

SUBSTANCE AND SHADOW;
OR, THE
FISHERMAN'S DAUGHTERS OF BRIGHTON.

A Patchwork Story.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

BY THE AUTHOR OF LIGHT AND SHADE; EVERSFIELD ABBEY;

BANKS OF THE WYE; AUNT AND NIECE, &c. &c.

The first in native dignity surpass'd—
Artless and unadorn'd she pleas'd the more;

The other dame seem'd e'en of fairer hue,
Fat bold her mien, unguarded mov'd her eye.

VOL. I.

LONDON:

PRINTED AT THE

MINERVA PRESS,

FOR A. K. NEWMAN AND CO.

LEADENHALL-STREET.

1812.

SUBSTANCE AND SHADOW.

CHAP. I.

—————The sea,
Various and vast, sublime in all its forms,
When lull'd by zephyrs, or when rous'd by storms.

.....
I see them not! the storm alone I hear!

CRABBE'S BOROUGH.

IT was in the autumn of 17—, the day had been very hot and sultry, and the sun had set amongst heavy and portentous clouds, thunder muttered at a distance, and the melancholy notes of the sea-birds, as they wheeled in hasty circuits round the rocks, indicated the near approach of a storm; the gay throng who had so lately crowded on the Steine at Brighton, now hastened to their temporary homes, or to their evening parties, all but a few stragglers, who were still on the beach, and who seemed to watch the storm, some with abstracted, some with anxious eyes. Two females were accidentally standing near each other, and steadily contemplating the scene; the wind was rapidly rising, and howled responsively to the turbulent billows; though the sun had set, there was light sufficient to distinguish objects accurately, and the whole expanse of water became at intervals brilliantly illuminated by the vivid lightning which played on its surface. One of the ladies appeared about twenty-six years of age, her features were interesting, and her countenance had a mingled expression of softness, sensibility, and discernment, which instantaneously impressed the beholder with an idea of feeling and good sense; she was habited in a genteel but plain style; and intently watching the approach of the storm, she scarcely perceived that she had a companion, though they were gradually getting nearer to each other, and almost to the water's edge. The other lady was scarcely twenty; her form was strikingly elegant, and it was fully displayed by her dress, which was fanciful; with one arm she held the corner of a long azure scarf, which flitted in the wind; her dark hair streamed about her shoulders in unstudied negligence; she had no covering on her head; and, as if in fearful contemplation of the elements, she would frequently clasp her hands together, or waive them in the air, as with an emotion, which, however, appeared the natural movement of her mind, she cried —“Grand! awfully sublime! oh, what sight was ever equal to this! this is tremendously magnificent! don't you think so?” and she clasped the hand of her next neighbour with vehement earnestness, as the liquid lightning which illuminated the scene was momentarily succeeded by a loud peal of thunder.

The countenance of the speaker, as she made the interrogatory, seemed to have caught some of the ethereal brightness of the passing lightning; all enthusiastic admiration, she still held the arm of the person whom she had addressed—“It is indeed a fearful storm,” said she, “and I am standing here with no little anxiety, for the fate of a poor couple, who went out in a boat this afternoon; the man is a fisher, who maintains himself by means of his little boat, and I have frequently witnessed the patient docility with which his wife has followed him in this arduous and dangerous employ. I happened to observe them as they embarked; they have been gone a

much longer time than is their custom, and I have heard the fishermen on the beach expressing their apprehensions; it is impossible to put off a boat to their assistance, and—”

At this moment the voice of the speaker was entirely lost in a heavy and tremendous peal of thunder; it was instantaneously succeeded by rain, which fell in sheets. Hastily loosing her arm from the grasp of the stranger, Mrs. Elwyn, (for so we shall call her) moved towards the town, saying—“We can do no good by staying here; I think we had better seek our respective habitations.”

“There is something which suits the frame of my mind in this scene,” replied the lady, her dark hair streaming in the torrent which poured on her defenceless head; “I never witnessed such an imposing spectacle before—adieu!” and spreading her right hand on her breast, as if to retain her scarf, with the other she supported herself against the wall, which was washed by the sea, and looked like the genius of the ocean, risen from her watery bed, and invoking the storm. Surprise at the extraordinary manner and strange appearance of this unknown, was quelled in the benevolent bosom of Mrs. Elwyn, by her solicitude for the fate of the poor fishers; and as she sat in her room, still seeing the vivid lightning, still hearing the lengthened peals of thunder, the raging billows, and the roaring wind, she put up a fervent petition for the safety of the honest pair, who, though far removed from her sphere of life, and of whose names she was in ignorance, she yet considered as her fellow-creatures, and equally the care of an almighty and an all-wise Being!

CHAP. II.

Happy he sail'd, and great the care she took,
That he should softly sleep, and smartly look;
White was his better linen, and his check
Was made more trim than any on the deck.

CRABBE'S BOROUGH.

THE storm of the night was succeeded by a calm morning; the sun smiled, as if in mockery of the devastation of the tempest; houses were nearly unroofed—boats were drifted from their moorings—vessels were loosened from their anchors, their rigging and sails shattered and dismantled—the bathing-machines had felt the fury of the contending elements, and were moved from their stations; and though the spirit of the tempest was quelled, yet old ocean was not so soon appeased, but heaved and foamed, as if with labouring sobs it would have told the dismal history of the storm.

The Steine exhibited a busy and bustling scene; fishermen were hasting to see that their nets and tackling were safe—sailors were busy in righting their ships—the bathing-women were preparing their machines. Mrs. Elwyn was the first female of genteel appearance who ventured forth; she hurried to the beach; alas! the fate of the poor objects of her solicitous commiseration was decided; their boat had been drifted to the shore, without oars, shattered, and a wreck, and with every returning wave the bodies of its owners were fearfully expected.

A deep sigh issued from Mrs. Elwyn's bosom, as she turned from the beach; she had no spirits to lengthen her walk, but with dull and languid step she returned to her lodgings.—“How buoyant with hope, how vigorous in health, how elastic in spirits, did those poor creatures embark on the treacherous ocean but yesterday!” sighed she; “ignorant, frail, and short-sighted beings that we are! how soon are hope, health, and spirits immersed for ever in a cold and watery grave! no, not for ever!” and her step became firmer; “hope and immortal health *for ever* bloom in paradise. Oh, God of mercy and of love! into thy haven of eternal rest receive these ship-wrecked mariners.”

Anxious to know something further relative to this unfortunate couple, Mrs. Elwyn soon obtained a direction to their late residence; it was a neat but humble cabin, near the seaside, about a mile from the town. A woman, between fifty and sixty years of age, was sitting by a fire, and rocking a cradle, which contained two sleeping infants. Mrs. Elwyn spoke to the woman in a voice of eager inquiry—“Whose are these children?”

“Oh, madam! what, you have not heard then that these two dear babies have lost both father and mother since yesternoon; poor babies, worse luck for 'em!”

Mrs. Elwyn's eyes filled with tears—“Poor infants!” cried she, as she hung over them.

“Aye, poor things,” returned the old woman; “I little thought when Kitty Ellis sent for me yesterday, to take care of 'em, that I should never see more; and here I tossed up a bit of supper for James and she, and I put it all in order, and I waited, and waited, and between every clap of thunder I listened for James's whistle, for he was a main man for singing and whistling on shore; but law bless us all, I could hear nothing for the roaring of the waves. 'twas past twelve o'clock before I lighted the candle; I saw a winding-sheet in it within two minutes, and that I know'd to be a baddish sort of a sign; I could have lain a good wager that I should never see 'em more, after my eyes lighted on that ugly sight—oh, 'twas a sure token!”

“Are you a relation of these poor babes?” asked Mrs. Elwyn, still looking with compassion into the cradle.

“Oh dear, no, madam,” said the old woman, “in all the *varsal* world, these babies have now no kin or kindred but God. The parish must see to ‘em now, and I be only waiting for one of the overseers to come along, to know what ‘tis best to do; for ‘tishn’t to be supposed, or expected, as I can leave my own business to attend to they for nothing, you know, madam, though I love ‘em ever so.”

“Was the poor fisherman born in this place?”

“Law, to be sure, madam, he was, in this very house too, for aught I know to the contrary; his father followed the same calling as this James; he came from Worthing, I have heard tell, and so he married, and got this boy; and when father and mother died, why James he must be marrying too belike, and so he took up with Kitty; Kitty was a love-child, as was laid at somebody’s door here in Brighton. Folks *did* say that the saddle was put on the right horse’s back; howsomdever this child was sent to the parish—the great lord or squire, or what he was, set off; and Kitty was a decent sort of girl enough, considering her breeding up, with nobody to care for her, or after her, as it were; and so the long and the short of the matter was, that she was glad enough to marry with James Ellis. Poor girl, she had not been put to bed of these two babies more than six weeks, and such a young thing ‘twas, and looking so delicate, for she was but about of seventeen years old; and I said to her yesterday—‘Kitty,’ says I, ‘‘tis early times, child, for you to venture into the water and the wet.’ ‘Molly,’ says she, ‘James has been all alone with nobody but his own self a longful time, and I am very hearty now,’ says she; ‘you mind the dear babies, and I’ll take care of myself;’ and then she suckled ‘em, she did, and she kissed ‘em both *three* times—yes, I have minded since as ‘twas *three* times; and she flinged a net over her shoulder, and a basket upon her arm, and away she went.”

Many were the conflicting emotions which disturbed the peaceful breast of Mrs. Elwyn, as she listened to this recital; she wished to do something for the benefit of these poor orphans; but she was accustomed to reflect before she made a decision; and careful of not betraying her secret wishes to the old woman, she remained in silent meditation, when the door of the cottage was opened, and the stranger, whom she had seen on the beach the preceding evening, dressed in the same fanciful manner, with the addition of a long white veil, which, covering her head, descended in floating drapery almost to the ground, entered the house, and throwing herself on her knees at the side of the cradle, bent over it, and, as if careless of being observed, gave way to the most tumultuous emotions and affecting exclamations; she called them “poor forlorn innocents! helpless interesting orphans! tenders blossoms of misfortune! early victims of sorrow!” and that her feelings were in unison with her expressions was obvious, as the large tears fell in torrents from her lovely eyes.

“Do you know this lady?” whispered Mrs. Elwyn to the old woman, and retiring to the further end of the cottage.

“No, I never *seed* she in my whole life before,” answered the dame; and then pointing, with a look of significancy, to her forehead, she said—“but law, any body can see with half an eye what ‘tis as is the matter with she.”

Mrs. Elwyn did not think exactly with her informant; she allowed that there was something surprisingly eccentric about the stranger, but she knew that *romance* and *enthusiasm* were the leading features of the day, and that those feelings were nurtured and indulged, at the hazard of running counter to all the forms and usages of society, and the *good old way* in which she had been taught to walk.

One of the babes awakening from its slumber, and unconsciously stretching out its feeble arms, the lady started up, and catching it to her bosom, cried—“And shall you implore in vain? no, helpless being, here shall you have your shelter ever!”

“Law, madam, do not please to take up the child; may be as she’ll hurt your fine clothes,” said the old woman.

The lady looked with silent contempt at the cautioner, and turning towards Mrs. Elwyn, she said—“Should I not be worse than a barbarian not to claim her as my own? *you* who *first* called forth my feelings for the fate of the poor *lost* ones, tell me?”

“This is a case of pitiable distress, and no common interest,” answered Mrs. Elwyn, “and I think some means may be adopted to preserve these infants from a parish workhouse.”

The stranger almost shrieked at the name of workhouse, and held the child yet closer to her bosom.

Several persons, attracted by compassion or curiosity, on hearing the event of the preceding night, now gathered round the cottage, to make inquiries, and to look at the twin-sisters. The lady still held the babe, unmindful of the observations of the surrounding spectators, and by turns apostrophized, caressed, and bathed it with her tears.

A subscription was readily made to secure the attendance of the old woman, and to prevent the infants from being taken immediately to the poor-house; but the stranger started up, and putting five guineas into the hand of the old woman, she said—“I do not *yield* my treasure; she clings to me for protection, and she shall have it!” and hastily quitting the house with the infant in her arms, with sylph-like swiftness she moved along the shore.

“Who is she?” was the general inquiry; no one could answer it.

“She seems to have a *particular* interest in *that* child,” said a sagacious virgin of fifty; “else why not have taken *both*?”

“They are equal objects of pity, certainly,” said Mrs. Elwyn, her kind heart yearning towards the remaining babe.

“She must be *followed*,” said a gentleman, who was in the habit of acting as a country justice; “for she must give proper security to the parish for the maintenance of the child.”

“No, no, it wouldn’t do for her to become troublesome to the parish *hereafter*,” said a man who kept a lodging-house on the Steine, and who did not like the idea of an increase in the poor-rates. “The chances are ten to one against its *living*, if ‘twas sent to the workhouse *now*. No, no, the parish must have security;” and off he strided after the lovely enthusiast.

“And now then we shall know who she is,” said a maiden gentlewoman, lineally descended from mother Eve.

“She has been here a week; she discharged the servants who came with her, and has hired others, it seems; but she always walks about alone, and at all times, and at all seasons; and then she dresses so queerly; oh, there is certainly something vastly odd about her!”

As if by general consent, the company now moved off, except Mrs. Elwyn, who still cast a lingering look towards the sleeping infant; the unfeeling speech of the lodging-house man had pierced her heart, and as she quitted the cottage, she said—“Do not suffer that child to go to the workhouse till you hear again from me; in the mean time, try to get a wet-nurse for it, and for your care and attention I will reward you. Here is my address,” putting a card into the hand of the old woman, who, curtsying to the ground, was almost overwhelmed by the strange occurrences of the morning, and began to think it was a lucky chance for the twins that their parents had met with a watery grave.

CHAP. III.

—She, frail offspring of an April morn,
Poor helpless passenger from love to scorn.

MISS AIKIN.

LEFT an orphan at an early age, the care of Clara Elwyn had devolved to a paternal uncle; his wife was a worthy woman, who zealously fulfilled the part of a mother and an instructress; and the ductile mind of her niece was early imbued with the principles of religion and virtue; her uncle was equally careful of her pecuniary interests; and at the age of twenty-one she became the nominal mistress of two thousands per annum; we say *nominal* mistress, because it had long been designed for her cousin, Henry Elwyn, by her *prudent* uncle. Miss Elwyn had nothing to object to this arrangement; she had from infancy associated with Henry Elwyn; it was highly natural for her uncle to covet such an alliance for his only son, and to retain so large a fortune in the family.

The Elwyn estates were entailed, and in case she had died before she came of age, or in the event of her forming another connexion, and dying without children, her cousin Henry would have inherited them; and under these considerations, she almost felt it an act of justice to fulfil her uncle's wishes. There was not an individual in the world whom she preferred to Harry Elwyn, and he had always treated her with affectionate regard.

Clara had lived in retirement with her uncle and aunt, and had seen little of mankind; her uncle had been averse to her entering into the gay world (as it is called); and cheerful and contented in disposition, fond of intellectual pursuits, and feminine avocations, she was well contented to remain with them. Yet she had a heart eminently formed to partake in all the delights of relative intercourse and domestic happiness; and she frequently wished, as the period approached when she had engaged to give her hand to Elwyn, that he were more stationary under his father's roof, but for the last twelve months his absences had been very frequent, and much protracted. Clara allowed it was natural for a young man, in the zenith of life, and blessed with every thing which could make that life appear enchanting, to be fond of mixed circles, of excursions to the metropolis, and of (what are termed) the pleasures of society; but if his *heart* were in the country, would he not feel a tasteless apathy in the pursuit, and hasten with more avidity, and double animation, to his affianced bride? This was not the case, and those conversations which immediately preceded their marriage, and which might have been supposed to have contained much confidential communication, much cheerful anticipation, and many schemes of youthful ardour, were constrained and confused on the part of Elwyn, and ill calculated to diffuse serenity and confidence on the part of his cousin; yet she blamed herself for remarking his behaviour; she fancied that she had suffered her imagination to take the lead, and that she was too romantic and too fastidious in expecting such unlimited and such unrestrained attention. The happiness of her uncle and of her aunt depended on her union with their son; her uncle had never had more than a younger brother's fortune, and his generous disposition had prevented him from providing for his son according to his wishes; it became then her *duty* to give her hand to her cousin, and she hoped that this union would secure their mutual happiness.

