

LOVERS AND FRIENDS.

A NOVEL.

Printed by J. Darling, Leadenhall-Street, London.

LOVERS AND FRIENDS;  
OR,  
MODERN ATTACHMENTS.  
A NOVEL.  
IN FIVE VOLUMES.

BY

ANNE OF SWANSEA,

AUTHOR OF  
CONVICTION, GONZALO DE BALDIVIA, CHRONICLES OF AN ILLUSTRIOUS  
HOUSE, SECRET AVENGERS, SECRETS IN EVERY MANSION, CAMBRIAN  
PICTURES, CESARIO ROSALBA,  
&c. &c.

“I hold a mirror up for men to see  
How bad they are, how good they ought to be.”

VOL. IV.

London:

*Printed at the Minerva Press for*  
A.K. NEWMAN AND CO. LEADENHALL STREET.  
1821.

## LOVERS AND FRIENDS.

### CHAPTER I.

“This man standing before me, whom I believed  
The sea did separate, not more surprises  
Than affrights me; to me his presence is  
A fearful omen of approaching evil.”

“On eagles’ wings immortal scandals fly,  
While virtuous actions are but born and die.”

“I will not doubt her innocence,  
Though hydra-headed Scandal, with her countless  
Tongues, do strive to blacken her fair fame:  
I do believe her chaste—and in that belief  
Boldly stand forth her champion.”

I saw her breast with every passion heave—  
I left her torn from every earthly friend—  
Oh, my hard bosom! that could bear to leave!

SHENSTONE.

*An unwelcome Intruder on an Assignment—The  
Child of an unmarried Lady Introduced—He-  
nerous Confidence—Calumny confuted.*

THE dread of again encountering his injured friend Saville, hurried the earl of Torrington from Brighton, and left his imprudent lady at liberty to appoint a meeting with the fascinating major Norman, at a milliner’s, with whom she had laid out a good deal of money in unnecessary articles, merely to win her to permit her assignations with the major, as the distance to the farmhouse was inconvenient, and she had a suspicion that its mistress only waited an opportunity to betray their secret.

Mrs. Supple, the milliner, appeared to understand modern customs, as well as fashions; and as the countess promised to recommend her in her business, and had, besides, made her little girl a very handsome present on her birthday, she could not refuse her back drawing-room for an hour or two to so generous a lady, who had an affair of the utmost importance to settle with major Norman.

At the appointed hour lady Torrington repaired to Mrs. Supple’s, to meet major Norman, forgetful of the promise given to her son, and the prohibition of her husband, and deriding his menace of separation—a measure she had nearly reconciled her mind to adopt; for such was the power the insidious major had obtained over her weak understanding, by the adoration he affected to pay her beauty, that his ascendancy had entirely overcome every lingering sentiment of shame, and apprehension of the disgrace

which her licentious conduct would cast on her son, and the only repugnance that now remained on her mind, and prevented her yielding to the pressing solicitations of the artful major, who continually represented, with the misery he endured from his excessive love for her, the delights that awaited them in her favourite Italy, where, uncontrolled by a jealous husband, and the envious reports of the world, they should live for each other and for love.

That these arguments did not succeed with the countess of Torrington, was not owing to any virtuous sentiment that remained in her bosom, but from an unwillingness to resign, even for the life of delightful freedom the major so glowingly pictured, the rank, state, splendour, and precedence, she commanded, while continuing to reside under the roof of her husband.

In the course of their conversation at the milliner's, the major asked when she expected lord Torrington from town?

"Not till I see him," replied her ladyship; "and perhaps I should not express myself very wide of truth, if I were to add—if that never happens, I think I could survive; but, my dear major, come when he will, you must not expect me to meet you any more at that odious farmhouse, for Smithson told me the woman behaved very odd, and asked a number of impertinent questions. I remember too she came into the room once or twice on very frivolous pretences."

"Did she?" returned the major; "devilish impudent behaviour! and I should have told her so, had I observed it; but I had no thoughts but of the happiness I was enjoying, in the proud certainty that you had left the adoration of the crowd to devote an hour to me, the tenderest, the most impassioned of your admirers: but here, my Emily—can we not meet here? Mrs. Supple being your milliner, no suspicion can attach to your coming here: and she, I dare be sworn, will have no objection, if we make it worth her while."

"I shall take care of that point," said lady Torrington; "but I shall actually rejoice when we get to dear London, where observation and curiosity are baffled in the immensity of population—where we can meet when we please, without the fear of detection."

"You only say this," replied the major, putting on the pathetic, "to prevent my falling into absolute desperation; for I shall never be free from the torments of jealousy—never be persuaded, my lovely Emily, that you are really attached to me, unless you consent to adopt my plan."

"What plan, you insinuating wretch?" asked the countess; "have I not put my reputation to the utmost risk for you? Oh! what a glorious triumph it would afford that snuffy old cat, lady Bromford, and her inseparable friend, the immaculate Miss Jameson, if they could only peep into this room! What a tale they would make for the gossiping loungers at the library to-morrow! How my character would be cut up!"

"And all for having condescended to bless me with your company for an hour!" said the major; "what gratitude do I owe you!"

"And yet you are still encroaching on my favour," resumed the countess.

"Yes," replied the major; "and I shall never cease to entreat and persuade till I have convinced you that my plan—"

"What new folly," asked the countess, "do you wish to persuade me into?"

"Not into folly, my charming Emily," returned the major, fondly pressing her hand, "but into happiness."

“What conceited creatures men are!” said the countess; “and do you believe major, do you seriously think that you have it in your power to make me happy?”

“It should be the study, the unceasing employment of my life,” replied the major. “The Persian does not adore the sun with half the devotion I should worship your eyes—I would watch over you with more solicitude than a miser bestows on his gold.”

Lady Torrington thought the major talked like an angel—the major never remembered being more eloquent; but similies and ideas began to fail, and he brought his speech to a conclusion, with adding an entreaty that she would accept his protection, and at once leave the earl of Torrington to his gloomy morality.

“Morality!” repeated the countess, laughing—“he has a great deal on his lips, I grant you, but very little in his heart. If time would allow, I could treat you with a few pleasant anecdotes of the earl’s morality, but I must reserve them for a future opportunity. Lord Torrington, you must know, my dear major, affects to say, that he thinks with horror of his former gallantries—that he feels no pleasure in public amusements and scenes of gaiety—in fact, he is verging into the opposite extreme, and it is my opinion, will shortly turn Methodist; for he already preaches sermons, long, dull, and wearying, against cards, masquerades, and all the festivities of life.”

“And surely, my Emily,” said the major, “you must be enamoured of his gloom and stupidity, or you would never endure its annoyance. You have given me reason to believe my person, my professions of love, are not disagreeable to you; why will you not fly with me from this hated, this insensible husband?”

“Well, well, pray don’t look so doleful,” returned the countess, “and I will give you my promise to think seriously of your plan; for, *entre nous*, I am really quite *ennuyée* with lord Torrington’s everlasting philippics, and disgusted with his sober *manière*, as cold, precise, and formal, as if he belonged to the society of Quakers. I positively declare I scarcely remember the day when he appeared pleased with any thing I could say or do.”

“What a savage, a barbarian, he must be,” exclaimed the major, “when your beauty, your charming vivacity, my beautiful Emily, fails to please him! You are in person, temper, and elegance, so superior to all other women—”

“You are such an agreeable flatterer,” returned the countess, “that I shall grow vain, and believe you, if I listen much longer; besides, I have to dress for lady Colloney’s rout—adieu, dear major—I must be gone.”

“Not yet, my lovely countess,” replied the major, kissing and detaining her hand.

Lady Torrington chose to be girlish, and affected a little struggle to release herself from the major, who was clasping her in his arms, when, in the height of their toying, the door opposite to where they were sitting opened, and a gentleman entered the room.

The countess started from the encircling arms of the major, uttering a loud scream. The major extended his arm to prevent her falling to the ground, for she appeared near fainting, while in an angry tone he inquired of the intruder—“What the devil, sir, do you want here?”

For a moment the stranger gazed on the varying countenance of lady Torrington, totally regardless of the major’s loud and peremptory command that he should instantly quit the room; he then, with a look of mingled pity and contempt, exclaimed—“And you are the once-lovely Emily Herbert, the present degraded countess of Torrington, a wife and a mother! Poor lost creature! what a situation do I find you in—forgetful of your rank

in life, dead to all sense of virtue! You have a son, of whom the public voice speaks highly—have you no compunction for the disgrace you are bringing on him?”

The countenance of the intrepid major was fixed in amazement—the countess hid her face on the arm of the sofa, as the stranger continued to say—“At your age better thoughts should have possession of your mind, for you are past the giddy years of youth. A matron’s passions should be under the control of reason, and where is your reason?—lost, sunk in licentiousness. That I escaped making you my wife ought to give me joy; but, alas! to find you thus profligate, thus abandoned, thus debased, from the pure artless being I once knew, renders the pangs your perfidy inflicted more intolerable; and while I reflect on the shame, the misery, your conduct must occasion the man I once called my friend, I am compelled to pity and forgive him; for what greater curse can enmity wish, or he endure, than the certainty that the cause of injured friendship is revenged by the infidelity of her for whose sake he became a villain?”

Having thus spoken, the stranger, darting a look of contemptuous indignation on the major, precipitately left the room; while he, stamping about the floor, muttered something like—“Revenge for this insolence—call the fellow out if he is a gentleman.”

The countess slowly raised her head, and seeing the enemy gone, clasped her hands, exclaiming—“*Grace à Dieu!* he is departed. I protest, my dear major, I never was so terrified since I was born.”

“Who the devil is the fellow?” demanded the major.

“A gentleman, I assure you,” replied the countess.

“Favour me with his name,” said the major; “as he is a gentleman, I shall do him the honour to send him a challenge.”

“Not for the world!” replied the countess—“not if you love me.”

“Not call him out,” said the major, “when he has uttered such impertinent things?”

“If you challenge him, my reputation will be ruined,” resumed the countess; “for then our meeting, dear major, will be made public. Who could have expected to see Saville at Brighton, whom I have so long considered dead, or, if living, safe in the East Indies?”

“But who is this Mr. Saville?” again inquired the major; “and by what right has he presumed to say such insolent things to you?”

“Why, you must know, my dear major,” replied the countess, “this Mr. Saville was once a lover of mine, before I married the earl of Torrington; and being rich, he was greatly favoured by my parents; though, for my own part, I was perfectly indifferent about him: but I was very young and very dutiful at that time, and to oblige my father and mother, who thought it an excellent match for me, I certainly did promise Mr. Saville to wait for him till his return from Calcutta. But he should have married me at once, you know, if he intended it; because no person can answer for the change a few days even may make in their sentiments.”

“Very true,” returned the major; “a few moments, my lovely Emily, have made a change in mine; my anger is converted into pity for this Mr. Saville. Poor devil!” continued he, conceitedly, “he is jealous, and the impertinence he uttered was the effect of envy at the happiness he supposed I enjoyed in your favour.”

“And now, I suppose,” resumed the countess, “out of downright revenge, he will inform lord Torrington of the discovery he has made.”

“If he presumes,” exclaimed the major, “to breathe a sentence of our—”

“Mr. Saville is a very decided character,” interrupted the countess, “and will not be prevented, by any dread of incurring your revenge, from doing what he thinks is proper: but this unlucky discovery brings me to a determination; and if the earl of Torrington talks to me again of a separation, I shall know what course to pursue.”

“You will at once abandon the gloomy tyrant, my charming Emily, will you not?” asked the insinuating major, “and take shelter in the arms of him who lives only to adore you?”

The countess smiled, called the major a presuming wretch; and at last gave him a solemn promise, that if things were brought to extremity, she would accompany him to Italy.

Mrs. Supple, the milliner, made many apologies and excuses for the alarm the countess had been put into by the abrupt entrance of Mr. Saville, who, she supposed, had made a mistake, and opened the door of the room she was in, instead of his own, which was the next to it.—“But I wonder,” said Mrs. Supple, “the major or your ladyship did not turn the key in the lock, which would have prevented any disagreeable intrusion.”

The countess protested that the innocency of her thoughts and actions rendered such a precaution equally unthought of as unnecessary; but as she had refused her hand to Mr. Saville before her marriage with the earl of Torrington, he might, out of mere spite and revenge, spread reports to injure her reputation.

“Then he must write his reports from France, my lady,” returned Mrs. Supple; “for he is now gone aboard a smack he has hired to take himself and a sick friend to the nearest port; and as the wind is fair, they will soon be far enough from Brighton.”

The countess, leaving the major to inform the accommodating Mrs. Supple that the business he had met the countess of Torrington upon being interrupted by the intrusion of Mr. Saville, they should again want the room; and that to prevent her being any way a loser by her very obliging behaviour, he would engage the whole of her lodgings during the time of his stay at Brighton, which would be the surest way to prevent future intrusion, though he should only occupy them a few hours now and then; but this engagement, Mrs. Supple's good sense would tell her, must be *sub rosa*.

Mrs. Supple's understanding had frequently been exercised in the same way; she looked archly, and told the major she knew her own interest too well to betray secrets.

The countess returned home, relieved from the fear of present detection; and being told by Smithson, after she was dressed, that she looked handsomer than ever, she went to lady Colloney's rout in high spirits, where the evening passed very agreeably, till some person said in her hearing, that the very first time the duchess of Aberdeen went out, after spraining her ancle, she was seen to walk on the Steyne, leaning on the arm of the honourable Mr. Drawley; and that it was currently reported and believed, that her grace favoured his addresses to her daughter, lady Arabella Moncrief.

This conversation was quite sufficient to put the countess of Torrington out of temper with every thing and every body; she sat down to a table to play gold loo, where, though she cheated with admirable dexterity, she lost her money. Her evening's entertainment was quite spoiled; Drawley and lady Arabella Moncrief were uppermost in her thoughts, and she ordered her carriage much sooner than her usual hour, to call upon the duchess of Aberdeen, whom she found alone. An explanation soon took place; they

mutually upbraided each other with duplicity, and parted, with a resolve never to be in future more than visiting acquaintance.

The countess returned home, to confide her disappointments and mortifications to the sympathizing Mrs. Smithson, who had always a tear at command, and an assenting word for every thing her lady advanced, true or untrue. The faithful Mrs. Smithson assisted the countess to rail at the deceit of the duchess of Aberdeen, the ingratitude of the honourable Tangent Drawley, and the coquetry of lady Arabella Moncrief.

The next morning, in a *tête-à-tête* conversation with her son, the countess was informed, that she had nothing to accuse either the duchess, lady Arabella, or Drawley of—“For I,” said Oscar, “at my first introduction to lady Arabella, informed her that my affections were irrevocably engaged; and Drawley, whom you so bitterly accuse of deceit, was also in possession of my sentiments.”

“I dare say,” returned the countess, reddening with passion, “you think your conduct extremely candid and generous; but if the earl of Torrington would be guided by my opinion, and the duchess of Aberdeen was not the next thing to an idiot, you and lady Arabella might be taught obedience to your parents.”

“The earl of Torrington is the best of parents,” resumed lord Rushdale; “and the duchess of Aberdeen has too much feeling, as well as understanding, to wish to force her daughter’s affections, which are placed on a deserving man, to whose family and fortune no reasonable objection can be formed.”

“Pretty romantic nonsense!” exclaimed the countess. “Affection!—give me patience! What can such a mere chit as lady Arabella Moncrief know about affection, I wonder?”

“And yet, madam, chit as you are pleased to call lady Arabella Moncrief, you have peremptorily insisted that I should make love to her.”

“Certainly,” resumed lady Torrington; “most certainly I did; and for the best reason in the world, the Aberdeen alliance being, in all points, very desirable; and I have no doubt, if you had obeyed my command, you would have secured the prize.”

“I think I can venture to assert I should not,” replied lord Rushdale; “for I have great reason to believe lady Arabella had bestowed her regard on Mr. Drawley before our arrival at Brighton.”

“I seldom suffer any of my plans to be defeated,” said the countess; “and it is a thousand to one but I find means to disappoint Mr. Drawley’s ambition, by breaking off his match with lady Arabella Moncrief.”

“That avowal, madam,” said lord Rushdale, “I am persuaded, is the mere ebullition of resentment; but if you really intend what you say, I am convinced you may spare yourself any efforts to separate lady Arabella Moncrief and Mr. Drawley; their attachment is sincere, and entirely divested of ambitious or interested views; and if the duchess of Aberdeen should oppose lady Arabella’s preference of Mr. Drawley, she will marry him as soon as she is of age; and for my own particular, I beg to assure your ladyship, that I will never be a bar in the way of their union.”

“What!” asked the countess, with a sneer, “is not the *perfect* Miss Delmore forgotten yet? I really supposed that romantic caprice had yielded to six weeks absence.”

“Then, madam, you did the stability of my principles injustice,” returned lord Rushdale; “for while I have a heart to feel, and judgment to approve, never will Miss Delmore or her perfections be forgotten.”

“Very sublime and pathetic, upon my word,” said the countess; “spoken 'with *good emphasis*,' but not much discretion; a great sound, meaning nothing at all.”

“You will find, madam,” returned lord Rushdale, “that my words have a meaning; and that, satisfied that she alone, of all her sex, can make me happy, it is my unalterable determination to marry Miss Delmore the very day I am of age.”

“Mean-spirited wretch!” exclaimed the countess, furiously ringing the bell, and ordering her carriage, “is it possible that a son of mine can entertain such grovelling notions? marry Cecilia Delmore, a girl of low origin—brought up on charity! Get rid of your vulgar passion—give up the idea of this degrading marriage, or I disclaim you.”

With an air of offended dignity, the countess of Torrington stepped into her carriage, when, having composed her ruffled spirits, and arranged her looks, she made a few calls, and alighted at the library. Here she found her dear friends, lady Bromford and Miss Jameson, to whom she related the conversation she had overheard at lady Colloney's rout, respecting lady Arabella Moncrief's engagement to Mr. Drawley—“And in this affair,” said lady Torrington, “the duchess of Aberdeen has behaved to me with monstrous duplicity; for it was herself that proposed a marriage between her daughter and lord Rushdale.”

“My dear lady Torrington,” replied Miss Jameson, affecting great sympathy, “I am not at all surprised that you feel hurt and offended at the conduct of the duchess of Aberdeen; for nothing can be more shocking, more distressing to a susceptible heart, than the deceit and ingratitude of those who profess themselves our friends; for, as the poet says, *'when the hand of friendship bars the arrow, the wound is more painful.'*”

“But after all,” said lady Bromford, “every sorrow has its solace; and who knows but your ladyship may yet have more reason to thank than resent the duplicity of the duchess of Aberdeen?”

“No,” replied lady Torrington; “I have been shamefully deceived; the childish folly of lady Arabella ought not to have met encouragement from the duchess. Nothing can possibly reconcile my feelings to the disappointment, or enable me to suppress my resentment.”

“This all appears very just and proper,” rejoined Miss Jameson; “but it strikes me, that there is a trifling circumstance that will reconcile you, my dear countess, to the breaking off this match between lord Rushdale and lady Arabella Moncrief.”

“I cannot even guess at the circumstance you allude to,” said lady Torrington, “nor have I an idea that any thing can possibly reconcile me to the disappoint of a match I had set my heart upon.”

Lady Bromford stuffed an enormous pinch of snuff up her nose, and, with a shrug of her shoulders, observed—“Heaven knows, we live in a strange world, where unthought-of circumstances bring about uncommon events, uniting foes and separating friends.”

“But it is the duty of a friend,” rejoined Miss Jameson, “to present things in their true colours; I am sure I am the last person in the world to say or do an ill-natured thing; but I think a certain person, lady Bromford, ought to be made acquainted—you understand me.”

“Oh, perfectly, my dear friend, perfectly,” replied lady Bromford; “and as I always pay a deference to your opinion, I think this morning as proper a time as any.”

Lady Torrington saw that Miss Jameson and lady Bromford were brimful of some intelligence, which they longed to communicate to her; and being curious to get to the bottom of their mystery, she invited them to take an airing with her.

Lady Bromford proposed driving towards Bramble Cottage, about two miles from the town, where a gardener lived, of whom she wanted to bespeak fruit.

During their drive lady Bromford took occasion to blame the folly of some mothers, who introduced their daughters into public when they were mere babies, unable to conduct themselves, or repress, with proper decorum, the freedoms of the men.—“For my part, I was so tenacious of lady Caroline Bromford’s reputation,” said she, “that I kept her in the nursery till she was turned of nineteen; and I had the happiness to see the good effects of my care, for lady Caroline married advantageously the following winter.”

“Yes, to a man old enough to be her grandfather,” thought Miss Jameson; “advantageously, but not happily; the poor girl escaped the tyranny of her mother, to suffer, in splendid misery, the peevish humours of a valetudinarian husband.”

“Had the duchess of Aberdeen followed my prudent example,” resumed lady Bromford, tapping her snuff-box, with an air of self-gratulation, “lady Arabella Moncrief would, without doubt, have been a different person in morals and conduct; and now her grace must see the error of introducing a child of fifteen to fashionable parties—But there are the gardens.”

Lady Torrington followed the direction of lady Bromford’s finger, and saw a very neat cottage, covered with roses and honeysuckles, and surrounded with smooth-trimmed hedges of white thorn.

“That is Bramble Cottage,” said lady Bromford, “where, if you please, we will alight and take a little fruit.”

There was no person in the cottage but a girl of about seven years old, who was rocking a cradle, which was lined and covered with fine corded dimity, as white as snow. Lady Bromford inquired for the gardener, and was told he was out in the ground.

Miss Jameson asked—“And whose child, my dear, are you rocking to sleep?”

“Not my little sister,” replied the girl; “she was put in the pit, in the church-yard, and then mother took the pretty lady’s baby to nurse.”

“And what is this pretty lady’s name?” asked lady Torrington, suspecting she had been brought to the cottage to learn a secret.

“Her name is—is—I have forgot her name; but she is a very pretty lady, and a very good lady too, mother says: and this,” said the little girl, catching up a cambric handkerchief that lay on the cradle, “and this is her handkitchur; lauks, how sweet it smells! and see here is letters along the connel of it—great A; and mother says as how I shall larn to do fine work like that.”

The countess of Torrington saw a coronet marked on the corner, and beneath it Arabella Moncrief in full.—“My stars, what a discovery!” exclaimed she, reading the name; “but it never can be possible—this infant can never belong to lady Arabella Moncrief.”

“Yes, but it does though,” replied the girl; “it is lady Arabella’s child, and she loves it dearly, so she does; and she comes here every day, sometimes in her coach, so grand, with two men, all silver lace, ahind on it; and she kisses it, and nurses it, and calls it her own dear dear baby; and the baby’s name is Arabella too, the same as her own; and sometimes a fine gentleman comes, with powder in his hair, and he kisses it, and calls it

poor little infortinit thing: but they shall never take it away in the grand coach, for I love the baby, and mother and father loves it, and the baby shall live with us always.”

Lady Torrington had heard sufficient, and she returned to her carriage, turning up her eyes, and exclaiming—“Well, certainly I never could have suspected this! Lady Arabella Moncrief’s child! Astonishing!”

Lady Bromford having applied her finger and thumb to her snuff, replied, there was nothing astonishing in the affair, when lady Arabella’s education was considered—”But I presume,” added she, “your ladyship is not now as much offended with the duchess of Aberdeen as you were before this discovery?”

“I am positively so surprised,” returned the countess, “that I am incapable of defining my own feelings, lady Arabella Moncrief is so young.”

“She is old enough, you see,” replied Miss Jameson, “to have made a faux pas, of which you have just seen the living witness.”

“I can scarcely believe I am awake,” said the countess; “lady Arabella Moncrief’s child! It is a strange business.”

“But very true, for all that,” returned lady Bromford; “and, for my part, I see nothing so very wonderful in it; for when young girls are allowed a carriage, and are suffered to drive about here and there, and where they please, such consequences are generally the result of reprehensible indulgence, and a child might naturally enough be expected to—”

“But when,” interrupted the countess, “or where could this affair have happened?”

“It is all clear as noonday,” rejoined Miss Jameson. “Every body supposes that a Frenchman is the father of the brat, a young man, a Parisian tailor or hair-dresser, who used to visit lady Arabella’s governess, madame de Piere; and she was dismissed in disgrace from the duchess of Aberdeen’s family, we all know.”

“Yes,” said lady Bromford; “and we all know, that as soon as she arrived here, lady Arabella was taken ill—that medical assistance was sent for from town, and that she was full three weeks before she was seen abroad again.”

“Very odd though,” resumed the countess, “that lady Arabella takes no care to conceal her disgrace.”

“She rather seems proud of it,” replied Miss Jameson; “for you both heard, ladies, what the little girl at Bramble Cottage said, which proves that lady Arabella is at no pains to prevent her shame from becoming public. I should like to know if Mr. Drawley has had no hint given him of lady Arabella’s little indiscretion.”

“He has my perfect consent to make her his wife as soon as he pleases,” said lady Torrington; “for lord Rushdale is now entirely out of the question.”

“If Mr. Drawley has not been informed of the affair,” rejoined lady Bromford, “it is impossible it should remain a secret long, lady Arabella visits the child so openly.”

“I am surprised I never heard it before,” said the countess, “for it seems public enough; but doubtless my friends, knowing how extremely anxious I was for the alliance, were delicate in mentioning the affair before me.”

“Mr. Drawley,” rejoined Miss Jameson, “is passionately fond of lady Arabella; and when he comes to hear of her imprudence, the consequences are to be dreaded; I should not wonder if he was to shoot her, and himself afterwards.”

“I should not believe,” replied lady Bromford, “that his love is so violent; Mr. Drawley is a volatile unthinking young man; he has been in love many times, or report

errs, and has got over all his tender passions without difficulty, or resorting to violent measures.”

The countess of Torrington resolved, let the consequences be what they might, that Mr. Drawley should be acquainted with the affair, before another day passed over his head; Miss Jameson had said he was passionately fond of lady Arabella, and that was cause sufficient, in her envious mind, to endeavour at making him miserable. Pleading an engagement, she took leave of her dear friends, lady Bromford and Miss Jameson, and hastened home to employ the ready agent of her mischiefs, Mrs. Smithson, in copying an anonymous letter to Mr. Drawley.

The countess considered it necessary to use the utmost precaution, lest suspicion should fall on her, as the author of the intelligence to Mr. Drawley of lady Arabella’s indiscretion: Mrs. Smithson received a strict command to be entirely ignorant in the story, while she placed a seal on her own lips, and never dropped a hint, even to lord Rushdale, of the important discovery she had made, leaving the circulation of the scandalous tale to the indefatigable industry of her friends, lady Bromford and Miss Jameson, through whose representations it was soon currently believed that lady Arabella Moncrief was bona fide the mother of an illegitimate child; and that the duchess of Aberdeen was doing all in her power to cover her daughter’s disgrace, and draw in the honourable Tangent Drawley to marry her.

“A tale of scandal is believ’d,  
And none suspect that they’re deceiv’d;  
While if a noble act you do,  
Folks wonder if the tale is true.”

Mr. Drawley had no sooner read the anonymous scandal transmitted to him by lady Torrington, than his generous mind at once pronounced it false; and glowing with honest indignation, he hastened to communicate it to lord Rushdale; for though he despised, and gave no sort of credence to the information, he was anxious to trace the inventor of such a vile fabrication, and to remove every shadow of suspicion from the character of his beloved Arabella.

Lord Rushdale confessed having already heard the story at lady Bloom’s; but being equally incredulous with Drawley, he advised that the anonymous letter should be immediately shewn to the duchess of Aberdeen and lady Arabella Moncrief, who, without doubt, would give such satisfactory explanation of the business, as would effectually justify lady Arabella’s conduct, and clear her reputation from suspicion.

This advice was too good to be neglected; the deeply-interested, but confiding Drawley shook his friend by the hand.—“Farewell!” said he; “from my soul I believe Arabella innocent; I confess I am now agitated a little, but when we meet in the evening, you will find *Richard is himself again.*”

Drawley repaired, without further delay, to the duchess of Aberdeen’s, where he was welcomed with smiles by lady Arabella, who told him that she was very happy to see him, for the duchess and herself had determined on spending the morning at home; and while they worked, he should read to them.—“Here,” said she, handing a pamphlet to him, “here is a very curious, though very improbable tale.”

“Not half so improbable or curious,” replied Drawley, “as the tale this letter contains, which I must entreat the duchess to favour me by perusing.”

The duchess took the letter.

“Now, I dare say,” resumed lady Arabella, “you expect me to be extremely anxious concerning the contents of that letter; but,” taking up her work, “I am determined to convince you that I have no curiosity respecting it.”

“And yet,” said the duchess, “it concerns you most nearly.”

“Concerns me!” repeated lady Arabella; “that will not do, mamma; you are only trying my forbearance.”

“Listen, and be convinced,” said the duchess.

“SIR,

“Report says you are paying your addresses to lady Arabella Moncrief; it would perhaps be well for your future peace, if you were to investigate the reasons that prompt the haughty duchess of Aberdeen to acquiesce in your wishes. At Bramble Cottage, two miles on the London road, is nursed a female child, which is every morning visited by lady Arabella Moncrief, who calls it hers, and bestows on it the most tender caresses; a cambric handkerchief, with a ducal coronet, and the name of Arabella Moncrief, was left at Bramble Cottage. Perhaps the wily duchess, or her sprightly daughter, may be able to clear up this affair to your satisfaction, and find another mother for the infant Arabella, whose actual existence reflects no lustre on the fame of lady Arabella Moncrief.”

A pause of a moment ensued; lady Arabella blushed as Drawley sought in her eyes the confirmation of her innocence.

“If you had attended to my advice, lady Arabella Moncrief,” said the duchess, “this indelicate affair had never been canvassed by the public.”

“No doubt, my dear mamma, you were right,” replied lady Arabella; “but I could not bear to part with the dear little innocent.”

“And you see the consequences,” resumed the duchess, colouring with indignation; “the hitherto unsullied name of Aberdeen is become the sport of licentious tongues. I pity the poor infant, but must for ever condemn the imprudence that has exposed you to this scandal.”

Drawley listened in astonishment; the speech and look of the duchess seemed to condemn and pronounce her daughter guilty, but the countenance of lady Arabella betrayed no consciousness of shame; her blush was the rosy emanation of purity; and, in spite of appearances, his impassioned heart generously whispered—“She is innocent.”

The duchess turned to Mr. Drawley, and, with more hauteur than he had ever seen her assume, said—“And you, sir, who have placed this insolent, mortifying scrawl before me, you, no doubt, join the scandalous cabal, and condemn the indiscretion of lady Arabella Moncrief.”

“No, on my soul—my sacred honour,” replied Drawley; “had I for a moment suspected the purity of lady Arabella, you had not seen me here. No, believe me, madam, I placed the letter in your hands, with the full assurance that you would enable me to vindicate the fame more precious to me than my own life.”

The haughty features of the duchess relaxed into complacency; she extended her hand to him, with a gracious smile, while, in a softened voice, she said—"You are a noble-hearted young man, and deserve our confidence."

Drawley pressed his lips on her hand, and replied, he was happy to be thought worthy the distinction.

