she believed the child had been there several months. This was far from abating my rage; I knew to the contrary, and demanded why she had left her? The woman fell on her knees, and begged me to hear her with patience. She then said, at the time she received my orders, her own child was so ill, that she believed it dying; that she could not leave it, and it was wholly impossible to take it with her, but knowing that it was necessary for Miss to be gone directly, she had prevailed on her husband's sister to take the charge of her, and had given her the seal to deliver to the gentleman at Belfast, and had not till that moment any doubt of her safe arrival, as she knew the woman could not write, and therefore had not expected to hear from her. My grief and anger were unbounded at this account, but useless. I hastily left them, and travelling the direct road to Belfast, made the strictest enquiries at every town

and village, but without success. Every other method I have taken have been equally ineffectual; and I too late perceive, with the deepest regret and remorse, that I should have strictly followed the rule of never doing evil to accomplish even a good purpose, but have left it to the Providence, which never fails to effect the purposes he intends, by the best and wisest means.

‘I have now nothing to add but to assure you of my penitence, and again entreat your forgiveness. I know I have forfeited your esteem, but do not refuse it to one who has never offended you. Lady Bellenden is the gentlest of her sex; she solicits your friendship, and believe me she deserves it. It is only of late she has been made acquainted with my unnatural and cruel behaviour, and she condemns my conduct, even whilst she weeps over my afflictions, which will soon terminate themselves. Adieu, beloved and injured Louisa! pity at least the ceaseless sufferings of

‘Your miserable but penitent

‘E. BELLENDEN.’

Honoria shed tears over this epistle, but unwilling to interrupt Lady Clarendon, returned it to her without speaking, except to entreat her to continue her narrative, which she instantly complied with.

“This letter was accompanied by one from Lady Bellenden, requesting me in the most persuasive terms, to forgive her husband, and consider, though the consequences were so fatal, the motives were founded on a well meant, though ill placed zeal; and added, that his health was so rapidly declining, she scarcely thought he would live to see me. Affected by her letter and entreaties, and shocked, at the idea of adding deeper regret to that which already filled his bosom, I endeavoured to conquer my resentment and horror, and desired Sir William to write, and beg of him to come over to us, for the benefit of the air, and assure him, he should have no reason to complain of our obduracy. He complied immediately, and our meeting was painful on both sides; I saw he was a true penitent, and as such I pitied, and attempted to console him, and concealed as much as possible the regret I felt from the uncertainty of the fate of my child. Lady Bellenden was indeed truly amiable, and I soon loved her with a sincere affection. Sir Edmund was much softened by his affliction, and his illness, and melancholy by degrees obliterated the remembrance of his conduct, and in time, I regarded him more like a brother than I had ever done before since we were mere children. The attention he met with, and the air of Montpelier, whither we all accompanied him, at length in some measure restored his health, and as we had no longer any reason to absent ourselves from our native country, we returned all together to England, and lived from that time on the most amicable terms. Soon after our arrival, Sir William went himself to Ireland, but his search was a fruitless one; and from that period, we never mentioned to any person the unhappy circumstance, that we might no longer keep the memory of it alive in our minds, when we had lost all hopes of ever being so fortunate as to recover our long regretted child: but this method, though strictly adhered to, was vain; I spoke not of it to Sir William, or my sister, but I

could not forget it; and the constant agitation I endured for so long a time, impaired my health and weakened my constitution.

“Do you not recollect, my dear Honoria, my telling Emily never to wish too earnestly for any thing, and said how much I had suffered from the fulfilling of one, the forming of which had employed my imagination so many years? It was at this time when I was anxiously sighing for my lost child to be restored; and how often and how bitterly did I regret its accomplishment, when the unworthy Louisa usurped your rights!

“Four years after my reconciliation with my brother, I unhappily lost Sir William: his illness was lingering and painful, and I was often reduced almost to pray for a termination of that life, to preserve which I would cheerfully have resigned my own. After his death, my son going to Oxford, and afterwards upon his travels, I lived in the most retired manner, having lost all inclination to mix with the world. Part of every year I spent at Bellenden Castle, as I grew daily more attached to my amiable sister; the patience and good humour with which she bore her husband’s petulance, whose increasing infirmities in time soured his temper, and increased the natural violence of his disposition, endeared her still more to me.