The cousins were united, and the strictest propriety and civility marked the conduct of Mr. Elwyn towards his lady.

During the first eighteen months subsequent to their marriage, the time of the youthful bride was almost exclusively devoted to the parents of her husband; at the end of that period they had both paid the debt of nature; and though the melancholy scenes she had witnessed had tinged the countenance of Mrs. Elwyn with a pensive expression, yet the consciousness of having performed her duty afforded her much comfort; her cares and her attentions would from henceforth entirely devolve on her husband; and she looked with a sanguine eye through a long perspective of domestic happiness, which, through the favour of Heaven, she hoped to enjoy. Alas! she was doomed, like millions who had gone before her, to experience the vanity of human wishes! and yet to common observers, what was there wanting to felicity?

The house to which, on the demise of Elwyn's parents, he removed with his wife, was built on her paternal estate, and situated in one of the pleasantest, the richest, and the most populous parts of Gloucestershire. The mansion was spacious, commodious, and elegant; the Elwyn family had for centuries been held in general respect; hence the neighbourhood united in shewing attention and civility to our young couple, who moved in that rank of life, which, while it lifted them above the vulgar herd, enabled them to keep in the happy sphere of social enjoyment, and did not set them apart from their fellow men, in the solitary gloom of superior eminence. It was the very sphere where Mrs. Elwyn was peculiarly calculated to shine; and as the unassuming equal, and the kind and unostentatious benefactress, she was soon estimated according to her worth.

The discernment and anxious scrutiny of Clara too soon enabled her to perceive, that where she would have sought the fond confiding friend, she found the cold and heartless husband. Nothing could be more obliging or more attentive than the manner and behaviour of Elwyn, yet nothing could be farther removed from that connubial tenderness, which is better felt than described. In any plan of benefiting the tenantry or the poor, which the active mind of Clara suggested, his instant concurrence was obtained; but it seemed as if he took no share in it, as if his heart entered into no scheme of hers; and frequently was her generous, her disinterested spirit, mortified by the seeming implication which his manner conveyed, that it was *her* fortune, and she had a right to dispose of it without his voice.

"Ah," thought Clara, "why not *ours*? Oh Elwyn, Elwyn, you know not how the very existence of Clara was blended with that of thine, when she became a wife! *I* can have no divided interest!"

Mrs. Elwyn had a great mind, and though endued with much sensibility, yet that softer feeling of her nature had been corrected and restrained by a proper sense of religion. The most undeviating, the most uncomplaining sweetness, marked her whole deportment towards her husband; his smile of formal complaisance was always answered by one of affection from her, his courteous speech returned warm from the heart; if he seemed melancholy, she tried every art to enliven him, without appearing to have noticed it; if she failed, and he retired (which was not unusual) to the solitude of his library, she forbore to intrude upon his privacy; but by immediate and active employment, tried to dissipate her own unpleasant retrospections and anticipations. When Elwyn received letters, she never seemed anxious to gain a knowledge of their contents; if he pleaded business and quitted home, she never asked the nature of it, but anxiously awaited his return, and received him with smiles, which often shone through tears, bright as the crystal showers of April.

If we should say that Mrs. Elwyn had no painful curiosity on the subject of Elwyn's strange and mysterious reserves, we should be accused (and with great justice too) of drawing an Utopian character; that she *had* was certain; but gloomy suspicion never gained an interest in her

pure and liberal mind. She remembered Harry Elwyn when a boy, gay, ingenuous, and open; she saw and lamented the change, and willing to divine the cause, and after the minutest scrutiny, unable to lay any fault to her own charge, in her conduct and deportment towards a husband whom she loved (in the midst of all his reserves, of all his concealments), with warm affection, she at length resolved it into his anxiety for a family, and in consequence her own wishes of becoming a parent were doubly sanguine.

Poor Clara forgot (or *tried* to forget) that the gloomy reserve of Elwyn had taken place prior to his marriage, and that when he led her to the hymeneal altar a blooming blushing bride, his countenance had exhibited more of the character of a devoted victim than of a triumphant bridegroom; but the bloom of Clara's cheek was faded, the roundness of her form was wasted, she had no prospect of presenting her husband with an instant cement of affection, and her health evidently declined.

In compliance with the advice of her physician, she had for several successive summers journeyed to the sea; Mr. Elwyn had been eager for the adoption of this plan, had been strenuous in persuading her to go, but he had invariably pleaded business; and after escorting her, with great attention and care, to some watering-place, and seen her settled in lodgings, he had quitted her.

Mrs. Elwyn's letters to her husband during these (on her part) forced separations, had been written in a style of confidential freedom; she had no reserves with him, and she communicated all she saw, and all she thought; and having a lively imagination, and being gifted with a facility of expression, her letters were calculated to give pleasure and satisfaction even to an indifferent reader; by Mr. Elwyn they were regularly *answered*.

In his manner of addressing his wife, there appeared a mixture of respectful politeness and gallantry; in answer to her communications, he always told her of the journeys he had been taking; but of the people whom he had seen, and of the incidents which had taken place, he was wholly silent.

The knowledge of acting in conformity with principle, duty, and religion, will support the mind when every earthly hope fails; but human nature will ebb, and recoil back on itself, in sustaining such a conflict as that which had so long torn the mind of Mrs. Elwyn.

She now almost despaired of ever possessing her husband's confidence, or of experiencing that connubial happiness on which her early visions fondly floated; and she now turned towards the idea of a child, whose infantile caresses might fill the void in her heart, and brighten her future days with the pure enjoyment of maternal tenderness; but this wish had been denied to her; and in worse health than she had ever known, she had sought Brighthelmstone for the fourth summer, when we introduced her to our readers, standing on the beach, and so anxiously feeling for two fellow-beings whom she knew to be in danger.

CHAP. IV.

Careless and cold, he views the beauteous mind,
For virtue, bliss, *eternity* design'd.

MISS AIKIN.

RETURNING from the cottage so recently inhabited by the poor fisherman to her own lodgings, Mrs. Elwyn revolved over the idea of taking the remaining orphan under her protection. Surely it would be an act of benevolence, and pleasing to the Most High; at the same time that it would afford the supremest gratification to her own heart; her fortune was amply sufficient to enable her to follow the dictates of her generosity; but she did not consider it as her own; she had never considered or used it as such, since she had become a wife; and she sat down to ask her husband's sanction and concurrence, ere she ventured a step further in the business.

"Alas!" sighed the tearful Clara, "the worst of it is, this will be a mere form; I shall receive from Elwyn a tame concurrence; he will sanction every wish, he will conform to every proposition that I shall make; I never yet could be assured that I got the assent of his judgment, or the concurrence of his heart."

After simply, but affectingly detailing the direful tempest of the preceding night, and naturally blending with it a description of her own feelings, at learning the untimely and disastrous fate of the young couple, for whom she had been so painfully interested, she recounted her visit to the cabin which contained the hapless little orphans, together with the immediate adoption of one of them by the strange lady. She thus continued—"My dear Elwyn will have guessed my wishes by the length of this detail, yet while I fearlessly avow them, I await his decision. I confess it would be to me a most grateful office to become the protectress of this poor babe, and, in some sort, to be to her a parent. Yet, mistake me not; I do not mean to adopt her into your family, or foolishly to squander your fortune; if I take her under my care, I will do my duty by *her*, and forget not what I owe to *myself*. If Providence blesses my endeavours, and she turns out a tractable and well-disposed child, I may have the satisfaction of introducing a useful member to society. Pray tell me, my dear husband, what you think of my plan; for be assured, that my enthusiasm in the cause of this desolate babe would all be quelled, were you to start the shadow of an objection, while it would glow with double fervour if it met with your approval."

Such was part of the letter, which was thus answered by Mr. Elwyn:—

Elwyn Hall, August 10.

"MY DEAR MADAM,

"I am hurt that you should think it necessary to apply for my assent, in following the pure dictates of your benevolent heart. Never have I yet opposed your wishes, and in this case, *surely* I must be the most unfeeling of men to start an objection. You have an ample fortune, and in permitting me to share it with you, I hope you will never find that I wish to lay any embargo on your liberal spirit. On the present occasion, we seem to be actuated by similar feelings; for, strange as it may appear, just at the moment when I had the favour of your letter, I was meditating an address to you on the subject of a little stranger, whom I am about to ask your permission to introduce to Elwyn Hall. Many persons in my situation would hesitate to ask such

a boon, but I have too long experienced the disinterestedness of my dear friend, to hesitate on the present occasion. My friend Belford is dead, and a boy of about six years of age pleads for my protection. I cannot resist the appeal, and our mutual feelings must be our mutual excuse, for the introduction of our respective *protégées*. Our circle will be enlarged by their appearance amongst us, and our enjoyments will be enlarged also. Whether we call them children of our adoption, or by whatever name they may be distinguished, yet if they grow round our hearts, and become part of our very selves, who shall condemn us, or term it squandering a fortune to let them share it with us? Be assured, my dearest madam, that I shall receive great satisfaction in seeing you return to the Hall, accompanied by your little foundling; and, feeling assured of your permission for so doing, I shall appear to greet your arrival with Harry Belford in my hand.

“With most cordial wishes for the entire re-establishment of your valuable health, believe me to remain, with unfeigned regard,

“Your much obliged friend,
“HENRY ELWYN.”

Several combining emotions were felt by Mrs. Elwyn as she perused this letter; the usual constrained style of her husband was evident, till he came to the part of it which concerned the two children; here the warmth of his natural disposition had forcibly intruded itself, and she could not help fancying that she perceived, in the ardour of his expressions, the mortification which he still felt at not having a son of his own; and to his disappointment in this respect, she in part attributed his eager adoption of the child of his friend.

“Thus are even our trials and bitter disappointments productive of good,” thought Mrs. Elwyn; “had Mr. Elwyn had a son of his own, he might have steeled his heart to the claims of friendship; in receiving the innocent endearments of my own offspring, I might have been impervious to the call of humanity.”

Belford was a name that Mrs. Elwyn had never remembered to have heard, as that of a friend of her husband’s, or of the Elwyn family; but with regard to his own friendships, Elwyn had been uniformly reserved towards her; and it would almost have been a subject of surprise had she known the name of Belford, as she was a stranger to that of all his distant acquaintances.

Mrs. Elwyn answered her husband’s letter, in that prompt and ready manner which instantaneously proved to him that Master Belford would from henceforth have two friends at the Hall; and having procured a wet-nurse for her little *protégée*, Mrs. Elwyn employed herself, during the remaining period of her stay at Brighton, in providing clothes of more decent appearance than those she had hitherto worn, for the babe, previous to her introduction to Mr. Elwyn.

In the mean time, she had learnt that the strange lady, on being followed to her lodgings by the parish officers, with an inquiry concerning what she meant to do with the infant which she had taken away, had declared her intention of providing and educating it wholly at her own expence; and being asked to give her address, and a reference, in order to certify to the parish that the child would not become chargeable thereafter, she had ordered them to call again in the morning, promising at that time to give them every necessary information; but when the morning came, and the overseers attended according to the lady’s appointment, they were informed, that together with the infant and a female servant, whom she had hired to attend it, she had left Brighton the preceding evening in a chaise and four.

The certain expence of following her, and the possibility of a vain pursuit, when opposed to the uncertainty of the child’s being returned on the parish, as such pains had been taken to

carry her off, appeased the minds of the parish officers; but not so the busy tongue of curiosity and scandal; various were the surmises and the conjectures in circulation with regard to the fair unknown, whose extravagant appearance, extraordinary behaviour, and mysterious departure, were not in the course of daily events; in general it was supposed, that her inheritance of a large fortune depended upon her having a child within a limited period; and that having no prospect of producing one herself, she had determined on obtaining one by surreptitious means, and to introduce it into the world as her own.

There seemed in this case a shadow of reason in her conduct; but Mrs. Elwyn, who had seen her eccentric appearance and extravagant demeanour, previous to the fate of the poor fishers, believed that she had some motive for concealing her name and family; and that an inquiry into these had hurried her from Brighton; while in protecting the child, she had merely followed an impulse of feeling; and as in the latter case she had herself been actuated by a similar motive, she was very much inclined to extenuate the conduct of the young lady, and to hope that she was unfortunate, rather than culpable.

That she had money at command was evident; during the few days she had remained at Brighton, her liberality was the constant theme; and her total ignorance, or disregard of the value of money, proved that she had been born in a very exalted sphere of life, or that she had been educated without the remotest reference to that knowledge of prudence and calculation, which is so necessary in the common occurrences of life. Elegant accomplishments and high-flown sentiments may be resorted to like *court dresses*, and worn on *gala days*; but in the *wardrobe of education* there should be laid in a large stock of those *plain suits* of *homebred* knowledge, which will be wanted for *every-day* use, and almost *constant* wear.

CHAP. V.

So virtue blooms, brought forth amid the storms
Of chill adversity. KIRKE WHITE.

AT the appointed time Mrs. Elwyn returned to the Hall, accompanied by her little *élève*. Mr. Elwyn appeared at the door, leading a beautiful boy of six years of age. Mrs. Elwyn's warm reception of his little favourite seemed to have paved the way for her husband's cordial notice of hers; indeed, there seemed more freedom and *heart* in his reception of herself, than she had been accustomed to meet with for many a day; and indulging in the most pleasurable emotions, the yet sanguine Clara hailed the present moment as the harbinger of many happy years.

Mary Ellis was consigned to the care of a cottager's wife, in the village of Norton, about half a mile from Elwyn Hall; Mrs. Elwyn contented herself with paying her a daily visit, careful of not suffering Mr. Elwyn to suspect her of an eccentric and romantic fondness for the little orphan.

Harry Belford was the inmate of the Hall, and the constant companion of herself, or of Mr. Elwyn; that gentleman's fondness for him appeared to increase every day; and in his long walks, which he had been heretofore accustomed to take alone, Harry ran at his side; and even in his hours of periodical retirement, the pleading voice of Harry Belford was not unnoticed at the library door. Of a quick capacity, and lively manners, the boy could not fail of gaining general favour.

Mrs. Elwyn delighted in instructing him, and in marking the opening faculties of his mind; and while she contemplated his dark and expressive eyes, and marked the roseate colour as it mantled on his cheeks, she frequently fancied (and at these moments she seemed to love the boy more fondly) that she could trace a likeness of her Elwyn, as he was in the halcyon days of infancy.

The name of Belford, as the father of Harry, had never been mentioned by Mr. Elwyn since his lady had returned to the Hall; Mrs. Elwyn had kept an invariable silence on the subject; she never sought to gratify an insignificant curiosity, at the hazard of tormenting her husband with questions which he might not approve; if he thought it necessary to be more communicative, she judged that he would have been so; and if his reserve was occasioned by his doubts of her being worthy of his confidence, it would rather strengthen them, and lessen his opinion of her, were she to betray an eager desire to be admitted into it.

As an exemplary wife, we could almost venture to pronounce that Mrs. Elwyn had not an equal; but such a character as we have portrayed would not be imitated by the ladies of the present era; they would all unite in calling her a tame, a meek fool; and each of them would be tempted separately to declare—"that the behaviour of such a brute as Elwyn was absolutely not to be borne!" In such a case, they would have recourse to numberless *modern* methods of shewing their spirit; they would relate the tale of injury to female friendly confidants; they would have let their *male* acquaintance peruse it in the *soft liquid* of their melting eyes; and if *they* ventured to advise retaliation and revenge—[But see further of this in the every-day anecdotes of modern married pairs.]

We will return to Mrs. Elwyn, who, trying to palliate what she would have wished to change in her husband, and *dwelling* on a great deal that she *still* saw to admire, diverted her mind, by the conscientious discharge of her new duties, (duties which she had voluntarily taken

upon herself), and who felt a *living principle* within, as the original impulse, and the unerring guide of all her actions.