Lady Arabella having perused the letter, returned it to Drawley, saying—"You merit my warmest thanks for the open generous conduct you have pursued. I acknowledge that you, above all others, have a right to ask an explanation of this affair, and I will not withhold it; but first, Drawley, on the honour of a gentleman, answer me—do you believe me guilty?"

"No, so help me Heaven!" replied Drawley; "there is in your look, in your manner, an air of angel innocence, that speaks conviction to my heart—that tells me you are wronged; and on my soul, I am ready to vindicate your honour against a host of calumniators, even before I am acquainted with the history of this child."

Lady Arabella, with a delighted look, rang for her writing-desk.

"That declaration, Mr. Drawley," said the duchess, "has won my heart; you think liberally, and have acted nobly. Arabella, from this moment I permit you to receive Mr. Drawley's addresses."

Drawley warmly thanked the duchess, and would have pressed lady Arabella's hand to his lips, but, gently withdrawing it, she said—"Not yet; let me first prove that I am worthy the affection of a man of honour." Then opening her desk, she took out three letters, bearing the Leicester post-mark, and signed Maria Weston. These she placed before Drawley, and insisted on his reading. They contained a most humble and pathetic acknowledgment of a deviation from virtue, and the most fervid and grateful thanks to the duchess and lady Arabella, for having preserved her from the horrid act of self-destruction, and for the care they were so humanely taking of her unfortunate child. The writer also expressed an abhorrence of her barbarous seducer, major Norman, and a hope that she might never again behold him.

Drawley now pressed lady Arabella to his heart.—"I am not mistaken," said he; "you are the angel I have ever believed you; you are indeed worthy of all my love and confidence."

Lady Arabella's shining eyes evinced the delighted feelings of her heart, while Drawley, addressing the duchess, said—"How, my dear madam, shall I ever sufficiently evince my gratitude to you, for the hope you have generously given me, that I shall call this angel mine!"

The duchess smiled, and jocosely replied—"You will best evince your gratitude to me, Mr. Drawley, by forbearing to engage in any whims that may endanger your life."

"And have the grace and goodness," said lady Arabella, "to release my hand, which you will please to recollect is, at present, my own property; and before I promise that you shall at a future period have a right to it, you must engage to love my child, and pledge your honour to bring it up; for it is such a darling—such a little wax-doll, that I would not part with it for the universe."

Drawley promised to love the little Arabella for her sake; to help to nurse it, and to be its father through life.

The duchess of Aberdeen now informed Mr. Drawley, that the unhappy Maria Weston was the daughter of a clergyman, whose widow, unable to support her rank in

life, had been reduced to the necessity of keeping a lodging-house at Leicester, where major Norman, happening to see Miss Weston, engaged apartments in her mother's house, for the sole purpose of seducing the inexperienced girl.—“Maria Weston was pretty, and very young; the artful major took the utmost pains to lull the watchfulness of the mother, and recommend himself to the favour of the daughter. Being certain that he had gained her affection, with a thousand promises of marrying her as soon as they arrived in London, he persuaded her to elope from her widowed mother, and throw herself on his protection and honour, to which proposal the miserable deluded girl consented, because she was afraid to meet the resentment of her mother, on the discovery of her disgrace, which she was conscious must soon happen, as she was in the way to become a mother. After remaining with her a few weeks in obscure lodgings in London, and putting off their marriage on various pretences, the major grew weary of her tears and reproaches, and cruelly abandoned her, when she stood most in need of support and consolation. Careless of the want and distress in which he left Maria Weston, the gay profligate major Norman set off for Brighton, and without a single pang of remorse for the sorrowing deprived widow, or her ruined daughter, he entered into expensive amusements, and mingled with the most fashionable parties, where, I am sorry to add,” said the duchess, “men of the major's licentious character are but too favourably received. A letter, unintentionally dropped by the major, informed the wretched Maria whither he was gone; instantly her resolution was taken to follow him—to endeavour to soften his hard heart; but on her arrival here, major Norman inhumanly denied all knowledge of her; and boldly asserting she was a woman of the town, he had her thrust from his door. The evening was closing in; penniless, and without a roof to shelter her, the unhappy creature, desperate with her injuries, attempted to plunge into the sea, but was happily prevented from accomplishing her dreadful purpose, by Mrs. Maynard, my woman, and Mr. Jennings, the butler, who happened to be near, and by force dragged her from the water. Mrs. Maynard is a sensible woman, with an excellent heart; she placed Maria Weston in decent lodgings, and immediately informed me of her situation and unhappy story. I need not tell you, we did all in our power to convince the wretched girl of the double sin she would commit, by rushing unbidden into the presence of her Maker; and while we administered to her wants, we had the satisfaction to see that she was truly penitent for her indiscretion, and anxious to be reconciled to her justly-offended mother. Lady Arabella immediately wrote to Mrs. Weston, who joyfully consented to receive her; the week after, Maria became the mother of a female infant; and as soon as she was able to travel, set out again for her deserted home, and the protection of her mother; but as taking the infant with her must at once have published her indiscretion, I complied with Arabella's request, and permitted her to adopt it. Maria Weston,” continued the duchess, “is now addressed by a respectable tradesman, who has been made acquainted with her misfortune, and is willing to bring up the child, but Arabella will on no account part with it; and as she goes every morning to Bramble Cottage to see the urchin, and always calls it hers, I really wonder that the idlers and gossippers, who have no other employment than to invent and circulate scandal, have been so long silent. I have now,” said the duchess, “finished a long story.”

“Which does infinite credit, my dear madam,” replied Drawley, “to your own and lady Arabella's heart.”

“Very prettily observed,” said lady Arabella; “and as you have behaved remarkably well in this business, by way of reward, you shall go with me to-morrow morning to see my little marmoset. I generally take Jennings with me, and I am rather surprised that he has not been implicated in the scandal.”

Having first obtained lady Arabella’s permission, Drawley informed lord Rushdale of all the particulars relative to the child at Bramble Cottage; and while they commiserated the erring Maria Weston, they mutually execrated major Norman, who, having seduced the fair unfortunate, and decoyed her from her home, had the cruelty to abandon her to misery, want, and despair.

At the library, next morning, when lady Torrington and all the scandalous party were assembled, lady Arabella Moncrief, quitting the side of a venerable old lady, with whom she had been in conversation, invited Miss Sedgeley, lord Rushdale, and Drawley, to take a drive with her as far as Bramble Cottage, to see her little girl.

All eyes were turned, with a stare of astonishment, on lady Arabella, while with a smile, lord Rushdale, taking Miss Sedgeley’s hand, said—“I am certain, Miss Sedgeley, you must be greatly pleased with this invitation; lady Arabella Moncrief’s child has been so much talked of, and has created such interest in Brighton, that no doubt you have a curiosity to see it.”

Miss Sedgeley wondered why she in particular had been invited to see the child; but being convinced that lady Arabella would not, in so very public a way, have spoken of it, had she been its mother, she suffered lord Rushdale to lead her to lady Arabella’s elegant barouche, leaving lady Torrington and her party turning up their eyes in amazement at lady Arabella Moncrief’s effrontery.

Lady Bromford, while she deliberately took an enormous pinch of snuff, began to see the possibility of the child not being lady Arabella’s; and as she did not wish to be expelled from the duchess of Aberdeen’s parties, was casting about in her mind how to exonerate herself from having had a share in propagating the scandal, when the venerable lady with whom lady Arabella had been conversing put down the newspaper she had been reading, and having consigned her silver-mounted spectacles to their green shagreen case, said—“That young creature has the best heart in the world.”

“Lady Arabella Moncrief, I presume you mean, ma’am,” returned Miss Jameson.

“Yes, ma’am,” replied the stranger, “lady Arabella first preserved the life of the mother, and sent her home to her friends, and she now humanely provides for the child, which she has placed out to nurse at Bramble Cottage, and calls it her own.”

“Bless my soul!” exclaimed Miss Jameson, “this is placing the affair in a very favourable light indeed: but are you certain, ma’am, of what you assent? I assure you I have heard a very different story respecting this same child.”

“I have no doubt, ma’am,” replied the old lady, “but there are persons in the world sufficiently wicked to traduce the fame of an angel; but I can take upon me to vouch for the truth of what I advance. I am just arrived from the town of Leicester, where the mother and grandmother of the infant reside; I have had the whole story from their own lips; and so vile, so detestable a part has major Norman acted in this affair, that I have no scruple to say I think he deserves hanging more than a highway robber.”

Lady Torrington felt uneasy, and unable to resist an opportunity of vindicating his reputation, she replied—“Major Norman, ma’am, is a man of fashion—an officer who has distinguished himself on more than one occasion; his name—”

“He has disgraced it,” interrupted the old lady, “by the most villanous conduct; and I shall take care, while I remain at Brighton, that major Norman is never admitted within my doors, or to any assembly where I may have a voice.”

Two beautiful young women now entered the library, and addressing the old lady, said—“We hope we have not tired your grace’s patience.”

Lady Torrington stared—a duchess was a person of too much consequence to be neglected; but before she could contrive to get introduced, an elegant barouche drove up, and the young ladies assisted their grandmother, the duchess of Singleton, into it.

“This is quite astonishing,” said lady Bromford; “who could have suspected that queer-looking woman of being the duchess of Singleton? I am sure I had not an idea of the little, shrivelled, old soul, in a close bonnet and a plain pelisse, being a person of rank. Those young ladies, I suppose, are lady Georgina and lady Ellinor Walworth. Well, I am quite happy to think I had prudence enough to give no opinion respecting lady Arabella Moncrief and the child, for it would be very disagreeable to make an enemy of a person of the duchess of Singleton’s consequence.”

Miss Jameson’s pallid face grew red with passion, as she exclaimed—“Why, surely, lady Bromford, you will not pretend to deny that you were the person who first mentioned to me that lady Arabella Moncrief had a child.”

“I am sorry, ma’am, to be obliged to contradict you,” replied lady Bromford; “your memory must be very short indeed, if you forget whispering in my ear, at lady Seaton’s rout, that lady Arabella Moncrief looked very blooming, considering it was so short a time since her accouchement.”

“I solemnly protest,” returned Miss Jameson, “I have not the remotest recollection of making such an observation, though I certainly heard you say—”

“Your memory, ma’am, is very convenient,” interrupted lady Bromford; “but I positively declare, whatever I may have said, has been merely repetitions of your reports.”

“My reports!” repeated Miss Jameson, “my reports! why certainly you do not mean to accuse me of inventing the scandal?”

“By no means, ma’am,” replied lady Bromford; “I shall not take upon me to say who was the inventor; but this I know—I am extremely concerned it ever was invented at all, and that I was so weak as to lend an ear to the abominable calumny, for indeed lady Arabella Moncrief’s extreme youth, and look of perfect innocence, were enough to convince the most prejudiced person, and I cannot sufficiently congratulate myself that I never took any trouble to—”

“Why, surely,” interrupted lady Torrington, who had sat silently enjoying the squabble between these dear friends, “surely, lady Bromford, you will not deny having invited me to accompany you to Bramble Cottage to see the child?”

“Yes—no,” replied lady Bromford, upsetting her snuff-box on her lilac satin pelisse, “no, lady Torrington, I did not invite you to see lady Arabella Moncrief’s child—I merely asked you to drive to Bramble Cottage, that I might speak to the man who supplies me with fruit: but I see, ladies, you have entered into a combination to throw upon my shoulders the odium of this scandalous invention; but since I fortunately perceive your intention, I shall take care that you come in for your share of the opprobrium, I promise you.”

Lady Torrington's only vexation arose from having been duped by the reports of her dear friends, which, after all, were likely to end like the fable of the 'mountain and the mouse.' She felt too angry with the duchess of Aberdeen and lady Arabella Moncrief, on account of Drawley, to trouble herself about removing the scandal from their illustrious name; and though she had enjoyed the petit brule between lady Bromford and Miss Jameson, she had no wish or design to take part with, or embroil herself with either of them; because, from their insatiate passion for scandal, she was constantly supplied with anecdotes, pathetic and ludicrous, of the follies and improprieties committed in the extensive circles of haut ton.

"For my part," said lady Torrington, "I do not see what we have to do with lady Arabella's guilt or innocence. Let things take their own course—no doubt the truth will soon come out. It is not worth while to dispute about her reputation, and as to who invented or promulgated the report, it has been so general, that I fancy it would be extremely difficult to trace it to the fountain head; and whether the child proves to be hers or not, the most unprejudiced person living must acknowledge that appearances have been very much against her."

To this opinion lady Bromford and Miss Jameson assented; and after mutual apologies, the trio parted with great apparent friendliness, while in their hearts they determined not to spare each other, rather than be excluded from the duchess of Singleton's parties.

During their ride to Bramble Cottage, lady Arabella Moncrief, who had reason to believe that Miss Sedgeley still nourished in her bosom a passion for the unprincipled and unworthy major Norman, with great delicacy and tenderness, explained to her his base and most inhuman conduct to Maria Weston, the unfortunate mother of the beautiful infant they were going to visit. Lady Arabella made this communication, not for ostentation, or the vanity of having her own generosity talked of, but in the sincere hope that this fresh instance of major Norman's depravity would effect a thorough cure, in the virtuous and susceptible heart his desertion had wounded, and restore the amiable Miss Sedgeley to that perfect health and tranquillity his sordid and unmanly conduct had deranged.

Arrived at the cottage, the lovely infant smiled, and held out its little dimpled hands to lady Arabella, who, almost smothering it with caresses, called it her child, her own Arabella, her marmoset, and her wax-doll.—Miss Sedgeley wept over the innocent babe, while she deplored the fate of its deluded mother, whom she said she well remembered at Leicester, a blooming animated girl.—Drawley took the laughing babe in his arms, and played a thousand antics with it, declaring he knew how to nurse better than any of them; then repeatedly kissing its soft rosy cheek, he insisted on his right to be its father.

Lord Rushdale, in his turn, took the babe; but whether he did not handle it so adroitly, or the child was weary, it began to put up its coral lip, and whimper. Lady Arabella soothed it with the tenderest affection, and, as if sensible that it was in the arms of its benefactress, the babe again smiled, and lady Arabella, fondly kissing it, protested, let the world invent what scandals it would, she would never part from her dear child.

"Our child, my Arabella," said Drawley.

"Very well," replied she, "our child it shall be; but do you know the dear babe has not yet been christened?"

“We will have this ceremony performed as publicly as possible,” said Drawley, “and I take the liberty of naming you, Rushdale, for one of the marmoset’s sponsors.”

To this lord Rushdale immediately agreed; and while he caressed the engaging infant, expressed his surprise how any man could be so destitute of natural feeling, as to deny and abandon his offspring.

“No man can abhor,” said Drawley, “such inhuman conduct more than I do; but, by-the-bye, the major, if report does not exaggerate, would have a numerous family to maintain, if he acknowledged all his children.”

Miss Sedgeley warmly thanked lady Arabella, for making her acquainted with this fresh instance of major Norman’s profligacy and want of feeling.—“It will, I am certain,” said she, “cure me of the lingering regard which, I blush to confess, I till this discovery nourished for him. I believed and hoped he might repent his conduct to me, and sue to be forgiven; but Maria Weston’s injuries and claims upon him are far greater than mine, and my pity for her wrongs teaches me to scorn and despise her villanous betrayer.” She then took the babe in her arms—“It is very like its unfortunate mother,” continued she—“it has the same lovely blue eyes and alabaster skin. I would offer myself as a sponsor; but, doubtless, lady Arabella, you will prefer those of higher rank and greater consequence than myself?”

“I have a reason,” returned lady Arabella, “for wishing you to be one of my child’s godmothers, and I will not suffer you to retract—I wish you to convince major Norman that you are acquainted with his base conduct to Maria Weston, and think of him as he deserves.”

The duchess of Aberdeen had not seen the infant for some time, and generously wishing to keep alive her interest in it, lady Arabella took the nurse and child with her in the carriage; and as they were obliged to pass through the most public part of the town, her appearance with it in the face of day had the good effect of putting an end to the suspicion of its being her child, though two old spinsters of quality, whom lady Arabella stopped the carriage to speak to, still retained their doubts and surmises.

Lady Arabella presented the infant to the antiquated virgins. They peered at the smiling urchin through their glasses, pronounced it a little beauty, and having bade lady Arabella good-morning, gave each other their opinion respecting the child, as they slowly walked home—lady Barbara Grizzle thought it the express image of the honourable Tangent Drawley, while lady Mildred Blight declared she thought the child vastly like colonel Annesley, an agreeable rattling Irishman, of some celebrity in haut ton, with whom lady Arabella used to flirt before he went abroad.

The duchess of Aberdeen had been put into such extreme good temper by the generous, manly conduct of Drawley, that all he said and did was received in the most favourable manner; and when he carried the child into the drawing-room, and placed it in her arms, she condescended to caress it, and to admire its bright blue eyes and dimpled chin.

Drawley conceiving the present moment favourable, proposed the child being christened; and the duchess of Singleton fortunately calling while lady Arabella was persuading her mother to be one of its sponsors, she had the pleasure to arrange every thing entirely to her wish, by the venerable lady proposing herself for one of the godmothers.

“This poor babe,” said the duchess of Singleton, kissing its white forehead, “has many claims upon the feelings of humanity; and you must understand, my love,” turning to lady Arabella, “that old women have to the full as many whims as young ones—are you inclined to indulge one of mine?”

“Assuredly, my dear madam,” replied lady Arabella; “for I am certain what you term a whim will prove to be—”

“Not a word—not one word more,” said the venerable duchess; “I am too old to be flattered: my wish is, that this child should be christened in the most public manner possible, because I think it will answer two good purposes—it will entirely silence your defamers, and it may bring shame and compunction to the heart of major Norman.”

Drawley declared, in a whisper to lady Arabella, that if he was not irrevocably engaged to her, he would make love to the duchess of Singleton, for she was a delightful old woman, and he longed to kiss her.

The ceremony of christening lady Arabella Moncrief’s adopted child took place with the utmost magnificence and publicity; and when the company the duchess of Aberdeen had invited to dinner met in the drawing-room, lord Rushdale having admired a beautiful antique vase, placed it on a table.—“We have just bestowed a name,” said he, “on this lovely babe—let us give her an independence.”

Lord Rushdale was at that time the fashion—his dress, his manner, his very look, were copied; no matter what was their incentive, his proposal was instantly adopted. Lord Rushdale having premised that he was the infant’s godfather, dropped bank-notes to the value of five hundred pounds into the vase. Drawley immediately followed his example with the same sum; and before the dinner-bell rung, the infant Arabella Georgina’s fortune amounted to five thousand pounds.

“This sum, with the interest,” said lady Hardy, “will be a very handsome thing when the child comes of age.”

“You forget to mention the compound interest, lady Hardy,” returned her little bustling husband; “if I had pencil—I wonder if I could borrow one?”

“Borrow what?” asked his lady.

“A pencil,” replied sir Peter Hardy; “if I only had a pencil about me,” feeling in his waistcoat pockets, “I could tell to a fraction how much five thousand pounds, interest and compound interest, will amount to in nineteen years, eight months, and fifteen days.”

“You really make me blush, sir Peter,” returned lady Hardy; “I really did not expect, when I took you from a counting-house, to be annoyed with your everlasting calculations. Let me request it as a particular favour, sir Peter, that you will forget, for this one day, that you ever were a merchant; and do, pray, try to remember that you are not now in company with traders, but with persons of the first quality and fashion.”

Lady Hardy turned away; the abashed knight repented having married a quality wife, and sighed for the freedom of that counting-house, which he had bartered for the privilege of looking like a fool, in the company of titled sharpers and rantipole women of fashion.

The accommodating Mrs. Supple, the milliner, had shut up her shop, and gone on her travels with a French nobleman, leaving lady Torrington at a great loss where to meet the fascinating major, whom she had not seen for the tedious space of three long days. At last, aided by the fertile invention of Mrs. Smithson, she pretended indisposition, which furnished an excuse for not accepting the duchess of Aberdeen’s invitation to the

christening. Lord Rushdale, they knew, was engaged for the whole day; and having given orders to admit no person, her lady being very unwell, the kind convenient Mrs. Smithson introduced major Norman, disguised as a doctor, to her apartment.

The public christening of Maria Weston's child had prepared the major for upbraidings and reproaches. Lady Torrington thought this a happy moment to prove the strength of his affection for her, and with an air of dignified seriousness she told him, she had sent for him merely to say, that all intercourse between them was at an end; for his barbarous conduct to Miss Weston convinced her, that no reliance was to be placed on his professions, that she in her turn could only expect scorn and desertion, and that to prevent so unpleasant a termination of their acquaintance, she had determined it should conclude there.

The major vowed, knelt, wept, and swore, and so artfully told his story, that the countess affected to believe that he had been the seduced, not the seducer, in the affair with Maria Weston, whom he represented as an adept in intrigue. The major protested, that so far from having, as report represented, abandoned the artful girl, that he had really intended to make her his wife, till he made the distressing discovery of her criminal intimacy with his brother officers, "with one of whom," said the major, "she had been more than a week before I left town; and I leave you to imagine, my adored Emily, my indignation and surprise, when I found the artful girl had followed me here, and in the most unfeminine manner exposed herself and me. I confess, in my rage, I did order her to be turned from my door, and I am certain any other gentleman, with the same provocation, would have acted as I did. At that moment I was under the influence of resentment; but, Heaven knows, I did not intend to let her suffer want, ill as she had conducted herself. In spite of her ingratitude, I designed to support her during her confinement, to provide for the child, and, on her recovery, to send her back to Leicester, to her mother, who ought not to have suffered her to visit the apartments of her lodgers."

"It certainly was very imprudent of her," replied the countess; "it was exposing the girl to temptation."

"And if, giving way to her violent passions, she attempted to throw herself into the sea, am I to blame?" asked the major.

"Certainly not, as you tell the story," replied the countess; "but are you sure it is not a little apocryphal?"

"Every syllable truth, my divine Emily," said the major. "You have heard in what way Miss Weston was preserved by the duchess of Aberdeen's butler, to whom, of course, she made her case pitiable, by representing me as a monster; and as the duchess and lady Arabella took upon themselves to provide for the mother and child, why, you see, my lovely countess, they released me from what I should otherwise have considered a duty imposed by humanity entirely; for as to love, or even esteem, her own bad conduct had put that quite out of the question."

The rhetoric of the engaging major was not lost on the countess, who protested he was an insinuating, fascinating wretch, born to delude and deceive poor, silly, believing women.

As the major was conducted through the hall by Mrs. Smithson, one of the footmen stared him full in the face; and just as he descended the steps, lord Rushdale met him. The height and gait of major Norman were too particular to be passed unnoticed. The first impulse of lord Rushdale was to follow, and satisfy his suspicion, for

notwithstanding a black coat and curled wig, the person of major Norman was ill disguised. The idea of covering his mother with disgrace prevented lord Rushdale from pursuing him; but as he entered the hall, he inquired who the person was he had that moment met?

“The doctor that came to bleed my lady,” was the reply.

Lord Rushdale asked no more, but hastily passed up stairs.

“The doctor—the devil!” repeated one of the servants, when lord Rushdale had left the hall—“I’ll wager a crown that he was no more a doctor than I am, though I might lose too, for he might have been doctor to the regiment before he was promoted, for what I know.”

“He! what he are you talking about?” asked the butler.

“Why, about major Norman,” replied the footman; “if that was not he I opened the door for, I never saw him in my life, that’s all. A doctor! fudge! the countess is as much sick as I am.”

“Hush! you long-tongued blockhead,” said the butler; “if madam Smithson hears you, I would not give you a straw for your place or your character. What is it to you whether the man you let out was a major or a doctor?”

“Nothing at all, but—”

“But you are a fool,” interrupted the butler; “a still tongue puts money in the pouch. Do you think I should have lived all these years in this family, if I had been given to prating? if you wish to keep your place, you must hear, see, and say nothing.”

Lord Rushdale, agitated, and full of resentment, entered his mother’s apartment; but perceiving her arm bound up, and two china cups on the dressing-table, he became convinced that he had been mistaken, and that it was possible the doctor might resemble major Norman, or that he might have fancied a likeness that did not really exist. Having given her ladyship an account of the splendid christening, lord Rushdale expressed his wishes for her recovery, and bade her good-night.

Mrs. Smithson closed the door, and having joined the countess in a laugh, drank the claret from the china cups, and retired to bed, protesting the most sensible men were the easiest deceived.

The following week the earl of Torrington arrived from town, and brought the news, that the count del Montarino had proceeded from Torrington Castle to London, where he had found out a money-lender, who had advanced Miss Maxfield thirty thousand pounds, with which they had proceeded to Scotland, where they had got married, and from thence had departed for Naples.

Lord Rushdale said he was extremely sorry for Miss Maxfield.

The countess observed she was a fool, and that the count had married her for her money.

“But if he uses her ill,” resumed lord Rushdale, “being under age, the law can annul her marriage.”

“To whom is she to complain?” said lady Torrington. “She speaks neither French nor Italian; she has committed a glorious folly in marrying a foreigner.”

“If I was her brother,” replied lord Rushdale, “I would compel the count to treat her kindly.”

“Her brother is so enamoured of lady Jacintha Fitzosborne,” returned the earl, “that he has quarreled with all his relations on her account; and to revenge herself on the

'child of nature' and her head-strong nephew, Mrs. Freakley, last week, at Tunbridge Wells, gave her fair hand to lord Wilton."

"What a mercenary wretch lord Wilton must be," exclaimed the countess, "to sacrifice himself to that frightful, chattering, old woman, for the sake of her money! Well, I suppose in winter we shall see lady Wilton waddling along in all the bridal pomp of white and silver—a happy exchange! for my eyes actually used to ache with gazing on her rose-coloured and her Waterloo-blue satin; and now she is married, I hope her lord will oblige her to keep her nails clean; for what with snuff, and other dirt, it was really disgusting to see her at a card-table."

"I have not yet told you all the news," resumed the earl; "the tender loves of lord Melvil and lady Eglantine Sydney are terminated."

"In marriage, I suppose?" said lord Rushdale.

"Yes," replied the earl, "but not as you suppose. At Weymouth lady Eglantine was introduced to the marquis of Beverley, a fine dashing young man, newly returned from his travels, and just come into possession of sixty thousand pounds a-year; for this new lover the fair inconstant forgot all her tender vows to lord Melvil, who remonstrated by letter. Lady Eglantine wondered what he could possibly mean, thought him extremely impertinent, and returned his next billet unopened. Lord Melvil was not so much in love as to fall into utter despair at her inconstancy—he turned his attentions to the rich widow of an Armenian diamond-merchant, who is reported to be worth near a million of money: they were married last Friday; and the account of lord Melvil's superb equipage, his liveries covered with gold lace, and his pretty little bride glittering with precious stones, fills half the newspapers of the day."

"And they say Melvil's bride is pretty, do they?" asked the countess; "that must be a double mortification to lady Eglantine."

"I do not see," rejoined lord Rushdale, "how lord Melvil's marriage should mortify lady Eglantine; she had rejected him, and certainly cannot consider his good fortune with displeasure."

"There, young man, you are greatly mistaken," replied lady Torrington; "for when a lady sees it proper to reject a gentleman, though she may not wish him absolutely to expire with grief, or live in downright agony, she would not be displeased to know that he was a little unhappy on her account."

"Such vanity," replied lord Rushdale, "ought to be disappointed; and I am glad that lord Melvil has the power to prove to lady Eglantine Sydney, that her inconstancy has neither affected his spirits, nor marred his fortune."

"On such subjects," returned lady Torrington, "the learned will differ.—Any thing more in the way of news, my lord?"

"Yes," returned the earl—"I saw lord Alwyn Bruce in town; he told me he had just left Teignmouth."

"How the proud lady Jane will fume and fret, to find the heart of her brother seriously caught at last! This is news indeed!" said the countess; "for I have no doubt but lord Alwyn Bruce went to Teignmouth to offer his hand to Miss Delmore."

"He went for that purpose solely," replied the earl.

"I am most sincerely glad to hear it," resumed the countess; "for nothing on earth would give me half so much pleasure as to hear of Miss Delmore's marriage."

“That is a pleasure,” replied the earl, “you will not enjoy just yet, for Miss Delmore’s marriage, I understand, cannot take place for some time.”

“No matter; as long as she is positively engaged,” said lady Torrington, “her immediate marriage is not of so much consequence. To be certain she is affianced would make me perfectly happy.”

“Then your happiness is certain,” replied the earl; “for I give you my honour, that, with Mrs. Doricourt’s consent, and my approbation, Miss Delmore is affianced.”

“This intelligence is delightful,” said the countess, looking exultingly at her son, who, to her great surprise, seemed perfectly composed. “But is your lordship quite certain—did lord Alwyn Bruce tell you Miss Delmore had accepted his offer?”

“No, really,” replied the earl; “I had not my information from lord Alwyn Bruce.”

“By letter, then, from Mrs. Doricourt?” asked the countess.

“I did not hear from Mrs. Doricourt while I was in town,” said the earl.

“How excessively teasing you are!” returned the countess—“you see I am expiring with curiosity, and you are resolved to torment me—Miss Delmore, then, must have written you the account of her *bonne fortune*?”

“Not a sentence like it,” returned the earl; “your ladyship is unfortunate in all your guesses: but at once to relieve your curiosity, lady Torrington, I will candidly inform you Miss Delmore has rejected lord Alwyn Bruce’s addresses.”

“She is a fool, an idiot!” said the countess; “and I am certain Mrs. Doricourt is mad, or she never—but stay, there is a mystery in your lordship’s words—Miss Delmore, you say, has rejected lord Alwyn Bruce’s addresses, but with Mrs. Doricourt’s consent, and your approbation, she is engaged—affianced; this is easily solved—Miss Delmore is affianced to some one——”

“Whom she prefers to lord Alwyn Bruce,” interrupted the earl. “To put an end at once to this mystery, lady Torrington, Miss Delmore is affianced to your son; and it is my intention their marriage shall take place the day he is of age.”

The countess was speechless with rage; and to avoid further altercation, the earl took his son’s arm, and left her ladyship to reconcile her mind to his determination in the best way she could.

## CHAPTER II.

\_\_\_\_\_ “Will pride make a man immortal? no:  
Will pride hinder the worms from feeding on  
The carcase after death? no: for your glutton  
Worm feasts most luxurious on a pamper'd  
Noble. Pride, that sin most sinful,  
Is transform'd bright angels into devils,  
And seeing that man is form'd of dust, and  
Must return to dust again, why should he  
Proudly scorn his fellow-men, who after  
Death must mingle with him in one common  
Mass?” Z.

.....

“You shall find I am your lord, your head, your master;  
have you not sworn to honour and obey me? Unbend  
that haughty brow, and put on looks gentle and sub-  
missive. What, have I braved the raging elements; and  
steered through seas that boiled, and foamed, and swelled  
in angry billows, to quail because a woman frowns? Go  
to, my will shall be your law.’

*An unwished-for Introduction — Definition of  
Friendship—Mercenary Marriages—The De-  
ceiver deceived — How to rule a Wife.*

THE pride of lord Alwyn Bruce was by no means so excessive as that of his sister. The amiable disposition, beauty, and accomplishments of Miss Delmore, united with her highly-cultivated understanding, made him forgetful of her humble birth, and rendered him a constant visitor at Mrs. Doricourt’s, to the last day of their remaining in Cumberland.