“Since, nothing material occurred till the summer before last, when I was as usual at the Castle. Lady Bellenden had been in London, where she parted with a servant who had attended her many years, and brought down a young woman to supply her place. My brother was then ill and confined to his room. One day he sent for me to him, and when I entered I observed he was in a violent and uncommon agitation, and hastily enquired the cause. “Oh! Louisa, (cried he) your prayers and mine are at length heard; your daughter is restored.” “Impossible, Sir Edmund, returned I, what do you mean?” “I mean, (replied he) and I have no doubt of her identity, that Marianne Hervey, Lady Bellenden’s woman, is your long lost child, and I hope soon to prove it beyond a possibility of doubt. My astonishment at these words prevented me from answering, and he rang the bell; the girl entered, and fell upon her knees to embrace and receive the blessing of her new-found mother. I may now frankly confess my feelings at that moment; my heart was sensible of no emotion, no transport, and whilst I clasped her in my arms, I severely reproached myself for the indifference, which I could only imagine proceeded from pride and mortification, at finding her so different from my wishes. I had often remarked her as a bold and insolent girl, whose imperious behaviour to the servants, had already incurred their dislike.

“This part of the story I can by no means make clear, as I am myself yet ignorant of many particulars. I can only tell you that she produced the trunk, said she was the Honoria Sommerville mentioned in the paper, and related the circumstance of her being found on the common, with many others, with equal clearness and precision; we had no reason to doubt the truth of her assertion, and it only remained to prove that Honoria Sommerville was really my daughter, and this my brother undertook. The seal which was found in the woman’s pocket he said he could swear to, as well as to the crown piece, which he had given O’Neale when first she left Bellenden with the child: the time agreed exactly to that when she was first taken from her nurse’s cabin, and her age, and the road

they were in, were no less proofs of her identity. From all these circumstances I could not refuse my belief, and from that moment looked upon her as my child. Sir Edmund, however, desirous there should be no doubts upon my mind, begged I would write to my son, who was then only in Paris, and mention a wish for his return for a short time. He instantly obeyed my summons, and came to us at the Castle where I introduced his sister to him; he received her without much apparent pleasure, and his uncle, who already doated on her, imagined his coldness arose from mercenary motives, but I knew the nobleness of his mind, and was positive it was never swayed by interest. Furnished with the proper credentials, at our request he set off for Ireland to enquire farther. I wanted Louisa (for so she desired to be called from a pretended compliment to me) to accompany him, but she refused with anger and contempt, and said she hoped never again to behold that horrid country. I did not then know what excellent reasons she had for this wish.

“Sir William’s enquiries were attended with every possible success: O’Neale, to whom he first went, not only acknowledged the seal and the crown piece, which she said she had given to her sister, but added, the cloaths were actually what she had on when she left her, and that the child’s dress was what she had herself made for her own infant, and in which, to prevent any suspicion if it had been met on the road, she had dressed the little Clarendon.—These were undoubtedly incontrovertible proofs; it next remained to ascertain the truth of Louisa’s own story. Mr. Richardson, who was still alive, acknowledged signing the certificate, and assured your brother of the reality of every circumstance: he added, he had heard, and was sorry to hear, of Mr. Fortescue’s second marriage, and its consequences to the unhappy orphan, of whom every unprejudiced person spoke in the highest terms; and that Mrs. Fortescue’s character was so well known, that nobody wondered at the young lady’s escape: and desired he would tell her how sincerely he rejoiced at this fortunate discovery.—From thence he went to Wood Park. Mr. Fortescue was visibly declining; he shed tears when Sir William explained the reason of his visit, and begged him for Heaven’s sake to entreat his dear Honoria to come over and see him once before his death; as she had now so happily found protectors, she need not fear Mrs. Fortescue’s resentment. That lady’s entrance prevented Sir William from answering this speech, as the poor man put his finger on his lip, as if to silence him. She received the intelligence in a very different manner; rage and mortification struggled in her heart, and she replied “she should be sorry to make any breach in a family, therefore would say nothing, but that Honoria had met with better fortune than she deserved; and hoped she would not return their kindness, as she had done her’s, with the blackest ingratitude.” Finding there was no probability of any farther conversation with Mr. Fortescue but in the presence of his lady, and having learned all it was essential for him to know, Sir William took leave, but the news his servants had spread in the kitchen soon ran through the family, and at the park-gate he was stopped by an old woman whose joy had almost deprived her of utterance: she expressed the liveliest sensations of pleasure to hear of her dear child’s health and welfare, and that she had at last found her relations; she cried and laughed so alternately, and her expressions were so incoherent, he could scarcely understand any thing she said, except that his sister was the best young lady in the world, and she hoped in her prosperity would not forget her old nurse, who was grown very poor indeed, as madam Fortescue had turned her husband out of his place as gardener, and he had been prevented from getting other work by a long and

severe illness. He gave her a handsome present in the name of Louisa, and quitted Ireland with a very different opinion of her merit, from that he had entertained when he left Bellenden; as exclusive of what I have mentioned, he had heard in fact your praises, my love, from a variety of people, who all spoke of you in the highest terms of admiration and respect.