Gossips there are, and gossips there have been, in all ages of the world, and in all parts of the habitable globe, but the gossip of a country village has been proverbial time out of mind; and the whole village of Norton did not contain *one* female who was *dumb*!

The goodness, the meek carriage, and the humility of Mrs. Elwyn, had gained her the universal suffrage; but where we cannot find any thing to condemn, it may be sometimes pleasant to *pity*; for human nature is human nature, and if there be no perfect happiness, or perfect goodness, how should there be perfect charity? The sagacious spinsters nodded their heads to the garrulous old wives, as they canvassed over the affairs of the neighbourhood.

“Poor Mrs. Elwyn, ‘tis a great pity!”

“Yes, she is a very good woman, very good indeed, very good to the poor. She is really laying up *her* treasure in heaven!”

“Ah, poor soul! she has lain it out to little purpose here, take *my* word for it; she is quite broken-hearted, sinking with trouble, though she never complains; and yet, before I would have let *my* husband bring home his base-born brats under my own nose, and he too that I gave up such a handsome fortune to—oh ladies, ‘tis shameful, shameful work! ‘tis not forbearance, ‘tis not, indeed; I cannot call it forbearance—it shows no spirit, no conduct—it scarcely shows any affection for the husband; for jealousy, say what you will, must exist where there is any love.”

“And the boy, you tell me, is the image of Mr. Elwyn?”

“Oh law, yes! the very counterpart of the father, the same sly look with his eyes, as I remember well, when he came down a child to visit his uncle here at the Hall. These family matches are sad things; they never do turn out well, that’s very certain.”

“But the girl who is nursing at Sarah Cooke’s, whose is that?”

“Oh, that is *Mrs.* Elwyn’s pet, it seems.”

“Heaven only knows, ma’am; there are two stories about *that* too; it will all come out in time, I dare say; but they tell me Mrs. Elwyn is very fond of it.”

“Ma’am, I assure you she *dotes* upon it. Mrs. Elwyn went much earlier to Brighton this year than she did the last.”

“Did she, ma’am? I was not at Norton last summer.”

“Oh dear, yes! she did not go till August *then*—now she went in June.”

Unsuspecting and unassuming, Mrs. Elwyn pursued the “even tenor of her way.”

Master Belford was at the proper time placed by his guardian at an eligible school near the metropolis; Mr. Elwyn always attended him there, and went himself to fetch him at the vacations, at each return to the Hall. The young gentleman seemed to rise in estimation and in consequence; the servants observing the increasing fondness of their master, and the sweet compliance of their mistress, treated him with most respectful deference and attention. A poney was kept for his exclusive use, a servant was given up to attend him during each vacation, and every thing was prepared for him, which could minister to his pleasures or his gratification. He was a fine youth, and high in health and spirits; and under the protection of such indulgent friends, it would have been surprising if he had not appeared in an attractive light. His improvements kept pace with the ardent wishes of his benefactor; and while he made great progress in his scholastic education, the accomplishments of the gentleman were not overlooked.

Mrs. Elwyn saw the increasing fondness of her husband for Harry Belford with no jealous eye; she loved the youth with much sincerity; and if *she* was doomed never to be the object of Elwyn’s warmest affection, she did not grudge it to this child of his adoption. Her

cares, in the mean time, had never relaxed towards her own favourite; for if she felt a partiality for one of the children, it was surely towards the little girl, whom she had probably saved from a life of painful servitude, if not of infamy.

When she was taken from the nurse, Mrs. Elwyn had brought her to the Hall, and had scrupulously endeavoured to instruct her in her duty, as an accountable and an immortal being, and to infuse such knowledge into her youthful mind as would be useful to her in her journey through life, and be calculated to smooth her passage to the tomb.

The little orphan was of a most tender and affectionate disposition, passionately attached to her “mama Elwyn” (as that lady suffered herself to be called), and scrupulously observant of all her advice and her instructions.

Mrs. Elwyn looked upon the fortune which she inherited as only lent to her for a season, for the trial of her own faith, and for the use of her fellow-beings; and she was careful of unnecessarily wasting it, because she knew that had she died unmarried or childless, it must have devolved to her husband and to his heirs; she considered it as *his* now; and though she knew that he would, in his accustomed easy manner, acquiesce to any proposition she should make, with regard to a provision for Mary Ellis, yet it was not her wish to leave her more than a moderate provision.

“If I would make her a reasonable and a rational being,” thought she, “rational and reasonable ideas must be implanted in her mind. Happiness is not the certain accompaniment of riches;” here a half-checked sigh proved that she felt what she uttered; “a decent competence, a useful stock of knowledge, a cultivated understanding, without fastidious refinement of taste, and a grateful, a thankful heart, lifting itself towards heaven—*these* are the blessings I shall covet for my little Mary.”

CHAP. VI.

—————In admonition warm,
Oft did he caution the too thoughtless tribes
Against each sin that easily besets
The heart; and oft, more anxious than their guardians,
Taught the surrounding innocents, who lov'd
His friendly smile, the lesson to be good.

POLWHELE.

MARY Ellis had attained the age of eight years, when she accompanied her protectress to Clifton; Mrs. Elwyn now left home on a yearly excursion, from custom rather than from an idea of experiencing any benefit.

The sea air had been pronounced too keen for her the preceding summer, and in compliance with medical advice, enforced by the persuasions of her husband, she now visited Clifton; her frame was fragile, and her health delicate, yet she had no alarming symptoms; in fact, mental anxiety and disappointment had long been struggling with a naturally good constitution, and as yet they had not wholly undermined it.

Fond of having her little child about her person, in an hundred ways she contrived to make her feel herself useful, and to imagine herself of consequence in the tiny offices of gratitude which she could perform; thus a stimulus was given to her exertions, and a motive to her endeavours. Mary Ellis had been told that her parents were dead, but of her infantile history she knew no more, except that on her "dear mama Elwyn" the care of her had fallen. Mrs. Elwyn had a great aversion to all appearance of mystery or concealment, and probably this aversion had daily been gaining ground, from observing the cheerless and, as it were, studious reserve, which Elwyn had ever practised towards her, and which had clouded all her days. She had long determined to make Mary Ellis fully acquainted with her birth and situation, *not* to give her a more enlarged idea of her obligations to herself, but to dilate her mind with gratitude to the Supreme Being, and to teach her that *He* who could thus raise up a protector to the *fatherless* would never forsake those who trusted in him.

From the most trivial incidents lasting impressions are frequently made; Mrs. Elwyn was urged to the communication of Mary's little story, by the circumstance which we are going to relate.

It was a fine Sunday evening in summer, and having accompanied her protectress to the church at Clifton twice in the course of the day, Mary was rather surprised to hear the carriage ordered for an airing, as Sunday was usually kept in the *old fashioned* manner by Mrs. Elwyn; and while she devoted herself to the duties of religion, her domestics had rest, and her cattle also.

The evening was delightfully pleasant, the breeze, as they were driven across the down, was cool and refreshing, after the intense heat of the day; they turned out into a public road to which Mary was a stranger, and presently were attracted by the sound of a bell, from a plain edifice which stood in a rural lane, at a short distance from the road; thither they bent their course. There was something peculiarly impressive in the scene; the sun was fast diverging towards the western hills, but its saffron glow threw an illumination on this house of prayer; the simplicity of the building, its neat and unobtrusive spire, the silver-toned bell, the retiredness of the situation, which seemed particularly calculated to inspire pure and holy thoughts to the mind,

and to impress on the soul a true relish for devotion; the neat but ancient style of architecture of the dwelling-house, which was attached to the chapel; the picturesque scenery of the adjoining country, a gurgling rivulet, which gently, pensively, meandered through meadows, which were clothed in summer's loveliest green, and which, newly mown, sent their refreshing fragrance on the evening breeze, all conspired to impress the imagination and the fancy with the most tranquil and the most soothing feelings; and with placid serenity in her countenance, Mrs. Elwyn alighted from her chariot, and entered the chapel, leading her beloved child. The eyes of that quickly apprehensive child were wandering from side to side as they passed through the body of the chapel, and were conducted by a respectable-looking matron to a pew near the pulpit, which was set apart for the accommodation of the ladies. The clergyman got into the desk, the chapel was filled, the solemn but soft-toned organ was struck, and looking towards the gallery, Mary saw on each side of the instrument fifteen girls stand up, and neatly clothed in gowns of green, with modest round-eared caps, lift up with one accord their youthful voices in the evening hymn of praise. Mary felt her heart glow with delight as she listened to this infantile and harmonious choir; she looked with inquiring eyes towards her protectress, who directed her by an answering look to the duties of the place, for now the public service was begun.

The clergyman who preached had chosen a most appropriate text—"Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven." He made an affecting but judicious appeal to his hearers for the female orphans whose cause he pleaded; he pointed out the dangers to which children, and particularly female children, were exposed, when bereft of their parents; he showed them the incalculable advantages of early religious instruction, and he reminded them that the Saviour of the World did not think it beneath his glory to descend from the highest heavens, and attend to the lisping petitions of babes and sucklings; he spoke with fervor and with energy, for he felt the cause which he had taken in hand; he knew the depravity and the frailty of human nature, and the dangers to which the *best* instructed are exposed in their journey through the world; and in affording an asylum for infant females, a nursery of virtue and piety, he judged that there could not be a species of charity more beneficial to the world, or more pleasing to the Almighty. Towards the conclusion of the discourse, he turned towards the female orphans, ere he began to address them; (as if by intuition) they all rose from their seats, and fixing their modest eyes in attentive respect upon the preacher, his address was most wisely adapted to their comprehension. He pointed out to them the particular mercies of heaven, which they had experienced in having friends raised up to them, when they were deprived of their natural ones; he explained to them the nature of their obligations to the patrons of that beneficent institution, who had not only shielded their persons from want, extended to them food and raiment, and a dwelling-place, but who had cared for their souls, who had given them the means of becoming the children of God, and inheritors of the kingdom of heaven; he besought them never to forfeit their right or title to that high distinction, but to join with him in praying for their temporal benefactors, and in beseeching their Heavenly One still to supply them with the means of grace, and with the hope of glory;" and then, in a short but solemn prayer, he ended.

Again the organ sounded, again the children lifted up their voices in praise, and Mary's eyes were suffused in tears, as Mrs. Elwyn turned towards her. It was with proud satisfaction that she watched her trembling fingers, as hastily they emptied her little morocco purse of its contents, when the plate came near her, while the crimsoning hue which overspread her countenance announced the unusual perturbation of her bosom. Mrs. Elwyn had, however, anticipated this in part, and on the preceding day had filled her purse.

When they were reseated in the carriage, Mary Ellis would have sunk on her knees at the feet of Mrs. Elwyn, but was raised to her bosom, and tenderly folded to it.

“*I am an orphan too!*” cried Mary; “oh why, why must I not kneel and thank you? oh, dear, dear mama Elwyn, only think what that gentleman told those little girls! *I might have been brought up wicked—I might have sworn—I might have stolen—I might have never known my duty to God Almighty, if you had not taught me! oh, why may I not kneel and thank you?*”

“Only kneel to that God who moved my heart in your favour, my best Mary,” said Mrs. Elwyn, deeply affected at witnessing the virtuous emotions of her child.

“But how came you to take *me*, to take Mary Ellis? there were plenty, *plenty* of other little orphan girls, you know; and *then* you could not tell that *I* should love you the best of all.”

“Compose yourself, my good girl, and I will tell you all about it. Accident introduced me to your acquaintance, so it would be called by those who are not accustomed to look for the presiding influence of God in all sublunary things.”

“I am quite composed and good now,” said Mary; “but you must let me hold your hand all the time you are telling it.”

Mrs. Elwyn kissed the pudsey hand which pressed hers, and faithfully recounted to Mary the fatal catastrophe which had attended her parents, and the history of her visit to their cottage.

Tears rolled over the roseate cheeks of the artless child, as she listened to the dreadful fate of her parents, but her eyes brightened through them, when she heard she had a sister; and while almost devouring Mrs. Elwyn’s hands with kisses, she forgot not to bless the other good lady for taking her sister, and naturally asked her name, and where she lived. Here Mrs. Elwyn was at a loss; she had frequently made inquiries concerning the strange lady, but hitherto without success; and she tried to quiet the mind of Mary, by telling her that her sister had got a friend as well as herself, and that the same God cared for them both; but this assurance did not entirely set the heart of Mary at ease, (not though it came from her benefactress); for the first time, a feeling of relative affection had been raised in her breast, and she ever after retained an anxious interest for the fate of her sister; breaking from a reverie of a few moments, Mary said—“There are male as well as female orphans, an’t there, Mrs. Elwyn?”

“Certainly, my love.”

“Poor Harry Belford, he is an orphan too; he has no father, no mother—has he, ma’am?”

The question was an awkward one; Mrs. Elwyn felt the colour revisit her pallid cheeks; her lip quivered; at length she answered—“To Mr. Elwyn’s goodness Harry Belford is indebted—he has supplied to him the place of his natural—of his parents.”

“And I think,” cried Mary, “I shall love Harry Belford a great, *great* deal more than I ever did, now I know he is an orphan like myself; and Mr. Elwyn too, how good it was of him! But were Harry’s father and mother drowned too, ma’am?”

Mrs. Elwyn was again confused; she answered she did not know; and then, as if recalling her words, she said—“No.”

“No, no,” said Mary, shaking her head, “it was only poor Mary’s father and mother that were drowned. Oh, I shall never see the sea again without thinking of my poor parents; and my dear *good* mama Elwyn, if *you* had not taken their child, *she* might have been drowned too, you know, before this time; for who would have looked after her, to see that she did not come to any harm?”

CHAP. VII.

Forward and frolic glee was there,
The will to do, the soul to dare,
The sparkling glance, soon blown to live,
Of hasty love, or head forgive.

SCOTT'S LADY OF THE LAKE.

WE will pass over the infantile years of Mary Ellis, and our readers shall behold her a fine girl of sixteen, firmly fixed in the affections of her patroness, by her good conduct, grateful disposition, and pleasing demeanour; she was not eminently beautiful, but her countenance was very expressive; and her dimpling mouth and glistening eyes displayed the alternate emotions of a bosom which was a stranger to disguise; her understanding was good, and her discrimination superior to her years; she had great quickness and delicacy of feeling, and an innate sense of feminine propriety; she was respectful and obliging in her behaviour towards Mr. Elwyn, and scrupulously attentive to him, because she knew it was her duty, and because she saw it was pleasing to Mrs. Elwyn; but for her loved, her honoured benefactress, her affection could scarcely be restrained within the bounds of moderation; she believed her the most perfect of human beings; and while she beheld her as a model, she was almost in danger of worshipping her as an idol, so strong a hold had the grateful sense of obligation obtained on her youthful heart.

Harry Belford had just attained the age of twenty-one, and returned to the Hall from Oxford, where his arrival was distinguished by as much hilarity as if he had been the lineal heir of the house of Elwyn; indeed, he had been long looked upon as the future possessor of its honours by every body; and though Mr. Elwyn had never expressed himself directly in this respect, yet by acquiescing in the general notice and deference which was paid to him, he seemed covertly to have acknowledged it.

Harry Belford had been told that he was the son of Mr. Elwyn's dearest friend; he felt that Mr. Elwyn had been the *best* of friends to him, and his conduct displayed towards him the respect and affection of a son; his must have been a hard heart if it had not softened towards Mrs. Elwyn; but Harry's was *not* a hard heart; and whilst he loved Mrs. Elwyn for her goodness to himself, he revered those superior virtues, and that exemplary and undeviating rectitude, which seemed to have lifted her above her sex, and even above that secret sorrow, which had attacked, without conquering, her elevated mind.

As a playful child, and an interesting and innocent girl, he had always been on the most friendly and familiar terms with Mary Ellis.

At his last return from College, she had been absent with Mrs. Elwyn, on one of that lady's yearly excursions, and hence his surprise at seeing her shot up into the interesting and lovely young woman, from the lively laughing girl, was forcibly impressed on his features; while Mary observed, with satisfaction, that his manners and appearance had received their last polish, and that he was quite the well-bred gentleman, without having lost the natural ingenuousness which marked his boyish days.