Miss Macdonald had been informed of his lordship’s daily visits to the Hermitage, and expressed her jealous displeasure, in wondering how any person could cry up Miss Delmore for a beauty; the girl was very well, but had a certain air, that plainly told she was of low origin; and as to her accomplishments, she saw nothing wonderful; but for her part she thanked Heaven she had sense enough to judge for herself, and must declare Miss Delmore had never astonished her.

At length the day so anxiously wished by Miss Macdonald arrived, and she heard, with undisguised pleasure, that the trio of perfects, as lady Torrington had named them, lady Welford, Mrs. Doricourt, and Miss Delmore, had left Cumberland.

Miss Macdonald believed that lord Alwyn Bruce, having no longer a magnet to attract him to St. Herbert’s Island, would be, as usual, a constant visitor at her uncle’s, sir

Alexander Stuart, and that his senses released from the witcheries of Miss Delmore, he would become sensible of her superiority, and feel himself honoured in her notice.

Miss Macdonald, like many other females in similar situations, believed as she hoped; but though lord Alwyn Bruce did not decline sir Alexander Stuart's invitations, he paid no more attention to Miss Macdonald than he did to Miss Graham, or lady Stuart; and she had the mortification to prove she studied Grecian attitudes, and robed her tall figure in antique draperies, without even obtaining from him a word, or even a glance of tender admiration.

After remaining at Keswick about a month after Mrs. Doricourt's departure from the Hermitage, lord Alwyn Bruce asked his sister if she would accompany him to Teignmouth?

Lady Jane began to feel alarmed, and to suspect that Miss Delmore was the incentive to this excursion; but being herself deeply engaged in a matrimonial speculation, she was, though very reluctantly, compelled to decline his invitation, and suffer him to proceed alone: but previous to his setting off, she, in a very lofty tone, reminded him, that the family of Bruce descended in a direct line from royalty, and never had disgraced itself by a plebeian marriage, and expressed an oblique hope, that he did not design to introduce the low-born Miss Delmore into a family of their antiquity, rank, and consequence.

Lord Alwyn Bruce had often combated the prejudices of his sister, but always unsuccessfully. Lady Jane, in his eyes, had but one fault—excessive pride; she was an affectionate sister; and as he knew it impossible to reconcile her to his intention, he determined to let her remain in ignorance till his fate was decided, "*to be or not to be a husband;*" and while he made up his mind not to interfere in her choice, he determined not to let her opinions influence his; he had seriously weighed every circumstance for and against a marriage with Miss Delmore, and saw no possible objection that could be made by the most fastidious, except her want of rank; and that to him, young and in love, appeared of no importance, for in every other point she stood proudly pre-eminent, and seemed "*a creature of celestial mould.*"

Ardent and full of hope, lord Alwyn Bruce had not once entertained an idea that it was possible Miss Delmore's heart and hand might already be engaged. On his arrival at Teignmouth, he was received by Mrs. Doricourt and Miss Delmore with many expressions of pleasure. Love is apt to delude itself; and in the smiles of Miss Delmore, lord Alwyn Bruce read the success of his suit. With all the fervour of youthful passion he explained the motive of his visit to Teignmouth, and made her an offer of his hand.

Miss Delmore esteemed and respected lord Alwyn Bruce as a friend, but her love was irrevocably placed, and his heart felt many severe pangs, when, with modest candour, she thanked him for the honour he intended her, and confessed herself engaged.

Lord Alwyn Bruce was a man of honourable principles; it was painful to endure a disappointment of his most cherished hopes, but he did not attempt to persuade Miss Delmore to break the faith plighted to a rival. He respected the honourable avowal she had made of her preference of another, and entreated to be admitted to her friendship—an honour he would in person claim, when time and absence had reconciled him to his disappointment. This was a request not to be refused; and lord Alwyn Bruce and Miss Delmore parted, with the sincerest good wishes for each other's happiness.

The beauty of Miss Delmore was now completely restored, and no trace remained of the disorder from which her rival, Miss Macdonald, had hoped so much. The health and spirits of Mrs. Doricourt were also so much improved by the Devonshire air, that her repugnance to society was lessened daily, and she ceased to regret having left the quiet shades of St. Herbert's to mingle with the world. Lady Welford had met several of her acquaintance at Teignmouth, and with these Mrs. Doricourt had been led to visit the theatre and the assemblies, at first for the sake of Cecilia partaking the amusements of the place, and afterwards for the relief she found they afforded to those sorrows too long and too fondly cherished.

The necessity of answering some letters from abroad detaining Mrs. Doricourt at home, lady Welford and Miss Delmore set out to make a few morning calls. At the house of general Amherst they were introduced to sir Alan Oswald, an old gentleman of near ninety years of age, who still walked erect, and was in full possession of his faculties. Lady Welford soon understood that sir Alan Oswald was Mrs. Doricourt's grandfather; and in his lofty air, of which time had in no degree divested him, lady Welford distinguished all the unbending pride which, in the days of Mrs. Greville, had distinguished his character. Miss Delmore was certain Mrs. Doricourt rather wished to avoid than meet sir Alan Oswald; but as he was come to spend some weeks at Teignmouth, an interview was unavoidable, and lady Welford undertook to mention sir Alan's arrival to her friend.

Mrs. Doricourt received the intelligence with far less emotion than Cecilia expected, who had sat in much uneasiness while lady Welford made the communication. But Mrs. Doricourt had never considered sir Alan Oswald as a relation; he had never seen or forgiven her mother after her marriage with lieutenant Greville—a man honoured by his country, and idolized by his family; and for herself, he had never bestowed on her the slightest notice.

Lady Welford described sir Alan as tall and dignified, with all the ceremonious formality of the old school about him.

Mrs. Doricourt wished herself at the Hermitage, for it afforded her no pleasure to learn she was in the vicinity of a relation, whose unbending pride and relentless cruelty had rendered him rather an object of aversion than respect to her mind; for she remembered, with feelings of resentment, how often she had seen her mother weep at his harshness and neglect—that mother, the most gentle and amiable of women; she remembered too the piety and fortitude with which that dear and tender mother had borne up against the cruelty and pride of her unfeeling family, and the unwearied solicitude and affection with which she had watched over her youth: while these reflections passed in succession through her mind, Mrs. Doricourt again felt the loss of this beloved parent, and bathed her memory with tears of agony.

Resentful of the injustice and hardness of heart of sir Alan Oswald, she felt a strong repugnance to meeting him—"My mother's only fault," said she, "was loving and marrying a man of handsome person, great intellectual endowments, and acknowledged bravery. Such was my father, lieutenant Greville; and for loving him my lamented mother was discarded and disclaimed."

"These retrospections," replied lady Welford, "avail nothing; the past cannot be recalled. Sir Alan is anxious to shew to you the affection he denied your parents, and he

requested lady Amherst to bring about an interview as speedily as possible. He is invited to dine at the general's where you know we have been engaged for near a week."

Mrs. Doricourt could not bring her mind to support an interview with sir Alan Oswald, and she requested lady Welford to make her excuses to general and lady Amherst.

But against this hasty determination lady Welford urged many arguments, particularly, that shrinking from an interview with sir Alan Oswald would give rise to a thousand ridiculous reports. She bade her reflect whether Mrs. Greville, if living, would approve her shunning the presence of her grandfather, who had expressed a desire to be introduced to her; and whether her piety would allow her to refuse sir Alan an opportunity of bestowing on her the blessing he probably repented having withheld from Mrs. Greville.

Mrs. Doricourt listened to lady Welford's arguments without being convinced by them. She felt reluctant to see sir Alan from another motive she had not explained—she was sufficiently rich, and did not wish the world to believe that she entertained a design of worming herself into the favour of her grandfather, with a view of participating in his wealth: but lady Welford would not give up the point, and Cecilia joining her entreaties, Mrs. Doricourt yielded to their opinion, not to her own sense of the propriety of meeting sir Alan Oswald.

It was late when they arrived at lady Amherst's, where sir Alan had been some time fretfully expecting Mrs. Doricourt, every now and then exclaiming—"Refractory like her mother—little respect can be expected from a daughter of lieutenant Greville's—equality and disobedience were his precepts."

Lady Amherst, with a delicate regard to Mrs. Doricourt's feelings, took care that no persons should be present at the interesting introduction but herself and lady Welford. When Mrs. Doricourt was announced, sir Alan appeared much moved; he looked at her for a moment, then exclaimed—"What mockery is this—she is not dead! this is my—this is Mrs. Greville!"

Mrs. Doricourt gazed on the white locks and venerable countenance of sir Alan—nature throbbed at her heart, but the remembrance of her deserted mother suppressed every tender emotion; she thought of his pride, of his hatred of her brave father, and was near fainting.

Sir Alan saw she was sinking, and too feeble to support her, with a countenance expressive of distress, he entreated lady Welford to place her on the couch. Mrs. Doricourt burst into tears, and sinking at the feet of sir Alan, earnestly entreated him to bestow on her the blessing he had denied her mother.

Sir Alan raised her, pressed his lips on her forehead, and pronounced the blessing she requested.—"Your mother, Mrs. Doricourt," said he, "was my favourite child, and on that account her disobedience was more wounding. Had she married a man of family, his poverty might have been overlooked, but the disgrace she brought upon the house of Oswald was of a nature not easy to be pardoned."

Mrs. Doricourt would have replied, but perceiving in her look a vindication of her mother, he hastily said—"But the past not being in our power to recall, it is wisdom sometimes to forget."

During the conversation that ensued, it was evident to Mrs. Doricourt that time had effected very little alteration in the character of sir Alan Oswald—pride was still

predominant, and rank his idol. Being taken by surprise, his feelings had burst forth; but had time been allowed him for reflection, it is probable he would have thought his offended dignity required him to demand concessions, as well as solicitation, before he bestowed his daughter's forfeited blessing on her unoffending offspring. Of every class of persons below nobility sir Alan Oswald spoke and thought with disdain; and while running over a list of grand alliances Mrs. Greville might have formed, he did not forget to express his contemptuous regret that the husband of Mrs. Doricourt had made his fortune by commerce.

At table the person of Miss Delmore, but more particularly the notice bestowed on her by lady Welford and Mrs. Doricourt, exciting sir Alan's curiosity, he inquired who she was? but being informed that she was the *protégée* of his grand-daughter, a person of no family, he took no further notice of her than to observe it was pity she was so handsome, as her beauty might allure some foolish young man of rank to marry her, and disturb the peace of his family, which was always the case when unequal alliance were formed.

The figure of sir Alan Oswald was still unbent by age; his cheeks were florid, his hair white as snow, and his full dark eyes still retained a great portion of their brilliancy. This venerable-looking old man would have awakened all the tender duteous feelings of Mrs. Doricourt's heart, could she have forgotten his inexorable conduct to her mother, or had he confined himself to speak on common topics; but whenever a subject was touched upon in which rank or family had a place, the inordinate pride of his heart became conspicuous; and sir Alan Oswald appeared, at the very great age of near ninety, haughty, overbearing, and tyrannical.

Such a character was not likely to conciliate the affections of Mrs. Doricourt, who, while she beheld the coldness, almost bordering on disdain, with which he treated her darling Cecilia, she wished she had declined being introduced to him. But while Mrs. Doricourt felt neither respect nor affection for sir Alan, his pride in her was strongly awakened. The rest of his family resembled him in disposition and deportment, consequently were little admired or respected; but wherever Mrs. Doricourt moved, she was followed by the voice of popular applause; her person, her manner, her accomplishments, and, above all, her benevolence, were enthusiastically spoken of. The haughty spirit of sir Alan was gratified to perceive her society was eagerly courted by the highest circle at Teignmouth, notwithstanding she was the widow of a man whose wealth had been made in a way his pride despised.

The offer of lord Alwyn Bruce to Miss Delmore had been spoken of before sir Alan, and while others thought she had acted unwisely in refusing so noble a match, he condescended to praise her conduct, observing, had she accepted his hand, she never could have expected to meet any thing but contempt from his family, who, being all persons of rank, would have felt themselves degraded, even while their respect for lord Alwyn compelled them to admit her to an equality with themselves.

Mrs. Doricourt had mildly endeavoured to reason these prejudices from her grand-father's mind, but they appeared every hour to gather strength; and she was not sorry when rain, or any other contingency, kept him from her house.

Miss Delmore, in the meantime, had, with unwearied sweetness, strove to gain sir Alan's favour; but whatever she did, either to assist or entertain him, he received with the haughty air of a superior, who condescended by accepting, rather than considered himself

obliged; and though this haughty ungracious manner of behaving to their favourite induced lady Welford and Mrs. Doricourt to treat her with a double portion of tenderness and respect, it made no sort of change in the conduct of sir Alan Oswald, who publicly and privately condemned their fondness of an inferior, which, sooner or later, he professed himself assured, would be rewarded by ingratitude.

Mrs. Doricourt now looked forward with anxious anticipation to the period that would release her from the presence of a relative she found it impossible to respect or love. Sir Alan had entirely given up visiting London, and always spent the winter at Oswald Abbey, in Dorsetshire; but though Mrs. Doricourt wished to see the birthplace of her mother, she positively declined sir Alan's invitation to accompany him to the Abbey, on the plea of business, which would detain her in town during the winter.

Cecilia regularly received letters from lord Rushdale; the tenderness and liberal spirit breathed in every line amply compensated for the *hauteur* of sir Alan Oswald. They were filled with anxious wishes for the happy period when they should meet in town, and the fondest protestations of love, which absence had increased rather than diminished.

Having formed a very agreeable acquaintance with young ladies of her own age, Cecilia would have found her time pass very pleasantly at Teignmouth, but for the supercilious conduct of sir Alan Oswald; though of this she never complained, for she saw that it pained and displeased her friends equally with herself.

While matters remained in this state, Mrs. Doricourt received a letter from Marseilles, relative to her late husband's property, which she wished to sell, but was informed it could not be disposed of without her presence.

Mrs. Doricourt rejoiced in a circumstance that would separate her from sir Alan, and release her darling Cecilia from the presence of a person, who alone, of all her acquaintance, was insensible to her merits.

Lady Welford determined on a trip to France with her friends; and they had made their arrangements for quitting Teignmouth, when sir Alan Oswald informed his granddaughter, that feeling rather indisposed, he had determined on wintering in France, and would avail himself of the opportunity of going over with her.

Mrs. Doricourt was vexed and mortified; she tried to put the old gentleman from his scheme, by observing, that during her short stay at Marseilles, her time would be entirely occupied by lawyers and land-surveyors, her business there being to dispose of an estate.

Sir Alan had determined on going to the south of France; its air, he felt assured, would prolong his days, and no suggestions of Mrs. Doricourt could alter his purpose.

"Sir Alan Oswald's years have been many," said Mrs. Doricourt to lady Welford; "they may be near a close: his daughters appear to have but little respect or affection for him, or they would not thus commit him to the care of servants. I cannot be hypocrite enough to say that I am actuated by any tenderer sentiment than humanity and general charity towards him; I would much rather decline than accept his company; but the world would call me unnatural—nay, I fear my own conscience would upbraid me; and though it will grieve me to the soul to part from Cecilia, yet I will not take her with me, to be perpetually annoyed by the *hauteur* of sir Alan. Assist me, dear lady Welford, with your advice; to whose protection, during my stay in France (and I will make it as short as possible), shall I commit this dear child of my affection?"

“Sir Alan Oswald’s determination, my dear friend, has entirely altered mine,” replied lady Welford; “I have not your reasons for putting up with his peculiarities, and would on no consideration be an inmate in the same house with him. I am sorry to let you go alone, but nothing would tempt me to visit France in company with sir Alan. You know I am ever candid in my opinions, and will, I trust, pardon me for speaking my mind thus freely; to me the pride of sir Alan is ridiculous, and his behaviour to our sweet Cecilia unpardonable. If you consider me worthy the trust, I will endeavour to make her abode with me as pleasant as it can be during your absence from England.”

Mrs. Doricourt joyfully accepted this kind proposal, adding, she would hasten her return; and hoped her business would not detain her more than a month.

The parting of Cecilia and Mrs. Doricourt was tender and affecting; Cecilia felt that she was separating from her best and truest friend; she shrunk in terror from the reflection, that very soon Mrs. Doricourt would be on that element which had often proved the grave of those who embarked upon its swelling waves, full of brilliant hopes of fortune and of lengthened days.

The piety and resignation of Mrs. Doricourt had taught her to consider “*death our necessary end*,” without fear; but at parting with Cecilia, it made no part of her anxious melancholy thoughts; ever unhappily prone to look on the gloomy side of futurity, she had a dark presentiment, that at her return from France she should find the blooming cheek of Cecilia pale, and her present cheerfulness, through the dereliction of lord Rushdale, destroyed, “*for man regards not oaths nor promises*.” Such were the thoughts of Mrs. Doricourt; and as she pressed Cecilia to her heart, and bade her farewell, she felt convinced that when they met again, she should find her deprived of every hope of that felicity that now seemed to await her.

“Thank Heaven! my dear Cecilia,” said lady Welford, “we have got rid of don Formallo Pomposo, who has, I confess, put my temper and patience to very severe trials; and as to you, certainly you merit lady Torrington’s appellation of perfect—you are absolutely a saint in forbearance and patience; have you really no human failings?”

“A great many, my dear madam,” replied Cecilia; “but gratitude and affection to my dear Mrs. Doricourt made me struggle with my feelings; and I am happy to think I disguised them so well, as I would not for worlds have made her uneasy. Sir Alan is indeed proud, and exacts more respect than the heart can voluntarily pay, at least mine, which is, I know, much more haughty than it ought to be, considering, as sir Alan often observed, my no family, and my dependent state; but it ought to be remembered, sir Alan Oswald is very old, and——”

“Very ill-tempered,” interrupted lady Welford; “do not, my dear girl, attempt to speak one word in extenuation of his fretful, imperious, contradictory humours; he is the most disagreeable old man I ever met in the course of my life; I really hope Mrs. Doricourt will not suffer her goodness of heart and notions of duty to confine her to his side; he will wear out her spirits with his nonsensical pride and parade.”

Cecilia feared sir Alan would persuade Mrs. Doricourt to reside with him at Oswald Abbey.—“And then,” said she, tears trembling in her eyes, “I shall lose her altogether.”

“No,” returned lady Welford, “that will never happen. Mrs. Doricourt is too fondly attached to you to consent to a separation, even if her own happiness was out of the question; but Mrs. Doricourt has been for many years uncontrolled mistress of her

time and actions, and, I am certain, will never submit to be made the slave of sir Alan's haughty caprices, who, by-the-bye, has lived quite long enough, and can now be very well spared; and I promise you, *entre nous*, I shall not be sorry to hear he sleeps with his illustrious ancestors in the family vault."

A few days after Mrs. Doricourt's departure, as lady Welford and Miss Delmore were coming out of a milliner's shop, they were, to their great surprise, accosted by lady Jacintha Fitzosborne.—"Bless me, Miss Delmore," said she, "I was told you had left Teignmouth!"

"I suppose you heard," returned lady Welford, "that we were all gone to France?"

"No, really, that was not the report that met me on my arrival," said lady Jacintha: "let me recollect—I love to be correct; it was, that old sir Alan Oswald had insisted on Mrs. Doricourt sending you, Miss Delmore, back to your aunt, Mrs. Milford—Milfred—Mildew—what is her name?—the housekeeper at Torrington Castle."

"My aunt's name is Milman, lady Jacintha Fitzosborne," replied Cecilia, mildly, yet proudly, "of which she has never yet given me reason to be ashamed. Report, your ladyship perceives, has deceived you."

"Oh yes, I find my intelligence has not been quite correct," said lady Jacintha; "but what are you doing, now Mrs. Doricourt has deserted you? Does lord Torrington do any thing for you? Teignmouth is a very gay place, I perceive, and rather dangerous, I should think, for an unprotected female."

Lady Welford had suffered lady Jacintha Fitzosborne to run on, in the hope that Cecilia would silence her impertinence; but finding she merely replied—"I certainly shall profit by your ladyship's caution," she asked lady Jacintha, who had informed her that Mrs. Doricourt had deserted Miss Delmore?

"Heavens, what a question!" returned lady Jacintha. "I heard the report while I was bathing; but really I have no recollection who mentioned it."

"Permit me then," said lady Welford, "to enable your ladyship to contradict the report when you next hear it. Mrs. Doricourt neither has, nor ever will desert Miss Delmore, who, notwithstanding Teignmouth is, as your ladyship observes, a gay place, will, I trust, be exposed to no dangers while under my protection." She then took Cecilia's arm, and they wished her ladyship good-morning.

At lady Amherst's, where they made a call, they heard that lady Jacintha Fitzosborne had arrived at Teignmouth with the widow of a Dutch merchant, a Mrs. Vanburgh, whose vulgarity she kindly overlooked, in consideration of being allowed the use of her purse and table, both which were plentifully supplied.

At Teignmouth lady Jacintha Fitzosborne and her Dutch acquaintance attracted great attention, and obtained little respect, for lady Jacintha's dress, and that of Mrs. Vanburgh, were fashionably indelicate, and their manners of a sort that, while they encouraged the intimacy of the gentlemen, alarmed the modesty of the ladies, and by them they were but little noticed or visited.

Among the gentlemen constantly seen in the train of lady Jacintha Fitzosborne, was a Mr. Cheveril, a man something "*declined into the vale of years*," of reserved manners, sparing in speech, and of awkward figure; but report represented his wealth as incalculable. He had spent the best part of his life in Persia, and had been only a few months returned to England.

Mr. Cheveril had been at some pains to study the character of lady Jacintha; he knew she was poor, very mercenary, and very satirical; he observed that only rank or wealth could obtain her notice—and that, in the affair of marriage, her hand was to be purchased by the best bidder.

Mr. Cheveril, in spite of all her numerous imperfections, felt for lady Jacintha a sentiment approximating to love; and he fancied, if she was his wife, he could tame the arrogance of her spirit, soften the keen edge of her wit, and reform the principles that he was willing to believe were the result of education, not the genuine offspring of nature.

Mr. Cheveril had no ancestral dignities to be proud of; his father had worked hard as a ship-carpenter, and brought up a family honestly and creditably: of all his children, two only had survived, George, of whom we are writing, and Charlotte, who had many years been married to a banker at Exeter, of the name of Danvers.

When George Cheveril returned to England, after an absence of full five-and-twenty years, he found all his family dead, except Mrs. Danvers, to whose daughter he made a present of the little property that fell to his share from the decease of his father, at the same time placing a large sum of money in the hands of Mr. Danvers, and hinting that his possessions exceeded their most extravagant thought.

Mr. Cheveril, in the course of the summer, had been at most of the fashionable bathing-places, in the hope of meeting a lady whom he could like well enough to marry. His choice fell on lady Jacintha Fitzosborne, whose poverty was no objection, but whose rank was a great incentive, for pride had some share in the mind of Mr. Cheveril, who thought it would greatly add to his matrimonial felicity to have a titled wife.

The most sensible people have weaknesses; Mr. Cheveril thought an alliance with nobility would place him upon an equality with those who, remembering his father was an honest ship-carpenter, and himself, at his first outset in life, the cabin-boy of a merchantman, behaved with proud civility towards him.

Mr. Cheveril's immense wealth sunk sir Middleton Maxfield's fortune into a mere competency; and, determined that she would marry before she entered her thirtieth year, lady Jacintha did not discourage the visits of Mr. Cheveril, though his genealogical tree wanted supporters: many females of rank had married beneath themselves, without her excuse of poverty; and if nothing else offered in the course of the winter—but she would take time to consider; and, in the mean time, that Mr. Cheveril might not prevent other offers from being made, she resolved to tell all her acquaintance that he was Mrs. Vanburgh's lover, not hers.

Mrs. Vanburgh's vulgarity and want of education did not prevent her having many admirers, who were so seriously in love with her fortune, as to overlook deficiencies so trifling; but Mrs. Vanburgh, to use her own phrase, had tumbled over head and ears in love with a tall, black-whiskered officer of the name of Leland, to whom she spoke her passion, as plain as looks could speak, whenever she met him, but without obtaining the slightest intimation that the young man understood, or was grateful for her condescension: the beauty of Miss Delmore had blinded the ensign to the more matured charms of Mrs. Vanburgh; and without considering that he had only his commission, and the little his family, persons in very moderate circumstances, could spare, to subsist on, he was wasting his sighs and looks on her, following a delusive Cupid, when he ought to have been worshipping at the shrine of Plutus, and praising the simple elegance of Miss

Delmore's appearance, at the moment Mrs. Vanburgh had decorated her person in all the gaudy colours of the rainbow to attract his notice.

Lady Jacintha Fitzosborne did not wish Mrs. Vanburgh to marry, for a husband might consider her friendship an expence prudent to be dispensed with; and at present Mrs. Vanburgh's house, table, and purse, were very necessary to lady Jacintha, and she called forth all her wit to set her against ensign Leland; she ridiculed his family, his person, his connexions, and even did not stick at inventing a few falsehoods. But it was in vain lady Jacintha tried to extinguish the *flamme de Cupidon*; Mrs. Vanburgh persisted in declaring he was the most handsomest man she had seen since she left Amsterdam; and as to his family, if they were not quality folks, he could not help that, because he had not no choice given him before he was born.

Lady Jacintha was certain she was no favourite with ensign Leland, and Mrs. Vanburgh's avowed partiality put her almost to her wit's end; for if she married him, adieu to their friendship: the ensign would take upon himself the direction of the household, all of which now moved at her nod; he would also arrogate the management of her money, and lady Jacintha saw herself deprived of those liberal supplies that now enabled her to dress and indulge in fashionable extravagance.

Young Leland's admiration of Miss Delmore had not escaped the lynx eyes of lady Jacintha; and among many other equally true arguments she made use of to cure Mrs. Vanburgh of her passion, she positively asserted, that ensign Leland was paying his addresses to Miss Delmore, and that they were to be married the second week in January.

This was cruel intelligence to Mrs. Vanburgh; but while lamenting her hopeless passion, she suddenly recollected having once or twice before caught her dear friend, lady Jacintha, telling fibs, and it was not impossible, as she so much disliked the handsome ensign, but she might be sophisticating a little now. "*Once to suspect,*" is, as Othello says, "*once to be resolved;*" Mrs. Vanburgh was determined to be satisfied on this point. The residence of lady Welford was not a hundred yards distant; and while lady Jacintha was busily engaged detailing the news of the day with a party who had made a morning call, Mrs. Vanburgh threw on her Ingee shawl and her Macling whale, and slipped out unobserved. In a few seconds she stood on the steps of lady Welford's house, and with breathless haste gave a thundering rap at the door; having sent in her name, she was admitted to the conference she requested with Miss Delmore.

Not a little astonished at her visit, as lady Welford had never called upon lady Jacintha Fitzosborne and Mrs. Vanburgh since their arrival at Teignmouth, Cecilia received her with an air of cold reserve, that would have sealed up the lips of any but a person deeply in love, and determined to ascertain at once whether they might encourage hope, or were to sink into the darkest gulf of despair.

Mrs. Vanburgh having curtseyed, and said—"Good morning, Miss," floundered into a chair, and throwing up her veil, leaned on her elbows on the table that stood before Cecilia, fixing on her a stare that lasted more than a minute.

The modest cheek of Cecilia was suffused with a blush, as, with graceful dignity, she asked, to what cause she was indebted for the honour of her visit?

"Why, as to the honour, Miss," replied Mrs. Vanburgh, "I don't know whether you think it a honour or not, because you nor lady Welford have not, neither of you, called upon us, though lady Jacintha Osborne, my partickler friend, who is on a visit to me, told me she was intimate with lady Welford, and knew you very well down in

Cumberland, when she was visiting the countess of Torrington; but that does not signify, for we have got plenty of acquaintance.”

Cecilia merely replied—“No doubt, ma’am.”

“I have been looking in your face, Miss,” resumed Mrs. Vanburgh, “just to satisfy myself; and though my partickler friend, lady Jacintha Fitzosborne, will not allow it, I think you are a very pretty young woman.”

Cecilia blushed deeper than before.

Mrs. Vanburgh was not troubled with delicate feelings, and she continued to say—“But a pretty face, Miss, is not a fortune.”

No woman breathing had less right than Mrs. Vanburgh to make this observation, for she was the daughter of an English shoemaker, who had settled at Amsterdam; she had gone to wait on the first Mrs. Vanburgh; and after his wife’s death, her master, taking a fancy to her face, had married her, and in less than three years died himself, leaving her one of the richest widows in Amsterdam.

“What is a poor man,” resumed Mrs. Vanburgh, “to do with a pretty wife? a fair skin, you know, Miss, and rosy cheeks, won’t do nothing to support a family.”

“I really, ma’am, am at a loss to understand you,” said Cecilia, offended at her vulgar familiarity.

“Dear heart, don’t you?” returned Mrs. Vanburgh; “why, folks say you understand every thing. Well, I will try to speak plain:—please to tell me, Miss, are you acquainted with a tall handsome man?”

Cecilia was ready to laugh at the oddity of the question.—“I think, ma’am,” replied she, “I know many who answer that description.”

“But one in partickler, Miss,” resumed Mrs. Vanburgh, “who has offered himself to you for a lover. You must know who I mean—I am sure you must.”

Cecilia thought of lord Rushdale, and wondered what she could possibly have to say about him; but in the next instant she discovered her mistake, by Mrs. Vanburgh continuing—“Now this tall handsome young man, with black eyes, and very dark whiskers—”

“I have no acquaintance with any such gentleman, I assure you, ma’am,” said Cecilia.

“That is mere quivercation, as my partickler friend, lady Jacintha Fitzosborne, says,” resumed Mrs. Vanburgh; “and I come on purpose, out of goodwill, to tell you, Miss, if you marry this tall handsome young man, you will be poorer than poverty itself; and your babes—think of that, Miss—your poor babes will be ragged little beggars, for he has not a shilling but what he gets from his—”

“I must beg, ma’am,” said Cecilia, “that you will spare yourself the trouble of saying any thing more on this subject.”

“What then,” asked Mrs. Vanburgh, in a whimpering tone, “are you positively engaged to marry him? Well, mark my words, you will repent; for when poverty comes in at the door, love jumps out at the winder.”

“I assure you, ma’am,” replied Cecilia, “I have at present no intention of marrying; and when I do, I shall take care to provide against the poverty you describe.”

“Well then, Miss, if you don’t mean to marry, you are acting a barbarous part by the young man,” said Mrs. Vanburgh, “to suffer him to believe you like him, when it seems you care nothing at all about him; you ought to tell him your mind plainly, Miss,

and give him a opportunity of making his fortune, which perhaps he might do, if he was to open his eyes, and look about for favour.”

“I must again repeat to you, ma'am,” replied Cecilia, “that I do not at all comprehend your meaning; while at the same time I seriously deny having given encouragement to any gentleman here to believe I approved him.”

“I wish I was quite sure you are not sinfisticating, as my partickler friend, lady Jacintha Fitzosborne, says; I wish I was quite certain that you are not in love with a tall handsome young man, with black eyes and dark whiskers.”

Cecilia, though vexed at the impertinence of Mrs. Vanburgh, found it difficult to help laughing in her face; but restraining her risibility, she again assured her she had no prepossession in favour of any gentleman answering her description.

“He is so engaging, so fascinating,” said Mrs. Vanburgh, “it is, I think, quite impossible to know ensign Leland, and not to be in love with him.”