“He returned fully convinced Louisa was indeed his sister, and prepared to love and esteem her as such; but her conduct obliged him to change his sentiments. She received the account of Mr. Fortescue’s illness and kind message with the most perfect indifference, and scarcely attended to what he said of Mrs. Connor: this first excited in him a disgust that every day increased, but he soon quitted us, and went back to France. I could no longer in the least doubt her being my child, and tried every method in my power, but without effect, to regard her with maternal affection. Sir Edmund not only owned, but sincerely loved her, and rejoiced at being able in some measure to make reparation for his former behaviour. The agitation however that it threw him into, was too much for his weak frame long to support, and in a few weeks after this discovery, he died, and left her thirty thousand pounds, to be paid on her marriage. Lady Bellenden’s jointure was considerable, but to her he bequeathed the English estate for her life, and afterwards to my son; and the Irish estate which was of less value, to Sir James Eustace directly. I forgot to mention, that on reading the paper signed by Mrs. Fortescue, I knew it must be the mother of the young lady my nephew had married, and with whom I was highly pleased, when she staid a few days with me in their way to Portsmouth, from whence they embarked. I told Louisa of this, and observed it struck her, and that she did not express the satisfaction I expected it would afford her, but seemed embarrassed; this, however, at the time, I attributed to surprize, for how could I guess at the real cause?

“We staid with Lady Bellenden some time after this event, to console and amuse her, and then went to London, where Louisa was extremely anxious to be, that she might mingle with the gay world: here we remained great part of the winter, and she entered into every amusement with an avidity that hurt, and behaved with a levity that shocked me. Early in the last spring, I discovered a plan she had laid to elope with a young Templar, who I thought not merely her inferior in birth and fortune, but who was a man of the most dissolute character. To keep her out of his way, which I found it was impossible to do here, I sent her to Mrs. Wheeler’s, at Northampton, who, I was sure, would have a strict watch over her conduct; and who, by accompanying her to every public place she frequented, and constantly visiting with her, which my ill state of health would not permit, might at least prevent her from forming any improper connection. I felt a relief in her absence that seemed to restore me to some degree of comfort; her intrigue, however, was so publickly known, that I did not wish to remain in London, but was detained by Lady Bellenden, who came up from Cheshire, and staid some time with me in her way to Dover, from whence she meant to go to France to spend a few months with a particular friend, and where she still is.

“There was no part of Louisa’s character that hurt me more than the ingratitude she testified; not a single friend from whom I imagined she had received such marks of attention, ever engaged her thoughts; nor did she ever express a wish to see any one of

them again. This conduct I then believed unnatural, and proceeding from a bad heart. When first I met with you, I often wished she was but half as amiable, and then as often reproached myself for an indifference towards her which yet I could not conquer; and fancied, if I had shewn her more affection, it might have softened her heart. It was this motive alone which induced me to take her to Bath, for I was very sensible, that happy in your society, I could wish for no other, little imagining the claim from nature you had upon my tenderness. Your attention to me during the sad time of William's illness, the kind methods you took to console me for Louisa's elopement, which hurt my pride more than it wounded my feelings, all made an impression on my heart which no time can ever efface."

Lady Clarendon here ended her narrative; during many parts of it Honoria had been deeply affected, and now fell on her mother's bosom, which she bathed with her tears. Lady Clarendon pressed her with the maternal tenderness with which her soul overflowed, and they remained some minutes incapable of expressing their feelings. When a little recovered, Honoria said every thing a grateful heart could dictate and Lady Clarendon re-assured her of her fondest and most lasting affection. After a long conversation on the events her Ladyship had related, in which Honoria regretted the opinion her friends in Ireland must entertain of her, from her apparent neglect and ingratitude, a mistake which however she resolved the next day to rectify, by writing and explaining every circumstance that had happened, they both retired, though not to rest; Honoria was too elated to close her eyes; after returning the humblest thanks to that Providence that had preserved her from so many evils, had supported her in so many distresses, and had now restored her to the arms of a tender and excellent parent, she spent the whole night in reflecting upon the various events of her past life, and anticipating the scenes of happiness she hoped in future to experience.

END OF VOLUME III.