Every character has some leading traits, and those which were discoverable in Belford's, to the penetrating eye of Mrs. Elwyn, were impetuosity of temper, and no little idea of self-consequence; he felt that he would never be guilty of a base or unworthy action, and this feeling raised him in his own estimation, and taught him to expect and to covet the world's applause;

while the indulgence with which he had been reared, and the respect and deference with which he had been invariably treated, were not calculated to lessen it; and the ardent and impetuous emotions of his mind, though at present they only added energy to his opinions, and gave to his expressions a tincture of enthusiasm, not disagreeable in so young a man, were likely to break out with resistless violence, if he should experience any mortifications, or have to struggle with any disappointments. To the overweening indulgence of Mr. Elwyn, his lady attributed these failings as in part originating.

Belford had been told that his birth was respectable; no *humble* notions had been infused into his mind, from the consciousness of inferior origin.

With the knowledge of her early misfortunes, on the contrary, humility had been happily blended in the character of Mary Ellis; and while Harry Belford received all the good things of this life, with *gratitude* indeed, but with a gratified self-complacency, as if he had them of *right*, Mary Ellis felt them all as unlooked-for unmerited *gifts*, which were not hers to *claim*, but which, while they were thankfully received, were fresh calls upon her meekness and her humility.

It was naturally supposed by the neighbourhood that a family compact would again be formed, and that the fortune of the Elwyn family would be centered in the two favourites. The idea had struck Mrs. Elwyn, and more particularly since the last return of Belford, when she had remarked the evident pleasure with which he viewed her Mary, and the pains he took, by his easy and confidential freedom, to rid her conversation of that respectful timidity by which it was marked in her behaviour towards him. Mrs. Elwyn had also seen the surprise and satisfaction which seemed to overspread the countenance of Belford, at perceiving Mary's quick apprehension of subjects on which he conversed, and that intellectual knowledge which, while it had been stored in her mind, had been prevented from making any display, by the just principles which had been implanted with it, and the modesty of her disposition, and which now unfolded itself very charily, and was *drawn* from its confinement, rather than protruded into notice.

The prospect of such a connexion would not have been displeasing to Mrs. Elwyn; all cares, all fears for her child would be at an end, in insuring her the protection of a man of honour, and the heir of Mr. Elwyn; but could she ensure his affection? was she not herself a living, a melancholy witness of the instability of human happiness—of the fallibility of all human schemes for its accomplishment? In the youth of Harry Elwyn, she had appeared to be as much the object of *his* preference as Mary Ellis now seemed that of Harry Belford's; the one had abated—had vanished without a cause, a reason, a conjecture—it had been transient, dazzling as the watery sunbeam of a winter's day—the other might only be the offspring of early intimacy, operating on an ardent temper, and a mind which opened itself to the influence of every pleasurable emotion, and tried to communicate some portion of its own happiness to all who came within its sphere.

In the present state of Belford's feelings, Mrs. Elwyn had no doubt of his eagerly entering into an engagement with her *protégée*, were it to be suggested to him in the slightest manner by his benefactor; but she had known too much of the mutability of the youthful heart to wish to put his constancy to the trial.

With regard to Mary Ellis she was perfectly easy; her sense of her inferior origin, and her humble idea of her own deserts, prevented her from indulging any aspiring thoughts, (for such she would have esteemed them, had she suffered them to be lifted towards Mr. Belford), by permitting her to behave towards Harry as she had ever done, without checking her simple and candid manners, by conjectures or cautions, which were not likely to be of any beneficial result.

Mrs. Elwyn judged that she was pursuing a right line of conduct, yet she could not avoid feeling a secret and warm satisfaction, when any instance of Belford's partiality and regard for Mary met her observation; but she saw that these were wholly disregarded by her husband, who was ardently and exclusively attached to Belford, while the engaging manners and modest gentleness of Mary Ellis appeared to be entirely unobserved; and while he treated her with civility, it was of so indifferent a kind, that Mary herself could not fail to remark it, and her lovely cheek was often suffused with crimson, at receiving some fresh instance of his inattention to, or entire forgetfulness of herself.

How few females of the present era could bear the idea of being overlooked! this was calculated to stimulate Mary Ellis, by additional attention and exertions, to deserve more notice in future; but this constant exercise of her humility and display of her amiable disposition, endeared her yet more to Mrs. Elwyn, who, though she had long ceased to feel her husband's indifference towards herself as acutely as she once did, yet could not help attributing to him great blindness, if not insensibility, in not opening his heart to the engaging qualities and pleading claims of her Mary.

Mr. Elwyn was of late become inert and inactive; the pleasures of the table seemed to be obtaining a dangerous hold on his senses; he got very corpulent, took little exercise, and seldom appeared to be roused from a state of lethargic indolence, except by the appearance of Henry Belford at the Hall, after some occasional absence.

Sacredly concealing in the depths of her own heart her painful observation of the faults and weaknesses of her husband, Mrs. Elwyn invariably attributed to disorder and to indisposition every renewed instance of his indifference; but the "silent sorrow" thus hidden from the world preyed on her vitals; and once again, in compliance with the advice of her physician, and the affectionate pleadings of Mary Ellis, she consented to leave home, and to visit Cheltenham, to try the efficacy of the waters at that place, for the complaint which her medical adviser had pronounced to be "an affection of the liver;" had he named it "*an affection of the heart,*" his judgment would have been unquestionable.

It now gave some prospect of relief to Mrs. Elwyn to leave home, and to be released for a short period from the contemplation of her once-loved Elwyn, in his present enfeebled and degraded state; to see his fine mental faculties—to see his energies destroyed—to contemplate that form, bloated and distended by corporeal indulgencies, which had once rivalled with the statue of the far-famed Belvidere Apollo, for a model of manly grace—to behold all the gifts of fortune slighted, and not to be able to account in the remotest way for the dire cause which led to this fearful, this appalling change—no wonder that the still acutely susceptible mind of Clara felt a temporary alleviation of its misery, in a change of scene, and a removal from the object of her ill-requited affection.

The attention of Mary Ellis to her protectress was all that the fondest love and the most *active* gratitude could inspire; without officiously obtruding on the invalid, she sedulously watched the opportunity of stealing her (as it were) away from melancholy contemplation; and varied her methods and her sources of amusement, as the occasion required.

As a nurse, Mary had successfully profited by the useful instructions which Mrs. Elwyn had imparted to her; and her quiet, yet steady and uniform performance of the duties of a sick chamber, while it proved the feeling benevolence of her heart, at the same exhibited much presence of mind and great self-controul; for though tenderly, apprehensively anxious for the event of this illness, Mary did not, by her saddened countenance and agitated manner, give a hint to her suffering friend of those tears, which often in the silence and the solitude of the night,

when “all the world seemed hushed to rest,” had sent her streaming eyes and piously clasped hands towards the throne of Heaven, in prayers for Mrs. Elwyn; but in moments of reason and reflection, Mary Ellis acknowledged, that nothing but the extreme of selfishness could impel her to offer up a petition for the prolongation of that life, which, it was evident, was become of no value to the possessor. “And yet,” thought this grateful *protégée*, “by precept, by example, by active usefulness, by patient suffering, by pious resignation, of how much benefit to others has that life been! and how should I have abused the mercies of the Almighty, I that have daily, hourly, been a witness of her virtues, and her meek submission, if I had not in some part learned to imitate her prompt obedience to the will of Heaven!”

CHAP. VIII.

Her mien all swimming in delight,
Her beauties half reveal'd to sight.

MOORE'S FABLES.

HARRY Belford was not at the Hall when Mrs. Elwyn quitted it for Cheltenham, but from the weekly letters which she wrote to Mr. Elwyn, and which were in general carelessly thrown on the library-table, he gathered that her health did not mend; and Mr. Elwyn always yielding to any proposition of his favourite, Harry rode down to Cheltenham to pay Mrs. Elwyn a visit.

The invalid was in her apartment when Belford arrived; Mary Ellis was sitting at work, and in melancholy rumination on Mrs. Elwyn's evident increase of illness.

She received him with smiles of genuine satisfaction—"Mr. Belford," said she, as she rose from her chair, and met his extended hand, "this is *very* good of you, but perhaps—" and her countenance flushed with hope, "perhaps you are not *unaccompanied*?"

Belford understood the half inquiry conveyed in the last word, and hastily said—"I came down with my servant only; and now tell me, my dear Mary, how is our friend?"

Mary shook her head (while tears started to her eyes), and as if that melancholy motion had been sufficient, she eagerly desired Belford not to appear too much shocked at the alteration which he would witness in Mrs. Elwyn. "It is not that I fear to alarm *her*," continued Mary; "my beloved benefactress fears not death; to *her* it presents no appalling terrors; she knows, Mr. Belford, that 'there the weary will be at rest;' but it is for *my* sake, for *our* sakes, that I speak; if she sees, from our countenances, that we judge her case to be past remedy, *may* she not slacken in her efforts—*may* she not slight the means which are still essayed for her recovery—*may* she not—" and now the tears would rush from her eyes, "may she not disregard any further assistance, and thus accelerate the bitter moment of trial to us?"

"I will do all that I can," said Belford, in an hurried tone; but his manly brow was overcast, his voice was impeded, as Mrs. Elwyn entered the room, and his hand trembled as she held out her pallid, her almost transparent one to him.

It was now that Belford first observed the self-command and calm resolution of Mary Ellis—of her strong sensibility she had the moment before evinced unquestionable proofs, yet with tranquillized feelings she now addressed both himself and Mrs. Elwyn; and gently, and almost as if by enchantment, led the conversation to indifferent and agreeable subjects.

"Is it the difference of nature, of constitution, or of education," thought Belford, "while every emotion of my breast rages and wars with resistless impetuosity, this gentle, this delicate girl, though tenderly alive to every soft emotion, has yet the power of saying—'peace, be still,' and in a moment all is quiet as the 'pure translucent lake,' while my ruffled soul continues turbulent as the unquiet and buffeting wave on the tempestuous ocean?"

Mrs. Elwyn was much pleased at the appearance of Belford at Cheltenham, and more so on Mary's account than on her own. She knew that Mary Ellis was exhibited to greater advantage in her present situation, and in the performance of her present duties, than if surrounded by a mixed and fashionable society.

Mary's education had made her a useful rather than an ornamental character; by the side of a belle of fashion, she would have dwindled into a mere awkward and unpolished girl; for *that* understanding, which but cautiously and timidly unfolded itself to the emboldening approval of

friendly attention, would have shrunk back with chilling apprehension from a competition with unblushing effrontery and modern pertinacity.

Harry Belford appeared to be fully aware of Mary Ellis's attractive and endearing qualities, and while sedulously courted by the gay world at Cheltenham, and received, wherever he appeared, as the heir of Mr. Elwyn, the coveted partner of all the beauties at the balls, and their favoured beau in their promenades on the walk, he yet retired frequently from the follies of fashion to the contemplation of all that was patient and pious in Mrs. Elwyn—to the contemplation of all that was lovely, and worthy *of being* loved, in the form of the artless and unassuming Mary.

But *human nature* has its ebbs and flows, and Harry Belford was by no means a *perfect* character; he had formed a pretty good estimate of his own attractions and advantages, and his vanity was much flattered at the evident marks of partiality and attention, which were awarded to him wherever and whenever he appeared. As a friend, as the companion of his youth, as an adviser, as the gentle soother of his cares, he would have singled Mary Ellis from the world, but the captivating Lauretta Montgomery was a far greater object of attraction in public, and gave much more eclat to his taste.

Miss Montgomery was the beauty of Cheltenham; she was lately arrived from the east with her mother, lady Lauretta Montgomery.

Report, like an "*avant courier*," had preceded these ladies to Cheltenham; it was said that they had travelled one thousand, two thousand, three thousand, and four thousand miles *overland* from India, for the story gained a thousand miles at every time it was narrated, (and promised to exceed the sand on the seashore in number, if these exaggerating details were continued). In the same ratio, the camels which composed their train were fifty, sixty, seventy, and eighty; the size of their oriental pearls was distended till they *almost* got to the egg of the ostrich: but as a *bulse* of diamonds sounded well for a *Nabobess*, the exact quantity contained in a bulse was increased *only* in the same proportion with the rest of the eastern importation.

Miss Montgomery's person was cast in the mould of symmetry, and every embellishment of dress (or rather its *rejection*, as far as it could be done without quite overstepping the bounds of decency) assisted in displaying every fine-turned limb to the greatest advantage; her features were schooled in the arts of attraction; and if she did not always say a thing worth listening to, yet the pearly whiteness of her teeth, and the ruby richness of her mouth, gave interest to the most trifling remark; but she could converse on all the fashionable topics of the day—she could descant on the fashionable publications—quote from the "*Lay of the Last Minstrel*"—warble the amorous effusions of Moore—speak of sentiment and sensibility with any German novelist—like Niboe, almost "*dissolve in tears*," and instantaneously transform herself into all that was gay and lively, as she sprang into the "*frolic dance*;" while presently she seemed to sink into all the lassitude, the languor, and the inertia of Ottoman voluptuousness.

All the advantages of education which could be procured in the east had been eagerly sought for the fair Lauretta, and the last *finish* had been put to every accomplishment, the last touch to every grace, since her arrival in England; and she now broke forth from the east like the sun, to dazzle and astonish all beholders.

Lady Lauretta Montgomery was passed the bloom of youth, and even the maturity of her charms appeared to have been hastily chased away by the despoiling hand of sickness. The torrid zone had given the tinge of yellow to her cheek, but her dark eyes yet flashed with fire as she spoke, and the animation of her manner was peculiarly striking. In her expressions, and even in her action, there was something so different from the rest of the world, that she naturally

attracted observation; and if reclining almost at full length on a sofa, like an ancient figure at the foot of a family tomb in a country church), enveloped in her shawl of camel's hair, in the midst of a crowded ball-room, such behaviour was excused, nay even admired, on the plea of its being "foreign," "quite Asiatic," "perfectly *nouvelle*."

In Lady Laretta's language, she adopted all the flowery figures of eastern poesy; but as these could not be easily woven into the trivial occurrences of the passing moment, she did not condescend to notice *them*, unless she shrouded them in metaphor and sublimity.

In her addresses to Miss Montgomery she used every appellative of tenderness, and redundantly expressed affection, which she had gleaned from the copious sources of oriental phraseology. All her ideas, all her sentiments, seemed sublimated from every thing that was terrestrial; and while the impassioned voice of the *mother* was thus pouring forth the warm effusions of the heart, the enchanting smiles of the *daughter*, as she silently received them, formed a picture, which, from its *singularity*, was calculated to interest; and the unabashed and unconstrained manner with which the young lady heard these tender addresses, while they gave her in some eyes a double charm, and showed the *sweet simplicity* and *consciousness* of her *supreme attractions*, had quite a contrary effect on others, who traced in her behaviour the very acme of indulged and overweening vanity; and who scrupled not to aver, that under the appearance of "naïf" simplicity, much art and much duplicity lay concealed. To *this* number Belford did *not* belong; *he* saw in Laretta Montgomery all that the highest refinement could wish for; as a model of fashionable elegance, to *him* there appeared a nameless *grace* in her every action, an indescribable charm in her every word; when she spoke, he seemed bound as if by a spell of enchantment—when she danced, he seemed drawn into a magic circle of delight—when she *sang*, and accompanied the finely-modulated trill of her voice with her harp, as if "lapped in Elysium," he was all ear; his mind seemed in a rapturous tumult in her presence; and when he quitted her, he was agitated with impetuous passion, till he repaired to Mrs. Elwyn's; and *there* he contemplated the modest and placid Mary Ellis, who, "like the mild green of the soul," seemed to refresh his senses, and to compose his mind, after those brilliant coruscations, which, while they dazzled, had filled him with perturbation.

Alike alive to the calls of pride as of vanity, the thought of marrying Mary Ellis had never entered the imagination of Belford; indeed, the idea of marrying at all had never been seriously reflected on; but he daily felt more flattered at the marked distinction of Miss Montgomery; and when he was joked on the subject, though he affected to disclaim it, yet his self-exultation was pretty evident.