The murder was now out, Mrs. Vanburgh’s mystery was explained, and Cecilia saw clearly the motive of her visit.—“I beg to assure you, ma'am, on my word of honour,” said she, “that I never was in company with ensign Leland but twice in my life—that I never exchanged fifty words with him—and were he to offer me his hand, I should refuse it at once, seriously and for ever.”

“And I may depend that you are in earnest, Miss, in this declaration?” asked Mrs. Vanburgh.

“As truth,” replied Cecilia.

“I am sure I am extremely obliged to you, Miss, for being so candid,” said Mrs. Vanburgh; “and I am quite astonished that my partickler friend, lady Jacintha Fitzosborne, should lead me into such a error; indeed I take it very ill of her, to tell me that ensign Leland was your lover, and that you was to be married the second week in January. Well, Miss, I wish you a good-morning, and I am extremely much obliged to you; and pray, Miss, be so good as to make my compliments to lady Welford, and say we shall be at home Saturday evening; but I will order my footman to call with invitation tickets.”

Mrs. Vanburgh bustled away, leaving Miss Delmore in astonishment at her vulgar effrontery, and absolutely at a loss to guess at lady Jacintha Fitzosborne’s motive for wishing to persuade her that she encouraged ensign Leland’s addresses, when he was not even a visiting acquaintance at lady Welford’s.

Mrs. Vanburgh had esteemed herself highly honoured, and uncommonly fortunate, to have a woman of title for her particular friend, though she paid an extravagant price for the distinguished favour of her acquaintance. Before they had been intimate a month, lady Jacintha had flattered her into lending her money to liquidate all her debts, on her promise of repayment, as soon as she married sir Middleton Maxfield, and, as a very great secret, she informed her that she was bound by a solemn engagement to give him her hand early in the following spring.

Mrs. Vanburgh had not received any sort of acknowledgment from lady Jacintha for upwards of eleven hundred pounds, being told by her that the word of a woman of rank was quite sufficient; but on quitting lady Welford’s, Mrs. Vanburgh’s eyes began to open on the duplicity of her ladyship; and remembering the money she had lent her, and other obligations in matters of dress and jewellery, she thought her particular friend had behaved ungrateful, and she was not a little offended with her, for having, in the first

instance, spoken in very degrading terms of ensign Leland's person, family, and connexions, and in the second, for having so solemnly assured her that he was engaged to marry Miss Delmore.

Mrs. Vanburgh was yet a young woman, but she wisely considered that she every day grew older, and, of course, that the term of her enjoyments was shortening. She had often heard her particular friend, lady Jacintha, say it was folly to let any opportunity of gratification pass, and that money was only properly disposed of when employed to purchase and obtain our wishes. All the gentlemen of their acquaintance allowed lady Jacintha to be an exceedingly-clever woman; Mrs. Vanburgh thought she could not err if she followed her precepts and opinions. She had married her first husband—a man twenty years older than herself, to make her fortune; she was now deeply in love with a poor man, about her own age, and she determined to marry him, and make his fortune.

Mrs. Vanburgh thought the sooner the affair was settled the better. She sent for the ensign, and in a few words explained to him the extent of her affection and her fortune, and made him an offer of her hand.

Ensign Leland felt he had no heart to give in return for this generosity: but Miss Delmore, he understood, was only a dependant, and to marry for love was nonsense. The ensign gave a sigh to the beauty of Miss Delmore, as he contemplated the broad flat face of Mrs. Vanburgh, her little grey eyes and snub nose; but recollecting that her wealth had abundance of charms, he acted the passionate lover, gratefully accepted her offer, and three days after they were privately married, without even dropping a hint to lady Jacintha of their intention.

Presuming on the extreme good-nature and ignorance of Mrs. Vanburgh, lady Jacintha Fitzosborne was infinitely more mistress of the elegant house she had hired at Teignmouth than Mrs. Vanburgh was herself; taking upon her to order every thing, to invite and reject what company she pleased, and even to sit at the head of the table, making it always appear that Mrs. Vanburgh was obliged and honoured by her condescending to be in all things as troublesome and expensive as possible. Ensign Leland, now master of the house, had borne the airs of insolence assumed by lady Jacintha for two days with tolerable patience and temper, without even appearing to notice her impertinent inuendoes, or the scowl of haughty contempt with which she regarded him; but on the third day, when lady Jacintha was about to place herself, as usual, at the head of the table, he took his wife by the hand, and, in a tone of authority, said—"The head of the table is your place, madam, and I insist that you occupy it."

Lady Jacintha still remained standing, and, with a look that she meant to be awful and petrifying, asked him what he meant by presuming to interfere?

"I merely mean, lady Jacintha Fitzosborne," replied he, coolly, "that Mrs. Leland shall sit at the head of her own table."

"Mrs. Leland!" echoed lady Jacintha, with an altered tone and countenance—"Mrs. Leland! can this be true?"

"Yes, indeed, it is very true, my dear friend," replied the bride; "it is three days since I changed the name of Vanburgh for Leland."

"And without even consulting me!" said lady Jacintha; "you have used me shamefully—I did not believe it was possible you could have acted so ungratefully."

"Another time you can decide on which side the obligation lies," observed the ensign. "Will your ladyship be seated?—the dinner cools."

Lady Jacintha placed herself at the right hand of the bride, and the dinner proceeded almost in silence.

When the cloth was removed, and the servants withdrawn, the ensign informed lady Jacintha that business of importance called himself and Mrs. Leland to Holland, and that they should quit Teignmouth the following week.

“Since Mrs. Leland has thought proper to act towards me, her friend, with such horrid duplicity,” said lady Jacintha, “the sooner we part the better.”

“I am of your ladyship’s opinion,” replied the ensign; “but before you bid each other adieu, I think,” taking out his pocketbook, “it is proper, as probably you never may meet again, that all pecuniary concerns should be settled between you.”

“Pecuniary concerns!” repeated lady Jacintha; “you are pleased to be facetious, sir; or perhaps your good fortune has deranged you a little. I have heard that a sudden accession of wealth has frequently turned the brain of persons in the lower sphere of life.”

“I dare say you mean to be witty,” said the ensign; “but unfortunately my brain is too dull to take in your ladyship’s point; this, however, I clearly understand—you are indebted to Mrs. Leland eleven hundred and forty-eight pounds.”

“You labour under a trifling mistake, sir,” returned lady Jacintha; “you will not pretend to say this, Mrs. Leland?”

“Yes, indeed I will,” replied Mrs. Leland. “That money I lent you in good English banknotes, besides bills that I have paid for you since we came to Teignmouth. Here,” taking from her husband’s hand a memorandum of lady Jacintha’s own writing, “here is a list of your debts that you made out yourself and gave me— ‘To Allen, shoemaker, sixty-three pounds thirteen shillings’— ‘To Havard, glover, ninety-seven—”

“Spare yourself the trouble of reading, ma’am,” said lady Jacintha; “I utterly deny your ever having lent me money, and shall laugh at Mr. Leland’s ridiculous demand, till he can produce my acknowledgment of the debt; though I must confess this demand upon my purse is a very grateful return, Mrs. Leland, for my great condescension in taking you under my protection, and introducing you to the first society, which, but for the honour of my acquaintance, you never could have been admitted into.”

“And it would be paying rather too dear for the honour you have conferred on me, in making use of my house, table, and carriage, for yourself and your acquaintance,” retorted Mrs. Leland, “if at last I am to be swindled out of near twelve hundred pounds.”

“I shall quit your house immediately, ma’am,” said lady Jacintha; “and shall ever lament having honoured it with my own presence, or the introduction of my friends; but when persons of rank associate with vulgar plebeians, they generally suffer for their condescension.”

Lady Jacintha was about to withdraw, when, with a slide and a bow, the ensign placed himself between her and the door.—“Your ladyship will pardon me,” said he, “for detaining you; but before you deprive us of your most agreeable society, I shall consider myself obliged if you will favour me with your note of hand on this stamp, for the eleven hundred and forty-eight pounds you are indebted to Mrs. Leland.”

“Let me pass, sir,” exclaimed lady Jacintha; “do you presume to detain me?”

“I am extremely sorry to be rude to a lady,” replied the ensign; “but our being on the very eve of quitting the kingdom must plead my apology. I would certainly much rather receive the money; but as I suppose that is not quite convenient to your ladyship, I will take your note, payable on the day of your marriage.”

“I shall give no note,” returned lady Jacintha.

“Well,” said Mrs. Leland, “I find the honesty of a lady of title is not worth a nutmeg. Here is the list of your debts, set down by yourself—can you deny that they were paid with my money?”

“Whatever I am in your debt, ma’am,” returned lady Jacintha, “I give you my word I will pay you.”

“Then you must pay me for the dress on your back,” said Mrs. Leland; “for I am certain it is set down to my account; and as to your word—you have told me so many falsehoods, that I would not take your word for this filbert.”

“Does your ladyship choose to give me your note?” demanded the ensign.

“Let me pass this instant,” said lady Jacintha, “or I will swear that you have attempted to extort money from me.”

“That menace decides me,” replied the ensign.—“Pull the bell, Mrs. Leland.”

The servant who entered was desired to request the attendance of an attorney who lived on the opposite side of the street.

Lady Jacintha detested the name of an attorney; she had often been in the hands of the law, and was sensible that she never escaped without suffering loss. To be sure she knew the only witness to her borrowing the money was Mrs. Garnett, and she thought she could depend on her to say whatever she directed. But Mrs. Garnett had lived long enough with lady Jacintha Fitzosborne to find that her wages were considerably in arrear, and that all she got for her services of lying through thick and thin, was now and then a cast-off dress, which lady Jacintha had worn herself as long as it was good for any thing.

Mrs. Garnett was a very expert and clever *femme de chambre*, and Mrs. Leland had dropped several broad hints that she should like to engage her, if she had an intention of quitting her present situation. These hints had not been thrown away—the honour of being waiting-woman to a poor lady of title, Mrs. Garnett began to think, was not so desirable as she once imagined, for she had neither got well paid, nor well married; and hearing the dispute respecting the money, she determined to secure herself a good place, by deserting the side of lady Jacintha.

Mrs. Garnett being called upon for her testimony, said she was monstatiouly sorry to be obligated to tell truth, but she could not do no sitch wicked thing as quivercate against her conscience, and she sartinly was present when Mrs. Leland lent lady Jacintha Fitzosborne eleven hundred and forty-eight pounds, and she did hear lady Jacintha say after, that she would not give a straw for a friend, unless she could make use of their money gist as if it was her own.

Lady Jacintha was quite confounded; the declaration of Mrs. Garnett was a disappointment for which she was so unprepared, that all her effrontery forsook her, and she could only exclaim against the treachery of her servant, and declare she was bribed to witness against her; but finding the ensign resolute to arrest her for the money, she at last gave him her note, payable on the day of her marriage, “with sir Middleton Maxfield,” she wished to have inserted; but Mr. Leland, much more wary than she expected, would only have the words, “payable on the day of my marriage.” The ensign was so well aware of her mercenary character, that he was convinced, if any match more advantageous should offer, she would, without scruple, deny and break off her engagement with sir Middleton Maxfield; and that he might be sure of his money, if she ever did marry, he insisted on wording the note in his own way.

Mrs. Leland parted with her partickler friend, lady Jacintha, on the worst terms possible, resolving never again to put herself under the management of a poor lady of quality.

Lady Jacintha being unable or unwilling to pay the demand of Mrs. Garnett, was compelled to hear that loquacious and eloquent gentlewoman abuse her in her own phraseology; but as Mrs. Garnett's language was above the comprehension of most persons, lady Jacintha thought it impossible that her representations could be of consequence to her character; and though she reviled Mrs. Leland for engaging her servant, she was not, on the whole, sorry to part with her; for Mrs. Garnett, from being admitted to a participation of her secrets, had become impertinent and presuming.

Ensign Leland prided himself on his generalship, in getting rid of lady Jacintha, whom he compared to a leech, and to whom he had taken a dislike, from the *hauteur* with which she had always behaved to him, which dislike had been considerably increased by Mrs. Leland communicating to him all the disparaging things her ladyship had said of his person, his manner, and his family.—“I am now even with her haughty ladyship,” said the ensign, triumphantly lodging her note of hand with his attorney, giving him a strict charge to demand the money the moment he heard of her marriage.—“And in future, Mrs. Leland,” continued he, “I will prove to you, that rank is not of so much consequence in life as these titled sharpers wish to have it believed. Take my word for it, if you can afford to keep a handsome equipage, and entertain well, the world will never be so impertinent as to ask how many quarters you have in your escutcheon, nor trouble themselves to inquire whether your riches were hereditary possessions, or had their rise in the muddy stream of Pactolus.”

“I never heard of Mr. Pactolus,” returned Mrs. Leland; “but I know Mr. Vanburgh got the chief of his riches by trading to Ceylon; and I know that at Amsterdam I was thought of some consequence, whatever I may be in England.”

Lady Jacintha Fitzosborne heard of the departure of the Lelands from Teignmouth with much satisfaction, and if any person happened to mention them in her presence, she would request not to be reminded of her misfortunes. She had, she confessed, taken pity on the female Hottentot, and had endeavoured to model and reform her savage manners; but her marriage with that presuming, ignorant, vulgar fellow, ensign Leland, had constrained her to cut the connexion, and entirely separate herself from an acquaintance which it was impossible for her to remember without blushing.

Mr. Cheveril was now a constant attendant on lady Jacintha. She condescended to ride his horses—she suffered him to drive her round the country in his curricule; and finding that his fortune was a passport to the best company in Teignmouth, she no longer persisted in denying his being her admirer.

Mr. Cheveril was pleased with the person of lady Jacintha, and he thought he should like to manage the spirit of a woman who kept every person of her acquaintance in awe. He had heard of her engagement with sir Middleton Maxfield, and he one day bluntly asked her when she was to be married?

Lady Jacintha protested she was under no engagement to sir Middleton Maxfield. She would not deny that he had made her an offer of his hand, and had proposed giving her uncontrolled possession of five thousand pounds a-year; but seriously she had entered into no promise, and was at perfect liberty to marry whom she pleased.

Mr. Cheveril perfectly understood the deep and interested game lady Jacintha was playing; but having a design himself, he affected to believe her declaration, and immediately replied, since her ladyship was under no engagement to sir Middleton Maxfield, he should be the happiest of men if he could render himself agreeable to her.

Agreeable, lady Jacintha thought absolutely impossible; but his fortune was extremely desirable. She put on a look of modest confusion—hesitated, and, as he became pressing, desired time for consideration; but Mr. Cheveril was determined not to dangle after any woman; and anxious to conclude the affair at once, he said he would settle twelve thousand a-year upon her, and would give her twenty-four hours to consider his proposal; he would then, within one week, become her husband, or take his leave of her for ever.

This hasty procedure did not exactly please lady Jacintha, who wished her marriage to be conducted with splendour. She considered the family of Mr. Cheveril, his person and education, with contempt; but his wealth was incalculable—she should, by marrying him, be enabled to live in a style of eastern state and magnificence—she should, in the splendour of her establishment, the number of her carriages, and her attendants, black and white, rival all her acquaintance; interest prevailed—lord Rushdale, sir Middleton Maxfield, all her admirers were resigned, and Mr. Cheveril received her consent to be his as soon as the settlement was ready.

Lady Jacintha now wrote to sir Middleton Maxfield, to inform him that her family were very averse to her fulfilling her engagement with him, and that she was certain his were equally ill-disposed to receive her; and as their marriage would only be productive of discord and uneasiness on all sides, she thought it much better they should give up all idea of an union. She added, that she returned all the letters he had written her, and expected, as a gentleman, he would return hers.

Sir Middleton Maxfield raved, swore, and tore his hair; at last he made a packet of her letters, writing in the envelope, that he felt extremely obliged to her for convincing him that the representations of his friends respecting her principles of honour were true. He assured her that he wished her all possible happiness, and begged her to believe that her rejection of his hand would by no means lessen his.

But though sir Middleton Maxfield wrote thus carelessly, he was seriously hurt at lady Jacintha's ungenerous conduct; but determined not to give way to melancholy, he set off to Tunbridge Wells, to reconcile himself to his aunt, and congratulate her on her marriage with lord Wilton.

Lady Jacintha Fitzosborne did not expect to get rid of her engagement with sir Middleton Maxfield so easily; and as she threw the packet of letters into the fire, she felt no little mortification that he had expressed no regret at her conduct.

At the appointed time she found Mr. Cheveril punctual. The promised settlement was brought for her inspection, and being approved, was signed, sealed, and given into her possession; and no chance of any thing superior offering, lady Jacintha, at the end of the following week, exchanged the name of Fitzosborne for Cheveril, and as soon as the ceremony was performed, set off with her husband to spend the honeymoon at Willow Bank, near Exeter.

Lady Jacintha wished to invite a large party to accompany her, as she was not so fondly inclined towards her husband as to desire to spend a single day with him alone; but wishes and angry remonstrances were equally unavailing; even on her wedding day

Mr. Cheveril was so rude as to remind her ladyship that she had vowed to obey; and that it was his will that she should accompany him immediately and alone to Willow Bank.

Lady Jacintha frowned and bit her lip, but she had twelve thousand pounds a-year at her own absolute disposal, and she resolved to shew him a trick for this sudden display of his insolent authority. Into a postchaise she most unwillingly ascended, with a newly-hired female attendant, and her first bridal hours were spent in resolves not to yield, even in the most trivial point, to her husband, or to allow him the prerogative of command.

At the close of the evening the carriage stopped before a large old-fashioned building, and Mr. Cheveril saluting his bride, bade her welcome to Willow Bank.

“This Willow Bank!” exclaimed lady Jacintha, almost shrieking; “that gloomy prison-looking place—that your beautifully-situated country-seat! But though you have deluded me hither, you shall never get me to set my foot within the doors—I insist upon going back to Teignmouth.”

“You are my wife, madam,” said Mr. Cheveril, sternly; “and I insist that you submit to my pleasure.”

Lady Jacintha ordered the driver to take the road back to Teignmouth; but he declared the horses were tired, and could not proceed before morning.

Lady Jacintha scolded vehemently. She looked round, and on all sides, but no house appearing in sight, nor any person she could appeal to, she was obliged to suffer Mr. Cheveril to lead her into an unfurnished hall, where a black man and woman waited to receive her. Lady Jacintha threw herself on a window-seat, without bestowing even a nod in return for the salutations of the sable attendants.

“You now perceive, my dear,” said Mr. Cheveril, “why I did not suffer you to bring company to Willow Bank, which having purchased but a few weeks ago, is not furnished; and knowing your exquisite taste, I left every thing to your direction.”

Even this compliment failed to reconcile lady Jacintha to her situation. She complained of being cold, and asked if fire had ever been heard of in that out-of-the-way place?

The black woman, in broken English, replied, they knew what fire was very well; and if she would walk into the parlour, she would find herself quite comfortable.

This parlour was a room nearly twenty feet by sixteen; at one end a small grate, with a newly-lighted fire, threw out such volumes of smoke, that it was scarcely possible to see an article of the furniture.

“From the comforts of Willow Bank,” exclaimed lady Jacintha, retreating again to the hall—“good Heaven deliver me!”

“I thought you had possessed more philosophy, madam,” said Mr. Cheveril, “than to suffer such a trifling inconvenience to disconcert you; the chimneys at present are damp—when they have had time to dry, no doubt the smoke will ascend—if it should not, we must find a remedy; but as it is, my love, you must make a virtue of necessity, and condescend to take your tea in the kitchen.”

“In the kitchen!” repeated lady Jacintha, angrily; but putting on a smile of disdain, she added—“Oh certainly! in the scullery, if you think proper. Pray lead the way, sir—I long to go over this elegant magnificent seat of yours.”

The kitchen was large, very clean, and enlivened by a good fire, near which being seated, Zeila, the black woman, asked if madam would have tea then?

Lady Jacintha haughtily replied, whenever she thought proper.

Zeila bustled to set a little bright-rubbed oak table, on which she placed, without a tea-tray, cups and saucers, and a large plate of piled-up brown bread and butter.

“Make me some toast,” said lady Jacintha; “I never eat bread and butter. Have you no rolls—no manchet?”

“That is the bread,” pointing to a large loaf—“we have none whiter,” replied Zeila.

“I cannot eat that,” returned lady Jacintha; “I must have white bread.”

“Then you must fast, my dear, till tomorrow morning,” rejoined Mr. Cheveril. “At the distance we are from Exeter, we cannot possibly procure white bread this evening; besides, brown bread is much wholesomer.”

“And cheaper, I suppose,” said lady Jacintha, with a sneer.

Mr. Cheveril replied—“Certainly, for it goes further in a family.”

Zeila made a slice of toast, and at lady Jacintha’s desire would have poured out the tea, but Mr. Cheveril chose to take the office on himself.

Having drank two cups of tea, lady Jacintha declared it was abominable smoky stuff, and the toast coarse and dry as chaff, which she had no doubt would make her ill, by lying like lead on her stomach.

“A walk,” said Mr. Cheveril, “may perhaps be serviceable; and as the evening is very mild, and the moon at full, you will be able to judge of the capabilities of the garden.”

Mortified, disappointed, and out of humour with every thing and every body, lady Jacintha listened to Mr. Cheveril’s intended improvements with disdainful indifference; and when he paused, asked him if he really could believe, after he had done his utmost to beautify and embellish, that it would ever be possible to make a place, surrounded with high walls, a summer residence fit for a person of her rank?

“I believe it will make a residence fit for me, madam,” replied he; “and as you have done me the honour to accept me for your husband, of course, what will suit me you cannot object to.”

“There you are greatly mistaken, Mister Cheveril, returned lady Jacintha, “for doubtless you have been accustomed to live in a style very different to any thing I can have an idea of; and if I had supposed that I was to be hurried away from my friends, even on my wedding-day, and brought to a gloomy mansion, where there is scarcely a chair to sit down upon, I never would have accepted you for a husband, I promise you.”

“You can be candid, I perceive,” said Mr. Cheveril.

“I certainly expected that a man of your fortune,” resumed lady Jacintha, “had a suitable establishment; and from your description of Willow Bank, that it was a magnificent structure, furnished with Asiatic luxury, I expected.”

“I know you did,” interrupted Mr. Cheveril; “from my long residence in Persia, you expected to find the floors covered with costly carpets—you expected sofas of gold and ivory, glittering with precious stones, and canopied with oriental purple; you expected to be received by a crowd of prostrate slaves, and that your vanity would be gratified, by bringing with you a parcel of high-bred coxcombs, and unprincipled women of fashion, to laugh at, and make a property of the man who had admitted you to a participation of his wealth; but your intentions, madam, by no means coalesce with mine; your career of folly has lasted too long; the world gives you credit for wit—common sense is of infinitely more value; if you possess any, you will accommodate yourself to

my wishes, and become reasonable and rational; we shall then live happily and lovingly together.”

“Like Darby and Joan,” said lady Jacintha, disdainfully; “may I be permitted sir, to inquire whether solitude forms a part of your plan of rational happiness? Is it among your wishes that I should live without society in this delightful mansion of yours?”

“That question,” replied Mr. Cheveril, “is not very flattering to me, who might reasonably expect that at present you would prefer my society to any other; but I forgive you, because I know the amiable serenity of your temper is a little disturbed. Believe me, I have no design to seclude you from society; but I will take care that your company and amusements are such as will not corrupt your morals, or increase your passion for extravagance and dissipation.”

“You arrogate too much,” returned lady Jacintha, “in supposing that I shall consult your opinion on the choice of my company or amusements.”

“You shall do both,” interrupted Mr. Cheveril.

“You speak in a very lordly tone,” said lady Jacintha; “but you are not now in Persia; recollect, Mr. Cheveril, English women are not slaves.”

“If English wives were under the laws that regulate those of the East,” replied Mr. Cheveril, “their husbands would not have such frequent reason to repent the imprudence of their choice.”

“It is a pity you did not content yourself with one of these slaves,” said lady Jacintha, “who would have been satisfied to live moped up in a corner of your house, with no other society than you, her lord and master.”

“I have no design to punish you so severely,” returned Mr. Cheveril; “you shall have other society; to-morrow, madam, you will be visited by Mr. Danvers, his wife and daughter. Mr. Danvers is not a man of fashion, but, what is far more estimable, he can boast sound principles and unblemished integrity. Charlotte Danvers is a lively little girl, and her mother, my sister, a well-meaning, good sort of woman,” which, in lady Jacintha’s idea, meant an insipid fool.

Determined not to suffer Mr. Cheveril to believe she was at all intimidated by his conduct or declarations, she returned to the house, and went through every apartment, which she protested was the worst planned and vilest finished building she had ever seen in her life; dull and gloomy enough to nourish melancholy, and bring on madness; and that however Mr. Cheveril might reconcile his mind to live in such a prison, she never could; and she was resolved to set off for Teignmouth the next morning.

“We shall see,” said Mr. Cheveril.

But the next morning brought disappointment and fresh vexation to the pride of lady Jacintha. The chaise had left Willow Bank at daybreak; and while she was protesting that she would not remain another day, Mr. Mrs. and Miss Danvers were announced. Lady Jacintha’s love of ridicule overcame her pride; in the hope of mortifying her husband, by quizzing his relations, she constrained herself to receive the congratulations of a country banker and his family.

Mr. Danvers was a man of good understanding; he was disgusted with the haughty airs of lady Jacintha, and soon took his leave; he mentally blamed his brother-in-law for marrying a quality termagant, though, knowing Mr. Cheveril’s decided temper, he believed, if any man had power to tame a shrew, he had.

Mrs. Danvers, though used to genteel company, had never met any thing so high bred as lady Jacintha, who, whenever she attempted to speak, either flatly contradicted or ridiculed every thing she said. Mrs. Danvers respected her brother, and for his sake tried to accommodate herself to the haughty capricious temper of his lady, who treated her with supercilious contempt.—“The prospect from this window is very agreeable,” said Mrs. Danvers; “don’t you think so, lady Jacintha Cheveril?”

“Prodigiously agreeable indeed,” replied lady Jacintha; “to the right a stagnant pool, with half-a-dozen ducks swimming on it; to the left a common, with not a tree, or even a furze bush, to rest the weary eye upon; in front a group of miserable thatched huts, dignified with the name of a village—extremely agreeable indeed, Mrs. Danvers!”

“Perhaps your ladyship is not fond of the country,” said Miss Danvers, perceiving her mother was completely put to silence.

“Not very, I confess, Miss Danvers,” replied lady Jacintha. “A watering-place for two or three months in the summer does very well, because one is sure to meet fashionable company; but from a dull quiet place like this, Heaven deliver me!”

“I should greatly prefer living here,” said Mrs. Danvers, “to the noise of Exeter. But different people, to be sure, have different opinions; and you, lady Jacintha Cheveril, have, I suppose, been used to London?”

“Yes, ma’am,” returned lady Jacintha, “I have indeed been used to London—dear delightful London! I am certain I never could survive a winter out of it.”

“My uncle has promised to take me with him to London,” said Miss Danvers.

“Has he?” replied lady Jacintha. “That is not consistent with his usual prudence; I think he had much better let you remain at Exeter.”

Lady Jacintha’s haughty airs and unceasing contradictions had worn out the patience of Mrs. Danvers, who fancying her ladyship considered the expence of taking her daughter to town, observed, in a tone of more spirit than she usually assumed, that her brother was rich enough to afford to give his niece a jaunt to London; and as long as he did not spend other people’s fortunes, nobody had a right to call him to an account about his own.

“I am sure, ma’am,” said lady Jacintha, “I shall never take the trouble; my remark did not proceed from any consideration of expence, I promise you, but merely from Miss Danvers being so young.”

“What difference can that make,” asked Mrs. Danvers, “when she will be under your care?”

“Under my care!” exclaimed lady Jacintha, casting a look of disdain on Mrs. Danvers and her daughter—“expect me to lead Miss Danvers about! You really design me an honour, ma’am, that will be quite out of my power to accept; I shall have too many engagements on my hands.”

“I don’t think my brother will go any where, without taking Charlotte with him,” said Mrs. Danvers.

“To that I can have no possible objection,” replied lady Jacintha, “except that it would be extremely ridiculous. When in town, Mr. Cheveril and myself shall rarely meet, except at dinner.”

“Mercy on me! rarely meet but at dinner!” repeated Mrs. Danvers. “Why, bless my soul, lady Jacintha Cheveril, what can you mean?”

“I mean, ma’am,” replied her ladyship, “that married persons in high life have different acquaintance and different pursuits; but your situation in life, placing you in so very opposite a track, Mrs. Danvers, the manners and arrangements of *haut ton* must be beyond your comprehension.”

“And to tell you the truth, lady Jacintha Cheveril, I have no wish to comprehend such wicked ways,” said Mrs. Danvers; “but I am certain my brother will never allow such doings; he has spirit enough to keep proper order in his family.”

Lady Jacintha considered an altercation with Mrs. Danvers beneath her. Mrs. Danvers thought her ladyship a proud insolent woman, and in heart severely condemned her brother for marrying a titled beggar, who treated himself and his relations with disdain, always endeavouring to impress them with an awful sense of the honour she had conferred on them, in condescending to mix her noble blood with their plebeian puddle.

Lady Jacintha believed her husband to be an obstinate narrow-minded man, who, though immensely rich, had not the spirit to spend his money like a gentleman; and she wondered how he had opened his heart to make so liberal a settlement on her.

Lady Jacintha’s maid appeared to be as little pleased with Willow Bank as her lady, and she had been easily brought to assist in preparing for the elopement her ladyship projected to make from her husband the very first opportunity.—“Twelve thousand a-year, entirely at my own disposal from the hour of my marriage,” said lady Jacintha. “Well, really, with all his caution, Mr. Cheveril was a little overseen there; the silly man has amply provided for my separating myself from him; he was in love, poor soul!”

Having prepared a packet of letters for town, lady Jacintha thought it would be safest to lodge her settlement with a solicitor; but previous to enclosing it with her letters, she broke the seals of the envelope, to indulge herself with again perusing a parchment, that made her independent of a parsimonious husband; but what was her confusion and dismay, when, instead of her settlement, she held two blank skins of vellum. Lady Jacintha shrieked aloud, and Mr. Cheveril and his sister, in alarm, rushed into the room, and demanded what was the matter?

Lady Jacintha, with difficulty, articulated—“Look there!” pointing to the blank parchment.

“Is that all?” said Mr. Cheveril, coldly. “I really supposed something terrible had happened.”

“Is not this terrible!” exclaimed lady Jacintha. “Do you not perceive that I am robbed—defrauded?”

“It is of no consequence” returned Mr. Cheveril.

“Do you intend to drive me mad?” said lady Jacintha. “It is of the utmost consequence to me. Was it not the settlement that induced me—”

“To deceive sir Middleton Maxfield, and marry me. I will fill up the pause for you,” said Mr. Cheveril.

“I was not going to say any thing of the kind,” replied lady Jacintha, looking pale and wild; “but you will renew the settlement, dear Mr. Cheveril, I know you will.”

“I have no such silly intention,” said he.

“I see I have been taken in,” resumed lady Jacintha, raving like a maniac; “I have been deceived—imposed upon; but I will proclaim you to the world.”