It was not likely that either Mrs. Elwyn or her *protégée* should hear of Belford's flirtation with Miss Montgomery; they saw no one but himself, (for Mrs. Elwyn was unable to quit the house, and Mary never left her); and though Laretta Montgomery was the all-engrossing subject of his thoughts, when he reached Mrs. Elwyn's door, he found her image very soon put to flight, while witnessing the patient suffering of Mrs. Elwyn, and the gentle attentions of Mary.

Amiable, charming, sensible, and dignified as was Mrs. Elwyn, Belford still saw that she would not *comprehend* the characters of the Montgomerys by description, and that any attempt to give it might be dangerous, lest in portraying their *unique* graces of conversation and manner, eccentricity might be supposed to form a part.

It was only those who knew them, who had *personally* conversed with them, who could properly appreciate their indescribable and countless attractions. Exemplary in her conduct and deportment, there was a regular and systematic rule of right in every *word* as well as action of Mrs. Elwyn. *She* had been educated in the sterling principles of rectitude, which *used* to be

implanted with the first rudiments of female education, in the good old times. The natural ingenuousness of youth was *then* chastened by proper and maidenly reserve, and politeness of behaviour inculcated by those enforcing rules, which, if they gave *rather too much* formality to the manner, and imposed a *little* too much restraint on the conversation, were yet deemed by our grandmothers as the proper bulwark of female modesty and virtue; by their *grandchildren* *this* mode of education would have been termed “the reign of *terror*;” and to say the truth, it must be allowed, that there is nothing *terrifying* in the *forms* or the *ceremonies* practised by the gay belles of *this* century; though frequently the most *terrific* consequences have ensued to the unshackled laxity of modern manners.

CHAP. IX.

With smiles and adulation bland.

MOORE'S FABLES.

BELFORD had always felt an unaccountable repugnance to speak of the Montgomerys in the presence of Mrs. Elwyn, and that pride which was gratified at the distinguished notice bestowed on him by persons so high in rank and in notoriety as were these ladies, seemed to slumber in the society of the invalid and her interesting young attendant; but it "raged and reigned without controul" when he quitted *them*; and the look of gratified and conscious exultation with which he looked around him, when receiving some proofs of Miss Montgomery's or her mother's marked attention, would have evinced to any one who had been prepared for the scrutiny, that self-consequence and pride were the ruling traits of his character; but sailing down the stream of pleasure, while every thing is propitious to the wishes, there is in the ardent and sanguine temperament of youth so buoyant and so bright an expression of felicity, that, dazzled by the exterior, we are apt to give it credit for more amiability, and for more perfection, than falls to the lot of human nature.

The pleasing address, the fine person, the agreeable conversation, and the fair prospects of Belford, were alone viewed by the multitude; and in *his* turn he was as much extolled by the young ladies and their mamas, as Miss Montgomery had been by the beaux.

The flattery of the world—its artificial manners—its affectation of interest for our persons—its approbation of our sentiments—its warm expressions of regard and admiration, which are merely words of course, and lip deep—used to all people on all occasions, are calculated to do incredible mischief to the minds of youth, more especially to those who, like Belford, have their prominent foibles encouraged by this mode of behaviour; and who, unpractised in the varnished arts of insincerity and dissimulation, are well disposed to lend a ready ear to every thing which feeds their vanity.

It was at an elegant ball and supper given by lady Laretta Montgomery to about an hundred of the most fashionable people at that period in Cheltenham, that Harry Belford seemed absolutely lifted above himself, by the marked distinction with which he was treated by the interesting mistress of the revels and her enchanting daughter.

As lady Laretta's behaviour gave the tone to her guests, Belford seemed the universal object of applause and attraction. If *he* spoke, his speech was retailed as a *jeu d'esprit* to lady Laretta, as she rested on an Ottoman couch of rose-coloured satin at the head of the room. If a young lady was heard to say something indicative of her admiration, with much avidity Miss Montgomery had it repeated to her; and the bewitching smile with which she instantaneously turned towards Belford, as if to observe whether he had noticed it, while it gave to every one an opportunity of making their own remarks, was calculated to fill the breast of Belford with the most ecstatic delight.

The ball had been opened by the fair Laretta and himself on that evening; never had she looked more lovely; and the bird of paradise, as it waved its feathery plumage on her head, seemed to point her out as one of the fabled houris, which had been described by Mahomet to his impassioned followers, as an inhabitant of that favoured land.

She danced that night in a style which surpassed every thing which had been seen; and Belford, who was not deficient in this accomplishment, felt inspired with emulation as he looked at his bewitching partner, and never had moved more gracefully, or looked more irresistibly.

All rapture, all delight, all enchantment, he led the beauteous fair one to the supper-room, where all the luxuries of European elegance and Asiatic splendour seemed combined to make out an entertainment for the admiring guests. No longer could he restrain his emotions, but bending his head to the not unwilling ear of the fair Laretta, while he played with the ivory fan, which he had sportively taken from her, he poured forth a strain of admiration, and fond protestation of adoration and attachment, with all the sanguine and ardent impetuosity of his nature.

The bewitching maid, while she half looked down, yet betrayed no symptoms of uneasiness; and while fondly expecting from this gentle softness some confession of reciprocal tenderness, and pleading for it with a degree of impassioned earnestness, which made him forgetful of every thing beside. Laretta turned her melting eyes towards him; her coral lips were severed, as she seemed beginning to speak: all eye, all ear, Belford sat in mute and throbbing expectation, when, feeling a gentle tap on his shoulder, he hastily turned round, though not much pleased at the interruption, when he met the face of his own servant, who respectfully putting a note into his hand, said—"The servants here, sir, all being engaged, I thought it better to find you out and deliver it myself, for fear of any delay."

The hand of Belford trembled, for as he took the note, he recognised the hand-writing of Mary Ellis: with a slight inclination of the head, Miss Montgomery gave the permission for perusal, which he seemed to have asked, though he had not uttered a word; and with the most painful emotion he read the following words:—

"MY DEAR SIR,

"I am sorry to break in upon your festivities, but a change so much for the worse has taken place in our beloved friend, within the last two hours, that it is necessary Mr. Elwyn should immediately be apprized of it.

MARY ELLIS."

Laretta Montgomery was vanished from the imagination of Belford—the enchanted supper, the ball, the sparkling decorations, were fled—he was already in the street, and in a few seconds at Mrs. Elwyn's door.

In the parlour he was met by the gentle Mary; in a subdued but articulate voice, yet trembling with apprehensive affection, she informed him, that in the middle of the night, Mrs. Elwyn had been seized with an alarming fit of coughing, and that in consequence she had broken a blood-vessel, from which the most alarming consequences were to be apprehended.—"She is now easy," said Mary, "and, thank Heaven, for the *present* we have nothing to dread; but how soon the hemorrhage may return, alas! we cannot say—she must be kept perfectly quiet. Ah, Mr. Belford, she looks like an expiring saint!" cried Mary, breaking out into a passionate flood of tears. "She would not suffer me at first to send for you, with her usual goodness, unwilling to shorten the enjoyment of others."

"Enjoyment!" repeated Belford, with a bitter expression of countenance, and putting his hand to his forehead, "enjoyment! and *that* while my *dearest* friends were *suffering!*"

"But sensible," continued Mary, "of her imminent danger, and anxious to see Mr. Elwyn *once* again," here Mary's voice was lost, and she turned from Belford, and hid her face in her

handkerchief.—“But I forgot myself,” said she; “no time must be lost—our beloved Mrs. Elwyn desires to see you for one moment—she thinks *you* will write to Mr. Elwyn.”

“Write!” hastily repeated Belford, “I will go, instantly go—no messenger could go so quickly as I shall, Mary, guided by duty and affection.”

“Thank you, *bless* you, Mr. Belford,” said Mary, catching his hand, and pressing it with fervor to her lips; she knew not what she did, but the artless action was *felt*—it was remembered by Belford—it afforded him an instance of the intuitive gratitude of her nature, of the enthusiasm of her affection for her protectress, which was never erased from his mind.

“*You*,” said Mary, “can tell Mr. Elwyn how *very* ill my dear benefactress is—it is not a *very* long journey for him to take—besides *you* will accompany him back; and—and—” Mary felt that she was putting persuasives for Mr. Elwyn to undertake the journey into the mouth of Belford—alas!! her foreboding mind had told her they would be necessary; but she tried to believe otherwise, and only adding—“He will come, he cannot but come,” she led the way to Mrs. Elwyn’s apartments, and gently moved on tiptoe; thus delicately, by her example, teaching Belford to do the same.

Mrs. Elwyn’s pallid countenance could scarcely be distinguished from the white pillow on which it rested. Belford approached the bed; she received him with a faint smile; and as he reverently bent his head, and pressed his lips to the hand which, extended on the counterpane, she did not seem to have strength to hold out, Mrs. Elwyn feebly whispered—“Tell Mr. Elwyn it will give me comfort to behold him once more, and bid him lose no time.”

“Mr. Belford says he will go himself, my dearest mama,” said Mary, in a gentle whisper.

The pleased expression of Mrs. Elwyn’s eye, as she turned it on Belford, conveyed the warmest satisfaction to his heart. Again he bent upon her hand, and exchanging a kind look of adieu with Mary Ellis, he quitted the apartment.

With the utmost speed Belford changed his ball trappings for a travelling suit, and mounting his own horse, thinking it would carry him more swiftly than he could be conveyed in a chaise, he set off for Elwyn Hall.

The rapid haste with which he moved along seemed to preclude his mind from much reflection; yet, strange as it may seem, the image of Laretta Montgomery was chased away by the dying form of Mrs. Elwyn, and tearful eye of Mary Ellis; and when he glanced at the festive scene which had so recently entranced his senses, it was with something of self-reproach, for he dwelt on the more recent and affecting one to which he had been summoned.

As the *ignis fatuus* dazzles and misleads the traveller, by its playful and versatile brilliancy, and as the mild influence of the chaste orb of night, as it pursues its steady track, gives him both content and resolution on the way, so did the benign form of Mary Ellis appear to Belford; and each wish of his soul seemed now to be turned towards the amelioration of her situation, and in hasting back to Mrs. Elwyn, with that comfort which a husband’s presence alone could give.

Mr. Elwyn was just taking his afternoon’s nap (after a plentiful meal) when Belford entered; he had given orders not to be disturbed, but the servants knew that there was always an exception in favour of their young master; neither were they mistaken; Mr. Elwyn roused himself with some appearance of pleasure, as he said—“Henry Belford, my dear boy, where did you come from? sit down—I am delighted to see you—and now you are come home to stay, I hope?”

“A very short time, my dear sir,” answered Belford, respectfully taking the hand of his patron; “but I am going to take you back with me to Cheltenham; Mrs. Elwyn wishes for your company, and I know you will not deny us.”

A “pshaw” half broke from Mr. Elwyn as Belford named his wife; but, as if recollecting himself, he made a cold inquiry after her health.

Belford then unreservedly acquainted him with the precarious state in which she lay, and which had been the occasion of his sudden return; and after having waited for some moments for Mr. Elwyn to speak, but without effect, he again addressed him, and urged the wishes of Mrs. Elwyn, saying—“I ordered the travelling chaise as I came in, for if we do not set off instantly, I *fear* we can hardly expect to see her alive.”

Mr. Elwyn trembled all over, but his silence was taken for consent by Belford, who was hastily quitting him, to see that his orders had been followed up, when Mr. Elwyn said—“Stop, Harry—come hither; stop, Harry—I cannot go.”

“*Not go, my dearest sir?*” said Belford; “not go! to afford the last earthly consolation to the amiable, the suffering, the *dying* Mrs. Elwyn?”

Elwyn shuddered, and putting both his hands before his face, he said—“No, I *cannot* go—I *cannot* behold Clara in her last moments.”

“Ah, my beloved, my honoured benefactor, say not so!” cried Belford; “it is a scene calculated to give peace and comfort to *all* her friends. The greatness of Mrs. Elwyn’s mind never shone more conspicuously than during this her long and trying illness, and as she gets nearer to the closing scene of her pilgrimage—(“Pilgrimage!” repeated Mr. Elwyn in a hollow whisper, while a sigh issued from the bottom of his heart)—her patience, her fortitude, and her faith, seem to be gaining strength as her bodily faculties decay. Believe me, my dear sir, such a contemplation has in it something, which, though it cannot be expressed, yet seems to afford us consolation, even in the midst of our affliction. We must regret her for *ourselves*—but for *her*, she seems already to have a foretaste of the happiness prepared for her; and but that she still fondly clings to attachments closely rivetted to her affectionate and benevolent heart—to *you*, her husband—to the child of her bounty—and to *me*, the happy object of your goodness, she seems already an inhabitant of that world to which she is going. The only earthly wish that now remains is *once* more to see her husband—and *surely* it will not, *cannot* be denied to her!”—and Belford grasped the hand of Mr. Elwyn, and looked in his face with a beseeching expression.

The countenance of Mr. Elwyn was no longer hid by his hands, but he seemed to look on vacancy rather than on the animated pleader, who was in an attitude which might almost be called kneeling before him.

“Pray—pray sir, do not deny me,” cried Belford, “do not now deny your *own* Harry Belford this *one* request—a request which for your *own* sake you ought to accede to, as well as for that of the dear sufferer.”

“I *cannot* go,” said Mr. Elwyn, “have I not said so?—Harry, torture me no longer; tell poor Clara—tell her—I do not know what I would say,” said he, pausing, and leaning on the mantle-piece.

“No!” said Belford, “you cannot frame a message that will excuse your attendance—I know, I feel you cannot—and you *will* accompany me.”

“Never!” said Mr. Elwyn; “I am ill—I am unhinged both in mind and body—I am not equal to the exertion—you see I am not; tell her so—say that I am indisposed, dear Harry,” said he, with some appearance of eagerness, as if happy to have hit on any thing which might wear the semblance of a reasonable excuse.

“But will you not be worse, my dear sir, if you thus give way to an imaginary imbecility? believe me, my *honoured* Mr. Elwyn,” and Belford spoke with the warmth of virtue, “there can be no danger to be apprehended from that *exertion* which is the offspring of duty and affection.

Pray, *pray* do not be angry with your Harry Belford, if he ventures to suggest to you that you will have more to dread from the pangs of self-upbraiding, should you remain here, than could possibly await you in taking this journey."

"Self-upbraiding! what do you mean, Harry?" asked Mr. Elwyn, with quickness; "are *you* then become my inquisitor and my judge? does my own—does—do *you*, Harry, condemn me?"

"Condemn you—God forbid!" cried Belford with emotion, his heart overflowing with gratitude to his patron, yet at the same moment throbbing with agonizing emotions at the idea of returning to Cheltenham unaccompanied—"God forbid, my dear Mr. Elwyn!" repeated he with fervor; "but in return for the countless obligations you have heaped on me, I would try, if possible, to prevent you from experiencing one moment of self-reproach."

Mr. Elwyn was softened towards his favourite, but he still persisted in declaring his inability to take the journey; and Belford, who believed the idea to proceed wholly from his habitual indulgence and supineness, while he lamented that long course of intemperance which had produced such imbecility and timid apprehension, saw that nothing which he could urge had power to persuade him to the contrary.

In the utmost mortification and distress, as he pictured the sad consequences which might too probably ensue to Mrs. Elwyn, when she should see him arrive without her husband, he left the room, and tried to compose the tumult of his agitated mind, in pacing with hurried steps the spacious hall; but suddenly recollecting that every moment was precious, and that while he yet lingered Mrs. Elwyn might be breathing her last, he returned to the dining-room. Rising from his seat, Mr. Elwyn poured him out a large bumper of Madeira, (having during this little interim fortified his *own* courage *not* to take the journey, but *more resolutely* to withstand the intreaties of Belford, with two or three glasses)—"Come, Harry, take a glass of wine; it will do you good."

Belford declined the invitation, saying—"That having eaten nothing for the day, he was afraid to venture."