“What will you proclaim?” asked Mr. Cheveril, with provoking calmness; “will you tell the world, that, with a mind the most mercenary, you married a man, whose family you despised, for the sake of extravagantly spending the wealth he had endured hardships and toil under a burning sun to obtain?”

“I will be revenged!” exclaimed lady Jacintha. “I will have justice! All the world shall know how I have been taken in.”

“Proclaim your own detestable principles to the world as soon as you please, madam,” said Mr. Cheveril; “tell them, that, informed of your intention to elope, and spend my hard-earned fortune according to your pleasure, I deprived you of the power to disgrace yourself and me. Yet, even now, conduct yourself with propriety, and you shall have no reason to complain; but I will restrict your extravagant expences—I will not have my fortune dissipated at a faro-table.”

“I will be separated from you, if law can effect it,” returned lady Jacintha. “What! have I disgraced myself and family, by marrying a low-descended man, to be compelled to square my expences to his mean contracted ideas? Shall I submit?”

“Yes, madam,” resumed Mr. Cheveril, “you shall submit to live, not according to your will, but mine. And mark me, madam, if you leave my house for a single night, never expect to be received into it again, or that any part of my wealth shall maintain you in a state of separation; you brought me no fortune, and I have dearly enough purchased you, for it appears likely I shall expend a tolerable one in paying your debts.”

“It is false,” said lady Jacintha; “I have no debts.”

“Remember Mrs. Leland, and be silent,” returned Mr. Cheveril; “I have this morning taken up your note, given to ensign Leland, for eleven hundred and forty-eight pounds.”

“I wish I owed a hundred thousand pounds,” said lady Jacintha; “but when I get to London—”

“Make your mind easy, madam,” interrupted Mr. Cheveril; “you will not see London this winter.”

After a few days spent in upbraidings, lady Jacintha, finding her husband of a temper on which neither tears, rage, nor sullens, had the least effect, began to consider that it would be to her interest to put on an appearance of affability and reconciliation; she wished to spend the winter in London, and was willing to humble herself a little to gain her point: but Mr. Cheveril kept his word—he remained in Devonshire, but not at Willow Bank, which he had borrowed of his brother-in-law, as the beginning of his plan to reduce the haughty lady Jacintha to reason, and humble her pride. Perceiving a favourable change in her temper, he removed to a modern-built villa, elegantly furnished; she had the use of a carriage, and was properly attended, but still Mr. Cheveril maintained his authority; and though her table, her wardrobe, and her purse, were liberally supplied, on every occasion where her old propensities burst forth, lady Jacintha found that Mr. Cheveril knew how to RULE A WIFE.

### CHAPTER III.

The angel of affliction rose,  
And in his train a thousand woes;  
He pour'd his vial on my head,  
And all the heaven of rapture fled. MONTGOMERY.

“There is nothing under heav'n's wide hollownesse,  
That moves more dear compassion of mind,  
Than beauties brought t'unworthie wretchednesse,  
Through envie's snare, or fortune's freakes unkind.”

“This calumny is thine,  
Thou hast invented this foul tale, to hold  
Me faster in thy toils; but I have yet a  
Friend in heaven, and he who knows my  
Innocence will rescue me.”

*Love a Disease seldom incurable—A Rout and a  
Discovery—Credulity and Deceit—An unplea  
sant Journey.*

THE fog and rains of November had driven the gay fluttering votarists of fashion from the dreariness of the country, to seek amusement in the ever-varying scenes of London. Lord Rushdale and Miss Delmore had met, and considered all the inquietudes of absence overpaid, by discovering in each other numberless improvements in mind and person, and in addition to this pleasure, they found what indeed rarely occurs, that absence had actually increased, not diminished, their affection. The earl of Torrington embraced Cecilia with the tenderness of a parent; the countess met her with undisguised haughtiness, and suffered no opportunity to pass, without giving her to understand that she disapproved her son's engagement, and would, to the utmost of her power, oppose their marriage.

This disapprobation on the part of the countess, and the absence of Mrs. Doricourt, who was unexpectedly delayed in France, were the only troubles that alloyed the happiness of Cecilia, who having been introduced to lady Arabella Moncrief, Miss Sedgeley, and several other young ladies of fashion, whose party was soon augmented by the arrival of lady Jane Bruce, Miss Graham, and Miss Macdonald, thought lord Rushdale unreasonable in his complaint of the slowness of time; for with her it passed so rapidly, that she was obliged to devote part of that allotted to sleep to write to Mrs. Doricourt and her Cumberland friends: but though continually engaged with parties who reversed the order of time, by turning night into day, Miss Delmore's health continued good, and her beauty so resplendent, that in all the circles of haut ton, she was the envy of the women and the admiration of the men, who unanimously declared she was the most lovely creature that had appeared for the last century; wherever it was known that Miss Delmore

was to be, the place was crowded to suffocation; and no lady of fashion considered her entertainment complete without the presence of Miss Delmore.

This universal approbation stung the countess of Torrington to the quick, who, go where she would, met the praises of Miss Delmore; her beauty, her accomplishments, her taste in dress, were the constant theme, and heightened her dislike to the low-born girl, whose introduction to her family she considered a misfortune; but while lady Torrington endeavoured to throw contempt on Cecilia, by informing all her friends that she was the niece of her housekeeper, many noble offers were made her, which would have placed the low-born girl, as she termed her, in rank above her own; among these the young and elegant duke of Arvingham made her an offer of his hand; but for Cecilia, whose heart was fondly attached, the golden trefoils of a duke had no attraction; in her eyes, Rushdale was superior to all mankind, and, blest with his love, a desert would have been a paradise.

The earl of Torrington was a watchful observer of the conduct of Miss Delmore; and he warmly congratulated his son, that in the midst of flattery and temptation, she preserved a graceful humility and steady propriety, that proved her mind truly noble.—“This winter’s fiery ordeal past,” said the earl, “I will leave you at liberty, Oscar, to act in the affair of your marriage as you think proper.”

Lord Rushdale was all grateful thanks to his father, while his exulting heart was full of the happiness inspired by a confidence, that Miss Delmore would never be won by flattery, or influenced by ambition, to swerve from the faith that inclination had plighted.—“No,” said he, proudly, “Cecilia is courted, followed, admired, but her affection is mine; my heart is her world, my love the only treasure she is anxious to possess; dearest, loveliest, angelic Cecilia, a few months more, and I shall indeed be blest, for my indulgent father promises to join our hands—to unite us in those happy bonds, which only death can dissolve.”

Lady Jane Bruce, on her arrival in town, among the first news, heard of Miss Delmore’s engagement to lord Rushdale, for both the earl of Torrington and lady Welford had spoken of it publicly. Lady Jane turned up her eyes, and expressed surprise that the earl and lord Rushdale had not more ambition; but feeling inclined to do justice to Miss Delmore’s merits, and admire her in any character but that of her brother’s wife, she renewed her intimacy with lady Welford; and finding that Miss Delmore was the *comète flamboyante* that attracted all the men of fashion, she generally contrived to be one of her party whenever she appeared in public.

Miss Macdonald, too, being convinced that Miss Delmore had no design on the heart or title of lord Alwyn Bruce, declared she was every way deserving of lord Rushdale’s hand, and thought lady Torrington very much to blame to oppose their marriage.

The lively Miss Graham had several admirers; but a little lurking passion for sir Middleton Maxfield, imbibed in Cumberland, appeared to be gaining strength, from knowing that lady Jacintha Fitzosborne, by being married, no longer opposed her hopes; but more particularly, from being told that sir Middleton not only survived her perfidy, but still enjoyed his senses, his spirits, and his appetite, a report confirmed by his calling one morning at lady Welford’s when she happened to be there, a much-pleased witness of his good looks and undiminished gaiety.

When rallied on lady Jacintha’s inconstancy, he confessed he wore a willow garland one day, six hours, and five minutes—“But though,” said he, “I raved and swore,

and acted the disappointed lover for that time, you perceive, ladies, I had sense enough neither to clap a pistol to my head, or dangle in my garters; and when I began to consider the matter calmly, I really felt obliged to her ladyship for jilting me; had we married, we should have been a miserable pair; our tempers, I am certain, never would have agreed; and, by the-by, if report is to be credited, her ladyship is not quite so happy as she expected to be, from marrying a man immensely rich.”

“Lady Eglantine Sydney told me,” said Miss Graham, “that lady Jacintha’s husband, Mr. Cheveril, is a miser, penurious in the extreme, and that she has not a guinea that she can call her own.”

“Mr. Cheveril is, I understand, a second Petruchio,” replied lady Welford, “and has undertaken to tame a shrew.”

“And, by George!” rejoined sir Middleton, “lady Jacintha wanted taming; and it is said her lord let her know he would be master, by beginning to humble her haughty spirit even in her wedding shoes.”

“Lady Eglantine called to see her, out of pure curiosity, as she expressed it,” said lady Welford, “at a sumptuous mansion in Devonshire, called Woodfield Priory; there she found her surrounded indeed by wealth and magnificence, but without the power to enjoy it, for Mr. Cheveril’s authority was visible in ever thing; lady Jacintha’s dress was elegant and costly—her boudoir shone with Asiatic splendour, and was adorned with numberless curiosities in gold and ivory; but in the midst of her magnificence lady Jacintha appeared low-spirited, fretful, and uneasy; her former amusements and former acquaintance were entirely excluded from Woodfield Priory, and no company admitted but Mr. Cheveril’s own relations—a clergyman, his wife, and daughters, and a baronet’s family, all of the old school, formal, ceremonious, and puritanical.”

“Adieu then to *rouge et noir* and faro,” observed sir Middleton; “these enchanting games must now give place to a rubber at sober whist.”

“I much question, from lady Eglantine’s report, whether even that is allowed,” replied lady Welford; “every thing at Woodfield Priory was so regular, so stupid, and so dull, that she protested she was quite sorry for lady Jacintha— ‘For what,’ said she to lady Eglantine, ‘does it signify to reside in a palace, if no one is to see its riches? one might as well live in a hovel; when one can’t break the heart of one’s friends with envy at one’s possessions, one might as well be poor.’”

“Her ladyship’s mortifications have wrought no change in her sentiments, I perceive,” remarked sir Middleton.

“Lady Eglantine declared,” resumed lady Welford, “that during the three days she remained at Woodfield Priory, she heard nothing on the part of Mr. Cheveril but contradictions, dressed in the most provoking politeness, and on lady Jacintha’s, only murmurs and complaints, for she had no will of her own in any particular. Lady Eglantine begged Mr. Cheveril would allow lady Jacintha to come to London in February, to assist at her nuptials with the marquis of Beverley; but he peremptorily refused, alleging, as an excuse, that he would not hazard the loss of an heir, by allowing his wife to racket about, and keep late hours, and plunge again into the ruinous dissipations of a town life, from which, he flattered himself, he had nearly weaned her.”

“The wealth lady Jacintha was so eager to ensure,” said Miss Delmore, “has become her bane and punishment; she is married to a man she does not like, and though surrounded by magnificence, lives a life of splendid misery—I pity her most sincerely.”

“In that I believe then you are singular,” replied Miss Graham; “for most of her ladyship’s acquaintance appear to rejoice at her disappointed hopes.”

“She is rightly served,” said sir Middleton Maxfield, “and I give Mr. Cheveril credit for knowing how to rule a wife.”

Miss Graham saw, with much secret satisfaction, that sir Middleton was perfectly reconciled to the loss of lady Jacintha, and that his heart felt no emotions of jealousy or regret; it also gave her no little pleasure to see herself particularly distinguished by him whenever they met, which occurred almost every day; but sir Middleton made no declaration of love—the trick lady Jacintha had served him, though it did not prejudice him against women, made him suspicious and wary, and determined him to see a little into the disposition and principles of the fair one who should next engage his regard, before he made her an offer of his hand.

Miss Macdonald having ceased to consider Miss Delmore a rival, was now more than ever encouraged to believe that her indefatigable exertions to attract the wavering inconstant lord Alwyn Bruce, would ultimately be crowned with success. His visits at sir Alexander Stuart’s had been regular, and she had fancied him more attentive to her than formerly. A few days had passed in the encouragement of the delightful hope that she should yet obtain the title of lady Alwyn Bruce, when, alas! at a ball given by lady Wilmington, she had the misery to see him lead out Miss Sedgeley, at the very moment when she believed he was approaching to ask her to dance. This disappointment so deranged and disturbed Miss Macdonald, that she was near fainting, and catching Cecilia’s arm, she entreated her to go with her into one of the retiring-rooms for a few moments, where she thought the air would relieve her.

Miss Delmore was engaged to dance with lord Rushdale; but precious as were the moments passed with him, she compassionated Miss Macdonald’s indisposition, and entreated his excuse.

Miss Macdonald, in the strong violence of grief and resentment, pushed open a door, which was held by some person in the inside; and the discovery she made on entering the room, instantly removed her indisposition, while it reduced Miss Delmore to a situation the most pitiable, for she trembled, and her lips and cheeks changed to ashy paleness, as Miss Macdonald, with a look of disdain, said—“I really entreat your ladyship’s pardon—when I pushed open the door, I had no idea that I was intruding on a *tête-à-tête*; I certainly had no expectation that I should find the countess of Torrington and major Norman shut up together.”

“Shut up together!” repeated the major; “you are under a mistake, ma’am—I entered this apartment only the instant before yourself, by mere accident, not supposing any person was here; and knowing how very censorious the world in general is, I held the door, because I did not choose to expose lady Torrington to misrepresentations and undeserved scandal.”

“Very gallant, very considerate, and very correct, I dare say!” replied Miss Macdonald, sneeringly—“come, Miss Delmore, I am much better; let us go, for fear the censorious world should include us in its misrepresentations and scandal.”

The countess had sat on a sofa; perplexed, if not confused, she now started up—“Stay, Miss Delmore,” said she—“I must request you will not misrepresent this affair to the earl of Torrington and lord Rushdale, for major Norman’s explanation is, I assure you, true to a letter.”

“From me, madam,” replied Cecilia, “you have no misrepresentation to apprehend—I would willingly forget having entered this apartment at all.”

“And you, Miss Macdonald,” resumed the countess, “you will, I trust, remember it may be attended with very serious consequences your mentioning having seen me with major Norman.”

Miss Macdonald replied only by a look of disdain; and taking the arm of the pale trembling Cecilia, she was quitting the room when they met the earl of Torrington; the sight of him increased Cecilia’s agitation, and unable to support herself, she sunk on Miss Macdonald’s shoulder.

Lord Torrington inquired what was the matter?

Miss Macdonald replied that Miss Delmore was unwell, and made an attempt to move towards the ball-room.

“The heat of the ball-room will overcome her quite,” said the earl; “you had better go in there,” pointing to the room they had just quitted.

Miss Delmore now felt added alarm, and she faintly articulated—”No, no, for Heaven’s sake, no—I am better, indeed I am—I am quite well;” but her look and tone contradicted her words.

The earl saw that something unpleasant had occurred, his curiosity was awakened, and resolved to satisfy it, he attempted to open the door. A strong opposition was made from within; but exerting all his strength, the earl forced open the door, and beheld his own disgrace, and the cause of Cecilia’s agitation and alarm. A scene of tumult and confusion took place—the major drew his sword—lady Torrington shrieked and fainted—the company in the ball-room were disturbed: but fortunately the indisposition of Cecilia being mentioned to lord Rushdale, he had flown to her, and remained ignorant of the discovery of his mother’s frailty, till after the major had left the house.

This event put an end to the entertainment of the evening; lady Wilmington was suspected of having encouraged the intimacy of the countess of Torrington and major Norman, by allowing them to meet at her house, and that part of her guests who considered reputation valuable, retired in disgust. Lord Rushdale, overwhelmed with shame and sorrow, accompanied his no-less-distressed father home; and lady Welford withdrew, with Miss Delmore and the other young people of her party.

Sir Middleton Maxfield was dancing with Miss Graham when the news of lady Torrington’s exposure flew round the ball-room; the anxiety with which she sought Miss Delmore, and the tenderness and feeling she had expressed for all the parties concerned in the unpleasant business, convinced him that her disposition was very different to lady Jacintha’s, who would have enjoyed, with malignant pleasure, the discovery of her dear friend’s indiscretion and disgrace.

Lord Torrington, after a long conversation with his son, determined on a separation from the countess, and they waited in the library in painful expectation of her return home, when the earl, in the presence of his son, intended to bid her farewell for ever; it was past one o’clock when they left lady Wilmington’s, and they had sat a long time silent, busied in unpleasant reflections, but yet she came not.

The earl meditated on the justice of his punishment, for he had forsaken a lovely innocent being, to marry a heartless creature, whose ruling passion was vanity, and her dereliction of virtue, he mentally acknowledged, was retribution for his own offences.

Not so the noble high-souled Rushdale. He sat with his hands covering his face, down which, in spite of the burning indignation of his soul, the big tears coursed one another; he wept the dishonour brought on a noble house, and felt a double portion of agony in the reflection, that the disgrace was inflicted by his mother. His father had let fall no hint that he intended to call major Norman to account, but his spirit would not tamely submit to the injury, and Rushdale determined on sending the seducer of his mother a challenge—little did the sorrowing Oscar know that mother, or he would have acquitted major Norman of the guilt of seduction.

The earl of Torrington and his son saw the return of day, and they retired to their beds, convinced she intended to return no more.

When the earl left his chamber the next day, he inquired for Mrs. Smithson, and was informed she had left the house, taking with her a large travelling trunk, and several smaller ones.

When lord Rushdale joined his father at breakfast, he ingenuously told him he had been to call upon his friend Drawley, whom he had fixed upon to be the bearer of a challenge to major Norman; but from him he had learned that the major and his mother had left London at daybreak, on their way to France. Lord Rushdale was for pursuing them; but this the earl opposed—“It is utterly impossible we should ever live together again,” said he, “and equally impossible to prevent her continuing this shameful intrigue.”

For many days the earl and his son felt unable to go abroad, or admit company, and during this time the newspapers were full of exaggerated accounts of the conduct of the earl, lady Torrington, and major Norman; but however much the generality of lady Torrington’s acquaintance might rejoice in the disclosure of her disgrace, Miss Delmore, lady Welford, and Miss Graham, were among the few who deplored her ill conduct, and sincerely commiserated the earl and his son, who seemed almost distracted, and bent to the earth, with the conviction of his unfeeling mother’s frailty.

The earl of Torrington and his son had shut themselves from society, and shrunk from the sneers and compassion of the world; but the sensible arguments of colonel St. Irwin and lady Welford, joined with the pathetic remonstrances of Miss Delmore, at length prevailed, and they found that lady Torrington’s indiscretion was nearly forgotten, in the wonder excited by some newer instance of infidelity.

The buz of admiration that every where followed Miss Delmore, if it did not excite love in the bosom of the vain conceited sir Cyril Musgrove, raised a passion equally as tormenting; and while he viewed her beautiful face and symmetrical figure, he thought, if he could once secure her favour, he might challenge the kingdom to produce a pair so handsome and well-matched as themselves; but matrimony was considered by sir Cyril with aversion, and that the

——— “Names of wife and husband  
Only meant ill-nature, cares, and quarrels.”

As a wife, sir Cyril never thought of Cecilia; but to have so lovely and accomplished a creature for a mistress, would increase the eclat of his gallantries, and render him the envy of the fashionable world. But though sir Cyril got himself introduced at lady Welford’s, and contrived to make one in every party where he knew Miss Delmore was

invited, though he had dropped the insolent freedom of his manner, and had become one of the most humble and attentive of her admirers, yet she never bestowed on him so much as an encouraging smile. Sir Cyril had also heard that lord Rusdale was an accepted lover; but to this report he gave no credence, believing that the earl of Torrington would certainly seek to match his heir with a lady of equal rank and consequence with himself.

Miss Macdonald's ambitious projects were now greatly disturbed, by lord Alwyn Bruce being constantly seen at the side of Miss Sedgeley, who, perfectly cured of her passion for the unworthy profligate, major Norman, seemed to listen to his lordship with complacency and approbation; and, full of rage and jealousy, Miss Macdonald appeared one morning at lady Welford's, intending to disclose her griefs and suspicions to Miss Delmore, whom she found prepared to go to Richmond with lady Welford, who had a relation residing there.

"There is no person in the world so unlucky as I am," said Miss Macdonald; "you are going to Richmond, and I came on purpose to fetch you to spend the day with us."

"I am extremely sorry," replied Cecilia.

"And Miss Graham will be here directly," continued Miss Macdonald, "to enforce my suit. Sir Alexander Stuart has got the gout, and is as cross as the—, and we promised to bring you to sing to him, because we know your melody will charm the evil spirit out of him, as David's did out of Saul."

"I do not believe I possess such power," said Cecilia.

"But I am certain of it, you are such a favourite with sir Alexander," returned Miss Macdonald; "and this disappointment will make him more fretful than ever."

"I am sure my dear Cecilia would be happy to banish pain from any person," said lady Welford; "and as she is not expected at Richmond, I will readily relinquish the pleasure of her company to oblige sir Alexander Stuart."

Miss Macdonald was grateful to lady Welford for her kindness; and it was settled that Cecilia should spend the day in Albemarle-street, lady Welford promising to return, if possible, time enough to dine at sir Alexander Stuart's.

Lady Welford's carriage had no sooner left the door, than Miss Macdonald began to disclose her own particular grievances. Cecilia listened to her account of lord Alwyn Bruce's attentions to Miss Sedgeley with patience, though it was given with much ill-nature and prolixity; and when Miss Macdonald paused, she endeavoured to persuade her to think no more of lord Alwyn Bruce, whose conduct so evidently demonstrated that he had no thought of, or intention of addressing her.

But this was advice, though certainly wise and prudent, that Miss Macdonald did not choose to adopt; she determined to hope,

"Though hope was lost,  
Though heaven and earth her wishes crost;"

and she continued to exclaim most spitefully against Miss Sedgeley, who had no pretensions to recommend her to such a match as lord Alwyn Bruce would be in point of rank and fortune, at the same time proudly enumerating the antiquity of the house of Macdonald, and her own fortune and expectations.

Miss Delmore in vain tried to change the subject; but Miss Macdonald could talk of nothing but lord Alwyn Bruce's ridiculous penchant for the sheepish-looking

automaton, Miss Sedgeley, against whom she was violently exclaiming, when Miss Graham entered, and gave a different turn to her ill-temper.—“You have kept me waiting till my patience is quite exhausted,” said she; “your half hours, Miss Graham, are longer than the hours of other people.”

“I beg ten thousand pardons, my dear Margaret,” replied Miss Graham; “to me it has been the shortest half-hour I ever passed in my life; but I hope my stay has not deranged any plan.”

Miss Macdonald proposed a walk in the Park.

“As the morning is so fine,” said Cecilia, “and that can take place now; but I see,” continued she, “in your eyes a sparkling pleasure, that tells me the last half-hour—”

“Has produced an event,” interrupted Miss Graham, “of sufficient importance to make me happy or miserable for life.”

“Why bless me, Jessy, you are not married, are you?” asked Miss Macdonald.

“No, cousin,” replied Miss Graham, “not absolutely married, but on the high road—actually promised.”

“You astonish me, Jessy,” said Miss Macdonald, fretfully; “all my acquaintance, I think, are on the high road to matrimony. Here is Miss Delmore promised, and you, Jessy Graham, promised—I wonder I am not promised.”

“I am not half so particular as you,” replied Miss Graham; “if I was to wait for a man without fault, I should stand a fair chance of leading apes, and so to avoid that terrible employment, I have consented. But, dear me! I believe I ought to blush, and cast down my eyes, with several other young-lady tricks, to shew my ‘maiden modesty;’ but as I cannot blush when I please, I will leave it to your imagination to suppose me overwhelmed with confusion, while I—”

“I hope, cousin,” interrupted Miss Macdonald, “you have entered into no engagement without consulting sir Alexander and lady Stuart; remember how kind and good they have been to you, even from your infancy.”

“You surely cannot suspect me of such ingratitude,” said Miss Graham, “sir Middleton Maxfield—”

Miss Delmore smiled—“I congratulate you, my dear friend,” said she; “with all my heart.”

“Sir Middleton Maxfield is like the rest of his inconstant sex, I perceive,” observed Miss Macdonald, spitefully; “it was but the other day he was dying for love of lady Jacintha Fitzosborne, and now—”

“He is violently in love with Jessy Graham,” interrupted the lively girl, laughing; “and do you know, coz, I have the vanity to think he will be constant.”

“I hope you will not be deceived,” returned Miss Macdonald; “but there is no sort of dependence to be placed on men. I am sure I have seen lord Alwyn Bruce in love with half-a-dozen different females in the course of as many months.”

“But you know, coz,” said Miss Graham, “it was not sir Middleton Maxfield that deceived lady Jacintha Fitzosborne; and surely it is not natural to suppose that he would remain single all his life, for the sake of a worthless woman.”

“Oh dear, no, certainly,” replied Miss Macdonald; “such instances of persevering constancy are very rare in men; but let us drop the subject, for the creatures are not worth so much conversation, and you see we have kept Miss Delmore waiting a long time.”

In the Park the observation that Cecilia's beauty attracted restored Miss Macdonald to tolerable good-humour, for vanity suggested it was her Grecian figure that occasioned several elegant young men not only to express their admiration aloud, but to keep near them during their promenade.

Lady Wilton left her carriage to join the youthful trio, for the pleasure, as she said, of enjoying a walk with them, but in reality to rail against the countess of Torrington; for the salutation of the morning had scarcely passed, before she said—"So, Miss Delmore, your friend and patroness, lady Torrington, has committed a fine faux pas; for my part, I was not at all astonished—I was perfectly convinced that there was something not correct between her and that other vile wretch, count del Montarino, as he calls himself, though I never did believe he had a right to any title; no, no, he was certainly a dancing-master, or a hair-dresser, or some low person of that sort. I dare say you remember the fire, and the count's gold snuff-box—lady Jacintha Fitzosborne could have told a pretty tale about that fire, I fancy."

Miss Graham perceived how much Cecilia was distressed, and anxious to dismiss lady Torrington from the loquacious lady Wilton's thoughts, she inquired if her ladyship had heard from her niece?

"No, not a syllable," replied lady Wilton; "no one knows what has become of her. Poor dear Jemima was quite a child of nature, all innocence and simplicity; and having no deceit herself, never suspected it in another; no one can tell where the fellow may have taken her; he may, for what we know, have sold her to the Algerines, who are said to be monstrously fond of English women. Poor Jemima! it is impossible to tell what she is suffering.—But pray, Miss Delmore, has the earl of Torrington heard whether the countess and major Norman are gone to France or to Italy? Who could have believed, at her years—I dare say she is upwards of forty—that she would have been so foolish as to elope? No doubt the earl will be divorced; but as to damages, the major is as poor as a church mouse—he has not a guinea, I believe, independent of his commission. Really these are very serious times; wickedness of all sorts, and distress of all sorts; but, of course, matrimonial infidelity is extremely distressing—nothing can be more so; I don't know, for my part, how people can be happy a moment with the consciousness of having broken their matrimonial vows—does the earl intend to be divorced?"

Cecilia was so much confused, she knew not what she said.—"I really have not heard."

"Not heard!" repeated lady Wilton—"that is very odd indeed; I thought it was settled that you are to marry lord Rushdale; and as that is the case, I wonder you are not acquainted with the earl's intention respecting his wife."

The indelicacy of this speech so affected Cecilia, that she burst into tears, and Miss Graham begged lady Wilton to drop the subject.

"With all my heart," said lady Wilton; "for my part, I hate the countess of Torrington—I always disapproved her conduct, and am not at all interested to know what becomes of her; I only mentioned her name by mere accident."

"I thought," observed Miss Macdonald, "you had been on the most intimate terms with the countess of Torrington. I perfectly remember last summer—"

"Don't mention last summer, Miss Macdonald," interrupted lady Wilton; "pray don't speak of it—the recollection makes me quite ill; last summer was a most unfortunate period for me—I met nothing but vexation and disappointments at Torrington

Castle: poor dear Jemima! first her unfortunate elopement, then my nephew, sir Middleton Maxfield, became infatuated with that deceitful, unprincipled, satirical lady Jacintha Fitzosborne. Pray, Miss Delmore, did you ever get paid the four hundred pounds you lent her?"

"No, madam," was the reply.

"You are very foolish you don't apply to her husband," resumed lady Wilton; "four hundred pounds is not a trifling sum to lose. Lady Eglantine Sydney told me yesterday, that she had been to see her cousin at Woodfield Priory, and that Mr. Cheveril is quite a bear of a man; but no one can be sorry for lady Jacintha; I hope her husband will keep her in the country; I am sure she was one of the persons that made Torrington Castle extremely disagreeable to me."

"How was it possible, lady Wilton," said Miss Graham, "that Torrington Castle could be disagreeable to you? Was it not the happy scene of your wooing? It was, if my information is correct, at Torrington Castle you became acquainted with lord Wilton, and received his first declaration of love."

"I wish, with all my soul," replied lady Wilton, "he had made love to lady Jacintha Fitzosborne, and married her. With my first husband, Mr. Freakley; as good a creature as ever drew the breath of life, I had no cross looks—no contradictions; I did as I pleased, and my word was a law; but now lord Wilton talks so much about his dignity, and his consequence, and his rank, that I really begin to think I have paid very dear indeed for a title, particularly as his lordship spends my money among persons that I have never yet been introduced to."

"Gamblers and Newmarket jockeys," whispered Miss Macdonald.

"I suppose you young ladies are invited to lady Eglantine Sydney's wedding?" resumed lady Wilton; "there will be most magnificent doings—white and silver liveries, and a new carriage, with superb silver mouldings; but with all the splendour and parade that is to attend the ceremony, I can never persuade myself that lady Eglantine will ever be happy, after using lord Melvil so ill."

"Have you seen lady Melvil," asked Miss Graham.

"No," replied lady Wilton; "but I go with a party to call upon her to-morrow morning. Lord Wilton has seen her, and says she is a very pretty woman."

"And very sensible and unaffected, I have heard," said Miss Delmore.

"I wonder if lady Eglantine and she will visit?" resumed lady Wilton; "tho', if lord Melville is wise, he will avoid the acquaintance of the marquis of Beverley, who, if report speaks truth, will make a very bad husband."

"What does report say of him?" asked Miss Macdonald.

"That he is very much given to women," said lady Wilton; "and, for my part, I know of nothing so likely to disturb matrimonial peace, as a husband being fonder of every other female than his own wife; it is a disposition that is certain to occasion uneasiness and quarrels; in short, a married man taking notice of every face he sees is unpardonable, and would put a saint out of temper."

"Lord Wilton is given to philandering," whispered Miss Graham.

"I dare say such behaviour in a husband would be very shocking," rejoined Miss Macdonald; "but if the marquis of Beverley has been given to gallantry, lady Eglantine will reclaim him; and you know, my dear madam, it is said, a reformed rake makes the very best of husbands."

“I would not advise you to trust to that saying, Miss Macdonald,” replied lady Wilton: “men never leave off their vices, take my word for it; let their wives be ever so amiable, they think it no sin to go astray; and I am certain, let lady Eglantine Sydney marry when she will, the marquis of Beverley will give her cause to repent, for he will follow his old courses, like lord Wilton.”