Mr. Elwyn instantly pulled the bell, saying—"Good God!! why did you not say so before? why would you not order something? Harry, my dear Harry; you know you are master here; every thing I have is yours. Why did you wait to be asked?"

"Alas!" answered Belford, "I have had no time to bestow a thought on myself; and even now I scarcely dare take advantage of your kindness; but if you will say that *after* I have taken some refreshment, I shall have *your* company on the way"——

"I have told you, Harry," said Mr. Elwyn, "that I *cannot* go;" and he spoke with more peevishness than he had ever used to his favourite. "You would not ask me, if you—if you knew how I felt."

"But am not I a proud, a living instance," asked Belford, "that selfishness does not form a part of Mr. Elwyn's character, and to evade a temporary inconvenience, would he run the hazard of purchasing to himself a lasting subject of regret?"

"Urge me no more, imprudent boy; if you will persist, you drive me to distraction."

The look of agonizing suffering which Mr. Elwyn's countenance exhibited, as he said these words, appalled and confounded his hearer; he said no more, but hastily snatching a few mouthfuls of refreshment from a tray which a servant had put on the table, he looked at his benefactor with an expression of mingled duty and compassion, as he drank the glass of wine which he had poured out for him, and grasping his hand with emotion, (while Mr. Elwyn threw himself back in a chair, and turned his face from his gaze), he caught up his hat, and left the room; the chaise which he had ordered was at the door, and, without further delay, he sprang into it, and was driven off.

CHAP. X.

She, frail offspring of an April morn,
Poor helpless passenger from love to scorn;
While dimpled youth her sprightly cheek adorns,
Blooms a sweet rose, a rose amid the thorns;
A few short hours, with faded charms, to earth
She sinks, and leaves no vestige of her birth.

MISS AIKIN.

THE morning which dawned upon the sick-bed of Mrs. Elwyn, soon after Belford had quitted the room, brought with it some amelioration to the griefs of the watchful Mary, as she saw her beloved protectress gently resign herself to the influence of sleep.

After enjoying two hours of tranquil slumber, Mrs. Elwyn awoke calm and refreshed, free from pain, though much weakened by her recent violent attack. Sensible that she had not long to live, her eyes seemed to fix themselves on the darling object of her affection, and her heart to overflow in love towards her.—“My best child,” said she, tenderly holding her hand, “come nearer to me, and let me seize the last opportunity which may be allowed me, of making known to you my wishes, with regard to your future destination.”

Mary bent her lovely mournful countenance towards her dearest friend; she softly pressed her warm lips on her cold moist forehead, and in an attitude of pious attention, and holding in her breath, as though she would not lose a syllable, she listened to that maternal advice, which she resolved to make the sacred rule of her conduct, and which might be truly said to be engraven on her heart.

Mrs. Elwyn did not conceal from Mary that she did not entertain very sanguine expectations of seeing her husband; he had never visited her *bed of sickness*, and her *bed of death* was not likely to be a scene which would be contemplated by him; yet, to have assured him in person, that never in thought, word, or deed, had she swerved from her allegiance to her early love—to have bestowed upon him her last prayers—to have communicated personally to him her wishes concerning Mary Ellis, would have afforded her the most heartfelt satisfaction; but as she feared that it was likely to be denied her, she had addressed a letter to him, in an hour of comparative convalescence, and she now informed her weeping auditor of its contents.

Mrs. Elwyn still felt the most tender and affectionate interest in her husband’s happiness; by the natural goodness of her own nature she judged of his; and though his neglect and indifference had been closely folded in the deepest recesses of her heart, yet she suspected that they would be conjured up by the “busy meddling memory,” and that when she was gone for ever, Mr. Elwyn might feel regret and compunction; she therefore had urged in her letter to himself, and also in her advice to Mary Ellis, her continuing to reside at Elwyn Hall, till the period when her virtues should have fixed the affections of some worthy being, who might make her his willing partner for life.—“You know Mr. Elwyn’s turn of mind, my beloved girl, his peculiarities, and the different shades of his temper—you will not break in on his retirement by officiousness—you will not disturb his period of abstraction by ill timed loquacity—your gentle and unassuming manners have particularly calculated you to be an inmate in his family; and your quiet and regular method of pursuing your active avocations, while they cannot offend the most fastidious, will always afford you self-satisfaction in their discharge; besides, where could I point

out for you a more eligible asylum, than under that roof which has been your shelter from infancy, and under the immediate protection of my husband?"

"But without you, without you!"—sighed out Mary.

"Mary, we must not dare to murmur at the dispensations of the All-Wise. I have had a long time of suffering."

Mrs. Elwyn paused, and Mary once more essayed to resume her fortitude, from which she had been instantaneously bereft, as the idea forcibly presented itself to her imagination, of the solitary gloom of Elwyn Hall, when bereft of its mistress.

Mrs. Elwyn proceeded—"I have already told you, my dear child, that in the provision which I have requested Mr. Elwyn to make for you, I have removed you from an affluent rank of life, while I have guarded you from the distresses allied to poverty. If four thousand pounds would not make my Mary happy, double, nay treble that sum would fail; and the man who would not take Mary Ellis with four thousand pounds, would not deserve her."

"Enough, enough!" whispered Mary; "*enough* for *me*; what do *I* merit—what do *I* deserve—what ought *I* to expect? a poor orphan—a foundling; I owe my *life* to you. Oh, my dear madam, where might poor Mary Ellis have been at this moment, if *you* had not preserved her?"

"Compose yourself, dear Mary; for *my* sake, compose yourself. My fortune would at my death have been unalienably Mr. Elwyn's, had I never become his wife." Mrs. Elwyn sighed and paused—"I do believe, that if I were to desire him to give you the half of it, he would scrupulously, nay promptly fulfil my last request; but I have perhaps been more delicate in my expenditure, from knowing the liberality of disposition which has always distinguished Harry Elwyn."

After some more affectionate instructions on the subject of Mary's future conduct, Mrs. Elwyn proceeded as follows:—"A few words more I must add, my dearest Mary, on a topic which, perhaps, you have not yet considered; it is with regard to your settling in marriage. I do not guard you against forming a connexion with the profligate, the irreligious, or the undeserving; I feel that your good sense, and your good principles, will preserve you from such an unhappy fate; but I would shield you from the bitter pangs of ill-requited affection—I would guard you from the weakness of your own heart—I would earnestly beseech you not to accept the hand of any man, till you have in some measure proved his constancy—till you are *assured* that your affection is reciprocal. Duty, gratitude, transient partiality, many feelings may, I fear, be mistaken for that exclusive attachment which *ought* to subsist to render the married state a happy one. I am not pleading for the existence of that all-engrossing passion which, alas! is to be found only in the enthusiasm of youth, and in the pages of romance, but for that steady and reasonable affection, which is calculated to ripen into mutual confidence and esteem, and to smooth and gild the passage to the tomb."

Insensibly, as if portraying from having experienced the painful reverse in her own case, Mrs. Elwyn grew more energetic, but more affected as she concluded the last sentence, till exhausted by the exertion, she was obliged to fall back on her pillow.

Much impressed with the feeling and goodness of heart which Belford had evinced in his late visit to Cheltenham, his attention to herself, his brotherly kindness towards Mary, together with the prompt manner in which he had met the summons from the scene of festive pleasures, and had commenced a hasty and solitary journey, Mrs. Elwyn felt a latent hope arise in her mind, of his becoming, at no very distant period, the protector and husband of her Mary. In desiring that she might remain an inhabitant at the Hall, she knew that she was giving him an opportunity of seeing her in the fairest and most interesting light; and she thought it was highly probable, that

the generous and ardent temper of Belford might be taken captive by so much excellence, notwithstanding that his natural pride, and his self-consequence, might at first have revolted from the idea; but remembering her own unhappy case, and fearing that the fatal error into which her husband had fallen, (for of selfish or of interested views, in forming a connexion with herself, she had never accused Harry Elwyn), she had been thus particular in warning her youthful *protégée*.

Although Mrs. Elwyn tried to conceal the disappointment which she experienced, on seeing Belford return unaccompanied by Mr. Elwyn, yet it wounded her soul—her faithful heart; to be denied a last look of the beloved object, for whom she had sacrificed all her earthly prospects, and all her earthly happiness, was painfully, acutely felt, even when her entire resignation to the will of Heaven, and the fortitude with which she contemplated her approaching dissolution, might, in some measure, have been supposed to have blunted these sensations.—But

On some fond breast the parting soul relies,
Some pious drop the closing eye requires;
Even from the tomb the voice of Nature cries,
Even in our ashes live the wonted fires.

The constant and the faithful heart of virtuous woman, clings with its last sigh to the object of early and pure attachment; of this nature was the attachment of Mrs. Elwyn; it had upborne itself in the midst of coldness, estrangement, and neglect, and it did not *reproach* Mr. Elwyn for this last instance of unkindness; for every jarring, every warring sentiment; was extirpated from her pious breast; and in the arms of her beloved Mary Ellis she resigned her last breath, while beseeching Heaven to shower down its blessings on the heads of Mr. Elwyn, on her child, and on Harry Belford, who, overcome with grief, knelt at the foot of the bed, (and clasped his hands in speechless but pious earnestness, lifting up his eyes to Heaven, as if to witness the sacredness of his promise), as the expiring saint, pointing to Mary Ellis, besought *his* care of her.

Such scenes as these have truly been said to better the heart. In the contemplation of the latter end of such a woman, the soul seems purified from all selfish, from all gross feelings.

Belford lifted up a fervent aspiration for such an happy exit to himself; and while he took the hand of Mary, in order to speak words of comfort, he approached her with the respect and veneration with which he would have addressed a ministering angel, for such had she appeared to him.

Poor Mary *could* not be comforted—“I weep, dear Mr. Belford,” said she, “but it is for myself I weep; leave me, leave me now—let me give way to my feelings for a few hours—I shall then be better—I will then try to frame my mind to some degree of composure.”

Belford pressed her hand in silence, and retired to acquaint Mr. Elwyn with the melancholy event which had taken place, and to give the necessary orders, and make arrangements for the removal of the body to Elwyn Hall.

CHAP. XI.

Do foul misdeeds of former times,
Wring with remorse thy guilty breast,
And ghosts of unforgiven crimes,
Murder thy rest.

Lash'd by the furies of the mind,
From wrath and vengeance wouldst thou flee?
MONTGOMERY.

WE will not weary our readers with a minute detail of these cheerless scenes; suffice it to observe, that Mary Ellis and Belford preceded the hearse which contained the remains of their lamented friend, in a mourning chariot, the servants following in a coach.

By the express desire of Mr. Elwyn, the melancholy procession did not rest at the Hall, but proceeded immediately to the parish church. As they slowly passed through the village of Norton, and the heavy bell of death first struck on the ear of Mary, she leant back in the carriage, all her fortitude seemed to forsake her at the sound, and the consoling and encouraging voice of her companion was scarcely heard in this excess of grief; but the chaise stopt at the church-yard-gate, and through that walk, where her kind protectress had often leant on *her* youthful arm, it was now poor Mary's turn to be supported by Belford. The servants of the Hall, the tenantry, and the sorrowing peasants, lined the way, and sighs and tears only broke on the silence. Mr. Elwyn was missing; he had signified to Belford that he was unable to witness the scene; and as he had made *that* an excuse where his presence might have given comfort, Belford did not wish to tax his feelings on the present occasion.

Mary Ellis seemed as if she had lost all that the world contained worth living for, when the corse was interred in the family vault of the Elwyns; but she remembered that she was now going to meet Mr. Elwyn, and that she must endeavour to put in practice some of that advice with respect to her future conduct, which had been given her by one whom it had hitherto been her delight to obey.

The manly soul of Belford sympathized with the lovely girl, but he tried, by his steady manner, to infuse some portion of resolution into her.

Mary had always feared Mr. Elwyn, because she had always perceived that she was not beloved by him, and this feeling had added to her natural reserve in his presence; *now* it seemed as if her imagination was conjuring up his recent neglect of her beloved protectress, more painfully to distress her; and she trembled from head to foot, as Belford almost lifted her from the chaise, and assisted her across the hall to the library, where Mr. Elwyn was sitting by the fire.

The windows were already closed, and candles were lighted, though it was yet early in the afternoon, and the sun had not reached the end of his daily career; but the idea of seeing the funeral procession, as it passed through the long avenue which led from the Hall to the village church, (and which had been the accustomed burial-path time immemorial), was insupportable to Mr. Elwyn, who would also, had it been possible, have stopt all entrance to his ears, when the bell announced to him the expected approach of the procession. Alas! it would have seemed as if he had wilfully closed the avenues of his heart, to give force and bitterness to the complicated emotions of his anguished and tortured spirit.

A large folding screen concealed Mary Ellis from the view of Mr. Elwyn; with something like a forcible action, she withdrew her arm from the supporting one of Belford, and while she impelled him forwards, she yet lingered behind the screen, putting her hand to her panting side, as if to acquire resolution.

“My dear sir, how are you?” asked Belford.

“Harry, my dear fellow, my dearest boy, are you come? is it past—is it all over? how glad I am to see you!”

Mr. Elwyn’s voice seemed obstructed, his words were hurried.

Mary now advanced, but her pallid cheeks, her tearful eyes, her agitated frame, as she tottered towards Mr. Elwyn, all spoke a language too intelligible to him; he started, and as she would have taken his hand, he turned from her, and burst into tears.

“It is too much, Henry,” said he; “it is too much—I can’t bear it. Harry, take her away, if you will not have me die before you. I cannot bear to look at her.”

Poor Mary heard no more; she sunk fainting on the floor, and was borne out of the room by the kind and generous Belford, who, hastily giving her to the care of the housekeeper, returned to his benefactor.

Belford saw, and deeply lamented, that weakness and imbecility of mind which had so fatally usurped the place of every manly sentiment in the character of Mr. Elwyn, and he resolved to seize the present opportunity of making known the last wishes and intentions of Mrs. Elwyn with regard to Mary Ellis.

He must have wanted discernment and observation, if he had not always noticed the indifference with which Mr. Elwyn had treated this gentle girl; but he had, at the same time, felt his indulgence to himself, and had seen that this had been an all-engrossing preference.

Mrs. Elwyn’s capacious heart had taken an interest in *his* welfare, as well as in that of Mary; but dreadful would be the fate of this poor girl, if in losing her kind and affectionate protectress, she should find herself not only an object of indifference, but almost of disgust and aversion to *him*, who was to supply to her the place of all she had lost.

Painful as the duty was, and conscious that the subject was a most ungrateful one to the mind of Mr. Elwyn, yet Belford did not falter in the task he had deputed to himself; he went through a cursory review of the patience, the resignation, and the fortitude which Mrs. Elwyn had evinced on her deathbed, and entered into a minute detail of her wishes, with regard to the future destination of Mary, as expressed to him, and through him to be communicated to Mr. Elwyn.

As Belford spoke, Mr. Elwyn exhibited evident symptoms of uneasiness.

When he mentioned the sum which Mrs. Elwyn had requested him to bestow on Mary Ellis, (and which she had likewise specified in a short address, which she had written to her husband)—“*Four* thousand pounds!” repeated Mr. Elwyn; “poor Clara! always modest—always considerate—always fearful of overstepping the bounds of justice—always setting limits to thy noble liberality of spirit. *If* thou hadst said ten, twenty, thirty, it should have been hers.”

“I know it would,” said Belford, his bright eyes sparkling; “but Mary Ellis, if I rightly estimate her turn of mind, would not have felt happier for the addition.”

“*I could* have wished,” said Mr. Elwyn, “that she might have been allowed to fix her residence any where but here.”

“And why, my dear sir?” asked Belford with eagerness; “why should such a wish arise in your breast? I am conscious that it was on your account, more than on that of Miss Ellis, that our departed friend recommended her residence here.”

“On *my* account, Harry?”

“Yes, sir, on *your* account. Mrs. Elwyn knew, that in the soothing delicacy, in the *devotedness* of female attention, there is something which is denied to our rougher sex; bereft of *her* society, of *her* converse, of *her* fond, of *her* attentive cares, who would cheer—who would enliven—who would administer to you—who but this good girl? who, trained up in the principles and practice of her revered friend, will feel it the pride and the glory of her life, to be in the remotest degree instrumental to your comfort.”

“Well, well, she may stay—she *is* to stay—Clara commanded it,” said Mr. Elwyn, with some degree of peevishness.

“And you will *bless* her for it,” said Belford, with much warmth; “*without* female society, what should the best of us become? and now that death has deprived you of her—”

“No more—no more, Harry; not a word more, if you love me,” said Mr. Elwyn, starting from his seat.

“Forgive me, my best friend,” said Belford, “for thus cruelly reminding you of the extent of your loss. Alas!” continued he, with a deep-drawn sigh, “we *all* feel it to be irreparable.”

Mr. Elwyn walked to the other end of the room, he clasped his hands in agony, he almost groaned as he said—“Harry, Harry Belford, I believe I shall go distracted!”

Belford was awed into silence by the unaccountable emotion of Mr. Elwyn; for it seemed unaccountable to him, that a man, who could feel so acutely, and who exhibited such undissembled marks of sorrow at the death of his wife, should yet have treated her with such cold and cutting neglect during her life, and have cruelly refused her last—her dying request.

Belford was at this period new to the emotions of the human heart, he had never before witnessed the “compunctious visitings of conscience.”

Mary Ellis soon recovered her sense and recollection; but it was some time ere she ventured again to obtrude herself into the presence of Mr. Elwyn; she might have absented herself entirely, and not have feared that an inquiry would have been made after her from the master of the mansion, (so wholly insignificant did she seem in his estimation); but when he happened to cast his eyes accidentally on her grief-worn countenance, immediately were they withdrawn, for it seemed as if the alteration he there witnessed always carried a pang to his heart.

At these moments the kindness and consideration of Belford were deeply felt by our amiable orphan; he strenuously endeavoured to divert his patron’s mind to another subject; and he never drew his attention towards her, unless when a gleam of cheerfulness overspread her features, or some degree of gaiety was perceptible in her conversation. In the most trifling instances, he discovered a scrupulous care of wounding her delicacy, or embarrassing her feelings.

The first time that she made one of the dinner-party, he saw the diffidence with which she entered; he saw the painful recollections which threatened to overcome her, on seeing the head of that table vacant, which used to be graced by one, whose refined sense and comprehensive mind had been the soul of the repast. He marked the irresolute step with which she seemed to linger, as if waiting for Mr. Elwyn to tell her where to place herself; with that promptness of decision, which, when accompanied by judgment, is of incalculable advantage in our journey through life, Belford took her hand, and seating her where from infancy she had been seen, (near the loved mistress of the mansion, as he said—“I will take this office on *myself*,” he sat down at the head of the table; thus sparing Mary Ellis from the hazard of displeasing Mr. Elwyn by doing wrong, and preventing the mutual embarrassment, which would have naturally ensued, had her diffident

eyes constantly met those of Mr. Elwyn, (when they were lifted from her plate), and had he beheld in them (as he usually *seemed* to do) the silent accusers of his conduct.

Mary Ellis, with an activity of mind which she had ever been accustomed by her benefactress to prize, and to encourage, as the first of human blessings, resumed those occupations and employments in which she had been used to pass her time; and though she seemed to have lost the stimulus to all her exertions, the master-spring of all her actions, in losing this dear friend, yet that friend had given her too right a notion of the duties of a Christian, for her to suffer herself to sink into supineness and despondency.

In being still permitted to inspect the village school, which Mrs. Elwyn had founded; in being still permitted to assist those poor cottagers, who had been used to be benefited by that dear friend's bounty; and in visiting, as heretofore, the sick and disabled children of industry, she felt that she was pursuing that course which had been marked out for her. While in cultivating those flowers which Mrs. Elwyn had most admired; in rearing, in fostering those plants which she had beheld with an eye of pleasure, the most grateful, the most *sacred* feelings of solitary satisfaction seemed to infuse themselves into the mind of our youthful orphan; and often, in the fulness of her heart, would she piously recollect the many mercies and blessings which were yet retained to her.

She had a respectable protector in Mr. Elwyn—a home of comfort under his roof—a kind, a considerate friend in Harry Belford; and that kindness, that consideration, that affection, had shone forth tenfold since the demise of her first friend; and if her society could in any shape, could in the most trifling way, be useful to Mr. Elwyn, how delightful would be the idea of returning some *small* part of that obligation which she owed to his protection! and how pleasing must such conduct be to the sanctified spirit of Mrs. Elwyn, were it permitted her, from the regions of blessedness, to take notice of those whom she had once valued *below*!

We shall be accused of drawing our heroine (as is usual with all novelists) a *creature of perfection*, though it must be allowed, that the two words *thus* joined are a contradiction in terms; but our design is to shew the practical advantages of a judicious education, and the stability and the strength of mind which may be derived from an early knowledge of religion, and an *exercise* of its duties, even by a weak and timid female.

Mary Ellis was attractive in person, but to those *only* who were accustomed to look for natural beauties; she had great diffidence in her manner, and very little enthusiasm in her *expressions*; neither had she much romance in her composition; yet her feelings were by nature acute, and her heart alive to every painful and pleasurable emotion.

With the death of Mrs. Elwyn, the wish of one day discovering her sister seemed to have taken a firmer hold on the mind of Mary; and, perhaps, the idea was not, at this time, without its beneficial effects, as it, in some measure, diverted her thoughts, and turned them into another current. Hope flushed her animated features at the prospect of being known—of being restored to this long-lost sister; she would retrace the circumstances of her infant days, and dwell on the description of the lady who had taken her sister away, as given her by Mrs. Elwyn; but naturally prone to extenuate, and willing to encourage cheerful ideas in the breast of her child, the *hopes*, and not the *fears*, which that eccentric and mysterious female's protection might have been likely to have produced, were alone displayed to Mary; for Mrs. Elwyn had long given up all idea of hearing of the fate of the other orphan.

In being restored to her sister—in having a relative claim on one human being, there was something so approximate to the disposition of our heroine, that she could not help believing that she should one day see it realized; and in the bright tints in which youth is used to deck a

favourite perspective, she expected to be pressed to the arms, and received into the heart of all that was amiable, good, and virtuous.

In contradiction to what we have remarked above, this idea may be called enthusiastic, and breathing the true spirit of romance; but we would rather have it called the ardent glow of sisterly affection.

From reveries of this kind Mary frequently roused herself, acknowledged the improbability of having her wishes realized, and by more sedulous attention to her pursuits, she endeavoured to be thoroughly content with such things as were granted to her, and not to waste her time in shadowy visions, when substantial blessings were within her reach.

Mr. Elwyn had retained all the domestics of his late lady, and from the old housekeeper to the kitchen-maid, there was not one of them who did not respect and love the gentle Mary.

Since the death of Mrs. Elwyn, no ladies had visited at the Hall; Mary Ellis not being recognised as its mistress by Mr. Elwyn, her name being seldom mentioned by him, her having taken no consequence upon her since her return, (but on the contrary, appearing to conduct herself with greater humility than she had done before), her disappearance when any gentlemen had called at the Hall, and her continuing to sit at the side of the table, (all which particulars had been scrupulously inquired into by the decorous females of Norton), had determined it against her.

“In the *best* of days, Elwyn Hall had not been a very *gay* house to visit at; there was something very odd, and very unaccountable, certainly, about Mr. Elwyn.”

There existed no *law*, however, against brothers, and fathers, and uncles, and sons, and twelfth *male* cousins, inviting Mr. Belford to all the parties in the vicinity; so it was finally decided, *nem. con.* that Miss Ellis was *not* to be taken notice of—she was nothing—*nobody*; and *if* her origin *should* ever be discovered, in all probability, they might have to *hug* themselves on this prudential resolve.

Poor Mary Ellis never having conceived herself to be *anybody*, was not surprised at receiving no civilities from those ladies who used to be so attentive to her when they visited Mrs. Elwyn. Mrs. Elwyn was gone, and she had not an idea of meriting a shadow of distinction on her own account. From how many mortifications—from how many slights is a truly humble mind shielded!

CHAP. XII.

The passions are the chief destroyers of our peace; the storms and tempests of the moral world (to extirpate them is impossible, if it were desirable); but to regulate them by habitual care, is not so difficult, and is certainly worth all our attention.

KNOX.

THE spirits of Mr. Elwyn seemed in some measure to have recovered from their temporary depression; he was as partially indulgent as ever to his favourite, yet of late there had been something particular in his manner when they were left *tête-à-tête*; frequently had Mr. Elwyn called off Belford's attention from the book he was reading, and had begun to address him with an air of extraordinary seriousness, when Belford having put himself into an attitude of profound and respectful attention, instantaneously the resolve of Mr. Elwyn seemed to be changed, and pointing to him to continue his studies, he had resumed his seat, and his usual air of abstraction.

More than once had he started from his chair, and as if on the point of communicating something of great moment, had placed himself close to the ear of his expecting auditor, and scarcely had he uttered a sentence, ere his whole soul seemed to recoil from the purposed communication; and Belford had again been left to conjecture what undiscovered secret thus troubled the spirit of his patron.

Mrs. Elwyn had now been a month dead, and Mr. Elwyn had one afternoon been more than usually quick in taking his wine. Mary Ellis had long quitted the dining-room, and on the servants appearing with candles, Mr. Elwyn said—"No, take them away, we will ring when we want them."—His spirits fortified by wine, and shrouded from the piercing gaze of Belford by the tempered light, he drew nearer to the fire, and pointing to him, said—"Come nearer, Harry."

Belford obeyed in silence.

"We have been very dull of late; will you take a journey with me?"

"Certainly," said Belford; "it will give me great pleasure to attend you, my dear sir, as I flatter myself that the change will be very beneficial to your health and spirits."

"I *flatter* myself too, perhaps," replied Elwyn; "but I *think* it will. Harry, I think you do not remember your mother?"

The question startled Belford; he had never before heard Mr. Elwyn mention the name of either of his parents; he had always understood that they had died when he was an infant; he looked at Mr. Elwyn, as if to know whether he heard aright; that gentleman, however, proceeded with the hurried articulation which a person may be supposed to use, who wants to get over a painful recital.

"She must be very anxious to see you, I am sure—I mean to take you to see your mother."

"To see my mother!" repeated Belford; "to see my mother!" and seizing his patron's hand, as if fearing that his senses were quitting him, he said—"My dearest sir, recollect yourself a moment; your Harry Belford is the child of your bounty—he is an orphan—deprived of both his parents."

“No, no; not so, Harry,” answered Mr. Elwyn, pressing his hand with impulsive tenderness; “your mother lives! your—you shall see her, my dear boy—you shall be held to the heart of your mother.”

“Almighty God! *what* is it you tell me?” cried Belford; “oh, pray sir, I conjure you, deceive me not—but say, where is this dear—this long-estranged parent? Oh, take me to her—lead me to her—and fear not, that while I evince my duty to *her*, my *affection* towards yourself can ever know diminution.”

“I hope not, I trust not, Harry,” said Mr. Elwyn, pressing his outspread hand upon his heaving breast; “but hear me, hear me out, and interrupt me not.—It is now something more than two-and-twenty years ago since your father, a young unthinking man, of good family and expectations, by accident saw your mother. She was then in the bloom of fifteen, and never did the eye light on a lovelier object; she was pure as an angel—simple as an infant—guileless as a dove; in comparison of your father’s, her situation in life was humble—she was an orphan, and under the protecting care of a brother, who, with the scanty stipend annexed to a village cure, sheltered his sister from want, and secured her comfort, while he shielded her from insult. This clergyman had been a college acquaintance of your father’s, and while making a little pleasurable tour, he happened to light on this humble residence of innocence and piety. He saw—he *loved* the angel girl I have described.”

Belford started from his seat, and clasping his hands furiously together, he cried out, with all the fatal impetuosity which characterized his disposition—“Oh, say not that he seduced her—say not, I charge you, say not that a villain triumphed over her fall—oh, say not, for God’s sake, say not, that your Harry Belford is the child of shame!” and then he fell back in his chair, as if entirely overpowered by the oppressive weight of his feelings.

Elwyn trembled as he sat—“No, no!” cried he; “oh, hear me, hear me out; Harry, hear me say, from *that* guilt your father was spared—he *married* her—the ceremony was solemnized in the parish church of which her brother was the pastor.”

“My father was a man of honour!” said Belford, in a tone of the most proud emotion; “thanks, thanks be to Heaven, I am not an *illegitimate child!*”

“In *that* instance,” said Mr. Elwyn; “in *this* instance—oh, what was I saying? hear me out, for mercy’s sake, Harry—do not interrupt me. I have said that your father had good expectations, but his were only reversionary prospects; and your grandfather having impaired his paternal fortune, naturally wished to *secure* one to his son, by an advantageous matrimonial alliance. An engagement of this kind had been entered into with a young lady, a relative of the family; the passive consent of the young man had been gained previous to his seeing your mother. But *then*, what had the prudential maxims of his father to oppose to such an all-engrossing passion as his? his marriage was kept secret—his frequent absences from home were not inquired into by his indulgent parents—neither by the easy object of *their* choice. Harry, let no one say he can withstand temptation till he has met the trial. In his early years, had the book of his succeeding life been opened to him, your father, like Hazael, would have said—‘Is thy servant a dog to do this thing?’ To his first faulty conduct, to his clandestine and concealed marriage, ensued the long catalogue of his crimes.”—Belford started—“He *dared* not confess his marriage to his father—neither to the lady to whom he had been plighted; for while the former looked forward to his speedy and certain advancement, the latter credulously believed *herself* the object of his fondest love. Your father had been nurtured on the lap of ease and luxury; he had imbibed ideas of expense and profusion, but ill according with the connexion he had formed; bred to no profession—used to little exertion, he had no means of maintaining his wife. Ah! why

seek to extenuate—why dwell for a moment on this ungrateful, this piercing subject? The clergyman, the brother of your mother, died of a contagious fever, which he had taken in administering the last solemn offices of religion to a sick parishioner. The time drew near when your father was expected to unite himself with the other lady—he succeeded in deceiving the unsophisticated mind of his wife—she believed what *he* told her, that the marriage being solemnized before she was of age, was consequently illegal, and that it had been otherwise informal. With her brother she had lost her only adviser, her only relative; and passively relinquishing her boy to the sole care of his father, she silently sought the asylum which *he* had prepared for her.”

“Dear suffering angel!” ejaculated Belford.

“Your father then resigned himself to the wishes of his family, and married the lady they had chosen for him.”

“Married! married did you say—married?” groaned out Belford; “married? and was this vil——” the word was but half-uttered—“and was *this* my father?”

He strode about the room in agony; then walking up to Mr. Elwyn, whose emotion was but too evident, as he witnessed the tumultuous anguish of Belford’s jarring feelings—“Oh sir, tell me—tell me—where—when—*how* did he die?” and then falling back, with fearfully uplifted hands, as if he expected to hear that he had been his own executioner.

“He lives, my son!” cried Mr. Elwyn, sinking on his knees before him; “he lives! behold him here—Harry, behold your father!”

“My father?—Mr. Elwyn—my benefactor—my friend!” cried Belford, throwing his arms round him, tenderly embracing him, and lifting him upon his seat—“Oh, my father!” then suddenly recollecting the virtues and the injuries of the deceased Mrs. Elwyn, of the amiable friend, of the irreproachable protectress of Mary Ellis, he retreated to another part of the room, and burst into tears.

A long explanation ensued to this affecting discovery.

The ardent and impetuous disposition of Belford impelled him to seek his mother immediately, and he eagerly demanded Mr. Elwyn’s promise for setting out on the journey the following morning.

Yes, he should be introduced—he should be known to this lovely, this much-injured parent—no longer would she mourn in solitude and sorrow the disappointment of her early prospects—her estrangement from her child; she would be restored to the arms of her husband—she would appear to the world in her real character—she would acknowledge her son, her *legitimate* son; from henceforth, he should bear the name of his father; he should be known—he should be received as the lineal heir of Mr. Elwyn.