“Like lord Wilton!” repeated Miss Graham, with affected astonishment. “Surely lord Wilton can never be so naughty as to abandon the society of so superior a woman as yourself for other females?”

“Yes, my dear Miss Graham,” returned lady Wilton; “yes, he neglects and forsakes me; it was only last week that I discovered the cruel barbarous man keeps a mistress.”

“Shocking!” exclaimed Miss Macdonald.

“Worse, ten times worse than shocking,” resumed lady Wilton; “the base ungrateful man spends my money on a harlot—a concubine! when I am certain there is nothing wanting to his happiness at home: but I will never rest till I ferret her out—and woe betide them if I catch them together! Poor Mr. Freakley, he was a well-conducted person; and after having had one good husband, I was certainly bewitched to take a second.”

“You will have better luck with a third husband,” replied Miss Graham.

“A third! Heaven forbid that I should be destined to be plagued with a third!” returned lady Wilton; “I am sure I would never persuade any person of my acquaintance to marry at all, men are such deceitful hypocrites, so attentive, and smiling, and tender before they get you to church, and afterwards paying more respect, by half, to their dogs and horses; if I could only have foreseen what a negligent husband lord Wilton would make, I would have remained Mrs. Freakley to the hour of my death.”

Lady Wilton was compelled to wish the young ladies good-morning, being engaged to go to an auction; but hoped they would not fail to be at her rout on Wednesday evening.

“Poor lady Wilton!” said Miss Delmore, “she might have foreseen, without any very extraordinary stretch of understanding, that lord Wilton, a free-thinker, an avowed libertine, would make exactly the husband she describes.”

“Does not her ladyship’s account of her matrimonial felicity frighten you, cousin?” asked Miss Macdonald.

“Not at all,” replied Miss Graham; “I think sir Middleton Maxfield has a good heart, and that by proper management I may wean him from his present irregularities; at any rate, I must take my chance; marriage has, you know, been compared to a lottery, in which there are many blanks to a prize: if I am fortunate, I shall rejoice—if I am otherwise, I will endeavour to bear my ill luck, without exposing myself to the ridicule of the world.”

At sir Alexander Stuart’s Cecilia found an agreeable party; but lady Welford did not, according to her promise, return from Richmond to dinner, and Cecilia, finding it near eight o’clock, was growing very uneasy, when a note was delivered her, which had been brought by one of lady Welford’s female servants. It contained the unwelcome intelligence, that lady Welford’s carriage, on her return from Richmond, had been overturned at Turnham Green, and that her arm had been dislocated by the accident; that the bearer of the note was the servant of Mr. Robinson, a surgeon, who would conduct

her safely to Turnham Green, to the surgeon's house, where lady Welford remained, being too much bruised to bear the motion of a carriage.

The surgeon's servant, a respectable-looking elderly man, had accompanied lady Welford's housemaid to sir Alexander Stuart's, who said he had brought his master's carriage, the axletree and one of the wheels of lady Welford's being broke.

The man gave so clear and unhesitating an account, that bidding her friends goodnight, Cecilia hastened home, to put up a few necessary things for herself and lady Welford.

On inquiring for James, the footman who always attended her, Cecilia was told he had been out ever since he left her at sir Alexander Stuart's. Much as she disliked trusting herself at that time of the evening in a strange carriage, and with strange servants, she was impatient of any further delay, and, stepping into the carriage, she bade them proceed with all possible expedition.

It was a dark foggy night, and, full of concern for lady Welford, Cecilia paid no attention to the road, till she began to think they were very long reaching Turnham Green; she felt for a check-string, but could find none; she endeavoured to let down the windows, but they resisted her efforts. Her repeater, which she happened to have about her, told her it was ten o'clock; she had left London at half past eight—it was impossible, going at the speed the carriage did, but that Turnham Green must have been left miles behind.

Terror now seized her mind, for she was convinced that she had been deceived. She remembered the carrying Mrs. Freakley off from Torrington Castle, and had now no doubt but this was a contrivance of the same person's.

Cecilia neither shrieked nor wept, but she fervently prayed to Heaven for protection, and fortitude to sustain the trial that awaited her; she was certain that her friends would be active to discover whither she was taken; she pressed the ring, placed on her finger by lord Rushdale, to her lips and again renewed her vow of faithful love, which no circumstance should ever have power to shake; and while she thought with fear on her own unpleasant situation, a tender regret, mingled with alarm for her own fate, to think that sorrow on her account would be added to what he already endured for the misconduct of his mother. Mrs. Doricourt was at present spared the painful knowledge of her being thus artfully separated from her friends—"And perhaps," said Cecilia, "perhaps I may be restored to their protection before she returns; at least I will hope so, for Heaven is every where, and will not now forsake me."

Not the most distant idea entered Cecilia's imagination, of where she was going, or by whom she had been spirited away; and the long tedious hours of night were passed in silence, in regret, and surmises. Sometimes she thought herself in the power of lady Torrington, who, to prevent her marriage with lord Rushdale, was hurrying her away to confinement in some distant part of the country; but if this was the case, she might find means to escape, or to inform lady Welford. At length the grey of the morning shed a faint ray through the windows of the carriage, and with anxious eye she watched the increasing light, till she saw they were on a road that led through a flat country; but unable to make much observation, from the rapidity with which they passed along, she sunk back in a corner of the carriage, almost numbed with cold, and faint with fatigue.

It was near eight o'clock when the carriage stopped at a little inn on the roadside; the door was opened, and Miss Delmore was desired to alight; no person appeared but an

awkward country-girl, who gaped and stared, and led the way up stairs to a bedroom. Cecilia would have detained the girl in the room, but a bold-looking young man, who had opened the carriage door, bade her, in a tone of authority, go down, and make breakfast as quick as possible, for he was almost starved.

The girl obeyed his order, after having stared at Cecilia with stupid wonder.

“Till you reach your journey's end, ma'am,” said he, “I am deputed to attend you.”

“Whither are you taking me?” asked Miss Delmore; “and by whose orders do you act?”

“These are questions, ma'am,” replied the man, “I am not at liberty to answer.”

“Where is that elderly man who pretended to be the servant of Mr. Robinson, the surgeon?” demanded Cecilia.

“He is returned to his mater,” was the reply.

“And who, in reality, is his master?” said Cecilia.

“You will be in that secret, and many more, by-and-by,” replied the man, in a tone of impertinent familiarity; “in the mean time, you had better take some refreshment, and go to bed, as we shall not travel again till towards night.”

“Send up the young woman to me, sir,” said Cecilia; “I prefer the attendance of a female.”

The man laughed.—“That young woman,” replied he, “would not attend you alone, if you would give her twenty pounds.”

“Not attend me alone!” repeated Cecilia; “and why not?”

“Because she is afraid you will bite or scratch her,” returned the man, laughing immoderately. “The girl believes you are stark mad, and so does the mistress of the house, and that we are taking you to a private madhouse. You see, ma'am,” impudently winking his eye, “we have cut our eye-teeth—we have all our thoughts about us: we don't blunder as they do in Cumberland.”

Miss Delmore, disgusted with his insolent manner, told him she wished to be alone, and could dispense with his attendance. From what he had said about the blunder in Cumberland, which certainly alluded to the carrying off Mrs. Freakley, she supposed she was not in the power of lady Torrington—“But let the projector of this villany be whom it may,” said Cecilia, “I ought to struggle—I should not remain thus stupified with surprise and alarm, but endeavour to make my escape.”

She started from her seat, and tried the door, but it was fastened on the outside; she then applied to the window, but it was strongly nailed down.—“Every precaution has been taken,” resumed she, “and I am completely in the toils; but I will not give way to despair—I will trust in Heaven, who will, I am persuaded, deliver me from this trouble.”

Cecilia was on her knees, absorbed in devotion, when a key turning in the door announced breakfast. The girl stood on the outside with a tea-try, but seeing Miss Delmore move towards her, she shrieked aloud, and begged Mr. Samuel, as she called him, to take the things, before she let them fall.—“A looks very quiet, to be sure,” said she, “but a may bite for all that; mad folks be always cunning, mun.”

“Never fear, Ciss,” replied the young man, “the lady will do you no mischief.”

“No trust to be put in crazy folks,” replied Cecily; “I remember granny Dawkins almost throttled me once; and ever since, mun, I be feared to come nigh mad folks.”

“I am not mad, my good girl,” replied Cecilia, “I am as much in my senses as you are; I have been forced away from my friends, and brought here against my consent.”

“Did not I tell you the poor soul would say so?” said Mr. Samuel.

“Yes, to be sure you did,” replied the girl; “and, bless your heart, old granny Dawkins used to say as how she was the queen of England; and that all the country, corn-fields and meadows, and all, belonged to her.”

Cecilia sat down; she found it would be in vain to expect assistance in that house, where the people were persuaded she was mad; she felt sick for want of food, but resolved not to take any till she had first seen the man eat and drink; she therefore bade him take a cup of coffee, that she might be convinced it was not drugged.

Mr. Samuel instantly obeyed, observing the coffee and toast were so good, that she might command him to finish his breakfast, if she pleased.

“You may now go to your breakfast, sir, if you please,” said Cecilia; “when I want you, I will ring for your attendance.”

Being left alone, she partook of what was set before her, considering that it would be wrong to waste the strength she might hereafter want, in useless privations and regrets.

When Mr. Samuel returned to remove the breakfast-things, she inquired at what hour they were to proceed?

Being informed at about six, she desired that she might not be disturbed, as she should endeavour to sleep.

The man retired, locking the door after him. Miss Delmore then placed a tolerably-heavy table against it, and threw herself on the bed, where, in spite of all the grief and incertitude of her mind, she sunk in a few moments into happy forgetfulness.

When she awoke, she found that it was near dark; and while she reflected on her own unhappy situation, and the distress her friends would be in on her account, a rapping at the door informed her it was time to rise. Certain that resistance would avail her nothing, she arose, and having refreshed her throbbing temples, by bathing her face with water, she opened the door.

Mr. Samuel was waiting to conduct her down stairs to a parlour, where a cloth was laid, near a window communicating with the bar.—“You have a long way to go, ma’am,” said the man, “and you have come a long way, and have taken very little refreshment; I have ordered a boiled fowl and ham, which will be ready in a few moments.”

Cecilia knew that opposition on her part would answer no purpose; she made no reply, but seating herself near the fire, kept her eye on the bar, in the hope that she should see some person enter, to whose humanity she might appeal, to aid her liberation from the hands of the villain who had deluded her from her home.

While she sat, full of sad rumination, a carriage stopped at the door; but supposing it the one that was to convey her farther from her friends, she kept her seat, till a voice she knew sounding on her ear, made her start; in another moment she saw sir Cyril Musgrove enter the bar, and heard him inquire if he could have two pair of fresh horses for his carriage, as he wished to reach London with all possible expedition?

Miss Delmore did not wait to hear the reply to this requisition, but advancing to the bar window, she shrieked loudly, and, calling him by his name, entreated his protection.

Cecilia’s spirits no longer supported her; the joyful hope of assistance deprived her of sense, and when she recovered, she found herself supported by sir Cyril and the landlady, who was holding burnt feathers under her nose.

A few words explained her situation; sir Cyril swore vengeance against the rascals who had brought her there; and protested, 'pon his honour, he would have the license taken from the house, where a young lady of consequence, one in whom he was so much interested, had been used so shamefully ill.

The landlady fell on her knees, wept and declared that she had been imposed upon by the two men who brought the young lady there, they having sworn that she was mad, and that they were going to take her to a madhouse, by the order of her relations.

Sir Cyril ordered the landlady to send in the men to him, that he might examine and compel them to give up the name of their employer.

The landlady was absent some time, which sir Cyril employed in soothing the apprehensions of Miss Delmore, and assuring her that she might rely on his word of honour, that he would never leave her till he had placed her in safety.

The landlady returned, full of grief and consternation, to say, that the men had mounted the carriage, which had been ready some time, and drove off full speed; and that, unfortunately, her husband being a cripple, she had no one to send in pursuit of them.

Sir Cyril flew into a violent rage, and stamped and swore that she was in league with the villains, but that he would bring her to a severe account.

The woman wept and sobbed, and protested her innocence with such apparent earnestness and sincerity, that Miss Delmore, convinced she knew nothing of the affair, tried to pacify sir Cyril, who at last becoming calm, inquired if there was anything to be had to eat?

The fowl and ham being brought in, he prevailed on Cecilia to take a seat at the table, observing, that if she travelled on an empty stomach, she would certainly be sick.

Dinner being over, sir Cyril began to apologize for ordering the carriage immediately, the urgency of his business obliging him to be in London early the following day.

To Miss Delmore nothing could be more agreeable than setting off directly; and in a joyful accent she replied, she was ready to attend him.

Seated by sir Cyril Musgrove in his carriage, she anticipated the pleasure of her friends, and her own delight, in being restored to them; and though she had always disliked sir Cyril, she now felt towards him the kindest and most grateful sentiments.

Sir Cyril asked her if she could form no conjecture of the person who had made use of this wicked stratagem to gain possession of her person?

Cecilia could suspect no one, nor could form an idea.

Sir Cyril mentioned Mr. Oxley, observing, he had been known to admire her when at Torrington Castle; and he had heard it whispered the reverend gentleman had made her an offer of his hand; might not the revenge of a disappointed passion have instigated him to this desperate course?

Miss Delmore knew not whom to accuse; but there was something in her mind that acquitted Mr. Oxley.—"No," said she; "though I am utterly at a loss to conjecture the author of this outrage, I have no thought that induces me to suspect Mr. Oxley; I do not think he is the person."

"Neither do I, 'pon my honour!" replied sir Cyril, to the astonishment of Cecilia, who, from what he had said the moment before, supposed he did suspect Mr. Oxley. "I do not," continued sir Cyril, "believe that the reverend gentleman has spirit enough for such

an undertaking; but time, you know, is a great tell-tale, and will, no doubt, reveal this secret, and at a moment perhaps when you least expect it.”

At midnight they stopped to change horses and take refreshment, sir Cyril declaring that travelling always gave him an immense appetite.

The hours of night passed in a close carriage are always fatiguing, even when conversation beguiles the way of its tediousness. At daybreak Miss Delmore perceived they were entering a town, which she supposed was London, and, clasping her hands, she exclaimed—“Thank Heaven! I shall shortly be at home.”

Sir Cyril smiled, and said—“Pon my honour, Miss Delmore, you have had a most miraculous escape; but, after all, I am prodigiously sorry—”

“Sorry for what, sir Cyril?” asked Cecilia.

“Why, but don’t be alarmed, I entreat you,” resumed he, “I am only a little apprehensive that there may be persons so ill-disposed as to think and say that you left London with your own free will—that there was no sort of compulsion used.”

“They will think and say truly, sir Cyril,” replied Miss Delmore; “for sir Alexander Stuart’s family, with whom I had dined, as well as lady Welford’s servants, are witnesses that I was impatient to set off, under the idea that I was hastening to lady Welford, whom I was taught to believe had met an accident that compelled her to remain at Turnham Green.”

“The world, my dear Miss Delmore,” resumed sir Cyril, “the censorious world, will not attribute the readiness with which you set off after dark, in a strange carriage, with no other attendant than a man you had never seen before, to concern for lady Welford; they will believe you went by appointment to a lover.”

“Impossible, sir Cyril!” replied Miss Delmore; “the world, bad as it is, cannot be so cruel and unjust. My engagement to lord Rushdale is well known, and no one will believe me so base, so vile, as to encourage other addresses.”

“It is a very wicked age we live in,” returned sir Cyril; “and our most praiseworthy intentions are mistaken and misrepresented. I sincerely wish it was otherwise, for I think it extremely impertinent, ’pon my honour I do, for people to make observations upon the conduct of others.”

Miss Delmore was not pleased with the look or conversation of sir Cyril Musgrove; and perceiving they were again off the stones on the high road, she asked how far they were from London?

Instead of replying to her question, sir Cyril continued to say—“Now, for instance, my dear Miss Delmore, if any person was to see you quietly seated beside me, in my carriage, it is a thousand to one but they would have the insolence to say I was the happy fellow for whose sake you had left the protection of your friends.”

Miss Delmore coloured with resentment, as she replied—“My friends, sir, know me better than to suspect me of such indiscretion and ingratitude; they will give credit to my assertions; they will not believe you my lover, but they will feel grateful to you for being my protector—for preserving me from the enemy who perhaps had a design upon my life.”

“Your life, my sweet creature! ha, ha, ha, ha! that idea is too ridiculous—excuse me—’pon my honour, I cannot help laughing. No, lovely credulity!” continued he, throwing his arm round her waist, “your life is in no danger, be assured; no man would be

so foolish as to deprive himself of the pleasure of gazing on those beautiful eyes—of hearing the silver tones of that melodious voice.”

Miss Delmore endeavoured to release herself from the strong clasp of sir Cyril Musgrove—a sudden light seemed to flash on her mind, and in him she was convinced she beheld the person who had failed to carry her off from Torrington Castle, but had now, unfortunately for her, succeeded in decoying her from the protection of lady Welford.

The road they were travelling was little frequented. She looked anxiously on each side; but no person appeared; and in a voice tremulous with terror, she demanded of sir Cyril whether they were really on the road to London?

“That question implies a doubt,” replied he. “What reason, Miss Delmore, have you to suppose I am deceiving you? ’Pon my honour! I think it monstrously uncivil of you to doubt my veracity.”

“You will, I trust, pardon me, sir Cyril,” said Miss Delmore, “when you reflect how much my mind has been agitated during the last twenty-four hours; besides, you must remember you told me we should reach London by daybreak, and it is now—”

“Nine o’clock,” interrupted sir Cyril, looking at his watch—“tempus fugit! ’Pon my honour! my fair interrogator, I expected we should have been at our journey’s end before this; but take patience—one other hour will satisfy all your doubts.”

Miss Delmore’s apprehensions were by no means lulled by this assurance. There was a constant evasion in all sir Cyril’s replies to her questions, that filled her with alarm, and made her anxiously watch the road for the appearance of some person who might remove her doubts respecting their approach to London; but no human being appeared, and in the utmost trepidation she beheld the carriage quit the high road, and enter on a broad, smooth-rolled gravel walk, which, by sinuous windings, cut through a wood, led to an elegant, modern-built mansion.

Miss Delmore was speechless with indignation and surprise, as sir Cyril, clasping her in his arms, exclaimed—“The triumph is mine! Crown me, shadow me with laurels! Welcome, lovely Cecilia, to Frome Hall; disguise is no long necessary—in me you behold—”

“A villain,” said she, repulsing him with all her strength—“a deceitful betrayer! but whatever may be your intention in bringing me to this place, rely upon it, you have ensured to yourself my eternal contempt and detestation.”

“Rage on, my fair reviler,” replied sir Cyril; “for, ’pon my honour! your very anger is beautiful; let the storm rattle—the louder its present fury, the more delightful will be the sunshine that ensues. Will you allow me to assist you from the carriage?”

Resistance was of no avail; Mr. Samuel, the same bold grinning fellow who had attended her at the inn, now appeared; and Miss Delmore saw that she had been made the dupe of a concerted plan.

An elegant breakfast was ready laid out in a parlour, where every thing gave indication that she had been expected—“I trust you will find yourself perfectly happy at Frome Hall, my divine Cecilia,” said sir Cyril; “though this is not the season of blossoms, I have provided every thing I thought conducive to your pleasure—harp, pianoforte, pencils, paint—”

“And writing materials,” interrupted Miss Delmore, “that I may acquaint my friends with my obligations to you, for having, by a mean deception, a paltry falsehood, decoyed me from my home?”

Sir Cyril replied—“Every other indulgence, except writing materials, you may command; but come—let me see you smile and eat.”

“It is not my intention to starve myself, sir Cyril, I promise you,” said Miss Delmore; “for though it is my misfortune to be your prisoner just now, I hope to enjoy freedom, and many happy days.”

“There is nothing wanting to your freedom and happiness,” returned sir Cyril, “but your acceptance of my love.”

“Pray, sir Cyril Musgrove, let me understand you,” said Cecilia; “you never gave me reason to suppose you beheld me with partiality.”

“Pon my honour,” replied sir Cyril, “you must have less vanity than any woman in the kingdom, or you must have read the ardency of my passion in every look and action; you might have seen my extreme adoration,

‘For love was breath’d in ev’ry sigh,  
And spoke in glances from my eye.’

“But as I had not sufficient vanity to see all this,” said Cecilia, “will you have the kindness to tell me what are your intentions respecting me?”

“With much pleasure,” replied sir Cyril; “for it is but fair we should understand each other. My intention is, that you shall possess my whole heart, participate my fortune, go with me every where, and be in every thing, except the ceremony, my wife, for, ’pon my honour! I have an unconquerable dislike to matrimony; and if a woman was as beautiful as Venus, the very certainty that she was my wife would make her a Gorgon in my eyes.”

“The candour of your explanation, sir Cyril,” said Miss Delmore, “demands an equally-ingenuous declaration on my part. Did you honourably offer me your hand, I should reject it, because my affections are unalterably engaged; but knowing from your own confession, your libertine principles, from my soul I despise you. Your vanity must indeed be excessive, to suppose that I would break my faith plighted to a noble youth, who will with the entire approbation of his father, honour me with his title, to live the degraded life of a mistress with you, whom I never did, never can, respect or esteem.”

“You will alter your sentiments,” replied sir Cyril; “you have not yet had time to find out my good qualities.”

“Do you process any?” asked Cecilia; “I fear not, from the systematic villany with which you have conducted your designs on me.”

Sir Cyril rang the bell, and ordered the servant to remove the breakfast-things—“To which,” said he, “the sauce piquante has been rather too high flavoured.”

“Of which you may avoid tasting again,” replied Cecilia, “by ordering your carriage to convey me to the nearest town.”

“Your company is infinitely agreeable,” said sir Cyril, “so very pleasant and entertaining, that, pon my honour! I cannot consent to part with it.”

“Since you are determined to detain me here,” returned Miss Delmore, “I beg you will recollect, sir Cyril, that I have been up all night, and repose is necessary.”

“You are so like a goddess,” replied sir Cyril, “that, ’pon my honour! I am ready to forget you stand in need of refreshment; but at Frome Hall you are queen and mistress, and your wishes will be obeyed as soon as made known.”

“I wish then to be allowed to return to London immediately,” said Miss Delmore, “where, I am certain, much uneasiness is felt on my account.”

“Which will very shortly be removed,” replied sir Cyril.

“In what way?” demanded Cecilia.

“Have patience, ma belle ange,” said sir Cyril, “and you will see.”

A female servant appearing, was told by sir Cyril to conduct her lady to her chamber.

Miss Delmore followed the steps of her guide up stairs to a room furnished for repose with the utmost taste and luxury; adjoining was a dressing-room, where the toilet was covered with elegant trinkets and ornaments.

Miss Delmore inquired for her own small trunk, which contained her night things? The waiting-woman produced it, at the same time saying—“Every thing, my lady, is provided; this wardrobe is full of the most fashionablest things as could be got in Lunnon—shall I reach one of the new nightcaps, my lady?”

“On no account,” replied Cecilia; “and I beg, young woman, that you will not call me ‘my lady,’ for, I assure you, I am not married to sir Cyril Musgrove.”

“No, we did not suppose you was married,” said the girl, pertly; “but that is nothing to us servants—that is your own concern; only sir Cyril gave orders to us all to call you on my lady.”

“I perceive, young woman,” resumed Cecilia, “that sir Cyril has artfully imposed on you the belief that I am his mistress; but, in the face of Heaven, I declare it is false. He has, by a most wicked stratagem, decoyed me from my friends—I am here against my inclination—I am innocent, and will suffer death before I submit to be the dishonoured wretch sir Cyril wishes me to be.”

“Goodness upon us!” said the girl, “can this sartinly be the case? Why, Samuel Sparks told me, Miss, that you fell in love with our master, sir Cyril, down in Cumberlandshire, and run away with him from your friends.”

“You are deceived by a false representation,” replied Cecilia; “I never left the protection of my friends till last night.” She then narrated at large the stratagem that had hurried her from sir Alexander Stuart’s, and thrown her into the power of sir Cyril Musgrove.

The young woman turned up her eyes with astonishment—“Our master is a sad man,” said she, “and I am sure—”

Sir Cyril’s voice, calling “Susan,” made her break off, and leaving her speech unfinished, she quitted the room. Cecilia, having examined the doors and windows, and made them fast, recommended herself to the protection of Heaven, and retired to bed.

The next day she was much indisposed, and would gladly have remained in bed; but terror of a visit from sir Cyril constrained her to leave her chamber, and to struggle with a torturing headache.

Many days after this were spent by Cecilia in contrivances to escape, and in trying to win over Susan to procure her some mode of conveyance to Wimbourn, which she found was the town she had passed through, sixteen miles distant from Frome Hall; but Susan stood so much in awe of her sweetheart, Samuel Sparks, that she was afraid to

assist, though she sincerely pitied Miss Delmore, whose spirited resistance, and undisguised aversion to sir Cyril, had convinced her that she was indeed innocent, and detained against her consent.

After having passed more than a month at Frome Hall, one morning Cecilia found on the breakfast-table a newspaper, in which was a paragraph which filled her bosom with grief and horror—it was a long and most artfully-written account of her elopement with sir Cyril Musgrove, with whom it was said she was then upon the Continent.—“Monster!” said she, darting a glance of fiery indignation on sir Cyril “you have indeed succeeded in destroying my reputation; but the consolation of innocence yet is left me, and that will never be in your power to stain.”

“Pon my honour, my adorable creature, replied sir Cyril, laughing, I should be extremely happy if you would put it in my power to contradict the report, by returning with me to London directly. If you would only suffer me to drive you in my curriple a few mornings in Hyde Park, those blunderers, the editors, would find their mistake, and be satisfied that we had never left the kingdom.”

“I should be happy,” said Cecilia, “to find some corner of the world where I might never be annoyed by your hated presence.”

Too much affected to partake the breakfast, she retired to her chamber to weep, not only for herself, but for the agonies of her friends—of lord Rushdale in particular, who, while sorrowing under the disgrace of his mother’s criminality, would have the pangs of her supposed frailty and deceit added to his sufferings.

When Susan came to put her chamber to rights, she offered to give her the elegant gold repeater, which she often admired, if she would procure her writing materials, and convey her letter to the post town. Susan promised to try; but Samuel and his master kept so strict an eye upon Susan, that she had it not in her power to obtain the gold watch, which she often regarded with a longing eye.

One day at dinner, Miss Delmore observed that sir Cyril took more wine than usual, and used much persuasion to induce her to follow his example. In his manner he was bold, and several times attempted to kiss her hand—a freedom she invariably repulsed; and when she would have retired, as was her custom after dinner, he constrained her to remain, and insisted on the harp being brought, that she might play for his amusement.

“You may spare yourself the trouble of bringing the harp here,” replied Miss Delmore; “for never shall my fingers strike a note while I remain under a roof of yours, sir Cyril. You may frown, but I am not to be intimidated—I am not your slave, and will not be constrained to contribute to your amusement.”

“Pon my honour! you are most extremely uncivil,” returned sir Cyril, “and give yourself as high airs as if you were an empress. Every thing has its time; you have been proud, coy, and haughty, for near two months; but I am quite tired of your ridiculous prudery—I have indulged your humours long enough—I have suffered your obstinacy till I am quite weary. You have had your turn—now comes mine; and as I consider my friend Tom Moore’s observation—

—— ‘Not to be blest when you can,  
Is one of the darkest transgressions  
That happens ‘twixt woman and man,’

I am determined this very night to share your chamber.”

Cecilia, with supernatural strength, threw sir Cyril from her, as he attempted to clasp her in his arms.—“Beware,” said she, “how you attempt approaching my chamber—it will assuredly be fatal to you. I do not fear to die, but I will never live dishonoured.”

Before sir Cyril could recover himself, Cecilia had flown to her chamber, and having made fast the door, sat down, full of agonizing thought and painful remembrances of the happiness she had been torn from, to pursue a work that, despairing of obtaining pen and ink, she had began in the hope that she might render it the means of procuring her release from sir Cyril Musgrove’s power, who never suffered her to quit the house, except himself or Samuel Sparks, attended her steps.

Cecilia’s reliance on Heaven was her support, even while she reflected on sir Cyril’s artful scheme to destroy her reputation. “Mrs. Doricourt,” said Cecilia, “will not doubt the principles she formed, and Rushdale, my beloved Rushdale, he will surely believe it impossible I can be the wretch the newspapers represent.”

While her mind was thus wandering to the dear friends from whom she was separated, her fingers were busily employed in marking, with her own hair, on a cambric handkerchief. On the third of January, Cecilia Delmore was decoyed, by an artful stratagem of sir Cyril Musgrove’s, to Frome Hall, in Dorsetshire, where she still remains in irksome confinement.

Cecilia’s eyes were dim with tears, but she diligently pursued her work, and when it was finished, she breathed on it a prayer that Heaven would graciously permit it to be the means of informing her friends of her distressful situation.

At the hour of repose it was not without considerable apprehension that Cecilia retired to bed, for she recollected, with terror, sir Cyril’s menace, and that Susan’s room was at a distant part of the house. A pair of scissors and a knife were all her weapons of defence, and these she placed on a chair close by her bedside; but this precaution was unnecessary, for sir Cyril having taken an overdose of wine, had fallen into a heavy sleep, out of which not even the most beautiful of Mahomet’s houri would have roused him, and Cecilia might have reposed securely, if fear would have permitted her to rest; but wakeful, and listening to every breath of wind, she thought over every occurrence of her past life, and dewed her pillow with tears of regretful tenderness, while she remembered the peace and happiness of St. Herbert’s Island, where she had passed her childhood, beloved, caressed, and respected. She wondered how her noble-minded Oscar bore her mysterious absence; and while she kissed the memorial of his affection, she prayed that his heart might acquit her of deceit and perfidy, that he might believe her innocent.

Of sir Cyril Musgrove she thought with increasing abhorrence, for his atrocious conduct was not the sudden impulse of ungoverned passion; it had been long meditated and contrived—it was not love, but vanity, that had urged him to destroy her happiness, by a plan of deliberate villany. She had been noticed and admired in the great world—sir Cyril only valued her as a fashionable toy, the possession of which would give him eclat with beings heartless and vicious as himself.

The character of sir Cyril’s steward, Samuel Sparks, Miss Delmore considered with terror; in her opinion he was wicked enough to be the perpetrator of any crime,

however horrible; she recollected with what diabolic mirth he had related to Susan the stupid blunder of his Cumberland relations, in carrying off Mrs. Freakley from Torrington Castle, and the boast he made, that he had never yet failed in the execution of any scheme he had undertaken.

In uneasy reflections, tears, and regrets, Cecilia passed the long dark hours of night, and the morning found her with swollen eyes and an aching head; she could then have slept, but the fear of sir Cyril's intrusion made her quit her bed.

On descending to the breakfast parlour, Cecilia met a beautiful little girl, of about three years old, who was running after a kitten. Cecilia kissed the rosy cheek of the child, who put her little hand within hers, and suffered her to lead her into the breakfast parlour.

Sir Cyril was already there, and made many, what he thought, witty observations on Miss Delmore's love of children. Seeing Cecilia continue to caress the little girl, he inquired who the brat belonged to?

The servant in attendance replied, that she was the child of Thomas Ellis, Susan's brother, who had called to see his sister in his way to Wimbourn, where he was going to take the little girl to live with her mother's sister, who was well married, and kept a druggist's shop.

"Confound the druggist's shop!" replied sir Cyril; "who the devil asked for this history? All I desire is, that the brat may not stay here—I detest the noise of children."

The servant replied, she was going away with her father as soon as he returned from the farrier's, where he was gone to get his horse's shoe fastened.

Miss Delmore requested sir Cyril to allow her to give the child some breakfast. The idea had struck her that she could make the little prattler the instrument of her deliverance. Sir Cyril was dull and out of humour; he stormed at the servants because the newspapers were not arrived; and when the packet was delivered him, he raved because a letter had not been forwarded that he expected.

Miss Delmore hastened to finish her breakfast; and while pretending to play with the child, and arrange her dress, she contrived to place her lettered handkerchief in the front of her frock, which she happily effected while sir Cyril was tumbling over the newspapers.

Every moment now appeared an age to her impatience, so much did she wish the departure of the child, who, full of prattle and of play, seemed delighted with the caresses of Miss Delmore. At length the anxiously-expected moment arrived, and with many a wish, and many a fervid prayer for deliverance, she saw the child placed before its father, who was already mounted, and her eye followed the steps of the horse till she could no longer distinguish them.

But the pleasure derived from having eluded the watchful eyes of sir Cyril, and effecting her purpose, was shortly after damped by his declaring, 'pon his honour, that he could no longer bury himself in the country, which, at that dreary time of the year, was his aversion; he was as bad as dead, and should not wonder if half the Fine women in London had put themselves into mourning on his account. "'Pon my honour!" repeated sir Cyril, "I can bear it no longer ? I must put an end to it."

"You can very easily do that," replied Cecilia; "restore me to liberty, and you will no longer be under restraint."

“That is much easier said than done, my fair prude,” returned sir Cyril; “besides, it would be barbarous in me to abandon you now; for having been so long absent, you cannot suppose lady Welford will receive you.”

“Yes, I do suppose it,” replied Miss Delmore. “Lady Welford will give credit to my assertions—she will be convinced of my innocence, and that my absence has not been my own act.”

“I adore you too much,” said sir Cyril, “to suffer you to run the hazard of being disappointed: no, lovely inflexible, we will try the air of another kingdom—we will take a trip to France, the region of gaiety, of pleasure, and freedom—nay, no contradiction, for, ’pon my honour! I have made up my mind to quit England. Some friends of mine are at this moment on the wing for Paris; we will join them; example may thaw your frigidity? you may be induced to return my love. I perceive you do not approve of going to France, which is very ungrateful, as I shall undergo the horrors of sea-sickness entirely on your account.”

“I beg, sir Cyril—“

“And I beg, Miss Delmore,” continued he, rudely interrupting her, “that you will prepare to set off, as I shall not remain at Frome Hall more than a fortnight.”

Cecilia’s heart sunk—a fortnight would soon elapse, and if before then her handkerchief should meet no pitying eye, what would become of her? In France sir Cyril might throw off all restraint, and in a land of strangers, to whom could she appeal? of whom ask protection? —Of Heaven,” said Cecilia; “yes, of that gracious and omniscient Power who has supported and sustained me to the present moment. Oh! never let me forget the precepts of my more than mother!—oh! never let me cease to supplicate that Almighty Being who watches over the injured and oppressed, and to whom the prayer of the afflicted ascends not in vain.”



his apartment, with the distressing information that lady Welford had just returned from Richmond alone, that she had met no accident at Turnham Green, had never heard of doctor Robinson, nor had seen Cecilia since she parted with her at her own house.

No doubt now remained that Cecilia had been decoyed from her home, and made the dupe of some villanous stratagem, for the distracted Rushdale, and his scarcely-less-distressed father, recollected with dismay the attempt made to carry her off from Torrington Castle. Without a clue to trace her, they offered rewards, and made inquires at all the towns in the vicinity of London, but failed to obtain any information that could lead them to guess whither she had been taken.

As usual in all mysterious cases, there were many who had professed themselves her friends, who inclined to the belief that Miss Delmore, with all her apparent modesty, had preferred the life of honour with some favourite lover, to lord Rushdale, whose title had been in her eyes his sole attraction, she is reality disliking his person, and more particularly the sentimental romantic turn of his mind. Others who had been offended at the preference given to Miss Delmore, observed lord Rushdale was properly treated, for having neglected females of family and distinction for a low-born girl, who, luckily for him, had discovered her licentious propensities before he married her, as doubtless she would have followed the example set by the countess his mother.

Lady Welford, the duchess of Aberdeen, sir Alexander Stuart's family, and some few others, whom the modesty and timidity of Miss Delmore had charmed even more than her beauty, warmly opposed these malevolent opinions, and declared their positive belief that she was detained by force, and prevented from giving her friends information that might relieve their anxiety respecting her.

Not for a single moment did the afflicted Rushdale doubt the truth and innocence of the adored of his heart; and neither himself, nor the earl his father, ceased to offer rewards in the daily papers, or to make inquires wherever they thought it probable they might obtain intelligence.

The footman who always attended Miss Delmore, on being severely reprimanded by lady Welford, for being out of the way when the note was brought by the man who pretended to come from Turnham Green, confessed, with much real concern, that he had been invited by one of sir Cyril Musgrove's grooms, to go with him to a relation's who kept a tavern, where, he protested, he only drank a single glass of liquor, which had so stupified him that he was unable to walk home, that he had fallen asleep as he sat, and did not wake till a late hour, and was quite certain that something had been purposely given him to take away his senses. The people at the tavern were examined, but they appeared ignorant in the affair.

Suspicion now fell on sir Cyril Musgrove, and doubt was shortly after converted into certainty, by paragraph after paragraph appearing in the fashionable papers, all tending to render the character of Miss Delmore despicable, and confirm the opinion of her having voluntarily accompanied sir Cyril Musgrove to France. These vile fabrications constantly meeting the eye of the earl of Torrington, his faith in Cecilia's purity and principles began to waver; though lord Rushdale, with all the generosity of confiding love, persisted in declaring her traduced; and if indeed with sir Cyril Musgrove, his compulsory companion.

The earl of Torrington's commerce with the female world had not given him the most exalted opinion of their virtues; he had, in early life, met one angelic mind, but that

he had basely deserted, and ever after he had been made the dupe of the artful, the ambitions, and the mercenary; and the anguish of lord Rushdale's feelings was rendered more painful by perceiving that his father grew every day less warm in advocating the cause of Cecilia, and less anxious to ascertain her real situation. At last, wrought up to agony by the severity of the earl's remarks on her absence, he declared his resolution of setting off for Paris; and if, as his lordship suspected, she was proved to be the companion of sir Cyril Musgrove, he would force her from the arms of her seducer.

The earl made many objections, observing, that when a female had thrown off all delicacy, and shewn such an utter contempt of virtue and propriety, he thought her unworthy of the trouble.

"And can you really believe Cecilia guilty?" said lord Rushdale; "can you indeed conceive it possible that, educated as she has been, her whole life passed without the shadow of reproach, that she can at once have become depraved and abandoned to vice? If it is possible that she has fallen from the proud eminence on which she stood—if her virtue has slumbered, let us not believe it totally extinct. Oh, my father! let us hasten to snatch her from infamy—to restore her to peace, which, I am certain, she never can enjoy while leading a life debased by the protection of sir Cyril Musgrove."

Won by the distress and supplications of the heart-wounded Oscar, the earl of Torrington consented to accompany him to Paris, and to assist his endeavours to separate the deluded Cecilia from her supposed seducer.

The day being appointed for their quitting London, the earl had been to inform lady Welford of what he termed Rushdale's romantic scheme, and of his own design to visit Mrs. Doricourt, who had hitherto been uninformed of Miss Delmore's having quitted the protection of her friends. Crossing the square to approach his own mansion, the earl was accosted by a person whom at first he did not recollect; but when the gentleman announced himself as the reverend George Dacres, and added, that he had intelligence of a very important nature to communicate, lord Torrington's emotions were so violent, that he was constrained to accept the offered arm of Mr. Dacres, to enable him to reach his home.

Having closed the door of the library, the earl sunk on a seat, and covering his face with his hands, shuddered convulsively.

"I remember the time," said Mr. Dacres, "when Wilfred Rushdale would have met his friend with expanded arms; I am now, I perceive, an unwelcome visitor."

The earl's reply was a deep groan.

"Before I quitted England," resumed Mr. Dacres, "I joined your hand with that of a young, innocent, confiding creature—I left you, as I supposed, a happy husband, at the summit of felicity; for your wife was lovely, gentle, and virtuous. I find you now surrounded by rank and wealth, but your appearance bears no evidence of your happiness. Where is your lovely wife? where is Edith?"

"Dead!" replied the earl, with a still deeper groan—"Oh, Dacres, Dacres! severe have been my sufferings since we parted."

"Can you, with an unreprieving conscience, say they have been undeserved?" asked Mr. Dacres. "I came not to flatter your vices, or palliate the enormity of your offences—I come to display, in all its glaring colours, the guilt of your past life—to demand from you the orphan's long-withheld right."

“I have wronged no orphan,” replied the earl—“who dares accuse me of such guilt?”

“I dare,” returned Mr. Dacres—“I am your accuser.”

“Of this crime,” said the earl, “I shall be found guiltless.”

This assertion Mr. Dacres staid not to contradict; but with a severity of tone and look from which the earl shrunk in dismay, he asked—“Did you not, with vows of love, and promises of eternal fidelity, persuade Edith Saville to quit the protection in which her brother left her? Did you not, in a few short months, after obtaining her hand, abandon her, and, like a villain swayed by cursed lucre, contract an unlawful marriage with Miss Herbert, the affianced bride of your deceived, betrayed friend?”

“Go on,” continued the earl; “your questions are daggers; but I deserve the pangs they inflict, even did they wound more severely.”

“On the discovery of your baseness,” resumed Mr. Dacres, “did not the forsaken Edith bury herself and her sorrows in a cottage, remote from the scenes where you had deluded her, with heartless vows and empty professions? There, with her infant—”

“She met a horrible death,” interrupted the earl, wildly, large drops of perspiration rolling down his pallid face; “the cottage took fire—Edith, my ever-loved though deeply-injured Edith, perished, with her infant, in the flames. The dreadful picture of her sufferings never leaves my imagination; it has pursued me in the mazes of dissipation—it has been present at the banquet; waking and sleeping I have seen them struggling in the flames—I have heard the shrieks of Edith and her babe.”

It was some time before lord Torrington was sufficiently composed to listen to the assurance of Mr. Dacres, that Mrs. Rushdale and her babe had escaped this horrible death, and taken shelter in a distant cottage.

The earl burst into tears, and grasping the hand of Mr. Dacres, with strong emotion, asked—“Does Edith, my injured Edith, live?”

Mr. Dacres mournfully shook his head, and replied—“No—she has long been released from the sorrows of this evil world. But, answer me, lord Torrington—where is that child you adopted at Torrington Castle, Cecilia Delmore?”

The earl gave Mr. Dacres a brief account of every circumstance relative to Miss Delmore, her engagement with his son, lord Rushdale, down to her supposed elopement with sir Cyril Musgrove.—“I had,” said the earl, “overcome every prejudice, for in my eyes her virtue, beauty, and accomplishments, were equivalent to rank and fortune; and had she not thrown off the mask of purity that artfully veiled the vices of her character, she had before this been the wife of my son.”

“Be grateful to Heaven,” replied Mr. Dacres, “that you are spared that horrible affliction; Cecilia is your daughter—the child of Edith—the heiress to your fortunes.”

The earl sunk back on his seat, his eyes closed, and for some moments he appeared to have lost all sense of present or future sorrows; when again recovered, he wept bitterly.—“Oscar, my noble-minded Oscar!” said he, “how will he support this intelligence?”

“That son, lord Torrington,” resumed Mr. Dacres, “of whom you speak so feelingly, is illegitimate; and however this unfortunate girl may have erred, I fondly loved her angel mother, and for that mother’s sake I will seek her out—I will, if admonition and persuasion can prevail, restore her to virtue, at the same moment that I instate her in her rights, for remember she is your lawful heiress; and while I reflect on all that I have heard

in Cumberland respecting her goodness, and the high character bestowed on her by persons of rank and reputation here, I am inclined not only to hope, but to believe her innocent, notwithstanding newspaper reports, which have frequently been proved false and scandalous.”

“Would to Heaven that I could prove Cecilia innocent!” said the earl; “for I have ever loved her with the affection of a father; and have felt more anguish than I have language to express, since by withdrawing from the protection of lady Welford, she has given licence to the venomous tongue of scandal.”

“No time must be lost,” replied Mr. Dacres; “Cecilia must be found. You are imperiously called upon, lord Torrington, to recover your daughter, and, if possible, restore her fame.”

“My daughter!” repeated the earl, relapsing into incredulity—“no, I trust you are mistaken; I will hope I have not the shame of her disgraceful conduct to endure; the degraded Cecilia Delmore, sir, is—”

“Your daughter,” interrupted Mr. Dacres, sternly; “if she is disgraced, receive the affliction as a punishment for your offences; but seek her out, lest her continuance in guilt add weight to your crimes. I am here to establish the rights of Edith’s child, and bring with me incontrovertible proof.”

“I confess,” said the earl, “when I first beheld Cecilia in her infancy, I was struck with her resemblance to my lost Edith; since grown to womanhood, the expression of her countenance, her voice, her smile, have continually reminded me of her whom my heart has never ceased to love and lament; but this likeness may be accidental—it does not confirm your assertion that she is my daughter; and before I consent to deprive my noble, generous Oscar, of rank and possessions so long considered his right, I must indeed have proof.”

“You shall,” replied Mr. Dacres, “for the requisition is just.” He then drew forth a pocketbook—“Do you recognize this memorial of love?”

Lord Torrington examined the book; in the cover was written—“Edith Saville, the gift of her adoring Wilfred Rushdale.”

“Can you deny,” asked Mr. Dacres, “that being your writing?”

The earl acknowledged the pocketbook to have been a present of his to Miss Saville, and the writing in the cover to be his also.

“These letters too are yours,” said Mr. Dacres, “in which you subscribe yourself the faithful husband of Edith.”

The earl clasped his hands, and in a tone of agony exclaimed—“Oh! would I had continued her faithful husband! how many years of misery had this lacerated heart been spared!”

“And here,” resumed Mr. Dacres, “is a letter addressed to ‘Wilfred Rushdale, esquire;’ and though the hand that wrote, and the woe-fraught heart that dictated, are mouldered to dust, you cannot have forgot the characters of Edith.”

The earl pressed the paper to his lips; he endeavoured to peruse its contents, but a mist swam before his eyes, and he desired Mr. Dacres to read it.

Mr. Dacres, with a tremulous voice, read as follows:—

“WILFRED,

“The pulses of the heart your perfidy has broken beat faintly—I shall soon sink to the grave, and be at peace; but you, false, ungrateful, and perjured—merciful Heaven! will you ever know peace? Will not the injuries of the forsaken Edith—the remembrance of your deserted lawful wife, poison the enjoyments you hope to purchase by the sacrifice of all that is honourable in man? Yet I mean not to upbraid you—we are taught to forgive, as we desire to be forgiven; of the full extent of this heavenly precept I am aware; yet only on one condition can I promise to forgive you—receive and acknowledge your child, my innocent Cecilia—bestow on her the tenderness I was denied—rescue my fame from infamy. As you perform these my last requests, you have my pardon, or my malediction. These, the last dictates of my breaking heart, will be delivered to you by John Delmore, when my eyes are closed in the sleep of death. His roof has sheltered me since the devouring flames consumed all my little property, except the Indian casket, which I bequeath my cherub child.

“Farewell, Wilfred, once the idol of Edith’s heart! be careful of the happiness of my Cecilia.”

The earl wept, and Mr. Dacres turned to the window to hide his emotion, and recover composure. After a pause of some moments, he subdued his feelings sufficiently to produce a small square ivory and gold casket; it contained a miniature picture of the earl, painted in the early days of youth, before care had impressed its furrows on the smooth open forehead, and another of Edmund Saville, folded in a paper, on which was written—“The best and most deceived of men;” a locket set with pearls, and two brilliant rings, were the contents of the casket.

“This locket,” said the earl, “I have seen hang on her ivory bosom; it was the parting gift of her brother—oh, Edith, Edith, for ever we are separated! neither here nor hereafter, I fear, will thy pure spirit seek alliance with the guilty Wilfred. But where have these sacred memorials of a departed angel been so long hid? why was I not sooner informed that the wretched erring Cecilia was my daughter? Alas, alas! heavy, though just, is the punishment of my offences! Both my children—must I be punished in both? one debased by an illicit connexion with a villain, the other devoted to misery by an incestuous passion! Why did not this intelligence reach me before my boy became a sacrifice?”

“The present is the earliest opportunity that has occurred,” replied Mr. Dacres. “You may remember that soon after your marriage with Miss Saville I left England. To relate my vicissitudes of fortune for eighteen tedious years, would be irrelevant to the present subject; suffice it, I was on my voyage from Hindostan, when the ship in which I sailed fell in with a boat, in which were three almost-famished men, the sole survivors of a foundered vessel. Two of these unfortunate creatures recovered, the third lingered a few days, and finding his end approached, expressed a wish that some Christian would pray beside him, as he lay pale and expiring in the hammock where the humanity of our sailors had laid him. I hastened to administer the holy consolations of religion to the dying man, who told me his name was John Delmore.”

“Merciful Providence!” exclaimed the earl, “and from him—”

“I learned,” continued Mr. Dacres, “that Mrs. Rushdale, bearing her infant in her arms, had sought shelter in his cottage from the conflagration that destroyed her property and her servant. Delmore had been absent some months, and on his return to his home he

found his wife in the last stage of a consumption, with two infants, her own puny and sickly, which expired in less than a week after his return. The little Cecilia was lively, beautiful, and healthy, and from his wife he learned that her mother had been buried about a month; she had left a letter behind her, with a request that the little girl might be conveyed to its father; but his wife had forgot the name, and in the bustle of the funeral had mislaid the letter. John Delmore confessed he had always been fond of drink, and finding, to use his own expression, ‘his wife wasted to a notamy, and scarcely able to crawl, and every thing at sixes and sevens, he drank harder than ever to drown sorrow.’ In a few weeks his wife died, and shortly after he had an offer to go out captain’s clerk to America. Throwing every thing portable that belonged to his wife into his chest, he prepared for the voyage, his only trouble being how to dispose of the poor little girl. At last it struck him that his wife’s sister was the housekeeper at Torrington Castle; and as he thought he could prevail on her to take charge of the child, if he passed it upon her for his own, he lost no time in taking the journey, sometimes carrying the child for miles on his back, and sometimes getting a lift outside a coach. At last he arrived at Torrington Castle, and succeeded in his project to his wish; Mrs. Milman took the little smiling Cecilia, and for her dead sister’s sake, promised to be a mother to her. When at sea, John Delmore had time to overhaul the contents of his chest, among which he found this casket, and the mislaid letter, which disclosed the name of Cecilia’s father, to whom he determined to deliver his child, and all that belonged to her, on his return to England. While in America, in a drunken frolic, he engaged to go to the East Indies. Arrived at Bengal, being an able navigator, he had a lucrative offer from the owners of a vessel that traded to China; and though every year resolving to return to England, he still remained, making money, and drinking like a fish, till a storm drove the ship to which he belonged out of her course, and at last, after ineffectual efforts to save her, drove on a reef of rocks, where she beat to pieces, himself and two others only escaping of all the crew. You may judge,” said Mr. Dacres, “with what interest I listened to this narrative, and with what earnest entreaties to see the motherless Cecilia righted, the expiring Delmore consigned to my care the important documents that were to assert her birth. On my return to England, I visited the grave of Edith, and the cottage that had sheltered her; I found the man-servant who lived with her when you deserted her, and who had assisted to remove her to the solitude where she became a mother. Anxious to perform the wishes of Edith, I hastened to Torrington Castle, where I heard from your domestics such accounts of Cecilia’s amiable qualities, and your affection for her, as left no doubt on my mind that you would rejoice to learn the child of your adoption had real claims on your heart and fortune.”

“Yes,” replied the earl, “I have loved Cecilia with all the fond affection of a father—I have been proud of her transcendent beauty, and have felt pleasure in drawing forth her various accomplishments; but now, wretched Cecilia, how art thou fallen! and how terrible is my affliction, to learn our affinity, at a time when disgrace and infamy sully the character I once believed above the reach of error or vice! Oscar, too, my beloved, noble-minded Oscar, must he resign the right of succession to a sister so unworthy? Oh, Dacres, once my friend, have pity on me—do not crush to earth this high-spirited youth; already his heart is tortured with a passion for this erring girl, whom he had my sanction to make his wife; think of his blighted hopes; he loves her, spite of her unworthiness, with a most sincere and fervent passion; spare him, I conjure you—conceal

from him, from the world, that he is illegitimate—I will settle on Cecilia any sum you shall name; and you, my friend, my preserver, you shall command my services—my fortune.”

Mr. Dacres surveyed the earl with a glance of scornful rebuke—“Could you bestow on me the empire of the world,” said he, “it would not bribe my integrity; the sainted Edith was the beloved of my youthful heart; she preferred you—I buried my passion in my own bosom, and I constrained myself to join your hands, because I believed the union would make her happy; how you fulfilled your vows, let your conscience answer; for myself, I stand here determined to do her fame justice—to assert the rights of her child. I pity the feelings of your son; but if he is indeed the noble-minded youth you describe, he will disdain a title and possessions to which he has not a legal claim.”

“Must I then endure the reproaches of my son?” exclaimed the earl; “must I appear a wretch, destituted of principle and honour in his eyes—the betrayer of his mother? Oh, Edith, this—this is retribution!”

“Poor worldly-minded man,” replied Mr. Dacres, “you shrink from the reproaches of your son—you dread to encounter the censures of the multitude; yet when you abandoned and left to wretchedness the lovely, amiable Edith—when you deceived Miss Herbert with an unlawful marriage, you felt no compunction—you feared not to offend the Almighty Power whose altar you profaned—you fear not to offend me, a minister of the Gospel, by offering to bribe me to an act of base injustice; wretched man! the vials of wrath are pouring out upon you; bend your proud spirit—own the mercy that has so long withheld your punishment, and humbly supplicate the pardon of offended Heaven!”

“My son, my son!” exclaimed lord Torrington, in frenzied accents, “who shall bear to thee the heart-rendering intelligence, that thou art illegitimate—that the titles to which, from thy birth, thou hast been considered heir, are not thy inheritance? Who shall tell thee that Cecilia, the tenderly-beloved though erring Cecilia, is thy sister? For me, overwhelmed with sorrow and disgrace, I feel unable to make these disclosures; I cannot, dare not meet his just indignation; conscious of the guilty part I have acted, I shrink from the reproving glance of his eye.”

“It is the duty of my office,” said Mr. Dacres, “to reprove the guilty and console the afflicted; painful as will be the task of communicating to a son events that must place a parent’s conduct in a reprehensible point of view, I will see the young man, and endeavour to dispose his mind to submit to privations that honour and justice render unavoidable. Where shall I find Mr. Herbert?”

The earl started.—“Call him not by that detested name, I conjure you,” said he; “to my ears it is agony; oh, what will it be to his!”

“Is not his mother’s name Herbert?” demanded Mr. Dacres, coldly.

“You know it was,” replied the earl; “but—”

“Say not,” interrupted Mr. Dacres, “that your mock marriage gave her title to any other: her name is still Herbert; and the children of unmarried women always bear the mother’s appellation.”

“Barbarous, cruel man!” said the earl, “in your inflexible severity, you forget compassion and mercy.”

“Where,” asked Mr. Dacres, “was your compassion, when you deserted your unoffending wife, a young innocent creature, who hourly expected to make you a father?”

Where was your mercy, when, to possess yourself of old Blackburne's wealth, you persuaded the affianced bride of your friend to break her plighted faith, and deluded her with a marriage you knew you were not at liberty to contract? For you indeed I feel but little compassion; but I pray Heaven to have mercy on you! for your son, whose estimable character I have heard from lips whose praise confers honour, my heart bleeds; but I will not suffer pity to overcome my sense of right. Cecilia, the daughter of Edith, your lawful wife, shall not be defrauded by compassion of her inheritance; she shall be acknowledged the heiress of the earl of Torrington, even were her errors greater than the world represents them."

"Oscar dashed from the pinnacle of greatness his virtues so eminently adorn—Cecilia, whom I believed all that was chaste and amiable in woman, sunk in infamy!" exclaimed the earl, wildly; "my punishment is more than I can bear. Hark! that is Oscar's voice! he comes to learn his father's infamy and his own disgrace."

"Wretched man, be calm and patient," said Mr. Dacres; "the sooner these disclosures are made the better."

"The tale of dishonour will destroy him," replied the earl; "the knowledge of his father's guilt will be death to him. Honour is Oscar's idol, and bereaved of that, he will abhor existence. Inexorable man, fulfil your purpose; proclaim me a villain, but ask me not to face the resentment of my guiltless boy."

As lord Rushdale entered the library, the earl rushed wildly past him, leaving the resolved, though deeply-affected Mr. Dacres to introduce himself.

Oscar listened with the calmness of desperation to the disclosure of his father's guilt, on which he made no comment; neither did he seem moved, when he was told he must resign the titles and possessions to which he had believed himself heir. Cecilia alone occupied his heart and imagination; the terrible idea of their affinity seemed to possess his thoughts entirely, and the words—"Cecilia my sister!" alone murmured from his lips.

The expression of deep melancholy that clouded the fine countenance of Oscar induced Mr. Dacres to speak of his father's vices in as gentle terms as possible; and when the tale of guilt was at an end, he endeavoured, with every soothing argument that religion and piety could suggest, to reconcile the heart-wounded youth to his unavoidable destiny. He expressed his belief that Cecilia was the involuntary companion of sir Cyril Musgrove—still innocent and virtuous.

A momentary ray of pleasure lightened in the melancholy eyes of Oscar; he pressed the hand of Mr. Dacres, and fervently exclaimed—"Yes, my Cecilia is innocent; a thought of impurity has never contaminated her angelic mind."

Mr. Dacres spoke of the pleasure it would afford him, to be the means of restoring to fame and to her friends a young creature so much beloved; and declared his intention of going to Paris immediately, in search of her—"I am assured," said Mr. Dacres, "she has been conveyed from England by force; and nothing shall prevent my bringing sir Cyril Musgrove and his agents to punishment."

The wretched Oscar listened, while Mr. Dacres enjoined him to subdue his feelings, to avoid the indulgence of sorrow, and, above all, to respect the penitence of his father, and harbour no resentment against him. "I need not request you to exert all your powers to conquer your unholy passion for Cecilia," said he, "which divine and human laws forbid."

The eyes of Oscar were fixed on Mr. Dacres as he spoke, but he understood not a syllable; the agony of his mind had before produced fever, and as he again thought of Cecilia as his sister, he fell senseless at his feet.

For several days, the lives of the earl of Torrington and his son were despaired of, and Mr. Dacres, anxious as he was to ascertain the fate of Cecilia, was compelled by humanity to remain in London, dividing his cares between the wretched father and no less unhappy son. The earl of Torrington's health again gave signs of renovation, but the hapless Oscar, though free from fever, sunk into profound melancholy; no sound or object seemed to attract his attention—his brain was unsettled—he seldom spoke, and would sit for hours with his arms folded, and his eyes fixed on vacancy; to the self-upbraidings of the earl, and his unceasing entreaties for pardon, he would make no reply, except a hollow groan burst from his bosom, or his pale lips unconsciously murmured—“Cecilia, the adored of my soul—Cecilia is my sister.”

The earl's physicians pronounced an immediate voyage to Lisbon the only measure likely to promote the recovery of lord Rushdale, to whose depressed mind change of scene, and a warm climate, were necessary.

Preparations were directly made for the voyage, and the earl, still an invalid, deputed to Mr. Dacres the charge of seeking out Cecilia, while he watched over the health of his son, now dearer to his heart than ever, since visited by misfortune.

On the same day that Mr. Dacres began his journey to Paris, the earl of Torrington and his son, the shadow of his former self, set sail for the shores of Portugal.

The sea air had a good effect on the debilitated constitution of the earl, but the sunk eye of Oscar would follow the rolling billows, unconscious that their course bore him from his native land. To him neither the wide expanse of ocean, nor the blue arching sky, brought health or pleasure.

The earl of Torrington bore from England letters of introduction to most of the families of distinction in Lisbon; he engaged a splendid mansion, and established himself in a style consonant with his rank; but for many days the unfortunate Oscar remained utterly unconscious of passing events, while the earl, apprehensive that his reason was for ever extinguished, watched over him with a heart tortured by remorse and anguish, the late-obtained knowledge of Cecilia being his daughter adding acuteness to the misery her dereliction of virtue occasioned.

The health of the earl again sunk in the conflict; sorrow and pain are ill sustained by persons whose lives have been passed in ease, affluence, and pleasure; yet the remembrance that his crimes had destroyed the health and felicity of his son, urged the earl, though scarcely able to quit his couch, to insist on being supported to his apartment.

The evening of a sultry day had closed in, and lights had been placed, when the earl, in removing towards an open lattice, fainted in the arms of his valet. This circumstance seemed to rouse a momentary attention in Oscar, who, having mournfully gazed at his father, was again relapsing into gloomy forgetfulness, when the earl, being restored to sense, in a faint voice, said—“Oscar, my son, I believe I am not long for this life; let me not, I conjure you, pass into eternity unblessed by your forgiveness.”

Oscar raised himself on his elbow; he placed his hand on his forehead, and seemed to try to collect his scattered thoughts. At last he said—“Now I remember all; I am illegitimate, and Cecilia is my sister; would that I had died in Cumberland! I had then sunk to my grave, in the happy blessed assurance that—But, alas! alas! Cecilia is my

sister! My lord," addressing the earl, "the gentleman who told me this unhappy story is a clergyman; he said Cecilia is the daughter and heiress of the earl of Torrington; he told me also, that Heaven commands we should forgive each other; my brain wanders, and my heart is broken, but I believe I harbour no resentment, except against the villain who has murdered the fame of my Cecilia. My Cecilia! oh no, no, she is your daughter—my sister; and to love her is become criminal: yet while my heart throbs— while memory survives, I shall bear in my wretched bosom incurable passion."

"Oscar, my beloved Oscar!" said the earl, "give not way to unavailing tenderness; remember this unhappy girl is your sister."

I never can forget it," replied Oscar; "that she is my sister, is my grief—my misery; were she not your daughter, I would still seek and woo her for a bride; for here, in the sight of Heaven, I solemnly protest I believe her chaste, innocent, and incapable of deceit."

"Grant it, gracious Heaven!" said the earl, with a look and tone of indescribable sadness; "grant me to behold you restored to health, and Cecilia returned with unblemished fame, and I care not how soon I sink to—"

"The grave," interrupted Oscar, with a bitter smile. "No, my lord, you must live to see your base-born son stripped of his borrowed honours, pointed at, laughed at, scorned; but I can bear all this; the loss of titles, public favour, wealth, is nothing; no, no, there was a treasure dearer to Oscar's heart than all the pageantries of fortune; but that is wrested from me; and now, despoiled of all, the grave remains my only place of refuge."