These were bright prospects, well calculated to sooth the high spirit, and to blow the latent pride of Belford into a flame; but quickly were his sensations changed, for when, with the most undissembled satisfaction, he expressed himself on the subject of his mother’s restoration to fame, and to a highly respectable situation in society, he was stopped by the piercing groan of his father.—“Alas! my poor Harry, in vindicating the honour of your injured mother, would you pass sentence on that of your father?”

The question was unanswerable—Belford felt it through his whole frame, which thrilled with horror; yet, starting up, he cried—“Oh, tell me what you would do? would you introduce a son to a parent, and still let that parent behold in him the child of her degradation and infamy? Oh, why, why was this fatal discovery made to me, if still—”

“Harry, have patience; have a little command over your feelings, and hear me.”

Belford was recalled to recollection, and his countenance again assumed that air of respectful consideration with which he had been always used to regard Mr. Elwyn.

“It has long been my determination,” said Mr. Elwyn, “to bring your mother to the Hall as its mistress; the declining health of—of poor Clara had prepared me for the event, and determined me as to my future conduct—my injury to *her* had been irreparable. I had no alternative, but to let her die in ignorance of my guilty conduct; but fearful that the sight of her sufferings might bereave me of my self-command, I refused—I could not consent to her—to go—you know what I would say, Harry. In declaring myself the husband of your mother, I am fulfilling an act of duty towards you. *You* must have no doubts on the subject—I will shew you the marriage certificate, and from henceforth you shall not only *feel* yourself my son, but you shall be called by the name of Elwyn.” The eyes of Belford were involuntarily lighted by added brilliancy, as he heard these latter words—“This, for *your* sake, my child; but to carry some appearance of propriety to the world, I shall again unite myself, and that publicly, to your mother.”

“But why?” asked Belford, with quickness, “why, if the first marriage be legal, why the necessity of a second? will not such a proceeding appear to establish the criminality of the former connexion? shall I not still *appear* the child of infamy?”

“And would you have me throw myself at once upon the world the thing I am—a cool decided villain? Shall I acknowledge the dissimulation which for a long term of years I practised on a woman, whose virtues, whose talents, whose greatness, whose undeviating goodness, were seen, were known to all? shall I hold myself up to view an object of universal abhorrence and scorn? and shall that heart, which long has borne the barbed arrow, at length burst with agony?”

“Oh, no—no, my father, my friend! pity, pardon me!” cried Belford; “but overwhelmed by a contrariety of new, of overpowering emotions, I know not what I say, nor scarcely what I think.”

“Had the much-abused Clara any relative to whom I could make restitution for the injuries I heaped upon her,” continued Mr. Elwyn, “I would with joy, with satisfaction, relinquish that fortune for which I sacrificed my principles, for which I bartered my integrity, but which never contributed to my happiness. She had no friend, no relative but myself; and I, how did *I* abuse the sacred trust?” Mr. Elwyn paused, and then resumed as follows:—“Your mother, I have said, believed our marriage informal; and consequently, now that I am at liberty to make another choice, she will feel herself restored to fame and character. In her retirement she has assumed the name of Belford, and has passed for a widow—you *are* her son; and if I suffer you to take my name, on bringing your parent to the Hall, the world may conjecture what it pleases—you will know the truth; and at *my* death, it then may be discovered. Oh, spare, spare me only till *then*, Harry!” and Mr. Elwyn, with clasped hands, looked beseechingly at his son.

Belford was deeply affected, and returning an answer of mingled respect and feeling, he besought Mr. Elwyn to let him retire, and endeavour to tranquillize his mind; but alas! a most difficult task still awaited Belford; Mr. Elwyn commissioned him to prepare Mary Ellis for the reception of the new mistress of the Hall.—“Take an opportunity of doing so this evening, Harry,” said Mr. Elwyn; “I shall retire to the library; explain as much to her—say what you think fit. For this cause it was that I could have wished her deceased friend had not recommended her residence here.”

“Why—why, my dear sir?” asked Belford, with his accustomed ardour; “will not the society—will not the converse of my *amiable mother*, such as you have portrayed her to me—will not these be of invaluable benefit to the gentle Mary? will not my *mother* soon learn to

estimate the mild retiring graces of her character? and when the awkwardness of the first introduction is over, will it not be a mutual benefit? and, in the reciprocal interchange of good offices, will not their comforts be augmented—their happiness improved?”

“I hope so,” answered Elwyn, as he motioned towards the door.

Belford understood his meaning, and left the room; but he took his hat in the hall, and walked for some time in the avenue leading to the house, ere he could attain resolution to seek Mary Ellis.

Good Heavens! what a recital had he just heard! and how did he pity, accuse, extenuate, lament, and mourn by turns, as he thought of his mother, of his father, and of the excellent, the much-injured woman, who had so long usurped the place of another—unconsciously, innocently usurped it! To tell the child of *her* benevolence of the base, the deceitful conduct of the man she had called her husband—of her nearest relative, while that child’s soft eyes were yet moistened with tears for her death—and to tell her that this man was *his* own father—oh, dreadful, heart-piercing idea! “No, it cannot—cannot be,” said Belford, “I cannot teach the gentle girl to *hate me*—to despise my father; what then shall I dare acknowledge, or rather ask—what shall I *dare* conceal? Dissimulation, what pangs dost thou inflict upon an open and ingenuous mind!”

Belford saw, and deeply lamented the fatal weakness of his father’s character; he had *courage* to confess a part, but not the *whole* of his nefarious conduct to the world; he still feared its condemnation, although he had voluntarily defied a higher and more dread tribunal; and though, by involving his former connexion with Mrs. Belford in mystery, he would most assuredly affix an imputation on her character, and hold up his son to the world in a “questionable shape,” yet he still pertinaciously adhered to this half-deceptive and half-repentant conduct, and selfishly shrouded his own guilt, though conscious that his only refuge consisted in the apparent culpability of the innocent mother of his son.—“Let me not dwell on this subject,” thought Belford; “oh, let me cautiously scan a parent’s faults!”

CHAP. XIII.

“Oh, fate unjust,
Of womankind,” she cried.

SOUTHEY.

BELFORD knew where to find Mary Ellis. In a little apartment, which had been fitted up by her benefactress for her use, and which had been the daily, almost the hourly scene of her early instructions, and which now exhibited, in the books, the pictures, the furniture, and in an hundred inanimate objects, memorials of her kind care and of her tender affection; to this little sanctuary Mary retired, with all the reverential fondness which may be supposed to fill the soul of the devotee when visiting the shrine of his tutelary saint. Here she again seemed to hear the voice of her beloved Mrs. Elwyn; it spoke to her in every article which surrounded her; and here, as if she was still conscious of being beheld, and being approved by her, she delighted in pursuing those studies, and those occupations which she had more particularly recommended.

A gentle tap at the door was answered by the soft voice of Mary; and looking round to see the intruder, she hastily rose on seeing it was Mr. Belford.

“I am not come to disturb you, Mary,” said he; “sit down;” but his hand trembled as he took hers to reseat her. “I want to say a great deal to you, so you must give me a cup of tea *tête-à-tête* to-night, for Mr. Elwyn has desired not to be interrupted: we are both going on a journey to-morrow, and he has some business to settle.”

“Both going?” repeated Mary; “this journey is sudden—is it not, Mr. Belford?”

“Yes, it is,” answered he; and he grew more confused as he endeavoured to proceed.

“I am glad Mr. Elwyn has summoned resolution to leave home,” said Mary; “he will be the better for the change; this place must every moment remind us of her who is for ever gone. There is no accounting,” continued she, “for the different effects such a remembrance produces on different dispositions. To Mr. Elwyn it evidently conveys the most distressing sensations; but for myself, believe me, when I say it gives me a feeling which, though I cannot describe it, I would not be divested of for worlds.”

Mary spoke with more than usual animation; the recent scenes in which they had been joint partners, and the amiable light in which Belford had appeared, had insensibly divested her manner of all that timidity and reserve which she used to feel in expressing her sentiments to him. Since the death of her protectress, he had been her only friend and confidant.

“Some cloud hangs on your brow, Mr. Belford,” said Mary; “tell me, do I not guess aright? have you not been reviewing the scene in which we both took a melancholy part on this day month? even now, I seem to hear the solemn bell, which told us all our earthly duties were ended.”

“Yes, I well recollect that it was on this day month that we returned to the Hall,” answered Belford, with a sigh; “but, Mary, I am come to tell you of an important event, of a circumstance which has just been made known to me—I have found a parent.” Mary Ellis started; she fixed her eyes on his agitated countenance. “Yes, Mary, I am going with Mr. Elwyn to be introduced to my mother.”

“Your mother?” asked Mary; “and have *you* a mother living? Oh, happy, happy Belford! and have *you* then found what I have just lost for ever? But tell me,” continued Mary, who did

not suffer selfish regrets to take place of the undissembled satisfaction which she felt in Belford's recovery of a parent, "tell me, why have you been kept thus long in ignorance of her existence? I always thought *you* were an orphan like myself; and Mrs. Elwyn thought so—surely Mrs. Elwyn thought so?" and she seemed to ask the question of Belford.

"I *hope* she thought so!" hastily cried he; but checking his emotions, he said—"Mr. Elwyn, you know, has hitherto supplied the place of both my parents to me; but *now* he kindly—now he is going to make me known to my mother; she has lived in retirement for many years. My father was—my father was well known to my—to Mr. Elwyn; my mother is to return with us to the Hall. Say, Mary, will you not love her? will you not esteem her? will you not respect my mother?"

"Yes," said Mary with warmth, "I owe you many, many obligations, Mr. Belford; you have been uniformly kind, attentive, and affectionate to me; and now that—now that the mistress of this house is no longer here, Mary Ellis will do her utmost to make it comfortable to Mrs. Belford, to evince her respect for your mother."

"Generous good girl!" said Belford, pressing her hand; "and even if you should see her appear in *another* character—if you should find that by doing so the happiness of Mr. Elwyn was augmented—oh, Mary, if he should introduce her as his wife—"

Mary withdrew her hand.—"So soon, so *very* soon forgotten!" said she, casting her eyes round the room, as if she were calling every article within it to witness to the truth, the tenderness, and the virtues of her beloved Mrs. Elwyn. "Do I, *can* I understand you, Mr. Belford?—have I heard aright? and is it *you* who have said it? and is it—*must* it be true?"

Mary took out her handkerchief; she read the answer of Belford in his countenance, and she gave vent to those gushing tears which forced their way. This moment appeared to her the most afflictive one which she had ever known. She felt a sensation of indignation rise in her gentle bosom towards Mr. Elwyn—of disgust towards the woman who could so soon consent to fill the place vacated by her excellent friend. But she was Belford's *mother*; and Belford himself seemed unable to add a syllable in extenuation of this indecorous haste; for he sat the image of mute melancholy, leaning his head on his hand, as he listened to her piercing sighs.

"And when—and how—and where did Mr. Elwyn?—oh, Mr. Belford!" cried Mary, "tell me *all* you would *have* me know?"

"Dearest Mary," said Belford, "the sight of your distress tortures my inmost soul; only within the last hour have these circumstances been known to me, but if there is *truth* in *man*, I must believe that I am the son of a *virtuous* woman. It seems," continued Belford, with that confusion which must ever attend a voluntary deception in a candid breast—"it appears," continued he, "that Mr. Elwyn has long known my mother."

"And *loved* her!" added Mary; "ah, I *now* see it as it *was*; without a previous attachment, could Mrs. Elwyn's virtues have been slighted, overlooked—could *she* have been beheld with such cold, such cutting indifference? oh, Mr. Belford, forgive me if I offend."

"Mary, you cannot offend!" cried Belford, with warmth; "in the natural expressions of your grateful and ingenuous mind, can I discern any thing which I do not applaud and admire? believe me, dear Mary, that not for his *own* mother would Belford plead if he thought her unworthy—if he thought her conduct had been faulty; the fostered *protégée* of Mrs. Elwyn shall never become the associate of vice or imprudence. Mr. Elwyn has assured me that my mother's conduct has been spotless, and that *I* am the *legitimate son* of my parents; he acknowledges that he long has loved my mother—he represents her as a model of all that is lovely and attractive in

woman; and if my mother consents to gild the evening of my benefactor's days—oh, Mary, shall we not mutually rejoice in his happiness?"

"We ought—I ought," said Mary, "I hope I *shall*—but taken so unawares—this *very* evening—such an unlooked for, such an unexpected change! my spirits too having been much depressed of late—you must excuse me, Mr. Belford, if I say not all I ought; but at your return I hope you shall have no cause to condemn me."

"Never can I condemn *you*," cried Belford; "but severely do I *now* condemn myself for thus distressing you; and yet some preparation was required—some explanation was necessary."

"Indeed there was," answered she; "and I will sedulously employ the period of your absence, in bringing every unruly emotion into subjection."

"And *I*," cried Belford, with enthusiasm, "will employ mine in preparing my mother to love and to esteem you."

Belford then entered into a more particular description of his feelings of delightful anticipation, at the expected introduction to his mother, in the hope of diverting the channel of her thoughts. With his accustomed rapid energy, he depicted his mother as she had been represented to him by Mr. Elwyn; but while sitting with Mary Ellis before him, and portraying all that was amiable, gentle, domestic, and retiring in the female character, our readers may be apt to suspect him of painting from the page that thus lay open to his view, rather than from one which he had never studied.

Of a temper which peculiarly qualified her to share in the pleasurable emotions of others, because it was so entirely divested of egotism and selfishness, Mary entered with generous ardour into the sanguine emotions of delight which Belford expressed; and she did not endeavour to lower, or to detract from those high ideas of perfection and pre-eminence with which his radiant fancy had encircled the form of this maternal relative.

He unfolded to her Mr. Elwyn's intention of giving him *his* family name; and as Mr. Elwyn was going to marry the parent, and her son had long been the son of his fond adoption, Mary thought this design was very natural.

The doubts and suggestions which were likely to have arisen, even in a mind of simplicity like that of Mary Ellis, were entirely dispelled by the solemn seriousness of manner which Belford had assumed, when he had told her that Mr. Elwyn had assured him of his parent's honour.

That Mrs. Belford must have loved Mr. Elwyn previous to the decease of his wife, was evident, else how could her sudden acceptance of him be accounted for?—"At any rate," thought Mary, "there must be indelicacy of sentiment, or defalcation of principle." This sudden haste seemed inconsistent with that extreme solitude, that rigid privacy, in which Belford had decorated the picture of his amiable recluse, and which he had really understood to have been her situation from Mr. Elwyn.

We shall probably tire our readers with the minuteness of our relations, but we have wished to give them a proper insight into the meek and attractive qualities of Mary Ellis; and we have not performed our part, if we have not taught them to look with *more* partial eyes on Belford during the last month, that he has been the consoler, the friend, and the encourager of our youthful orphan, *than when* they saw him dazzling in manly beauty, and decorated with all the attractive graces, pouring out a strain of animated and rapturous admiration into the ear of Laretta Montgomery.

Some characters shine in retirement; alas! the world presents a wide scene of temptation to the ardent, the self-willed, and the impetuous. How necessary is discipline—what miseries are avoided by the judicious controul of these otherwise unruly emotions!

Mr. Elwyn and Harry (by which name we shall henceforth call him, as that of Belford must be dropped in compliance with the wishes of the former) lost no time in setting out on their journey; to have beheld their different countenances, it might have been imagined that the expectant bridegroom had been the son rather than the father, so full of animated and sparkling expectation were the fine features of the former; while the once equally handsome ones of the latter were so blunted by a constant and hacknied course of dissimulation, so bloated by intemperance, that they exhibited scarcely a trait of human intellect or animation.

That Mr. Elwyn had told the *truth*, and nothing *but* the truth to Henry, was certain; but he had not told the *whole truth*.

As we dare not put off our readers with a cramped or garbled detail, we must ask their patience and attention, while we take a cursory review of those transactions and events, which had finally led to that journey which our travellers had now undertaken; but for this explanation we must refer them to the second volume.

END OF VOL. I.