The earl, during this speech, had again fainted; and when the eyes of Oscar fell on his countenance, he beheld it fixed, as in death.—"Wretch that I am," resumed he, striking his forehead, "my inhuman reproaches have murdered my father." He then flung himself at his feet, and, in the frenzied accents of delirium, entreated him to live and pardon him.

The attendants having summoned the earl's physicians, he was borne to his bed, where he remained for some time in a state of such suffering, that every moment was expected to be his last.

During this melancholy period, lord Rushdale's health became better, but his dark blue eyes regained not their sparkling intelligence; his spirits had entirely lost their animated tone—his cheeks were pale, and his figure attenuated. Silent and melancholy, he constantly attended the couch of his father, whose sufferings and penitence made him sincerely accord the forgiveness he unceasingly supplicated; his hand smoothed his uneasy pillow, and administered the medicines, which he feared were prescribed in vain. Many a prayer for the earl's recovery was breathed by the sorrowing Rushdale, whose heart, though lost to happiness, and keenly sensible of his disgraceful birth, gratefully remembered the unvarying affection of his father—the indulgence lavished on all his wishes, and the care bestowed to form his mind on the firm principles of virtue and humanity.

Softened by these grateful recollections, Oscar struggled with the misery of disappointed fortune and hopeless love, that he might not increase the anguish of his father, who having the comfort of seeing this son, so deservedly beloved, constantly beside his couch, and hearing him directing the services of his attendants, again gave hopes of recovery.

When sufficiently convalescent to venture abroad, the earl endeavoured to divert the melancholy of his own and Oscar's mind, by cultivating an acquaintance with the nobility of Lisbon, and by an examination of all the antiquities and curiosities of the country.

To these pursuits, entered into with avidity by the earl, Oscar, neither by word or look, objected; he saw the intention, and was willing that his father should believe his sorrows were diverted; but insensible to the beauties of nature and art, the poisoned arrow rankled in his bosom; his disgraceful birth, seldom absent from his memory, continually flashed the indignant crimson of shame across his pale cheek, and his heart was tortured with the anguish of hopeless love.

Still no intelligence from Mr. Dacres reached them; and while, out of respect to the feelings of each other, the name of Cecilia never escaped the lips of the earl or his son, yet both were anxious and impatient for an express from France.

The earl of Torrington was by nature mutable and inconstant; he had several times in his life believed himself in love; he had also felt, to a certain degree, the unhappiness of disappointed passion, but in general he had consoled himself for the perfidy of one mistress with the charms of another; the only real affection he had ever felt was for Edith, the lovely wife he deserted; but even her image, indelibly impressed on his heart, had not prevented him from forming various other attachments. Judging Oscar's disposition by his own, he believed that time and new objects would console him for the loss, if not entirely obliterate the passion for Cecilia from his bosom; and to effect this most desirable purpose, even while his health was unequal to the fatigue, the earl made frequent visits to those families where youth and beauty held forth their attractions.

To gratify the wishes of his father, Oscar was a guest at many splendid entertainments, and various places of public resort, where the handsome melancholy Englishman was the admiration of many a fair one, while he, pensive and regardless of inviting glances shot from the eyes of beauty, thought only of his own blighted prospects and the lost Cecilia. For him the ball, the concert, had no longer charms; music, once the delight of his enthusiastic fancy, was now discord to his ears; and when he saw the gay bolero danced, his feelings amounted to agony, for he remembered the graceful form and sylph-like step of Cecilia, and with what animation he had seen her wind through the mazes of the dance.

To the wretched Oscar, sounds of mirth and scenes of gaiety were hateful; and whenever he could steal from observance, he would climb the mountains, or hide himself in the lone recesses of the rocks, where, uninterrupted, he could indulge in recollections of those happy days, when prosperity, like a brilliant sun, shone above his youthful head—when, high in rank and honour, he was surrounded by friends—when love, hallowed by virtue and blest by paternal sanction, seemed to invite him to happiness.—“The vision, bright with the gay colouring of youthful hope, fades,” said Oscar, mournfully, “and a sad certainty of wretchedness succeeds; my birth disgraceful—my love a crime, what solace can the world afford me?—what recompence for the treasures I have lost? Yet were I assured that Cecilia is innocent—could I learn that she is safe, it would be some alleviation of my misery. Innocent! dare I believe that she is guilty? Can I remember the bashful modesty, the blushing timidity, with which she always received my avowals of affection, and believe that Cecilia is the voluntary companion of a villain? Oh, never! Angel of purity, forgive me! My sister—Cecilia is my

sister! Would that I could banish from my mind the remembrance of those blissful hours, when we wandered in the groves of Torrington—when Cecilia blest me with the assurance of her love—when she promised to be mine. Mine—never! Alas! alas! we are already too nearly allied; another shall woo and call her his, while I, condemned to unavailing repinings, shall wretchedly waste my days, torn by the pangs of jealousy and disappointment. Yet, gracious Heaven! though I am visited by sorrow, grant I may see her happy; let me behold her restored to fame, and I will strive to bear the load of woe that presses on my heart; I will vanquish pride—I will endeavour to forget that she was my affianced wife—when love was not a crime, and the future presented smiling years of tender confidence and wedded happiness.”

With the miserable Oscar, what a fearful change a few short weeks had made! to him, whose eyes were clouded by misfortune, the sky, the ocean, and the earth, presented their beauties and their wonders in vain. Cecilia, the splendid planet that illumined his existence, was sunk, and lost to him for ever, and nature had no longer a charm to attract his eye or interest his heart. Sometimes, starting from the wild delirium of disappointed passion, he would endeavour to reason his distracted feelings into calmness, he would force himself to consider Cecilia the daughter and heiress of the earl of Torrington, and struggle to bend his spirit to bear the stigma of illegitimacy with patience; but still, as the circumstance of Cecilia quitting the protection of lady Welford, and the newspaper reports, rose to remembrance, his sunk eyes would elicit sparks of indignant fire, and the blush of wounded pride would redden on his pale cheek; the fame of the house of Torrington, sullied by her supposed dereliction of virtue, would swell his bosom, and he would then, in the frenzy of rage, pour heavy execrations on sir Cyril Musgrove, and vow revenge for a sister’s ruined reputation; then suddenly recollecting his illegitimacy, he would throw himself on the earth, and weep in all the bitterness of sorrow.—“Not by me can the villain be called to account!” he would exclaim; “not by my hand can the seduction of Cecilia be avenged! Oh, no, no, not by the base-born son of a wanton! Wretched, wretched Oscar! the sins of my parents are severely visited on my head; I am become a mark for scorn—every eye will now behold me with contempt; never again can I mix in the scenes, where once I was received with friendship, respect, and homage; the heir of Torrington, to whom all deference was paid, has vanished, and in his place a wretched, disgraced, unhappy being stands, undone in fortune and in love; yet though my interference should be despised and rejected by sir Cyril Musgrove, who, no doubt, would cast in my teeth the opprobrium of my birth, what withholds her father tearing Cecilia from the arms of a villain? he has claims upon her which none will dare dispute; he has honourable birth too, and may demand satisfaction for injury, without apprehending contumelious rejection.”

Sunk in the deepest despondency, hours would pass away unmarked by Oscar, who, amid the wildest scenes of nature, would sit, with his eyes fixed on the fathomless ocean, oftener vindicating than accusing Cecilia, picturing to his irritated fancy her probable distress and misery, detained by compulsion from those endeared to her by friendship and by love; for, spite of appearances, the unhappy youth, in his calm moments, clung to the idea of her innocence, and cherished the fond belief, that he still possessed the pure and unaltered affection of her heart. Wrought to agony with the thought of her sufferings he would rush into the presence of his father, to urge him to make a personal search after Cecilia, whom he felt certain was forcibly detained by sir

Cyril Musgrove; but when the pale, feeble, drooping form of the earl met his eye—when he considered him weakened and emaciated by recent illness, he saw the impossibility of his quitting Lisbon in the present state of his health, and he buried deep in his fevered bosom the boiling passions that hurried him to rage and impatience, lest he should precipitate from its frail tenement the life of his father, who yet seemed scarcely a step removed from the verge of eternity.

While Oscar piously and duteously did his utmost to conceal the anguish of his heart, and never suffered the name of his mother to pass his lips, he thought of her with feelings that excited his own wonder; for while contempt and indignation rose in his bosom against her frailty, he was sensible of but little wounded affection; he considered, that however deceived by the earl of Torrington in the matter of her marriage, she never had cause to doubt being legally his wife, and he had always behaved towards her with indulgence and unbounded generosity. From the hour that Oscar was capable of reasoning on passing events, he had thought the conduct of the countess highly reprehensible towards all that concerned his attendance and accommodation—she had manifested abundance of pride, but not the least tenderness; and though a sense of duty had always governed his conduct, he never had felt for her either the affection or respect a mother ought to command; he had observed, with much displeasure, her behaviour while the count del Montarino was her guest, and her elopement with major Norman had concentrated his feelings; all she now excited was disgust and contempt.

His mother's certain infamy, and the clouds of suspicion that hung darkly over the character of Cecilia, had rendered England hateful to the melancholy Oscar, and he secretly resolved never again to visit a country that had witnessed the disappointment of his dearest hopes, and the disgrace of his birth: there were many persons in England of whom he thought with respect and regard; but circumstances were sadly changed with him; he had frequently heard that the unhappy had no friends, and he determined to avoid meeting supercilious pity from those who had once thought themselves honoured by his acquaintance—for the future he had been able to arrange no plan, except that of resigning the title he had so long usurped.

While the nights and days of Oscar were devoted to regret and sorrow, the mind of the earl was suffering all the pangs of remorse, for conscience perpetually displayed, in all their hideous forms, the consequences of his vices—the dreadful spectacle of the noble-spirited Oscar, bowed to the earth by the disgrace of illegitimate birth, was present to his tortured sight, and the distracting idea of Cecilia made the victim of a villain, who would not have presumed to approach her with dishonourable wishes, had she been the acknowledged daughter of the earl of Torrington, added poignancy to his feelings.

Fearful of explaining their thoughts to each other, they had each to regret those delightful hours of confidence, when every wish of Oscar's met the approval of his indulgent father, and friendship of the most exalted kind subsisted between them. This happy interchange of sentiments, feelings, and opinions, was now at an end; the earl felt abashed in the presence of his son, for conscience loudly proclaimed, that Oscar, formed by nature to fill the most exalted rank, was disgraced by the vices of his father; and to shun his society the earl forced himself to accept invitations, when his health and spirits required tranquillity, and the tender soothings of filial affection.

At the splendid mansion of don Emanuel di Torrismond the earl was most anxious to engage Oscar, for there the most polished society of Lisbon met, attracted by the

graces of don Emanuel's daughter and niece, whose beauty was the theme of universal praise; but neither the melting sensibility expressed in the dark oriental eyes of donna Ismena, Emanuel's heiress, nor the animated glances of the little wild Isabella, his niece, for a moment charmed the sorrows of Oscar, or made him forgetful of Cecilia, whose person was the perfection of loveliness, and whose attainments excelled the most accomplished maids of Portugal: yet in obedience to the wishes of his father, Oscar went frequently to don Emanuel's; he appeared to listen while donna Ismena sang or swept the strings of her lute, but his fancy, at those moments, recalled the lovely graceful figure of Cecilia, bending over the harp, and accompanying its tones with the rich warblings of her angel voice.

The heart of Oscar was dead to the fascinations of beauty; the world had lost its allurements, and he often meditated on retiring to the solitude of a cloister—"For where," said he, "can the wretch, whose desolated prospects and blighted wishes render society hateful, where can he seek consolation, but in the holy stillness of a monastery? There religion may subdue the agonies that an intercourse with the world increases—the tranquillity of the cloister may impart its quiet to my perturbed feelings, and I may become patient and submissive under the heavy chastisement of adversity."

When his intention of renouncing the world, and pronouncing the vows of a monk, was hinted to the earl, it threw him into such agonies, that fearful of becoming the destroyer of his father, Oscar solemnly promised to relinquish the idea.

"To become a monk" said the earl, "you must renounce the faith you were educated in—you must adopt new beliefs; have you considered this?"

"I believe," replied Oscar, "that the ceremonials of religion will neither forward or deter us on the road to heaven; the purity of our intentions, and the performance of our duties, will alone, according to my judgment, lead us to happiness."

"A monk," resumed the earl, "flies from the performance of his duties. Man was placed on earth to assist his fellowman—to—"

"Proceed no further," said Oscar; "I guess what you would say; but though I consent to mingle with the world, I shall never perform the duties allotted to man—I shall never be a husband or a father."

"Time," replied the earl, "will, I trust, change your present sentiments; time, my son, blunts the keen edge of affliction, and reconciles the mind to disappointment."

"Time may effect all this," returned Oscar, incredulously—"it may dull my memory—it may render my feelings torpid, but I am convinced it will never restore me that tranquil happiness, that innate peace, which was once mine."

The earl read the despondency of Oscar's thoughts in his countenance, and he proposed a visit to don Emanuel's, but Oscar excused himself—his mind was not disposed to bear the sentimental conversation of Ismena, or the badinage of the playful Isabella—he wished to enjoy, in solitude, the luxury of grief, to indulge in visions of the past, and sigh over departed happiness.

After many days of tedious suspense, letters arrived from the reverend Mr. Dacres, describing a fruitless journey to Paris, and several other places in France, celebrated by tourists and pleasure-hunters. Mr. Dacres had not obtained the least account of Cecilia, and concluded his letter with observing, if she was in France, he must have heard of her; but that he was now positively convinced that sir Cyril Musgrove had concealed her somewhere in England.

The letter of Mr. Dacres gave the earl a transient pleasure—"I am now satisfied," said he, "that Cecilia is innocent; the newspaper paragraphs, that so confidently spoke of her being at Paris with sir Cyril Musgrove, are proved to be scandals invented by some secret enemy."

"And that enemy," replied Oscar, his lips quivering, and his whole frame agitated, "that enemy is my mother; knowing my attachment, she has, by an artful scheme, decoyed the lovely girl from her friends, to prevent my contracting a marriage which did not accord with her ambitious views—she has barbarously invented scandals to destroy Cecilia's reputation, and prevent her return to the world. Yes, I am now fully convinced that the woman I blush to call my mother, holds the dear suffering angelic girl in confinement."

The earl acknowledged there was probability in the idea, but was at a loss to trace her route, and saw no possible means of ascertaining the fact, or liberating Cecilia.

"She is your daughter, my lord," returned Oscar, "and woe for me, she is my sister; humanity and duty call upon us to do our utmost to restore her to fame and happiness. I remember, before I left London, Mr. Drawley told me that he had been informed by a friend of major Norman's, that he had carried the wretched partner of his guilt to Naples; suffer me to go—I am persuaded I shall find Cecilia."

"We will both go," replied the earl; but as yet he was unable to undertake the fatigue of travelling; yet that no time might be lost, and to satisfy the impatient Oscar, he wrote to some persons high in rank and power at Naples, who would, he was certain, make every inquiry, and give him speedy intelligence.

Much as the mind and feelings of Oscar were at variance with amusements, he was constrained to join the unthinking throng, who make pleasure the business of their lives. A grand entertainment, given by the cardinal patriarch, had assembled all the youth and beauty of Naples at his palace, where various amusements were displayed, to enchant the senses, and call forth the graces and accomplishments of the company. The earl of Torrington had accepted the patriarch's invitation for himself and son. In magnificent costume they presented themselves at the palace, but to the woe-distempered Oscar, Pleasure offered her glittering bowl and waved her enchanted wand in vain; he saw not the glance of love shot from the dark melting eye of beauty, or the smile that dimpled round the rich coral lip of youthful gaiety; in a palace, decorated with a magnificence that spoke the wealth of the owner, surrounded by the fairest maids of Portugal, each eager to attract his notice, Oscar thought only of Cecilia; her image possessing his imagination, he was insensible to their attractions—his ears closed against the melody breathed from a full band of various instruments, and Cecilia confined, aspersed, and suffering, possessed his mind.

Perceiving the company about to form the dance, he moved to the lower end of the hall, where folding doors opened on a spacious lawn, intersected by groves of lemon and orange, which were now shedding their fragrant blossoms, white as snow, on the short smooth turf; the yellow moon sailed majestic over a deep blue sky, studded with innumerable glittering stars, and a soft breeze wafted the odour of the flowers on the throbbing temples of Oscar.

As he left the giddy, laughter-loving throng, incapable of joining in their mirth, or taking a part in the dance, the grove through which he unconsciously wandered led to the rocks that overlooked the harbour; here all was lonely and silent, for no sound met the

ear, save the murmur of the waves, as they stole in gentle undulations along the beach; the night was calm, and the white sails lying at anchor, reposed in the moonbeams. An angle in the road presented a little romantic spot, shadowed by a tall fantastic rock, which forcibly reminded the unhappy Oscar of that beneath whose beetling front he used to wait for Mrs. Doricourt's yacht, to waft him to love and Cecilia.

A thousand tender and painful recollections swelled the heart of Oscar; he drew from his bosom her ring, which he wore attached to a ribbon, and pressing it to his lips, exclaimed, in tones of anguish—"Lost! lost to me for ever!"

Stretched on the turf beneath the rock, for some time he watched the beautiful fire-flies, floating like living diamonds in the air, and listened to the rippling of the waves.—"Were Cecilia here," said he, with a heavy sigh, "how her taste would be gratified with this scene—those groves of orange and lemon, breathing fragrance on the air—those distant spires glittering in

'The silver light, that, hallowing tree and tower,  
Sheds beauty and deep softness o'er the whole.'

"These would call forth her admiration, they would afford subjects for her pencil; but to me they offer no charm, for the misery of my soul darkens every object, and renders me alike incapable of feeling, or delineating the beauties of nature; yet here all is tranquil—all is lovely; no sound of sorrow—no groans of anguish are heard, save those that burst from my bosom. Cecilia, beloved of my soul, in such nights as these we have wandered in the hallowed groves of St. Herbert's Island—we have gazed upon the stars—we have watched the brilliant course of the moon, and together adored the great Creator. We have spoke of our future prospects, and laid down plans of felicity that now are destroyed. Alas! yes, all our hours of bliss are vanished; we are separated, my adored, and all that remains for the miserable Oscar, is the remembrance, that his prospects were once bright and joyous, and the sad certainty that they are darkened for ever; yet surely I may gaze upon thy beauty—I may press thy hand—I may claim a brother's right. A brother's! no, no; the claim will not be admitted, for I am illegitimate—my birth stamped with disgrace—myself an impostor, set up as the earl of Torrington's heir, then branded with infamy, and stripped of my mock honours. Cecilia, we must meet no more—another shall call thee his—another shall enjoy thy smiles—shall possess the affection that once was mine; while I, forsaken, despised—madness would then be happiness; but where, Cecilia, where, my sister, art thou confined? The honours and wealth that once glittered round thy betrothed Oscar are now thine, and the selected of thy heart is debased, degraded; Oscar, the base-born son of thy father, is become the scoff of fools, the scorn of pride, and, oh, affliction harder to be borne than all the rest! thy love, that formed the joy of my existence, must no more be indulged—Cecilia, to whom my heart clung with all the fervour of affection, is, alas! my sister."

Starting wildly from his stony couch, with eyes bent on the earth, Oscar hurried forward; the past, the present, and the future, occupied his burning brain, and, heedless of the path he had taken, or the distance at which he was leaving Lisbon, he paused not till he had gained the centre of a forest; fatigue now restored him to recollection, he gazed round him as if newly awakened from a dream; on every side he was surrounded with thick woven trees, and various paths, intersecting each other, presented themselves in

every direction; to retrace his way appeared impossible, as he had not remarked a single object that might assist his recollection to regain the road to Lisbon.—“I can die here,” sad Oscar, sinking to the earth; “my erring father will regret me, but the disgrace of my birth will be buried with me, and all uneasiness on my account will be forgotten in my grave; and when the gentle Cecilia learns the fate of him she once loved, she will embalm my memory with her tears; but joy shall revive in the bosom of Cecilia, when the turf covers the remains of the miserable heart-broken Oscar.”

A chilling torpor stole on the senses of the unhappy youth, as, unable to support himself, his head sunk on the root of a wide-spreading chestnut.

The earl of Torrington left the patriarch’s palace at an early hour, and retired to rest, as was his custom, pleased with the supposition that his son had been prevailed upon to join the dancers in the ball-room; but when morning came, and he learned from his attendants that he had not yet returned home, a thousand apprehensions seized his imagination: inquiries were made at every place where the earl visited, but without gaining any intelligence. Many of their friends had seen lord Rushdale at the patriarch’s palace in the early part of the evening, but none afterwards.

The day past, and no tidings arriving, the almost-frantic father believed that the unhappy despairing Oscar had terminated his own existence. The dreadful idea of suicide was too horrible for endurance, and too feeble, from recent illness, to combat this shock, the earl of Torrington was again confined to a sickbed, from which, in the bitterness of sorrow, he prayed that he might never more arise. To his particular friend, the earl of Portland, then resident at Lisbon, lord Torrington expressed, without reserve, his fear, that the distracted Oscar had deprived himself of life; an idea which was fearfully confirmed by his handkerchief being found on the projection of a rock that overhung the sea.

Within the mansion of the earl of Torrington all was gloom, horror, and grief, the domestics, his own valet excepted, believing that their young lord had destroyed himself; but he persisted in the opinion that his master was too pious and too good to commit such a wicked act, though he had troubles enough to turn his brain.

The sun had just risen, and was darting his golden beams through the thick tangled branches of the forest, when a young peasant, driving a mule before him, which he was cursing in a language half English and half Portuguese, arrived at the spot where Oscar lay extended, and to all appearance dead. The richness of his habit convinced the peasant that he was a grandee; and he stood for a moment, gaping and wondering how he came there without attendants; the notion then struck him, that he had been robbed and murdered; but the ornaments about his dress contradicted the idea of his having been robbed, and soon a groan, and convulsive catchings of his limbs, convinced the astonished peasant that he lived. Stooping down, he endeavoured to raise him from the earth; but finding his strength inadequate to the task, he hastened home to call assistance.

The peasant’s mother, an Englishwoman, and his father, a Portuguese, hurried to the forest, and soon bore the insensible Oscar to a neat pleasant cabin, on the sunny side of a mountain, where industry had raised a blooming garden, and vineyard of the choicest grapes of Portugal.

Having prepared a clean though homely pallet, Suzette laid the burning head of Oscar on a pillow, and hastened to brew for him a posset of herbs, which she knew were

efficacious in fevers; and that the stranger had a fever was certain, from his parched lips and burning palms.

Lopez, her husband, was going to the convent, two leagues distant, to fetch father Juan; but this humane intention Suzette strongly opposed, declaring herself certain that the young gentleman would do well. The truth was, Suzette hated monks, and father Juan in particular, for he had more than once called her a heretic, and said she would never reach heaven, unless she adjured her Protestant errors, and embraced the Catholic faith. Suzette disliked father Juan's doctrine, and, determined against fasting and mortification, chose to go to heaven her own way, in spite of the fryings, burnings, roastings, and broilings, with which he threatened her heresy.

Three days elapsed before the fever-posset of Suzette evinced its virtues, by making Oscar sensible of his situation; and when he had regained the power of reasoning, he was too weak to inquire how he came to the cabin, or to direct the humane peasants to relieve the anxiety of his father with a knowledge of his safety and existence.

Another day passed, and having taken a little goat's milk, he inquired how far he was from Lisbon? being answered, he asked if he could be supplied with writing materials? There was nothing of the sort to be had nearer than the Franciscan convent, two leagues distant.

Oscar recollected he had a pencil about him; tearing a leaf from his pocketbook, he wrote a hasty assurance of his safety to his father. He then folded the paper, and giving it to the son of Suzette, directed him to the mansion of the earl of Torrington at Lisbon.

Suzette said it was many long years since she left England, but she remembered to have heard of the earl of Torrington—"You, sir," continued she, "I suppose, are his son?"

Oscar replied in the affirmative.

"And lady Torrington," resumed Suzette; "she was called a great beauty—is she alive?"

"The countess of Torrington," replied Oscar, "is dead;" thinking, at that moment, of the lovely unfortunate Edith.

"Dead!" repeated Suzette; "why bless me! she was but young; but, to be sure, death spares neither young nor old. Pray, young gentleman, had she any children besides you?"

"Yes," replied Oscar, "lady Torrington had a daughter."

"A daughter!" said Suzette; "I am very glad she had not a son."

"You are glad!" returned Oscar—"why what difference, my good woman, could the sex of lady Torrington's children make to you?"

"None in the world," said Suzette, quitting the cabin.

Oscar thought her inquiries strange; but she was an Englishwoman, and any thing relative to a family she had known in her youth might be interesting.

With languid eyes, Oscar beheld the rays of the setting sun gild the brow of the mountain, and tinge the western horizon with rich shades of purple and crimson—he heard the industrious peasants cheerfully singing as they returned from the labours of the day.

A young girl, the daughter of a neighbouring peasant, entered the cabin soon after sunset, and inquired for Lopez?

"He is gone to Lisbon," replied Suzette, "and will not be back before midnight."

The young girl's countenance was instantly clouded.—“It was very odd,” replied she, “that he should go without telling me; and very unlucky that he went this evening at all, for my father has at last consented that Inis shall marry Pedro, and we thought to make merry on the occasion, and have a moonlight dance in the lime grove; but no one hereabouts can play the piquedilla except Lopez, so there is an end of our evening's merriment.”

“Happy peasants!” exclaimed Oscar, as Suzette and the young girl left the cabin together, “happy Lopez! thou art beloved, and it is thy absence, not the loss of a moonlight dance, that will spoil the evening's merriment. How blest should I have passed my life in this seclusion, had Cecilia shared my cabin! but destiny has placed an insurmountable bar between us. With some more fortunate youth she may experience the felicity of connubial love, but I shall remain lonely and wretched during life, for never can another female interest the heart that adores her with an unconquerable though hopeless passion.”

Oscar had expressed an intention of sitting up to wait the return of Lopez from Lisbon; but weakness and fatigue opposing his wish, he was obliged to seek repose on his humble pallet; weariness soon lulled his senses, and he enjoyed a calm refreshing sleep, that lasted till morning.

On opening his eyes, he beheld, to his great astonishment, his friend Drawley sitting beside his couch, watching his slumbers. The surprise and joy of this unexpected meeting having given way to inquiries for his father, Oscar learned that grief and terror on his account had occasioned a relapse, and that the earl of Torrington was again confined to his chamber.—“But the happy intelligence brought by the young peasant last night will do more for the recovery of his health,” said Drawley, “than all the prescriptions of his physicians; the earl, I am satisfied, will do well; and all we have at present to think of is removing you to the Franciscan convent, where you can be accommodated till you are able to return to Lisbon. You can be carried by a relay of peasants, for no carriage can reach this mountainous spot.”

“I am perfectly satisfied, and will remain here,” replied Oscar, “till I am able to mount a mule. In this little cabin I have met kindness, hospitality, and attention; and though my food is not luxurious, it is wholesome, and my coarse pallet is clean and comfortable. Remember I am no longer the heir of Torrington; and it is necessary that I should accommodate my wants and my desires to my depressed fortunes.”

Mr. Drawley warmly remonstrated, but finding Oscar determined to remain at the vineyard cabin, he ceased to urge his removal to the Franciscan convent.

Suzette, with matronly tenderness, assisted to bear the invalid to the shelter of a mulberry-tree, where, with his friend Drawley, he partook of a breakfast of milk, cakes, and fruit.

Drawley declared he had never ate so delicious a meal.—“The tranquillity of this pleasant spot,” said he, “and the cheerful contentment that seems to glow in the faces of these kind-hearted people, would almost tempt one to resign pride, vanity, and pomp, and turn peasant.”

Suzette having removed the remains of the breakfast, Oscar expressed a curiosity to know what had brought his friend to Lisbon?

“The duchess of Aberdeen’s health, being prescribed a change of climate,” replied Drawley. “Lady Arabella, knowing how anxious I felt on your account, kindly persuaded her mother to take a voyage to Lisbon.”

“Amiable, generous lady Arabella!” exclaimed Oscar; “her loveliness is her least perfection.”

“Come, come, my friend,” returned Drawley, “be less ardent in your praises, or I shall grow jealous. A young handsome man, recovering from illness, is a very interesting object, and my wife—”

“Your wife!” interrupted Oscar.

“Even so, my friend,” replied Drawley; “and I marvel much you did not read married man in the gravity of my countenance. I have exchanged for the white hand of Arabella all my whims, follies, and eccentricities, and solemnly vowed to be her loving husband, till death shall us part.”

“I give you joy with all my soul,” said Oscar; “may you never experience an abatement of your present felicity!”

“Thank you, thank you!” returned Drawley; “you will also have to give lord Alwyn Bruce joy on a similar occasion, for he has taken Miss Sedgeley to wife, in spite of all his sister could urge respecting their family being royally descended, and the mortifying degradation of unequal alliances.”

“Miss Sedgeley’s amiable qualities,” said Oscar, “will soon reconcile lady Jane Bruce to her want of rank.”

“Your lively little favourite, Jessy Graham,” continued Mr. Drawley, “has persuaded sir Middleton Maxfield to put on matrimonial fetters.”

“And Miss Macdonald?” asked Oscar.

“Still studies Grecian attitudes and antique draperies,” replied Drawley; “the marriage of lord Alwyn Bruce was a terrible disappointment; the *Chronique Scandaleuse* said she had strangled herself in a fit of jealousy, with lord Alwyn’s military sash; but in utter contradiction of this report, she officiated, a few days after, as one of her cousin Jessy’s bridesmaids, in costume *à la Euphrosyne*, and is now trying all her graceful attitudes to win the classical lord Belgrave. But, my good friend, you must prepare to receive a visit from the new-married folks, for after my report of your convalescence, you may depend that nothing will prevent their coming hither.”

“Are they at Lisbon?” asked Oscar.

“They are,” replied Drawley, “and impatient to see you.”

“They do me honour,” said Oscar, a faint blush colouring his pale cheek as he recollected his illegitimacy.

“Honour—nonsense!” returned Drawley; “they will do themselves pleasure and honour; and Arabella, who is so partial to the country, will be delighted with this hilly region.”

“It is indeed a charming spot,” said Oscar; “and if happiness were to be found on earth, one might expect to meet it in this place, where, remote from the contagion of cities, and removed from temptation to vice—”

“Hold there!” interrupted Drawley, pointing to a young girl at a distance, who was laughing as she ran from the pursuit of a peasant—“don’t speak of being removed from temptation, when these olive-coloured beauties continually cross your path.”

“To me,” said Oscar, with a sigh, “they offer no temptation. You have not mentioned Cecilia, and your silence assures me you have obtained no information on that distressing subject.”

“The fate of Cecilia is still involved in mystery,” replied Mr. Drawley; “I have heard nothing.”

A deeper shade of melancholy fell on the countenance of Oscar; and Drawley, unwilling to encourage the regret and distress of his friend, began to describe, in his own ludicrous way, the sickness of his companions, their unfounded terrors, and all the incidents that had attended their voyage from England, to the moment of their casting anchor at Lisbon.

END OF VOL. IV.